

Tel Aviv University
The Lester & Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities
The Shirley & Leslie Porter School of Cultural Studies

**Radī al-Dīn al-'Astarābādī and his position in medieval Arabic
grammatical theory**

**A study on the distinctive terminology and methodology in *Šarḥ al-
Kāfiya***

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by

Beata Sheyhatovitch

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Abstract

This work concentrates on *Šarḥ al-K fiya* by Raʿd al-Dīn al-ḤAstar b ʿAḥ (d. 1289?). Very little is known about the life of this Arab grammarian, who was apparently a Shiite and lived in Najaf or al-Madīna. *Šarḥ al-K fiya* is a commentary on *Kit b al-K fiya* written by Ibn al-ǧīb (d. 1249), a grammarian, theologian and jurist who lived in Egypt. While *Kit b al-K fiya* is a concise book dedicated mainly to the syntax of Arabic, *Šar al-K fiya* expands upon linguistic principles presented in *Kit b al-K fiya* and strives to reveal their underlying logic. Besides *Šar al-K fiya*, ḤAstar b ʿAḥ wrote a commentary on another grammatical book by Ibn al-ǧīb, *Kitāb al-Šāfiya*, which concentrates on morphology.

ḤAstar b ʿAḥ seems to be different from other grammarians and his writing may pose difficulty for a reader accustomed to earlier grammatical literature. Modern research has not yet figured out the distinctive features of his treatise. I believe that the key for better understanding of *Šarḥ al-K fiya* lies in a thorough study of its terminology and methodology, and that the unique character of this book can be explained, at least partially, by influences from other Islamic sciences, such as logic, philosophy, theology and jurisprudence. Although influences from these sciences (and especially logic) can also be found in earlier grammarians' writings, in *Šarḥ al-K fiya* they are particularly strong, so much so as to often make the understanding of the text difficult or impossible without acquaintance with other Islamic sciences. In addition, semantic discussions play a more important role in *Šarḥ al-K fiya* than in most Arabic grammatical treatises.

My work, based mainly on the Benghazi edition of *Šarḥ al-K fiya*, is divided into two parts, dealing with terminology and methodology.

Part 1 - Terminology

There are some general tendencies that can be discerned in ḤAstar b. ḤD's terminology:

- A tendency towards accurate formulations (e.g., he criticizes other grammarians who said that the *maf'ūl mutlaq li-l-ta'kīd* "emphasizes the verb", by explaining that it emphasizes only the element of action included in the verb's meaning).
- A tendency for abstract terminology – ḤAstar b. ḤD creates multiple abstract terms by adding the suffix *-iyya* to a less abstract grammatical terms (e.g., *ḥabariyya* 'predicativity, a function of a nominal predicate', *ḥāliyya* 'a function of a circumstantial accusative') or even to non-technical words (e.g., *juz'iyya* 'being a sentence's/word's component' or 'being a part of something', *nusūsiyya* 'conveying a meaning unequivocally').
- Using terms that are usually viewed as Kūfan (e.g., *yā' al-'iḍāfa* to refer to the ending *-ī*, 'my' – instead of the regular *yā' al-mutakallim*, *kināya* to refer to a personal pronoun – instead of the regular *ḍamīr*).
- Using terms from the realms of logic and jurisprudence.

ḤAstar b. ḤD uses terms from logic and jurisprudence to speak about predication (in addition to the well-known grammatical terms, e.g. *mubtada'-ḥabar*, *fī'l-fā'il*, *musnad-musnad 'ilayhi*). *Mansūb 'ilayhi-mansūb-nisba* '[something to which something else] is ascribed'-'something which is ascribed [to something else]'-'ascription', originated in logic, refer to the basic idea of ascribing two terms to each other, which can be realized in an independent sentence or otherwise. The term *mawḍū'* 'a logical subject' is used in discussions imported directly from logic. The juristic terms *maḥkūm 'alayhi-ḥukm*

'[something upon which] a judgment is given' - 'judgment' are used to present a sentence as providing the addressee with a new information about something.

Additional logical terms:

muqaddima 'premise', each one of the two propositions from which a conclusion is driven in a syllogism;

jawhar 'substance/essence', that can refer to (a) a word (that is substantial, as opposed to an accidental syntactic function), (b) the consonants of the word's root (that are substantial, as opposed to an accidental morphological pattern), (c) the essence of some sound (e.g., in pausal forms of some words ending in a quiescent 'alif, a *h* is added "in order to make clear the essence of the 'alif", since this 'alif is pronounced clearly only when followed by another sound);

qasim 'partner', a category placed on an equal level with another one in the categorical division.

Juristic terms:

istihsan 'preference', referring to linguistic phenomena which are not dictated by the basic principles of the theory but by speakers' preferences;

mansuh 'abrogated', referring to an element from an underlying structure which is not relevant to some derived structure (e.g., Astar b \bar{E} refutes the opinion that a reconstructable preposition assigns genitive to the governed element in an annexation construction; he states that this preposition exists in the underlying structure and is "abrogated" in order to create the annexation).

In addition to general tendencies in Astar b Ā's use of terminology, there are specific terms worthy of discussion. One of them is *wadʿ* (which I translate as 'coinage') and its derivatives. It refers to the hypothetical act of creating a linguistic expression for a certain meaning/function. It is rooted in Muslim philosophy and theology, and although some instances of its usage can be found in early grammarians' writings, Astar b Ā seems to be the first to develop what can be called a "*wadʿ* theory", i.e., define the concept, apply it to different kinds of linguistic elements, and build arguments on it.

He defines *wadʿ* as "the first assignment of a linguistic expression to a meaning, with an intention for it to become conventional between people", and distinguishes between lexical coinage (creation of a word for a certain meaning/function), morphological coinage (creation of a prefix/suffix/pattern for a function and/or with a certain behavior), and syntactic coinage (creation of an element for a certain syntactic position, or creation of a syntactic structure for a certain meaning/function). An element's coinage determines its form, meaning, categorical belonging, syntactic functions, etc. Astar b Ā uses these features to explain various phenomena: definiteness (e.g., relative pronouns and demonstratives are definite because they were coined so that they have a specific referent), case marks (e.g., in a sentence where the general term is preceded by *min* 'from', the case of the thing excepted is explained in terms of the meaning for which *min* was coined), etc.

Unlike other Muslim scholars, Astar b Ā does not show any significant interest in the coiner's identity (although it can be inferred that he views the language as a convention between speakers). Instead he concentrates on various linguistic elements' features that are determined by their coinage. Most linguistic phenomena are explainable by the coiner's intention, but in certain

cases Astar b Ē points out a mismatch between the coiner's intention and the actual usage. These cases can be viewed as proof that he views the language as a dynamic entity.

Alongside signification by virtue of coinage (which is the case with the meaning of most linguistic elements), he mentions signification "by nature" (*bi-l- ab i/ ab an*), in which a natural connection exists between the signifier and the signified (that is the case with onomatopoeic words), and signification "by means of reason" (*aqlan*), in which the meaning is inferred independently of coinage. An element can signify a meaning by means of reason, as well as require other elements on the grounds of reason (and not by coinage) – i.e. even if the coiner did not intend that some element be necessarily accompanied by others, that element can nonetheless require other elements as is logically entailed by its meaning.

Two other terms essential for understanding *Šarḥ al-K fiya* are *ṭur'ān* 'a sudden attack' (whose origins are unclear) and *urūd* 'accidentality' (a logical term). Both terms refer to factors/elements which are secondary and/or transient in comparison to others. However, they differ from each other, as the first is usually reserved for the factor that suppresses the others and determines the rule for the element/structure, whereas the second mostly refers to a factor that is suppressed by others and does not influence the rule. Although an 'accidental' factor is sometimes presented as influencing the rule, it seems that the term 'accidental' is then chosen to stress the weakness of the rule that ends up being influenced by a factor not supposed to be taken into an account.

The 'suddenly attacking' factor is presented as determining words' endings (e.g., various syntactic functions 'attack' the nouns' meaning; the assigner of jussive 'attacks' the declarative; the endings of the particles are fixed since their meaning is not 'attacked' by anything); the grammatical definiteness is presented as 'attacking' the basic word's meaning; the 'attacking'

factors play important role in grammatical agreement, and they influence the semantic aspect as well.

'Accidental' factors may appear on morphological, syntactic and semantic levels. Astar b Ā explains, for instance, that the syntactic behavior of *laysa* differs from that of *mā l-ḥijāziyya*. Although both of them function as negation markers, the first one is a verb, and the second one is a particle. It can be claimed that the function of *laysa* is "creating the meaning of negation in another element, i.e., in the clause preceded by it", which is a function characteristic to particles.

Astar b Ā's answer is that since the similarity to particles is accidental to *laysa*, it is not supposed to prevent it from syntactical behavior characteristic to verbs.

Šarḥ al-K fīya is abundant with semantic discussions, and consequently contains many terms referring to the form-meaning relation. None of these terms is unique to Astar b Ā, but their frequency and diversity in his book allow studying the differences between them. The conclusions are as follows:

Maʿnan 'meaning' refers in the vast majority of cases to a meaning which is relatively abstract. Indeed, Astar b Ā uses the term *maʿnan* to speak of the 'meaning' of condition, of the particles *li-/min*, and of predication. Rare cases when the term refers to less abstract ideas include an example where the meaning of personal pronouns (which is, most likely, some person/s) is intended.

It is worth mentioning that Astar b Ā uses *maʿnan* to refer to a meaning that may or may not exist in a linguistic element (when the question raised concerns not the nature of the element's meaning, but the existence of a meaning besides the formal function). For instance, Astar b Ā explains that the morphemes *yāʾ al-nisba* and *tāʾ marbūʿa* are sometimes interchangeable because of the similarity between them. This similarity is partially rooted in the fact that both of them can

indicate intensiveness and can also be without any particular meaning. Other terms referring to the form-meaning relation are not used in these contexts.

Sometimes the term *maʿnan* refers to a component of a word's meaning. For instance, Astar b Ā states that the adjective *ṭawīl* 'tall' signifies "two meanings": the attribute of tallness, and the owner of this attribute. Since the adjective signifies the owner of the attribute only vaguely, it must appear alongside a noun elucidating the owner of it. There are contexts in which *maʿnan* refers to an element's function in a sentence (and then it is appropriate to translate it as 'a functional meaning'). For instance, Astar b Ā mentions "a functional meaning of an essential/optional [constituent] in the sentence" (*maʿnā kawnihi ʿumdata al-kalāmi/faḍlatan*).

Although Astar b Ā mostly uses *maʿnan* to refer to a meaning of a single word, it sometimes refers to the meaning of units which are bigger or smaller than a word. In the context of units smaller than a word, he speaks of the functional meaning of the *tanwīn*, of the ending *-n* in verbs, etc. In the context of bigger units, he occasionally mentions clauses that can perform syntactic functions characteristic to nouns, because their meaning is similar to that of noun phrases.

Another important group of terms in the context of form-meaning relation is *dalāla/madlūl* ('signification/ a signified [meaning]') and their derivatives. These terms are similar to *maʿnan* as they may also refer to something signified by a single word or by bigger/smaller units, and to components of word's meaning. However, unlike *maʿnan*, which almost always refers to abstract ideas, *dalāla/madlūl* are often used to speak of a mental representation of a concrete object signified by linguistic elements. For instance, Astar b Ā speaks of "what is signified by [the two constituents]" (*madlūlayhimā*) of the noun phrase *al-rajul al-ʿāqil* 'a reasonable man' (and a man is, of course, a concrete being).

It is worth mentioning that he does not use derivatives of the root *d.l.l.* to refer to an existing (or non-existing) meaning or to a syntactic function (using exclusively derivatives of the root *ʿ.n.y.* for this purpose). There is evidence in *Šarḥ al-K fiya* that *dalāla* is not equivalent to denoting an object in an outer world, or to the dictionary meaning of the linguistic element.

Astar b Ā uses only derivatives of the root *d.l.l.* in discussing meta-linguistic usages (e.g., when pointing out that the speaker has in mind the actual word rather than something signified by it). He states that a word can be used when having in mind “the linguistic sign [itself]” (*al-lafẓ al-dāl*), just as it can be used when having in mind “its signification” (*madlūluhu*). For instance, when one says *jā’anī Zaydun* ‘Zayd came to me’, the signification of the name Zayd is intended, whereas when one says *takallamtu bi-Zaydin* ‘I said: Zayd’, the linguistic sign itself is intended.

The most prominent usage unique to the term *dalāla* is in discerning different types of signification. In this context two important distinctions are made:

1. The distinction between formal and informal signification (i.e., between something signified by the form itself and something that can be inferred from it), which is found also in a juristic treatise by Ibn Ā Ajīb. For instance, the verb can assign the *naṣb* case to all kinds of time expressions, since some times (i.e., past, present and future) are signified by it. However, the idea of place is not signified by the verb formally, but rather rationally (i.e., we know by the means of reason that an action signified by the verb must take place somewhere, but the idea of place is not signified by the verbs’ form). Therefore, a verb can assign the *naṣb* only to general place expressions, which behave analogically to the time expressions.

The relation between formal/informal signification and signification by coinage/by the means of reason does not appear clear in *Šarḥ al-K fiya*. The difference between the

terms may lie in the focus: when Astar b Ā speaks of formal/informal signification, he concentrates on the linguistic expression itself and the way the addressee understands it, whereas in mentioning signification by coinage/by reason, he concentrates on the hypothetical coiner and his plans/intentions.

2. The distinction between signification “by correspondence” (*muṭābaqatan*), in which a concept corresponds entirely to the meaning for which the element has been coined; “by inclusion” (*taḍammunan/ḍimnan*), in which a concept is included in the meaning for which the element has been coined; and “by entailment” (*iltizāman*), in which a concept is entailed by the meaning for which the elements have been coined. These terms were already used by Ibn Sīnā.

The idea of ‘inclusion’ is used in *Šarḥ al-K fiya* in the following contexts:

- in distinguishing between syntactic functions – e.g., Ibn ʿĀjib holds that *taʿkīd* is supposed to affirm the concept signified by the preceding noun by correspondence, whereas Astar b Ā demonstrates that the main difference between the *taʿkīd* and other *tawābiʿ* does not lie in the way in which the affirmed concept is signified by the main noun, but in the speaker’s intention to affirm the relation between the main noun and the verb, which sets the *taʿkīd* apart from other *tawābiʿ*;
- in explaining a syntactic position of an element – e.g., the fact that *rubba*, ‘many (a man), many (a time), sometimes’ cannot be joined by constituents that abrogate the *ibtidāʿ* structure is explained by claiming that *rubba* includes the idea of negation, and the negation is designated to appear in the beginning of a sentence;
- in explaining a similarity between elements – e.g., the fixed endings of various nominal elements are explained by similarity to particles, due to the inclusion of their meanings.

- in elucidating elements' meanings – e.g., the relation between the noun *naḥra* (lit. 'revealing') in the phrase *ṣaḥratan baḥratan naḥratan* 'openly/directly' and the root *n.ḥ.r.*, whose basic meaning is 'slaughtering', is explained by stating that 'slaughtering' includes the idea of revealing, since this action reveals internal parts of an animal.

The idea of 'entailment' is used in a discussion of anaphora. In one of the cases presented, the context before the personal pronoun signifies by entailment something that clarifies the pronoun. The entailment can be 'close' (i.e., the context includes a word whose meaning is close to the one indicating the referent of the pronoun) or 'far' (the context includes no such word, and so the addressee must rely on general knowledge to understand the intention).

The term *musamman* 'the named one' is used to refer to an entity called by a proper name. Astar b Ā explains, for instance, that the most important purpose in coining a proper name is particularizing the named one. Therefore the original meaning of a word functioning as a proper name is not supposed to affect its grammatical features. In cases where the discussion does not presuppose a proper name, *musamman* seems to refer to an object in an outer world for which the linguistic sign stands (unlike the terms *maʿnan* and *dalāla/madlūl* that refer to a mental representation of the reality). As a case in point, Astar b Ā distinguishes between place expressions that refer to places on account of something which is a part of their named ones, and these that refer to places on account of something which is not a part of their named ones – e.g., the word "market" refers to a place on account of shops etc. being there (as part of that place) whereas the word "parasang" refers to a place being a distance measurement unit (although not a part of the place itself).

The term *maḍmūn* 'content' mostly refers to the content of a clause (or a clause-like element) or of a predicate in a sentence/clause. The meaning intended by the term is never concrete.

Paraphrasing an element's content, Astar b Ā uses its *maṣḍar* form. Paraphrasing the content of a clause, Astar b Ā uses an annexation construction in which the *maṣḍar* derived from the predicate (or the predicate-like element) serves as an annexed element of the subject. For instance, he explains that the “real object” of a cognitive verb, such as *ʿalimtu* ‘I knew’, is the ‘content’ of the second object, annexed to the first object. In the sentence *ʿalimtu Zaydan qāʾiman* ‘I knew that Zayd was standing’, the known thing is *qiyām Zaydin* ‘Zayd’s standing’.

The verb *waqaʿa ʿal* (lit. ‘fell on’) can be translated, when used in the context of form-meaning relation, as ‘referred to’. Its subject is always a single word (unlike the terms *maʿnan* /*dalāla*/*madlūl*, which often refer to meaning/signification of units longer/shorter than a word, and unlike the term *maḍmūn* that refers frequently to the content of sentences/clauses). It can be assumed that the verb is used to speak of one of the possible referents that a word can have. For instance, Astar b Ā explains that the term *rafʿ* can refer to the endings *ḍamma* (the regular nominative marker), *ʿalif* (the nominative marker in dual forms) and *wāw* (the nominative marker in sound masculine plural forms).

Part 2 - Methodology

My work further deals with two central issues related to distinctive methodology in *Šarḥ al-K fīya*: the theory of definition and the distinction between general and specific. Both are connected to logic and other Islamic sciences.

Dealing with definitions, Astar b Ā not only explains those given by Ibn ʿAjīb and criticizes them, but also shows interest in the theoretical side. His attention to definitions is most probably influenced by logic (which gives importance to definitions, since a definition allows conceptualization and thus starts the process that eventually leads to grasping the truth). Sometimes his theoretical interest seems even stronger than the practical one – especially when

an extended and sophisticated discussion on Ibn ʿĀjib’s definition does not lead to an improved formulation. His arguments in this area are often hard to follow without an acquaintance with the terminology from the field of logic.

Al-Ghazzālī and others mention three types of definitions: *ḥadd ḥaqīqī* ‘a real definition’, which reveals the true essence of the defined thing, *ḥadd rasmī* ‘a descriptive definition’, which includes all the tokens of the defined thing and excludes everything that is not the defined thing, but does not reveal the true essence of it, and *ḥadd lafzī* ‘a literal definition’, which explains the defined thing with a more common word. Astar b ʿĀ mostly speaks of the true definition, but sometimes mentions the descriptive one. For instance, he gives only a descriptive definition for a direct object. He possibly does so because he cannot give some concepts a true definition, or wants to show his virtuosity in dealing with different types of definitions.

Following Aristotle and al-Fārābī, he refers to the structure of a complete definition: *jins* ‘genus’, a category containing the defined sub-category alongside others + *faṣl* ‘differentia’, which allows an essential distinction between the defined sub-category and other sub-categories. For instance, in dealing with the definition of the term *kalima* ‘word’, he says that “a genus can be used to exclude unwanted things from the definition, if it is somehow more specific than the differentia”.

He names various criteria for a complete definition:

- Co-extensiveness (*ṭard/ʿittirād*) and exclusiveness (*aks*). Astar b ʿĀ explains that a proposed definition A can be tested for co-extensiveness with a concept B by placing “each A” in a position of a subject for a predicate B. If the statement “Each A is B” is true, the definition is co-extensive. A proposed definition can be tested for exclusiveness by replacing the subject and the predicate in that statement by their opposites: if the statement “Each non-A is non-B” is true, the definition is exclusive.

- Separate definitions for separate concepts. Since a complete definition must include all the essential features of the defined thing, two things with a different essence cannot be included in one definition. Having this principle in mind, Astar b Ā (unlike other grammarians) discerns two different types of *mubtada'* (a subject of a nominal sentence, and an adjective that appears before the subject and assigns it the *raf'* case) and formulates a separate definition for each.
- An accurate formulation. Unclear, uncommon or polysemic words must be avoided in definitions. For instance, Astar b Ā criticizes Ibn Ā Ājib for using in the definition of *ġ'rāb* the word *murakkab*, which has two separate meanings, 'something added (to something else)' and 'a compound'. The meaning relevant for the definition is the first one, but it is less common in use than the second one. Therefore Ibn Ā Ājib's formulation is not accurate enough. Likewise, unnecessary words affect the accuracy of a definition. For instance, Astar b Ā criticizes Ibn Ā Ājib more than once for starting some of his definitions with the word "each".
- Avoiding circularity. In general, circularity occurs when a concept is defined using itself or something equal to it (or surpassing it) in vagueness. For instance, Ibn Ā Ājib defines a noun in *jarr* as "something that includes a sign of the governed element in an annexation construction". Astar b Ā notes that in order to understand that the governed element receives *jarr*, one must first understand its true nature. Therefore, this definition is problematic.

The second important issue related to the methodology in *Šarḥ al-K fiya* is the distinction between general and specific. It is prominent in various discussions and various levels of analysis. Remarkably, this distinction is important also in other Islamic sciences. The importance

of this aspect in Astar b Ā's writing can be demonstrated by mapping out the different terms related to it.

The most frequently used terms in this context are *‘āmm-hāṣṣ* ‘general-specific’ and their derivatives. These are relative terms signifying that the number of possible referents of one element is bigger/smaller than the number of possible referents of another. There is a difference between *taḥṣīṣ* ‘specification’ and *tawḍīḥ* ‘clarification’: specification narrows the number of the element’s possible referents, whereas clarification helps the addressee understand which referent/s the speaker has in mind while taking into account the addressee’s state of knowledge (although the number of possible referents of the clarifying element may be equal to the number of possible referents of the clarified one). There is also a difference between specification and *ta’rīf* ‘grammatical definiteness’: each definite noun is specific, but not each specific noun is definite.

Astar b Ā uses the *‘āmm-hāṣṣ* distinction in discussing terminology (e.g., he explains that the term *kalām* ‘sentence’ is more specific than *jumla* ‘clause/sentence’), in discussing elements that can fill a certain syntactic position (e.g., the annexed element must be specified semantically by the governed element, and the conditions for this specification are mentioned), in semantic analyses (e.g., Astar b Ā compares generality/specificity of seemingly synonymous structures), and in dealing with semantic shifts (e.g., a meaning of an element can become more specific in the course of its use).

Another important pair of terms is *muṭlaq-muqayyad* ‘absolute-limited’. These terms and their derivatives appear in *Šarḥ al-K fiya* in two main contexts: meta-grammatical discussions (in which the term *qayd* ‘limitation’ refers to a component of a definition/rule used to exclude things that are not supposed to be included); and grammatical discussions, in which the element whose

meaning is ‘limited’ signifies usually an event/process, and the limiting element in the vast majority of cases is an object/adverbial which allows the addressee to better imagine the event. Unlike the terms *‘āmm-hāṣṣ*, which refer to the number of referents, the pair *muṭlaq-muqayyad* refers to the way in which the language presents events as limited by conditions/circumstances, or as absolute (i.e., totally unlimited).

For instance, Astar b Ā explains the fact that the *ḥāl* is supposed to be indefinite, by stating that its function is “limiting the action mentioned in the sentence”. Therefore, its definiteness would not add anything semantically. In another place Astar b Ā presents the omission of a direct object as dropping a limitation for the purpose of exaggeration (i.e., the omission allows presenting the action as occurring irrespectively of its participants).

The term *mu‘ayyan* ‘particular’ can refer to one particular referent, one particular group (included in a bigger category), or a particular time span (if its timing is known, in comparison to the present, and so is its length). For instance, it is stated that a proper name is coined for an entity that is particular and specific for the coiner and for the user of the language. In other words, someone who gives a proper name to someone/something, has in mind one particular person/thing, and so does everyone who uses this proper name. In some cases *mu‘ayyan* is said of abstract things, such as events, essences and quantities. Astar b Ā explains that the ‘sisters’ of *kāna* ‘was’, e.g., *mā dāma* ‘as long as’ and *mā zāla* ‘still, yet’, “signify a particular action that is not signified clearly enough by the nominal predicate”. The term *mu‘ayyan* in this context seems to be very close to *muqayyad*.

The term *ma‘dūd* ‘countable’ refers (when used in the context of the general-specific distinction) to a time span with a known length, although it is not necessarily known where it stands in relation to the present or in terms of year/month – e.g., ‘a month’. If it is known where that span

stands, the time expression is considered specific, in addition to its being countable – e.g., ‘the first ten days of Ramaān’.

The terms *maḥṣūr/muwaqqat* ‘restricted/delimited’ refer to time spans with a known length, the exact timing of which is usually unknown. In this usage the terms seem similar to each other and also very close to the term *ma’dūd*. Astar b Ā defines *muwaqqat* in the context of time as “having a restricting border” and gives examples such as ‘day’, ‘night’, ‘month’. In other place he gives almost the same examples of the time which is *maḥṣūr*.

In addition, the term *maḥṣūr* is sometimes used to speak of a ‘restricted group’. Astar b Ā defines this sense of the term, and says that the meaning is either the entire genus, or a group included in the genus, with a known number of individuals (i.e., it cannot refer to an undefined part of a genus). This term is used in discussing cases where *illā* ‘except’ behaves analogically to *ḡayr* ‘other than..., unlike’. The noun described by *illā* in these cases is not, basically, supposed to signify a restricted group (although there are deviations from this principle).

Influences from logic, theology and jurisprudence are perceptible not only in Astar b Ā’s terminology and methodology, but also in his examples. For instance, the example “The God is capable of everything but the impossible” (given in a discussion of exception) has a theological flavor, and the sentence “The water is pure” (exemplifying the generic definiteness) is taken from jurisprudence.

In sum, my work attempts to elucidate central issues in the distinctive terminology and methodology in *Šarḥ al-K fīya*. It also serves as an example of using other Islamic sciences for a better understanding of a grammatical text. My approach, based on a close and comprehensive reading of the treatise as a whole, allows recognizing and studying features recurring in various

chapters and on various levels of analyses, and may provide a method for discovering distinctive traits of the writings of other, especially relatively late, grammarians.

