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**The Grammatical Treatise *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī ṣan‘at al-i‘rāb*
of Abū al-Qāsim az-Zamaḥṣarī (Died 1144 A.D.)
– a Masterpiece of Arab Grammar**

Abstract

Abū al-Qāsim az-Zamaḥṣarī's (1075–1144) grammatical treatise *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī ṣan‘at al-i‘rāb* is one of the main and most acknowledged philological masterpieces of the classical Arabic. The aim of this article is to shed some light on its origin, cultural and philological background, main goals and assumptions of the author, its position in the history of studies on Arabic grammar, hitherto prevailing research output of European orientalist dealing with *Al-Mufaṣṣal*. It also comprises a short presentation of the figure of Az-Zamaḥṣarī himself. The article quotes references to Arabic, English, German, Russian and Polish source literature.

The renowned Persian-Arab philologist and polyhistor Abū al-Qāsim az-Zamaḥṣarī (1075–1144 A.D.) is the author of 10 philological works on the classical Arabic language. The most valuable and best known of these is without doubt the grammatical treatise *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī ṣan‘at al-i‘rāb* (short form: *Al-Mufaṣṣal*), recognized as one of the best linguistic works of the Arab world. It was written in the years 1119–1120 (in one year and four months) in the spirit of the Baghdad grammatical school (which the Russian Orientalist N.K. Efendieva described as eclectic and rationalist-philological¹). Before setting out to present the book itself, I would first like to briefly outline the figure of its author.

¹ Н.К. Эфендиева, *Исследование некоторых трудов аз-Замахиари „Язык и литература“* 2001, No. 3-4 (32).

Abū al-Qāsim az-Zamahšarī is one of the most outstanding representatives of the Arab-Islamic human sciences of the 12th century. His creative output and achievements outperform many famous Arab scholars. Az-Zamahšarī wrote in the Persian, Arabic and Turkish (Turkmen) languages. His preserved literary legacy includes 20 works, most of which have already been published (in Arabic). In addition, some biographical dictionaries and other sources mention 30 more of his writings that have been lost. Az-Zamahšarī's output is dominated by works on grammar, lexicography and moralizing theology². He was a philologist, commentator of the *Qur'an* in the spirit of Shī'ite theology, and a poet. While in the Arab world he is very well known and appreciated, the name of Az-Zamahšarī is almost completely unknown in the West.

The Russian Arabist Ignatij Kračkovskij (1883–1951) summarized the literary merits of Az-Zamahšarī stating that “he is remembered as an eminent exegete (philologist, author of commentaries of the Holy Scripts – in this case – of the *Qur'an*) in the spirit of the Mu'tazili, as well as a grammarian, lexicographer and author of several fine works of literature”³.

We can risk to say that all books of Az-Zamahšarī, even those classified in the field of theology, are connected to a greater or lesser extent with studies on the Arabic language. The Muslim scholar regarded the Arabic language as an indispensable primary tool for exploring dogmas of the Muslim faith. As a philologist, he considered it the queen of all languages, although his native tongue was Persian.

Abū al-Qāsim az-Zamahšarī was born on March 8th 1075 A.D. (17 raġab 467 H.)⁴ in the village of Zamaḥšar, the land of Khwarizm. Today, the town said to be associated with Zamaḥšar is located in the Dağoguz Province in northern Turkmenistan, near the Uzbeki border. This version of his birthdate is mentioned by old Arabic biographical dictionaries: *Nuzhat al-alibbā' fi ṭabaqāt al-udabā'* [“Wise men's stroll through generations of renown scholars”] by Abū al-Barakāt Ibn al-Anbarī (d.577 H./1181 A.D.), *Wafāyāt al-a'yān* [“Lives of Eminent men”] by Ibn Ḥallikān (d.681/1282) and *Iršād al-arīb ilā ma'rifat al-adīb* [“Guidebook to knowledge”] by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d.626/1228), as well as Ğamāl ad-Dīn al-Qifṭī (d.646/1248) in his biographical dictionary *Inbāh ar-ruwāt 'alā anbāh an-nuḥāt* [“Informing writers of news about grammarians”] referring to Az-Zamahšarī's nephew – ‘Umar ‘Amir ibn al-Ḥasan as-Samsārī who in turn relied on the work of Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥāmid⁵.

² В.М. Мяммядялийев, *Ярлб дилчлийи*, “Маариф” Баку 1985.

³ “Он оставил важный след как крупный экзегет (филолог, занимающийся толкованием и объяснением библейских текстов, в данном случае – коранических) му'тазилитского толка, как грамматик, лексикограф и автор ряда произведений высокого стиля в художественной прозе” (И.Ю. Крачковский, *Избранные сочинения. Йусуф ал-Магриби и его словарь* 1957 vol. 1 p. 313).

⁴ See: *Enzyklopädie des Islām*, Leiden 1913–1934 pp. 1305–1307. The encyclopedia appears to contain a typographical error stating the birth date to be 27.7.467 instead of 17.7.467, but already the conversion to the Gregorian calendar is correct -08. 03. 1075.

⁵ Н. ал-Ḥaffāf (ed.), *Risālat fi i'ğāz sūrat al-Kawṭar li-az-Zamaḥšarī*, www.rafed.net/turathona/13/13-7.html.

In some sources, with less frequency though, one can find Az-Zamaḥṣarī's the birth to be the year 1074 or even 1070. They may result from erroneous calculations between the Muslim and the Gregorian calendar.

Az-Zamaḥṣarī died on January 13th 1144 (9 dū al-ḥiğğa 538 H.)⁶ in the town of Al-Ġurġaniyya – the medieval capital of Khwarizm⁷. The ruins of what was then Al-Ġurġaniyya, situated at the crossroads of caravan routes and demolished by successive Mongol invasions in the 13th and 14th centuries, are located in the south of the city Konye-Urgench in today's Turkmenistan.

Az-Zamaḥṣarī's flagship grammatical work – *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī ṣan'at al-i'rāb* – is an outstanding achievement of the Arab compilatory grammatical movement which was developing in the Middle East from the 11th century. It was committed primarily to didactic purposes: teaching of the Arabic grammar (and not, as in the case of the so-called Al-Baṣra philological school, teaching the proper use of correct grammar norms imposed on the language)⁸. The compilation movement did not create new scientific theories describing the structure of the language, nor did it set any new norms for it, but it took up organizing and systemizing the formerly composed Arab philological writings for educational purposes.

Hence, *Al-Mufaṣṣal* has been written with a didactic target, next to other well-known dissertations on Arabic grammar, such as *Al-Alfiyya* [“The book of thousand verses”] by Ibn Mālik (d. 673/1274), *Šudūr ad-dahab fī ma'rifat kalām al-'Arab* [“Gold particles or the knowledge on Arab's speech”] by Ibn Ḥiṣām (d. 761/1359), the monography on Arabic morphology (*Aṣ-Šāfiyya*) and syntax (*Al-Kāfiyya*) by Ibn al-Ḥāğib (d. 646/1248) commented on by Astarābādī (d. 688/1289). The compilatory movement in the history of the Arabic grammar is crowned by the Egyptian polymath As-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) with at least a dozen writings devoted to grammar. All of these books, including the *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī ṣan'at al-i'rāb*, can be regarded as an attempt to put together all preceding contemporary grammatical achievements.

There are many possible translations of the book's title according to different meanings of the Arabic word *mufaṣṣal*: *A detailed dissertation on inflexions* or *Book in chapters on inflexions*. The Arabic word *mufaṣṣal* may also mean ‘refined in detail, elaborate, systematic, tailored to suit something’. It seems that only together, all these terms appear to give the full meaning of the Arabic title meant by the author, taking into account the circumstances and character of the book. It may be assumed that the author (as a distinguished scholar of the Arabic language) gave an ambiguous title for his book intentionally, since playing word-games in books' titles was a widely practiced habit by then.

⁶ Some modern sources claim here the year 1143 (eg. www.1911encyclopedia.org) which may also be a matter of date conversion.

⁷ According to Charles F. Horne, Az-Zamaḥṣarī was born and died in Khiva (today Turkmenistan). Ch.F. Horne, *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East*, 1917, pp. 134–139.

⁸ J. Danecki, *Gramatyka języka arabskiego*, Warszawa 2001, vol. II, p. 88.

Quite often bibliographic lists mention Az-Zamahšarī's treatise also under two other titles: *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī an-naḥw*⁹ ["The book on grammar"], *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī 'ilm al-arabiyya* ["The book on knowledge of the Arabic language"], or simply *Al-Mufaṣṣal*. The abbreviated title appears e.g. on the manuscript from 1739 held in the Yusuf Ağa Library in Konya, Turkey.

On the one hand, Az-Zamahšarī's grammatical dissertation reveals many similarities to the monumental grammatical treatise *Al-Kitāb* ["The Book"] of Sībawayhi (d. 180/796) which is regarded as the cornerstone of Arab philology. On the other hand, as claims the Russian Arabist B.Z. Khalidov (and also W. Diekmann of the University of Cologne), the grammatical material in *Al-Mufaṣṣal* is presented in a more systematic and consistent manner which makes the treatise more accessible to its readers¹⁰.

The high esteem in which *Al-Mufaṣṣal* is held among Arab philologists is comparable to that enjoyed among Qur'anic exegetes by Az-Zamahšarī's best known work – his commentary of the *Qur'an*: *Al-Kaššāf*. This importance of *Al-Mufaṣṣal* is underlined by the Turkish historiographer Hāğğī Halīfa (d. 1067/1656) in his book *Kašf aḏ-ḏunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa-al-funūn* ["Discernment of knowledge on types of books and other arts"] in the section devoted to *Al-Mufaṣṣal*¹¹. For many centuries Az-Zamahšarī's masterpiece has served in the Arab world as a standard university textbook, as well as a research base for working on new manuals. This important role of *Al-Mufaṣṣal* has not been lost by it to a great extent till today – Arabic is taught by simplified and modified rules once drawn up in the philological centers of Al-Baṣra, Al-Kūfa and Baghdad. The modern Arabic grammar sticks to the old patterns¹².

Al-Mufaṣṣal is therefore one of the last large-format writings of grammar, combining the wealth of interpretations concerning the classical Arabic language accumulated over centuries by scholars from Al-'Irāq, and seen through the eyes of the great linguists – Az-Zamahšarī. *Al-Mufaṣṣal*'s author is happy to make frequent, if somewhat critical, references to the opinions of his philological predecessors. He does not limit himself to sheer compiling of the accumulated knowledge, but also responds to it leaning toward the views of different grammarians from the Al-Baṣra and Al-Kūfa schools or criticising them. He would as well suggest his own individual understanding of the issues under discussion. Hence, some researchers do not consider Az-Zamahšarī to represent the compilatory movement, but more likely the late Baghdad philological period¹³. His grammatical treatise is a good starting point to acquaint oneself with the rules of the classical Arabic grammar from the perspective of various philologists. It

⁹ This title is e.g. given by Джирджи Зейдан in: *Тарих адаб ал-луга ал-арабийя (на арабском языке)*, Бейрут 1967, vol. II, p. 47.

¹⁰ Б.З. Халидов, А.Б. Халидов, *Биография аз-Замашари, составленная его современником ал-Андарасбан*, "Письменные памятники Востока" 1973, p. 556.

¹¹ H. Halīfa, *Kašf aḏ-ḏunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa-al-funūn*, www.almeshkat.net, vol. 2, pp. 956–958.

¹² J. Danecki, op. cit. vol. II, p. 90.

¹³ Ahmed El-Amir, *Sharh Abiat El – Mofasal By El-Sharif El-Georgany, A study and Verification* – M. A. Dissertation, EL-Menia University, Egypt 1418/1998.

is therefore a suitable (and equally typical) material for undertaking, e.g. an analytical-comparative research on differences in perception of the Arabic grammatical structures seen through the eyes of Arabs and European Orientalists. It seems that chronologically after Az-Zamaḥṣarī's dissertation there was no other integrated grammar book more suitable (except of As-Suyūṭī's philological treatises) for this goal.

It is also worth noting that *Al-Mufaṣṣal* was written for a special linguistic purpose. In order to understand it, we must take a brief look at the contemporary linguistic situation in the Arab-Muslim world of the 12th century. At its time, *Al-Mufaṣṣal* was an extremely urgent and up-to-date work from the perspective of the would-be fate of the Arabic language. The political disintegration of the Arab caliphate in the 10th century led to a fragmentation of culture, including the language. The result was a decline of the Arab culture, including a gradual disappearance of the command of the classical language among people. In various provinces of the disintegrated caliphate local cultural traditions became more important than the Arab one. In the east of the Arab-Muslim world, in Az-Zamaḥṣarī's native province of Khwarizm, ground was gradually won by the Persian language and Persian-Tadjik literature represented by great Persian poets such as Rūdākī (860?-941?) Firdawsi (between 932 and 942-1020 or 1025) and 'Omar Ḥayyām (1048-1131). The 12th century also witnessed the literary output of the great Azerbaijani poet Neẓāmī (1141-1209), writing in Persian. At the same time, the milieu of high-ranking Persian dignitaries gave birth to a new intellectual and social movement called *ṣu'ūbiyya*¹⁴ which was directed against the political and social domination of the Arabs in the multiethnic society of the Arab-Muslim caliphate. This trend spread to ordinary people in whose veins flowed the Persian blood. For their purposes, usually political ones, they would invoke the Sunni belief that people should be differentiated only in terms of religion, and not origin.

All of these tendencies limited the scope for the use of the classical Arabic language, not only in Khwarizm, but also in other areas of the non-Arab Muslim world. Nevertheless, scholars and theologians, non-Arabs, did not cease to use the Arabic as the sole language of science and religion – Islam. The classical Arabic language also enjoyed wide application in poetry.

The emergence of a new multifunctional compendium of the Arab grammatical thought in the form of *Al-Mufaṣṣal* was in its author's intention designed to contribute to and support the functioning of the Arabic language and renew people's interest in it. Even though there already existed a large number of grammatical treatises at that time, apparently there was still a need for an enhanced compilation of philological achievements, a need to develop a systemized and easily accessible grammar manual that would serve as an aid for adepts studying the classical Arabic language. The scientific community of that

¹⁴ The *ṣu'ūbiyya* movement had a significant impact on the development of Arabic literature (in such a way that supporters of increasing the role of non-Arab nations such as Abū Nuwās were squaring off in written discussions and literary disputes, often in a rough manner, against proponents of the Bedouin movement such as Ibn Qutayba (M.M. Dziekan, ed., *Arabowie, Słownik encyklopedyczny*, Warszawa 2001 p. 341).

times asked their foremost philological authority – *Az-Zamaḥṣārī* (although not an Arab, but an expert in the Arabic language) to create such a unique grammar manual.

The author writes in *Al-Mufaṣṣal* foreword: “I was asked to create a universal and orderly manual on *i’rāb* covering all the chapters, a book which the Muslims lack to learn Arabic. And since my brothers – the servants of literature – are close to my heart, I wrote such a book giving it the title *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī ṣan’at al-i’rāb*”. Then the Muslim scholar thanks God for keeping him away from “deviations from the right path of admirers of this language, and joining the ranks of preachers of the disastrous *ṣu’ūbiyya* movement. God saved me from their biased ideas that are nothing but curses and undermining the truth”¹⁵. The whole treatise is thus an attempt to respond to the contemporary socio-cultural situation of the eastern borderlands of the caliphate¹⁶.

In the foreword *Az-Zamaḥṣārī* also indirectly indicates the importance of his work: “*Al-I’rāb* is a ladder leading to the explanation of reality, thus giving the opportunity to explore the mysteries of the *Qur’an*. It guarantees that you will be able to mind its (the *Qur’an*’s) beautiful countenances and to reach its most precious gifts. Anyone condemning *al-i’rāb* is like a man who denies others going the right ways, not wishing them luck.” It is clear that in *Az-Zamaḥṣārī*’s understanding, getting to know the principles governing the Arabic grammar is a necessary starting point for studying the *Qur’an* and understanding it properly.

Next, the author presents the methodology guiding him in the course of his work on the grammatical material: “I divided it (the book) into four chapters. The first deals with nouns, the second with verbs, the third with particles (*ḥurūf*), and the fourth one joins them altogether (*al-muṣṭarak*)”. It is a typical division into grammatical categories as used by other Arab philologists. The fourth chapter is devoted to phonetic issues. It includes such phonetic categories as *al-imāla* (imāla), *al-waqf* (pause), *al-qasam* (oath), *taḥfīf al-hamza* (losing the *hamza*), *iltiqā’ as-sākinayn* (meeting of two *sukūns*), *ḥukm awā’il al-kalam* (the principle of beginning the speech), *ziyādat al-ḥurūf* (adding particles), *ibdāl al-ḥurūf* (exchanging particles), *al-i’tilāl* (weak consonants), *al-idḡām* (strong consonants). The author is one of the first philologists who noticed that sounds are a linguistic phenomenon requiring separate detailed studies¹⁷. Famous European scholars of the Arabic – H. Fleisch, J. Cantineau, M. Bravmann, C. Brockelmann and D. Grünert paid great attention in their works to the phonetic concepts presented in *Al-Mufaṣṣal*. As explained by the Russian Orientalist N.K. Efenđiyeva, it is a proof of the philologists’ unremitting interest in the grammatical concepts put forward by the 12th-century Persian linguist, and proof of the constant topicality and timeliness of his linguistic ideas.

¹⁵ See: M. Grodzki, *Kategoria przypadku w dziele gramatycznym Al-Mufaṣṣal fī ṣan’at al-i’rāb Abū al-Qasima az-Zamaḥṣāriego (zm.1144)*, Ibidem, Łódź 2009.

¹⁶ *Az-Zamaḥṣārī*’s treatise was once valued so highly that the ruler of the Ayyubid dynasty ‘Isā al-Ayyūbī (13th century) has appointed a prize from his own vault worth 100 dinars plus an expensive robe for anyone who owned a copy of *Al-Mufaṣṣal*.

¹⁷ Н.К. Эфендіева, *op. cit.*

The original Arabic text contains no division into chapters or sections. *Al-Mufaṣṣal* is written at one stretch and counts several hundred pages in today's Arabic editions of this book. The first several dozen pages of the treatise, together with my own translation into the Polish language and a grammatical commentary were published in 2009.

The *Al-Mufaṣṣal*'s text contains numerous quotations from Arabic poetry, often referred to by the author. The poetic *bayts* of Az-Zamaḥṣārī's book and their extensive commentary are the main subjects of the broad dissertation by Muḥammad Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī al-Ḥalabī under the title *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī šarḥ abyāt Al-Mufaṣṣal*¹⁸.

Al-Mufaṣṣal must have enjoyed a success shortly after its release by the author, because later in his life Az-Zamaḥṣārī wrote a summary of *Al-Mufaṣṣal* calling it *Al-Unmūdağ* ("The book of reference"), which is mentioned by Ḥāğğī Ḥalīfa (d. 1067/1656)¹⁹. *Al-Unmūdağ* is a kind of a specific compendium of grammatical knowledge for beginners – a handy help in acquainting the rules of grammar. It was printed in Constantinople in 1880 and Egypt in 1872.

Among Az-Zamaḥṣārī's unpreserved writings closely connected with *Al-Mufaṣṣal* was *Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal* ["Commentary on *Al-Mufaṣṣal*"] and *Ḥāšiya 'alā Al-Mufaṣṣal* ["References to *Al-Mufaṣṣal*"]. Both are mentioned in *Kašf aḏ-ḏunūn*²⁰.

The characteristic feature of *al-Mufaṣṣal* as well as of other grammatical and lexicographical writings of his author, is certainly the maximised substantial brevity and condensation of the discussed material, dense with terse descriptions. This allows the reader to get acquainted with many pieces of valuable information on what is roughly equivalent to a few pages. However it equally hinders proper assimilation of the read text and renders the author's ideas difficult to grasp, e.g. when translating the Arabic text into a foreign language²¹.

Besides Sībawayhi's *Al-Kitāb*, *Al-Mufaṣṣal* is the most commented on classical work of grammar²² among the Arabs. There are hundreds of commentaries to *Al-Mufaṣṣal*, written by different authors (C. Brockelmann estimates there are 291²³ of them). Already in the 17th century Ḥāğğī Ḥalīfa listed in his bibliographical dictionary *Kašf aḏ-ḏunūn*²⁴ a few dozen such works. Most Arabic commentaries of *Al-Mufaṣṣal* appeared in the first three centuries after Az-Zamaḥṣārī's death. Their great number indicates the degree of interest attracted by his book among Arab philologists. The most widespread

¹⁸ Muḥammad Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī al-Ḥalabī, *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī šarḥ abyāt Al-Mufaṣṣal* Dār al-Ġīl, Bajrūt (no date – reprint of the Alexandrian edition of 1874).

¹⁹ Ḥ. Ḥalīfa, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 270 and vol. 2, p. 956.

²⁰ A. El-Amir, op. cit., p. 21.

²¹ In turn, Az-Zamaḥṣārī wrote his other pieces of fine literature in the spirit of that time – intricate style, rhymed prose, embellished language and stylistic means of expression upon the templates of Arabic poetry, skillfully weaving in a number of synonyms and rare linguistic phrases.

²² El-Amir writes that the most often commented classical grammar works of Arab authors are: Sībawayhi's *Al-Kitāb*, Az-Zağğāğī's *Al-Ġūmal*, Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī's *Al-Idāh*, Az-Zamaḥṣārī's *Al-Mufaṣṣal*, Ibn al-Ḥāğğib's *Al-Kāfiya*, Ibn Mālik's *Al-Alfiyya* and Ibn Ḥišām's *Al-Muğannī*. A. El-Amir, op. cit.

²³ C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur*, Erster Supplementband, Leiden 1937, p. 1305.

²⁴ Ḥ. Ḥalīfa, op. cit. vol. 2. pp. 956–958.

Arabic commentary is Ibn Ya‘īš’s (d. 643/1245) *Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal* [“Explaining *Al-Mufaṣṣal*”]. Over centuries Arab scholars have managed to explore comprehensively the secrets of *Al-Mufaṣṣal*, not only in terms of linguistics and historiography of Arab philology, but also from the point of view of studies on literature and research on the history of culture. It is worth mentioning here a commentary of poetical verses (Arab. *šawāhid*) quoted in *Al-Mufaṣṣal* under the title *Al-Mufaḍḍal fī šarḥ abyāt Al-Mufaṣṣal* by Muḥammad Badr ad-Dīn Abū Fīrās an-Naṣ‘ānī al-Ḥalabī, published in 1323/1905 in Cairo. The *Al-Mufaṣṣal* itself (and its most known commentaries) reappeared repeatedly in the Arab countries where it is treated as basic linguistic literature. Nowadays one can find commentaries of commentaries of *Al-Mufaṣṣal*, sometimes issued as books, such as a recent M.A. thesis from the Faculty of the Arabic Language at the University of El-Menia in Egypt written by an Arab student, Ahmed El-Amir, under the title: *Šarḥ abyāt al-Mufaṣṣal li-aš-šarīf al-Ġurġānī. A study and Verification* from year 1998.

Several centuries later, *Al-Mufaṣṣal*’s role started to be appreciated by Arabists from Europe and other continents. In Europe, it was first printed in Arabic alphabet only in 1859 (and again in 1879) in Christiania (now Oslo), by J.P. Broch’s effort. With glosses and footnotes by Mawlawi Muḥammad Ya‘qūb Rāsbūrī it was also published in Delhi in 1891. In 1882, F.H.G. Jahn printed in Leipzig in two volumes the most famous *Al-Mufaṣṣal*’s commentary of Ibn Ya‘īš’s (d. 643/1245) – *Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*²⁵, based on the texts of the Arabic manuscripts from Leipzig, Oxford, Constantinople and Cairo.

Al-Mufaṣṣal was repeatedly the point of bibliographical reference for the famous British Orientalist W. Wright (1830–1889) in his English masterpiece *Grammar of the Arabic Language*. First published in 1859–1862, it is still considered the best English grammar edition of the classical Arabic language. In the preface to the second edition (1874), Wright mentions *Al-Mufaṣṣal* among three Old Arabic grammar writings on which he depended when reviewing the first edition of his *Grammar of the Arabic Language* (the other two are books of Ibn Mālik: *Al-alfiyya* and *Lāmiyat al-af‘āl*)²⁶.

An equally interesting innovative elaboration was put forward by a German Protestant theologian and Orientalist E. Trumpp (1828–1885). Between 1878 and 1884 he published in Munich *Beitrag zur Übersetzung und Erklärung des Mufassal*. According to my knowledge, this publication has never been renewed, and the few available copies can be found in library resources of e.g. Staatsbibliothek in Berlin and Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic studies at the University of Bergen.

A big contribution to the research on *Al-Mufaṣṣal* must also be attributed to the 20th-century Russian/Soviet Orientalists. Especially two of them came to the forefront of

²⁵ Earlier, in 1873 Jahn published in Halle a part of this commentary concerning the grammatical category of *ḥāl*: *Abul-Bakā ibn Ja‘īš Kommentar zu dem Abschnitt über das [حَال] aus Zamachsari’s Mufassal nach der Leipziger und Oxforder Handschrift* printed by Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses.

²⁶ W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language* 1874. It is worth adding here that Wright’s grammar is an English translation of the original German version of the Lutheran theologian and Orientalist of Jewish origin Karl Paul Caspari (1814–1892) who published his book in Latin in 1848 with the title: *Grammatica Arabica*, and later – in 1859 – in German. However Caspari’s versions of grammar have been consigned to oblivion.

these studies: B.Z. K h a l i d o v (1905–1968) and his son A.B. K h a l i d o v (1929–2001) who were primarily interested in A z - Z a m a ḥ š a r ī's life and writings. Their case studies contain valuable information on *Al-Mufaṣṣal* and its importance for the development of Arabic linguistics, but they cannot be treated in any way as philological monographies. Similar scientific works have been written contemporarily by two Russian Orientalists N.K. E f i e n d i y e v a (2001) and S.M. P r o z o r o v a (1999) who investigated one of the manuscripts related to A z - Z a m a ḥ š a r ī's life (currently in the collection of the Russian Academy of Science).

Another inspiring contribution to the studies on *Al-Mufaṣṣal* were lectures given in the 90's by W. D i e m at the University of Cologne. The linguistic seminar called *Das grammatische System von az-Zamakhshari*²⁷ was an introduction into the mysteries of the traditional description of Arabic grammar, based on the example of *Al-Mufaṣṣal*. As the German scholar explains, he has chosen A z - Z a m a ḥ š a r ī's book and not S ī b a w a y h ī's *Al-Kitāb* for the seminar because *Al-Mufaṣṣal* is (in contrast to *Al-Kitāb*) *a very orderly and concise work, which – because of its high intellectual level – poses at the same time particular difficulties for interpretation*. The seminar included inter alia a presentation of *Al-Mufaṣṣal*'s preface and the middle chapters, their commentary and explanation. The reference book for D i e m is the above mentioned commentary of I b n Y a ' ī š entitled *Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*.

The fact remains that *Al-Mufaṣṣal* as a valuable historical source of early Arabic grammatical studies has so far been used by European Orientalist in a very small extent. According to my knowledge, in Poland there have been no books or dissertations devoted to A z - Z a m a ḥ š a r ī and his *Al-Mufaṣṣal*, except the above mentioned doctoral thesis (2007). Scientific publications occasionally mention the great Persian scholar in the context of his contribution to the development of the descriptive theory of the Arabic grammar, but they are usually short notes., e.g. an article of J. D a n e c k i *The notion of taṣarruf in Arabic grammatical theory* published in “*Studia Arabistyczne i Islamistyczne*” 1, 1993 (Warsaw).

²⁷ www.uni-koeln.de.