# Introduction

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The present volume brings together a number of papers that were presented at the Third Conference on the Foundations of Arabic Linguistics, hosted by Georgine Ayoub in Paris at the Fondation Singer-Polignac, on October 23 and 24, 2014. The conference constituted a sequel to the first two conferences on the same topic that had been organized by Amal Marogy at the University of Cambridge in 2010 and 2012 (for the proceedings of the first two conferences see Marogy 2012a and Marogy and Versteegh 2015).[1]

The original aim of this series of conferences was to focus on the first major grammarian in the Arabic grammatical tradition, ʾAbū Bišr ʿAmr ibn ʿUṯmān Sībawayhi (d. 177/793?). The analysis of the Arabic language in his *Kitāb* remains the most frequently cited source within this tradition, and his linguistic legacy in the Arabic grammatical tradition is unparalleled. The topic of the conferences also included the reception of the *Kitāb* in modern scholarship, because, as Marogy (2012:x) formulates it, "the study of the *Kitāb* in the West over the last one hundred and twenty years (from de Sacy's *Anthologie grammaticale arabe* of 1829) has been a continuous application of prevailing Western linguistic theories as they successively emerge, with no end in sight".

The original aim of concentrating on Sībawayhi was indeed realized in the sense that out of a total of thirty-four papers published in the proceedings of the three conferences, twenty-seven dealt with the early period of Arabic grammar, in particular with the theories contained in the *Kitāb Sībawayhi*, whereas the remaining seven were concerned with its impact in the later tradition. Sībawayhi's figure continues to loom large in this field, not only in the

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1   In the present volume, we have followed more or less the same editorial guidelines as in the previous volumes. The transcription of Arabic follows the system of the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006–2009), with one major difference, *ḥ* instead of *x*. Initial *hamza* is transcribed when it is morphological, but not when it is merely phonetic (thus: *wa-ktub* 'and write!', but *wa-ʾaktib* 'and make write!'). Declensional and inflectional endings are represented fully in Qurʾānic and poetic quotations and in grammatical examples; in other quotations and book titles we have opted mostly for a simplified system, in which pausal rather than contextual forms are used. Yet, in some papers, we have allowed authors to use full representation throughout.

historical period, when to some extent all grammarians followed his footsteps and considered themselves to be his successors, at least since the times of al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), but also among modern scholars working in the field of the history of linguistics.

This is not to say that the study of the Arabic grammatical tradition has remained the same. As a matter of fact, one of the fascinating developments is precisely that there are so many new discoveries in the field, ranging from the discovery of new texts to the study of 'forgotten' grammarians. What is more, this field continues to attract young scholars who are putting their mark by bringing in entirely new insights. Looking at this development from the point of view of a historian of linguistics, one cannot help but notice that the field went through a revival at the end of the 1970s and through the 1980s, with the publication of such works as Michael Carter's *Arab linguistics* (1981), Georges Bohas and Jean-Patrick Guillaume's *Etudes des théories des grammairiens arabes* (1984) and Jonathan Owens' (1988) study of the theoretical foundations of Arabic grammatical theory. The 1980s also saw the establishment of the field in the form of workshops that were organized, among other places, in Nijmegen, Haifa, Budapest, Bucharest, and Paris.

This revival was also manifest in the role Arabic grammar began to play in the general field of the history of linguistics, for instance in the new journal *Historiographia linguistica* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins), and in the international conferences on the history of linguistics, organized by Konrad Koerner (the first one of which took place in Ottawa in 1978). Large scholarly enterprises, such as the *Histoire des idées linguistiques*, edited by Sylvain Auroux et al. (Liège: Mardaga, 1989–1992) and the *Handbuch für die Geschichte der Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft*, edited by Sylvain Auroux, Konrad Koerner, Hans-Josef Niederehe and Kees Versteegh (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000–2006), paid due attention to Arabic grammar within the growing field of the history of linguistics. These projects also marked a new development in the cooperation between scholars working at Western universities and those working at universities in the Arab world, which has grown slowly but steadily, in spite of political and cultural differences. In the field of the history of the Arabic grammatical tradition, this cooperation was imperative, if only for the immense work done by scholars working at Arab universities in editing and publishing new manuscripts. At the beginning of the 1980s, many works that were either unknown or existed only in manuscript form were edited, such as Ibn al-Sarrāj's (d. 316/928) *Kitāb al-ʾuṣūl* by ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Fatlī in 1985, and the edition of al-Sīrāfī's (d. 368/978) commentary on the *Kitāb* by Ramaḍān ʿAbd al-Tawwāb and Maḥmūd Fahmī Ḥigāzī, which started in 1986, to mention only two of them.