SĪBAWAYHI’S VIEW OF THE ŽARF AS AN ‘ĀMIL

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1. Introduction

1.1 The meaning of the term žarf

In Sībawayhi’s terminology the term žarf (plural žurūf), designates an expression denoting place or time. The žarf is an accusative as in al-lay-lata ‘to-night,’1 or a combination of an accusative + genitive as in ma’a-hu ‘with him,’2 xalfa-ka ‘behind you’3 and yawma l-jum’ati ‘Friday,’4 or a combination of a ḥarf jarr + genitive, as in fī-hā ‘in it.’5

1.2 The syntactic status of the žarf

In given syntactic constructions the žarf is an indispensable part of the sentence, while in others it is a dispensable part.

When the žarf is an indispensable part it occurs as a predicate in some types of the nominal sentence, as in the examples ‘abdu llāhi fīhā (Sīb. I:222, 18) and fīhā ‘abdu llāhi (Sīb. I:222, 17) “‘Abdallah is in it”6 and ‘abdu llāhi fīhā qā’iman “‘Abdallah is standing in it” (Sīb. I:222, 15). A žarf also occurs as the indispensable predicate in sentences beginning with ‘inna and the kind of kāna the later grammarians called kāna an-nāqīsa, as in the examples ‘inna fīhā zaydan and ‘inna zaydan fīhā “verily Zayd is in it” (Sīb. I:222, 20); ‘inna zaydan lafīhā qā’iman “verily Zayd is standing in it.” (Sīb. I:242, 12); mā kāna fīhā ‘aḥadun xayrun minka “nobody better than you was in it” (Sīb. I:21, 7) and mā kāna

2 The form ma’a is conceived of by Sībawayhi and the other grammarians as a noun taking the accusative (see Sīb. I:177, 14–15). When following the particle min ma’ takes the genitive, as in the example min ma’ihi—‘from him’ (ibid.).
‘ahadun mitluka fihā “nobody like you was in it” (ibid.). When the zarf is the indispensable predicate of the sentence it is called mustaqarr,7 lit., ‘a place where someone is.’ As a grammatical term mustaqarr designates ‘an indispensable predicate of the nominal sentence, denoting the place where the subject is.’ The term mustaqarr is sometimes restricted by an expression denoting its grammatical quality as an indispensable part of the sentence, as in mustaqarran taktafi bihi ‘a predicate denoting the place where the subject is, with which you content yourself [when intending to express a complete sentence]’ (Sib I:21, 11), and mustaqqarran lizaydin yastaqnī bihi s-sukūtu ‘a predicate denoting the place where Zayd is [occurring in the sentences ‘inna fihā zaydun and ‘inna zaydan fihā], with which a complete sentence can be satisfied as its complement.’9 (Sib. I:222, 20–21).

When the zarf is not an indispensable part of the sentence it is called ġayr mustaqarr ‘not a mustaqarr.’10 It is said that the zarf in this case is mulgan or ḥāl ‘a dispensable zarf which does not operate as an ‘āmil’ (see below § 4).

The form mustaqarr sometimes occurs in combinations referring to a dispensable part of the sentence. These combinations include restrictive expressions indicating that the whole combination refers to a dispensable part: in referring to the example fihā ‘abdu llāhi qā’imun ‘Abdal- lahah is standing in it’ (Sib. I:223, 2), where fihā is a dispensable part of the sentence, Sibawayhi says that fihā here is a mustaqarr lil-qiyām ‘an expression denoting the place where the act of standing [expressed in the predicate qā’imun] takes place.’11 Similarly, in referring to the examples fiha ‘abdu llahi qa’iman and ‘abdu llahi fiha qa’iman “Abdallahah is standing in it” (Sib. I:222,15), Sibawayhi says that qa’iman is a ḥālun mustaqarrun fihā ‘[an expression denoting] a ḥāl (= a state) where [the subject ‘abdu llahi] is.’ Note that the above combination refers to a part of the sentence that is a ḥāl and not a zarf.

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7 See Sib, I:21, 7–17; 222, 14–22.
8 This definition is inferred from Sib. I:222, 14–22; See also Sib. I:21, 4–11; as-Sīrāfī III, 11, 9–14; as-Sīrāfī according to Jahn, 1895, I/2, 73, note 16.
9 Lit. “with which silence can be satisfied [after expressing a complete sentence].”