

## Sounds (*aṣwāt*) in the multi-thematic lexicon *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*

by Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838)

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This article is part of a broader research on sounds (*aṣwāt*, sing. *ṣawt*) as they were systematised in the context of early Arabic lexicography. It takes as a case study the multi-thematic lexicon *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* by Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838) and more specifically the three chapters respectively devoted to voices, tones of voices of people’s speech and their modulation, and languages and words included within the opening book regarding the lexicon on human anatomy.

**Keywords:** Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām, *aṣwāt*, *ṣawt*, sounds, early Arabic lexicography, Arabic soundscape, *ġarīb*.

### 1. Introduction

For centuries and across cultures, reflections on sounds have sought to capture their multiple dimensions: human and animal, environmental and mechanical, physical and communicative, emotional and expressive. Like colours, sounds have been identified, classified, described, reproduced by using a complex lexical palette that, echoing countless sonorous refractions, returns us the variegated soundscapes from the past and present of humanity.<sup>1</sup> Depending on the channel or instrument of their emission, the sounds described can be of various types: human voices, animal calls, cries, musical sounds, sounds emitted by objects, and sounds produced by natural or meteorological phenomena. Each of these types of sound has specific and intrinsic characteristics—related to frequency, amplitude, wave form, duration, or, in musical terms, pitch, dynamic, timbre (tone color),

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<sup>1</sup> This article is dedicated to Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti, a mentor and a great scholar, who I think either directly or indirectly has reflected his entire life on sounds and their modulations in the different languages he has learnt, spoken and taught, not to mention those he has studied for his research. I would like to add that the particular voice of Fabrizio Angelo Pennacchietti was an unforgettable travel companion in my early years of study in Turin. I will always be grateful to him for his unmatched talent to inspire curiosity and enthusiasm from any topic within or around Semitic studies by making any kind of sound a possible focus to grab our attention.

and duration—that make it both unique and discernible. Against this background, through the languages used to communicate, past and present cultures tried to describe any sound (not just the human voice) as an integral part of the existing world by using a wide range of expressions that actually are inclined to recreate a specific soundscape as faithful as possible to the oral/aural reality the human beings experienced and certainly also responsive to their own cultural needs.

Like other cultures have done, the Arab culture also showed an interest in sounds (*aṣwāt*, sing. *ṣawt*) from its very beginning. Various written sources from different genres—poetry, Qur’ān, lexicography, grammar—provide the bulk of information that we have available for framing the understanding of such interest in the earliest stages of its history. From the mid-second/eighth century onwards, further reflections on sounds, human voices, animal cries also appear in *adab*, philosophical, and medical works, thereby expanding the number and types of the written sources available on the subject and broadening the scope of the reflections on the sound dimension.

Regardless of the genre, all the sources from the first centuries of Arabic textual culture have in common the need to describe sounds as they were perceived and through the Arabic language, and thus they prompt a strong interest in issues related to lexicography, terminology and taxonomy. In order to understand such descriptive attempts of reconstructing the panoply of the Arabic vocabulary on sounds, which ultimately had to return some kind of aural/acoustic reality, albeit in writing, we have no other means than by resorting to the written evidence of these Arabic sources. And, undoubtedly, “writing can only record linguistic sound,” as noted by Butler and Nooter in a reference work on sounds in the ancient world (2018: 6).<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The author and his book: *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* by Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām

This article assesses *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* by Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838). It explores how and according to which criteria the author of the first multi-thematic Arabic lexicon systematised the knowledge about sounds. The choice of focusing on this work is based on two considerations.

The first consideration relates to the context in which this work was conceived. Actually, *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* is not the first lexicographical treatise concerned with sounds. In the first half of the second/eighth century, the most renowned philologists and grammarians Quṭrub (d. 206/821), al-

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<sup>2</sup> The reference essay on sounds in the ancient world was edited by Butler and Nooter (2018). Many reflections in my research on sounds and voices profit from the enlightening insights of Agamben (2023), Albano Leoni (2022), Bettini (2018), Bologna (1981 and 2022), Cavarero (2003), and De Luca (2020). Although I do not take a philosophical or anthropological approach to the subject, I have greatly benefited from all these essays.

Aṣma‘ī (d. 216/831), Ibn al-Sikkīt (d. 244/858) compiled a few *Kitāb al-Aṣwāt* (Books on Sounds).<sup>3</sup> These works contained information about sounds produced by humans and animals. However, while none of these monographic treatises have survived in independent form, the information that was supposedly collected in them was actually scattered in the form of small fragments (*i.e.* short textual strings of lexical information) within coeval and later multi-thematic works, including the one written by Abū ‘Ubayd, which has been object of the research for this article.

Abū ‘Ubayd wrote *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaḥ* at a time when philologists from the various Iraqi schools were still compiling short treatises on specific topics by as a result of their researches among the more purely Arabic-speaking Arab tribes or based on the studies undertaken under teachers who had formerly carried out such fieldwork. When compiling his multi-thematic lexicon, he tried to systematise—and thus preserve—a vast body of technical and material knowledge largely gathered by his predecessors that would otherwise have been lost by re-functionalising such knowledge in a new yet lexicographical format.<sup>4</sup>

The second consideration concerns the specificity of this work in the early Arabic literature. Undoubtedly, lexicography was not the only genre concerned with sounds. Arabic poetry, the Qur’an and *adab* works provide interesting insights into the oral/aural dimension of the early Arabs (Bellino 2022: 40-41). However, there can be no doubt that mono- and multi-thematic lexicons represented the (lexical) skeleton based on which other genres of works have provided further information and reflections.

For these reasons, *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaḥ* provides an insight into how the early generations of scholars from various Arabic/ian backgrounds investigated the oral/aural dimension of their surrounding soundscape, while struggling with every linguistic means at their disposal in order to be able to identify, describe, distinguish all possible sounds that could echo any differences between

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<sup>3</sup> This research originated from an article (Bellino 2022) that examines direct and indirect evidence of the transmission of mono-thematic works entitled *Kitāb al-Aṣwāt* (Books on Sounds) and frames the transmission of such knowledge within the wider framework of the Arabic lexicographical tradition between the late first/seventh and early fourth/tenth century. For a wider discussion on these works within the history of Arabic lexicography, see Sellheim (1954), Haywood (1960) and Baalbaki (2014).

<sup>4</sup> Agius (1984) was the inspiring light for reading Arabic literary works as a source of documentation for technical terms of the material culture. Among other things, he dealt with a number of multi-thematic lexicographical sources that also form the focus of my research (Agius 1984: 60-62).

voices, tones, cries, calls, noises found in it.<sup>5</sup> Investigating this way of mapping the sound-related terminology is therefore the essential starting point for understanding more broadly how the early Arabs conceived “sound.”

Of many sections of this work, I will focus on the one devoted to human beings in relation to whom ‘Abū Ubayd offers an extensive description of sounds that characterise their different voices, ways of speaking, languages. The joint analysis of the organisation of the whole work and the content of some specific chapters highlights that the soundscape that emerges from *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* is a kaleidoscope that has several sound dimensions, each of which refers back to a different domain of specialised terminology provided by Abū ‘Ubayd. The following analysis aims to grasp the work’s general sense, highlight where the sounds are located relative to each domain covered in this kaleidoscopic work, and delve into one in particular.

### 2.1. Outline of the contents and history of the text

The philologist, grammarian, Qur’anic scholar, and law expert Abū ‘Ubayd was born in Harāt, in the Yazd province of Iran. He studied philology both in Basra and Kufa. Then he continued his studies on Qur’an and Islamic law under al-Šāfi‘ī (d. 204/820). Later he moved between Baghdad, Khorasan, where he tutored (*mu‘addib*) for the family of the governor Harṭama b. A‘yan (d. 200/816) and then for the son of Tābit b. Naṣr b. Mālīk, and finally Ṭarsūs in the Byzantine frontier where he stayed as a *qāḍī* for eighteen years. After returning to Baghdad, he spent the rest of his life writing thanks to the support of his admirer ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir (d. 230/845). Here, he composed his major works *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* and *Ġarīb al-Ḥadīṯ*, which became reference works in the field of the Arabic lexicography and the Islamic prophetic tradition, respectively. The latter was even written for and read to the Caliph al-Ma‘mūn (Gottschalk 1986: 157; Weipert 2008).

Abū ‘Ubayd’s *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* is the oldest Arabic multi-thematic lexicon (‘Abd al-Tawwāb 1962; Baalbaki 2014: 268-270). The title refers to the composition (*muṣannaf*) on the subject of the strange kind of words (*ġarīb*).<sup>6</sup> Many later biographical-bibliographical works cite this title among the writings of Abū ‘Ubayd, although some scholars record the variants *Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* and *al-Ġarīb al-*

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<sup>5</sup> When providing lists of words of animal calls and human voices, Bettini (2018: 31-45) emphasises the role of the so-called “poetic archives” created by authors from the classical and pre-modern periods. In his view, these lists can be considered as veritable sound encyclopaedias.

<sup>6</sup> According to Baalbaki (2014: 267) “the term *muṣannaf* was also used in the titles of multithematic books to indicate that they comprise various topics.”

*Mu'allaf* ('Abd al-Tawwāb 1989, vol. 1: 49).<sup>7</sup> Through the collation of manuscripts, Şafwān 'Adnān Dāwūdī outlined the line of transmission (*riwāya*) of the text through the generations of scholars who followed the author, thus identifying three different textual transmission lines (*ṭarīqa*) (2005, vol. 1: 63-66). In addition to numerous manuscripts, there are also a few printed editions of this work.<sup>8</sup>

Over the centuries, other authors have written various supplements, commentaries, improvements to *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*. These include the following:

- Additions to *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* (*Ziyādāt al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*) by Shamir b. Ḥamdawiyah (d. 255/869) and by Abū al-Faḍl al-Mundharī (d. 329/940);
- Admonitions about the errors contained in *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* (*al-Tanbīh 'alā mā fī al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf min al-Aḡlāt*);
- Explanation of verses of *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* (*Šarḥ abyāt al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*) by Yūsuf b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd Allāh al-Sīrāfī (d. 385/995);
- Defectiveness of *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* (*'Ilal al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*) by Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1004);
- Etymology of words in the first [part] of *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* (*Ištiqāq kalimāt fī awwal al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*) by Abū al-Qāsim al-Zaḡḡāḡī (d. 337/949);
- Abridgment of *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* (*Iḥtiṣār al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*) by Abū al-Qāsim (d. 418/1027);
- Reply to *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* (*al-Radd 'alā al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*) by Abī Na'im al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038);
- Commentary to *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* (*Šarḥ al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*) by Ibn Sīdah (d. 458/1066) and by Abū al-'Abbās al-Mursī (d. 460/1067).

Taken together, all these works attest to the wide use of *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* in the lexicographical tradition and beyond along with the need for its constant updating ('Abd al-Tawwāb 1989, vol. 1: 50-51). A great Andalusian lexicographer epitomises the latter trend. When compiling *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ* ('The Specified Book'), in the mid-fourth/tenth century, Ibn Sīdah surveyed other fields left unexplored to

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<sup>7</sup> Depending on the sources, between twenty and forty works are attributed to Abū 'Ubayd. Only a dozen have been published (Brockelmann 1898: 106-107; 1937: 166-167; Sezgin 1982: 81-87).

<sup>8</sup> In this article, I use as a reference edition the one edited by Ramaḍān 'Abd al-Tawwāb (1989) and, when necessary, I compare this version of the text with that published in Riyāḍ (1997) and that edited by Şafwān 'Adnān Dāwūdī (2005). For the various manuscript versions, see 'Abd al-Tawwāb (1989, vol. 1: 215-258) and Dāwūdī (2005, vol. 1: 46-49).

broaden the lexicon of his predecessor, whom he greatly admired, as evidenced by the fact that he is said to have known Abū ‘Ubayd’s work by heart and even wrote a commentary on it.<sup>9</sup>

Being a multi-thematic lexicon, *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* is divided in twenty-five “books” (*kitāb*), each dedicated to a specific field.<sup>10</sup> As can be seen from the list that follows, the books and thus the topics covered are of two types. The first type contains the classified vocabulary of specific technical fields of knowledge related to the natural world and society. These may concern the human sphere (human anatomy, women, diseases) along with its material culture (clothes, foods, weapons, utensils), the natural world including animals (horses, birds, insects, camels, sheep, wild animals, predatory animals) and plants (trees, plants, palms), the natural environment (mountains, waters, canals), the meteorological phenomena (clouds, rains, times, winds). The second type deals with purely philological or linguistical knowledge, for example, synonymous and contrary, patterns of names and verbs, different names denoting the same thing, etc. A final book contains miscellaneous information, which, according to the author, evidently did not fit into either.

In detail, the books are given in the following order:

- 1) human anatomy (*ḥalq al-insān*);
- 2) women (*al-nisāʾ*);
- 3) clothes (*al-libās*);
- 4) foods (*al-aṭʿima*);
- 5) diseases (*al-amrād*);
- 6) houses and lands (*al-dūr wa-l-arḍin*);
- 7) horses (*al-ḥayl*);
- 8) weapons (*al-silāḥ*);
- 9) birds and insects (*al-ṭuyūr wa-l-huwwām*);
- 10) utensils and pots (*al-awānī wa-l-qudūr*);
- 11) mountains (*al-ǧibāl*);
- 12) trees and plants (*al-šāḡar wa-l-nabāt*);
- 13) waters and canals (*al-miyāh wa-l-qanā*);
- 14) palms (*al-naḥl*);
- 15) clouds and rains (*al-siḥāb wa-l-amṭār*);

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<sup>9</sup> For a comparison between *mubawwab* and *muḡannas* works with regard to the circulation of lexicographical materials relating to plant and animal knowledges, see Grande (2016: 110).

<sup>10</sup> ‘Abd al-Tawwāb (1989, vol. 1: 129-130) lists twenty-five books to the exclusion of the one on *ḥamr* (wine).

- 16) times and winds (*al-azmina wa-l-riyāh*);
- 17) examples (patterns) of names (*amṭilat al-asmā'*);
- 18) examples (patterns) of verbs (*amṭilat al-asmā'*);
- 19) contronyms (*al-aḏḏād*);
- 20) different names denoting the same thing (*al-asmā' al-muḥtalifa li-l-šay' al-wāḥid*);
- 21) camels (*al-ibil*);
- 22) sheep (*al-ǧanam*);
- 23) wild animals (*al-wuḥūš*);
- 24) predatory animals (*al-sibā'*);
- 25) miscellaneous data (*al-aǧnās*).<sup>11</sup>

Regarding size, the calculation of data contained in the *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* differs depending on the base text versions considered. Gottschalk states that *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* books “consist of 1000 chapters, 1200 *shawāhid* and 17,990 words” (2008: 157). ‘Abd al-Tawwāb specified that the whole composition consists of 900 chapters (1989, vol. 1: 129-130), which feature evidence (*šawāhid*) from different sources including 666 verses of poetry (vol. 1: 133-140), 44 quotations from the Qur’ān (vol. 1: 141-142), 48 *ḥadīṭ* (vol. 1: 143-144), 10 sayings (*amṭāl*, vol. 1: 145-146).<sup>12</sup> In this work, Abū ‘Ubayd made approximately 60 references to dialectal terms in use among Arab tribes (*al-lahaǧāt*, vol. 1: 147-148) and to numerous Arabicized words (*al-mu‘arrab*, vol. 1: 149-150), thus providing relevant information also for the history of the Arabic language and its varieties. Baalbaki states that “the whole book, moreover, is characterized by brevity in explaining words and relative scarcity of *šawāhid* in comparison to the vast number of words it contains (a total of 17,970 according to al-Zubaydī)” (Baalbaki 2014: 270).

## 2.2. The sources and the method of inquiry of a lexicographer facing the world of words

When compiling his work, Abū ‘Ubayd relied on materials collected by numerous scholars. First, in Basra he studied under scholars such as al-Aṣma‘ī, Abū ‘Ubayda (d. c.210/825), Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī (d. 214 or 215/830–1), and then in Kufa under Abū ‘Amr al-Šaybānī (d. 206/821), al-Kisā‘ī (d. c.189/805), al-Farrā’ (d. 207/822), and Ibn al-A‘rābī (d. 231/846). Such names—along with those of ‘Alī b. al-Mubārak

<sup>11</sup> The content of this last book is miscellaneous, which is the reason for its title. It is quite substantial as it includes no less than 179 chapters, almost one fifth of the total chapters of the work (Baalbaki 2014: 269).

<sup>12</sup> The differences in the scope of these data can be explained by the fact that the various scholars have referred to different editions with discrepancies between them since they are based on different manuscript recensions.

al-Aḥmar (d. 194/810), Yaḥyā b. al-Mubārak al-Yazīdī (d. 202/818), ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa‘īd al-Umawī (d. ca. 203/819)—are cited among the sources he used to compile *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*.<sup>13</sup>

While the focus of Abū ‘Ubayd lies on the *ġarīb*, clearly not all words he collected in his work fall into this category and come from surveys held among Arabian tribes and Beduins. As far as sources are concerned, Baalbaki claims that:

Much of the material of *al-Ġarīb al-muṣannaf* is derived from the *A‘rāb*, or the Bedouin *fuṣaḥā’* who were usually consulted by early philologists, and who in some cases were authors in their own right. These include Abū l-Ġarrāḥ al-‘Uqaylī, Abū l-Ḥasan al-A‘rābī, Abū Ziyād al-Kilābī, Abū Šanbal al-A‘rābī, Abū ‘Alqama al-Ṭaqafī, Abū Faq‘as al-A‘rābī, Abū l-Qa‘qā’ al-Yaškuri, Abū l-Walīd al-Kilābī, and al-‘Adabbas al-Kinānī. Abū ‘Ubayd’s reliance on these *fuṣaḥā’* and his frequent citing of dialectal material (cf. the report that he spent forty years collecting data directly from the Arabs for inclusion in his book) are certainly related to the strength of the component of *ġarīb* in his book, as is also reflected in the inclusion of the term *ġarīb* in its title. This corroborates our view that some multithematic works can be classified with books on *ġarīb* as well (Baalbaki 2014: 269).

On the other hand, as a result of the research undertaken by ‘Abd al-Tawwāb (1989, vol. 1: 67–114), who compared several possible direct sources—namely mono-thematic treatises such as al-Ašma‘ī’s *Ḥalq al-insān*, *al-Ibil*, and *al-Ḥayl*—with the corresponding thematic chapters in this work, in most cases fewer than a fifth of al-Ašma‘ī’s words are included in the latter and, in several cases, with different definitions. According to Weipert (2008), this would suggest that Abū ‘Ubayd depended largely on the oral transmission that he received in the *mağālis*.

Caution should be exercised, however, in drawing conclusions, because of Abū ‘Ubayd’s way of treating his sources, not simply reproducing them but shortening or sometimes lengthening them and expressing their contents in his own words to serve his own purposes. Weipert (2008) claims that, by concentrating on the essentials of his sources and rendering their content in his own concise style, Abū ‘Ubayd created well-founded summaries of what had been achieved in previous generations, which became an authoritative source for subsequent scholarship for centuries to come.

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<sup>13</sup> The composition of this work should be viewed against the wider context of Abū ‘Ubayd’s training and career. In particular, see Gottschalk (1936; 1986); Weipert (2008); and above all the Introduction to the *Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* edited by ‘Abd al-Tawwāb (1989, vol. 1: 5–128).



### 3. The sounds in the *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*

In *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*, Abū ‘Ubayd provides a wealth of information on sounds, returning a rather broad and kaleidoscopic view of what the *aṣwāt* are. For instance, various books dedicated to particular animal species include chapters on their calls, always referred to as *aṣwāt*.<sup>14</sup> The book on horses (*Kitāb al-Ḥayl*) contains, for example, a chapter on the terminology concerning nitrites and sounds related to horses in the different phases of their life. The book on birds (*Kitāb al-Ṭayr*) encompasses a very short chapter on certain terms relating to the cries of some birds including the hen and the crow. The book on camels (*Kitāb al-Ibil*) contains two chapters on the sounds uttered by this animal, one of which differentiates the cries of the camel at various stages of its life, while the other focuses on its roaring and the (human) crying at camels (*al-zağr*) for inciting them.<sup>15</sup> The book on predatory animals (*Kitāb al-Sibā’*) also contains a chapter on cries humans use to chide, check or urge, these beasts (*al-zağr bi-l-sibā’*). The book on these species also includes a long chapter on the calls of the predatory animals along with those of the cattle or quadrupeds (*Kitāb al-Bahā’im*), such as the gazelle, the jerboa, and the donkey. Animal cries are also recorded in the chapters dedicated to other species—such as insects, sheep, beasts, animals of prey—as part of the description of their physical characteristics and traits of their nature.<sup>16</sup>

Other types of sounds are featured within the chapters of *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*, describing the material and natural worlds. For instance, sounds are an essential element in defining a variety of meteorological events and natural phenomena. Objects of everyday, working and material life like pots, millstones, house doors, produce characteristic sounds that can be either described as such or used by

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<sup>14</sup> Some sections of *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* recall the monographic treatises written on individual topics. Some of these, by the way, deal with sounds. According to Saba (2019: 55, 61–65), the works entitled *Kitāb Ḥalq al-insān* were closely related to those known under the title *Kitāb al-Farq*, which concerned the different terminology between the human and animal spheres. These books provided lexicons on 1) the divisions of the body, 2) the birth, pregnancy, and terms for offspring, 3) the voices and cries of humans, animals and birds, 4) the sounds of humans, animals and birds, 5) the groups of humans and animals, 6) the death of humans and animals. On the differences between human voices and animal cries of the chapters on the *aṣwāt* in the *Kitāb al-Farq* by Quṭrub and al-Aṣma’ī, see Bellino (2022: 47–54).

<sup>15</sup> This section can be considered part of the *waḍ’ al-luġa* (the conventional nature of language). Here, I cannot enter into the complex discussion, which involves as much as linguistic as philosophical and theological considerations, on the conventional nature of language in relation to terms referring to animals or human beings or to one another. On this see Weiss (2002, vol. XI: 7). I thank both Elias Saba and Jérôme Lentin for drawing my attention to this reflection.

<sup>16</sup> In the early history of the lexicographical tradition, the philologists collected a great deal of materials that have converged into thematic treaties. For each animal species there are in fact dedicated mono-thematic treatises, many of which have unfortunately been lost or preserved only through partial quotations in other coeval or later works. On monothematic treatises on wild animals generally entitled *Kitāb al-wuḥūš* (Book on Wild Animals), see Bellino (2019).

Abū ‘Ubayd as terms of comparison for the description of other types of sounds produced in different environments and under various circumstances.

Fragmentary elements of the soundscape of the time can be captured through all these chapters and the information they contain. In fact, it can be inferred that for Abū ‘Ubayd sounds are simply part of this earthly world and as such they must be classified, enumerated, depicted in word form. Their description—which is not exhaustive of all the possible sounds that exist but nevertheless offers a broad and articulate description of the soundscape(s) related to each environment of the material and natural cultures—moves on a spectrum of possibilities that include, on the one hand, the silence or the noise (never named in their absolute form but always relative certain ways of unmaking/producing sound), and on the other, the multiple forms of sound articulation from animal cry to human voice.

#### 4. A human being (made of words) as featured in the *al-Ġarīb al-muṣannaf*

The first sounds that Abū ‘Ubayd describes are those uttered by the human beings. The opening book of the human body (*Kitāb Ḥalq al-insān*) focuses on anatomy but also includes materials about some other physical and behavioural aspects. In particular, this book consists of an opening chapter devoted to the naming of

- 1) the various parts of the human body, followed by a series of chapters on epithets and names related to
- 2) the human body (*ḥalq al-insān*), namely, tears of the eyes, their bottom and weaknesses (*dam‘ al-‘ayn wa-ġawrihā wa-ḍu‘fihā*), names of breaths (*asmā’ al-nafas*), epithets on people’s tallness (*al-tiwāl*) or shortness (*al-qīṣār*), colours (*al-alwān*), voices (*al-aṣwāt*), ways of speaking (*aṣwāt kalām al-nās*), languages and speech (*al-alsina wa-l-kalām*);
- 3) praised and blamed traits of people’s character (*al-aḥlāq*), such as avarice (*al-buḥl*), strength of vigour and constitution (*šiddat al-quwwa wa-l-ḥalq*), courage and bravery (*al-šugā’a wa-šiddat al-ba’s*), brightness of spirit and its sharpness (*ḍakā’ al-qalb wa-ḥiddatihi*), cowardice and weakness of spirit (*al-ġubn wa-ḍa’f al-qalb*), weakness of intelligence and dumb opinion (*ḍa’f al-‘aql wa-al-ra’y al-aḥmaq*); weakness of constitution (*al-ḍa’if al-badan*), dementia (*al-ġunūn*), voracity and bulimia (*al-šarah wa-duḥūl al-insān fimā lā ya’niyihi*), bad haste for everything that is not appropriate (*al-šarīr al-masāri’ ilā mā lā yanbaġī*), the vile vulgar of bastard men (*al-ḥasīs al-ḥaqīr min al-riġāl al-da’iyy*); leftovers (of meals) of people and riffraff (*ḥuṣār al-nās wa-siflatihā*), the most skilful men (*al-dādī min al-riġāl*);
- 4) ways of walking (*mašy al-nās*), in particular of men who walk fast or slow;

- 5) epithets on beauty and ugliness (*al-ğamāl wa-l-qubḥ*); division of nourishment among people (*qismat al-rizq bayna al-nās*); men able to do things skilfully and poorly to be sold (*al-rağul al-ḥādhiq bi-l-shay' wa-l-radī' al-bay'*);
- 6) groups of people (*al-ğamā'āt min al-nās*); various differences between people and what can happen to you (*al-firaq al-muḥtalifa min al-nās wa-man yaṭra'u 'alayk*); exuberance of people and common people (*ğumār al-nās wa-dahmā'ihim*); groups of the people of the household (of the Prophet) and its tribes (*ğamā'at ahl al-bayt wa-qabilatihi*); groups of people coming from another place, imposing themselves on others and chiefs of people; peoples who do not answer to the sovereign against their might and leading personalities of the sovereignty (*al-qawm lā yuğībūna al-sultān min 'izzihim wa-ḥāṣṣati al-mulk*); peoples aggregating on the individual (*al-qawm yağtamī'ūna 'alā al-rağul*);
- 7) young people (*al-šabāb*); years and growth in age; advancing in age and senility (*al-haram*); children's proper nourishment (*al-walad wa-l-ğidā*); poor child nourishment (*al-ğidā' al-sayyi' li-l-walad*); children's teeth (*asnān al-awlād*); names of a man's first son and last one; names of a man's first son from youth to old age; names of what comes out with the baby (*asmā' mā yaḥruḡu ma'a al-walad*);
- 8) lineage (*al-nasab*); lineage by mothers, fathers and others; lineage by slaves (*al-mamālīk*); names of the relationship on the female side (*al-qarāba*) in the lineage and of an adopted son (*al-ad'iyā*); [name of] relation (*al-nisba*); adoption of a half-son by his father and genuineness of the lineage (*naz' šabah al-walad ilā abihi wa-l-ṣiḥḥa fi al-nasab*).

As can be seen in this first book, the interest of Abū 'Ubayd in sounds is embedded within the more general concern for the human beings and the corporeality of their body. This first book hints at the sphere of the senses or, at least, the sensory organs. Indeed, the chapters on the voices are concerned with the sphere of sound hearing, although Abū 'Ubayd does not systematically deal with issues of sound perception or hearing as one of the five senses, rather offering a theory of the senses that in fact is not yet covered in this kind of source.<sup>17</sup>

Further, the book contains names and epithets of character traits (*aḥlāq*) that range from positive to negative and involve both the unique personality of each individual and how others perceive one. Beauty and ugliness are covered in a separate chapter. It may be significant to note that, as in the case

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<sup>17</sup> The scope of the studies on the senses at the beginning of the history of Islam also helps us to better frame the study on sounds and on hearing. Important reflections for a historicisation of sound-related materials were made by Fahmy (2013) and Lange (2021, 2022).

of certain animals, a distinguishing characteristic of humans is how they walk, to which Abū ‘Ubayd devotes a few chapters.

In the final part of the book, Abū ‘Ubayd moves on to the nomenclature of human beings in connection to their role and function in society. He lists the rich and complex terminology related to the different types of groups, various ages, and lineage. This section portrays human beings both in a reciprocal relationship and in relation to the flow of time.

## 5. The kaleidoscopic perception of sounds: voices, ways of speaking, and languages according to Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām

If, as Butler and Nooter (2019: 4) put it, “humans have their own panoply of vocabulary for voices,” Abū ‘Ubayd provides an array of terms to define many of them.

As outlined above, Abū ‘Ubayd distinguishes various categories of sounds in connection with the human sphere he lists in three different chapters: sounds regarding the voices and the different ways they are uttered (*bāb al-aṣwāt wa-iḥtilāfihā*), sounds regarding the ways people speak (*bāb aṣwāt kalām al-nās wa-ḥarratihim wa-ġayr dālīka*), sounds regarding languages and speech (*bāb al-alsina wa-l-kalām*).<sup>18</sup> As a whole, these three chapters offer a rather articulate palette of human-related sound capabilities in which voice (*ṣawt*) is seen as a way of articulating sounds, spoken word or speech (*kalām*) as a way of uttering or expressing things in words, and language (*lisān*) as a way of articulating meanings of words are the three main focuses of interest for Abū ‘Ubayd.<sup>19</sup>

Within the framework of these three different categories, *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* provides a well-structured taxonomy that consists of nouns and adjectives (*asmā’* and *nu‘ūt*) and, in some cases, verbs. In each chapter, Abū ‘Ubayd displays the spectrum of variables found in uttering sounds, pronouncing words, articulating Arabic language by selecting both common and rare terms from various lexicographical sources at his disposal and putting all of the terms in the form of *word lists*.

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<sup>18</sup> Various scholars emphasise the relevance of this tripartition. See Bologna (2022: 36-40).

<sup>19</sup> This subdivision shows the greater breadth of the scope of the voice than of the word and thus seems to reserve an autonomous sphere of reflection for vocality in all its expressions. Drawing on major studies like those of Paul Zumthor, Cavarero (2003: 19) insists on the wider scope of the voice than that of the *logos*.

### 5.1. Sound categories and acoustic labels

In *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*, Abū ‘Ubayd does not seem to propose subjective categories to classify the various types of sounds. Each chapter collects lists of words, in turn divided into clusters, containing a variable number of terms, introduced by the name of the philologist who acts for their source like in a *ḥadīṭ*.

In order to describe the sounds, Abū ‘Ubayd associates broad definitions such as “loud” or “soft” sound that can be applied to a variety of rare terms with further possible variations of properties that seem objective and measurable, such as pitch, intensity, force, and repetitiveness. The more general definitions would trace back to a few broad “sound categories,”<sup>20</sup> whereas a set of more specific “acoustic labels” can be identified within them.<sup>21</sup> The information on a specific type of sound—regardless of whether it belongs to the sphere of voice, speech, or language—is thus given by the association between a term and an acoustic label that places such term in a specific range of the sound spectrum within a broader sound category.

The beginning of the chapter on voices and their differences provides an example of the text:

al-Aṣma’ī: [it is said of]<sup>22</sup> a man *nabbāḥ* is loud of voice and *nabbāḡ* [also with *ǧīm*] is vehement in voice. And *al-faddād* is similar, the name comes from *al-fadīd* (the vehement utterance). And *al-wa’d* and *al-wa’īd* are all the loud sound. And *al-nahīm* is similar, and also

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<sup>20</sup> The use of the term “category” draws inspiration from the dialectological study carried out by Breteau and Roth on the dialectal sound system of a Tunisian region (1988-1989; 1990; 1996). Through the analysis of the *Textes arabes de Takroûna* collected by W. Marçais and A. Guiga (1925) and the *Glossaire* (1958-1961) that follows, Breteau and Roth identified a series of “acoustic categories” with relatively objective parameters forming the oral/aural system—namely the soundscape—of the village of Takroûna (Tunisia), the tribes of the Marazig and the Zaer. In particular, Breteau and Roth (1990: 19, 43-47) illustrated that the categories deal, respectively, with four sequences of the process of sound emission, namely 1) overture, 2) expression of immediate sound, 3) expression of sound diffusion, 4) sound stop and repercussion. To these categories they added the “variables” of pitch, intensity, duration, and volume, which led them to define the different types of sound as continuous-indistinct, continuous-acute, continuous-crescendo, continuous-decrescendo, vibrating, vibrating-resonant, resonant, serial, punctual-serial, and irruptive.

<sup>21</sup> When classifying voices, Albano Leoni (2022: 32-34) emphasises the importance of using “acoustic labels” (in Italian “etichette sonore”). Actually, he proposes a distinction between a classification of voices in which “somewhat generic labels are applied, assigned on the basis of a general impression and pertaining to current usage: examples include *low, grave, deep, sombre, acute, silvery, shrill* voices, more or less traceable to variations in pitch...,” and a classification in which the acoustic labels are more precise as they refer to objective properties in use in specific professional fields or assigned on the basis of the presence/absence of dominant characteristics. They may be further supplemented by individual and/or social articulatory habits and/or occasional variations in the use of the voice.

<sup>22</sup> Only added in the text edited by Dāwūdī (2005, vol. 1: 102).

*al-za’ma*. And *al-waġr* is the voice. And *al-ṣarīr* and *al-ṣarṣara* are amongst the voice but not [uttered] with force.

(Abū ‘Ubayd, *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*, ed. ‘Abd al-Tawwāb, 1989, vol. 1: 305).

This opening part of the chapter features terms attributed to al-Aṣma‘ī who collected words referring to the category of someone having loud voice (*ṣadīd*). The first ones listed—*nabbāḥ* and *nabbāġ* (*i.e.*, both meaning one having a vehement voice), *faddād* (one having a strong voice), *al-wa’d* and *al-wa’id* (loud sound or noise)—are all accompanied by definitions, *i.e.* labels (*loud of voice, vehement in voice, loud sound*), which enable Abū ‘Ubayd to place each of them in the section of the spectrum referred to sounds uttered loudly (*ṣadīd al-ṣawt* or *al-ṣawt al-ṣadīd*) or even vehemently (*al-fadīd*).

The aforementioned part of the chapter contain not only synonyms related to the human sphere but also terms that extend the perception of uttering a loud or vehement sound in other directions: towards the animal sphere, *e.g.* with the term *al-nahīm*, which means an heavy sound coming from the chiding of camels; in an attitude of anger and aggressiveness, *e.g.* with the terms *al-za’ma*, which means a vehement shout; and *al-waġr*, which denotes a voice uttered out of rage.

Subsequent sections of the chapter contain information attributed to other transmitters and add other terms both relating to this segment of the spectrum or possibly shifting the focus towards other targets, in which, for example, the voice is uttered without force (*al-ṣawt laysa bi-l-ṣadīd*) or with a different frequency by emphasising, for example, its repetitiveness.

If we compare them, the three chapters on sounds are arranged with categories following the same pattern, *i.e.* ranging from more to less, from the loudest to the softest (sound), from the most intense to the softest (way of speaking), from the most comprehensible and eloquent to the most illogical and disordered (organisation of language). With due differences or similarities between sounds and colours, term after term the palette grows full of nuances and slowly changes colour. Hence, only the entire reading of the chapter offers a complete overview of the terminology relating to the various types of sounds.

## 5.2. Varieties and types of terms used for describing sounds<sup>23</sup>

In each chapter, Abū ‘Ubayd lists terms consisting of names, adjectives and verbs more rarely. In particular, the distinction between nouns (*asmā’*, sing. *ism*) and adjectives (*nu’ūt*, sing. *na’t*) is crucial in

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<sup>23</sup> An analysis of the forms and patterns of the terms in the various lists is beyond the scope of this article. For this purpose, the huge analysis on the terminology related to colours made by Fischer (1965) could certainly be useful.

this genre of work. The first category may include both substantives and adjectives that denote a person or a thing, whereas the second is a more complex category that encompasses adjectives or attributive locutions added to a noun to qualify it.<sup>24</sup>

How did Abū ‘Ubayd select, include, and interrelate the rare terms in the list? The aforementioned list of terms on loud sounds attributed to al-Aṣma‘ī includes two terms that fall into another category of voices not uttered with force (*laysa bi-l-šadīd*): *al-ṣarīr* designates a prolonged sound and *al-ṣarṣara* means a creak. The criterion by which Abū ‘Ubayd or al-Aṣma‘ī proposes this binomial seems to be prompted by the need to discriminate a pair of synonyms—at least those terms that fall into the same category and also have the same label—that nonetheless differ both in terms of phonic nature (because they indicate different types of sounds) and in terms of phonetic nature (because they derive from different roots but contain the same consonants: ṣ-r-r and ṣ-r-ṣ-r).

In the chapter on the ways people speak, Abū ‘Ubayd gives more information related to the form of the rare noun or adjective he quotes by mentioning again a set of connected terms derived from roots that share consonants and thus may be assonant:

*al-unūḥ* is a sound accompanied by a reiterated hemming<sup>25</sup> in the throat (*ṣawt ma‘a tanaḥnuḥ*). From this it is said a man *anūḥ*, with the vowel *fatḥa* on the first letter *alif*, when he is asked for a thing and makes a reiterated hemming in his throat with a hoarseness [of the voice] (*idā kāna yatanaḥnaḥu ma‘a baḥaḥ*), then he breaths and breathed hard (*anaḥa ya’niḥu*) and thus *al-anūḥ* is the man who breaths hard by hemming in his throat (*ya’niḥu*). (Abū ‘Ubayd, *al-Ġarīb al-muṣannaḥ*, ed. ‘Abd al-Tawwāb 1989, vol. 1: 310).

In this section, Abū ‘Ubayd provides a primary definition of the noun *unūḥ* (the [sound of] breathing hard)<sup>26</sup> connecting its meaning to that of *tanaḥnuḥ* (reiterated hemming in the throat), thus linking the two roots ‘-n-ḥ and n-ḥ-ḥ. The former root (‘-n-ḥ) refers to someone who breaths hard, or violently, in the consequence of heaviness or oppression experienced by that person as an effect of disease or of being out of breath. In contrast, the latter (n-ḥ-ḥ) refers to someone who reiterates a sound, or makes a reiterated humming in his throat, like a slight coughing. Abū ‘Ubayd uses this second root in its

<sup>24</sup> For the two terms as defined by grammarians, see respectively Edzard (2009, vol. 4: 422-428) on noun (*ism*) and Versteegh (2009, vol. 4: 219-222) on *ṣifa* and its difference with *na‘t*. In the lexicographical sources, however, the difference between noun and adjective should not be traced back to purely grammatical categories but has more of a semantic value.

<sup>25</sup> This term indicates a hesitation by uttering “hum [or hem] and haw”.

<sup>26</sup> According to Lane (1863-1893, vol. 1: 113), the term *unūḥ* indicates a sound like the one which is called *zafīr*, lit. meaning ‘calamity; misfortune’ since it is arising from grief, anger, repletion of the belly, jealousy.

reduplicated form (n-ḥ-n-ḥ), which also in terms of acoustics suggests, through phonetic imitation, the signified action of making a reiterated hemming in the throat. To the explanation of the variant *anūḥ*, he adds a further term of onomatopoeic origin (*baḥaḥ*), whose root (b-ḥ-ḥ) refers to someone who has a hoarse, rough, harsh voice. Although all these roots refer to hoarseness, the terms derived are different semantically and acoustically.

In other cases, the criterium adopted by Abū ‘Ubayd is different. In all the examples drawn from the opening part of the chapter on the voices, the rare terms are mentioned in pairs, thus showing at once a resemblance of meaning—almost a synonymy—because they fall into the same acoustic category, but also a difference in terms of phonetics (as in the case of *nabbāḥ* and *nabbāḡ*) or pattern (*ṣarīr* and *ṣarṣara*), which is reflected in their different significances.

In some cases, Abū ‘Ubayd lists terms whose phonetic distinction—despite being synonyms—is relevant on the semantic level as in the example below:

Abū ‘Ubayda [said]:<sup>27</sup> *al-zamḡara* is [i.e., means] the sound from deep in the body; *al-zamḥara* is [i.e., means] the cry of a she-ostrich (*al-zammāra*).

(Abū ‘Ubayd, *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaḥ*, ed. ‘Abd al-Tawwāb 1989, vol. 1: 305).

The terms *zamḡara* and *zamḥara* quoted from Abū ‘Ubayda differ concerning the consonant ḡ/ḥ. While the first term, which means the roaring of the lion or thunder, is described as a sound coming from deep in the body (*al-ṣawt min al-ḡawf*), the second term, which means the roaring of rage or hunger, specifically that of the tiger, is compared to the *zammāra*, which is the cry uttered by the she-ostrich (derived from the verb *zamara*, used only when the she-ostrich cries). Only by comparing these terms on the acoustic level does Abū ‘Ubayd differentiate their meaning.<sup>28</sup>

There are cases where the difference is only a vowel, as in the following example:

From al-Aṣma‘ī: *al-‘arak* and *al-‘arik*, *al-ḥišāram* and *al-ḥuṣāram* are all sounds (*aṣwāt*).

(Abū ‘Ubayd, *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaḥ*, ed. ‘Abd al-Tawwāb 1989, vol. 1: 305).

The difference transmitted from al-Aṣma‘ī is once again acoustic and semantic. Different in terms of vocalisation (*a/i*), *‘arak* and *‘arik* are synonyms meaning both a strong sound uttered in striving or in

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<sup>27</sup> Only added in the text edited by ‘Abd al-Tawwāb (vol. 1: 305).

<sup>28</sup> Again, in this case, one should note the assonance between the three terms. The first two stem from a quadrilateral root (respectively z-m-ḡ-r and z-m-ḥ-r) which have the three radicals of the third one in common.



war. Otherwise, the two terms *hišāram* and *hušāram*, which differ in the vocalisation of the first syllable (i/u) refer respectively to the laugh of the hyena and the roar of the lion. While they indicate animals of similar species, they designate different kinds of cries.

In other cases, such as in the chapter on spoken word and language, Abū ‘Ubayd provides a more grammatical explanation for the term he quotes. In the case of *laḥā* (the distorted in the mouth) he also lists the verb from which it derives and the resulting adjectives in the masculine and feminine forms.

And *al-laḥā* is [*i.e.*, means] [one] in the [state of being] unsound (*fī al-bāṭil*) [because of being distorted in the mouth]. From this it is said that a man is *alḥā* and a woman *laḥwā*, and thus he was obscure in his speech (*laḥiya laḥā*) [is written] with *alif maqṣūra*.

(Abū ‘Ubayd, *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaḥ*, ed. ‘Abd al-Tawwāb 1989, vol. 1: 314-315).

In this last chapter, Abū ‘Ubayd makes greater use of technical terms, namely nouns indicating specific speech or language features rather than adjectives relating to persons.

Other [said]: *al-laḥlaḥānī* is [*i.e.*, means] the one who has an impediment in speech (*‘uǧma*). It is said: there is barbarism in it.

(Abū ‘Ubayd, *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaḥ*, ed. ‘Abd al-Tawwāb 1989, vol. 1: 316).

As can be seen in this example, the epithet referring to the person who possesses a certain quality in speaking who is called *al-laḥlaḥānī*, means the one barbarous in speech, and is closely related to its speech defect, a barbarism (*laḥlaḥāniyya*) (Rabin 1951: 50). The use of the term *‘uǧma*, which means speech impediment, to explain this kind of incomprehensible way of speaking places this defect in a particular category.

Finally, there are examples where Abū ‘Ubayd presents a rare term, such as *ḥarīr*, which is explained using a label that places it in a different category (such as *ṣawt al-mā’*).

*al-ḥarīr* is [*i.e.*, means] the sound of water.

(Abū ‘Ubayd, *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaḥ*, ed. ‘Abd al-Tawwāb 1989, vol. 1: 314).

In the following pages, I review all the nouns and adjectives contained in the three chapters on sounds related to voice (*ṣawt*), speech (*kalām*), and speech and language (*kalām* and *lisān*) by ordering them in a series of tables that highlight the categories and the labels but also the nuances that distinguish them.

## 6. The focus on the voice (*ṣawt*)

In the first of the three chapters, Abū ‘Ubayd offers the first wordlist of sounds related to voices (*bāb al-aṣwāt wa-iḥtilāfihā*). By and large, he distinguishes two macro-categories of voices: the loud voice uttered with force (in the table: 1 *ṣadīd al-ṣawt* or *al-ṣawt al-ṣadīd*) and the low voice not uttered with force (2: *al-ṣawt laysa bi-l-ṣadīd*). Alongside this distinction, on the one hand, he isolates a category of voices uttered in particular circumstances such as calling (3: *bi-l-du‘ā*), and, on the other hand, a variety of voices uttered in conditions that do not fall into any of the previous categories (4 [without a definition]).

Before we go into the details of the categories and their corresponding associated terms I would like to make a few general remarks. This broad division into four acoustic categories reveals the prominence given to the force of utterance of the voice. The adjective *ṣadīd* implies that the sound of the voice possesses the quality of being loud, vehement, and vigorous. This focus recurs in all three chapters and may also be relevant in terms of phonetics. For example, according to the Arabic sound system of some grammarians, one of the cardinal points that underpins the doctrine of the coalescence or incorporation of letters concerns precisely the distinction between “close” or “tight” (*ṣadīd*) and “loose” (*riḥw*).<sup>29</sup> This difference may also be important for the choice of terms and links drawn within the list. In many cases, the terms within each category or label seem to hint that there is a close relationship between the tone, the timbre, and the pitch of the voice and the emotional state in which the sound is produced.

The four macro-categories show further possible nuances.

As for the loud voices (1), Abū ‘Ubayd employs two terms—*al-ġahīr* and *al-fadīd*—to establish comparisons if they are uttered vehemently or forcefully (1.1.). The term *ġahīr* refers to a high, loud, or vehement voice. The use of this particular term could be significant in light of the distinction in the sound system of the Arab grammarians, between voiced sounds (*maġhūr*) and voiceless ones (*mahmūs*).

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<sup>29</sup> Vollers (1892, vol. 2: 134). According to Arab grammarians, the adjective *ṣadīd* refers to “those letters that, in a state of quiescence, prevent the current of the voice in their utterance.” The so-called *al-ḥurūf al-ṣadīda* are ‘, b, t, ġ, d, ṭ, q, and k. See Lane (1863-1893, vol. 4: 1518). They are different from *al-ḥurūf al-riḥwa*, the so-called “lax letters,” namely, ṭ, ḥ, ḫ, ḍ, z, s, š, ṣ, ḍ, z, ġ, f, h. See Lane (1863-1893, vol. 3: 1061). For more on the opposition between the modern notion of voiced/voiceless and lenis/fortis phonemes, see Danecki (2008).

Hence, the voicedness together with the quantity of stress at the moment of its emission may characterise the sound, and thus the voice, defined as *ğahīr*.<sup>30</sup>

The term *fadīd* denotes a vehement utterance without specifying the degree of its vehemence. The strength and vehemence of this emission is further distinguished from the cry of certain animals that utter a strong sound in striving or from the voice uttered out of rage (1.2.). Another term of comparison is *al-šiyāh* (shout) referring to when a person, animal, or anything raises their voice and cries, utters a loud cry, or even shouts (1.3.). A final group of loud sounds are the cries applied to people and/or animals who exhort them to do something (1.4.).

Regarding voices not uttered with force (2), Abu ‘Ubayd seems to specify two categories: low sounds, emitted without the use of force, in the description of which pitch is relevant (2.1.); and prolonged or repeated sounds, in which frequency of utterance prevails (2.2.). The former are not precisely described and the spectrum of possible low voices is quite varied. The range of repeated and prolonged voices also varies. However, in this case, Abū ‘Ubayd provides an indication regarding the prolongation of the voice and the extension of the sound (*mamdūd al-ṣawt*) also indicating the point of articulation in the repetition (*ṣawt yuraddiduhu fī ġawfihi*, litt. voice that is repeated from the deep in the body).

The sound of the voices uttered when supplicating (*bi-l-du‘ā*) or with a variety of feelings that return the person to a state of difficulty (such as *ma‘a tawağğū*, with suffering) represent a further category (3) that goes beyond the greater or lesser strength of the voice and rather concerns emotional or psychological changes or special circumstances in which something is uttered.

The last category includes a variety of sounds and voices that cannot be easily classified (4), of which Abū ‘Ubayd does not give precise indications except in the case of the sound of water (*ṣawt al-mā*).

As mentioned above, I arranged the terms listed in the three chapters on sounds of the first book of *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* in tables, grouping them according to the acoustic categories provided by Abū ‘Ubayd. Unlike the previous examples, the Arabic text as given in *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*, is unpacked and transferred to the table. The columns of the table (from right to left) provide information on a) the Arabic rare name listed in the text and listed in alphabetical order), b) its meaning as found in the most important Lexicons (Freytag, Lane, Kazimirski), c) the acoustic label to which Abū ‘Ubayd associates

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<sup>30</sup> Grammarians and linguists have discussed the distinction between the letters *mağhūra* and the letters *mahmūsa*. Equally debated is the meaning of the two terms and whether they actually refer to voicing and voicelessness. On the different opinions on this issue, see in particular Fleisch (1958) and Danecki (2008).

the rare term and of which he gives the general meaning, and d) the name of the transmitter. I have numbered the acoustic category and sound labels. Some rare terms are found in more than one table.

1. loud			
1.1. vehement and strong			
other	<i>al-ḡahīr</i> <sup>31</sup> <i>al-ṣawt</i>	rough, loud, vehement voice	أَجَشَّ
other	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	high, loud, or vehement, voice or speech	جَوَّير
Abū Zayd	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	din	حَرَاة
Abū Zayd, al-Aḥmar	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	uproar, vehement utterance <sup>32</sup>	خَوَاة
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	vehement shout	زَأمة
Abū Zayd	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	crying out, clamouring, shouting	ضَوَّة
Abū Zayd	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	howling [of dog, wolf, jackal], clamouring, shouting	عَوَّة
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>al-ism minhu al-fadīd</i>	having a strong voice	فَدَاد
al-Aṣma‘ī		vehement utterance	فَدِيد
al-Aḥmar	<i>al-ṣawt / al-fadīd</i>	loud and shrill	كَصِيس
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>ṣadīd al-ṣawt</i>	having a vehement voice [like a bark] <sup>33</sup>	نَبَّاح
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>ṣadīd al-ṣawt</i>	loud or vehement in voice <sup>34</sup>	نَبَّاج
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	heavy sound [of the chiding of camels]	نَهِيم
Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt al-ṣadīd</i>	<i>hā’i’a</i> [vehement sound]	هَائِعَة <sup>35</sup>
al-Aḥmar	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	thud	هَدِيد

<sup>31</sup> The term *al-ḡahīr* denotes the sounds of which musical modulations are formed, which are three in number; the sound thus called being from the head, issuing from the air-passages in the nose, having in it a roughness and hoarseness, and followed by a gradual fall [of the voice] modulated in accordance to that same sound, and then followed by a sound.

<sup>32</sup> In the animal sphere, the term denotes the beating of an eagle’s wings.

<sup>33</sup> In the animal sphere, the term denotes a dog that barks a lot.

<sup>34</sup> In the animal sphere, the term denotes a loud-barking dog. The distinction between the two terms *nabbāḥ* and *nabbāġ* therefore seems to be one of intensity and amount.

<sup>35</sup> This terms goes along with *wā’iya*. They both are onomatopoeic sounds denoting a kind of hullabaloo, loud shout, tumult. This sequence goes together with that of the three terms explained in footnote 32.

al-Aṣma'ī	<i>al-ṣawt al-šadīd</i>	loud sound or noise [occasioned by vehement of heavy treading of the ground]	وَأَد / وَئِيد
al-Aḥmar	<i>al-ṣawt / al-fadīd</i>	rustle	وَجْفَةٌ <sup>36</sup>
Abū 'Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	afflatus	وَحَى <sup>37</sup>
Abū Zayd	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	sound accompanied by a hoarseness <sup>38</sup>	وَحَاة
Abū 'Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt al-šadīd</i>	<i>wā'iya</i> [vehement sound]	وَاعِيَةٌ
Abū 'Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	clamour [mixed sound]	وَغَى
Abū 'Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	tumult, strepitous, clamour	وَغَى
<b>1.2. strong in striving</b>			
from al-Aṣma'ī	<i>al-aṣwāt</i>	laugh [of the hyena]	خُشَارِم
from al-Aṣma'ī	<i>al-aṣwāt</i>	roar [of the lion]	خُشَارِم
Abū 'Ubayda	<i>al-ṣawt min al-ḡawf</i> <sup>39</sup>	roar [of the lion or thunder]	زَمْجَرَةٌ
Abū 'Ubayda	<i>zammāra</i> <sup>40</sup>	roar [of rage or hunger, of the tiger]	زَمْخَرَةٌ
from al-Aṣma'ī	<i>al-aṣwāt</i>	strong [sound uttered when striving or in war]	عَرَكَ / عَرَكَ
al-Aṣma'ī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	wrath	وَغَر
<b>1.3 shout</b>			
al-Kisā'ī	<i>al-ṣiyāḥ</i>	cry vehemently emitted <sup>41</sup>	صَلَقَةٌ

<sup>36</sup> The term has the variant with ḥ instead of ḡ and denotes a rustle.

<sup>37</sup> The terms *wa'ā*, *waḡā*, *waḥā* are evidently of onomatopoeic origin and indicate voices uttered tumultuously and vehemently.

<sup>38</sup> The verb *waḥwaḥa* denotes a sound accompanied by a hoarseness, roughness, harshness, or gruffness, of the voice. It is said that it means "he made his breath to reciprocate in his throat, so as to be audible, by reason of cold."

<sup>39</sup> The label denotes the sound coming from deep in the body.

<sup>40</sup> This term denotes the cry uttered by the female ostrich. The three terms (*zamḡara*, *zamḥara*, *zammāra*) refer to similar types of sounds but uttered by different animals although tagged by the same label.

<sup>41</sup> In the animal sphere, the term denotes the buttocks of camels rubbing another that make a sound by their being grated.

1.4 cry <sup>42</sup>			
Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	exhortation [ <i>cried out to him yā wayhāh (Ho! On!)</i> ], cry to camels [or horses and men] <sup>43</sup>	تَأْيِيه
Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt bi-l-nās wa-l-ibl<sup>44</sup></i>	shout, crying out	تَهْلِيْت
Abū Zayd		[it is what he says] <i>yāhiyāh (Ho! On!)</i>	هو أن يقول يا هياه
2. not uttered with force			
2.1. low sound			
al-Umawī	<i>mamdūd al-ṣawt<sup>45</sup></i>	soft sound or low, murmured, voice	جَمَش <sup>46</sup>
Other	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	low sound, any sound that is not vehement, or a sound that one hears from afar	رَزَّ
from Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt laysa bi-l-ṣadīd</i>	whisper, an act of whispering or speaking softly; sensation caused in the ear by the vibration of the air or the vibration causing this vibration  low sound; or a sound that is not vehement: or the sound, or voice, of a man, which one hears from afar	رَكَز
from Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	twang  a sad voice when singing  said of a woman in her wailing; and of a pigeon in its cooing; and of a bow on the occasion of its string’s being pulled and let go	إِرْزَان
from Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	faint noise	نَبَّأَة
2.2. prolonged / creaking / repeated			
al-Umawī	<i>mamdūd al-ṣawt</i>	crying aloud in weeping	رُنَاء

<sup>42</sup> This sub-category covers a range of onomatopoeic sounds.

<sup>43</sup> Abū ‘Ubayd specifies that the term applies to both men and camels.

<sup>44</sup> Abū ‘Ubayd specifies that the term applies to both men and camels.

<sup>45</sup> The label denotes the reiteration of sound.

<sup>46</sup> Abū ‘Ubayd associates this term with *runā’* giving them both the same acoustic label, although *ḡamš* is distinguished by being a low sound and *runā’* by being reiterated.

		uttering of the sound of reiterating the breath with weeping	
from Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	trilling, or quavering, and prolonging the voice hum; humming; intonation; singing; song; chanting	تَرْنَمٌ
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>min al-ṣawt wa-laysa bi-l-šadīd</i>	creaking	صَرِيرٌ
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>min al-ṣawt wa-laysa bi-l-šadīd</i>	squeak	صَرَصَرَةٌ
other	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	creaking, grating <sup>47</sup>	صَرِيفٌ
other	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	clanging, loud ringing sound [rumbling] <sup>48</sup>	صَلِيلٌ
from Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>ṣawt yuraddiduhu fi ḡawfihi</i> <sup>49</sup>	rumbling, grumbling sound; uttered a sound like that of one throttled, or strangled or like one harassed, or fatigued, or overburdened	كَرْكَرَةٌ
from Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>ṣawt yuraddiduhu fi ḡawfihi</i>	reiterated sound, or made it to reciprocate, in his inside <sup>50</sup>	نَحِيحٌ
other	<i>al-ḡahīr al-ṣawt</i>	whimpering, sobbing, weeping, feeble note	نَشِيحٌ
<b>3. sound with supplication</b>			
other	<i>al-ṣawt ma‘a istiḡāta wa-taḍarru</i> <sup>51</sup>	moan <sup>52</sup>	جُؤارٌ
Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	supplicating, vociferation; long loud deep sound <sup>53</sup>	عَجِيحٌ

<sup>47</sup> The sheave of the pulley caused a sound to be heard on the occasion of the drawing of water denoted by this term.

<sup>48</sup> This sound is to be heard on the occasion of drinking in consequence of one’s intestines having become dry.

<sup>49</sup> The label denotes a sound that is reiterated and coming from the deep within the body.

<sup>50</sup> Meaning one who when asked for something, disliking to give it, has recourse to a pretence, and makes a reiterated breathing [or humming in his throat] as a feint to hide his unwillingness. The term denotes a grave and crass voice.

<sup>51</sup> The label denotes a sound along with a calling for help and supplication.

<sup>52</sup> In the animal sphere, the terms mean the bellow [of a cow or a bull].

<sup>53</sup> Freytag indicates that this sound is emitted when calling camels crying out ‘aḡ ‘aḡ.

from Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt bi-l-du‘ā</i> <sup>54</sup>	coo	هَتَافٌ
<b>4. other types of sound</b>			
Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	any sound, or any mixed, confused, sound	أَزْمَلٌ
al-Umawī	<i>ṣawt al-mā’</i>	gurgling, murmuring [of the water]	خَرِيرٌ
Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	gnashing	قَبِيبٌ
other	<i>mitlu al-ṣawt al-muḥtaniq aw al-mağhūd</i> <sup>55</sup>	rattling in the throat; hoarseness or roughness of the voice [occasioned by dust]	كَرِيرٌ
Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī	<i>idā zafara</i> <sup>56</sup>	roar <sup>57</sup>	نَحَطٌ

### 7. The focus on the way of speaking (*kalām*)

In the chapter on sounds regarding how people speak and their motion (*bāb aṣwāt kalām al-nās wa-ḥarratihim wa-ğayr dālīka*), Abū ‘Ubayd uses the two general terms *ṣawt* and *kalām* to designate, depending on the rare terms referred to, whether only the sound of the uttered voice or also the spoken words or the speech are involved. Hence, the chapter involves both how spoken words are uttered and how people speak.

In the opening part of the chapter, Abū ‘Ubayd mentions two other important terms—*ḥaraka* (a) and *ğalaba* (b)—in connection with voice and/or speech. *ḥaraka* means motion and movement, but also, more in general, the activity [of speaking],<sup>58</sup> while *ğalaba* denotes a mixture of cries, shouts or noises, and thus a confusion. Therefore, these two terms indicate two poles in the range of meanings of speaking in general.

<sup>54</sup> The label denotes a sound [uttered] with supplication.

<sup>55</sup> Abū ‘Ubayd specifies that the sound is similar to the voice uttered from a narrow place (*al-muḥtaniq*) and the voice of the afflicted (*al-mağhūd*).

<sup>56</sup> Abū ‘Ubayd specifies the circumstance in which this voice is uttered, that is, if he breathed out.

<sup>57</sup> This term denotes somebody who drew in his breath to the utmost by reason of distress. It also means the beginning of the cry of the ass.

<sup>58</sup> Among other meanings, *ḥaraka* means a “letter’s having a vowel immediately following” and a “vowel” itself.



<b>a. motion / activity</b>			
Abū Zayd	<i>kalāmuhum wa- ‘alāniyatuhum dūna sirrihim</i> <sup>59</sup>	desire to talk [of the people] openly	جَرَاهِيَّة
al-Kisā’ī	<i>al-ḥaraka</i>	low, faint, gentle, or soft sound; motion <sup>60</sup>	خَشْفَة
other	<i>aṣwāt al-nās</i>	crying out, shouting, or clamouring [of people talking]	ضَوْضَاءَة <sup>61</sup>
al-Aṣma’ī	<i>al-kalām wa-l- ḥaraka</i> <sup>62</sup>	verbosity	هَمَمَّة
Abū Zayd	<i>al-ḥaraka</i>	(the talking) of agitated motion	وَقْشَة
<b>b. talking with noise</b> <sup>63</sup>			
Abū Zayd	<i>al-kalām wa-l-ḡalaba</i>	crying out, clamouring, shouting	ضَوَّة
al-Aṣma’ī	<i>al-kalām wa-l-ḡalaba</i>	clamour [way of speaking and noise]	ظَاب
Abū Zayd	<i>al-kalām wa-l-ḡalaba</i>	howling [of dog, wolf, jackal], clamouring, shouting	عَوَّة

As in the previous chapter, the force of the sound emission used in uttering words represents a discriminating factor in speaking. In this connection, Abū ‘Ubayd distinguishes between speech characterised by loud, soft, and low sounds: while he reintroduces the difference between loud and low speech, namely with force (1: *šadīd*) or without force (3: *laysa bi-l-šadīd*), he adds the variable of soft speech (2: *ḥafiy*), which could be understood as a variable of low sounds. The latter category relates to sounds unperceived or imperceptible by the ear and therefore to an almost inaudible way of speaking.

Abū ‘Ubayd then sketches a category of sound patterns generated when murmuring and therefore lists various ways of speaking characterised by a murmuring or trembling voice (4: *ṣawt ma’a baḥaḥ*), optionally accompanied by a reiterated hemming in the throat (*ṣawt ma’a tanaḥnuḥ*). Similar to the previous chapter, Abū ‘Ubayd also identifies a category of ways of speaking when the voice is uttered with supplication (5: *al-ṣawt bi-l-du‘ā*) or with a variety of attitudes that return the person to a state of difficulty (*al-ṣawt ma’a tawaḡḡu’*, with suffering). These two categories overlap because they include sounds produced in certain moods or circumstances.

<sup>59</sup> The label denotes their [people’s] way of speaking and their openness without secrets. The expression also appears in the Qur’ān (2:275) to mean “openly,” “publicly,” and “aloud.”

<sup>60</sup> In the animal sphere, this is the sound of the creeping of serpents and the sound of the hyena.

<sup>61</sup> In some editions, the term is written ضَوْضَاءَة.

<sup>62</sup> The label specifies that the term refers both to the way of speaking and to the motion or the activity.

<sup>63</sup> This category includes terms denoting both the manner of speaking and the confusion (of cries, noises) in it.

Incomprehensible speech that cannot be understood or accepted represents a further category (6: *al-kalām alladī lā yubayyinu*). Underlying this category is evidently the idea of not possessing a *clear* or *eloquent language* (*kalām bayyin*). In fact, we find there a variety of ways of speaking that range from the obscure (*zulma*) to the obscene (*huġr*).

Finally, a last category combines various unclassifiable ways of speaking (7).

1. loud			
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	voice, breath, emitted with a moaning; hard breathing	رَجِير
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	speaking or uttering in a warbling manner; speaking in a singing manner	صَدَح
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	stridulation; harsh and loud sound; squeaking; grating; creaking; jarring; chirp;	صَرِيف
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	hoarse, rough, harsh, or gruff, in voice	صَحَل
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	loud ringing sound; uttering the <i>kalima</i> [or sentence] with a feigning, or making a show, of skilfulness	صَالِصَةٌ
al-Kisā‘ī	<i>al-ṣiyāḥ</i> <i>ṣawwata ṣawtan</i> <i>ṣadīdan</i>	cry vehemently emitted; tushes of camels, that make a sound by their being rubbed against one another	صَافَةٌ
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	chest-sound	طَحِير
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	roar of the lion, tiger; voice of the moan of pain; sound of the monkey’s cry; uttering the kind of sound termed <i>za’ir</i>	نَهَيْت
other	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	heavy sound [of the chiding of camels]; roar	نَهِيم
other	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	loud sound or noise [occasioned by vehement heavy treading of the ground]	وَيْد
2. soft			
other	<i>ṣawt ḥafiyy</i>	act of whispering or speaking softly [without vibration of the vocal cords]	هَمْس
other	<i>al-kalām al-ḥafiyy</i>	whisper <sup>64</sup>	هَتْمَلَة
other	<i>al-kalām al-ḥafiyy</i>	murmur softly, speech concealed	هَيْمَة

<sup>64</sup> This term denotes an occult way of speaking.

3. low sound			
other	<i>al-ṣawt al-ḥafiyy laysa bi-l-šadīd</i> <sup>65</sup>	whisper, act of whispering or speaking softly; sensation caused in the ear by the vibration of the air or the vibration causing this vibration; low sound; or a sound that is not vehement: or the sound, or voice, of a man, which one hears from afar	رِكْز <sup>66</sup>
other	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	twang; sad voice when singing <sup>67</sup>	إِرْتَان
other	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	trilling, or quavering, and prolonging the voice hum; humming; intonation; singing; song; chanting	تَرْتُم
other	<i>[al-ṣawt laysa bi-l-šadīd] naḥwahu</i>	faint noise, low sound, barking	نَبَاة
Abū 'Ubayd	<i>al-kalām al-ḥasan</i> <sup>68</sup>	whispering, twittering	نَغِيَّة
Abū Zayd and al- Kisā'i	<i>al-kalām al-ḥafi</i>	melody with or without harmony; gentle-toned speech; and sweetness of voice, or melody, in recitation	نَعْم
al-Aṣma'ī	<i>ṣawt al-ḥallī</i>	rustle; talking indistinctly or in a low, faint, gentle, or soft manner, with confusedness; or with abnormal anxiety; suspicion; scrupulosity	وَسْوَس
4. murmuring / prolonged			
al-Aṣma'ī	<i>[ṣawt ma'a baḥaḥ]</i>	any sound, or any mixed, confused, sound	أَزْمَل
al-Aṣma'ī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	braying prolonging of the cries of camels	أَطِيَط
al-Aṣma'ī	<i>ṣawt ma'a tanaḥnuḥ yuqāl minhu raḡul anūḥ idā kāna yatanaḥnaḥu ma'a baḥaḥ wa-qad anaḥa</i>	mourning, lament	أَنُوح

<sup>65</sup> The label relates to a soft voice uttered not loudly.

<sup>66</sup> The term denotes something unclean and dirty.

<sup>67</sup> The term is also referred to a wailing woman; and of a cooing pigeon; and of a bow's string being pulled and let go.

<sup>68</sup> Unlike the other labels, this one seems to indicate a way of producing sounds and thus of speaking that is good or understandable.

	<i>ya’niḥu al-anūḥ al-raġul alladī ya’niḥu</i> <sup>69</sup>		
al-Aṣma‘ī	[ <i>ṣawt ma’a baḥaḥ</i> ]	twittering, warbling (a bird and a man) prolonged its, or his, voice, and singing, and modulated it sweetly, or warbled	تَغْرِيد
al-Aṣma‘ī	[ <i>ṣawt ma’a baḥaḥ</i> ] <i>ṣawt al-qidr ayḍan</i> <sup>70</sup>	gargling sound with which is a roughness, like that which is made by one gargling with water	غَرَّعْرَة
al-Aṣma‘ī	[ <i>ṣawt ma’a baḥaḥ</i> ]	making, or sending forth, a sound with which or in which is a roughness, hoarseness	تَغَطْمَط
al-Aṣma‘ī	[ <i>ṣawt ma’a baḥaḥ</i> ]	trilling, or quavering singing	هَزَج
al-Aṣma‘ī	[ <i>ṣawt ma’a baḥaḥ</i> ]	murmur, humming muttered words	هَمَمَة
al-Aṣma‘ī	[ <i>ṣawt ma’a baḥaḥ</i> ] <i>naḥwahu</i>	trembling uttered a sound accompanied by hoarseness, roughness, harshness, or gruffness, of the voice	وَحْوَحَة
<b>5. with suffering</b>			
Abū Zayd	<i>al-ṣawt ma’a tawaḡḡu’</i>	yearning for effort	نَحِيْط
Abū Zayd	<i>al-ṣawt ma’a tawaḡḡu’</i>	sob	نَشِيْج
al-Aṣma‘ī and Abū ‘Amr	<i>al-ṣawt ma’a tawaḡḡu’</i>	the voice of lament or remorse; the voice of the supplicant in supplication; the voice of the mourner	نَحْوَب
other	<i>al-ṣawt bi-l-du‘ā’</i>	coo, sound [uttered] with supplication, loud excited utterance of words	هَتَاف
<b>6. Incomprehensible talking</b>			
other	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	gibberish; talked much, and raised a clamour, or confused noise, with his tongue; he cried, or cried out,	بَرْبِرَة

<sup>69</sup> This long definition that follows has been translated above and goes as follows: “a sound accompanied by a reiterated hemming in the throat (*ṣawt ma’a tanaḥnuḥ*). From this it is said a man *anūḥ* when he is asked for a thing and makes a reiterated hemming in his throat with a hoarseness [of the voice] (*idā kāna yatanaḥnahu ma’a baḥaḥ*), then he breaths and breathed hard (*anaḥa ya’niḥu*) and thus *al-anūḥ* is the man who breaths hard by hemming in his throat (*ya’niḥu*).”

<sup>70</sup> Abū ‘Ubayd adds that this term may also refer to the sound of a pot that somehow gargles.

		and talked in anger, or talked confusedly, with anger and aversion	
other	<i>al-kalām allaḍī lā yubayyinu</i> <sup>71</sup>	mumbling; talking indistinctly not from impotence	تَجَمُّمٌ
other	<i>al-kalām allaḍī lā yubayyinu</i>	speech that does not make itself distinguished / indistinctly	تَعَمُّمٌ
al-Kisā'ī	[similar to <i>huḡr</i> ] <i>wamiṭluhu aẓlama idā waqa'a fi al-ẓulma wa-aḍā'a idā waqa'a fi al-ḍaw</i> <sup>72</sup>	obscure talking	ظُلْمَةٌ
al-Kisā'ī	<i>wa-ahḡara idā balaḡa al-ḡāl allaṭī tūḡibu al-huḡr</i>	obscene talking; spoken, or uttered, foul, evil, bad, abominable, or unseemly, language	هُجْرٌ
<b>7. Other</b>			
other	<i>al-munāṭaqa</i> <sup>73</sup>	sermon to someone	مُؤَاظَةٌ
al-Umawī	<i>al-ṣawt</i>	gurgling, murmuring sound of the water	خَرِيرٌ

### 8. The focus on the speech (*kalām*) and the language (*lisān*)

In the chapter on sounds regarding language and speech (*bāb al-alsina wa-l-kalām*), Abū 'Ubayd lists terms dealing with speech (*kalām*), language (*al-lisān*), dialect (*al-laḡa*), diction or the expression of ideas by voice and words (*al-manṭiq*). Thus, how sounds are uttered while speaking is no longer his focus of interest, but rather how words are articulated to convey ideas. In line with this, Abū 'Ubayd lists rare terms that range from eloquence to incorrectness in speech and logic of discourse.

In the category of eloquence (1), Abū 'Ubayd enumerates terms relating to persons having different qualities: [a man] whose tongue speaks Arabic correctly (*al-ḡaṣīḥ al-lisān*), eloquent (*al-baliḡ*), clear in the dialect which he speaks by nature (*al-bayyin al-laḡa*). Another small category concerns sharpness (2) in respect of eloquence (*al-ḡadīd al-lisān*).

<sup>71</sup> The label denotes a speech that does not make itself distinguished.

<sup>72</sup> In the label, the sphere of sound is compared to that of colour and the darkness of language to that of nightfall.

<sup>73</sup> The terms indicates a conversation with someone.

Very consistent, however, is the category of the profusion of words or verboseness in speech (*al-kaṭīr al-kalām* or *kaṭrat al-kalām*) (3). Once again, Abū ‘Ubayd lists a large number of rare terms expressing a range of ways of talking from excessive talking (*al-kaṭīr al-kalām wa-l-ifrāt fihi*) to idle talk.

The opposite pole of eloquence is thus represented by a series of ways of speaking that make language from incomprehensible to illogical. Three other categories relate to the negative effects on speaking. The category of disordered speech (4) includes terms that refer to people who are confused in the way they speak (*al-muḥtaliṭ fi kalāmihi*). The incorrect speech and the misspeaking (*al-saqāṭ min al-kalām wa-l-ḥaṭā’ fihi*) generating barbarisms in the language represent a specific category (5). A further category includes terms referring to defects in speech, language and logic (6). The opposite pole of eloquence is incorrectness in language and its illogicality (7).

1. eloquence			
Abū Zayd	<i>al-faṣīḥ al-lisān al-bayyin al-laḥḡa</i>	eloquent in language and clear in pronunciation	حُدَاقِي
other	<i>lisān al-qawm wa-al-mutakallim ‘anhum</i> <sup>74</sup>	headman, or chief in respect of tongue, on the occasion of contention, or disputation	مِدْرَه
Abū Zayd	<i>al-baliġ</i> fluent and refined in speech	fluent sharp properly speaking; and also chaste, or eloquent; and profuse of speech, or clamorous	ذَلِيْق
Abū Zayd	<i>al-baliġ</i>	eloquent; sharp, cutting, or eloquent, tongue	مِسْلَاق
other	<i>al-ḥaṭīb al-baliġ</i> <sup>75</sup>	eloquent [because of the vehemence of his voice and his speech]	مِسْلَاق
other	<i>al-ḥaṭīb al-baliġ</i>	eloquent [loud in voice] speaker, orator or preacher	مِصْقَع
Abū Zayd	<i>al-faṣīḥ al-lisān al-bayyin al-laḥḡa</i>	sharp-tongued man	الْفَتِيْق اللِّسَان
2. sharpness			
al-Aṣma‘ī	<i>al-ḥadīd al-lisān</i>	sharp-tongued	الحَلِيْف اللِّسَان
3. profusion of words			
Abū Zayd	<i>al-kaṭīr al-kalām wa-al-ifrāt fihi</i> <sup>76</sup>	logorrhoea; logorrhoeic if he has exceeded the due bounds in speech	إِذْرَاع / أَذْرَع

<sup>74</sup> The label refers to someone who acts as the tongue of people and is the one who speaks of them.

<sup>75</sup> In a second sense, the term refers only to the eloquent preacher.

<sup>76</sup> The label refers to the one who speaks too much and exceeds in it, i.e., the talkative.

al-Aṣma'ī	<i>al-kaṭīr al-kalām</i>	prolix; loquacious, or profuse of speech	مُسْتَهَب
al-Aṣma'ī	<i>al-kaṭīr al-kalām</i>	Windy; eloquent, or fluent, in speech; running therein like the wind	مِسْهَك
al-Aṣma'ī	<i>kaṭrat al-kalām fa-iḏā kaṭura kalāmuhu min ḥaraf<sup>77</sup></i>	weak in judgment, or unsound in mind by reason of extreme old age, or disease; who confounds [things] in his speech; or loquacious by reason of unsoundness of mind	مُفْنَد
Abū Zayd	<i>kuṭrat al-kalām fī al-bāṭil</i>	in the <i>obscure in his speech</i> ; distorted in the mouth [state of being] unsound ( <i>fī al-bāṭil</i> )	لَخَا / أَلْحَى
al-Farrā'	<i>al-kaṭīr al-kalām</i>	idiot talkative	لَقَاعَة / تَلْقَاعَة
al-Aṣma'ī	<i>al-kaṭīr al-kalām</i>	pratter; quick and voluble in speech; incorrectly, and vainly, or frivolously, loquacious; a great babbler	مِهْت
al-Aṣma'ī	<i>al-kaṭīr al-kalām</i>	long-winded; loquacious; garrulous; babbling; a great talker; a bubbler. or nonsensical, irrational, foolish, or delirious, in his talk	هَذِر إِهْذَار
Abū 'Amr	<i>al-kaṭīr al-kalām</i>	stupid, or foolish, and loquacious, man	هَوْب
<b>4. disorder</b>			
Abū 'Amr	<i>al-muḥtaliṭ fī kalāmihi<sup>78</sup></i>	disordered; disorder	مُنْبَكِل / تَبَكَّل

<b>5. barbarism</b>			
al-Aṣma'ī	<i>al-saqat min al-kalām wa-al-ḥaṭā' fīhi<sup>79</sup></i>	deceptive or false talk	هَنْر / مُهَنْر
al-Farrā'	<i>al-saqat min al-kalām wa-al-ḥaṭā' fīhi</i>	garrulous	فَقْفَاق
<b>6. defect in language and logic<sup>80</sup></b>			
Abū Zayd	'ayy <sup>81</sup>	one with rolled tongue; one unable to find the manner in the expression of his ideas; bradyglossia <sup>82</sup>	أَفَف

<sup>77</sup> The label refers to the circumstance where he increased his words because of a disordered state of the intellect.

<sup>78</sup> The label refers to the one who is confused in his way of speaking.

<sup>79</sup> The label refers to the mistake in the way of speaking in which there is an error.

<sup>80</sup> This category does not include clear labels. Definitions of language problems are often explained with examples.

<sup>81</sup> The term refers to someone *unable to find the right manner* in the expression of his ideas.

<sup>82</sup> A form of dysarthria characterized by an abnormal slowness or deliberateness of speech.

other		impeded in his speech and such a one was unable to finish a saying that he desired to utter ( <i>artaġa ‘alayhi</i> ) if the speech was as though it were closed against him ( <i>istaġlaqa ‘alayhi al-kalām</i> ) <sup>83</sup>	رِتَاج
al-Aṣma‘ī	in his language ( <i>lisān</i> ) there is anarthria ( <i>ḥukla</i> ) namely barbarism ( <i>‘uġma</i> )	anarthria	حُكْلَة
al-Aṣma‘ī		barbarism	عجمة
Abū Zayd	<i>al-kalīl al-lisān</i> <sup>84</sup>	dull of tongue <sup>85</sup>	فَهْ
al-Farrā’	the one who speaks with the deepest throat ( <i>luqā’a</i> )	hoarse	مُقَامِق / مُمَمَّقَة
<b>7. incorrectness in speech, language and logic</b>			
al-Aṣma‘ī		idle talk	خَطْل
other		barbarous in speech; barbarousness and viciousness	لُخْلَخَانِي / لُخْلَخَانِيَّة
other	the one who does not talk	one unable to utter verse	مُفَحَم
other	<i>al-kalām alladī lā yubayyanu</i>	indistinct speech	تَعَمُّم
al-Farrā’	the one who scrutinizes it, reconsiders it <sup>86</sup>	refiner of speech	مُنَقِّحٌ لِلْكَلَامِ
other		polemical; the argument and speech revision; the contrast in the speech	نَقْل / نَقْل / مُنَاقَلَة فِي الْمُنَطَق

<sup>83</sup> The origin of the meaning lies in *al-ritāġ* (the door locked) which means the door (*al-bāb*).

<sup>84</sup> The label refers to someone who is weak in speech.

<sup>85</sup> The verb denotes a state of confusion and forgetfulness. The example (also reported by Lane) is: I came for some reason, but a guy made me forget what it was to the point that I forgot [it completely] i.e. he made you forget it.

<sup>86</sup> The verb denotes someone who removes faults or defects of the language.



other	<i>al-mantiq al-fāsid</i> <sup>87</sup>	loquacity with incorrectness	هراء
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## 9. Conclusions

The search for sounds in *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* seems to have led away from the soundscape that would be expected for several reasons.<sup>88</sup>

The first difficulty in understanding the sounds at this stage in the history of Arab culture is inherent in the very Arabic word for sound. If we closely examine the work of Abū ‘Ubayd, it would appear that he uses the term *ṣawt* (and also *aṣwāt*) as a kind of “umbrella” term to comprise several sound dimensions (both abstract and concrete). Hence, depending on the field of application, a *ṣawt* could refer to, describe, reproduce sounds of different types, originating from various sources—human beings, animals, objects, natural and meteorological phenomena, to mention a few—characterised by a variety of dynamics and modulations. We find such a variety of possibilities even in the human sphere. Indeed, the *aṣwāt* are not only the different voices of people in the strict sense; they are also the sounds that characterise their various ways of talking and the languages they speak.

A further difficulty lies in the word lists provided in *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf*. Based on the lists of terms these *aṣwāt* refer to, we can assume that they do not reproduce real sounds. Most of the terms listed do not always refer to nouns, adjectives, or verbs that express or reproduce the very sound uttered but rather how they are uttered. One might, therefore, conclude that for Abū ‘Ubayd, the term *ṣawt* represents a broad sound dimension rather than relating to a specific sound.

Overall, *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* depicts a kaleidoscopic and artificial soundscape, which cannot be immediately established through the list of words of each chapter. But we can infer it, albeit with silent and missing pieces, through the work as a whole. Many of the terms found in the lists of the three chapters above examined are decontextualised. They would rather seem to indicate emotional or physical conditions more than places, individuals or circumstances in which people utter sounds, speak, and use language. For example, there is no mention of any specific sound regarding the Bedouin environment despite many of these terms coming from interviews conducted by lexicographers among the Arab tribes. Just as environmental references are missing, anthropological references are missing too. No terms refer to people speaking different dialects, or people characterized by diverse ways of

<sup>87</sup> The label denotes the incorrect logic of the speech.

<sup>88</sup> These conclusions are far from definitive and are rather general reflections that have emerged from the exchange of views I have had with various friends and colleagues whom I gave this article to read. I therefore thank Francesco Grande, Jérôme Lentin, Alessandro Mengozzi, Elias Saba, and Ignacio Sánchez for their precious insights, comments, remarks, and revisions.

talking in different communities, social or ethnic groups. To some extent, through his lexicographic work, Abū ‘Ubayd seems to normalise the Arabic soundscape by giving it a homogeneous and regular profile as if the *aṣwāt* came from a community of Arabic speakers uniform in terms of origin, habitat, and social status.

On the other hand, the three chapters do provide us with a palette of very interesting terms and expressions. Some continue to be used today, whereas others have been lost since they have become effectively rare and obsolete. And precisely because of this consideration, I conclude that the (almost archaeological) excavation research work in these sources provides us with something that, in its own way, may be a true soundscape. For all intents and purposes, *al-Ġarīb al-Muṣannaf* is an artefact of the Arabic lexicographical culture and should be treated as such. It gives back some of the sounds that could be heard in real life, leaving the rest silent or missing.

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