

A Grammar of Standard Classical Arabic

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Work in progress

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<https://adamiturabi.github.io/arabic-tutorial-book/>

Table of contents

Preface	5
1 The verb كَانَ	7
1.1 Introduction	7

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Preface

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The primary texts of Islām (the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth) are in Arabic. So too is much of its scholarly literature. However, there are many Muslims for whom Arabic is not a native language, yet who are familiar enough with English to study textbooks written in this language. The goal of this book is to help them learn Arabic at a beginner's level so that, together with a study of the appropriate expository texts, they are one step closer to understanding the primary texts in their original language. We hope that this will, if Allāh wills, make them feel more connected to the primary texts and their teachings. Furthermore, they can be empowered to study the vast body of Arabic Islāmic literature.

Regarding the title of this book: the Arabic grammarians were describing *an* Arabic language, drawing upon a corpus that included transmitted texts and the dialectal speech of informants. We term the language of this corpus to be *Classical Arabic* because of its considerable volume and its agreed upon significance and eloquence. In the processing of describing and sifting through the dialectal variation of Classical Arabic, a normative variety emerged, and gained prevalence for composing and transmitting texts. It is the grammar of this *Standard Classical Arabic* that is the subject of this work.

This book is a learning or teaching grammar, as opposed to being strictly a reference grammar. Therefore, generally, topics are covered, and examples are given, in a manner that assumes an understanding of only preceding content. We have, however, generally tried to organize content coherently for convenient reference during learning.

We have also aimed to make this a self-instruction textbook so that a diligent student should, if Allāh wills, be able to study it without an instructor. The target learner is someone who has not been exposed to grammatical terminology like *inflection*, *case*, *mood*, etc. While terminology is necessary for a rigorous non-immersive learning of language, we have tried to steer away from Latin-based terms like *accusative* and *jussive*. Such terms, when first encountered by an uninitiated learner, may deter him from proceeding further. So we have in some places translated the meaning of Arabic grammar terms to English. In other places, we have used established English grammar terms where the terms are basic enough. We have even, in places, invented terms where we deemed appropriate. The drawback to this non-standard approach, however, is that the student may not be able to immediately relate the terminology he has learned in this book to established terminology in other grammar textbooks. To remedy

this to some extent, we provide a glossary which maps the grammatical terminology used in this book to other, established, Latin-based and Arabic-based counterparts.

It may also be appropriate to inform the reader that we chose to present a subset, and sometimes a simplified version, of Arabic grammar. As such, the grammar presented here may not be entirely consistent with the comprehensive and harmonious framework developed by the Arab grammarians. We chose this approach because we felt that exposing the beginner to complex grammatical details at this stage would be more of a hindrance than a help in learning the language.

This book is a currently work in progress and is produced using the [Quarto](#) authoring and publishing framework. The code and text are open-sourced and developed at github.com/adamiturabi/arabic-tutorial-book. The typeset output is published at adamiturabi.github.io/arabic-tutorial-book/.

THE AUTHORS

مَاتَ الرَّشِيدُ بِطُوسَ وَكَانَ خَرَجَ إِلَى خُرَّاسَانَ لِمُحَارَبَةِ رَافِعِ
بْنِ اللَّيْثِ. وَكَانَ رَافِعٌ هَذَا قَدْ خَرَجَ وَخَلَعَ الطَّاعَةَ وَتَعَلَّبَ
عَلَى سَمَرْقَنْدَ.

- (1) “al-Rashīd died at Tūs after he had set out for Khurāsān to combat Rāfiʿ ibn al-Layth. And this Rāfiʿ had already rebelled and cast off his allegiance and taken forcible possession of Samarqand.”

Chapter 1

The verb كَانَ

1.1 Introduction

- مَاتَ الرَّشِيدُ بِطُوسَ وَكَانَ خَرَجَ إِلَى خُرَاسَانَ لِمُحَارَبَةِ رَافِعِ
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عَلَى سَمَرْقَنْدَ.
- (1) “al-Rashīd died at Ṭūs after he had set out for
K̤hurasān to combat Rāfiʿ ibn al-Layth. And this
Rāfiʿ had already rebelled and cast off his alle-
giance and taken forcible possession of Samar-
qand.” [Wright, vol. ii,
§3, rem. a,
p. 6A]
- (2) الرجل طويل
“The man is tall.” المنتاس نتائب
نتا
p. 3/234
- (3) الحمد لله
“Thanks to Allah” 1:1 سورة الفاتحة

Start list

1. some text
2. some text

مَاتَ الرَّشِيدُ بِطُوسَ وَكَانَ خَرَجَ إِلَى خُرَّاسَانَ لِمُحَارَبَةِ رَافِعِ
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 عَلَى سَمَرْقَنْدَ.

- (4) “al-Rashīd died at Tūs after he had set out for
 Khurāsān to combat Rāfiʿ ibn al-Layth. And this
 Rāfiʿ had already rebelled and cast off his alle-
 giance and taken forcible possession of Samar-
 qand.”

- (5) الرجل طويل
 “The man is tall.”

مَاتَ الرَّشِيدُ بِطُوسَ وَكَانَ خَرَجَ إِلَى خُرَّاسَانَ لِمُحَارَبَةِ رَافِعِ
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 عَلَى سَمَرْقَنْدَ.

- (6) “al-Rashīd died at Tūs after he had set out for
 Khurāsān to combat Rāfiʿ ibn al-Layth. And this
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 giance and taken forcible possession of Samar-
 qand.”

- (7) الرجل طويل
 “The man is tall.”