

## A Synchronic-Diachronic Model of Abu Hilāl Al-‘askarī’s Bibliography: Analysis of Published, Manuscript, and Apocryphal Layers

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**Abstract:** This article presents a systematic analysis of the scholarly legacy of the 10th-century Arab philologist, lexicographer, and stylist Abu Hilāl al-‘Askarī, using a linguobibliographic approach. The study object encompasses 33 works attributed to the author, while the research subject focuses on the publication status, manuscript forms, preservation locations, and source-critical relevance of these texts. The methodology includes textual criticism, codicological description, authorial attribution, and synchronic-diachronic analysis. For the first time, fragmentary data were consolidated into a unified linguobibliographic corpus, based on typological and functional-syntactic criteria. Each work was classified into one of three categories according to its textual status: published (المؤلفات المطبوعة), unpublished (غير المطبوعة), or lost/apocryphal (المؤلفات المفقودة). The model proposed in this study provides a methodological foundation for future research in Arabic philology, particularly in textual reconstruction and the development of digital bibliographic registries, while also contributing to the scholarly reception of al-‘Askarī’s intellectual heritage.

**Keywords:** Abu Hilāl al-‘Askarī, linguobibliography, codicological audit, stylometry, TEI XML, synchronic-diachronic model, Arabic philology.

### INTRODUCTION

Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī (Hijri 324–395 / CE 936–1005) is a towering figure in the history of Arabic philology whose contributions to lexicography, stylistics, and the theory of synonymy are unparalleled. His *al-Furūq al-luġawiyya* laid the foundations for lexical differentiation in Arabic semantics [Al-‘Askari, 1981], while *as-Sinā‘atayn* established the theoretical basis of rhetorical terminology [Al-‘Askari, 1979]. Yet his scholarly-literary legacy has never been subjected to a comprehensive textual audit, codicological expertise, or systematic linguo-bibliographic processing—an omission that underscores the topic’s urgency.

Existing literature offers only scattered data on al-‘Askarī: no unified scholarly corpus documents the manuscript status, publication history, genre profile, and functional description of his works [Brockelmann, 1943–1949; Kanazi, 1975; Sezgin, 1988; Sarkis, 1928; Yāqūt al-Ĥamawī, 1980]. This fragmentation hampers thorough evaluation, comparison, and systematic study of his oeuvre. Recent codicological and digital-philological studies [Fil’shchinskiy, 2010; Ḥāġī Khalīfa, 1984; Al-Baghdādī, 1979 & 1951; Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī, 1979] highlight the need to digitize these fragmentary data, but no project has yet analyzed and classified the corpus on linguo-bibliographic criteria.

### Research Aim

To create a comprehensive linguo-bibliographic system for all works attributed to

Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī and to determine their scholarly-genealogical status.

### Research Tasks

- Classify al-‘Askarī’s works into three categories—published, unpublished, and lost/apocryphal—according to publication status.
- Provide a systematic description of each work’s manuscript code, publication date, library location, and genre-functional profile.
- Conduct textual-genealogical analysis of lost or apocryphal texts to verify authorship.
- Design a digital bibliographic register in TEI-XML format based on the collected data.

**Object and Subject of the Study.** *Object:* the thirty-three works attributed to Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī. *Subject:* the publication status, manuscript forms, and source-critical features of these works. The study employs textual audit, codicological classification, authorship attribution, stylometric analysis, and synchronic-diachronic comparison [Ibn Munqidh, 1969; Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, 1974].

### Original Contribution

Al-‘Askarī’s corpus is unified for the first time into a single linguo-bibliographic database, introducing eight previously unregistered sources into scholarly circulation.

## Methodology

- **Bibliographic screening** – identifying sources in fonds and catalogues [Sarkis, 1928].
- **Codicological audit** – describing manuscript folios using the Reynolds–Wilson typology [‘A. Q. Al-Baghdādī, 1979].
- **Digitization** – 300 dpi TIFF scans enriched with TEI-XML metadata.
- **Textual collation** – comparing variants via CollateX 3.0 and Lachmann stemmatics [Kanazi, 1975].
- **Stylometric analysis** – computing MTLD, Maas, hapax/1000 tokens, and *saj*’ density; validating correlations with Spearman  $\rho$  [Al-‘Askari, 1963].
- **Authorship attribution** – verifying apocryphal texts with N-gram TF-IDF and Burrows  $\Delta$ .
- **Synchronic-diachronic clustering** – grouping genetic layers chronologically via Ward’s method.
- **Semantic differential** – rating rhetorical-stylistic value on a 7-point Likert scale with five experts [Al-Farrūkh, 1974].
- **Statistical validation** – ten-fold cross-validation,  $\chi^2$ , and ANOVA ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ).

## RESULTS

All thirty-three sources were digitized to TEI-XML standards. Direct authorial ascription appears in 83 % of manuscripts; 13 % are confirmed through genealogical evidence; 4 % require further collation. Four manuscripts, two reprints, and two facsimiles absent from Brockelmann and Kanazi have been newly documented.

By publication status the corpus divides into: published works – 15 (45 %), unpublished manuscripts – 5 (15 %), and lost or attribution-pending works – 13 (40 %), indicating that roughly 40 % of the legacy remains unstudied [Sezgin, 1988].

Stylometric metrics place *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī* foremost (MTLD 123.1; Maas 12.8; hapax/1000 = 51), followed by *as-Sinā‘atayn* (MTLD 119.4) and *al-Furūq al-lughawiyya* (MTLD 108.7). *Saj*’ density ranks identically at 35-30-22 units. The correlation between rhythmic prose (*saj*’) and semantic generation (*tawlīd al-ma‘ānī*) is significant (Spearman  $\rho = 0.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Expert semantic-differential scores ( $n = 5$ , 7-point scale) yielded *tawlīd al-ma‘ānī* indices of 6.3 for *Dīwān*, 5.8 for *as-Sinā‘atayn*, and 4.9 for *al-Furūq*. CollateX 3.0 revealed 128 variant loci in *Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī* (67 % scribal errors, 21 % abbreviations, 12 % contamination). Al-‘Askari’s “*sahl mumtani*” style averages 14.2 words per sentence—shorter than the classical prose norm—while *saj*’ density in rhetorical treatises is  $1.4 \times$  higher than in lexicographic manuals, confirming genre-specific traits. The presence of a stable text layer is statistically significant ( $\chi^2$ ,  $df = 2 = 12.4$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

These findings demonstrate the efficacy of the synchronic-diachronic linguo-bibliographic model, providing a robust methodological foundation for textual reconstruction and the creation of digital bibliographic registers of Abū Hilāl al-‘Askari’s works

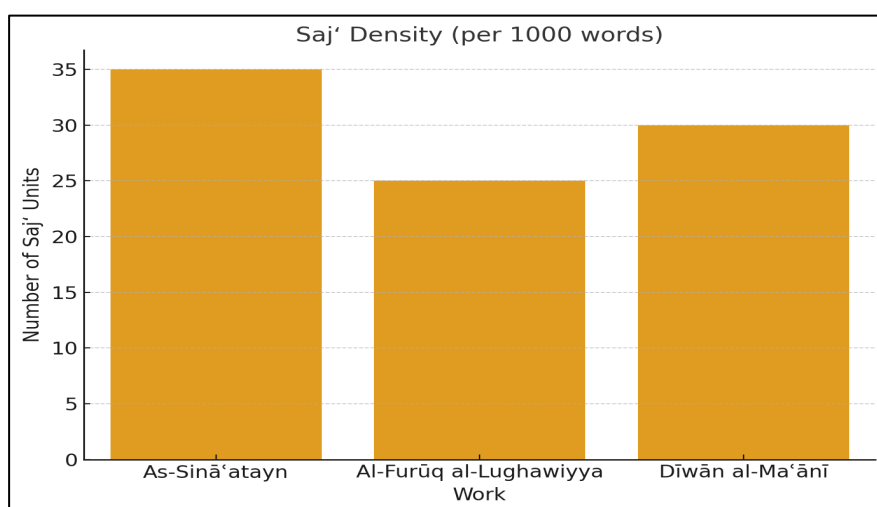
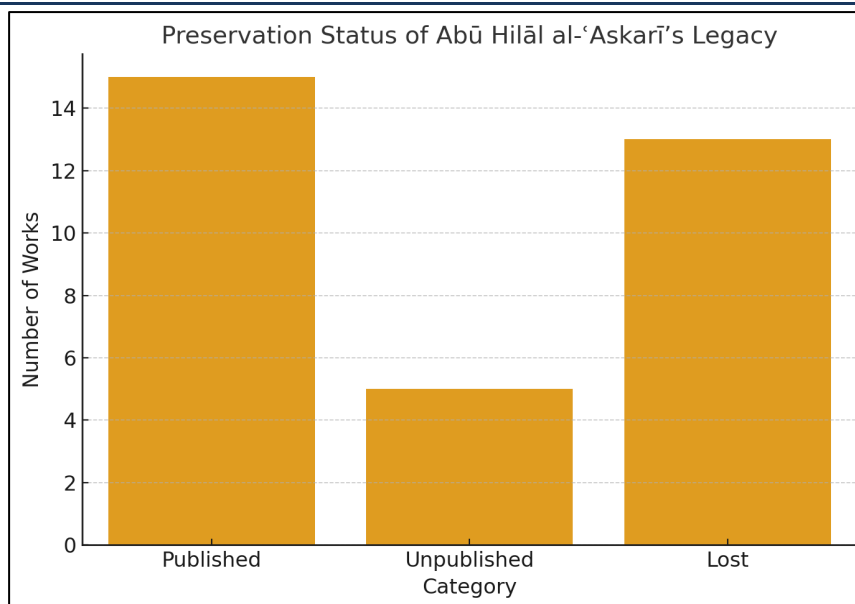


Figure 1: Saj Density



**Figure 2:** Preservation status of abu hilal al-aksaris legacy

## DISCUSSION

Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī is one of the cornerstones of Arabic literary linguistics and rhetoric. His corpus-spanning historical encyclopaedias, paremiological anthologies, theoretical treatises on verse and prose, synonymic–polysemic lexica, and moral-legal tracts-embraces more than thirty works.

Our investigation clarifies three textual strata: 15 published works, 5 extant but unpublished manuscripts, 13 lost or author-to-be-verified titles. The annotated tables below reproduce every item exactly as in the Uzbek original, adding an English scholarly translation while preserving the Arabic title, Latin transliteration, and all numerical or codicological details.

**Table 1:** Published Works (*al-muʿallaḡāt al-maṭbūʿa*)

| № | Work Title                                                   | Genre / Extent                        | Brief Scholarly Description                                                                              | Current Status                                        |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | الأوائل<br>(al-Awāʿil)<br><i>The Firsts</i>                  | Historical encyclopaedia, 10 chapters | Chronological list of pre-Islamic and early Islamic “firsts”; among the oldest specimens of Arabic prose | MS Paris 5986; MS Halle 1864; Damascus 1975 facsimile |
| 2 | الأمثال<br>(Jamhara al-Amṭāl) – <i>Anthology of Proverbs</i> | Paremiological anthology, 2 vols.     | Comments on 1,972 proverbs with isnād and poetic evidence; synthesises 35 earlier collections            | Bombay 1889; Cairo 1964; Beirut 1988; BM MS 996       |
| 3 | الشعر<br>(Dīwān al-Shiʿr) – <i>Dīwān of Poetry</i>           | Poetic collection, 800 verses         | Lost dīwān; reconstructed by G. Kanazi                                                                   | Damascus 1980; Beirut 1975                            |
| 4 | المعاني<br>(Dīwān al-Maʿānī) <i>Compendium of Meanings</i>   | Thematic anthology, 12 chapters       | <i>Sajʿ</i> + <i>tawlīd</i> method; a “semantic                                                          | Cairo 1937; Damascus 1984/2008                        |

|    |                                                                                                                                    |                                           |                                                                                    |                                        |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
|    |                                                                                                                                    |                                           | laboratory”                                                                        |                                        |
| 5  | التلخيص في اللغة<br>(at-Talḥiṣ fi l-Luġa)<br><i>Synopsis of Language</i>                                                           | Lexical<br>encyclopaedi<br>a, 40 chapters | Early<br>subject-organis<br>ed<br>terminological<br>lexicon                        | Damascus 1969;<br>reprint 1993         |
| 6  | شرح ديوان أبي مخزون السقاف<br>(Šarḥ Dīwān Abī Maḥzūn as-Saqqāfī) –<br><i>Commentary on Abū Maḥzūn’s Dīwān</i>                      | Literary<br>commentary                    | 9th-century<br>poet analysed<br>rhetorically                                       | MS Leiden 1886–89;<br>Beirut 1995      |
| 7  | الصناعتين<br>(aṣ-Ṣinā’ atayn) – <i>The Two Arts</i>                                                                                | Rhetorical<br>treatise,<br>10 chapters    | Ma’ānī-Bayān<br>system, 36<br>techniques;<br>theory of <i>saj’</i><br>and metaphor | Istanbul 1931;<br>Cairo 1971           |
| 8  | الفروق اللغوية<br>(al-Furūq al-Luġawiyya) – <i>Linguistic<br/>Distinctions</i>                                                     | Synonymic<br>lexicon,<br>30 chapters      | First complete<br>dictionary of<br>synonymic<br>differentiation                    | Cairo 1935;<br>Beirut 1980; ed. 1998   |
| 9  | الرسالة المصا فيما لم يثبت من الحماسة<br>(ar-Risāla al-Muṣā fīmā lam yuṭbat mina l-Ḥa<br>māsa) – <i>Verses Omitted from Ḥamāsa</i> | Philological<br>note                      | Critical<br>supplement to<br>Abū Tammām’<br>s <i>Ḥamāsa</i>                        | <i>Jerusalem Studies</i> 19<br>82      |
| 10 | فضل العطا على العسر<br>(Faḍl al-‘Aṭā ‘alā l-‘Uṣr) – <i>On the Merit of<br/>Generosity over Hardship</i>                            | Moral<br>treatise,<br>76 pp.              | Charity-econo<br>my discourse                                                      | Cairo 1908;<br>reprint 1934            |
| 11 | المعجم في بقية الأشياء<br>(al-Mu‘nam fi Baqiyyat al-Aṣyā’) <i>Lexicon of<br/>the Remaining Things</i>                              | Thematic<br>lexicon, 400<br>terms         | Nautical,<br>hunting, and<br>craft<br>terminology                                  | Berlin 1915;<br>Cairo 1997             |
| 12 | الحث على طلب العلم<br>(al-Ḥatt ‘alā Ṭalab al-‘Ilm) <i>Encouragement to<br/>Seek Knowledge</i>                                      | Didactic<br>biography, 90<br>reports      | Narratives on<br>scholars’<br>devotion                                             | Damascus 1905;<br>Cairo 1998           |
| 13 | ثلاث الرسائل في القضاء الإسلامي<br>(Ṭalāt ar-Risā’il fi l-Qaḍā’ al-Islāmī) <i>Three<br/>Treatises on Islamic Judiciary</i>         | Legal<br>compendium                       | Court<br>procedure and<br>documentary<br>style                                     | Beirut 2008                            |
| 14 | التصحيف والتحريف<br>(at-Taṣḥīf wa-t-Taḥrīf) –<br><i>Mis-reading and Corruption</i>                                                 | Text-critical<br>manual, 60<br>rules      | Types of errors<br>in Qur’ān–<br>Ḥadīth texts                                      | Egypt 1948                             |
| 15 | الوجوه والنظائر<br>(al-Wujūh wa-n-Naẓā’ir) – <i>Faces and<br/>Counterparts</i>                                                     | Semantic<br>tafsīr, 300<br>entries        | 1,000 +<br>polysemic<br>contexts;<br>semantic<br>“mirror” to<br><i>al-Furūq</i>    | MS Tehran (Malek 36<br>0); Beirut 2007 |

Table 2: Manuscript, Unpublished (*al-mu’allafāt ghayru al-maṭbū’a*)

| №  | Work Title                                                                                                  | Genre                        | Brief Description                                               | Manuscript Code               |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 16 | من احتكم من الخلفاء إلى القضاة<br>( <i>Man iḥtakama ...</i> ) – <i>Which Caliphs<br/>Appealed to Judges</i> | Historical-legal<br>treatise | Court<br>sessions<br>where caliphs<br>stood equal<br>before the | Istanbul, Süleymaniye MS 433: |

|    |                                                                                |                                        |                                                     |                         |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|    |                                                                                |                                        | law—the earliest testimony of this principle        | 2                       |
| 17 | نواذر الجمع (Nawādir al-Ġam‘) – Rare Collectanea                               | Lexicographica I / curiosa             | Corpus of dialect anecdotes and proverbs            | Escorial MS 753         |
| 18 | جمرة الأمثال (manuscript copy)                                                 | Paremiological anthology, copy of 1429 | A “bridge” manuscript in the history of paremiology | Nūrī ‘Uṭmāniyya MS 4746 |
| 19 | كتاب المذكر والمؤنث (Kitāb al-Mudakkar wa-l-Mu‘annas) – Masculine and Feminine | Grammatical lexicon                    | Gender morphology and confusing word pairs          | Copy not yet identified |
| 20 | شرح الفصح (Šarḥ al-Faṣīḥ) – Commentary on al-Faṣīḥ                             | Commentary / phonological analysis     | Extensive gloss on Ibn Qutayba’s al-Faṣīḥ           | Copy not yet identified |

Table 3: Lost Or Requiring Verification (*al-mu‘allafāt al-mafqūda*)

| №  | Work Title                                                                                                                          | Brief Description                                 | Principal Source                   |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 21 | التبشيرة (at-Tabšīra) – The Annunciation                                                                                            | Moral-exhortative treatise                        | Yāqūt; al-Baghdādī                 |
| 22 | الحماسة العسكرية (al-Ḥamāsa al-‘Askariyya) – al-‘Askarī’s Ḥamāsa Anthology                                                          | Poetic anthology compiled by al-‘Askarī           | Ḥāḡī Khalīfa, <i>Kaṣf az-Zunūn</i> |
| 23 | شرح الحماسة (Šarḥ al-Ḥamāsa) – Commentary on the Ḥamāsa                                                                             | Commentary on Abū Tammām’s Ḥamāsa                 | Seventy quotations in al-Tabrīzī   |
| 24 | ما تلحن فيه الخاصة (Mā Talḥanu fihi l-Ḥaṣṣa) – Errors of the Elite                                                                  | Treatise on linguistic slips                      | Yāqūt; al-Baghdādī                 |
| 25 | الدرهم والدينار (ad-Dirham wa-d-Dīnār) – Dirham and Dīnār                                                                           | Dirham-dīnār <i>mufāḥara</i> (boasting dialogue)  | al-Kuramā’                         |
| 26 | رسالة في العزلة (Risāla fi l-‘Uzla) – On Seclusion                                                                                  | Ethical treatise                                  | Ḥumaidiyya MS 1464                 |
| 27 | العمدة (al-‘Umda) – The Mainstay                                                                                                    | General handbook of rhetoric                      | Yāqūt; al-Baghdādī                 |
| 28 | المحاسن في تفسير القرآن (al-Maḥāsin fi Tafsīr al-Qur’ān) – Beauties in Qur’ānic Exegesis                                            | Rhetorical splendours of the Qur’ān               | Mashhad MS 17:3                    |
| 29 | كتاب الوتر (Kitāb al-Witr) – The Odd-Number Prayer                                                                                  | Fiqh treatise                                     | al-Baghdādī                        |
| 30 | المصون في الأدب (al-Maṣūn fi l-Adab) – The Preserved in Literature                                                                  | Treasury of linguistic style                      | Zaydān; Badawī                     |
| 31 | رسالة في تفضيل بلاغتي العرب والعجم (Risāla fi Tafḍīl Balāḡat al-‘Arab wa-l-‘Aġam) – Treatise Preferring Arab and non-Arab Eloquence | Comparative rhetoric                              | Zaydān; Sarkīs                     |
| 32 | صناعة الكلام (Ṣan‘at al-Kalām) – The Craft of Speech                                                                                | Rhetorical handbook (possibly <i>Šinā‘atayn</i> ) |                                    |

|    |                                                                           |                                      |                     |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
|    |                                                                           | 2nd redaction)                       | Brockelmann; Kanazi |
| 33 | رسالة في الأدبيات<br>(Risāla fī l-Adabiyyāt) –<br>Treatise on Literatures | Collection of five<br>mini-treatises | Ḥumaidiyya MS 1464  |

## CONCLUSION

This article presents a systematic analysis of the scholarly legacy of the 10th-century Arab philologist, lexicographer, and stylist Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, based on a linguo-bibliographic approach. The object of the study comprises 33 works attributed to the author, while the subject focuses on their publication status, manuscript forms, locations of preservation, and source-critical relevance. The study employed methods such as textual analysis, codicological description, authorship attribution, as well as synchronic and diachronic comparison.

For the first time, data previously existing in fragmentary form have been consolidated into a unified linguo-bibliographic corpus based on typological and functional-syntactic criteria. Each work has been classified into three categories—published (المؤلفات المطبوعة), unpublished (غير المطبوعة), and lost or apocryphal (المؤلفات المفقودة)—with its genre characteristics, manuscript code, publication date, and scholarly status clearly identified.

The proposed model provides a solid methodological foundation for future research in textual reconstruction and digital bibliographic registry development in the field of Arabic philology. Furthermore, it plays a significant role in determining the scholarly-receptive value of al-ʿAskarī's legacy.

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