

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 Each work was classified into one of three categories according to its textual status: published (المؤلفات المطبوعة), unpublished (غير المطبوعة), or lost/apocryphal (المؤلفات المفقودة).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 MTL, Maas, hapax/1000 tokens, and *saj*’ density; validating correlations with Spearman ρ [Al-‘Askari, 1963].
- **Authorship attribution** – verifying apocryphal texts with N-gram TF-IDF and Burrows Δ .
- **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, χ^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 (χ^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

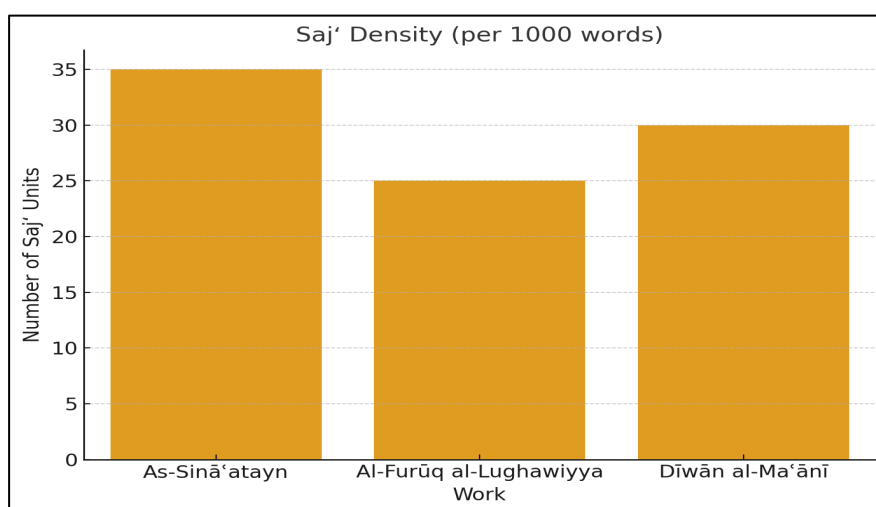


Figure 1: Saj Density

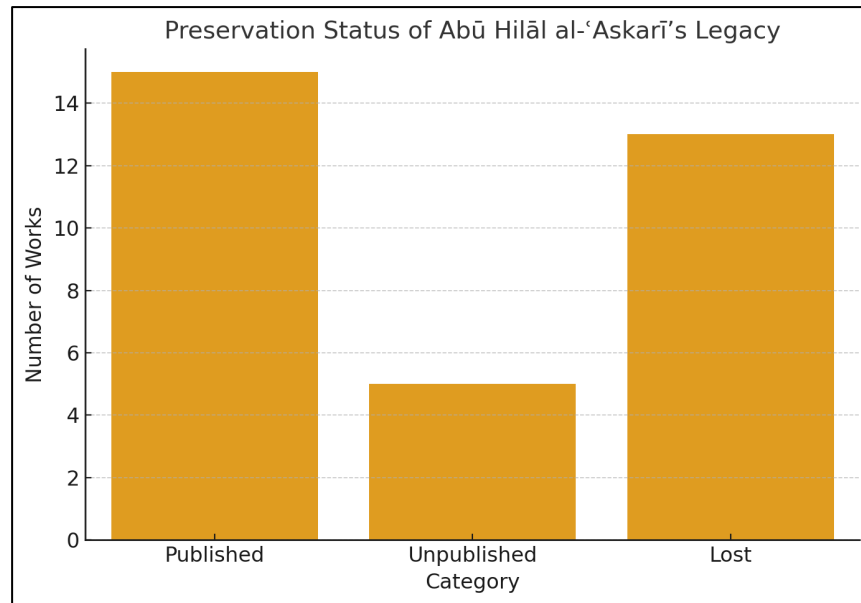


Figure 2: Preservation status of abu hilal al-aksaris legacy

DISCUSSION

Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī 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-mu‘allaḡāt al-maḡbū‘a*)

№	Work Title	Genre / Extent	Brief Scholarly Description	Current Status
1	الأوائل (al-Awā‘il) <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 (Jamhara al-Amṡāl) – <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 (Dīwān al-Shi‘r) – <i>Dīwān of Poetry</i>	Poetic collection, 800 verses	Lost dīwān; reconstructed by G. Kanazi	Damascus 1980; Beirut 1975
4	المعاني (Dīwān al-Ma‘ānī) <i>Compendium of Meanings</i>	Thematic anthology, 12 chapters	<i>Saj‘ + tawlīd</i> method; a “semantic	Cairo 1937; Damascus 1984/2008

			laboratory”	
5	التلخيص في اللغة (at-Talḥiṣ fi l-Luġa) <i>Synopsis of Language</i>	Lexical encyclopaedia, 40 chapters	Early subject-organised terminological lexicon	Damascus 1969; reprint 1993
6	شرح ديوان أبي مخزون السقاف (Šarḥ Dīwān Abī Maḥzūn as-Saqqāfi) <i>Commentary on Abū Maḥzūn’s Dīwān</i>	Literary commentary	9th-century poet analysed rhetorically	MS Leiden 1886–89; Beirut 1995
7	الصناعتين (aṣ-Šinā’ atayn) – <i>The Two Arts</i>	Rhetorical treatise, 10 chapters	Ma’ānī-Bayān system, 36 techniques; theory of <i>saj’</i> and metaphor	Istanbul 1931; Cairo 1971
8	الفروق اللغوية (al-Furūq al-Luġawiyya) – <i>Linguistic Distinctions</i>	Synonymic lexicon, 30 chapters	First complete dictionary of synonymic differentiation	Cairo 1935; Beirut 1980; ed. 1998
9	الرسالة المصا فيما لم يثبت من الحماسة (ar-Risāla al-Muṣā fīmā lam yuṭbat mina l-Ḥamāsa) – <i>Verses Omitted from Ḥamāsa</i>	Philological note	Critical supplement to Abū Tammām’s <i>Ḥamāsa</i>	<i>Jerusalem Studies</i> 19 82
10	فضل العطا على العسر (Faḍl al-‘Aṭā ‘alā l-‘Uṣr) – <i>On the Merit of Generosity over Hardship</i>	Moral treatise, 76 pp.	Charity-economy discourse	Cairo 1908; reprint 1934
11	المعتم في بقية الأشياء (al-Mu‘nam fi Baqiyyat al-Ašyā’) <i>Lexicon of the Remaining Things</i>	Thematic lexicon, 400 terms	Nautical, hunting, and craft terminology	Berlin 1915; Cairo 1997
12	الحث على طلب العلم (al-Ḥatt ‘alā Ṭalab al-‘Ilm) <i>Encouragement to Seek Knowledge</i>	Didactic biography, 90 reports	Narratives on scholars’ devotion	Damascus 1905; Cairo 1998
13	ثلاث الرسائل في القضاء الإسلامي (Ṭalāt ar-Risā’il fi l-Qaḍā’ al-Islāmī) <i>Three Treatises on Islamic Judiciary</i>	Legal compendium	Court procedure and documentary style	Beirut 2008
14	التصحيف والتحريف (at-Taṣḥīf wa-t-Taḥrīf) – <i>Mis-reading and Corruption</i>	Text-critical manual, 60 rules	Types of errors in Qur’ān–Ḥadīth texts	Egypt 1948
15	الوجوه والنظائر (al-Wujūh wa-n-Nazā’ir) – <i>Faces and Counterparts</i>	Semantic tafsīr, 300 entries	1,000+ polysemic contexts; semantic “mirror” to <i>al-Furūq</i>	MS Tehran (Malek 360); 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 (<i>Man iḥtakama ...</i>) – <i>Which Caliphs Appealed to Judges</i>	Historical-legal treatise	Court sessions where caliphs stood equal before the	Istanbul, Süleymaniye MS 433:

			law—the earliest testimony of this principle	2
17	نواذر الجمع (Nawādir al-Ġam‘) – <i>Rare Collectanea</i>	Lexicographica 1 / 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) – <i>Masculine and Feminine</i>	Grammatical lexicon	Gender morphology and confusing word pairs	Copy not yet identified
20	شرح الفصح (Šarḥ al-Faṣīḥ) – <i>Commentary on al-Faṣīḥ</i>	Commentary / phonological analysis	Extensive gloss on Ibn Qutayba’s <i>al-Faṣīḥ</i>	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) – <i>The Annunciation</i>	Moral-exhortative treatise	Yāqūt; al-Baghdādī
22	الحماسة العسكرية (al-Ḥamāsa al-‘Askariyya) – <i>al-‘Askarī’s Ḥamāsa Anthology</i>	Poetic anthology compiled by al-‘Askarī	Ḥāġī Khalīfa, <i>Kašf az-Zunūn</i>
23	شرح الحماسة (Šarḥ al-Ḥamāsa) – <i>Commentary on the Ḥamāsa</i>	Commentary on Abū Tammām’s <i>Ḥamāsa</i>	Seventy quotations in al-Tabrīzī
24	ما تلحن فيه الخاصة (Mā Talḥanu fihi l-Ḥaṣṣa) – <i>Errors of the Elite</i>	Treatise on linguistic slips	Yāqūt; al-Baghdādī
25	الدرهم والدينار (ad-Dirham wa-d-Dīnār) – <i>Dirham and Dīnār</i>	Dirham-dīnār <i>mufāḥara</i> (boasting dialogue)	al-Kuramā’
26	رسالة في العزلة (Risāla fi l-‘Uzla) – <i>On Seclusion</i>	Ethical treatise	Ḥumaidiyya MS 1464
27	العمدة (al-‘Umda) – <i>The Mainstay</i>	General handbook of rhetoric	Yāqūt; al-Baghdādī
28	المحاسن في تفسير القرآن (al-Maḥāsin fi Tafsīr al-Qur’ān) – <i>Beauties in Qur’ānic Exegesis</i>	Rhetorical splendours of the Qur’ān	Mashhad MS 17:3
29	كتاب الوتر (Kitāb al-Witr) – <i>The Odd-Number Prayer</i>	Fiqh treatise	al-Baghdādī
30	المصون في الأدب (al-Maṣūn fi l-Adab) – <i>The Preserved in Literature</i>	Treasury of linguistic style	Zaydān; Badawī
31	رسالة في تفضيل بلاغتي العرب والعجم (Risāla fi Tafḍīl Balāġat al-‘Arab wa-l-‘Aġam) – <i>Treatise Preferring Arab and non-Arab Eloquence</i>	Comparative rhetoric	Zaydān; Sarkīs
32	صناعة الكلام (Ṣan‘at al-Kalām) – <i>The Craft of Speech</i>	Rhetorical handbook (possibly <i>Šinā‘atayn</i>)	

		2nd redaction)	Brockelmann; Kanazi
33	رسالة في الأدبيات <i>Treatise on Literatures</i>	(Risāla fī l-Adabīyyāt) – Collection of five 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-‘Askarī, 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-‘Askarī’s legacy.

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Source of support: Nil; **Conflict of interest:** Nil.

Cite this article as:

Mukhammadjonov, A. “A Synchronic-Diachronic Model of Abu Hilāl Al-‘askarī’s Bibliography: Analysis of Published, Manuscript, and Apocryphal Layers.” *Sarcouncil Journal of Arts and Literature* 4.4 (2025): pp 27-33.