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التطابق بين الصفة والموصوف في القرآن

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Introduction

Definition of the term “Agreement”

It is uniformly agreed by traditional Arabic grammarians and western grammarians that in the example of *rağulun karīmun* (“a noble man”) the adjective agrees fully with the noun regarding determination or indetermination, as well as gender, number and case.¹ This example also fits the working definition of the term “agreement” – a definition that should be presented here to better understand this notion.

According to Lyons, the linguistic phenomenon of agreement or concord falls within the scope of “context sensitive.” In many languages, syntactic constituents in a sentence, such as adjectives, pronouns, numerals, articles and verbs agree with each other regarding gender, case and number. For example, in the French sentence *un livre intéressant* “an interesting book,” the article *un* and the adjective *intéressant* agree with the noun in gender (masculine) and number (singular). Lyons distinguishes between government and agreement by saying that under agreement two or more words or phrases are “inflected” for the same category, such as number and person. In government, two constituents in a syntactic construction do not exhibit the same category (LYONS 1971, p. 241). We may illustrate this principle with two examples from Arabic. In the syntactic structure *hādā waladun kabīrun* “this is a big boy”, the three members of this structure share the same categories: number and gender. In a structure such as *kuntu fī l-bayti* “I was in the house”, however, the preposition *fī* does not agree with the noun *bayt*, but determines it to be in genitive case.

An additional definition of the term is presented by Moravcsik (1978, p. 333):

“A grammatical constituent A will be said to agree with a grammatical constituent B in properties C in language L if C is a set of meaning-related properties of A and there is a covariance relationship between C and some phonological properties of a constituent B1 across some

1 WRIGHT 1896-1898, vol. 2, §136, p. 273.

subset of the sentences of language L, where constituent B1 is adjacent to constituent B and the only meaning-related non-categorical properties of constituent B1 are the properties C.”²

Regarding the example *rağulun karīmun*, A (the noun) and B (the adjective) are called “agreeing constituents.” Constituent B1 is the adjective ending, for example, *-āt*, *-ūna* or no ending for masculine singular, which is called an “agreement marker.” As for C – number, person, determination and case mark – this is called “agreement features.” Thus, *karīmun* (B) agrees with *rağulun* (A) in Arabic because there is a relationship of covariance between the number, person, indetermination and case mark specifications of the noun and between the phonological shape of the adjective, i.e., it has no ending, is undetermined and in nominative case.

This type of determination may explain an agreement structure in which there is “full” agreement between the two constituents A and B; however, it is possible to find in Arabic an agreement structure like *tawbatan naşūhan* (Q 66:8) (“sincere repentance”), where the noun is in feminine singular but the adjective is in singular masculine form.

According to Moravcsik, it is possible that a constituent agrees in gender with a noun phrase that has a gender affix (as in the noun *tawba*) even though this constituent does not have any overt gender marker (as in the adjective *naşūh*) and therefore does not show any kind of gender agreement with the noun. Another possible agreement pattern is when the constituent that agrees with the noun has a different gender marker (MORAVCSIK 1978, p. 337). For example, *ayyāman ma’dūdatan* (Q 2:80) “numbered days”, where the noun is in plural masculine and the adjective has the feminine singular suffix. As can be seen, the presence of an overt gender marker on the noun may be neither necessary nor sufficient to guarantee gender agreement for all components that could in principle agree (MORAVCSIK 1978, p. 342). Furthermore, it is not generally true that a singular noun will agree always with singular constituent or a plural noun will always agree with constituents in plural (MORAVCSIK 1978, p. 343). As an example of such a structure, Moravcsik mentions that in modern Arabic, a plural inanimate subject may take either singular or plural verb agreement (MORAVCSIK 1978, p. 346).

Definition of the term “Adjective”

According to Jespersen, there is usually a clear distinction in the languages between nouns and adjectives. Words denoting ideas such as “stone,” “tree” and “knife” are considered substantives, while “big,” “old” and “grey” are everywhere adjectives. This division is based on the common fact that substantives denote substances and adjectives refer to the qualities found in these things. It seems that this explanation is not satisfactory, because if the abstract noun “wisdom” and the adjective “wise” are compared, it can be seen that both denote the same qualities.

2 Cf. LEHMANN 1982, p. 203-204.

One of the prominent features of the adjective which differentiates it from the substantive is that the adjective indicates and singles out one quality, one distinguishing mark. The substantives, however, indicate many distinguishing features. For example, the adjective “sweet” in English indicates only one quality, while the noun “sweets” is more general than the adjective (JESPERSEN 1953, p. 75-77).

Thus, in general, the adjective is defined as a word that names a quality, and in some definitions the attributive adjective is described as modifying a head noun, or “adjective” is a term that refers to the main set of items that specify the attributes of noun. These definitions, which are presented by Goldenberg, are according to him generally inapposite (GOLDENBERG 1998, p. 51), therefore it would be more appropriate to define the adjective as follows (GOLDENBERG 1998, p. 53-54):

“Most typical are those adjectives which are distinguished by being susceptible of inflexion for gender, and may also be free, i.e. not syntactically connected with a substantive, as is also the case in many Semitic languages. Essential to the meaning of adjectives is that they do not name qualities but possessor of qualities [...]. It is not enough to recognize the adjective as the syntactically independent expression of an entity as characterized by some quality or state. If we admit that adjective have to do both with the carrier of the quality and with the attributed quality itself, then the form ‘adjective’ is recognized as an attributive complex with pronominal references and attribute as distinguishable components, the former represented by the inflexional markers and the later given the lexeme involved.”

Thus, according to Goldenberg the adjective *ḥakīm* (“wise”) is equivalent to *raḡulun ḥikmatin* or *raḡulun dū ḥikmatin* (“a man of wisdom.”) In this case, the adjective *ḥakīm* includes the possessor of the quality, which is represented by a zero inflexion because the possessor is in singular masculine and it includes also the quality – wisdom.³

Turning to the traditional Arab grammarians, it is possible to refer first to Sībawayhi’s definition of the term *adjective* as it was explained by Diem. Sībawayhi calls the adjective *ṣifa* “description.” He separates this category from the nouns, but in some cases he mentions that the adjective can be used as a substantive and in this case it will have a different plural form, as for example, *faṣīḥ* “artist talk”, which has the plural form *fuṣūḥ*. *Ṣifa* is not equivalent to the adjective in Latin grammar because it can be seen that Sībawayhi considers a verb to be an adjective. For example, in the sentence *hādā raḡulun ḍarabanā* “this is a man who hit (or hits) us,” Sībawayhi explains in a different context that the verb is used as *ṣifa* of an indefinite phrase because it actually takes the place of the active participle *ḍārib*. Thus, in this case the *ṣifa* denotes not only the adjective but also the asyndetic relative clause (DIEM 2007, p. 281-282).

3 Goldenberg says that the adjective is, in essence, equivalent to a genitive construction; however, can it be said that in the case of *raḡulun lubnāniyyun*, the adjective is also equivalent to a genitive structure? It might be said that it is impossible to compare the adjective *lubnāniyyun* to genitive contracture like **raḡul Lubnān* (“a man of Lebanon”). In addition, it is not quite clear how Goldenberg’s definition of the term “adjective” can explain cases such as *tawba naṣūḥ*, because according to Goldenberg the carrier or the possessor of the quality should be represented by the inflexional marks of the adjective. The adjective *naṣūḥ*, however, does not have any mark at the end, although the possessor is *tawba* – a feminine singular noun.

The traditional Arab grammarians refer briefly to the definition of the term “adjective.” It is clear that they support the common idea that the adjective refers to a specific quality of the mentioned noun:

*aṣ-ṣifa: hiya l-ismu d-dāllu ‘alā ba‘ḍi aḥwālī d-dāti wa-dālīka naḥwa ṭawīlun wa-qaṣīrun wa-‘āqilun wa-aḥmaqu wa-qā’imun wa-qā’idun (...) wa-yuqālu innahā li-t-taḥṣīṣi fī n-nakirāti wa-li-t-tawḍīhi fī l-ma‘ārifi.*⁴

“The adjective is a noun which refers to some of the situations [and qualities] of the [modified] noun, for example: tall, short, smart, stupid, standing and seating [...] It is said that the adjective is used for specification when it follows indefinite noun and it is used for clarification when it follows definite noun.”⁵

For the principle of the adjective agreement as presented by the traditional Arab grammarians, Zağğāğī can be quoted:

*fa-ammā n-na‘tu fa-tābi‘un li-l-man‘ūti fī rafihi wa-naṣbihi wa-ḥafḍihi wa-ta‘rīfihi wa-tankīrihi. in kāna l-ismu marfū‘an fa-na‘tuhu marfū‘un wa-in kāna maṣṣūban fa-na‘tuhu maṣṣūbun wa-in kāna maḥfūḍan fa-na‘tuhu maḥfūḍun taqūlu min dālīka qāma Zaydun l-‘āqilu tarfa‘u Zaydan bi-fī‘lihi wa-l-‘āqil na‘tuhu.*⁶

“As for the adjective, it agrees with the noun in nominative, accusative and genitive case and in indefiniteness. If the noun is in nominative case, the adjective will be in nominative case. If the noun is in accusative case then its adjective will be in accusative case. If the noun is in genitive case, the adjective will be in genitive case. You say ‘Zayd the wise stood up’ and you put Zayd in nominative case because it is the subject of the verbal predicate and l-‘āqil functions as its adjective.”

Examination of the adjectives’ description given by the traditional Arab grammarians shows that they did not pay much attention to all agreement patterns in their discussion. In contrast to the issue of the adjectival agreement, the morphology occupies a large part in the discussion of the adjectives. Ibn Hišām, for example, divides the adjective into four categories:

- a. Derived adjective: This type of adjective indicates both an action and its agent (*mā dalla ‘alā ḥadaṭin wa-ṣāhibihi*). Ibn Hišām categorized in this group the active and passive participles, as *ḍārib* “hits” and *maḍrūb* “being hit.” Additionally he mentions the adjective of the kind *ṣifa muṣabbaha bi-l-fī‘l* “adjective that is like a verb”, i.e., adjectives derived from intransitive. E.g., *ḥasan* “good,” which is derived from the verb *ḥasuna* “to become nice.”

4 Ibn Ya‘īš, *Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*, vol. 2-3, p. 46.

5 Ibn Ya‘īš (*Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*, p. 47) gives the following example for “specification” and “clarification:” *rağulun ‘alīmun* is more specific than *rağul* – an indefinite noun without any specification. In the sentence *ğā’anī Zaydun l-‘āqilu* the adjective helps to distinguish between Zaydun l-‘āqilu and other men with the name Zayd, because the adjective clarifies to whom the speaker refers. Cf. Anbārī, *Asrār al-‘arabiyya*, p. 293.

6 Zağğāğī, *al-Ğumal*, p. 26; cf. Anbārī, *Asrār al-‘arabiyya*, p. 294. He adds that the adjectives follows the noun in number (singular, plural or dual), in gender (feminine or masculine) and in definiteness or indefiniteness.

- b. “Frozen” adjective (*al-ğāmid*): In this category belong adjectives formed by *dū* or with the so-called *nisba*-ending, as, for example, *marartu bi-rağulin dī mālin* “I passed on a man who owns money” or *marartu bi-rağulin dimašqī* “I passed a man from Damascus.”
- c. Clause that functions as adjective: For example, *wa-ttaqū yawman turğa'ūna fīhi ilā llāhi* (Q 2:281) “and fear a day on which you will be returned to God.”
The clause may function in this context as an adjective because it fulfils three conditions: first, the qualified noun *yawm* is indefinite; second, the relative clause includes an anaphoric pronoun that connects the clause with the qualified noun; and third, the clause should be declarative (*ğumla ḥabariyya*).
- d. Verbal noun: For example, *rağulun 'adlun* (“a just man.”) According to the grammarians of Kūfa this noun has the same value of the active participle *'ādil*, while according to the grammarians of Baṣra, the *nomen rectum* is hidden and should be reconstructed (*taqdīr muḍāf*) as follows: *rağulun dū 'adlin*.⁷

Agreement types in Classical Arabic

The western grammarians, such as Wright (1898-1896), Brockelmann (1962), Nöldeke (1963), Fleischer (1968) and Fischer (1972), do not ignore the issue of agreement in their discussion of adjectives. However, like the traditional Arab grammarians, they do not provide a detailed description of the agreement types that exist in Classical Arabic. They usually are satisfied with few examples in which the adjective is not in full agreement with the noun.

There are additional works that deal directly or indirectly with agreement issues and will be reviewed briefly in this section.

Sāmīrrāṭī (1956) discusses in his dissertation plural and collective forms in the Qur'ān. After presenting the morphology of each form, he shows how the syntactic constituents agree with these nouns. Sāmīrrāṭī's work is more descriptive than analytic because the factors that affect the agreement are usually missing in this work. In his dissertation, Kahle (1975) dedicates a chapter to the agreement type of specific adjectives based on various pre-classical texts that belong, according to him, to the period before the Arab language was normalized by the traditional Arabic grammar.

Fischer (1980), who deals with the plural forms in Arabic, refers *inter alia* to their agreement types. Ferguson (1989) examines the agreement pattern in Classical and New Arabic to see whether the change that has occurred in these types can support Versteegh's theory that these changes are a result of pidginization, creolization and decreolization. The agreement of human and non-human plurals in Classical Arabic compared with Modern Arabic is the topic of two articles written by Belnap (1992, 1999).

7 Ibn Hišām, *Awḍaḥ al-masālik ilā alfiyyat Ibn Mālik*, p. 6-9. Cf. Suyūṭī, *Kitāb ham' al-hawāmi'*, vol. 6, p. 57-56; KRAHL n.y, p. 27-49; FISCHER 2006, vol. 1, p. 16-18.

It is worth noting in this context the adjectival agreement categories introduced by Reckendorf regarding Classical Arabic in general (1921, p. 89-90).

Noun	Adjective
Singular masculine	Singular masculine
Singular feminine	Singular feminine
Dual masculine	Dual masculine
Dual feminine	Dual feminine
Sound plural masculine, human	Plural
Sound plural masculine, nonhuman	Singular feminine and seldom plural
Sound plural feminine, human	Plural and seldom singular feminine
Sound plural feminine, nonhuman	Singular feminine and seldom plural
Broken plural, human	Plural and seldom singular feminine
Broken plural, nonhuman	Singular feminine and seldom plural
Collective noun, human	Plural and seldom singular
Collective noun, nonhuman	Singular feminine or masculine or plural
Names of tribes	Singular feminine or plural
Collective nouns that have no <i>nomen unitatis</i> ⁸	Singular feminine or plural
Collective nouns that have <i>nomen unitatis</i> ⁹	Singular masculine or feminine and plural (feminine)

It is the purpose of this article to present in a more detailed way than Reckendorf all agreement types that exist in the Qur'ān. Furthermore, this article attempts to clarify the types that show incomplete agreement. Some of these types were broadly discussed in the research literature (types of agreement 1, 4 and 6 below), therefore the main findings are presented. Some of the types are not even mentioned in the research literature (types 2 and 3 below). In other cases a reexamination of the given explanation for the agreement type is necessary (type 5 below). As for the research methods, the analysis of the agreement phenomenon requires consulting Qur'ān exegeses, classical dictionaries or referring to further syntactic issues, such as the difference between the plural forms in Arabic that can affect the agreement.

Types of adjectival agreement in the Qur'ān

This part of the article attempts to present in a more detailed fashion the different types of adjectival agreement that exist in the Qur'ān. The following chart includes not only the different types and examples but also statistics that reveal the exact dimensions of the adjectival agreement phenomenon in the Qur'ān. The agreement types are presented in

8 *Nomen unitatis* is the noun that denotes the individual – for example, *baqar* (*nomen generis* or *asmā' l-ğins*) and *baqara* (*nomen unitatis*). See ULLMAN 1989-1993, p. 1-5.

9 They are called in Arabic *asmā' l-ğam'*, e.g. *qawm* “tribe.”

	Transparent agreement				Obscure agreement			
	Noun	Adjective	Occ.	Example	Noun	Adjective	Occ.	Example
1. sg. masc.	sg. masc.	sg. masc.	934	<i>al-fawz l-mubīn</i>	–	–	–	–
2. sg. fem.	sg. fem.	sg. fem.	186	<i>ḥikma bālīḡa</i>	sg. fem.	sg. masc.	16	<i>tawba naṣūḥ</i>
					sg. fem.	pl. masc.	1	<i>nuṭfa amšāḡ</i>
3. plural human	sound pl. masc.	sound pl. masc.	2	<i>al-munāfiqīna z-zānnīna</i>	–	–	–	–
	sound pl. masc.	broken pl. masc.	1	<i>al-muṣṭafīna l-aḥyār</i>	–	–	–	–
	sound pl. fem.	sound pl. fem.	3	<i>al-muḥsināt l-ḡāfilāt</i>	–	–	–	–
	broken pl. masc.	sound pl. masc.	25	<i>‘ibādī ṣ-ṣāliḥīna</i>	–	–	–	–
	broken pl. masc.	broken pl.	3	<i>ar-rukka’ s-suḡūd</i>	broken pl. masc.	fem. sg.	1	<i>an-nuḡur l-ūlā</i>
					broken pl. masc.	masc. sg.	2	<i>riḡāl kaṭīr</i>
	broken pl. fem.	sound pl. fem.	9	<i>nisā’ mu’mināt</i>	broken pl. fem.	masc. sg.	1	<i>azwāḡ ḥayr</i>
	broken pl. fem.	broken pl.	4	<i>azwāḡ abkār</i>	broken pl. fem.	fem. sg.	3	<i>azwāḡ muṭahhara</i>
4. plural non-human	sound pl. fem.	sound pl. fem.	13	<i>āyāt bayyināt</i>	sound pl. fem.	fem. sg.	2	<i>āyātunā l-kubrā</i>
	Sound pl. fem.	broken pl.	14	<i>sunbulāt ḥuḍr</i>	–	–	–	–
	broken pl.	broken pl.	4	<i>al-aṣḥur l-ḥurum</i>	broken pl.	sound pl. fem.	11	<i>ayyām ma’dūdāt</i>
	broken pl.	sound pl. masc.	4	<i>arbāb mutafarriqūna</i>	broken pl.	fem. sg.	47	<i>ayyām ma’dūda</i>
	broken pl.	number	1	<i>azwāḡ ṭalāṭa</i>	–	–	–	–
5. collective nouns human ¹⁰	collective noun masc.	sg. masc.	6	<i>ḡund mahzūm</i>	collective noun masc.	sound pl. masc.	85	<i>qawm mu’minūna</i>
	collective noun fem.	sg. fem.	17	<i>umma qā’ima</i>	collective noun sg.	broken pl.	5	<i>ḡurriyya ḡi’āf</i>
6. coll. nouns non-human ¹¹	collective noun	sg. masc.	19	<i>al-ṣaḥāb l-musaḥḥar</i>	collective noun	sg. fem.	3	<i>naḥl ḥāwiya</i>
					collective noun	sound pl. fem.	1	<i>ṣaḥāb ḡulumāt</i>
					collective noun	broken pl.	3	<i>ṣaḥāb ṭiqāl</i>
7. plural of coll. noun human	pl.	sound pl. masc.	1	<i>qurūn aḥarīna</i>	pl.	sg. masc.	2	<i>ribbiyyuna kaṭīr</i>
					pl.	fem. sg.	2	<i>al-qurūn l-ūlā</i>
8. plural of coll. noun non-human	pl.	broken pl.	2	<i>naḥīl šinwān</i>	pl.	fem. sg.	3	<i>maḡānim kaṭīra</i>
9. dual	dual	dual	12	<i>ḡulāmayni yatīmayni</i>	–	–	–	–

10 Reckendorf calls this kind of collective “Collective nouns which have no *nomen unitatis*.”

11 According to Reckendorf, this type of collective nouns is “Collective noun which has *nomen unitatis*.”

two parallel columns. The left column is entitled “transparent agreement” while the right column is entitled “obscure agreement.”¹² The term “transparent agreement” is used here to refer to all agreement structures in which the integral noun characteristics of gender and number are fully manifested in the adjective. “Obscure agreement” refers to all agreement structures in which one or both characteristics are not manifested in the adjective. It should be emphasized that presenting agreement types under the same column does not mean necessarily that they belong to the same agreement category. Referring back to the definition of the term “agreement,” it might be seen that an agreement type such as *tawba naṣūḥ* cannot be compared with the type of *an-nuḍur l-ūlā*. In the first type, constituent B agrees with constituent A in all agreement features except gender. However, in the second type B agrees with A only in determination and case mark. There is no agreement between the constituents in number and gender.

To summarize, of 1461 collected adjectives, there are 1258 whose agreement is transparent as opposed to 203 with obscure agreement.

Statistical segmentation of the transparent agreement:

1. Adjectives in singular masculine agree with nouns in singular masculine (934 adjectives, which is 63.92% of all the adjectives).
2. Adjectives in singular feminine agree with nouns in singular feminine (186 adjectives, which is 12.73% of all adjectives).
3. Adjectives in broken or sound plural (masculine and feminine) agree with nouns in broken or sound plural designating the human (46 adjectives, which is 3.14% of all adjectives).
4. Adjectives in broken or sound plural (masculine and feminine) agree with nouns in broken or sound plural designating the non-human (36 adjectives, which is 2.39% of all adjectives).
5. Adjectives in singular masculine or feminine agree with collective nouns masculine or feminine designating the human (23 adjectives, 1.57% of all adjectives).
6. Adjectives in singular masculine agree with collective nouns masculine designating the non-human (19 adjectives, 1.30% of all adjectives).
7. Adjectives in dual agree with nouns in dual (12 adjectives, 0.82% of all adjectives).
8. Adjectives in broken plural agree with plural of collective nouns designating the human or non-human (3 adjectives, 0.20% of all adjectives).

Statistical segmentation of the partial agreement:

1. Adjectives in broken plural or sound plural masculine agree with collective nouns designating the human (90 adjectives, 6.16% of all adjectives)
2. Adjectives in singular feminine agree with nouns in broken or sound plural feminine designating the non-human (49 adjectives, 3.35% of all adjectives).

¹² Ferguson (1989, p. 9) uses the term “strict agreement” for describing agreement in which some category that is overtly or inherently present in the “controller” (subject or head-noun) is copied in the “target” (verb, noun-modifier) and “deflected agreement” in which, for example, a plural controller is associated with a feminine singular target. Bahloul (2006, p. 46) uses the notions “partial agreement” and “asymmetric agreement.”

3. Adjectives in broken plural or sound plural feminine agree with nouns in broken plural designating the non-human (25 adjectives, 1.71% of all adjectives).
4. Adjectives in singular masculine agree with nouns in singular feminine (16 adjectives, 1.09% of all adjectives).
5. Adjectives in singular masculine and feminine agree with nouns in broken plural designating the human (7 adjectives, 0.47% of all adjectives).
6. Adjectives in broken or sound plural feminine agree with collective nouns designating the non-human (7 adjectives, 0.47% of all adjectives).
7. Adjectives in singular masculine or feminine agree with plural of collective nouns designating the non-human (7 adjective, 0.47 of all adjectives).
8. Adjectives in singular masculine agree with nouns in singular feminine (1 adjective, 0.06% of all adjectives).
9. Adjectives in sound plural masculine agree with nouns in sound plural feminine designating the human (1 adjective, 0.06% of all adjectives).

Factors that affect adjectival agreement

Type of agreement (1): adjectives in singular masculine agree with nouns in feminine singular

The common type of agreement with a noun in singular feminine is transparent agreement; 186 adjectives in singular feminine, as opposed to 16 adjectives in singular masculine and one adjective in plural.

All adjectives that belong to this category do not display gender agreement. Among them it is possible to identify the following adjectives:

- a. Adjectives in singular masculine, which agree with both masculine singular and feminine singular nouns, as in, for example, *baldatan maytan* (Q 43:11) (“a dead land.”) According to Fleischer, the adjective *mayt* is originally in the form of *fa’īl* and over time it transformed from *mayyit* to *mayt*. He mentions that both the forms *mayyit* and *mayt* have a parallel feminine form, *mayyita* and *mayta*, like other adjectives in this form, such as *hayyin* - *hayyina*, *layyin* - *layyina*. Another possibility that is presented by Fleischer is that the noun *balda* has the same meaning as *balad* or *makān* and therefore the adjective is in singular masculine. It is also possible that *mayyit* here has the same meaning as *mawt*, thus *baldatan mayyitan* could be translated as “a land of death” and according to Fleischer this structure is no different than *silsilatun ḥadīdun*.¹³ It seems that only the adjective *mayt* does not agree with the noun *balda*. Examination of other occurrences of this noun shows a transparent agreement, as in:

wa-škurū lahu baldatun ṭayyibatun (Q 34:15)
 “And give thanks to him; a good land.”¹⁴

13 FLEISCHER 1968, vol. 1, p. 672. See also Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, vol. 5, p. 108. Two nouns, one in singular masculine and the other in singular feminine having the same meaning, also exist in the Biblical Hebrew, e.g., *naqam-neqama* “revenge”, *‘ašam-‘ašma* “guilt.” See WALTKE & O’CONNOR 1990, p. 106.

14 ARBERRY 1964, p. 439. The translation of the Qur’ānic verses is taken from Arberry’s translation. In some cases, there are some changes introduced to his translation.

innamā umirtu an a'buda rabba hādihi l-baldati llaḏī ḥarramahā (Q 27:91)

"I have only been commanded to serve the Lord of this territory which he has made sacred."

- b. Adjectives in singular masculine that can be only related to feminine singular nouns, such as *ʿaḡḡzun ʿaqīmun* (Q 51:29) ("an old woman, barren.")
- c. Adjectives in the form of *faʿūl* with an active meaning and those in the form of *faʿīl* with a passive meaning, such as *imraʿatun ṣabūrun wa-ṣakūrun* ("a patient and grateful woman") do not have a separate form for the feminine, and thus an adjective in singular masculine follows both genders.¹⁵ For example:

yā-ayyuhā llaḏīna āmanū tūbū ilā llāhi tawbatan naṣūḥan (Q 66:8)

"Believers, turn to God in sincere repentance."

qāla innahu yaqūlu innahā baqaratun lā ḍalūlun tuṭīru l-arḍa (Q 2:71)

"He says she shall be a cow not broken to plough the earth."

- d. Adjectives in the infinitive form (*aṣ-ṣifa bi-l-maṣdar*). The adjective *sawāʿin* can be categorized in this sub-category:

qul yā-ahla l-kitābi taʿālāw ilā kalimatin sawāʿin baynanā wa-baynakum (Q 3:64)

"Say: People of the book! Come now to a word common between us and you."

According to Ibn Manẓūr, *sawāʿin* is an infinitive (*maṣdar*) that cannot be conjugated, i.e., does not have a feminine or plural form.¹⁶

Type of agreement (2): adjectives in broken plural agree with nouns in feminine singular

innā ḥalaqnā l-insāna min nuṭfatin amšāḡin (Q 76:2)

"We created man of a sperm-drop, a mingling, trying him."

It seems that the adjective *amšāḡin* is in broken plural form, thus the agreement with a noun in singular feminine is obscure. The commentators on the Qurʾān disagree about the form of this adjective. Thus, according to Zamaḥṣarī, the adjective *amšāḡin* is in singular feminine and agrees with the noun in feminine singular:

*(nuṭfatin amšāḡin) ka-barmatin aʿšārin, wa-bardin akyāšin: wa-hiya alfāzun mufradatun ḡayru ḡumūʿin wa-li-ḍālika waqaʿat ṣifātin li-l-afrādi wa-yuqālu ayḏān: nuṭfatun mašāḡun.*¹⁷

"(a drop of mingled sperm) (this structure has the same form as): *ka-barmat aʿšār* and *bard akyāš*¹⁸: the adjectives are in singular form and not in plural form and for that reason they function as adjectives of the preceding nouns. Another structure that is to be found is *nuṭfatun mašḡun*."

15 WRIGHT 1896-1898, vol. 1, §297, p. 24. Cf. RECKENDORF 1921, p. 60 and NÖLDEKE 1963, p. 20.

16 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, vol. 3, p. 373. According to Kurylowicz 1973, p. 96, verbal nouns that function as adjective are actually abstract nouns that are usually analyzed as appositional impeding the agreement of gender.

17 Zamaḥṣarī, *al-Kaššāf*, vol. 5, p. 666.

18 According to Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, vol. 5, p. 367, *barmatun aʿšārun* and *bardun akyāšun* are Yemeni garments.

Bayḍāwī presents two possibilities in his commentary to Q 76:2. The adjective *amšāḡin* can be either singular or plural (1955, p. 289):

(*amšāḡin*) *aḥlātun ḡamu' mašaḡin, mašḡin aw mašḡin min mašaḡta š-šay'a idā ḥallaṭtahu wa-ḡumi'a n-nuṭfatu bihi li-anna l-murāda bihā maḡmū'u maniyyi r-raḡuli wa-l-mar'ati wa-kullun minhumā muḥṭalifu l-aḡzā'i fī r-riqqa wa-l-qawāmi wa-l-ḥawāṣi,*¹⁹ *wa-li-dālika yaṣīru kullu ḡuz'in minhumā māddata 'uḡwin. wa-qīla muḡradun ka-a'šār wa-akbāš.*²⁰

“(amšāḡin) this adjective that is parallel to the plural form *aḥlāt* is the plural of *mašaḡ*, *mašḡ* or *mašḡ*. These forms are derived from the verb *mašaḡta*, which means ‘you mix something if you combine it (mix it up).’ This adjective is in plural because the meaning (of the noun *nuṭfa*) is the plural (form) of the man’s and the women’s sperms (i.e. ovum), yet the sperm of the man and the ovum chromosomes of the woman are different from each other in their softness and their composition, and for that reason the man’s sperm and the ovum become a “material” member in the combined mixture. It is also said that the adjective is in singular form, like *a'šār* and *akbāš*.”

To conclude, regarding this type of agreement it may be said that there are two different ways to understand the structure *nuṭḡatin amšāḡin*. The adjective is in singular form and thus the agreement is transparent and can be translated as “a mixed drop;” or the adjective is in plural form and thus the agreement is obscure and this structure might be translated as an annexation structure (“a drop of mixed sperm and ovum.”)

Type of agreement (3): adjectives in singular feminine agree with nouns in broken plural designating the human

Statistically, the most common agreement to nouns in plural designating humans is an adjective in plural, i.e., a transparent agreement. There are only seven exceptions – four of them are the following:

ḥādā naḡīrun mina n-nuḡuri l-ūlā (Q 53:56)

“This is a warner, of the warners of old.”

wa-lahum fīhā azwāḡun muṭaḡharatun (Q 2:25; 3:15; 4:57)

“And there for them shall be spouses purified.”

As for Q 53:56, the commentators on the Qur'ān present two possible meanings of the word *nuḡur*. According to Zamahṣarī and Bayḍāwī, *nuḡur* means *indārāt* (“warnings”²¹) and thus the translation of the verse would be “this is a warning from the previous warnings.” However, they mention also that *nuḡur* is the plural of *naḡīr*, referring to the prophet Muḡammad, who was one of the first warners who was sent to the people (vol. 4, p. 429).²²

Regarding the option that *nuḡur* is a plural non-human, it may be said that the agreement is indeed obscure, but as will be shown in type 5, an adjective in singular feminine that

19 The meaning here of the words *ḥawāṣ* or *ḥiwāṣ* is unclear. This form is not mentioned by Ibn Manṣūr and Lane.

20 Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-tawīl*, 1955, p. 289

21 See also Q 54: 5 *fa-mā tuḡni n-nuḡuru* “and their warnings will not be useful,” where a verb in feminine singular precedes the plural noun designating the non-human.

22 Cf. Bayḍāwī, p. 237.

agrees with plural nouns designating the non-human is common in the Qurʾān. Thus, the structure *an-nuḍur l-ūlā* is not an exceptional structure in the Qurʾān. However, an adjective in singular feminine that agrees with a plural designating the human is less common and even rare in the Qurʾān.²³ Nöldeke (1963, p. 83) shows that in Classical Arabic the agreement in singular feminine with a plural noun designating the human also exists, as in:

ǧā'athum rusuluhum “their messengers came to them.”
aǧlat fawārisuhum “their horsemen retreated.”

As for Q 2:25, both types of agreement, i.e., the adjective in feminine singular and the adjective in plural, are allowed:

*fa-hallā ǧā'ati ṣ-ṣifatu maǧmū'atan ka-mā fi l-mawṣūfi? qultu: humā luǧatāni faṣiḥatāni. yuqālu: an-nisā'u fa'alna, wa-hunna fā'ilātun wa-fawā'ilun, wa-n-nisā'u fa'alat wa-hiya fā'ilatun.*²⁴

“Why is the adjective not in plural form like the noun that it modifies? I said (Zamaḥṣarī): Both dialect variants are correct. It is said the women did, and they are doing and woman did and she is doing.”

Examination of other occurrences of the noun *azwāǧ* “wives”²⁵ shows that the common agreement with this noun is in plural (feminine): Q 2:234; 4:12; 33:4; 33:6; 33:37; 33:50.

In Q 60:11, a verb in singular feminine precedes this noun and in Q 30:21 the pronoun that refers to *azwāǧ* is in singular feminine. Additionally, there is one case of Q 66:5 *azwāǧan ḥayran*, where the adjective *ḥayr* is an elative form which cannot be inflected.²⁶

*Type of agreement (4): adjectives in masculine singular agree with nouns in broken plural designating the human*²⁷

wa-baṭṭa minhumā riǧālan kaṭīran wa-nisā'an (Q 4:1)
 “And from the pair of them scattered abroad many men and women.”

Obscure agreement with the adjective *kaṭīr* is also found in Q 3:146; 25:49; 36:62. The nouns in these verses are in plural denoting the human but the adjectives that follow them are in singular masculine. Contrary to this type of agreement, when the noun is broken plural and denotes the non-human, the adjective *kaṭīra* (feminine singular) follows it, as in:

mawāṭina kaṭīratin (Q 9:25).²⁸
 “God help you in many battle-fields.”

23 Q 46:21 *wa-qad ḥalati n-nuḍuru* “the warners passed on them” is another occurrence where a verb in singular feminine precedes noun in plural designating the human.

24 Zamaḥṣarī, *al-Kaššāf*, vol. 4, p. 110; cf. Bayḍāwī, p. 17.

25 There are three occurrences in which *azwāǧ* has different meanings than “wives”. In Q 36:36; 43:12 it means “pairs” and in Q 56:7 it means “bands”.

26 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, vol. 2, p. 336.

27 Q 66:5 *azwāǧan ḥayran minkunna* can be also classified in this category. However, it is not discussed in detail because the adjective *ḥayran* is in elative form and is considered to be “frozen,” i.e., this form agrees with nouns in singular or plural designating the human and non-human.

28 Additional examples are: Q 2:245; 4:94; 23:21; 38:51; 43:73; 48:19; 48: 20; 56:32

As opposed to the other types of agreement mentioned, the commentators on the Qur'ān do not discuss the obscure agreement that was created due to an adjective in singular masculine following a plural noun. The fact that the adjective *kaṭīr* does not reflect gender and number agreement is mentioned by Hopkins (1984, p.142):

“Some adjectives of the pattern *fa'īl* may remain without *tā' marbūṭa* when referring to a feminine noun (...). Among such words are *qalīl* “few” and its opposite *kaṭīr*: *wa-ṣan'atuka kaṭīr* “and your affability towards me is great.”

It should be mentioned that the adjective *kaṭīr* remains in singular masculine regardless of the gender and number of the modified noun, while verbs and prepositions show transparent agreement with *riḡāl*, as in, for example, Q 7:48; 9:108; 24:37; 33:23; 38:62; 48:25.

Type of agreement (5): adjectives in feminine singular agree with plural nouns designating the non-human vs. adjectives in plural agree with plural non-human

There are 49 adjectives in singular feminine that agree with plural non-human, as opposed to 60 adjectives in plural that agree with plural non-human. The following are examples of these two types of agreement:

Adjective in singular feminine

āyātīnā l-kubrā (Q 20:23)

ayyāman ma'dūdātan (Q 2:80)

sururin maṣfūfatin (Q 52:20)

Adjective in plural

āyātun bayyinātun (Q 3:97)

ayyāman ma'dūdātin (Q 2:184)²⁹

wa-quḍūrin rāsiyātīn (Q 34:13)

baqarātīn simānīn (Q 12:43)

Before turning to the discussion of the agreement types, an important issue concerning this section should be clarified – the plural forms in Arabic, both of the nouns and adjectives.

The Arab grammarians recognize three numeric categories for Arabic nouns and adjectives. Singular (*mufrad*), dual (*muṭannā*) and plural (*ḡam'*). The grammarians further divide the plural forms into broken plural (*ḡam' t-taksīr*) and sound plural (*al-ḡam' s-sālim*). Plurals are then divided into plurals of paucity (*ḡam' l-qilla*) denoting three to ten items and plural of multiplicity (*ḡam' l-kaṭra*) denoting more than ten items (RATCLIFFE 1998, p. 69).³⁰ According to Fischer, the plural of paucity appears usually after numbers 3-10, except in the two cases Q 2:228 *ṭalātata qurū'in* “three periods, “where a plural of multiplicity stands instead of plural of paucity in the form of *afulun* or *aḡālun*. In Q 27:48, a collective noun stands after a number *tis'atu raḡṭīn* “nine groups of people” (FISCHER 1980, p. 75).³¹ The question this plural division raises is whether it affects the agreement type; namely, is the form of the noun in plural designating non-human causing the adjective to be in broken or

29 These agreement variations are also mentioned in the research of Belnap (1991, p. 129-130). See also Benlap & Shabaneh (1992, p. 249).

30 Cf. FISCHER 1980, p. 70, 74.

31 Cf. FERRANDO 2003, p. 40, 46-47.

sound plural? And if so, what is the implication of the adjective in singular feminine that agrees with a plural noun designating non-human?

The research literature presents several explanations for the existence of these two types of agreement:

a. Looking at the exegeses of the verses cited in this section, it is noteworthy that usually the commentators do not refer to the agreement issue; nevertheless, they refer to the meaning of the adjectives only by replacing one adjective with another adjective in plural. In his commentary on *ğannātin ma'rūšātin* in Q 6:141, for example, Ṭabarī replaces the adjective *ma'rūšātin* with two other adjectives in plural feminine form, *marfū'āt* and *mabniyyāt*.³² As opposed to Ṭabarī, in his commentary on *āyātun bayyinātun* (Q 3:97) Ibn Kaṭīr replaces the adjective *bayyināt* with an adjective in singular feminine, explaining that the meaning of *āyātun bayyinātun* is *dalālāt zāhira* "clear signs".³³ These two examples indicate that both agreement types were familiar and used by the commentators.

b. Referring to the expression *ayyāman ma'dūdātin* (Q 2:184), Ibn Manẓūr mentions the following explanation of Zağğāğ regarding the occurrence of the adjective *ma'dūdātin* in plural form.³⁴

*kullu 'adadin qalla aw kaṭura fa-huwa ma'dūdun, wa-lākinna ma'dūdāt adalla 'alā l-qilla li-anna kulla qalīlin yuğma'u bi-l-alifi wa-t-tā'i naḥwa durayhimāt wa-ḥamāmāt, wa-qad yağūzu an taqa'a l-alif wa-l-tā' li-t-taktīr.*³⁵

"each number, regardless of whether it indicates the plural of paucity or plural of abundance, is a number that can be counted, but *ma'dūdāt* refers to a small number because a noun that indicates paucity will be pluralized by the suffix *-āt* such as: 'pennies' and 'watering places.' It is also possible that this suffix will indicate plural of abundance (large number)."

A similar explanation is also introduced by Hopkins (1984, p. 144):

"In CA [Classical Arabic] when inanimate plural nouns do not exceed the number of ten, concord may take place in feminine plural rather than the feminine singular. This is the case in the papyri also, though restricted to certain stock expression connected with the calendar: *ḥamsat sinīna awaluhunna šahr Rabi'*. 'five years beginning from the month of *Rabi'*."

Examination of the plural nouns shows that most of them have only one plural form except for *ašhur*, which is considered to be plural of paucity. Thus, regarding the occurrences of adjectives in plural agreeing with plural nouns denoting the non-human, it is worth exploring whether the adjectives indicate that the noun includes limited items.

The first group that was examined is adjectives in feminine plural that agree with nouns in sound or broken plural.

- *āyātun bayyinātun* (Q 3:97) ("clear signs") - It can be understood from the different exegesis that the noun refers to specific and limited signs. One of the signs is *maqām*

32 Ṭabarī, *Ğāmi' al-bayān fi tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 5, p. 361.

33 Ibn Kaṭīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kaṭīr*, vol. 2, p. 191.

34 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, vol. 4, p. 272.

35 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, vol. 4, p. 272; cf. 'ABBĀS 1963-1964, vol. 1, p. 163.

Ibrāhīm, the stone upon which *Ibrāhīm* stood to build the House, and on which his footprints remain and whoever enters the House is secure.³⁶

- *tis'a āyātīn bayyinātīn* (Q 17:101) ("nine clear signs") - There is a numeric quantifier before the noun.
- *fa-arsalnā 'alayhimu ṭ-ṭūfāna wa-l-ğarāda wa-l-qummala wa-ḍ-ḍafādi'a wa-d-dama āyātīn mufaṣṣalātīn* (Q 7:133) "So we let loose upon them the flood and the locusts, the lice and the frogs, the blood, distinct signs." - It is clear from the context that the noun *āyātīn* refers to the five signs that are mentioned previously and they are: the flood, locusts, lice, and the frogs and blood.
- *āyātun muḥkamātun* (Q 3:7) ("clear verses") - According to Farrā', the noun *āyātun* referred to verses 151-153 in Sura 6.³⁷
- *wa-uḥarā yābisātīn* (Q 12:43, 46) ("and other lean ears of corn") - It is clear from the context that the noun refers to the seven lean ears of corn.
- *ayyāman ma'dūdātīn* (Q 2:184, 203; 3:24) ("numbered days") - According to the commentators, the expression *ayyāman ma'dūdātīn* means specific days in the year; thus, for example, in Q 2:184 the noun refers to the days of Ramaḍān, i.e., 30 days.³⁸
- *aṣḥurun ma'lūmātun* (Q 2:197) ("numbered month") - The noun *aṣḥurun* refers to the well-known month for pilgrimage and it is: *ṣawwāl*, *ḍū l-qī'da* and ten nights, some say all, of *ḍū l-ḥiğğā*.³⁹
- *āyātīn bayyinātīn* (Q 2:99; 22:16; 24:1; 29:49; 57:9; 58:5) ("clear signs"), *ğannātīn ma'rūṣātīn wa-ğayra ma'rūṣātīn* (Q 6:141) ("trellised and untrellised gardens"), *qudūrin rāsiyātīn* (Q 34:13) ("anchored cooking-pots"), *rawāsiya ṣāmiḥātīn* (Q 77:27) ("soaring mountains"), *qiṭa'un mutağāwirātun* (Q 13:4) ("tracts neighbouring each to each"), *ayyāmin naḥisātīn* (Q 41:16) ("days of ill fortune"). In the verses in this category, it is unclear if the nouns refer to a limited number of parts because the commentators do not explain to which part or entities the noun refers.

To summarize, it should be mentioned that there is a specific list of nouns in plural with which adjectives in sound plural feminine agree. Of 18 nouns in plural, eight nouns are *āyāt*, three nouns are *ayyām*, one is the noun *aṣḥur*, two nouns are *sunbulāt*, and the other four nouns are: *qudūrin*, *rawāsiya*, *qiṭa'* and *ğannāt*. Additionally, only *āyāt* and *ayyām* have the second type of agreement, in which an adjective in singular feminine agrees with them. A prominent fact raised during the analysis is that the sound plural feminine form of the adjective is restricted to active and passive participles. There is one exceptional form that is of *naḥisāt*.

36 Suyūṭī & Maḥallī, *Tafsīr al-Ġalālayn*, p. 62.

37 Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, p. 190.

38 Suyūṭī & Maḥallī, *Tafsīr al-Ġalālayn*, p. 28.

39 Suyūṭī & Maḥallī, *Tafsīr al-Ġalālayn*, p. 31.

There are also adjectives in broken plural that agree with nouns in broken plural and they are classified in the second group. It is possible to divide these cases into the following four sub-groups.

To the first sub-group belong the following verses, in which the nouns in plural include specific and limited items:

- *sab'a baqarātin simānin yākuluhunna sab'un 'iğāfun wa-sab'a sunbulātin huḍrin* (Q 12: 43, 46) (“seven fat cows have been eaten by seven lean ones and seven green ears of corn.”)
- *sab'an šidādan* (Q 78:12) (“seven strong (heavens)”).
- *ayyāmin uḥarā* (Q 2:184) (“other days”)
- *al-ašhuru l-ḥurumu* (Q 9:5) (“the sacred month”)

In the second sub-group, one cannot ignore the fact that the adjective in plural that appears at the end of the verse rhymes with the last word of the previous and the following verses:

- *fihinna ḥayrātun ḥisānun* (Q 55:70) (“maidens good and comely”)
- *sab'an šidādan* (Q 78:12) (“seven strong (heavens)”)
- *ğannātin alfāfan* (Q 78:16) (“luxurious gardens”)
- *as-samāwāti l-'ulā* (Q 20:4; 20:75) (“high heavens”)
- *ḥadā'iqā ġulban* (Q 80:30) (“enclosed gardens”)
- *kunnā ṭarā'iqā qidadan* (Q 72:11) (“different sects”)

In the third sub-group, the plural adjective in the form *fu'l* denotes color:

- *ğimālatun šufrun* (Q 77:33) (“yellow camels”)
- *rafrafin huḍrin* (Q 55:76) (“green cushions”)
- *wa-mina l-ğibāli ġudadun bīḍun wa-ḥumrun muḥtalifun alwānuhā wa-ğarābību sūdun* (Q 35:27) (“And in the mountains are streaks white and red, of diverse colour and pitchy black.”)

Beeston (1975, p. 65) refers to the question of the agreement of adjectives denoting colors by saying as follows:

“About thirty years ago, Polotsky called attention in one of his lectures to the fact that in CA colors referring to the plural of irrational beings stand in plural. I find it surprising that so distinguished a linguist as polotsky should have committed himself to this statement, which seems to imply that adjectives which are not colour terms have the singular concord with irretionalia. This is certainly not the case. In pre-Islamic poetry, it is virtually a universal rule that adjectives, no matter whether colour terms or otherwise, show plural forms when referring to pluralities; instance such as *albīḍu l-ṣawārimu* ‘the trenchant swords’ [...].”⁴⁰

Thus, according to Beeston, adjectives in plural that agree with a non-human plural are not unusual in CA. It is interesting, however, to see that nominal predicates and verbs

40 Cf. RATCLIFFE 1998, p. 147.

that indicate colours are in singular feminine when they agree with the non-human plural, as in the following:

yawma tabyaḍḍu wuḡūhun wa-taswaddu wuḡūhun fa-ammā llaḍīna swaddat wuḡūhuhum a-kafartum ba'da imānikum (Q 3:106)

“On the Day when some faces will be white, and some faces will be black. As for those whose faces will be black, (will be said): did you disbelieve after you had believed?”

wa-yawma l-qiyāmati tarā llaḍīna kaḍabū 'alā llāhi wuḡūhuhum muswaddatun (Q 39:60)

“On the Day of Judgment you will see those who told lies against Allah. Their faces will be turned black.”

As for the remaining verses, they can be categorized in the fourth sub-group (Q 33:19; 38:31; 66: 6). It might be concluded that the agreement of plural adjectives with plural nouns denoting the non-human is as follows: first, adjectives in sound plural feminine indicate that the nouns include a specific number of items. This number can be less than 10 items, but in some cases more than 10. Although the Arab grammarians describe in detail the morphological forms of plural of paucity and plural of multiplicity, there are plurals that are not categorized in these groups, as, for example, the broken plural *ayyām* or the sound plural *āyāt*. The adjective form, i.e., sound plural feminine, can indicate a number of items. This usage of the plural suffix *-āt* can be added to the common usages of this plural that are mentioned in the research literature. Thus, for example, Kurylowicz refers to the ending *-āt* that appears in nominalized adjectives, as in *al-ḥasanātu* “beautiful things.” Additionally, verbal adjectives with the feminine form *-at* have a regular plural masculine *-ūna* or plural feminine *-āt* when referring to a person. When used as impersonal adjectives or as substantives, they have the broken plural, e.g., *kātib-kātibūn* means “writing,” but *kātib-kuttāb* means “writer,” and in plural “writers.” (KURYLOWICZ 1982, p. 18-139)

Second, in some cases (see group two, sub-group one) adjectives in broken plural have the same function of the sound plural adjective, i.e., to indicate that the noun includes a specific number of items. The most prominent form of theses adjective is *fi'āl*, the plural of *fa'īl* (RATCLIFFE 1998, p. 13).

Third, keeping the rhyme might lead to the use of adjectives in plural rather than adjectives in singular feminine. Fourth, there are certain cases in which the reason for using an adjective in plural form is unclear. There is no specific quantifier that indicates the number of the items or the adjectives do not carry any end-rhyming. Fifth, adjectives denoting colours are in the broken plural form *fu'l*. Sixth, active and passive participles function as adjectives having the sound plural feminine form. Adjectives in forms other than active and passive participle are in the broken plural form of *fu'l*, *fu'al*, *fi'āl* and *afāl*.

This leaves the implication that adjectives in singular feminine agree with non-human plurals. A possible explanation for this type of agreement was found in Killean's article, who considers agreement features in modern literary Arabic. According to Killean, the agreement of singular feminine with non-human nouns is clearly equivalent to a neuter gender in other languages, even though this agreement is manifested only in the

plural number, a clearly-marked category. It is possible to view this agreement type as a synchronization of number combined with a neutralization of gender. That is, number is completely unmarked for these plural forms and gender is restricted to the category of feminine. It might be concluded from this explanation that if the number is unmarked it indicates that in this agreement type there is no intention to refer to the number of items. When this objective becomes important in the context, then an adjective in plural form will agree with the plural noun that designates the non-human.

In conclusion, the agreement with the non-human plural can be presented as follows:

Adjective Type	Noun Type: Non-human, sound plural feminine	Noun Type: Non-human, broken plural
Sound plural feminine	13 occurrences	11 occurrences
Broken plural	14 occurrences	18 occurrences
Sound plural masculine	0	4 occurrences
Feminine singular	2	47 occurrences

The statistical data show that the occurrence of adjectives in broken plural is almost identical to the occurrence of adjectives in sound plural. As was shown, both adjectives in sound plural forms and broken plural forms are used in order to indicate the limited number of items, especially when a specific noun has one plural form – sound or broken plural – and it is impossible to determine according to its form whether it is a plural of paucity or a plural of multiplicity. In other words, the adjective's agreement is not determined by the plural form of the noun, but according to the number of item(s) indicated by the noun.

The most prominent data is that adjectives in singular feminine typically agree with a noun in broken plural. It cannot be argued, however, that in this case the plural form affects the adjective's agreement. In this agreement type the gender is neutralized and there is no reference to the number of items.

*Type of agreement (6): adjectives in singular masculine agree with collective nouns denoting human vs. adjectives in plural agreeing with collective nouns denoting human*⁴¹

According to Jespersen, a word like *herd* or *flock* denotes an assemblage of things as a set and they are correctly called collectives. Such words denote a unit made of several things or beings that may be counted separately. Hence, a collective noun is from one point of view “one,” and from another point of view “more than one.” (JESPersen 1953, p. 195) The double-sidedness of the collective nouns is shown grammatically: thus, for example, when they denote plurality, the verb may be in plural (JESPersen 1953, p. 195). A similar

41 An extensive definition of the term collective noun is presented in the article entitled “Collective Nouns in the Qur’ān: Their Verbal, Adjectival and Pronominal Agreement.” Forthcoming in the *Journal of Semitic Studies*.

explanation is presented in the research literature that addresses the issue of adjectival agreement with the collective nouns in Arabic, as shown in the following quotation:

“The adjective following a collective noun denoting rational beings may be put in singular and agree with the grammatical gender of the collective, or in plural *sanus* or *fractus* according to the natural gender of the persons indicated. For example: *qawmun karīmun* or *qawmun kuramā'u* ‘a noble tribe or family, *qawmun fāsiqūna* ‘wicked people’.”⁴²

There are six collective nouns denoting the human and the adjective agreeing with them is in singular masculine. Among these are: Q 38:11; 38:59; 54:44; 37:8 and 38:69. However, as can be seen in Q 38:59, the adjective is in singular masculine, but the pronoun and the verb that refer to the collective noun *fawṣ* are in plural:

hādā fawṣun muqtaḥimun ma'akum lā marḥaban bihim innahum ṣālū n-nāri (Q 38:59)
“This is a troop rushing in with you; there is no welcome - they shall roast in the fire.”

A similar agreement pattern is found in the Hebrew Bible. Young investigates the types of agreement with the noun *'am* (“folk, people.”) He explains that the choice of singular or plural verb is explicable by some semantic distinction, such as whether the author conceived of the people acting as a whole or as many individuals. Among the different examples, Young mentions the following verses:

hinneh 'am yored me-raṣei heharim (Jud 9, 36)
“There come people down from the top of the mountain.”⁴³
hinneh 'am yordim (Jud 9:37)
“There come people down.”⁴⁴

He suggests that it is possible that in the first verse Ga'al sees the people as a group, while in the following verse he sees them as many individuals – hence the verb is in plural. Although this explanation is plausible, Young believes that it is impossible to find any rules that can explain the choice of singular agreement over plural agreement (YOUNG 1999, p. 56). Returning to the examples of the Qur'ān, it might be said that the adjective in singular that agrees with *fawṣ* indicates that *fawṣ* should be referred to as a group, as a collective and not as individuals. Yet it might be wondered why in the same verse the pronoun and the verb are in plural.

Statistically, the second type of agreement, i.e., adjectives in plural agreeing with a collective noun denoting the human, is more common in the Qur'ān (85 occurrences of an adjective in plural vs. six occurrences of an adjective in singular). There are two possible explanations for the appearance of an adjective in plural:

42 WRIGHT 1896-1898, vol. 2, §136B, p. 273. Cf. BROCKELMANN 1962, p. 162; NÖLDEKE 1963, p. 82; FLEISCHER 1968, p. 47 and FISCHER 1972, p. 64.

43 *The Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament*, p. 417.

44 *The Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament*, p. 417.

a. An adjective in plural indeed indicates that the reference is to the individuals composing the group. Thus, examination of the collective noun *qawm* shows that the agreement with this noun is usually in plural, as in:

wa-awraṭnā l-qawma llaḏīna kānū yustaḏ'afūna mašāriqa l-arḏi wa-maḡāribahā (Q 7:137)

“And we made the people who are considered weak inheritors of lands in both East and West.”

b. The adjective is in plural due to constraints of the rhyme, as in the following verse in which the adjectives carry the assonance *-una*:

a-fa-aminū makra llāhi fa-lā yāmanu makra llāhi illā l-qawmu l-ḡāsirūna (Q 7: 99)

“Did they feel secure against the plan of Allah? No one feels secure from the plan of Allah, except the people of the lost.”

As has been shown, there are two patterns of agreement relating to a collective noun denoting the human. This can be constructed either with an adjective in singular or in plural form. An adjective in singular form is related to the grammatical gender of the collective noun, while an adjective in plural is related to the persons, the individuals indicated by the collective noun. The explanation presented for the agreement variations with collective nouns can be augmented in the following patterns of agreement:

a. Adjectives in singular masculine agree with a collective noun denoting the non-human in masculine form, as in:

yawma yakūnu n-nāsu ka-l-farāši l-mabṭūṭi (Q 101:4)

“The day that men will be like scattered moths.”

Additional examples are: Q 2:164; 15:26; 37:49; 52:44; 54:20; 76:1.

b. Adjectives in singular feminine agree with a collective noun denoting the non-human in feminine form, as in:

kam min fi'atin qalīlatin ḡalabat fi'atan kaṭīratan (Q 2:249)

“How often a little company has overcome a numerous company.”

The following are additional examples: Q 2:128; 3:38; 3:113; 4:102; 5:66; 8:66.

c. Adjectives in singular feminine agree with a collective noun denoting the non-human in masculine form, e.g.:

ka-annahum a'ḡāzu naḥlin ḡāwiyatin (Q 69:7)⁴⁵

“As they are roots of hollow palm-trees tumbled down.”

Additional examples are: Q 3:14; 55:11; 69:7.

d. Adjectives in singular feminine agree with a plural of a collective noun denoting the human and the non-human, as in:

qāla fa-mā bālu l-qurūni l-ūlā (Q 20:51)

“He said: What then is the condition of previous generations.”

45 An adjective in singular masculine, singular feminine, broken plural or sound plural feminine can follow a collective noun denoting the non-human that do not have a *nomen unitatis* form. See WRIGHT 1896-1898, vol. 2, p. 273. Cf. FLEISCHER 1968, vol.1, p. 257.

Conclusions

The statistical data show clearly that transparent agreement of the adjective is the most common in the Qur'ān. There are 1258 adjectives whose agreement is transparent, as opposed to 203 adjectives with obscure agreement. Examination of the obscure agreement patterns yields the following factors that affect the agreement:

- The grammarians mentioning that adjectives that can be related only to a feminine singular noun, as in *'ağūzun 'aqīmun*, adjectives of the form *fa'īl* and *fa'ūl*, as in *tawbatun naṣūḥun*, will be in singular masculine even when the noun is singular feminine. To these cases might be added also the adjective *kaṭīr*, which follows a noun in singular masculine or in plural masculine, like *riğālan kaṭīran*.
- Adjectives in sound plural feminine usually in the form of active or passive participle or broken plural indicating the number of separate parts or items comprising the noun. Arab and western grammarians mention that there are two possible types of agreement with the non-human noun. One is an adjective in singular feminine and the other is an adjective in sound plural feminine. However, examination of these cases indicates that adjectives in the sound feminine plural and some adjectives in broken plural demonstrate that there is a limited number of parts – usually less than 10, sometimes more than 10, but still within defined limits. The “limits” can be a clear quantifier like a number, like *tis'a āyātīn bayyinātīn*, or in some other cases the commentators explain to which or how many parts the adjectives refer, as in *aṣḥurun ma'lūmāt* or *aṣḥurun ḥurumun*. In addition, there is a list of prominent nouns followed by an adjective in sound plural masculine or in broken plural: *āyāt* (eight times), *ayyām* (three times), *aṣḥur* (two times) and *sunbulāt* (two times). Nevertheless, there are a few cases in which the appearance of an adjective in sound plural feminine is unclear. For example, regarding *quḍūr rāsiyāt* it would be rather forced to claim that the adjective demonstrates that the number of the “cooking-pots” is limited because there is either a numeric quantifier or satisfactory explanation provided by the commentators regarding this noun.
- The rhyme at the end of the verses might cause some of the agreement patterns in the Qur'ān. For example, in *ğannātīn alfāfan* the adjective is in broken plural due to the end-rhyme *-an*. Also in the case of *qawmun fāsiquna* and additional examples in which an adjective in sound masculine plural follows the collective noun *qawm*, the adjective is in plural to keep the assonance *-un* of the end-rhyme. It is noteworthy that an adjective in plural that agrees with collective nouns indicates also that the reference is made to the separate parts or items which comprise the noun.
- As opposed to adjectives in plural following the collective noun, adjectives in singular masculine or feminine that agree with collective nouns demonstrate collectivity, as in *ğund mahzūm* the adjective in singular masculine indicates that the reference is made to the collective, to the group and not to the individual. It could be argued that also adjectives in singular feminine that agree with nouns in plural non-human denote collectivity and generalization, for example, *ayyām*

ma'dūda, where it is unclear to which and to how many days are referred, as opposed to *ayyām ma'dūdāt*.

- There are some exceptional or rare agreement types in the Qur'ān, such as: *nutfa amšāḡ* and *an-nuḡur l-ūlā*. In the first case, there are some disagreements about the form of the adjective. Some commentators claim that the adjective is in singular and others argue that it is in plural form. As for the second type, the western grammarians mention that it is not rare to find in Classical Arabic an adjective in singular feminine that agrees with plural noun designating the human.

The agreement types presented in this article are not special to the Qur'ān. They are found in pre-Islamic texts (6th century), in classical texts (from the 10th century), in modern texts and in the modern dialects. For example, adjectives designating colours are in the plural form regardless the noun's form. However, in different works dealing with the historical development of the Arabic language and its grammar, one issue regarding agreement is the most discussed – the agreement types with the plural non-human. In their article, Belnap and Shabaneh (1992) examine variable grammatical agreement with non-human head nouns, relying on the examples of Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic text. The main findings are that in pre-Islamic and classical texts the common agreement type is adjectives in plural that agree with a noun in plural designating non-human. Additionally, Belnap and Shabaneh refer to Reckendorf's observation that non-human plurals, both broken and feminine sound forms, seldom have plural adjectival agreement. They say that this observation appears to be accurate for post-Qur'ānic Arabic. The transition to deflected agreement, i.e., the adjectives in singular feminine agrees with nouns designating non-human, appears to have proceeded gradually with broken plural and gradually became the common adjective type. Ferguson (1989) examined the agreement type in old Arabic and new Arabic in order to refute Versteegh's hypothesis that the Old Arabic as represented by the Classical Arabic of the grammarians was pidginized, i.e., drastically simplified during early centuries of Islam. This pidgin Arabic then was creolized, i.e., became the language of formerly non-Arabic speakers. Finally, he points out the diglossic use of Classical Arabic alongside the dialects, where many classical features entered the dialects. Ferguson claims that this hypothesis cannot be regarded as proven because there are other processes in the language that can explain the similarities between Classical Arabic and the dialects. To prove this claim, Ferguson attempts to investigate the history of certain phenomena of grammatical agreement. What is relevant here is the discussion of the deflected agreement. He mentions that both types – the strict and the deflected – agreement were found in Old Arabic, while there is a strong preference for one or the other. The deflected agreement according to Ferguson is very common, for example, in Damascus Arabic.

The quantitative study presented here may prove and strengthen the finding of Belnap and Shabaneh and clarify when the deflected agreement is preferred in the Qur'ān.

The following table shows what are the agreement types of plural nouns designating the human and plural nouns designating the non-human:

Agreement type	Plural head human	Plural head non-human
	Occurrences	Occurrences
Noun in sound plural masculine Adjective in sound plural masculine	1	0
Noun in sound plural masculine Adjective in broken plural	1	0
Noun in sound plural feminine Adjective in sound plural feminine	3	13
Noun in sound plural feminine Adjective in sound plural masculine	1	0
Noun in sound plural feminine Adjective in singular feminine	0	2
Noun in sound plural feminine Adjective in broken plural	0	14
Noun in broken plural Adjective in broken plural	8	18
Noun in broken plural Adjective in sound plural feminine	9	11
Noun in broken plural Adjective in sound plural masculine	26	4
Noun in broken plural Adjective in singular feminine	2	47
Noun in broken plural Adjective in singular masculine	3	0

There are only five adjectives that in singular agree with plural nouns designating the human, as opposed to 49 adjectives that in singular feminine agree with nouns in plural designating the non-human. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the fact that 60 adjectives in sound or broken plural agree with plural nouns designating the non-human. This statistical data show that there is no preference for one agreement type over the other. The agreement is determined according to what the adjective indicates – limited items of the noun or neutralization of this limitation.

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