Angels, Beasts, and Impressive Things
A radial category approach to Qur’ānic Arabic feminine plural agreement

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1 Introduction

Although Qur’ānic Arabic (7th century CE) is usually considered an exponent of pre-Classical Arabic, it shows an agreement system rather distinct from the one displayed in other texts from this oldest stage of the language, namely in pre-Islamic Poetry (6th century CE). In fact, Qur’ānic Arabic agreement must be considered revelative of a transitional stage between the oldest manifestations of pre-Classical Arabic on one hand, and Classical Arabic on the other hand, i.e., the increasingly standardized language found in official and literary texts from the mid-8th century CE onward. While in pre-Islamic poetry, feminine plural agreement with non-human plurals is still very common (with controllers of any gender or morphological type), it is an agreement type clearly on the decline in the Quran: Here, the use of feminine plural with non-human plural controllers has become restricted to several specialized contexts—a fact which, at least quantitatively, foreshadows the further receding and semantic reanalysis of feminine plural agreement in Classical Arabic, and finally its almost complete loss in Modern Standard Arabic.

As we look upon feminine plural agreement in a broad diachronic perspective, its monotonous decline along the succession of varieties and text groups belonging to the Old Arabic

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2 See Fischer 1982: 38.
3 The term ‘controller’ commonly denotes “the element which determines the agreement” (Corbett 2006: 4).
5 See the detailed studies on various aspects of Qur‘ānic agreement in Dror 2014, D’Anna 2020b, and Hanitsch 2021, [in print, forthcoming a, b].
6 See D’Anna & Benkato [forthcoming].
language type\(^8\) (as documented by Belnap 1991, Belnap & Shabaneh 1992 and Belnap & Gee 1994) seems to be a rather straightforward issue: It simply appears as the negative counterpart of the “positive” spread of another, new agreement type throughout the system: feminine singular agreement with non-human plurals, that is, the so-called “deflected” and formally “mismatching” agreement type\(^9\) which is so characteristic of and remarkable in Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic in a cross-linguistic perspective.\(^{10}\)

But as we look upon the transitional stage reflected in Qur’ānic Arabic, as a synchronic system, we are confronted with a highly complex picture: between the agreement type on the rise (the already dominant feminine singular) and the one on the decline (the feminine plural having become relatively specialized) there is an important rate of variation (schematically, see Figure 1), and this variation depends on an important number of factors, and their highly complex interplay. There are morphological as well as syntactic factors involved in determining the agreement outcome, but some of the most influential factors are semantic in type,

\(^{8}\) Pre-Islamic poetry (pre-Classical I) > Qur’ān (pre-Classical II) > Classical Arabic > Modern Standard Arabic.

\(^{9}\) See Ferguson 2\(^{1}\)965 \((1961)\), Ferguson 1989: 9, 11.

\(^{10}\) See Ferguson 1989: 8, 11-13, Hanitsch [forthcoming b]: § 1.
and they reside either at the level of lexical semantics of the controller, or of the target,\textsuperscript{11} or even—as it is rather frequently the case—at the level of stylistics and context.\textsuperscript{12} As we look upon the whole of Qur’ānic occurrences of the feminine plural agreement type with non-human controllers, it is thus very difficult—probably even impossible—to tackle its “overarching meaning”, or else the “common denominator” that would explain how every single instance of feminine-plural agreement relates to the whole of the other instances.

The present contribution takes the position that not only is it impossible to sensibly formulate such an overarching meaning to the grammatical category of feminine plural agreement—nor is it even desirable to do so—, and yet we hold that the instances in which feminine plural agreement occurs, are not a disconnected bunch of “leftovers” from earlier language stages, that were individually spared from the spread of the new “deflected” agreement marker. Rather we hold and aim to demonstrate that the instances of feminine plural agreement in the Qur’ān, as disparate and accidental as they may seem at a first glance, connect among each other by forming a “radial category”, as it is presented in Lakoff (1987).

The demonstration will proceed as follows: § 2—Short introduction to the concept of radial category. § 3—Presentation of the Quranic data, i.e., an inventory of those lexemes, that are found, in the Qur’ān, to serve as controllers to feminine-plural agreement. In this inventory, we focus on the semantic features of these controllers as well as on the contexts of use, that are particularly associated with their triggering feminine-plural agreement. The purpose of this procedure is to highlight the numerous formal as well as semantic and (more generally) conceptual connections that exist between the various uses of feminine plural agreement and which—metaphorically speaking—constitute the “glue that holds the grammatical category of QA feminine plural agreement together”. Based on the picture of Qur’ānic agreement usage that we obtain in § 3, we will, in § 4, proceed to distill out the more general and abstract principles that govern the use of feminine-plural agreement. This discussion will lead to the formulation (and graphic visualization, see Figure 2) of the “Radial set of feminine plural agreement in Qur’ānic Arabic”.

2 General notion of “radial category”

The concept of radial category refers to a category with a network- or weblike internal semantic structure. It forms a contrast with the “classical” Aristotelian category, for which membership is a clearcut issue: For the “classical” category it is possible to formulate a definition stating the necessary and sufficient conditions for category membership. This, in turn,
leads to all members of the category sharing common properties and being equal with respect to membership status.\textsuperscript{13}

A radial category is different in several respects. The roots of the concept go back as far as Wittgenstein’s observation that, for some categories, such as the one referred to by the word ‘game’, it is impossible to find a common property for all members and that, instead, they are united by \textit{family resemblance}.\textsuperscript{14} Research in cognitive anthropology and experimental psychology on how humans actually and practically categorize—and how this is reflected in language use and linguistic structure\textsuperscript{15}—further promoted the idea that not all members of a category are equally central to the relevant category. Instead, there are \textit{prototype effects} observable: Some members are more typically representative of a category than others. This also entails that the borders of the category may remain fuzzy.\textsuperscript{16}

These ideas were eventually transferred to (cognitive) linguistics where Brugman (1981)—in a study on the polysemous English preposition ‘over’—was the first one to treat lexical items as “natural categories of senses”.\textsuperscript{17} The concept was subsequently refined and popularized under the terminological label “radial category” by George Lakoff’s (1987) seminal work \textit{Women, fire, and dangerous things}. It may be shortly characterized as follows:\textsuperscript{18}

\begin{itemize}
  \item There is no property (or set of properties) common to all members of a radial category.\textsuperscript{19}
  \item Instead, the radial category is constituted of subcategories, which are linked among each other by chaining. Each segment of the chain is based on a similarity or shared property between the two neighboring subsets it connects.\textsuperscript{20}
  \item Among the subcategories identifiable in a radial category, some are more central (or prototypical) of the category in question than others, which, in turn, belong to the relevant category in a more peripheral way.
  \item The prototypicality of the central member/subcategory of a radial category is rooted in an “idealized cognitive model”, which is to an important degree culture-dependent.\textsuperscript{21}
  \item The more peripheral members of the category are, in this view, conceptualized as variants or deviances from the central case.\textsuperscript{22}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{14} See Lakoff 1987: 16-17, Taylor \textsuperscript{2}1995 [1989]: 38-40.
\textsuperscript{15} See Lakoff 1987: 22-57.
\textsuperscript{17} Brugman 1981 as summarized in Lakoff 1987: 418, and in Brugman & Lakoff 1988: 1.
\textsuperscript{18} The following description is mainly drawn from Lakoff 1987: 83-84, 91-114. Additional sources are given in their respective places.
\textsuperscript{19} See Heine 1990: 14-15.
\textsuperscript{20} See Geeraerts 2019: 31.
\textsuperscript{21} See more specifically Lakoff 1987: 68-71, see also Croft & Cruse 2004: 28-32.
\textsuperscript{22} See more specifically Lakoff 1987: 83.
The chaining between the subsets of a category is ensured by cognitive principles and mechanisms, among which image-schemata, and metaphorical and metonymic mapping.

Radial categories are commonly used in linguistics to describe the structure of the lexicon. In monosemic contexts, for instance, with respect to the word ‘fruit’, the application of the radial category concept may provide an explanation of how and why apples are considered more typical examples of fruit (they are edible seed-bearing parts of a plant, juicy, sweet and eaten for dessert = prototype of ‘fruit’) than, for instance, lemons (neither sweet nor eaten for dessert). In polysemous contexts radial categories are helpful in determining the systematicity of the relationships between the various meanings of an element, e.g., fruit in the literal sense (apple, orange) vs. metaphorical uses, such as ‘fruit’ in the sense of ‘product, outcome’ or generalized meanings such as fruit in the sense of ‘fruits of the earth’.

But the most important application of radial categories with respect to the scope of the present article regards the description of polysemous grammaticalized items or polysemous grammatical categories. The two exemplary cases presented by Lakoff—Dyirbal and Japanese nominal classifiers—illustrate how radial categories are helpful conceptual tools when it comes to the twofold issue of:

- describing the semantics of a grammatical category/element itself as well as in opposition with other grammatical categories, e.g., each of the four mutually exclusive nominal classifiers of Dyirbal, bayi, balan, balam and bala and the system they constitute, or the Japanese nominal classifier hon and its range of applicability;
- determining with which lexical items of the language the relevant category is used (or may be used) and explain how this assignment (i.e., of noun class or “gender”) is cognitively motivated; hence, radial categories help explain why, for instance, Dyirbal balan (class II) may be used not only with human females (the basic/central members of the category) and the sun (a mythological female) but also with fire (belonging to the domain of the sun), hot coals and matches (belonging to the domain of fire) and the hairy

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23 See Johnson 1987; i.e., “simple cognitive structures that represent spatial configurations independently of a single sensory modality” and which are abstracted away from our basic day-to-day experience of, i.e., “Containment”, “Movement”, etc. (Sullivan 2017: 398-399); more specifically with reference to radial categories, see Lakoff 1987: 68, 106.


26 See ibid 2019: 31.

27 Based on Dixon 1982.

28 Other examples are early studies by Lindner 1981 (English verb-particle constructions with up and out) and Brugman 1981 (English preposition over), the latter as the precursor of Lakoff’s radial category approach. Other, among which more recent examples of the application of radial sets to the description of grammatical categories and their grammaticalization are Janda 1989 (Czech dative case), Heine 1990 (Chamus [Maa, Eastern Nilotic] grammaticalization of verbal lexeme -yyér), and Nesset/Endresen/Janda 2011 (Russian aspectual prefixes vy- and iz-).
mary grub (a caterpillar which causes a sunburn-like rash).29 There is thus a chaining of relationships between the category members. And each link in the chain is based on a similarity, which is (or was at some stage of the language) perceived26 to exist between the category members against the background of some culture-specific knowledge.

Agreement as a grammatical phenomenon can be argued to be remotely akin to nominal classification and nominal gender, insofar as it is (among other functions)31 a means of classifying a given linguistic element, typically a noun, either with respect to features that are overtly or covertly marked in it or with respect to features that the speaker perceives in it (or in its extralinguistic referent[s]).32 In languages where—as in most varieties of Arabic—agreement does not follow hard and clear-cut rules but instead displays a high degree of variation,33 a description of this variation and of the distribution of the available agreement values (e.g., f.sg., m.sg., f.pl., m.pl., etc.) must take into account the perceptual dimension of the classification that is provided by agreement. We will therefore closely parallel our analysis to the model of Lakoff insofar as we
give the full list of nouns that, in QA, have the feminine plural as an agreement option, and describe the chains of relations that exist between these nouns as well as between the contexts in which the relevant agreement occurs (mainly § 3);
and “distill out”, from the previous results, the internal semantic structure of the grammatical category of feminine plural agreement in QA, thereby setting it off—where necessary—from other competing agreement markers/values, especially the “new” but already-dominant feminine singular (mainly § 4).

3 Qurʾānic data

A full-length analysis of the Qurʾān yields 1080 instances of agreement34 with plural controllers referring to non-humans.35 The agreement values available are m.sg. (79 instances), f.sg.

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30 Or at least it must be supposed to have been perceived in it at the moment of assigning the relevant member to the category, i.e., at the moment of assigning a specific noun to the class of nouns that are used with a specific classifier.
34 To somewhat simplify matters, we do not differentiate—at this stage—between agreement in the strict sense, i.e., with controller and target present in the text, and various degrees of elliptic expression, where the “target” (adjectives, verbs, and pronouns) refers directly to some entity that is not named in the text itself, marking gender and number of this referent accordingly.
35 This count includes cases where the controller is present in the text (according to Corbett 2006: 9-10, an important feature of “canonical agreement”), as well as cases where the controller is absent (“less canonical agreement” (ibid. 2006: 9-10). The latter may be due to the elision of the controller in avoidance of redundancy (see Reckendorf 1921: 62 § 3., e.g., the “other dry [ears of corn]” of Q. 12:46), or else when the target refers directly to some extratextual multitude of nonhumans, for which there is no additional and unequivocal nominal expression in the text (e.g., the ‘winds’ that are merely alluded to by the sound
It is not our purpose to provide an answer to the question of which factors are involved in determining the choice of each of these agreement values over another, and how these factors interact in doing so, as this problem was treated near to exhaustively in a recent series of articles (Dror 2014, D’Anna 2020b, and Hanitsch [in print, forthcoming b]). Instead, the present contribution takes a complementary view: It selects the most “intriguing one” of the five available agreement values, i.e., feminine plural agreement, in an attempt to “get at grips” with its semantics as a “grammatical category”—and as it emerges from its contexts of use.

To achieve this goal, we will, in this section, give the full inventory of the contexts of use of F.PL agreement. The approach adopted here is to combine several viewpoints on the “grammatical category” of F.PL agreement, thus adding to the plasticity of its description: § 3.1. will look at the distribution of F.PL agreement over different target types (e.g., attributive, predicative, etc.). § 3.2. will describe the contexts of use and distribution of F.PL agreement in terms of various semantic subgroupings of controllers.

3.1 F.PL over target types
When describing the distribution of F.PL agreement over target types (e.g., attributive, predicative, etc.) we must first draw a basic distinction between what we would intuitively identify as “prototypical” agreement settings insofar as target and controller are both present in the text (e.g., fiʾayyāmin [controller] maʾlūmātin [target] ‘on days [controller] well-known [target]’ Q 22:28), and settings that can be claimed to represent agreement, yet in a “less typical” way, insofar as only the target but no controller is made explicit in the text. In our specific subcorpus (i.e., Qur’ānic Arabic F.PL agreement with nonhumans), the latter is chiefly covered by nominalized participles such as ʿṣāfināt Q 38:31 ‘(horses) standing with one leg bent’, or muʿaqqibāt ‘(angels) coming/following near after another’ where the participles sāfināt/muʿaqqibāt ‘(the ones) standing/following …’ can be felt to “attributively” refer to ‘horses/angels’ for which, however, there is no explicit nominal expression (controller) in the text.

The reason in favor of subsuming cases such as ʿṣāfināt and muʿaqqibāt under the category of agreement at all lies in the fact that, despite the absence of a controller, the target is subjected to some type of agreement decision. Basically, a decision has to be made, on behalf of the speaker, as to which inflectional form the word should take, namely, that it should feature as muʿaqqibāt (f.pl.) ‘the ones following …’ and

f.pl. participles of the fāʿilāt-oath series of Q. 51 and Q. 77 [e.g., fa-l-ḥāmilāti wiqran ‘and the burden-bearers’ Q 51: 1]).

36 Plural of common gender.
37 Out of the 105 instances, 79 instances represent “canonical agreement”, i.e., with the controller present, while 26 represent some type of “less canonical agreement” with the controller absent.
39 Following Lane 1863-1893: 2155.
40 Sinai [2022]: Sure 77 speaks of „Wendung[en (…) mit denen] ein unausgesprochenes Substantiv attributiv paraphrasiert [wird]“ which are also characteristic of pre-Islamic or Old Arabic poetry in general.

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not as *mu'aqqibīna (m.pl.),\textsuperscript{41} or even in the f.sg. (mu'aqqiba) as an ellipse of malāʾika mu'aqqiba ‘angels that follow one another’ which is attested outside the Qurʾān.\textsuperscript{42} Moreover, such a decision can be argued to depend on the perception of the extratextual referent of the agreeing element (i.e., the horses or angels thought of, or hinted at)—an effect which is, to a certain extent, involved also in agreement with the controller present,\textsuperscript{43} so that there is, in fact, a certain continuity between agreement settings with the controller present vs. absent.

Roughly following Corbett, we will henceforth adopt the term “canonical agreement” to refer to agreement with the controller present, and “less canonical agreement” to refer to agreement with the controller absent.\textsuperscript{44} The importance of keeping “canonical” and “less canonical agreement” apart lies in the fact that we cannot rule out beforehand that there is a difference in the agreement behavior of targets in either setting.\textsuperscript{45} “Canonical” and “less canonical agreement” will be dealt with in Tables 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1 (p. 60) gives an inventory of all instances of “canonical” F.PL agreement in the Qurʾān according to their distribution over target types in terms of “syntactic function”: the table thus distinguishes between attributive, nominal predicative, verbal, and pronominal targets. This subdivision of course roughly reflects Corbett’s ‘Agreement Hierarchy’ (with the distinction between two types of predicates added and the relative pronoun omitted):\textsuperscript{46}
agreement systems change, there is a cross-linguistic tendency for “new” agreement types to emerge in the pronoun, subsequently spread to the predicate, and reach the attribute—i.e., the “stronghold” of the older, receding agreement value—last. As for the older agreement value as the negative counterpart of the spreading agreement type, it is expected to recede as the new agreement type advances. It is therefore expected to show the reverse pattern: disappear from the pronoun first, then from the predicate, and from the attribute last. We will now see how the distributional patterns of F.PL agreement (i.e., the old agreement type of Arabic), as revealed in Table 1, relates to these typology-based predictions.

Comments on Table 1 (next page)

Lines 1-10: The controller lexemes of this group are documented triggering F.PL in the attribute only. In terms of semantic controller type, both concrete and abstract nouns are documented alike. This seems to indicate that in the most conservative target type (i.e., the attribute) the older (or receding) agreement type is not (yet) subjected to any thoroughgoing semantic conditioning.

Lines 10a-b: Assuming that the predictions of the agreement hierarchy applied to QA agreement in a “prototypical” way, these are the types of F.PL-distribution over target types that we would expect to be documented in the corpus at least for some controller lexemes. However, there is not a single controller-lexeme in the Qurʾān to trigger F.PL agreement in the attribute as well as in the adjectival/participial predicate but not in verbs or pronouns (line 10a), nor is there any controller-lexeme to trigger F.PL agreement in attributes, and predicates of both types (i.e., adjectival/participial as well as verbal), but not in the pronoun (line 10b). This situation is not overtly supportive of the assumption that F.PL recedes along the agreement hierarchy, however, it does not automatically exclude this scenario either.

Lines 11-12 display the only controller lexemes for which F.PL agreement is preserved as an agreement option with all four target types in terms of syntactic function (line 11) or at least with all three target types in terms of parts of speech (i.e., adjectives/participles, verbs,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controller (lexeme)</th>
<th>Attrib.</th>
<th>Predicate Adj./Part.</th>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Qur’ān</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 'āyām</td>
<td>days</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bāqiyāt</td>
<td>‘[works or words] which are permanent’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>18:46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 darağāt</td>
<td>degrees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>20:75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 'ār five Surahs</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>11:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 sab' seven Surahs</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:43,46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 ġannāt</td>
<td>gardens</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6:141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 qitā'</td>
<td>piece, parcel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>13:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 ḥuntas</td>
<td>stars, planets</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>81:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 rawāsin</td>
<td>things immovably fixed, mountains</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>77:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 qudūr</td>
<td>cauldrons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>34:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a Ø</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10b Ø</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 ġawārin</td>
<td>ships</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 (sab') samāwāt</td>
<td>heavens</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 'āsnām</td>
<td>idols</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14:35-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 ġawārīh</td>
<td>beasts of prey (trained as dogs)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 sab' seven years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 sab' baqarāt</td>
<td>seven cows</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:43,46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 kalimāt</td>
<td>words</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2:124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 tabā't 'awrāt</td>
<td>three times of nakedness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>24:58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 'ādiyāt [etc.] (fā'ilāt oath)</td>
<td>running [etc.] (horses)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>100:1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 ġibāl</td>
<td>mountains</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>21:79, 38:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 hasanāt</td>
<td>good deeds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>11:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 riyāb</td>
<td>winds</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>30:46, 15:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 hunna</td>
<td>pagan gods</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>39:38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 nuğūm</td>
<td>stars</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>16:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 'āyāt</td>
<td>Signs of God</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 'āshur</td>
<td>months</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2:197, 9:36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: QA “canonical” F.PL agreement with nonhumans according to target type

pronouns). From a purely syntactic perspective, the two controller-lexemes (ǧawārin ‘ships’ and [sab’] samāwāṭ ‘[seven] heavens’) can therefore be regarded as prototypical exponents of the class of nouns that, in QA, may trigger F.PL agreement. This is because their use of F.PL is the most unrestricted syntactically—i.e., in terms of target types. It should be noted that both these nouns refer to concrete entities.

Starting from line 13 we only find controller-lexemes for which the “F.PL-over-targets distribution” is not overtly supportive of the assumption that F.PL receded along the agreement hierarchy, giving up the pronoun first and gradually retracting to the attribute. It is quite impressive to see that controller-lexemes of this type make up more than half of the inventory.

In Hanitsch 2021 we showed that QA nonhuman animates and inanimates relate differently to the agreement hierarchy and its diachronic implications. In fact, only inanimates (concrete and abstract) show a neatly complementary left-to-right patterning of (F.)PL vs. F.SG (= deflected) agreement along the hierarchy, where the F.PL is clearly most dominant in the attribute and therefore most probably the older, receding agreement type. In animates (angels, other humanoids, and animals), however, the distribution of F.PL is diffuse insofar as it does not fall into any pattern that can be related to the agreement hierarchy. It thus remains difficult (for the time being and from within the agreement hierarchy approach alone) to determine the exact diachronic evolution that led to the agreement situation found in Qur’ānic nonhuman plurals as a whole. Although these results can only be related to Table 1 with caution (for in Hanitsch 2021 we treated both “canonical” and “less canonical” agreement in a joint statistical analysis), it would seem as if the information that we so far drew from Table 1—and which is somewhat unexpected in the light of the agreement hierarchy—might be due to the fact that the nonhuman animate/inanimate-distinction (that was found to be agreement-relevant in Hanitsch 2021) blurs the typologically “expected” picture. What should thus be retained from Table 1, are some observations regarding the relationship between “degrees of animacy” and F.PL agreement:

– In abstract nouns the most common place for F.PL agreement is the attribute. In the few instances where F.PL agreement occurs in the other targets, there are very strong reasons for it.
– Concrete nouns, and as such “higher” inanimates (in the sense that they stand higher on the animacy hierarchy than abstracts) are the controllers that show the most conservative agreement behavior, where conservatism is defined as “still allowing the older/receding F.PL agreement type in all basic target types”.
– All controller-lexemes, that refer to animates, namely animals (e.g., ǧawāriḥ, sab’ baqarāt, ʿādiyāt) or humanoids (ʿaṣnām, hunna) show F.PL agreement only in the right part of the agreement hierarchy, i.e., mostly with verbs and pronouns, occasionally in the participial predicate (hunna referring to pagan gods, line 22), but never in the attribute.

49 Cf. ibid 2021: 60-67.
50 Cf. ibid 2021: 56.
51 We will go deeper into these reasons in § 3.2.6.
The lack of animates in canonical attributive F.PL agreement is particularly striking insofar as the attribute is—in an overall statistical perspective on Quranic agreement with nonhumans—the quantitative “stronghold” of F.PL agreement, and therefore the place where nouns of any semantics might be expected.

Altogether it looks as if higher degrees of animacy were related to some conservatism in the sense of “preserving F.PL agreement in the verb and pronoun”. However, the exact way in which F.PL retreated across the system for different semantic types of controllers, thus yielding the synchronic situation we find in the Qurʾān, needs to be further investigated.

Table 2 (p. 63) gives the inventory of all Qurʾānic instances of “less canonical” F.PL agreement, by adopting a combined stylistic-chronological ordering. The inventory shows that:

- In “less canonical agreement” F.PL agreement of the attribute (or what may be considered as an attribute despite the absence of an explicit controller, see fn. 40) is not restricted to inanimates (as is the case in “canonical agreement”, Table 1). Instead, it occurs with reference to animates rather frequently (horses, [guardian] angels, and pagan gods).
- When “less canonical” F.PL agreement refers to animate and concrete entities (angels, horses, winds, clouds) it does so almost exclusively in (very) early Surahs: The vast majority of instances are in Early Mekkan Surahs 100, 79, 78, 77 (17 instances of fāʿilāt oaths, the muʿṣirāt ‘(rain)clouds of Surah 78, and the muʿtafikāt whose two first mentions are in Surah 69 and 53), followed by two Early Middle Meccan Surahs (3 instances of fāʿilāt oaths in Surah 37, and as-ṣāfināt ‘(horses) standing, etc.’ in Surah 38) There are two additional instances from a (not further classified) Mekkan Surah, i.e., hunna referring to pagan gods in Surah 39. Only two instances of “less canonical” F.PL agreement with an animate/concrete entity (out of a total of 27) are found in a Medinan Surah, namely the possibly lexicalized muʿaqqībāt ‘(guardian) angels’ of Q 13:11, and one “repetition” of the muʿtafikāt (Q 9:70).
- It is very striking to see that many of those “less canonical” instances of F.PL agreement that refer to concrete but (in our modern view) inanimate entities are related to the realm of meteorological/heavenly phenomena, namely winds and (rain)clouds. It is worth noting that, not only does this hold true for the oaths as well as for a non-oath instance (the muʿṣirāt of Q 78:14), but that even in the “canonical agreement” instances of Table 1 heaven- and weather-related entities/phenomena are rather well attested (i.e., [seven] heavens, winds, various types of astral bodies).

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52 When we group nonhuman controllers of any type together (e.g., humanoids, animals, inanimate), it turns out that the attribute has a very significantly higher rate of F.PL agreement (36%, p < 0.0001) than the predicate (5%) (this statistical evaluation is based on the figures presented in Hanitsch 2021: 60, Table 2.

53 The ordering first distinguishes between “less canonical agreement” as it is displayed in the fāʿilāt-oath series (lines 1-20) and other instances of “less canonical agreement” (lines 21-24). The oath series are placed before the remainder because they belong, in their majority, to the oldest groups of Surahs, namely Early Meccan. An additional reason for placing the oath series first is because they are commonly thought to archaizingly reflect the style of pre-Islamic kuhbān (sg. kāhin) (cf. Nöldeke 22000 (1909): 75, Maier 2001: 155). Within each stylistic section, the agreement instances are ordered (as far as possible) chronologically (cf. Nöldeke 22000 (1909), Neuwirth 2011, 2017, Meier 2001: 201-204, CLKK (9Feb2021), CLKK (15Aug2022).

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implied/intended &quot;controller&quot;</th>
<th>Target (with no controller)</th>
<th>Translation (Arberry 1873, or as indicated)</th>
<th>Syntactic function</th>
<th>Qur'an</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 horses</td>
<td>wa-l-'adıyátī dabhān</td>
<td>By the snorting chargers, by the strikers of fire, by the dawn-raid[ers]</td>
<td>attributive</td>
<td>100:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 horses</td>
<td>fa-l-mūriyātī qadhan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>fa-l-mudabbirītī 'amran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>wa-n-nādīliyātī ṣabqan</td>
<td>By those that pluck out vehemently and those that draw out violently, by those that swim serenely and those that outstrip suddenly by those that direct an affair!</td>
<td>attributive</td>
<td>79:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>fa-l-mudabbirītī 'amran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>79:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>fa-l-mudabbirītī 'amran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>79:3</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>fa-l-mudabbirītī 'amran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>79:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>fa-l-mudabbirītī 'amran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>79:5</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>wa-i-mursalātī 'asfān</td>
<td>By the loosed ones successively storming tempestuously by the scatterers scattering and the severally severing and those hurling a reminder</td>
<td>attributive</td>
<td>77:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>fa-l-āṣifātī ṣabqan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>fa-l-āṣifātī ṣabqan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77:3</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>fa-l-āṣifātī ṣabqan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>fa-l-āṣifātī ṣabqan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>wa-i-mursalātī 'asfān</td>
<td>By the swift scatterers and the burden-bearers and the smooth runners and the partitioners [...]</td>
<td>attributive</td>
<td>51:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>fa-l-āṣifātī ṣabqan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>fa-l-āṣifātī ṣabqan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>fa-l-āṣifātī ṣabqan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>wa-i-mursalātī 'asfān</td>
<td>By the rangers ranging and the scarers scaring and the reciters of a Remembrance [...]</td>
<td>attributive</td>
<td>37:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fa-l-āṣifātī ṣabqan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>fa-l-āṣifātī ṣabqan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>mu-ṣirāt</td>
<td>rainclouds (lit. [clouds] emitting or pressing out rain, cf. Penrice 1873:98)</td>
<td>attributive</td>
<td>78:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>al-mu'afikāt</td>
<td>‘(the cities) which were overthrown, (viz. Sodom and Gomorrha)’ (cf. Penrice 1873:7)</td>
<td>attributive</td>
<td>69:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>aṣ-ṣāfīnāt</td>
<td>(horses) standing with one leg bent, standing majestically (cf. Badawi &amp; Abdel Haleem 2013: qf)</td>
<td>attributive</td>
<td>38:31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>hunna</td>
<td>they (f.pl.)</td>
<td>deictic</td>
<td>39:38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>mu'aqqībāt</td>
<td>attendants perpetually acting in succession one after the other (cf. Badawi &amp; Abdel Haleem 2013: qh)</td>
<td>attributive</td>
<td>13:11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: QA “non-canonical” F.PL agreement in nonhumans

54 In the case of the fā‘lāt oaths (lines 1-20) the implied or intended “controller” is identified following Kandil 1996: 49-85, Neuwirth 2011: 168-170,100-402,504-506,531-523,17: 165-170, Sinai [2022]: Sure 100, Sure 79, Sure 77, Sure 51, Neuwirth & Hartwig [2021]: Sure 37.

55 In establishing this table we had to draw a somewhat arbitrary line among all Qur’ānic instances of F.PL marking in words that derivationally are participles or adjectives. Those excluded from the table were the ones that, according to the dictionaries, must probably be judged as rather strongly lexicalized (e.g., sāliḥāt ‘good deeds, actions’, as the plural of sāliḥa which is considered a substantive derived from the participial adjective sāliḥ by means of the feminine derivational affix -a). But of course, unsurprisingly,
In a synopsis of Tables 1 and 2, the following tentative conclusion is drawn: The synchronic picture of the Quranic Arabic agreement sub-systems under consideration leads us to assume that, when F.PL agreement receded during the evolution of the pre-classical Arabic agreement system, a few areas of the system tended to be more conservative or—in other terms—“reluctant” to give up the older (i.e., F.PL) agreement type on behalf of the newly spreading one (i.e., “deflected” F.SG agreement). These areas seem to be related to the animacy degree of the controller in combination with the target type (in terms of parts of speech and syntactic function) and to partly depend on the general agreement setting (“canonical” vs. “less canonical”):

- Abstract nouns have the attribute as a stronghold for F.PL agreement and only rarely appear with a verb or (anaphoric) pronoun in the feminine plural.
- Concrete inanities are rather well represented with F.PL agreement all over different target types—even with those target types that are known, in a crosslinguistic perspective, to be usually given up earliest when an agreement system evolves (i.e., anaphoric pronouns and verbs). In a syntactic view, they may therefore be regarded as a prototype of the “class” of nouns that, in QA, still have the F.PL as an agreement option.
- As for animates, they seem to represent another extreme. Here, what may be seen as attributive F.PL agreement is only preserved in contexts which, based on their ties with (presumably) more archaic or conservative exponents of pre-Classical Arabic, may be regarded as of archaizing linguistic type. Specifically, the “elliptic-seeming” nominalizations (as-sāfināt, al-muʿtafikāt, muʿṣirāt) are reminiscent of pre-Islamic poetry,56 the faʾlāt-oaths which also feature some animates (i.e., horses and angels) seem to have a precursor in a pre-Islamic type of oath formula that is related to pre-Islamic cultic practices.57 The faʾlāt oath formula may even be remotely related to the speech of the pre-Islamic kuḥān.58 The near-to-complete restriction of “attributive” F.PL agreement with nonhumans to the oldest Surahs only underscores the interpretation of the phenomenon as of archaizing style.

56 See fn. 40.
57 In most pre-Qurʾānic instances of faʾlāt oaths, the faʾlāt-participle refers to the „zum Wallfahrtsort Minā galoppierenden Reitkamelinnen oder Reitstuten“, e.g., (a)r-rāqiṣātiʾ ilā Minā (Kandil 1996: 163).
58 Oaths invoking heavenly bodies and cosmic elements are in general, i.e., even when considered independently of the faʾlāt oaths, a shared characteristic of the oldest, i.e., Early Mekkan, Surahs of the Qurʾān (cf. Kandil 1996: 194-198) and the style of the pre-Islamic kuḥān as it is transmitted in the later literature (cf. ibid 1996: 170-171). For the conceptual ties between the animates that feature in the Qurʾānic faʾlāt oaths (angels and horses) and heavenly bodies/elements see § 3.2.1.-3.2.3.
From this general picture we may conclude that, in contrast to abstract nouns, the higher strand of the animacy hierarchy is more disposed to preserve the older “strict” F.PL agreement across the whole array of target types and especially so to the right side of the agreement hierarchy (in pronouns and verbs).

3.2 **F.PL over controller types**

The present section gives an onomasiological overview of the distribution of F.PL agreement over controller-lexemes\(^{59}\) and systematically explores the semantic links that exist among the various controller-lexemes as well as between their contexts of use. The aim of this procedure is to reach a semantic characterization of the domain in which F.PL still occurs, and of the (class of) controllers which, in QA, have preserved the historically older F.PL as an agreement *option* (as against the vast majority of controller lexemes which, in the Qur’ân, are not found with F.PL agreement at all).\(^{60}\)

To facilitate analysis, the controller-lexemes are grouped into the following sections: humanoids (§ 3.2.1), created universe (§ 3.2.2), animals (§ 3.2.3), zoomorphic “domestic” artifacts (§ 3.2.4), other concrete objects (§ 3.2.5), and abstract concepts (§ 3.2.6). Within each section the onomasiological perspective is kept up insofar as lexemes referring to basically the same referents are grouped together, i.e., the sub-section on mountains treats the lexemes ǧibāl as well as rawāsin, the subsection on stars, treats nuǧūm as well as ǧinnas. Within each of these subsections we may touch upon the following points or domains (if relevant): a brief overview of occurrences of F.PL agreement with the relevant controller-lexemes, the grammatical gender of these lexemes (and sometimes the biological gender of their referents), their type of plural formation (sound plural in -āt, or broken plural), quantification, degree of animacy, material properties related to perceptual salience (size, extension, boundedness, etc.), other characteristics (e.g., motional aspects, theological aspects, etc.). Conceptual links between one controller (with its contexts of occurrence) and other controller-lexemes are indicated by an arrow (↗).

### 3.2.1 Humanoids

The members of this subset have in common, semantically, that they refer to non-human animates which are neither animal nor plant. They belong to the vast sphere of spiritual beings “inherited” from Arab paganism, or that go back to some ambient monotheistic views.\(^{61}\) The existence of such “spiritual beings” is not generally denied in the Qur’ân. Instead, the

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\(^{59}\) For the “less canonical” cases of F.PL agreement, the following analogous formulation seems adequate: The present section aims at giving an overview of the distribution of F.PL agreement, according to the onomasiological types of extra-textual entities referred to by the target.

\(^{60}\) The question to what extent the lexemes serving as controllers to F.PL agreement are also documented with other agreement types (mostly F.SG, sometimes M.PL), is treated in a rather cursory manner. For details regarding the—often interacting—factors involved in determining the individual agreement choice, see Hanitsch [forthcoming b].

text reflects the struggle of emerging Islam with (re)assessing and imposing the new status of these beings (or entities) within an Islamic cosmology.62

The humanoids which are occasionally found referred to in the F.PL, viz. with F.PL agreement are: pagan deities, idols, and angels.

Pagan deities are referred to in the F.PL only in one place, and only elliptically (two pronouns and two predicative participles): ʾa-fa-raʾaytum mā taḏʿūna min dūni llāhi ʾin ʾarādanīya llāhu bi-ḍurrin hal hunna kāšfātu ḍurrihīʾawʾarādanī bi-raḥmatin hal hunna mumsikātu rahmatīhī. ’What think you? That you call upon apart from God—if God desires affliction for me, shall they (f.pl.) remove (f.pl.) His affliction? Or if He desires mercy for me, shall they (f.pl.) withhold (f.pl.) His mercy?’ (Q 39:38).

It is not clear whether feminine marking is here due to the conception of these deities as “biologically” feminine or not. The former view is probably supported by Q 53:19-23 where names of female deities are enumerated, and idolaters criticized for attributing these as daughters to God.63 This is also one of the places where pagan deities are denied an actual existence (cf. Q 53:23).

But in many other places the Qurʾān limits itself to contesting the power of these deities—for example by stating their inability to intercede in favor of those who worship them, as in Q 6:94—or, alternatively, relegates them to the status of other “spiritual beings” such as ʾāgān or ḡinn (Q 34:40).64 It is the latter, “accommodative attitude” of the Quranic text which, for the present purpose, justifies the classification of pagan deities—at least partially—as non-human animates. As such, the plural ʾāliha referring to ‘(pagan) Gods’ may also trigger M.PL agreement through personification. But Nöldeke points out that ʾāliha may also take F.SG agreement and that the M.PL ~ F.SG fluctuation of agreement patterns reflects the status of ʾāliha as halfway between “persons” and “things” ( ʾāgān or ḡinn).65

Idols (ʾaṣnām) are found with F.PL agreement of the personal pronoun and the verb (one instance each) at 14:35-36: wa-ʾiḏ qāla ʾibrāhīmu rabbi ʾaṣnām/ raḥmatīn wa-baniyya ʾaṣnām/ raḥmatīn ‘And when Abraham said, ’My Lord, make this land secure, and turn me and my sons away from serving idols/my Lord, they (f.pl.) have led astray (f.pl.) many men’.66

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63 Similarly in Q 16: 57 (cf. Sinai 2017: 45).
65 “In Sura 11: 103 wird ʾāliha abwechselnd als Sg. F. und als Pl. m. gebraucht; ebenso Sura 21: 44. Das ist zwar charakteristisch für die schwankende Auffassung der Götter als Personen und als Sachen, aber schön ist es doch kaum.” (sic) Nöldeke ’1963 (1897): 81.
66 When indicating the gender of a controller, we always refer to the lexical gender as it is evident in the singular—or in other terms: the lexical gender as indicated in the dictionaries, e.g., ʾaṣnāḥ ‘idol’ is a masculine, therefore its plural ʾaṣnām is glossed as M.PL; ḡāriḥa ‘beast of prey’ is a feminine, therefore its plural ḡāriḥa is glossed as f.PL. We thus do not, in the glossing, adopt the common categorization of broken plurals as per se feminine singular (see Fischer 1987: 64) because this would blur a gender distinction—precisely, that of the corresponding singular—which might have a bearing on the agreement outcome (as we will come back to in the synopsis of § 4).
The term 'aṣnām is used in the Qurʾān to refer to “physical representations […] of deities or supernatural powers” and also to “false gods”. Just as noted by Nöldeke regarding pagan deities ('āliha, above), idols ('aṣnām) are occasionally found with fluctuating agreement F.SG ~ M.PL, which seems to indicate some intermediary status between “person” and “thing”, e.g., Q 26:71-73: qālū naʿbudu ʿaṣnāman fa-nażalū laḥā ʿakīfīna / qāla bal yasmaʿānakum 'iḏ tadʿūna / 'aw yanfaʿānakum 'aw yaḍurrūna / qālī bal waḡādānā ābānā ka-dālika yaṣṭalīna / ‘They said, 'We serve idols (m.pl.), and continue cleaving to them (f.sg.). / He said, 'Do they hear (m.pl.) you when you call / or do they profit (m.pl.) you, or harm (m.pl.)? / They said, 'Nay, but we found our fathers so doing’. But it is probably best to refer to the latter use of the M.PL as “mock-personification” intended to denounce the ridicule and wrong of worshipping idols.

“Mock-personification”-use of M.PL agreement contrasts with F.PL agreement in the passage cited above (Q 14:35-36), where no human-like animacy of the idols is at stake. The context rather seems to imply that the idols, though they are false deities or not real, may still—as a concept—exert a certain force-like effect on their worshippers. The F.PL thus seems related to a merely metaphorical animacy status, thus oscillating between humans and inanimates. The aspect of compelling force, which is apparent in this instance, links the idols to the created universe group below.

Angels: The vast majority of occurrences of controller-lexemes that refer to angels (malāʾika, ḥāfiẓūn, rasul) triggers M.PL agreement (6 attributes, 64 predicates, 3 relatives, and 13 pronouns) just as plurals referring to groups of human beings (of male or mixed biological gender), e.g., wa-tara l-malāʾikata ḥāffīna min ḥawli l-ʿarši yusabbiḥūna bi-ḥamdi rabbi him ‘And thou shalt see the angels (m.pl.) encircling (m.pl.) about the Throne proclaiming the praise of their (m.pl.) Lord’ (Q 39:75). Unlike controllers referring to pagan deities and idols, there is no fluctuation F.SG ~ M.PL agreement, that would indicate some partial “thing-like” status. Angels are thus the non-humans ranking highest on the animacy-scale after humans and before any other animates.

The only agreement phenomenon that connects angels to the lower parts of the animacy scale consists of four instances of elliptic (or nominalized) F.PL reference. Three of them

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67 Hawting [2021].
69 See also D’Anna’s (2020: 36-44) treatment of agenthood (or agency) as a factor favoring F.PL agreement.
70 Cf. Hanitsch 2021: 60, Table 2.
71 At least there is no target agreeing in the F.SG that would follow the controller (as the syntactic domain to which we limit our attention in the present article, given that, in QA, there is no F.PL agreement with nonhuman plural controllers in pre-controller targets).
72 Whether F.SG agreement in verbs preceding a subject referring to angels (as in fa-kayfa ʾiḏā tawaf-fathumu l-malāʾikatu yaḏribūna waḡāhahum wa-ʿaḍhārahum ‘How shall it be, when the angels (m.pl.) take them (f.sg.), beating (m.pl.) their faces and their backs?’ Q 47: 27), is an aspect, that lowers the animacy status of angels, by including angels into the syntactic behavior of controllers referring to inanimates/objects, remains to be investigated. More to the point: It should be investigated whether the frequency of F.SG agreement in VSO-verbs is significantly higher when the subject refers to angels, than when it refers to humans. This is because F.SG agreement with broken plural subjects referring to humans is not excluded in the Qurʾān either, e.g., wa-mā muhammadun ʿillā rasūlun qad ḫalat min qablihi r-
constitute the fāʿilāt oath series, that introduces late Meccan Surah 37: wa-ṣ-ṣāffāti ṣaffan / fa-z-zāǧirāti zaǧran / fa-t-tāliyātiḏikran / innāʾilāhakum la-wāḥidun ‘By the rangers (f.pl.) ranging / and the scarers (f.pl.) scaring / and the reciters (f.pl.) of a Remembrance / surely your God is One.’ (Q 37: 1-4). The angels, who are here referred to by the participles, are staged as agents in the process of waking the Dead on Judgment day or at least as prefiguring the relevant eschatological events.\(^73\)

The morphological form of the target not only points to the necessity of an eschatological reading (insofar as the feminine active participle of form I is, in the Qurʾān, repeatedly used to refer to threatening events related to the end of days/Judgment Day, i.e., al-qāriʿa (Q 101:1), al-wāqiʿa (Q 69:15, 56:1), al-ḡāšiya (Q 88:1).\(^74\) It also points to the four other Qurʾānic fāʿilāt series, all of them figuring in older Surahs—namely the Early Meccan Surahs 100, 79, 77, and Early Middle Meccan Surah 51.

– In the three Early Meccan Surahs, notably, the fāʿilāt forms also refer to the threatening events at the end of days. But here, they are conceptualized either as gāzwa-scenes (Surah 100, and 79), i.e., ridden incursions reminiscent of the biblical Horsemen of the Apocalypse,\(^75\) or to a threatening storm scene approaching (Surah 77). In the former case, the fāʿilāt forms allude to horses—with their riders implied—running, and/or attacking, thus ultimately paralleling the angels referred to in Surah 37 to ṣaff as the harbingers of an imminent catastrophe. In the latter case, the fāʿilāt forms allude to meteorological phenomena, thus paralleling the angels referred to in 37 to ẓibā, and maybe ẓawād, again as harbingers of the same events.

– In the Middle Meccan Surah 51 the fāʿilāt series evokes a positive event, probably the downsending of God’s message to mankind, but it is, just as the eschatological events in Surah 77, conceptualized in terms of a rain-bearing storm scene.\(^76\) Here we have a more indirect and less specific, but still discernible parallel between angels, on one hand, ṣibā, and ṣawā, and on the other hand, based on both domains being harbingers of some imminent event. As we proceed to an even more general level of analysis, we can see that angels are paralleled to all of the phenomena or entities just treated (ṣaff, ṣibā, ṣawā) based on the common characteristic that all fāʿilāt forms refer to the agents of some powerful and dynamic series of events, which—be them threatening or not—have their ultimate source or causation in God. Of this cosmological connection Neuwirth writes:

Diese und andere Parallelen zeigen, wie variabel und deutfungsoffen die koranischen Vorstellungen von jenen kosmischen Akteuren sind, die am Jünsten Tag den Prozess

\(^{74}\) Cf. Sinai [2022]: Sure 100, Sure 101.
\(^{75}\) Cf. Neuwirth (2011: 169-170), who also points out, citing Kugel 2007: 547-548, that horses, quickly approaching, are also an ancient oriental metaphor of a catastrophe about to happen, e.g., Jes 5: 26-30.
\(^{76}\) Cf. Neuwirth 2011: 531-532.
der Erweckung einleiten, oder diesen Prozess präfigurieren – eine Ambiguität, die durchaus dem Bild der Engel in der apokalyptischen Tradition entspricht, die über bestimmte Naturgewalten gesetzt sind. (Neuwirth & Hartwig [2021]: Sure 37)

In the overall view it becomes clear, that there is a conceptual connection between angels on one hand and natural and cosmological forces and powers (the created universe-subset, below) on the other hand, and that there is, in the qur'anic fāʾilāt series and along the chronology of Surahs, an evolution from the foregrounding of the latter (worldly experience and natural forces) to the foregrounding of the former (spiritual beings, i.e., angels): while in the oldest fāʾilāt oaths eschatological events are staged by agents, which are closely related to angels but not yet personified, and still act in a rather coarse “material” way (cf. fa-l-mulqiyāti dīkran ‘and those hurling a reminder’ Q 77:5 which refers either to winds or to clouds),77 the agents of Surah 37 are clearly of person-like status, insofar as they are able of standing in a formation—an aspect reminiscent of an orderly military action—and of reciting praise to God (tāliyāti dīkra ‘and the reciters of a Remembrance’ Q 37:3).78

Interestingly, some of the later commentators even go as far as to identify some of the fāʾilāt forms in the Early Meccan Surahs directly to angels.79 In fact, there are additional verses in the Qurʾān that state the similitude between winds and heavenly messengers openly (Q 25:48, 27:63, 30:46). And the words of al-Maqdīsi (d. 340/934) that state “that the wind is an angel as well as al-rūḥ”80 testify that the connection between winds and angels was maintained by the Islamic tradition.81

There is one more, and rather specific cosmological parallel between angels and stars: It is established by wa-ṣ-ṣāffāti ṣaffan ‘by the rangers ranging’ (Q 37:1), insofar as the angels, here standing in battle line, unmistakably point to the biblical ‘Lord of armies/host’ (YHWH šebaʾot, 1 Sam 1:3, Ps 24:10, Eph 1:20f., Kol 1:16), which in turn, is intricately connected to Astral bodies, in the apocalyptic tradition.82

Finally, there is one single instance of F.PL reference to angels outside the fāʾilāt oaths, i.e., the elliptically construed, possibly substantivized epithet muʿaqqibāt, literally ‘those who follow one upon the other’, in Q 13:11: lahū muʿaqqibātun min bayni yadayhi wa-min ḫalfihī yahfazānahū min ʾamri llāhi ‘he has attendant angels (formally f.pl.), before him and behind him, watching (m.pl.) over him by God’s command’. The muʿaqqibāt are commonly interpreted as some type of guardian angel.83 These angels, who watch lovingly over every person,
move down from heaven “with divine grace and re-ascend […] with human actions”. 84

It is specifically the up-and-downward movement of this special type of “spiritual beings” that connects them to the ’āmr in the sense of ‘logos’ (cf. Q 32:5, 34:2) and thereby to the sphere of God’s direct influence and creation (natural phenomena). Additionally, the up-and-downward movement may be seen to reveal some image-schematic connexion of these beings to other phenomena or entities that are sent “down” from heaven and thereby “connect” heaven and earth (see winds, clouds). One may even discern a connection to the trajectory movement of heavenly bodies (stars), which cyclically hide and reappear with the alternation of night and day. 85

3.2.2 Created universe

Heavens (samāwāt) is grammatically a sound plural in -āt, which generally favors the retention of F.PL. agreement. 86 This affinity is probably related to the fact that specifically in nominal targets (adjectives, participles) F.PL agreement with a controller that itself ends in -āt results in “alliterative agreement”, i.e., in an agreement setting where the agreement-marking morphemes of the target are formally identical with the gender-number marking of the controller, e.g., samāwātun matwiyyātun “and the heavens (m/f.pl.) shall be rolled up (f.pl.)” (Q 39:67). As for lexical gender, the singular of samāwāt (i.e., samā) is considered masculine as well as feminine.

The controller samāwāt has F.PL agreement documented in all three basic target types (in terms of parts of speech): one nominal (participle, see above), two verbs (Q 42:15, 19:90), and five pronouns (Q 2:29, 42:5, 65:12, 71:15). There are no instances of deflected agreement. 88 In most instances the controller is quantified by the numeral sabʿ ‘seven’, e.g., tumulta ʾila s-samāʾi fa-sawwāhunna sabʿa samāwātin ‘then He lifted Himself to heaven and leveled them seven heavens’ (Q 2:29). Explicit numeral quantification is among the factors that, across the varieties of Arabic, most strongly favor “strict”, i.e., plural agreement since it highly contributes to enhancing the individuation of the single items referred to by the plural controller. 89 However, F.PL occurs with ‘heavens’ even when there is no numeral present, e.g., takādu s-samāwātu yatafaṭṭarna min fauqiynna “The heavens wellnigh are rent

84 Cunial [2021].
85 Cf. Henning 1989 [1979]: 234) who translates muʿaqqibātun […] min ʾamri llāhi as ‘Engel aus dem Logos (ʾāmr) Allahs’; Penrice (1873: 99) translates ‘angels (of the night and day) who succeed each other’.
86 Cf. Hanitsch [forthcoming a].
87 See fn. 44; cf. also Dror 2014: 57, 68, Hanitsch [forthcoming b].
88 And likewise, no instances of “personifying” use of the M.PL, as is sometimes with other inanimates (cf. Hanitsch 2021: 69).
above them.’ (Q 42:5). This may be explained through common ground, more precisely by a specific cosmological knowledge that is present in the relevant speech community, and which states that the Heavens are by definition and always Seven. The plural lexeme *samāwāt* might, hence, be regarded as inherently quantified at the level of lexical semantics.\(^90\)

As we give a closer look at those instances of F.PL agreement where a quantifier is absent (in Q 42:5 above, and in the very similar Q 19:90), there is another individuating, and thus “strict”-plural-agreement favorable, characteristic to be noted: In both verses, the context has the unbelievers attributing a son to God—a belief which is literally stated to be “something hideous”, and which causes the heavens to “rent” (as well as the earth to split asunder and the mountains to “fall down crashing”). The Qur’ān thus attributes a reflexive or even emotional reaction to the natural elements that are here enumerated and thereby endows them with some sort of animacy.\(^91\) Since *samā*’ ‘heaven’ can be treated as feminine in the singular one may suppose that F.PL agreement is here a case of personification as a female human. But we do not favor this interpretation for two reasons:

- As we will see below, there are other instances of controller lexemes that take F.PL agreement under rather similar conditions, and which are unambiguously masculine, not feminine (-stars, REMOVE stars, -mountains). Therefore, we prefer to speak of “animization” or “bio–morphisation”, meaning the attribution of more rudimentary, maybe even “primitive”, animate properties “below” or simply different from human animacy.\(^92\) Ultimately this process results in raising the heavens along the animacy hierarchy\(^93\) and into the status of an (inferred) non-human, yet person-like animate, for which we would like to propose Hallowell’s (1960) concept of the “other-than-human person.”\(^94\)

\(^90\) Cf. Hanitsch [forthcoming b].


\(^92\) Cf. D’Anna 2020b, where it is also pointed out that actual or proper “humanization” (personification) leads, in Qur'ānic Arabic, to the use of M.PL agreement. A more detailed “animizing/biomorphising” account of F.PL agreement with *samāwāt* and other natural phenomena is presented in Hanitsch [forthcoming b].


\(^94\) The term „other-than-human person” was coined by the anthropologist A. Irving Hallowell to designate a group of objects which, in the language of the Ojibwa (Algonquian), are grammatically classified as animate instead of inanimate. “Other-than-human persons” are thought of as objects with “potentialities for animation […] under certain circumstances”. In Hallowell’s view the allocation of an object “to an animate grammatical category is part of a culturally constituted cognitive ‘set’” (Hallowell 1960: 21-25, cited in Perdibon 2019: 20). Harvey (2005: XVII, also cited in Perdibon 2019: 27) further sharpens the concept of the “other-than-human-person” by subsuming it under a broadened concept of personhood: A person is any relational being, with whom it is possible to “interact with varying degrees of reciprocity […] persons may be spoken with […] are volitional […] demonstrate intentionality and agency with varying degrees of autonomy and freedom”.

\(^{114}\)
The use of F.PL with controllers whose referents are—in our modern worldview—“really” inanimate (e.g., heavens, stars, mountains), is a retention from earlier stages of the language where F.PL agreement with inanimates was much more common with inanimates in general, viz. less subject to restrictions. Hence, in order to account for the retention of F.PL in specific cases of Qur’ānic inanimates (such as the heavens, etc.), there is no need to take the “bypass” via feminine personification (i.e., anthropomorphism). Rather, it is sufficient to account for the factors that, in every single case, lead to the referents of the plural controller being individuated enough to favor “strict” F.PL, or, in other terms, for having retained it. In our case, i.e., regarding the heavens, being raised on the animacy scale and into the status of an “animate by inference” thing, or of an “other-than-human person” surely is an individuating effect.

There is one last remark pending with regard to yet another individuating, and therefore “strict”-F.PL-favorable effect, namely perceptual and physical salience of the controller referents: The Heavens are unequivocally large and extended, and as such, they certainly are perceptually highly salient, and thus, individuated.95 We will refer back to this feature of the Heavens when treating other controllers of the Ṣ-created universe subset.

Stars (nuǧūm, ḫunnas): The respective singulars of these broken plurals are masculine (nu<byte>/gμm, ḫānis).96 F.PL agreement occurs only in the nominal target and comprises two particles, one predicative (Q 16:12), the other ambiguous between attributive and appositive (Q 81:15-16): wa-saḫḫara lakumu l-layla wa-n-nahāra wa-š-šamsa wa-l-qamara wa-n-nuġūmu musuḥḫarātu bi-ʾamrihī ‘And He subjected to you the night and day, and the sun and moon; and the stars (m.pl.) are subjected (f.pl.) by His command’ (Q 16:12) and: fa-lāʾuqsimu bi-l-ḫunnasi / l-ǧawāri97 l-kunnasi ‘No! I swear by the slinkers (m.pl.) / the runners (f.pl.),

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95 For textual or physical salience as a factor enhancing individuation, see Khan 1984: 469-470, and Brustad 2000: 22-25. It must be noted, however, that these authors mainly intended the perceptual or physical salience of a word (for our purpose, the controller) in the text (i.e., its recent or frequent mention), while we here extend the concept to the extratextual referents of the controller (i.e., the heavens).

96 Cf. Penrice 1873: 45, 145.

97 Unlike other broken plural targets in our corpus, which are considered plurals of common gender, we classify targets of the measure fawāʿil as inflectionally feminine. This decision is based on the strong “female bias” of this measure when it refers to humans. With male humans, the use of fawāʿil as a plural to the participial adjective of the pattern fāʿil seems to be (at least in a general view of Classical Arabic) restricted to only five specific lexemes (i.e., fāris ‘horseman’, pl. fawāris; tābiʿ ‘follower’, pl. tawābi; hālik ‘perishing’, pl. hawālik; nākis ‘hanging the head’, pl. navākus, and possibly ḥālīf ‘remaining behind’, pl. ḥawālik, see Wright 1967: II 214), while the sound plural in -ūna remains the regular plural formation for fāʿil adjectives (this holds even for some of the above-mentioned lexemes, e.g., ḥālīfūna ‘(men/persons) remaining behind’, Lane 1863-1893: 3039). With female humans, however, the pattern fawāʿil is a much more common option (e.g., kawāfir ‘believing [women]’, Q 60: 10, tawāhir ‘clean, pure [women]’, Lane 1863-1893: 1887; some even interpret the single quranic instance of ḥawālik (Q 9: 87,93) as referring to women, see Lane 1863-1893: 798). Moreover, the measure fawāʿil is closely associated with adjectives referring to specifically female properties and which are commonly known to therefore lack an explicit marking of feminine gender in the singular (e.g., ḥāmil ‘pregnant’, pl. ḥawāmil; ṣāḥib ‘menstruating’, pl. ṣawāḥib, ṣāḥib ‘divorced’, pl. ṣawāḥib; nāḥid ‘having swelling breasts’, pl. nawāḥid [Wright 1967: II 214]; kāʾib ‘a damsel with swelling breasts’ [Penrice 1873: 126], pl. kawāʾib ‘[maidens] with swelling breasts’, Q 78: 33; ‘ānis ‘a woman having become of middle age remaining a virgin, not
sinks’ (Q 81:15-16). If we interpret al-ǧawāri, in the last verse, as an apposition to al-ḫunnas, it would be an instance of “less canonical” F.PL agreement, insofar as it would refer to the stars in the F.PL directly. The stars as controllers may also take deflected agreement, but it is documented only in the verb (2 instances in Q 77:8, 81:2) and pronoun (one instance, Q 6:97).

In both instances of F.PL agreement, there is no explicit quantification. However, ḫunnas may be regarded as inherently quantified since it refers not only to ‘the stars, i.e., all of them, because they retire or hide themselves, at setting, or because they become concealed in the day-time’, but also to the ‘five planets Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury because they have a retrograde as well as a direct motion’. Just as for  Heavens, the contexts in which nuğūm and ḫunnas are used with F.PL agreement are of the kind that bestows on them a certain degree of non-human animacy.

— an-nuğūmu musaḫḫarātun (Q 16:12): the predicative participial adjective musaḫḫarāt ‘subjected’, conveys a notion of dominion, which is typical of the relation between a human (agent) and a domesticated animal (patient) or subordinate human. The stars are thus “anitized” by taking the position of the (typically) domesticated  Animal (or subordinate human) patient. It is also interesting to see that the “animization”—and by the same token domestication—that is performed on the stars, is also performed on other heavenly bodies, within the Qur’ān itself. Cf. the same verse (Q 16:12), where, apart from night and day, also sun and moon are ‘subjected’ within the process of creation. Moreover, this verse as well as similar ones (Q 13:2, 31:29, 35:13, 39:5) contributes to strengthening the conceptual link between the stars and another F.PL-affine controller, i.e., the  Heavens, as the abode of all celestial bodies. Another celestial body in the wider sense which is used in the Qur’ān with the subjecting verb saḫḫara, is the  wind (or winds), cf. Q 69:6-7, 38:36. And, to complete the picture and thereby the enumeration of lexical/onomasiological cross-connections within the category of controller-lexemes allowing for F.PL agreement, it should be mentioned that  mountains and also  ships are

having married’, pl. ’awānis; ’āqir ‘barren’, pl. ’awāqir (Kahle 1975: 83, Lane 1863-1893: 2225, 2110; the phenomenon even seems to extend to adjectives referring to female animals, e.g., lāqiḥ ‘(a she-camel) having just conceived’, or ‘become pregnant’, pl. lawāqiḥ; compare even the ‘fertilized’ and thereby ‘fertilizing’ winds in Q 15: 22 [see below]). In our view, the gender categorization of an agreement marker (here jama’l) according to its usage with humans is justified by the analogous situation concerning the sound plural in -āt: Although targets ending in -āt occur with nonhuman controllers of either lexical gender, the sound plural in -āt is commonly labeled “feminine”, based on its exclusive occurrence with females, when it comes to human beings.  

Lane 1863-1893: 819.  
Penrice 1873: 45. For more explanations of the astronomical reasons relating to the course—or apparent course—of the stars or planets, which are proposed in the Arabic lexicography, see Lane 1863-1893: 819. saḫḫara ‘he constrained him, compelled him, namely a servant or beast, to do what he (the latter) did not desire. You say saḫḫara llāhu l-ʾibila God hath made the camels subservient, or submissive, manageable’ (Lane 1863-1893: 1334).
treated in the Qurʾān as “domesticated-animized” patients of ᵗᵃᵏ⁻ʳᵃ (Q 14:32 and 38:18).101

- bi-l-ḥunnasi l-ḡawāri l-kunnasi: the use of the participial adjective ṣawārīn (f.pl., sg. ḡārin) connects the stars/planets intra-qurʾānically to ⼥ ships and ⼥ clouds, which are also in the category of controller-lexemes allowing for F.PL marking/agreement. This conceptual connection can be seen, at the formal level,102 in the fact that all of these entities, stars, ships, and winds, occur in the Qurʾān either directly referred to or modified by some inflectional form of the participle of ḣarā ‘flow, run’;103 ships are lexicalized as ḡārīya (pl. ḡawārin, used in Q 42:33, 55:24) ‘running > vessel, ship’. The ḥ clouds are referred to by the metonymic-elliptic ḡāriyāt ‘(swift) runners’104 in the ⾦ oath series evoking a storm scene at the beginning of Surah “aḏ-ḏāriyāt” (Q 51:3). This formal similarity between stars, ships, and clouds has a double conceptual underpinning: (1) The first one regards only ships and clouds, each of which is connected to ⼥ winds (which are in both instances mentioned in close context) by the same cause-to-effect metonymy: It is the wind (cause) who moves or drives (effect) the ships as well as the clouds along their course on the sea or in the sky. (2) The basic conceptualization of this movement is that of “flowing” along a trajectory105—and this is where the whole complex is linked back to the stars (al-ḥunnas / al-ḡawāri l-kunnas): The participle (plural cg.) kunnas ‘the sinkers’, which modifies (or is apposed to) ḥunnas ‘stars’ in Q 81:15-16, supports the notion of a trajectory (which is already present in the controller ḥunnas), since it is commonly applied to certain stars due to their characteristic of either going to hide “in their lace(s) of setting (like antelopes in their kunus)”, or because they “continue in their courses and then depart returning”.106 Q 23:17 even seems to indicate that the Seven layers of the ⼥ Heavens are themselves identified with the various (levels) of astral trajectories (ṯarāʾiq).107

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101 In the relevant passages mountains are expressed by a controller which is masculine plural and triggers F.PL agreement (ǧibāl), e.g., ʾinna saḥḥarna l-ǧibāla maʿahū yusabbih na bi-l-ʿašiyyi wa-l-ʾišrāqi ‘With him We subjected the mountains to give glory at evening and sunrise’ (38: 18). As for ships, the parallel to stars is established in a slightly more indirect way, as saḥḥara occurs only with ships, that are expressed by the collective noun fulk (which, in this verse, takes F.SG agreement): wa-saḥḥara lakumu l-fulka li-taǧriya fi l-baḥri bi-ʾamrihī ‘And He subjected to you the ships to run upon the sea at His commandment’ (14: 32). F.PL agreement with controllers denoting ships is found in Q 42: 32-34, 55: 24 (ḡawārin, see below) and Q 10: 22 (coll. fulk, cf. D’Anna 2020b: 39, 42-43): huwa llaḏī yusayyirukum fi l-barri wa-l-baḥri ḥattā ʾiḏā kuntum fi l-fulki wa-ḡarayna bihim bi-rīḥin ṭayyibatin wa-fariḥū bihā ‘It is He who conveys you on the land and the sea; and when you are in the ship—and the ships run with them with a fair breeze, and they rejoice in it.’

102 More precisely, in a semasiological perspective on lexical semantics.

103 See Penrice 1873: 27.

104 Neuwirth (2011: 525) translates fa-l-ḡāriyāti yusrū by „Bei den […] gleitend leicht Hinziehenden”.

105 As the primary use of ḣarā seems to be ‘running’ with respect to water or similar, i.e., fluid substances’ (Lane 1863-1893: 418).

106 Lane 1863-1893: 2691.

107 Cf. Kunitzsch [2022].
The latter image schema\(^{108}\) of a trajectory which, as was said, the ḫunnas (or stars in general) share with running ṣhips and flowing ṣclouds, even points back at the conceptualization of the stars as “domesticated-animized” entities (wa-n-muḫmu musalḥarāṭun), since the act of tasḫīr ‘subjection’ is explicitly linked in most Qurʾānic contexts to initially putting celestial bodies onto their trajectories, as in Q 13:2 llāhu llaḏī rafaʿa l-samāwātī bi-ġayri ʿamadin tarawnahā ʿalā l-ʿarši wa-saḫḫara š-šamsa wa-l-qamara kullun yaǧrī li-ʾaǧalin musamman ‘God is He who raised up the heavens without pillars you can see, then He sat Himself upon the Throne. He subjected the sun and the moon, each one running to a term stated’.\(^{109}\)

As for the degree of individuation of stars one should keep apart individuation in terms of “boundedness” (which in stars is high, insofar as each one has its individual localization, one may even count stars), and in terms of extension/size. With respect to the latter, the matter is somewhat complicated: Objectively, and according to the modern worldview, stars may be large and extended, but from an earthly perspective they are, perceptually, of course, not so. In this respect, stars are very distinct from all the other entities in the “created universe” subgroup. Yet, just as ṣmountains, stars constitute major landmarks insofar as they are crucial in assuring spatial orientation to man. The latter is probably true in premodern society in general, but very likely even more so in a society deeply rooted in the primary experience of traveling the desert and mastering livelihood within it or at its fringes.\(^{110}\) The landmark character of stars (and of other landscape components) is shown in Q 16:15-16 wa-ʾalqā fi l-ʾarḍi rawāsiya ʿan tamīda bikum wa-ʾanhāran wa-subulan laʾallakum tahtadūna / wa-ʾalāmātin wa-bi-n-naǧmi hum yahtadūna ‘And He cast on the earth firm mountains, lest it shake with you, and rivers and ways; so haply you will be guided / and waymarks; and by the stars they are guided’. This is another aspect that reinforces the impression that stars belong to the subclass of entities that are perceptually rather salient, and—maybe therefore—rather affine to F.PL agreement.

There is one last aspect to be mentioned before closing the section on stars, as we will refer back to it later, when discussing other lexemes: stars are, in the Qurʾān, among the signs of God (ʾāyāt). This is shown by the context of Q 16:12. Here the stars are embedded in an enumeration of various elements of creation which are stated to be ʾāyāt. The passage bears close resemblances with Psalm 104.\(^{111}\)

\(^{108}\) An image-schema is a “condensed redescription of perceptual experience for the purpose of mapping spatial structure onto conceptual structure” (Oakley 2007: 215). Image-schematic patterns “emerge as meaningful structures for us chiefly at the level of our bodily movements through space, our manipulations of objects, and our perceptual interactions” (Johnson 1987: 29, as cited in Oakley 2007: 215).

\(^{109}\) The double connection of heavenly bodies (sun and moon) to (1) domestication-animization (saḫḫara) and (2) a trajectorial movement expressed by ǧarā is also present in Q 13:2, 31:29, 35:13, 39:5.

\(^{110}\) “The stars were used for orientation (iḥtidāʾ) in the migrations of the Bedouins” (Kunitzsch [2022]). Moreover, the pairing of stars and ṣmountains in assuring this spacial orientation seems to have another echo in the fact that both stars and mountains appear, in pre-Islamic poetry, as symbols of durability and imperishability (Sinai [2022]: Sure 77 with reference to Neuwirth: 2011: 307).

Mountains (ǧibāl, rawāsin): The singulars of these broken plurals cover both lexical genders (gable m., ṭāsiya f.). There are three instances of F.PL agreement with mountains, one in the attributive adjective, two in the verb: wa-ḡaʿalnā fīhā ṭāsiyašāmiḥātin ‘Set We not therein soaring (f.pl.) mountains (f.pl.)?’ (Q 77:27), wa-saḥḥarnā maʿa dāwīda l-ǧibāla yuṣabbiḥna wa-ṭ-tayra wa-kuwnā ūliina ‘And with David We subjected the mountains (m.pl.) to give glory (f.pl.), and the birds, and We were doers’ (21:79).

While there is no other instance of agreement with rawāsin than Q 77:27, cited above, ḡibāl does also rather frequently occur with deflected agreement (F.SG), especially in the verb (5 instances), and pronoun (6 instances), e.g., wa-tara l-ǧibāla ṭahsabhabā ḡamidatan wa-liya tamurru marra s-sahābi ‘and thou shalt see the mountains (m.pl.), that (f.sg.) thou supposset fixed (f.sg.), passing by (f.sg.) like clouds’ (Q 27:88), and wa-yunaẓīlū mina s-samāʾi min ṭāsiyān fīhā min baradin ‘And He sends down out of heaven mountains (m.pl.), wherein (f.sg.) is hail’ (Q 24:43), but there is also one predicative adjective (Q 27:88 cited above). What is striking about the manifest variation F.PL ~ F.SG in the verb is that the two verbs that occur in the F.PL are clearly more agentive (ṣabbaḥa ‘praise’) than the ones occurring in the F.SG (marra ‘to pass by’, and passives).

While ḡabāl (pl. ḡibāl) is the noun that refers to mountains most commonly, ṭāsiya (pl. rawāsin) must be regarded as a substantivized elliptical adjective or epithet, based on the observation that ṭāsīn is an adjective commonly used to describe mountains (e.g., ḡibāl ṭāsiyatun or ṭāsiya ṭāsiyatun ‘firm’ or ‘steadfast mountains’). The use of ṭāsiya for mountains is reminiscent, in Old Arabic, of a general collocational pattern which reveals a conceptual connection of mountains with ḡships: Mountains are metaphorically mapped onto ships, based on the anchoring (and ensuing steadfastness) of the latter. Hence rasati s-safīnatu ‘the ship anchored’ or ‘cast anchor’ has its analogy in rasā l-ǧabalu ‘the mountain was firmly based’ or ‘firm in its base upon the ground’. A derivative of this collocation is found in the

\[\text{\textsuperscript{112}}\] And very similarly Q 38: 18.


\[\text{\textsuperscript{114}}\] This is in line with the findings of D’Anna (2020b: 41-46) regarding F.PL agreement in Qur’ānic SVO-verbs: “[W]hile agency in itself is not sufficient to trigger syntactic agreement [here meant to refer to strict number agreement], all the samples (with a single, but motivated, exception) of syntactic agreement are verbs whose grammatical subjects are also agents. In typological terms we are here dealing with a soft constraint” (ibid 2020b: 44). The reverse, consequently, does not hold, insofar as D’Anna has also shown that, in the Qur’ān, action verbs do not automatically trigger plural agreement with non-human inanimate controllers: “The Qur’ānic corpus […] includes 36 occurrences of action verbs following non-human controllers, out of which 16 (44.4 %) feature feminine plural agreement and 20 (55.6%) feminine singular agreement. Within the total number of feminine singular verbs, on the other hand, action verbs only feature 32.3% of the occurrences (while action verbs make 94.1% of the occurrences of feminine plural agreement)” (ibid. 2020b: 46).

\[\text{\textsuperscript{115}}\] Sinai [2022]: Sure 77.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{116}}\] Lane 1863-1893: 1092. – ḡibāl ṭāsiya illustrates that mountains do not occur, in OA, exclusively with F.PL agreement, but that F.SG agreement is also found.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{117}}\] The plural ṭāsiya occurs ten times in the Qur’ān, but only once triggering any agreement.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{118}}\] Lane 1863-1893: 1992.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{112}}\] And very similarly Q 38: 18.
Qurʾān itself: wa-l-ǧibāla ʿarsāhā ‘and the mountains He set firm’ (Q 79:32), or, more indirectly (e.g., Q 21:31, 31:10), when the rawāsin ‘steadfast (mountains)’ are mentioned, in the context of creation, as ensuring the steadfastness of the Earth itself.

There is no type of explicit or implicit quantification in the instances of F.PL with ǧibāl or rawāsin.

The two instances of verbal F.PL agreement with mountains (ǧibāl) show a certain degree of “animization”: The mountains are staged as if they were able to behave as animates, insofar as they are constrained by God (saḫḫarnā ‘We subjected [them]’) to praise Him along with the birds (yusabbiḥna Q 21:79, 38:18). The motive of tasḫīr ‘subjection’ connects the mountains to the kbdHeavens through a “domesticating type of animization” (see above). Unlike in the “animate representation” of the kbdHeavens in Q 42:5 and 19:90 (see above), there is no ambiguity here regarding the question of whether F.PL agreement might reflect proper personification as female humans: Since ǧibāl, unlike samāwāt, is masculine in the singular (ġabal), F.PL agreement can, in this case, only be interpreted as a reflex of some animacy below (or different from) the human status.

The “praising mountains” of the Qurʾān are commonly paralleled to Ps. 98,8 and Ps 148, where all that is in the world, among which natural objects and phenomena—including mountains and hills—are called to join in the praise of God. A more distant parallel may be seen in various manifestations of mountains as Gods or mythic “other-than-person animates” in Ancient Mesopotamian religion and literature. In Perdibon’s (2019: 53-85) comprehensive treatment of the topic, the most suggestive examples (as we compare them with the relevant Qurʾānic passages) include a visual representation of mountain gods bringing offerings (together with humans and a river deity) to Narām-Sīn, as well as the Myth of Inana and Ebiḥ, which shows that Inana, as a goddess, expects from a mountain god to show her “respect for her divinity and supremacy” by putting its/His nose to the ground and rubbing its/His lips in the dust. It is tempting to hypothesize that the Qurʾānic tasḫīr of the mountains should be read as a symbol of the victory of the One God over earlier polytheism and that this symbol is modeled on much more ancient instances of inner-polytheistic tasḫīr, where—just as in the Ancient Mesopotamian myths—a God attains or confirms His/Her position as a higher deity by subjugating other (Nature) Deities. Such a view is possibly corroborated by a parallel in Q 53:33, a passage where God is said to be the “Lord of Sirius”, a kbdstar which is implied to have been adored by some Arab tribes in the Ǧāhilīya, thus indicating “that the adoration of stars [and as such polytheism] has come to an end.”

Mountains are no unequivocal examples of discrete objects, insofar as it is hard to determine where exactly a mountain ends and another stretch of the landscape begins. Nevertheless, mountains clearly are highly individuated by virtue of their impressive size and

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122 Cf. ibid 2019: 63-69.
123 Kunitzsch [2022].
124 Cf. Lyons’ (1977: 442) borderline cases of “first-order entities”.

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ensuing perceptive salience. This is also shown in the fact that they are, in the Qurʿān, occasionally alluded to by the term ‘alām ‘landmarks, long mountains’. This is an aspect that connects mountains conceptually to ʿstars (see above). Obviously, major landmarks such as mountains, are crucial in spatial orientation as reference points, with respect to which alone the position of the stars themselves can be determined. The term ‘alām ‘landmarks, long mountains’, in turn, serves as an image donor for the conceptualization of ʿships as large and perceptually salient (see below).

By domain-of-experience metonymy, mountains are clearly connected to the ʿHeavens:
In the cosmology conveyed in the Qurʿān, God has set the mountains (rawāsiya) in Q 21:31 and 31:10 ‘as anchors’ to the earth (see above) and the mountains (ǧibāl) in 78:7 as ‘pillars’ (ʾawtād) [to the heavens]. Both facets reflect a conceptualization of the created universe as relying on the mountains as a central, securing, and load-bearing construction component and hence a central element in God’s creation; or else: the mountains are staged as an important “extension” of the firmament.

This leads to the last important conceptual connection of mountains to other controller-lexemes found with F.PL agreement: As a major element in God’s creation mountains belong to the signs of God (ʾāyāt): the rawāsiya šāmiḫāt in Q 77:27 are listed in the central section of the Surah which is dedicated to enumerating the manifestations of God’s works in History and Nature. In other passages in which the setting of the rawāsiya is mentioned the word ‘sign of God’ (ʾāya) is even made explicit, e.g., Q 13:3. This is a trait the mountains share, so far, with the ʿstars (see above), but also with ʿwinds (see below), and ʿships (see § 3.2.4)

Winds (riyāḥ) are referred to in the F.PL eight times. There are two instances of “canonical” agreement with the broken plural controller riyāḥ, the singular of which is a feminine (rīḥ).
In both instances the targets are participial adjectives construed as circumstantial modifiers:
wa-min ʾāyātiḥ ‘an yursila r-riyāḥa mubašširātin wa-li-yuḏīqakum min raḥmatihī wa-li-taǧriya l-fulku bi-ʾamrihī ‘And of His signs is that He looses the winds (f.pl.), bearing good tidings (f.pl.) and He may let you taste of His mercy, and that the ships may run at His commandment’ (Q 30:46), wa-ʾarsalna r-riyāḥa lawāqiḥa fa-ʾanzalnā mina s-samāʾī māʾan ‘And We loose the winds (f.pl.) fertilizing (f.pl.), and We send down out of heaven water’ (Q 15:22). Deflected F.SG agreement is found with riyāḥ twice (two verbs in Q 35:9 and 30:48).

The other six instances are the fāʿilāt forms, which occur in the storm scenes at the beginnings of Surah 77 and Surah 51: wa-l-mursalāti ʿurfan ‘By the loosed ones successively’

126 Neuwirth & Hartwig [2021]: Sure 15, Sinai [2022]: Sure 78.
128 We consider the plural lawāqiḥ as feminine for structural as well as semantic reasons, that were exposed in fn. 97.
129 Literally, lāqiḥ (pl. lawāqiḥ) is used of a she-camel ‘having just conceived’, or ‘become pregnant’. Moreover, the collocation riyāḥun lawāqiḥu refers to “pregnant winds; so called because they bear the water and the clouds, and turn the latter over and about, and then cause them to send down rain; or because they become pregnant and then impregnate the clouds” (Lane 1863-1893: 2669).
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/ fa-l-ʿāṣifāti ʿasfan 'storming tempestuously' / wa-n-nāširāti nāṣran 'by the scatterers scattering' / fa-l-fāriqāti farqan 'and the severally severing' / wa-d-ḏāriyāti ḏarwan 'By the swift scatterers' (Q 51:1).\(^{131}\)

As already noted above (see ‘angels’), the fāʿīlāt forms of Surah 77 present the winds as forces prefiguring and introducing eschatological events. As such, they are formally as well as conceptually paralleled to the ʿhorses in the fāʿīlāt series of Surah 100 and 79. Moreover, (as was also discussed above) both, the winds and the ʿhorses of the fāʿīlāt series, serve as models for the likewise staging of ʿangels as harbingers and agents of the Last Judgment in the probably younger Surah 37.\(^{132}\)

In Surah 51 the winds, which are staged as driving the clouds, are in a more general sense the harbingers of imminent events related to God—very likely the downsending of the Message.\(^{133}\) As such, again, the winds serve as a conceptual model for ʿthe angels in Surah 37 (see above).

The conceptual paralleling of winds and animate entities (ʿhorses and ʿangels) as well as the role of these entities as agents in some approaching events—be them threatening or at least impressive—\(^{134}\)—endows the winds themselves with a certain degree of agentivity, thus drawing them closer to the realm of animacy.\(^{135}\) Winds can therefore be considered as “other-than-human persons” by virtue of “inferred” or “mythologically grounded” animacy.\(^{136}\)

As for the winds in the two instances of participial agreement, there also are various “animizing” effects present in the context, and which draw the winds, as natural forces and as being part of God’s creation, close to the other, likewise “animized”, cosmological entities, i.e., ʿheavens, ʿstars, and ʿmountains, above:

— ʾan yursila r-riyāḥa mubašširātin (Q 30:46): the participle mubašširāt ‘one who announces joyful news’\(^{137}\) presents the winds metaphorically as Messengers bearing good tidings (the latter being identified with the rain). The metaphorical reading as ‘messengers’ is echoed (and as thereby confirmed), in the following verse (Q 30:47), where mention is made of the rusul as definitely animate messengers of God:

wa-min ʾāyātihī ʾan yursila r-riyāḥa [...] / wa-la-qad ʾarsalnā min qablika rusulan ʾilā qawmihim ‘And of His

\(^{130}\) See fn. 77.

\(^{131}\) The reading of ḏāriyāt as referring to winds follows Sinai [2022]: Sure 51. Neuwirth (2011: 531) assumes that ḏāriyāt—just as the fāʿīlāt forms in the following verses refer to clouds. However, she also points out that the verb ḏarā occurs in the Qurʾān (Q 18: 45) with reference to winds.


\(^{134}\) Cf. ibid 2011: 504, 531.

\(^{135}\) With reference to Surah 77 Neuwirth (2017: 168) speaks of “cosmic forces articulating ḏikr (kosmische Mächte, die ḏikr artikulieren)” and notes with reference to Surah 77 and 51: “Wenn die Exegeten alle diese Phänomene unmittelbar mit Engeln identifizieren, verkennen sie zwar die besondere hier ästhetisch wirksame Bildersprache, erfassen aber durchaus die dämonologische Relevanz der Schwüre”.

\(^{136}\) Cf. Cunial [2021].

\(^{137}\) Penrice 1873: 17.
In both passages the winds are shown in various ways to be among the signs of God: In Q 30:46 this status of the winds is stated literally (wa-min 'āyātihī 'an yursila r-riyāḥa lawāqiḥa ‘And of His signs is that He looses the winds’). In Q 15:22 the ‘āyāt-status is present in a more implicit way, insofar as the verse itself closes an ‘āyāt series, and introduces a passage dedicated more generally to stating “God’s unique status in providing for mankind”.

Clouds: When clouds are referred to literally by the controller-lexeme saḥāb (coll.), they never trigger F.PL agreement. But they are referred to in the F.PL in at least three (maybe four) instances of fāʿilāt forms at the beginning of Surah 51: fa-l-ḥāmilāti wiqran ‘and the burden-bearers’ / fa-l-ǧāriyāti yusran ‘and the smooth runners’ / fa-l-muqassimāti ʾamran ‘and the partitioners’ (Q 51:2-4). The participle mulqiyāt ‘those hurling [a reminder]’ in Q 77:5 may also refer to clouds (see above). Clouds are connected metonymically to the winds (referred to by other fāʿilāt forms close by in the context), as being part of the same meteorological domain-of-experience as well as by some cause-to-effect relationship. Just as those winds (as well as the ḥorses in the ḡazwa scenes of Surah 100 and 79) and the angels in Surah 37, they are mighty agents prefiguring eschatological or theologically important events. They are thereby likewise raised, along the animacy scale, into the status of some “cosmic agents” (see angels and winds above).

The use of the participle gāriyāt evokes the trajectorial “floating” movement (see above), which—as was also discussed above—connects clouds with stars (al-ġawārī l-kunnas, above) and ships (ġawārin, below).

Landscapes (qiṭa‘): There is one single instance of F.PL agreement (an attributive adjective) with the broken plural qiṭa‘, the singular of which is feminine (qiṭ a ‘a piece, parcel, plot of land’): wa-fi l-ʾardī qiṭa‘un mutaǧāwirātun wa-ġannātun min ʾaʿnābin ‘And on the earth are tracts neighbouring each to each, and gardens of vines’ (Q 13:4). There is no trace of animacy or agentivity in the relevant context. Although the qiṭa‘ are mentioned as part of an ‘āyāt series that enumerates the elements of God’s creation, they are also part of a sub-list of created elements, which are vaguely related to the human sphere of

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138 Cf. Lane 1863-1893: 2727, who also notes that the (probably likewise lexicalized) antonymic collocation to rīḥ lāqiḥ ‘impregnating’ or ‘fecundating winds’ is rīḥun ʿaqīmun ‘barren wind’—a fact which only emphasizes the biological-reproductive character of the underlying metaphor.

139 Neuwirth & Hartwig [2021]: Sure 15: “Gottes alleinige Urheberschaft für die Versorgung der Menschen”.

140 In OA in general, i.e., independently from the Qurʾān, ḡarā is also an expression of the running movement of the ḥorse, whose way of moving is thereby likened to flowing fluids (Lane 1863-1893: 418).

141 Lane 1863-1893 (Supplement): 10.

142 There is no instance of deflected F.SG agreement with qiṭa‘.
influence (agricultural activities), e.g., ǧannātun min ’a’nābin gardens of vines, zar’ān fields sown, etc. In this respect, as well as regarding the total lack of animacy or agentivity, ǧita’ is rather distinct from the other elements of the created universe group (heavens, stars, mountains, winds, clouds).

What clearly points towards individuation, thereby explaining the use of F.PL in this special case, is the implicit notion of boundedness of ǧita’ at the level of lexical semantics:143 ǧita’ is a “measuring unit” used in the domain of landscape for portioning stretches of land, which are in themselves semantically rather under-specified. The notion of boundedness is also supported by the lexical semantics of the target mutağāwirāt: Its meaning ‘neighboring each to each’ presupposes, and thereby focuses, the edges or borders of each portion of land as precisely the part of a stretch of land, where neighborhood becomes manifest.144

3.2.3 Animals

F.PL agreement (or marking) with reference to animals splits into two main groups:

(1) Animals which, by virtue of shared features or other links with the upper end of the animacy hierarchy, can be regarded as “individuals”.

(2) Any other animal which is individuated by virtue of numeral quantification.

The first group comprises horses and the special case of ḡawārīḥ ‘beasts of prey [trained as dogs to assist man in hunting]’.145

Horses are referred to nine times by elliptic (or nominalized) active participles in the F.PL. Most of these instances are the fā’īlāt forms in the ǧazwa scenes introducing Surah 100 and 79, whose cosmic-force and eschatological implications have been discussed already in detail in the sections on ʿangels and ʿwinds (above), e.g., wa-n-nāḏ’āti ḍarqan / wa-n-nāṣīṯāti naṣṭan / wa-s-sāḥīṯāti sabḥan / fa-s-sāḥīṯāti sabqan / fa-l-mudābbirāti ʾamran ‘By those that pluck out (f.pl.) vehemently / and those that draw out (f.pl.) violently / by those that swim (f.pl.) serenely / and those that outstrip (f.pl.) suddenly / by those that direct (f.pl.) an affair!’ (Q 79:1-5). In Surah 100 there are also two verbs that agree F.PL with the fā’īlāt forms: wa-l-ʿādiyāti ḍabḥan / fa-l-mūriyāti qadḥan / fa-l-muḡīrāti ṣubḥan / fa-ʾaṯarna biḥī naqʿan / fa-wasaṭna biḥī ǧamʿan ‘By the snorting (f.pl.) chargers / by the strikers (f.pl.) of fire / by the dawn-raiders (f.pl.) / blazing (f.pl.) a trail of dust / cleaving (f.pl.) there with a host!’ (Q 100:1-5). There is one single “less canonical” F.PL participle referring to horses outside the context of fā’īlāt oats. However, it triggers deflected F.SG agreement in a following anaphoric pronoun: ʾiḏ urūda ʿalayhi bi-l-ašīyyi s-ṣāfīnāt ʿalayya fa-diṭla masḥan bi-s-sūqi wa-l-ʾaʾnāqi ‘When in the evening were presented to him the standing (f.pl.) steeds […] Return them (f.sg.) to me! And he began to stroke their shanks and necks’ (Q 38:31,33).

More generally, instances of deflected F.SG agreement with expressions referring to horses have either the elliptic (or nominalized) participle ṣāfīnāt (above) or the collective

143 According to Barlow (1988: 303, cited in Belnap 1991: 75) “strict” plural agreement is also favored when “boundaries between members [of a group of entities to which the controller refers] are visible”.
144 See fn. 89.
noun ḫayl as a controller. The targets are one attributive adjective, wa-l-ḥaylī l-musuwwamatati ‘horses (coll.) of mark (f.sg.)’ (Q 3:14), and two anaphoric pronouns.¹⁴⁶

The common denominator of horses and ḡawārīḥ is the close relationship these animals share with humans: They are a “higher kind” of domesticated animal insofar as they are companions to man, and companionship bestows “personhood”.¹⁴⁷ The specific manifestations of this status in each of these animals are as follows;¹⁴⁸

– **Horses**: Among the riding animals in pre-Islamic society, the horse is the one with the closest personal relation to man: In a land without permanent pasture, a horse was a luxury good. As a consequence, it had a special status, even above the camel. This is expressed in the fact that their owners often gave them personal names, cautiously kept their pedigree, and fed them a special diet, made up of camel’s milk, and barley or dates, though as if they were children.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, in the specific contexts of occurrence in the Qur’ānic fāʿilāt series the horses can be regarded as metonymic extensions of their riders. Their role as (Godly appointed) agents in the threatening events at the end of days probably adds to their status ranging “above” or simply different from ordinary animals and connects them—through the parallelisms between the various fāʿilat series—with meteorological phenomena (↗winds, and ↗clouds, see above) and spiritual beings (↗angels, see above).

– **Hounds** (ḡawārīḥ): Beasts of prey can, even in their undomesticated or wild state, be considered to share affinities with the upper end of the animacy scale. This is because they share with man the capacity of hunting. They are hence, in a certain way, at the top of the “animal hierarchy”. Since the ḡawārīḥ in Q 5:4 are domesticated¹⁵⁰ they also get to share in a human capacity (hunting, precisely) of which it is said in the same verse, that it was taught to man by God.¹⁵¹ All these are aspects, that contribute to raising these animals on the animacy hierarchy.

The “personhood” of these animals draws them closer, conceptually, to other kinds of “persons” treated so far, i.e., to the other-than-human persons from the two domains of (1) humanoids and (2) “inferredly” or “mythologically animate” created universe entities.

Some of the participles in the fāʿilāt series also are vaguely reminiscent of other domains of experience; consider especially the participle ṣābiḥāt (in Q 79:3) from sabḥa ‘to swim’ with the infinitive sabḥ meaning the ‘running of a horse in which the fore legs are stretched

¹⁴⁶ See also Q 16: 9, where ḫayl is part of a coordination of animal collectives and plurals, that triggers F.SG agreement.

¹⁴⁷ In an anthropological perspective that focuses mainly on societies in which animism plays an important role, “personhood” in animals strongly relies on these animals ’relating to’ and ’acting towards humans’ in a way that indicates self-consciousness as well as an intention to communicate (cf. the chapter “Animals are people too” in Harvey 2005: 99-102).

¹⁴⁸ The following draws on Hanitsch [forthcoming b].

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Blachère 1952: 24 (cited in Hanitsch [forthcoming b]).

¹⁵⁰ Consider wa-mā ‘allamtum mina-l-ḡawārīḥi mukallibīna ‘and such hunting creatures as you teach, training them as hounds’ Q 5: 4).

¹⁵¹ tuʿallimūnahunna mimmā ‘allamakumu llāhu ‘and teaching them as God has taught you’ Q 5: 4.
forth well [like as are the arms of a man in swimming]. The mention of a swimming movement confirms the conceptualization of horses as moving in (or metonymically like) a fluid—a concept which is also exploited in the representation of Ṣ clouds and Ṣ ships (cf. ġ-r-y above). Even astral bodies (Ṣ stars) are occasionally said to ‘swim’ through the sky as in wa-huwa ʾllaḏī ḥalāqa l-layla wa-n-nahāra wa-s-samsa wa-l-qamara kullun fi falakin yasbahūna ‘It is He who created the night and the day, the sun and the moon, each swimming in a sky’ (Q 21:33 or similarly Q 36:40).

Animals that are individuated by virtue of numeral quantification trigger F.PL agreement independently of their being otherwise “individuals” or not, e.g., ʾaftinā fi sabʿi ṣabārīn simānin ya ʾkuluḥunna sabʿi ʾiǧāfun ‘pronounce to us regarding seven fat kine (f.pl.) that (f.pl.) seven lean ones were devouring’ (Q 12:46, and similarly Q 12:43).

### Zoomorphic “domestic” artifacts

Out of the numerous Qur’ānic instances of agreement with plurals denoting concrete and discrete objects, there are only 5 instances of F.PL agreement, and they concern only two controller lexemes: ships (ḡawārīn) and cauldrons (quḍūr).

Plurals denoting ships are found to trigger F.PL agreement in all basic target types: an attributive adjective in Q 55:24, a verb, a predicative participial adjective, and a personal pronoun in Q 42:32-34: wa-lahu l-ḡawārī l-munšaʿātu fi l-baḥri ka-l-ʿalāmi ‘His too are the ships that run (f.pl.), raised up (f.pl.) in the sea like landmarks (Q 55:24), wa-min ʿayāthī l-ḡawārī al-ḥawari ‘in yaša yuskini r-rīḥa fay-yaẓlalna ṣawākida ‘And of His signs are the ships that run (f.pl.) on the sea like landmarks / and if He wills, He stills the wind, and they remain (f.pl.) motionless (f.pl.) on its back. Surely in that are signs for every man enduring, thankful. / Or He wrecks them (f.pl.) for what they [i.e., the people on the boat] have earned’ (Q 42:32-34).

Cauldrons are found to trigger F.PL agreement once in an attributive adjective: wa-quḍūrin rāsiyātin ‘firmly fixed (or gigantic) cauldrons’ (Q 34:13). There are no instances of deflected (or otherwise) agreement with quḍūr.

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152 Cf. Lane 1863-1893: 1299.
153 Lane (1863-1893: 1299) explicitly states that Ṣ stars are, in these Qur’ānic passages, understood to be included, and cites other OA examples of (explicit) stars being used with the ‘swimming’-verb: an-nuǧūmu tasbaḥu fī l-falaki ‘The stars [swim, or glide along, or] pass along, in the firmament, with a spreading forth’.
155 In the Qur’ān, al-ḡawārī is always transcribed with a short i-ending, despite its being definite. This is because the rasm of al-ḡawārī lacks the final ￼—at least in the canonical Hafṣ ‘an ʿĀṣim reading (see Variæ Lectiones Coranicae).
156 For structural reasons, that were exposed in fn. 97, the broken plural ṭawākid is here regarded as inflectionally feminine. How ṭawākid relates semantically to the other fawā’il plurals of Old Arabic, especially to the ones referring to specifically female properties (see the same footnote), is a question that deserves further investigation.
The broken plural ǧawārin has a corresponding feminine singular (ǧāriya), and the broken plural qudūr has a corresponding singular qidr, which is of fluctuating masculine-feminine gender. At the lexical level, ǧawārin, literally ‘the (mellifluously) moving one’,\(^{159}\) is connected to the 潟 stars (bi-l-ḫunnasi / l-ǧawāri l-kunnasi, Q 81:15-16) and to 潟 clouds (fa-l-ǧāriyāti yusran, Q 51:3) through the image-schema of their common trajectorial floating movement across either the sky (潟 heavens) or the sea.

Points in common between the two objects—ships and cauldrons—regard (1) their relation to the realm of animacy, (2) their size as a factor related to perceptual salience.

Animacy plays a role insofar as both controllers are very likely conceptualized as animals, i.e., zoomorphized:

- A ship is a “riding” device. As such it is similar—in function—to a domestic animal used for riding (潟 horse). Drawing on the arguments presented in Hanitsch [forthcoming b] we claim that there is an underlying conceptual metaphor that says A RIDING DEVICE IS A DOMESTIC ANIMAL, and that this metaphor is itself a “traditional” or premodern variant of several other, commonly established conceptual metaphors at a time: (1) AN INSTRUMENT IS A COMPANION and (2) general object-to-person metaphors such as A MACHINE IS A PERSON and AN OBJECT IS A PERSON.\(^{160}\)

- The qudūr ‘cauldrons’ are said to be ‘firmly fixed’ (rāsiyāt). This means, practically as well as lexically (cf. the root rsw, which we saw to be related to an anchorage in the [sea] ground, 潟 ships, 潟 mountains), that it must be a cauldron standing on legs (by opposition to a hanging one). As a cauldron also has a belly, it becomes clear that it is conceived of as a [four- or three-]legged bellied animal. As the cauldron is a domestic utensil par excellence (and by analogy to the潟 horse, above) we would like to propose that the way in which the cauldrons are presented in Q 34:13 relies on a conceptual metaphor that says A DOMESTIC UTENSIL IS A DOMESTIC ANIMAL, and that this metaphor too is a variant of those well established conceptual metaphors mentioned above, i.e., AN INSTRUMENT IS A COMPANION and an OBJECT/MACHINE IS A PERSON.

The fact that these objects are conceptualized in terms of animal functionality and usefulness (ships) or animal morphology (cauldrons) is what draws them closer to the animate realm and explains their being marked by F.PL agreement—an agreement type which, as has begun to emerge in the previous sections, is closely related to “higher forms” of other-than-human animacy, and which, in the case of animals, additionally relies on the concept of “companionship with humans”. A certain notion of companionship is also found in 潟 angels, as we think of the muʿaqqibāt ‘guardian angels’ (above).

As for size and related concepts, the following are shared characteristics of ships and cauldrons:161 Both objects are, in their places of occurrence in the Qur’ān, modified in ways

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\(^{159}\) Cf. Shahīd [2021].

\(^{160}\) Cf. Lakoff & Johnson 2003 (1980): 34, 47, 48, 134 (cited in Heine/Claudi/Hünnemeyer 1991: 52). It should be noted that subsuming our specific conceptual metaphor A RIDING DEVICE IS A DOMESTIC ANIMAL under the ones established in Lakoff & Johnson 1980 presupposes the following series of equations: A RIDING DEVICE (= a type of INSTRUMENT or utility) IS A DOMESTIC ANIMAL (= a sort of COMPANION to man, which, as a consequence, is endowed with personhood = IS A PERSON).

\(^{161}\) The following arguments have also been presented in Hanitsch [forthcoming b].
that liken them to NodeType mountains: the ships are literally compared to ‘a’lām ‘landmarks, long
mountains’,162 while the qudār are qualified of rāsiyāt ‘firmly fixed’, an adjective with a special
semantic connection not only to NodeType ships but also to NodeType mountains (see above). In both
instances the effect conveyed is one of impressive size and bulkiness of the relevant objects.

This reading is also supported by the relevant contexts: The ship in its high-rising and land-
mark-like aspect is another sign (ʾāya) testifying to God’s might, and the gigantic cauldrons
are part of an enumeration of impressive things, built—with God’s permission—by the ǧinn
for the completion of the temple of Solomon,163 a narration which is also embedded in a list
of God’s grants of grace towards several biblical figures or peoples.164

Ships are stated explicitly in the Qur’ān to be signs of God165 (wa-min ʾāyātihi l-ǧawārī166
fi l-baḥri, Q 42:32). The cauldrons are rather more implicitly so, as can nevertheless be de-
duced from the passage of God’s grace granted to Salomon.

3.2.5 Other concrete objects

Concrete objects other than members of the “created universe group” (§ 3.2.2) or large zoo-
morphic objects (§ 3.2.4) do not usually take F.PL agreement unless they are secondarily
“individuated” by numeral quantification, e.g., wa-sab’a sunbulātin ḫuḍrin wa-ʾuḥara
yābisātin ‘seven green ears of corn (f.pl.), and seven [other ones] withered (f.pl.)’ Q 12:43
(and similarly in Q 12:46). It may be noted that the controller is here the plural of a nomen
unitatis,167 which is also “individuated” as a count unit at the level of derivational semantics.

There is no deflected agreement in the presence of a numeral quantifier.

There are only two concrete objects that are encountered with F.PL agreement in the ab-
sence of numeral quantification, i.e., ǧannāt ‘gardens’, and the ‘cities’ referred to by al-
muʿtafīkāt:

— ǧannāt ‘gardens’ is found with two attributive adjectives in Q 6:141: wa-huwa llaḏī
ʾanšaʾa ǧannātin maʿrūšātin wa-ġayra maʿrūšātin ‘It is He who produces gardens trel-
lised, and untrellised’. Here too it may be noted that the corresponding singular ǧanna
is feminine and that the plural formation (sound plural in -āt) may support the F.PL due to
“alliterative agreement”.168 But it is important to see that despite the gender and type of

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164 There is one last curious lexical cross-connection between ships and cauldrons, which—for its vague-
ness—shall be noted only in passing: it concerns the F.PL predicate rawākid in Q 42: 33: fa-yazlatna
rawākida ʿalā ẓahrihī ‘and they [the ships] remain motionless on its back’. The f.pl. participial adjective
rawākid (of rākid ‘still, motionless, fixed in its place’, Lane 1863-1893: 1151) also has a lexicalized
meaning related to ‘[firmly fixed] cauldrons’: the rawākid (or rukād) are the ‘three pieces of stone
upon which a cooking-pot is set’. At the same time, the adjective rākid is typically used also of ʿwinds(s),
i.e., ʾilḥan rākudatun ‘a wind becoming still or calm’ (pl. ʾilḥāḥan rawākidu).
165 Cf. Shahīd [2021].
166 For the transcription of al-ǧawārī, see fn. 155.
168 See fn. 44.
plural formation (which might, in a superficial perspective be seen as causal, or as a sufficient explanation for the use of F.PL), ǧannāt as a controller is, in the overwhelming majority of cases, used with FS agreement (out of a total of 76 instances of agreement with this controller, 73 feature pronouns agreeing in the F.SG), e.g., wa-yudhilakum ǧannātin taǧrī min taḥti ha-lʾanhāru ‘and will admit you into gardens (f.pl.) underneath which (f.sg.) rivers flow’ (Q 66:8).

— al-muʾtafikāt ‘the overthrown cities’ is considered to refer to Sodom and Gomorrha. Therefore, the referents of this expression may be considered highly individuated (and, as a consequence, affine to “strict” [or plural] agreement) due to at least two effects: (1) the cities are implicitly quantified by common knowledge, insofar as they are known to be two in number;169 (2) al-muʾtafikāt is an epithet used instead of a pair of proper names, and proper names range higher, regarding individuation, than common nouns.170

### 3.2.6 Abstract concepts

In plurals referring to abstract concepts we must—again—distinguish two main types:

1. Sound feminine plurals in -āt which seem to trigger F.PL mainly on formal (and not on semantic grounds)

2. Plurals that trigger F.PL because they are “individuated” by virtue of quantification.

That the preference of sound feminine plural controllers for F.PL agreement is due to formal reasons can be concluded from the following pattern: F.PL agreement is, with abstract controllers, particularly well documented in the participial adjective, where it applies almost without exception. Since the participle mostly forms a sound F.PL in -āt, we may conclude that it is the “alliterative” character of the resulting agreement setting that supports the retention of the archaic F.PL, e.g., ʾāyātun muḥkamātun ‘verses clear’ (Q 3:7).

The controller most abundantly documented with F.PL agreement is ʾāyāt ‘signs of God, verses’. This seems significant with respect to those natural phenomena and objects which are explicitly or implicitly stated, in the Qurʾān, as examples of ‘the signs of God’ (Stars, mountains, winds, ships). The relation between ʾāyāt on one hand and stars, mountains, winds, and ships, on the other hand, is that “between a general and a specific case”.171 The controller ʾāyāt occurs 22 times with a F.PL in the adjective, e.g., ʾanzalnā ʾāyātin bayyinātin ‘We have sent down clear (f.pl.) signs (f.pl.)’ (Q 58:5), and once with a pronoun: huwa llaḏī ʾanzala l-kitāba minhu ʾāyātun muḥkamātun hunna ʾumma l-kitābi wa-ʾuḫaru mu-tašābihātun ‘It is He who sent down upon thee the Book, wherein are verses (f.pl.) clear (f.pl.) that (f.pl.) are the Essence of the Book, and others (f.pl.) ambiguous (f.pl.)’ (Q 3:7).

Additionally, there is one instance each of kalimāt ‘words’ (with a personal pronoun in Q 2:124), bāqiyāt ‘[works or words] which are permanent’172 (with a participial adjective, 169 This is similar to the propensity of genuine duals (by opposition to pseudo-duals) for triggering “strict (or plural) agreement” in the Modern Arabic dialects (cf. Blanc 1970: 49).


172 Penrice 1873: 19.
which is either an attribute or—more likely—a substantivized participial adjective in apposition, Q 18:46, and ḥasanāt ‘good deeds’ (with a verb in Q 11:114). The case that is of most interest is ḥasanāt since it is the only instance of F.PL agreement in a verb when the controller is an abstract noun: wa-ʾaqimi s-ṣalāta ṭarafayi n-nahāri wa-zulafan mina l-layli ‘inna l-ḥasanāti yuḏhibna s-sayyiʾāti ḍālika ḍiḳrā bi-ḍ-ḍākirīna ‘And perform the prayer at the two ends of the day and nigh of the night; surely the good deeds (f.pl.) will drive away (f.pl.) the evil deeds. That is a remembrance unto the mindful’ (Q 11:114). Following D’Anna (2020b: 42–44) this special case can be explained as resulting from the high agentivity of the verb (causative ʾaḏhaba ‘drive away’), which has the effect of raising the agent ḥasanāt on the individuation scale. Another, probably complementary, factor in favor of F.PL is the fact that—according to traditional lexicography as well as exegesis—ḥasanāt, which is mentioned in a context treating prayer and prayer times, refers to the prayers themselves by metonymic paraphrase, i.e., by stating one of its characteristics (ḥasan). As such it can be read as ‘the five daily prayers, driving away what has been in between them’. The fact that the good deeds are thereby implicitly quantified draws this example closer to the second group: quantified abstract controllers.

Quantified abstract controllers mostly occur with F.PL agreement in the attribute and occasionally in the pronoun, independently of their plural formation and gender. Quantification may reside either in a numeral (e.g., bi-ʿašri suwarin miṯlihī muftarayātin ‘ten suras (f.pl.) the like of it, forged (f.pl.)’ Q 11:13, talātuʿ awrātin lakum laysa ’alaykum wa-lā ’alayhim ḍuḥūtan ba-daḥunna ‘three times of nakedness (f.pl.) for you. There is no fault in you or them, apart from these (f.pl.),’ Q 24:58, ṭumma yaʿti min bāʾdi ḡālika sabʿun sidāda stan yakulna mā qaddantum lakunna ‘Then thereafter there shall come upon you seven hard (years) (pl.cg.), that shall devour what you have laid up for them (f.pl.)’, Q 12:48, or at the lexical level, when the controller is a “measuring unit”, as ʾayyām ‘days’, ʿašhur ‘months’, and daraǧāt ‘degrees’, e.g., al-ḥaǧgu ʿašhurun maʿlāmātin fa-man farada fiḥinna l-ḥaǧga fa-lā raʿafa ’The Pilgrimage is in months (m.pl.) well-known (f.pl.); who so undertakes the duty of Pilgrimage in them (f.pl.) shall not go in to his womenfolk’ Q 2:197, fi ʾayyāmin maʿlāmātin ‘on days (m.pl.) well-known (f.pl.)’ Q 22:28.

As for the distribution of F.PL over the agreement hierarchy, the situation may be characterized as follows: When, in abstract controllers, F.PL is preserved to the right of the agreement hierarchy (i.e., predicates or pronouns, see § 3.1) one or several of the following usually applies: (1) the controller is in some way quantified (Q 2:197, 9:36, 11:114, 12:48, 24:58);

173 None of these controllers are documented with F.SG agreement.
174 D’Anna 2020b: 46.
175 Lane 1863-1893: 571; as-Suyūṭī/al-Maḥallī, Tafsīr al-Ǧalālayn: 301.
176 In ʾayyām there is a rather pronounced agreement variation F.PL ~ F.SG: There are nine instances of F.PL agreement, with and without numeral quantifier, but all of them are in the adjective. As for deflected F.SG agreement, there are three adjectives (Q 2: 196, Q 3: 140) and two pronouns agreeing in the F.SG (both with and without numeral quantifiers).
177 The controller ʿašhur occurs three times with F.PL agreement, once in the participial adjective and twice in the anaphoric pronoun. As for deflected F.SG agreement, it occurs once in the anaphoric pronoun despite the presence of a numeral quantifier (Q 9: 36).
178 The controller daraǧāt is found only once with F.PL agreement. It does not occur with F.SG agreement.
(2) the controller is zoomorphic, as is the case for the ‘seven hard (years)’ in Q 12:48; (3) the controller has a highly agentive verb, as the ‘good deeds driving away the evil ones’ in Q 11:114 or, again, the ‘seven hard (years) devouring […]’ in Q 12:48. Only two instances remain without an obvious explanation, i.e., \(\text{wa-īd ibtalā ibrāhīma rabbuhū bi-kalimātin fa-ʻatammahūna} \) ‘And when his Lord tested Abraham with certain words (f.pl.), and he fulfilled them (f.pl.)’ (Q 2:124), and \(\text{huwa llaḏī ʻanzala ʻalayka l-kitāba minhu ʻayātun muḥkamatun hunna} \) ‘It is He who sent down upon thee the Book, wherein are verses (f.pl.) clear (f.pl.) that (f.pl.) are the Essence of the Book’ (Q 3:7).

4 The radial category of F.PL agreement in QA

The previous section was dedicated to screening all nonhuman plural controllers which, in the Qur’ān, have F.PL as an agreement option. This screening, which also paid particular attention to contexts of use, has revealed a good deal of formal as well as conceptual links among the relevant controller lexemes (especially § 3.2.). These links constitute a radial structure—the radial network of (the category of) nouns that may go with feminine plural agreement. In short: It constitutes the radial category of F.PL agreement. At the center of the radial network, we find the one lexeme which shares the highest number of properties with other lexemes in the network (A in the figure). This means that it is the prototype of a noun that belongs to the category of F.PL agreement. The centrality of the prototype within the network is reflected in the fact that any lexeme (or subset of lexemes) that shares one or more properties with the prototype, links up with it directly. The prototypical member of the category of F.PL agreement in Qur’ānic Arabic F.PL is the noun \(\text{samāwāt} \) ‘heavens’. We will proceed in describing “the radial category of F.PL agreement in QA”, as visualized in figure 2, roughly following the list of criteria given in Lakoff (1987: 95-96).

Captions in Figure 2 (next page)

STRUCTURAL LEVEL: A.-F. links (or chainings) based on the principle of “shared information”, Links **SEMANTIC LEVEL:** 1.-4. Experiential domains/clusterings: 1. Created universe, 2. Danger and natural forces = eschatological agents, 3. Companionship, 4. Perceptual-physical experience: 4.1. size, stability, impressiveness, 4.2. orientation in space, 4.3. trajectorial movement; examples of chaining principles: **plain and dashed dark blue:** shared information; **brown:** metaphoric mapping; **dotted light blue:** image-schemata.

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However, it may be surmised that priming plays a role insofar as in both cases the target immediately follows an element in the F.PL (either the controller itself or another target).

The figure combines two ways of presenting the links that exist among the controllers used with F.PL agreement: The lower half of the figure focuses on the links among specific controller lexemes and among the subsets into which they cluster, according to their semantic features. The upper half of the figure focuses on the links that exist among several formal subsets of controllers (combinations of gender and plural formation, numeral quantification).
Figure 2: Radial category of F.PL agreement in QA
The centrality or prototypicality of the heavens (as-samāwāt) (A) as a member of the class of nouns that allow for F.PL agreement relies on the following features:

- The controller-lexeme samāwāt has conserved F.PL agreement in all basic target types (as defined in terms of parts of speech): adjective, verb, and pronoun (§ 3.1.). At the same time, it is totally resistant to deflected agreement. As such it can be considered as the prototype of a noun that is maximally affine to F.PL agreement and least affine to deflected agreement.

- Regarding lexical gender, samāwāt can be treated as feminine, and it also forms a (typically feminine) sound plural in -āt. In this respect, it is representative of the relatively high number of F.PL agreement instances with controllers showing one (or both) of these properties: the prototype thus links up directly with the group of sound feminine plurals in -āt, most of which are abstract concepts (kalimāt, bāqiyāt, ḥasanāt, 'āyāt, etc.) and which are—at least in the nominal target (adjective, participle)—a stronghold of F.PL agreement (B). However, feminines are over-represented even among the broken plurals that go with F.PL agreement (C). This is especially noted in the realm of concrete and animate controllers (riyāḥ, ġawāriḥ, ġawārin, etc.). Masculine broken plurals are affected by F.PL agreement only to a lesser degree (‘ayyām, ġibāl, etc.), which places them at the periphery of the network (D). Finally, the controller samāwāt (A) is inherently (and often even explicitly) quantified as ‘seven’. This establishes a direct link between the prototype and other controllers that are quantified by a numeral. The latter subset (E) is found almost exclusively with F.PL. Numerically quantified nouns (E) link up with inherently/lexically quantified nouns (“measuring units” [F]). The latter group accounts for the remainder of the abstract nouns (link with B), and it includes the only broken plurals (link with C and D) referring to abstract concepts and found to trigger F.PL agreement even in the absence of a numeral quantifier.

- At the semantic and conceptual level (lower half of Figure 2), the heavens display the following properties: they are concrete but (despite quantification) not genuinely discrete elements that constitute central elements of the cosmos created by God, and they are conceived of as vaguely “animized” (biomorphization) because of their seemingly “instinctive” or “reflexive” behavior). This list is almost integrally shared with the other cosmic entities, which, in the figure, are placed right below the heavens: mountains, stars, and winds. The only variation that occurs as we take the single step (or link) from the prototype samāwāt to the next row of subsets is that (a) animacy takes a slightly more agentive character, as cosmic entities and forces are staged according to “mythological models” of other-than-human animacy (subjected mountains, stars and winds [saḫḫara], stars as former Gods, the demonological dimension of winds as eschatological agents, etc.); (b) The inclusion of mountains, stars, and winds into the category relies on a very basic metonymic relationship with the heavens, insofar as they are topologically contiguous to it

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181 There is just one single additional controller-lexeme which, in the Qur’an, is documented with a f.pl. controller in as many different target types as samāwāt (and even in more, as we add the attributive target type), and that is ġawārin ‘ships’. However, we do not choose to put the latter at the center of the radial category/network, because, as we will see, it is not as central to the category as samāwāt, in terms of semantic properties.
Angels, Beasts, and Impressive Things

(stars and winds are heavenly bodies in the larger sense, i.e., part of the heavens themselves, mountains are the basis and therefore “extension” of the firmament), the angels are linked to the prototype of the heavens by their being metaphorical “heavenly bodies”. Together, the heavens, mountains, stars, and winds constitute the basic member set (or level) of the “semantic” part of the radial network (lower half of the figure): the “created universe” subgroup. The “created universe” is a central domain of human experience and, in our Qur’ānic case, serves as the point of departure for numerous other links leading to the more peripheral parts of the “more semantically motivated” section of the radial network (lower half of the figure), with its predominantly concrete controller lexemes.

Not only in the central section of the network (“created universe”) but also in the more peripheral areas of the radial structure, there are clusterings of links that are related to some specific area of human experience. The full list of these experiential domains or experiential clusterings, that are relevant to the application of F.PL agreement are:

1. **Created Universe**: As mentioned above, the elements in this domain of experience are important components of creation as the “stage” or “container” of any human experience at all. But it should be noted that the relevant elements are also mentioned in the context of the process of creation itself. The latter aspect is, of course, not accessible to human experience, but rather involves “specific knowledge” (see below).

2. **Danger and natural forces** (storms, ḡazwas, military formation) is a domain of human experience used to embody a specific field of culture-specific knowledge which—just as Creation—is not itself accessible to human experience (yet): Qur’ānic teachings about the “end of days”.

3. **Companionship**: Diachronically it is likely to assume the following scenario: As deflected agreement becomes increasingly common in the realm of inanimates/nonhumans, the older, receding F.PL agreement type is reanalyzed as a “true” feminine gender/agreement marker (modeled on the still common use of F.PL with human females). As the basic members of the categories of M.PL and F.PL agreement with humans are man and woman as partners or mutual companions, it is easy to see how, in an androcentric view, F.PL could be conceptually expanded to (and therefore preserved with) other higher animates—aside from women—which also typically entertain something like a social relationship with “man”, i.e., a companion, as the muʿaqqibāt ‘guardian angels’, “personal” riding animals (horses), and “skilled”, domesticated beasts of prey (dogs/hounds).

4. **Various (mutually intersecting) areas of perceptual-physical experience**:
   4.1. Size, stability, impressiveness
   4.2. Orientation in space
   4.3. Movement and fluidity

Just as the experiential domains (1) Created universe and (2) Danger and natural forces involve something more than immediate human experience (i.e., a good deal of culture-specific knowledge), the links that assure the cohesion of the two other domains of experience involve some additional cognitive principles or mechanisms: (3) Companionship is based on metaphoric mappings of social experience (cf. metaphor below), and the sub-areas of (4.1-4.3) perceptual-physical experience are based on bundles of image-schematic representations (cf. below too).

Culture-specific knowledge is involved in at least three areas of the radial network of F.PL agreement:

- Specific knowledge about the Process of Creation: The origins of, and the reasons behind, what can be experienced in the domain of the “created universe” (see above) are explained within the framework of a culture-specific belief system. For instance, the Qurʾān lets us know that God set up the mountains as a support to the heavens\(^\text{183}\) (thus underscoring perceptual contiguity of mountains and heavens) and that He rooted them firmly so that the earth should not sway (aetiological approach to the stability experienced in the created universe).

- Specific knowledge about the end of days is conveyed through the domain of experience ‘Danger and forces of nature’ (see above): this knowledge, as a central message of the Qurʾān, is introduced and gradually concretized in the earliest Surahs.\(^\text{184}\)

- Specific knowledge stating which elements belong to the Signs of God, is made explicit in the Qurʾān. The signs of God that are found with F.PL agreement belong to a subtype of Qurʾānic ʿayāt (indicated by an ʾalif madda in Figure 2) that prove God’s mercy and almightiness as well as his providing for mankind by appealing to common human experience—especially to the experience of the usefulness of creation to mankind—and give this experience a new theological framing.

Culture-specific knowledge that is relevant to the use of F.PL agreement is not always stated anew in the Qurʾān. Sometimes it is also present insofar as it was handed down to the Qurʾānic milieu by former generations: It is likely to assume that the use of F.PL agreement (or marking) with mountains or angels relies on culturally pre-established idealized cognitive models that “upgrade” the former as “animized” and “downgrade” the latter as part of the natural forces (see the sections on angels and mountains).\(^\text{186}\) It is not unlikely to assume that such pre-established models, some of which obviously go back as far as biblical traditions and their Ancient Oriental environment, may already have been present in the Arabic milieu—

\(^\text{183}\) Cf. Sinai [2022]: Sure 78.

\(^\text{184}\) It may be noted that both the beginnings as well as the end of the world are domains associated with the use of F.PL agreement/marking.


\(^\text{186}\) An alternative view would be to assume that both—(actually inanimate) mountains and (de facto animate) angels—are, according to those “idealized cognitive models” that were inherited from earlier cultural spheres, conceived of as belonging to a specific intermediate degree of animacy that is neither animal nor human, but simply that of “other-than-human persons” (see Hanitsch forthcoming b, following Perdibon 2019: passim, and Hallowell 1960: 21-25).
and hence in the Arabic language—at the time when the oldest Surahs of the Qurʾān originated. The traditional or archaic character of the “animizing”/animistic motives may have motivated the preservation, in these specific contexts, of a linguistic option that was felt to be likewise “archaic”, i.e., the old and already vanishing F.PL agreement type. In this view, the use of F.PL agreement may be seen as a “contextualization cue”\textsuperscript{187} that points to the legitimization of the Qurʾānic message as a successor of/rooted in, older monotheistic traditions. Another explanation (which does not necessarily exclude the former) may be that the archaic F.PL agreement type was here preserved as part of the grammatical structure of some set formulae that already had a record of being circulated in the Arabian Peninsula (viz. the Ḥiḡāz) when the Qurʾān emerged.

The various sub-areas as well as individual members of the radial network are connected among each other by chaining. Chaining relies on a limited number of cognitive principles, the\textit{ chaining principles}, among which: (a) shared information, (b) metaphoric and metonymic mappings, (c) image-schematic transformations.\textsuperscript{188}

(a)\textbf{ Shared information} is involved in the chainings between the prototype (\textit{samāwāt} ‘heavens’) and its direct “neighbors”: On the “formal” level of the network, the prototype shares information about morphological or syntactical properties with all controllers that, just as \textit{samāwāt}, are sound feminine plurals ending in -āt (A \↗ B) or quantified (A \↗ E). In the concrete realm, the prototype shares semantic information with the other elements of the “created universe” subgroup.\textsuperscript{189} The peripheral chainings within the “formal” level of the network are likewise established by shared information.

(b)\textbf{ Metaphoric mapping} is involved in numerous individual links as well as in some clusters of links: angels are staged as heavenly bodies (part of the heavens) by metaphorically conceptualizing them as stars or winds. Specific knowledge about the end of days is made palpable by evoking meteorological events (dangers resulting from natural forces) or by relating to experience from warfare (\textit{ġazwa}s, military formation of the angels). We have certain angels, higher animals (dogs and horses) as well as animal-like utilities conceived as companions and therefore endowed with a type of personhood that justifies the use of F.PL agreement (just as with women as the prototype of a “companion”). Domestication (originally of animals) plays a role as a tertium comparationis in metaphorically conceptualizing created universe entities as domesticated-animized entities (mountains, stars, winds). Finally, metaphor mapping plays a role in three domains of perceptual-physical experience:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{domain 4.1.}: a ship is a mountain/landmark (tertium comparationis [henceforth t.c.]: high rising above the ground), a mountain is a ship (t.c.: anchored, still), a cauldron is a mountain and thereby a ship (t.c.: gigantic, anchored). The formal elements that assure the mutual links within this cluster are the roots \textit{rsw} and \textit{rkd};
\end{itemize}


\textsuperscript{188} Cf. Brugman & Lakoff 1988: 2. We leave out the type of link “general/specific case” listed ibid. (1988: 2), since it does not seem to be of major importance in our case. On the other hand, we include metonymic mapping following Lakoff 1987: 106-110.

\textsuperscript{189} See the prose definition given above.
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- domain 4.2.: Ships and the waves they travel are like stars and mountains respectively (i.e.: assure orientation, cf. landmark-character of ships in 4.1.).
- domain 4.3.: A ship is a star and/or a star is a ship (i.e.: flowing, swimming across its element [skies, seas]), a ship is a cloud, and/or a cloud is a ship (i.e.: driven by the wind). The formal elements assuring the links within this cluster are the roots ġry and sbḥ.

(c) There are metonymic mappings involved in the relation between the samawāt-prototype and the other elements of the created universe, as well as with angels (part-whole-relation), and in the metaphoric mapping ‘a ship is a cloud/a cloud is a ship’ (cause to effect-relation, as the wind drives them both).

(d) The metaphoric mappings in the three sub-domains of perceptual-physical experience can be traced back to a number of image-schemata: The domain of experience “Size, stability, impressiveness” relies on a combination of the basic schemata of SUPERIMPOSITION/CONTACT, insertion (CONTAINER), and EQUILIBRIUM: mountains, cauldrons, and ships are superimposed to (in contact with) their ground [earth, “back” of the sea] by inserting a part of it into the latter and thereby reaching an equilibrium.¹⁹⁰ The domain of experience “movement and fluidity” relies on a combination of the schemata PATH/TRAJECTORY¹⁹¹ (in the seas or in the skies) on one hand and FORCE-DYNAMICS (with the wind as the force/agonist and the clouds and ships as antagonists),¹⁹² on the other hand.

A grammatical sub-system, e.g., a system of gender classes, a nominal classifier system or—as in our case—an agreement system, may show a class/category that contains “the other”, or “the rest”, i.e., a class (or category) the members of which are not cognitively linked among each other except for the fact that they do not qualify, by their properties or by any resemblance with a prototype, for being included in the other class(es) of the system.¹⁹³ In our case and with regard to the variation F.PL ~ F.SG agreement, it is the deflected agreement category (F.SG) which is at a first glance, likely to be “the other” category and to lack an internal radial structure. This is because, in most cases, the easiest way to describe the distribution F.PL ~ F.SG is to state that the latter simply occurs as the unmarked case when a controller is inanimate/nonhuman unless there are a few specific properties in the controller that draw it closer to the samawāt-prototype (feminine gender, ending in -āt, animate or animized, personhood, large/extended, etc.) and, consequently, link it up to the radial category of F.PL agreement. As a matter of fact, the category of controllers that are never found with F.PL agreement, but only with deflected agreement,¹⁹⁴ includes controllers as diverse as: masculine or feminine gender, sound or broken plurals, abstract concepts, discrete and non-discrete concrete objects among which artifacts/man-made structures as well as natural objects (plant,

¹⁹³ Cf. Lakoff 1987: 96, 103
¹⁹⁴ Unless for some reason the M.PL is applied (cf. the discussions in D’Anna 2020b, and Hanitsch 2021, [forthcoming b].
fruit), groups of persons,\(^{195}\) animals, and humanoids, small or large/extended, etc. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to assume that at least a part (the central part?) of the category of F.SG agreement is also structured in a radial manner. This is because, while most of the properties in the list just given may be found as isolated features also in controllers allowing for F.PL agreement, there is a subset of combined properties that are never found in controllers allowing for F.PL agreement. This is the subgroup of small discrete objects (either artifacts or natural objects), the most prototypical of which seems to be the subgroup of body parts, since being a body part is a property which—taken to itself—suffices for a controller to never occur with F.PL agreement/marking in the Qurʾān.


196 Or occasionally with M.PL agreement, see fn. 194.

197 Unlike the in the prose characterization of the samāwāt-prototype given above, we do here include the agentivity of mountains, etc. which was also discussed above.
5 Conclusion

Qurʾānic Arabic is representative of a transitional stage in the evolution of the agreement system of Old Arabic: While in pre-Islamic poetry nonhuman controllers have a strong preference for F.PL agreement and rather rarely take F.SG (deflected), the Qurʾān shows a reverse pattern: deflected agreement is the general rule with nonhuman plurals (654 instances), while F.PL agreement is clearly an agreement value on the decline (105 instances). Yet, it still occurs frequently and systematically enough to not be treated as a mere relic from former language stages. Rather, it calls for a characterization as a grammatical category. It was shown that the semantics of this category is dependent on its contexts of use—i.e., the controller lexemes able of triggering F.PL agreement in their respective textual settings—and that it is best analyzed as a radial network of related senses. At the center of the radial category of F.PL agreement, stands the prototypical member of this category: the plural noun samāwāt ‘heavens’, which shares a maximum number of features with other members of the category. It is directly connected to other lexemes that likewise refer to elements of the “created universe” (which together with the prototype form the basic member-set of the category), as well as to other subsets of controllers that share formal similarities with the prototype: sound feminine plurals in -āt (thereby including many abstract nouns) and quantified controllers. As for controllers denoting concrete entities, they are directly or indirectly linked to the prototype through a series of chaining, that rely on various cognitive principles: clusters of experiential domains (created universe, danger, and natural force, companionship, and perceptual-physical experience), culture-specific knowledge about the “beginning and the end of the world” (belief systems regarding the process of creation and events on Judgment Day), as well as the ‘signs of God’ (ʾāyāt), idealized cognitive models about specific elements of creation (biomorphization, other-than-human animates), and finally a series of intricate mutual metaphorical and metonymic mappings within the experiential domains of size/extension/impressiveness, orientation in space, and trajectorial movement. Despite the radial character of the category of F.PL agreement—and consequently the absence of “necessary and sufficient conditions” for category membership—it is striking to see, that there are two semantic “domains”, that seem to pervade larger areas of the category of F.PL agreement. However, they do so under ever-changing aspects: (1) animacy appears either as “actual” animacy in spiritual beings (gods, angels) and animals (horses and beasts of prey), as “mock-animacy” in idols, as “mythological” or “inferred” animacy in cosmic entities and finally metaphorically mapped onto specific zoomorphic, inanimate objects (ships, cauldrons). It is thus appropriate to speak of the concept of “other-than-human personhood” as an important semantic constituent of the grammatical category of F.PL agreement; (2) perceptual salience, which is known, cross-linguistically, to enhance individuation and hence to support the use or retention of full number agreement (F.PL among others), is found in the Qurʾānic Arabic use of F.PL agreement to have “grammaticalized” (in the sense of “having become part of the semantics of a grammatical marker”) under a rather peculiar aspect: in the realm of concrete entities/objects, F.PL agreement is used almost exclusively with controllers which are either larger than a human being or presented as unexpectedly large, and—as a consequence—as rather impressive. Both these aspects, i.e., other-than-human personhood as well as impressiveness, are what—by analogy to Lakoff’s deliberately provocative title
Women, fire, and dangerous things—motivates the characterization of Qur’ānic Arabic F.PL agreement as a grammatical marker of Angels, beasts, and impressive things.

Abbreviations

OA Old Arabic
QA Qur’ānic Arabic
t.c. tertium comparationis

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