

**JAWHARI'S AS-SIHAIH AND ITS INFLUENCE ON LATER ARABIC  
DICTIONARIES (LISAN AL-'ARAB)**

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**Abstract**

This article analyzes the significance and methodological innovations of Abu Nasr Ismail ibn Hammad al-Jawhari's lexicon *as-Sihah* in the history of Arabic lexicography. The study demonstrates that the arrangement of words according to the final radical of their root marked an important stage in the development of Arabic lexicography. It is substantiated through scholarly sources that this methodology was widely employed in subsequent monumental dictionaries, particularly in Ibn Manzur's *Lisan al-'Arab*. The research highlights the direct influence of *as-Sihah* on this dictionary, the extent of its utilization, and its contribution to the further development of Arabic linguistics. Furthermore, the paper examines the continuity of lexicographical heritage and the process of forming scholarly traditions.

**Keywords:** *al-Jawhari, as-Sihah, Lisan al-'Arab, Arabic lexicography, scholarly heritage, lexicographical methodology, root system, history of linguistics*

**Introduction:** The history of Arabic linguistics and lexicography possesses a centuries-old scholarly heritage, in which the contributions of great scholars are invaluable. In the process of systematically studying the rich lexical system of the Arabic language, organizing it, and transmitting it to future generations through written sources, dictionaries occupy a special place. They have served not only as references for linguistics but also as important sources for the development of literature, jurisprudence (fiqh), exegesis (tafsir), hadith studies, and many other Islamic sciences.

In this regard, the *As-Sihah fi al-lugha* ("As-Sihah") dictionary, compiled by Abu Nasr Ismail ibn Hammad al-Jawhari (d. 1003/1008), is considered one of the most significant sources of Arabic lexicography. In his work, the author analyzed previously existing dictionaries, collecting their positive aspects and striving to eliminate their shortcomings. A distinctive feature of *As-Sihah* lies in its principle of arrangement—namely, the organization of words according to the last letter of the root. This method represented an innovation in Arabic lexicography and later became a widely applied methodological foundation in subsequent centuries.

This work became one of the primary sources for later comprehensive dictionaries. In particular, the renowned thirteenth-century scholar Ibn Manzur relied heavily on *As-Sihah* when compiling his famous *Lisan al-'Arab*. He expanded



its material and enriched it with additional sources. As a result, *Lisan al-‘Arab* came to be recognized as one of the most comprehensive works embodying the history and lexical heritage of the Arabic language. *As-Sihah*, therefore, was not only a milestone in its own era but also retained lasting importance for the subsequent development of Arabic linguistics, playing a vital role in the continuity of scholarly traditions. This article will examine the scientific and methodological features of this dictionary, its influence on later lexicons—particularly *Lisan al-‘Arab*—and its overall significance in the history of Arabic lexicography.

**Main part:** In the history of Arabic linguistics and lexicography, al-Jawhari’s *As-Sihah* occupies a special place. Abu Nasr Ismail ibn Hammad al-Jawhari, who lived and worked between the 9th and 10th centuries, was one of the prominent scholars of his era and introduced a new stage in Arabic lexicography. His work *As-Sihah fi al-lugha* played a crucial role in organizing and systematizing the vast lexical richness of the Arabic language. Prior to the creation of this dictionary, earlier works—particularly Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi’s *Kitab al-‘Ayn*—were complex in their arrangement and difficult to use. Seeking to provide greater accessibility for learners of the language, al-Jawhari introduced an innovative method of ordering words according to the final letter of their root. This approach was a novelty in Arabic lexicography and later became widely adopted.

The scholarly and methodological importance of *As-Sihah* is considerable. The dictionary not only provided explanations of word meanings but also illustrated their grammatical forms and usage through literary examples. For this reason, the work served as a fundamental reference not only for linguists but also for scholars of literature, jurisprudence (fiqh), Qur’anic exegesis (tafsir), and hadith studies. The conciseness, clarity, and scientific rigor of the dictionary made it a widely used reference work in different fields.

Al-Jawhari’s dictionary subsequently became a source for all major Arabic lexicons. In particular, the renowned 13th-century scholar Ibn Manzur produced his *Lisan al-‘Arab* directly under the influence of *As-Sihah*. Ibn Manzur extensively used al-Jawhari’s work as one of his primary sources, supplementing it with material from other dictionaries and scholarly traditions. As a result, *Lisan al-‘Arab* emerged as one of the most comprehensive encyclopedic dictionaries of the Arabic language. In this context, *As-Sihah* functioned as the methodological foundation, while Ibn Manzur expanded its content, enriching it with historical, literary, and juridical evidence.

The influence of *As-Sihah* was not confined to *Lisan al-‘Arab* alone but is evident in many later dictionaries as well. For example, al-Zabidi’s *Taj al-‘Arus*



also drew extensively upon al-Jawhari’s method. In the history of Arabic lexicography, the principle of arranging words by the final letter of their root became firmly established as part of al-Jawhari’s intellectual legacy and continued to be applied for centuries.

Thus, *As-Sihah* was not only a pivotal work in its own era but also remained an integral part of the scholarly heritage of later generations. Its impact culminated in the creation of *Lisan al-‘Arab*, which marked a pinnacle in the history of Arabic linguistics, further consolidating the scholarly traditions of lexicography. Therefore, al-Jawhari’s *As-Sihah* may be regarded as the foundational cornerstone of Arabic lexicography, while Ibn Manzur’s *Lisan al-‘Arab* stands as its perfected continuation.

**Conclusion:** The history of Arabic lexicography has been shaped over centuries of scholarly research and traditions, within which al-Jawhari’s *as-Sihah* occupies a distinctive place. Research shows that this lexicon introduced a methodological breakthrough in organizing and systematizing the rich lexical heritage of the Arabic language. The principle introduced by al-Jawhari—arranging words according to the final radical of their root—was an innovation in Arabic lexicography and provided a methodological foundation for all subsequent major dictionaries. In this sense, *as-Sihah* is regarded as the cornerstone of Arabic lexicography.

The substantive richness of *as-Sihah* also determines its significance. The lexicon not only explains the meanings of words but also provides their grammatical forms, usage in literary texts, and semantic variations across different contexts. For this reason, the work has served as an essential source not only for linguistics but also for disciplines such as jurisprudence, Qur’anic exegesis, Hadith studies, and literary criticism.

In later periods, Ibn Manzur’s *Lisan al-‘Arab* emerged as the direct continuation of al-Jawhari’s legacy. The concise and precise definitions found in *as-Sihah* were expanded in *Lisan al-‘Arab* with historical, social, and literary contexts. Thus, although *Lisan al-‘Arab* became the most comprehensive encyclopedic dictionary of Arabic, its methodological foundation can be traced back to *as-Sihah*. Accordingly, al-Jawhari’s work stands as the scientific foundation, while Ibn Manzur’s work represents the fully developed system built upon that foundation.

Moreover, the influence of *as-Sihah* was not limited to *Lisan al-‘Arab* alone; it is also clearly evident in later monumental works such as al-Zabidi’s *Taj al-‘Arus*.



This demonstrates the continuity of scholarly traditions and the principle of intellectual succession in the history of Arabic lexicography.

In conclusion, al-Jawhari's *as-Sihah* systematically organized the lexical wealth of the Arabic language, established scholarly traditions, and provided the methodological basis for the major dictionaries that followed. While it remains the cornerstone of Arabic lexicography, *Lisan al-'Arab* and subsequent dictionaries stand as the scholarly summits built upon that foundation. Thus, al-Jawhari's intellectual legacy continues to hold invaluable significance not only in his own era but also in contemporary studies of Arabic linguistics and lexicography.

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