

THE HISTORY OF TAJWĪD

وَمِنْ آيَاتِنَا الْقُرْآنَ حَرَامًا

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The
History
of
Tajwīd

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System of Transliteration

Nr	Arabic	English	Nr	Arabic	English
1	أ	ʾ	17	ظ	ṭh
2	ب	b	18	ع	ʿ
3	ت	t	19	غ	gh
4	ث	th	20	ف	f
5	ج	j	21	ق	q
6	ح	ḥ	22	ك	k
7	خ	kh	23	ل	l
8	د	d	24	م	m
9	ذ	dh	25	ن	n
10	ر	r	26	هـ	h
11	ز	z	27	و	w
12	س	s	28	ي	y
13	ش	sh	29	أَ	ā
14	ص	ṣ	30	إِ	ī
15	ض	ḍ	31	أُ	ū
16	ط	ṭ	32	أَيَّ	ay
			33	أَوَّ	aw

N.B. Arabic words are italicised except in 3 instances:

- 1- When possessing a current English usage.
- 2- When part of a heading or table/diagram.
- 3- When the proper names of humans.

The “al” of the Arabic lām al-taʿrīf is occasionally omitted to maintain flow of the English.

Foreword

This booklet was part of my MA thesis. I have extracted it from the thesis and edited it for students and teachers of *tajwīd* and *Qirā'āt*.

It is imperative for any student embarking on the study of any science, that he/she also studies the history and developments which took place in that particular science. By understanding the history of a science, and the developments which occurred in it, one has a better appreciation for the science and is better equipped to engage and navigate it.

Though much has been written on the history of many sciences, I was surprised to find very little written on the history of *tajwīd*, even in the Arabic language. I pray that this booklet benefits many, especially those who love to recite the Qur'ān as it was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ; with *tajwīd*.

M. Saleem Gaibie

Tajwīd: The Oral Period

The Oral Dimension of the Qurʾān

Pre-Islamic Arabia had an oral culture. This means that their culture was predominantly transmitted orally, with writing being used in restricted areas. A dominant feature of an oral culture is that the people are illiterate, which the Qurʾān alludes to when it states:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾﴾

“It is He who sent among the unlettered a messenger from among themselves”. (Sūrat al-Jumu‘ah: 2).

Committing things to memory was another common feature amongst such a culture due to them not having written records to consult, hence the famous statement: “their gospels are in their hearts” (أَنَّا جِئْنَاهُمْ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ)¹ and the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ saying: “such a book has descended upon you which cannot be washed away by water” (لَا يَغْسِلُهُ الْمَاءُ) i.e. it does not require writing to preserve it for water can wash away the ink. These are indicative that they preserved information in their memories.² This does not mean that literacy did not exist; literacy and illiteracy coexisted, very similar to European society up until the nineteenth century. Graham writes that:






“one should not overestimate the actual dispersion of literacy, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when it was still a substantially restricted capacity in European society as a whole. Literacy and illiteracy coexisted well into the industrial revolution. It is now very hard for those of us raised in highly literate societies in the mid-twentieth century to recognize that historically, even in Europe, the majority of the population until the past hundred years or so have been unable to read

¹ Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*: 573; Zurqānī, *Manāhil al-ʿIrfān*: 1/195.

² Aḥmad, *Musnad*: 4/162, 163, 266; al-Ṭabarānī, *Muʿjam al-Kabīr*: 17/358-359; al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubrā*: 9/20; Zurqānī, *Manāhil al-ʿIrfān*: 1/195.

and write...Even in early nineteenth century England, in the workplace and public houses, reading aloud – often of news and politics rather than religion – continued to be an important means of dissemination of printed material to the illiterate or semiliterate (a function today of radio and television for the same groups).” (Graham, 1987: 42).³

In this oral milieu, it was to be expected that the Qur’ān also be of an oral nature. The very first revelation is indicative of the Qur’ān’s oral/aural character, “*iqrā*” (read). The word “*qara’ā*” (to read, to recite) and its derivatives appear more than 80 times throughout the Qur’ān e.g. *qur’ān al-fajr*. The imperative and recurring “*qul*” (say) introduces more than 300 statements; statements that are meant to be proclaimed aloud. The verb “*talā*”, alongside “*tilāwah*”, (to recite, to follow) occurs frequently, more than 63 times. Furthermore, the hadith legacy mentions thousands of various traditions encouraging the recitation of the Qur’ān. (Graham, 1987: 91).

In addition to its oral character, the Qur’ān was written from the earliest stages of Islam, even as a new and inexperienced community while being persecuted by the Quraysh of Mecca. In the story of the conversion of ‘Umar  to Islam, he found a parchment at the house of his sister upon which the Qur’ān was written.⁴ It was the regular practice of the Prophet Muḥammad  that upon the descent of revelation, he would call for one of his numerous scribes to write down the latest verses of the Qur’ān.⁵ It was also commonplace that the Companions  wrote the Qur’ān, for the Prophet  forbade them from writing the Qur’ān together with non-Qur’ānic material on the same sheet.⁶ Furthermore, the Prophet  himself refers to a written

³ The same could be said about ancient Greece. Orality was the norm well into the fifth century B.C.E and only later did it share a platform with written culture, not becoming widespread in the capital, Athens, until the last third of the century. (Graham, 1987: 34).

⁴ Ibn Hishām, *Sirah*: 1/343-346.

⁵ Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*: 3086; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*: 2/221; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Dalā’il*: 7/153.

⁶ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: 4/2298; Zurqānī, *Manāḥil al-’Irfān*: 1/231.

codex (*muṣḥaf*) when he related that those who recite without the aid of a *muṣḥaf* would receive reward of 1000 degrees while those who recite using a *muṣḥaf* would attain double the reward.⁷ The Prophet ﷺ also forbade the Companions ﷺ to travel into enemy lands with a copy of the Qurʾān.⁸ It was common for the Companions ﷺ to have their own personal codices of the Qurʾān. The works written in the *maṣāḥif* genre⁹ is indicative of their personal codices as well as personal codices of the Successors.¹⁰ If they did not document the Qurʾān in their personal capacities, then the communal collection which took place during the caliphates of Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān ﷺ would not have been possible.¹¹

Teaching from a *muṣḥaf* was not uncommon during that period. While in Kufa, Ibn Masʿūd ﷺ was known to dictate from a *muṣḥaf* when he taught the Qurʾān.¹² One of the 10 eponymous Readers, Abū Jaʿfar (d. 106/724), had a *muṣḥaf* when he read to ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAyyāsh (d. 78/697).¹³ The Damascenes would go to the mosque of Damascus and correct their *maṣāḥif* (*yusliḥūn maṣāḥifahum*) according to the *qirāʾah* of ʿAṭīyah ibn Qays (d. 121/739).¹⁴ Ḥamzah (d. 156/773) used to go to Aʿmash (d. 148/765) with a *muṣḥaf* and mark it according to how Aʿmash read to him.¹⁵ Those who came to the circle of Kisāʾī (d. 189/805), would mark their *maṣāḥif* based on how

⁷ Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*: 1/338.

⁸ Mālik, *Muwattaʿ*: 1/574; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: hadith 2990. See ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*: 6/155.

⁹ See See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*: 38-39. *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif* of Abū Bakr al-Sijistānī (d. 316) is the most popular book in this genre.

¹⁰ See *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif* of Abū Bakr al-Sijistānī for numerous examples of personal codices.

¹¹ Motzki summarizes several academic views and their arguments regarding the collection of the Qurʾān and concludes that “Western studies dealing with the issue of the collection of the Qurʾān make clear that premises, conclusions and methodology of these studies are still disputable. Whether their alternative views on the history of the Qurʾān are historically more reliable than the Muslim tradition on the issue thus remains an open question. (Motzki, 2001: 15).

¹² Aḥmad, *Musnad*: 1/309; Abū Yaʿlā, *Musnad*: 1/172-173.

¹³ Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sabʿah*: 58.

¹⁴ ʿAṭīyah ibn Qays was a Successor took over the seat of teaching Qurʾān in Damascus after the demise of Abū al-Dardāʾ. Abū Zurʿah, *Tārīkh*: 1/346; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Niḥayah*: 1/514.

¹⁵ Dhahabī, *Maʿrifat al-Qurrāʾ al-Kibār*: 1/118.

he recited to them; marking the places of starting and stopping as well.¹⁶ Schoeler mentions that these kind of reports

“show that very early on, written Qur’ān texts were used in recitations, something Sellheim doubted. In lectures teaching the Qur’ān, written copies obviously functioned as *hypomnēmata*, the text of which was corrected and revised through *samā’*. Somewhat later, there appeared people called *muṣḥafiyūn* in the field of Qur’ān reading, a group comparable to *ṣuḥufiyūn* in other sciences, those who received their knowledge exclusively from notebooks (*ṣuḥuf*) in circulation instead of “heard/audited” transmission (*ar-riwāyah al-masmū’ah, samā’*). Abū Ḥātim as-Siġistānī (d. 255/869) among others warns against trusting these people: “do not learn the Qur’ān from those who have only read codices!” There could not be any better evidence for the fact that also in the field of Qur’ān reading, “merely written” transmission was common practice, if frowned upon.” (Schoeler, 2006: 80).

The Relationship between the Oral and the Written

The idea of having the Qur’ān written as a scriptural codex was not out of the ordinary at all, especially considering that it was previously “preserved on tablets” (Sūrat al-Burūj: 21-22). (Nelson, 2001: 1). The ‘Uthmānic codification became the *textus receptus* of this idea. Though the transmission of the Qur’ān remained oral, it was not restricted to it.

“Technically, the scripture given to Muhammad presumably *could* have been passed on from the outset primarily as a written text, but it was not, or at least not alongside and as an adjunct to its memorization and recitation. While the revelations were considered to be part of God’s

¹⁶ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Niḥayah*: 1/538.

‘Arabic *kitāb*’, this in no way conflicted with or detracted from their fundamental character as divine words meant to be learned by heart, chanted aloud, and orally transmitted.” (Graham, 1987: 89).

Furthermore, there are numerous verses in the Qur’ān which refer to it as a written document or “*al-kitāb*” (al-Baqarah: 2; al-An‘ām: 7; al-Wāqī‘ah: 78), yet it was, and still remains, a predominantly oral text. Graham writes that:

“The written word of its scripture has always been secondary to a strong tradition of oral transmission and aural presence of scripture that far surpasses that of Judaic or Christian usage. In Islam, the functions of the holy book as an oral text have predominated over its functions as a written or printed one. As an English Arabist put it long ago, “from the first to the last the Koran is essentially a book to be heard, not read. For countless millions of Muslims over more than thirteen centuries of Islamic history, ‘scripture’, *al-kitāb*, has been a book learned, read and passed on by vocal repetition and memorization...the book of holy writ (*kitāb*) in Islam is ultimately not a written or printed document, but a holy ‘reciting’, or ‘recitation’, which is precisely what the word *qur’ān* means.” (Graham, 1987: 79-80).

Qur’ānic Pedagogy during this Milieu

This section analyses Qur’ānic pedagogy and transmission during this early period. Schoeler draws a comparison between early Islamic pedagogy and antecedent Alexandrian teaching methods and lectures, identifying structural similarities between the two systems. Islam placed more emphasis on *samā’* i.e. “heard/aural” transmission.¹⁷ Additionally, Islam made a distinction between *samā’* (the teacher

¹⁷ This might seem like something insignificant, but the printing press and the availability of digital books have displaced aural reading with silent reading. Marshal McLuhan stated that “Print gradually made reading aloud pointless.” Aural reading generally requires an audience and involves face-to-face interaction, as opposed to silent

reads loud) and *qirā'ah* (the student reads to the teacher).¹⁸ Furthermore, the Alexandrian system had a rudimentary system of *isnād* – if any – as opposed to Islam which demanded that sources be named. (Schoeler, 2006: 48).

Verse 16 of Sūrat al-Qiyāmah instructs the Prophet Muḥammad to remain silent and listen attentively whenever Gabriel came with revelation:

﴿لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ﴾ (١٦)

Move not your tongue with it, [O Muḥammad ﷺ], to hasten with recitation of the Qur'ān.

Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه explains that after listening to the revelation, the Prophet ﷺ would then recite it back to Gabriel عليه السلام.¹⁹ Thus, he grasped revelation via *samā'* (listening to it) and via *qirā'ah* (reading). Furthermore, there are two words that appear in the hadith legacy which depict *how* the Prophet ﷺ received revelation from Gabriel: *āraḍāh* (*yu'arīḍunī*) and *dārasah* (*fayudārisuhū*):

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَجْوَدَ النَّاسِ، وَكَانَ أَجْوَدَ مَا يَكُونُ فِي رَمَضَانَ حِينَ يَلْقَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ، وَكَانَ جِبْرِيلُ يَلْقَاهُ فِي كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ، فَيُدَارِسُهُ الْقُرْآنَ.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most generous of all the people, and he used to be more generous in the month of Ramaḍān when Jibrīl used to meet him. Jibrīl used to meet him every night in Ramaḍān to revise the Qur'ān together.²⁰

Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها reported:

أَسْرَأَ إِلَيَّ: "إِنَّ جِبْرِيلَ كَانَ يُعَارِضُنِي الْقُرْآنَ كُلَّ سَنَةٍ مَرَّةً، وَإِنَّهُ عَارِضُنِي الْعَامَ مَرَّتَيْنِ، وَلَا أَرَاهُ إِلَّا حَصَرَ أَجْلِي."²¹

reading. The print and digital culture transitions from an oral/aural interaction to a visual and purely mental process, removing vocalization completely. See Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*: 19-44.

¹⁸ This distinction between *qirā'ah* and *samā'* is still maintained in present-day Islamic pedagogy when texts are being studied between students and teachers, especially in hadith sciences.

¹⁹ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: 4/203-204; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: 4/1904; Aḥmad, *Musnad*: 44/10.

²⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*: hadith 3220.

²¹ Sheikh Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Aṭṭamī explains:

"Each of the above *ḥadīths* describes these recitations between Archangel and Prophet using the term *Mu'āraḍa*. *Mu'āraḍa* (معارضة) is from *Mufā'ala* (مفاعلة), meaning that two people are engaged in the same action. For example *muqātala* (مقاتلة): to fight each other. Thus *Mu'āraḍa* indicates that Jibrīl would read once while the Prophet listened, then vice versa. This general practice continues to this day. A few of the Companions were in fact privy to

The Prophet ﷺ secretly told me: “Every year Jibrīl used to revise the Qur’ān with me once only, but this year he has done so twice. I do not deem it except that my death is approaching.”²²

These two words are from the third scale, which signify a dual action i.e. Gabriel ﷺ recited to the Prophet ﷺ and the likewise the Prophet ﷺ recited to Gabriel ﷺ as well.²³

This very same methodology – *qirā’ah* and *samā’* – was employed when the Prophet ﷺ taught the Qur’ān. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ read the Qur’ān to whomsoever he invited to Islam. His Companions ﷺ regularly listened to his recitation, including during the daily *ṣalāh*.²⁴ He was instructed by Allah to recite to Ubayy ibn Ka’b ﷺ.²⁵ Likewise, the Prophet ﷺ listened to their recitation of the Qur’ān, as in the case of Ibn Mas’ūd ﷺ when he requested the latter to recite to him.²⁶ This manner of learning Qur’ānic recitation was referred to as “*talaqqī*” (oral reception). Ubayy ﷺ said to ‘Umar ﷺ that he learned the Qur’ān from the Prophet ﷺ via *talaqqī*, who grasped it from Gabriel ﷺ via *talaqqī*:

إِنِّي تَلَقَّيْتُ الْقُرْآنَ مِمَّنْ تَلَقَّاهُ مِنْ جِبْرِيلَ ﷺ

“I learned the Qur’ān via *talaqqī* from him from grasped it via *talaqqī* from Jibril ﷺ.”²⁷

this *Mu’āraḍa* between the Prophet and Jibrīl, such as ‘Uthmān [Ibn Kathīr, *Faḍā’il*, vii:440], Zaid b. Thābit, and ‘Abdullah b. Mas’ūd.”

See *The History of the Qur’ānic Text*: 54-55. See also *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’ah wa Manzilat al-Qirā’āt minhā* by Dr Ḥasan Diyā’ al-Dīn ‘Iṭr: 267; *Maqālāt al-Kawthar*: 6; *al-Tibyān li ba’ḍ al-Mabāḥith al-Muta’allichah bi al-Qur’ān* by Ṭāhir al-Jazā’iri: 124-125.

²² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*: hadith 3623, 3624.

²³ Sibaway, *al-Kitāb*: 4/68.

²⁴ For numerous examples and occasions in which the Prophet Muḥammad recited the Qur’ān, refer to al-Aṭḥamī, *The History of the Qur’ānic Text*: 60.

²⁵ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: 5/36, 6/175; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: 1/550.

²⁶ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: 6/45; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: 1/551.

²⁷ Aḥmad, *Musnad*: 35/41-42; Ḥākim, *Mustadrak*: 2/225. See also *Tajwīd al-Laḥḥ fi Qirā’at al-Qur’ān* by Ḥusayn al-Maṭīrī: 136.

Verse six of Sūrat al-Naml emphasises that the Prophet ﷺ received the Qurʾān via *talaqqī* (*wa innak la-tulaqq al-Qurʾān*):

﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَتَلَقَّى الْقُرْآنَ مِنْ لَدُنِّ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٦﴾﴾

And indeed, [O Muḥammad], you receive the Qurʾān from One, Wise and all-Knowing.

Nelson writes that “*Tajwīd* and *qirāʾāt* are both essentially oral in their transmission...the significance of *tajwīd* and *qirāʾāt* for Qurʾānic studies are largely ignored by Western scholars, except as they apply to the written text of the Qurʾān.” (Paraphr. Nelson, 2001: xviii). She states further that

“...to Western Qurʾanic scholars the Qurʾan has been largely defined by its written tradition...Consequently, the emphasis in Western scholarship has been on those aspects of the Qurʾan which manifests a written tradition, such as *tafsīr*, *lughah* (philology), *balāghah* (rhetoric), *rasm* (orthography), and so forth.” (Nelson, 2001: xviii)

Denny echoes these sentiments stating that “Typical Western disregard for the latter is simply a product of blindness both to Muslim practices and the Qurʾān’s special nature which emphasizes orality.” (Denny, 1989: 6). Regarding its transmission, Schoeler recognises that the natural manner of Qurʾānic transmission was via *qirāʾah*. (Schoeler, 2006: 50).²⁸ Graham has a few descriptions like “vocally transmitted text” and “recited, phonetic text”. (Graham, 1987: 88, 98). Nelson states that “The transmission of the Qurʾan and its social existence are essentially oral.” (Nelson, 2001: xiv). Though this process of oral transmission is a seemingly straightforward one involving *qirāʾah* and *samāʿ* (listening and reading), it consists of multiple complex disciplines which secure accuracy in transmission as well as detail. Each of these disciplines developed into independant sciences within the first few centuries of Islam. They include:

²⁸ Due to this, Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām has a chapter heading encouraging the practice of *ʿard* of the Qurʾān i.e. presentation or recitation of the *qurrāʾ* to their teachers. See Sallām, *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān*: 2/188.

- Transmission of Qur’ānic readings/ *Qirā’āt* – this entails that the reading was learned from a previous authority with a transmission chain (*sanad*) linking him to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. These Qur’ānic readings would incorporate dialectical variances and differences in expression allowed by the seven *aḥruf*. (Dutton, 2011). The systems of *qirā’āt* stem from the phonetic pool of the *aḥruf*. (Nelson, 2001: 3).²⁹
- Correct Arabic phonology/*tajwīd* – this discipline regulates correct oral rendering of the Qur’ān, which is the basis of all recitation. (Nelson, 2001: 13). All the *qirā’āt* mentioned in the previous point adhere to the rules of *tajwīd*. (Gade, 2006: 483; Graham, 1987: 116).
- ‘Uthmānic Orthography/*rasm* – all readings must comply with the ‘Uthmānic script.³⁰ (Gade, 2006: 483; Graham, 1987: 116). Graham notes that the copy of the written text

“exists as a support to the orally transmitted and recited text, not a determinant of it. Because the written codification of the authoritative text under ‘Uthmān took place before the development of an Arabic orthography that could indicate with true precision how a text actually is to be read, the written *muṣḥaf* could never stand alone. When ‘Uthmān sent out copies of his new Qur’ān text to the major cities of the young empire, he sent them with knowledgeable reciters who could teach the text of the *muṣḥaf*. To read the bare, unpointed text, one had to know it already by heart, or very nearly so.” (Graham, 1987: 98).

²⁹ The confrontations between ‘Umar, Hishām, Ubayy ﷺ and others in the hadiths of the seven *aḥruf* show that each one of them recognised that the Qur’ān was being recited differently to how they had grasped it. Secondly, the hadith always concludes that, despite their Qur’ānic recitation differing one from the other, these readings were all taught to them and stemmed from the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ (أَقْرَأْنِيهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ).

³⁰ Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*: 1/278.

The pointing of the ‘Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*, indicates that the Qur’ānic text still maintained its orality.³¹ There was always “primacy of the oral text over the written one – but always alongside it, not in competition with it.” (Graham, 1987: 110). Thus, the reading of the written text was governed by the oral tradition which naturally conformed with correct Arabic phonology, as mentioned previously. Even with millions of copies of the Qur’ānic text being printed nowadays³², it still maintains its orality based upon the reading tradition of one of the 10 eponymous Readers.

- Stopping and starting/ *waqf wa ibtidā’* – in the ‘Uthmānic codices the places of stopping were not marked, unlike in the printed copies of the Qur’ān presently. Students would grasp where to stop and start from their teachers. This practice was initiated and practised by the Prophet ﷺ when he instructed that the Companions should not mix a verse of chastisement with a verse of mercy or a verse of mercy with a verse of chastisement.³³ The Companion, ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, related that it was the practice of the Companions that they learned the appropriate places of stopping.³⁴ This practice is clear in the methodology of Kisā’ī mentioned previously when he taught the Qur’ān.

³¹ The pointing of the text initially comprised of dots below or above the consonants to distinguish them from similar shaped consonants in the Arabic script as well as dots to indicate the vowels (*ḥarakāt*). See Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*: 98.

³² The manner in which the Islamic world produced the printed version of the Qur’ānic text was certainly unique, contrary to the procedure followed by Western text-critical scholarship. They based their orthography on the rules of *rasm* and the science of *ḍabt* (literally means the science of precision, referring to the manner of dotting or the diacritics of the Qur’ānic script) as codified by authorities like Dānī (d. 444/1052) and Ibn Najāḥ (d. 496/1103), instead of relying on the manuscripts or manuscript fragments available. The Qur’ānic text produced by Egypt in 1342/1923-1924 was universally recognized as the most authoritative text printed. Gotthelf Bergsträsser declared on the Egyptian print “that all of the textual scholarship of the West could not have brought forth a more exact or critical edition than that produced by these leading exponents of the highly oral and highly mnemonic Islamic ‘science of readings’”. (Graham, 1987: 97). It was this print that was used by Saudi Arabia to print their version of the text in 1950. See al-‘Awfī, Muḥammad Sālim: *Taṭawwur Kitābat al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf wa Ṭabā’atīhi*.

³³ Aḥmad, *al-Musnad*: 35/41-42; Dānī, *al-Muktafā fi al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidā’*: 131.

³⁴ Ḥākīm, *al-Mustadrak*: 1/35; Dānī, commentary on *al-Khāqāniyyah*: 2/423.

- Verse enumeration/ *'add al-fawāṣil* – unlike in the present printed copies of the Qur'ān, the 'Uthmānic codice did not have the verses marked. The Successor, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī relates that Ibn Mas'ūd, Ubayy and 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه would teach them 10 verses per session.³⁵ The Successor and eponymous Reader, 'Āṣim رضي الله عنه, amongst the other eponymous Readers, would count the verses on their fingers when teaching.³⁶ As each Islamic centre differed in their *qirā'āt*, they differed in their count of the verses.³⁷ Nowadays, the verses in most prints are marked and numbered according to the narration of Ḥafṣ who follows the verse enumeration of the Kufis.³⁸

³⁵ Dānī, commentary on *al-Khāqāniyyah*: 2/264; Aḥmad, *al-Musnad*: 5/410; Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*: 1/557.

³⁶ Dānī, *al-Bayān fi 'Add Āy al-Qur'ān*: 48-49.

³⁷ See *al-Bayān fi 'Add Āy al-Qur'ān* of Dānī for more details.

³⁸ According to the Kufis there are 6236 verses in total. The *qurrā'* in Homs tally 6232 verses, Damascus counts 6227 while others say 6226, Basra totals 6204, Mecca counts 6210 while Medina has two opinions: 6214 and 6217. See *al-Qawl al-Wajīz fi Fawāṣil al-Kitāb al-'Azīz* of Mukhallalāti for details.

Orality: Describing the Qur'ānic Recitation of the Prophetic ﷺ³⁹

This section surveys words which describe the recitation of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ from hadith literature. There are primarily 10 words which recur in various narrations:⁴⁰

- 1) *Tartīl* – this signifies a slow or pacing recitation. It also means clarity. Thus, it would suggest a clear, distinct and slow-paced recitation.⁴¹

In Sūrat al-Muzzammil: 4, the instruction is given to recite the Qur'ān with *tartīl* (*rattil al-Qur'ān tartīlā*):

﴿وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلاً﴾

And recite the Qur'ān with a slow, measured recitation.

Ḥafṣah ﷺ relates that he (the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ) recited a sūrah with *tartīl* until it seemed longer than it (actually) was:⁴²

عن حفصة أنها قالت: ... وكان يقرأ بالسورة فيرتلها حتى تكون أطول من أطول منها...

The Prophet ﷺ furthermore encouraged recitation with *tartīl* when he stated: “recite with *tartīl*, as you recited with *tartīl* in the worldly life” (*rattil kamā kunta turattil fi al-dunyā*).⁴³

- 2) *Tarassul* – this is a synonym for *tartīl* i.e. a slow and pacing recitation.⁴⁴

Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān ﷺ relates that he (the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ) recited slowly (*mutarassil*). When he passed a verse of praise, he praised (Allah), when he

³⁹ These descriptions will not include those hadiths which encourage the Qur'ān to be recited melodiously, to adorn one's recitation with the Qur'ān, to recite loudly or softly since these matters are not within our area of focus.

⁴⁰ While these words are repeated in numerous reports, I will restrict myself to mentioning only one hadith to demonstrate its appearance.

⁴¹ *Tajwid al-Lafḥ fi Qirā'at al-Qur'ān*: 74-78.

Imam Shāfi'ī ﷺ mentions that the least degree of *tartīl* is to recite swiftly without distinction (*ibānah*) between the letters. See *Kitāb al-Umm*: 2/250.

⁴² *Muwaṭṭa'* of Mālik: 1/199; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: 1/507; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*: 1/399.

⁴³ Aḥmad, *Musnad*: 11/404; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*: hadith 1462; Tirmidhī, *Sunan*: hadith 2914.

⁴⁴ *Tajwid al-Lafḥ fi Qirā'at al-Qur'ān*: 85-86.

al-Rahmān-al-Rahīm, then **pause**; thereafter he would say ‘*al-ḥamd li-Allah rabb al-‘alamīn*’ then **pause**; thereafter ‘*al-Rahmān al-Rahīm*’ then **pause**.⁴⁹

وعن أم سلمة أنها سئلت عن قراءة رسول الله فقالت: كان يقطع قراءته آية آية، يقول: بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، ثم يقف، ثم يقول: الحمد لله رب العالمين، ثم يقف، ثم يقول: الرحمن الرحيم، ثم يقف.

- 6) The “seven *aḥruf*” – the Prophet Muḥammad’s ﷺ recitation incorporated the “seven *aḥruf*”.

Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ relates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Gabriel taught me to read in one *ḥarf*. Then I continued requesting him to increase it until it reached **seven *aḥruf***.”⁵⁰

وعن ابن عباس أن رسول الله قال: أقراني جبريل على حرف، فلم أزل أستزيده حتى انتهى إلى سبعة أحرف.

- 7) *Tarjī‘* – it infers that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ recited beautifully (*taḥsīn al-ṣawt*).⁵¹

‘Abd Allah ibn Mughaffal ﷺ relates: “I saw the Prophet reciting while he was on his she-camel, or his camel, and he was reciting Sūrat al-Fath – or from Sūrat al-Fath – an easy recitation with “*tarjī‘*”.”⁵²

⁴⁹ See Tirmidhī, *Sunan*: 6/427.

Other reports of Umm Salamah ﷺ describing the recitation of the Prophet ﷺ suggest clarity in recitation when she uses the words “*ḥarfān ḥarfān*” and “*kalimatan kalimatan*” or a slow and pacing recitation described her as “*baṭī‘ah*”.

See Aḥmad, *Musnad*: 44/324; Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*: 1/323; al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubrā*: 2/77; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaḥ*: 2/52; al-Ṭabarānī, *Muḥjam al-Kabīr*: 23/392; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*: 1/323.

⁵⁰ See Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: 4/113, 6/185; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: 2/202.

⁵¹ The word “*tarjī‘*” literally means to repeat. Thus, one of the interpretations of what is meant by “*tarjī‘*” here is that the Prophet ﷺ repeated certain letters or verses. Some argue that the reason it sounded as if he was repeating these letters or verses was due to the movement of the camel which he was riding at the time of his recitation. However, that would mean that his application of “*tarjī‘*” is not intentional, but coincidental; it would then not be proper to describe the Prophet’s ﷺ recitation of the Qur’ān as being with “*tarjī‘*”. Another interpretation given for “*tarjī‘*” is that it is a slower, more distinct pace than *tartil*. See *al-Adā’ al-Qur’ānī fi al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī wa al-Āthār*: 98-99.

⁵² See Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: 6/195; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: 2/193.

وعن عبد الله بن مغفل قال: "رأيت النبي يقرأ وهو على نافته أو جملة...وهو يقرأ سورة الفتح – أو من سورة الفتح
– قراءة لينة يقرأ وهو يرجع.

8) *Tardīd al-Āyah* – the Prophet ﷺ would repeat certain verses during recitation.

Abū Dharr رضى الله عنه relates that the Prophet ﷺ recited a verse and continued **repeating** it until the morning.⁵³

عن أبي ذر أن النبي قرأ الآية فرددها حتى أصبح...

9) *Zamzamah* – a soft recitation, audible only to the one reciting.⁵⁴

Makhūl relates that he asked Anas رضى الله عنه: "How was the recitation of the messenger of Allah?" He replied: "his recitation was **inaudible** (*zamzamah*)". He was asked: "O messenger of Allah, if only you raised your voice (during recitation)". He responded: "I disliked that I would inconvenience my company or the household".⁵⁵

وعن مكحول، سألت أنسا: كيف كانت قراءة رسول الله؟ قال: كانت قراءته الزمزمة، قال: فقيل له: يا رسول الله لو رفعت صوتك، قال: إني لأكره أن أؤذي جليسي، أو أؤذي أهل بيتي.

10) *Bukā'* – crying during recitation or a sad recitation.

Muṭarrif relates from his father that he found the Messenger of Allah (reciting) in prayer and his chest was "whistling" like the whistling of a boiling kettle.⁵⁶

عن مطرف عن أبيه قال: انتهيت إلى رسول الله وهو يصلي ولصدره أزيز كأزيز المزجل.

⁵³ See Nasā'ī, *Sunan*: 2/24; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*: 1/429.

⁵⁴ Abū Ma'shar al-Ṭabarī, *al-Talkhīṣ*: 132.

⁵⁵ See Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*: hadith number 3378; Hamadhānī, *al-Tamhīd fī Ma'rifat al-Tajwīd*: 183.

The report of the Prophet ﷺ reciting with "*zamzamah*" is considered weak. Therefore Hamadhānī does not regard this as one of the descriptions of the Prophet's ﷺ recitation. See *al-Tamhīd fī Ma'rifat al-Tajwīd*: 159, 183; see also *al-Adā' al-Qur'ānī fī al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī wa al-Āthār*: 106; *Tajwīd al-Laḥḥ fī Qirā'at al-Qur'ān*: 107.

⁵⁶ See Aḥmad, *Musnad*: 26/242.

This hadith appears in various books under the chapter-heading which infers crying during recitation. See Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*: hadith 904; Tirmidhī, *al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyyah*: 181; Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubrā*: 1/292; Ibn Khuzaymah, *Ṣaḥīḥ*: 1/450.

The *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah (1/424) also relates that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: "This Qur'an was revealed denoting sadness. So when you recite it, cry. And if you are unable to cry, then feign crying".

Orality: The Companions and Qur'ānic Recitation

The same words used to describe the recitation of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ are used to describe the recitation of his Companions ﷺ:

- ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ – he recited “*mufassaratan ḥarfan ḥarfan/mubayyanatan*”.

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ stated that whoever loves to recite the Qur’ān, fresh, as it was revealed, should recite the reading of Ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ. Abū Bakr and ‘Umar ﷺ then went to listen to the recitation of Ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ and described it as articulate with each letter distinct from the other (*mufassaratan, ḥarfan ḥarfan*).⁵⁷ Bukhārī explains this recitation as being each letter distinct with due clarity (*ḥarfan ḥarfan mubayyanatan*).⁵⁸

In other narrations, his recitation is described as being with *tartil*.⁵⁹

- ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ – he recited slowly or pacingly (*baṭī’ah*).⁶⁰
- ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ – he recited with *tartil* (*zurattil al-Qur’ān*) and every letter distinctly (*ḥarfan ḥarfan*).⁶¹
- ‘Umar, Hishām ibn Ḥakīm and Ubayy ibn Ka‘b ﷺ – all their readings incorporated the seven *aḥruf*. (Dutton, 2011).

⁵⁷ Tirmidhī, *Ilal al-Kabīr*: 351.

⁵⁸ Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*: 1/361.

⁵⁹ Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*: 7/321-322; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaf* 3/232; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*: 1/517-518.

⁶⁰ ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*: 2/114.

⁶¹ This is reported by a student of Ibn ‘Abbās, Ibn Abī Mulaykah (d. 117). Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaf*: 19/505.

Orality: The Successors and Qur'ānic Recitation

- Mujāhid ibn Jabr (d. 104/722) – he relates that he recited the Qur'ān with 30 completed renditions, reciting every letter distinctly (*ḥarfān ḥarfān*).⁶²
- Muslim ibn Jundab al-Hudhalī (d. 130/748) – the same description that the Prophet ﷺ gave to the recitation of Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ was given to his i.e. whoever wishes to hear the Qur'ān, fresh as it was revealed should listen to the recitation of Muslim ibn Jundab.⁶³
- Umm al-Dardā' ؓ – she loved to recite the Qur'ān as it was revealed.⁶⁴ This is similar to the description given of Ibn Mas'ūd's ؓ recitation by the Prophet ﷺ.
- 'Alqamah ibn Qays (d. 62/682) – he was reciting swiftly (*'ajala*) to Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ who then remarked that he should instead recite with *tartil*.⁶⁵

Most of these descriptions during this period – *tartil*, *tarassul*, *tafsīr*, *baṭī'ah*, *ḥarfān ḥarfān* – emphasize a slow, pacing recitation with due clarity. In contrast to this slow-paced recitation would be a swift recitation, referred to as *hadhramah*, *hadhdh* and *ḥadr*. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ explicitly prevented 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ ؓ from completing a rendition of the entire Qur'ān in less than three days; the reason given was that one who recited it in such a short period was not focused on the meaning (*man qara'a al-Qur'ān fi aqall min thalāth lam yafqah*).⁶⁶ Ibn 'Abbās ؓ

⁶² Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*: 8/66.

⁶³ This description of Muslim's recitation is given by the Successor, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 101/720). See Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/297.

⁶⁴ Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaf*: 15/434.

⁶⁵ Al-Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*: 1/325; Ibn al-Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*: 8/209-210; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaf*: 6/50.

⁶⁶ Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaf*: 5/509-510; Aḥmad, *Musnad*: 11/91-92; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*: 2/236; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*: 5/64.

preferred reciting slowly as opposed to reciting with *hadhramah*.⁶⁷ ‘Umar رضي الله عنه stated that the worst kind of recitation was *hadhramah*.⁶⁸ When a man boasted to Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه about how much he had recited of the Qur’ān the previous night, he became angry and responded that it was a swift recital, like that of poetry (*hadhdhan ka hadhdh al-shi‘r*).⁶⁹ This did not mean that a fast-paced recitation was not allowed though. From amongst the Successors, ‘Aṭā’ ibn Abī Rabāḥ (d. 105/723) and Mujāhid ibn Jabr recited swiftly (*yahudh-dhān al-Qur’ān hadhdhan*).⁷⁰ From the Companions, Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه as well as Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه was reported to have read with *ḥadr* (*yaḥdur al-sūrah*), which was a fast-paced recitation.⁷¹ The reason for wanting to recite at a swift pace was to gain more reward (*takthīr al-ḥasanāt*).

The preferred practice is *tartīl* because it allows for reflection upon what is being read, as per the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم guidance. However, *ḥadr* is also allowed. Nāfi‘ (d. 169/785) stipulates though, that when reciting swiftly, with *ḥadr*, one is still obligated to articulate each letter and vowel with due clarity.⁷² Thus, though a slow-paced recitation is preferred, *ḥadr* is allowed, and was practised upon by the earliest generations, with the prerequisite that no compromise was being made on correct Arabic articulation of the Qur’ān. Abū Muzāḥim al-Khāqānī gives allowance for *ḥadr* in his poem with this very prerequisite⁷³; Dānī simply considered *ḥadr* as being included within *tartīl*, however, to a lesser degree.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Al-Sallām, *Gharīb al-Hadīth*: 5/245.

⁶⁸ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Jāmi‘ li Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa al-Sāmi‘*: 1/262.

⁶⁹ Aḥmad, *Musnad*: 7/78; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaḥ*: 6/53.

⁷⁰ Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaḥ*: 6/52.

⁷¹ ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*: 1/261; Ibn ‘Adī, *al-Kāmil*: 8/689.

⁷² Dānī, *al-Taḥdīd*: 91. See also *al-Nashr*: 1/207.

⁷³ See line 12 of *al-Khāqāniyyah*.

⁷⁴ Dānī, *al-Taḥdīd*: 93.

Foreign Elements Entering Into Islam

It was towards the end of Abū Bakr's ﷺ caliphate (d. 13/634) that Islam spread beyond the borders of the Arabian Peninsula towards Levant and Iraq. During 'Umar's ﷺ caliphate (d. 23/644), it spread even further. It was to be expected that the huge influx of foreign – non-Arab – masses who entered into the fold of Islam struggled to grasp this new language, Arabic. So, the Arabic language, that was considered to be innate to Islam, became a challenge for many. Furthermore, the linguistic purity (*faṣāḥah*) of the native Arabs became tainted due to their exposure to these foreign elements at such a large scale.⁷⁵ With this new context, the guidance given to recite the Qur'ān to non-Arabs was simply to recite the Qur'ān in Arabic or with *faṣāḥah*. Consider that 'Umar ﷺ instructed: “learn to recite the Qur'ān in Arabic” (*ta'allamū qirā'at al-Qur'ān bi al-'Arabiyyah*).⁷⁶ Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ said: “Arabacise the Qur'ān because it is in Arabic” (*a'rib al-Qur'ān fa'innahū 'Arabiyy*).⁷⁷ Ubayy ibn Ka'b ﷺ stated: “learn the Arabic of the Qur'ān as you learn its memorisation” (*ta'allamū 'Arabiyyat al-Qur'ān kamā ta'allamūn ḥifṭḥahū*). These same sentiments were shared by the succeeding generation, like Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who also instructed that the Qur'ān be read in the Arab tongue.⁷⁸ The Successor and eponymous Reader, 'Abd Allah ibn Kathīr, is recorded to have been eloquent in his Qur'ānic recitation (*kāna faṣīḥan bi al-Qur'ān*).⁷⁹

To suggest that what is intended by “*'Arabiyyat al-Qur'ān*” in these statements refers to Arabic syntax would be implausible since Arabic had not been codified during this period yet.⁸⁰ Considering the context in which these statements were made i.e. when

⁷⁵ Mubarrid, *al-Fāḍil*: 4; Dānī, *al-Muḥkam fī Naḡḡ al-Maṣāḥif*: 18-19; Qurṭubī, *al-Muḍaḥḥ*: 61-65.

⁷⁶ Ibn Wahb, *al-Jāmi'*: 3/39.

⁷⁷ Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaf*: 15/432; al-Ṭabarānī: *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*: 9/139.

⁷⁸ Dūlābī, *al-Kunā wa al-Asmā'*: 3/1159; Ibn Wahb, *al-Jāmi'*: 3/43.

⁷⁹ Aḥmad, *al-'Ilal wa Ma'rifaṭ al-Rijāl*: 2/317; Dānī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*: 47.

⁸⁰ Suyūṭī has a chapter in his *Itqān* on “*I'rāb al-Qur'ān*” (1/575), in which he details various grammatical analyses of the Arabic constructs in verses of the Qur'ān. It is implausible to think that this was intended by these

non-Arabs were being introduced to the Arabic language, it would be most likely that the most basic elements of the Arabic language was being intended i.e. that they enunciate the letters and vowels of the Arabic language correctly when reciting. In Kisā'ī's (d. 189/805) book, *Ma Talḥan fih al-Āmmah* (*Those [pronunciations] in which the Laity Err*), these are the exact discussions that one finds; he points out errors made in the *ḥarakāt* (vowels)⁸¹, *iskān* (unvowelling)⁸², changing of letters (*ḥurūf*)⁸³, *madd* in the letters of *madd*⁸⁴, the *tashdīd*⁸⁵, *takhfif* (without a *tashdīd*)⁸⁶, adding letters.⁸⁷ With this context in mind, one can understand why Khalīl (d. circa 170/786) and Sībaway (d. 180/796) dedicated sections in their books to explain the details of Arabic phonology and phonetics, including matters as simple as the names of the letters (*alqāb al-ḥurūf*).⁸⁸

If the Arabic letters or vowels were not being articulated correctly, an error was being committed i.e. *lahn*, which was abhorred. Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه would beat his son if he committed *lahn* – errors in articulating the Arabic letters or vowels – and left his son if he made mistakes in the memorisation of the Qur'ān (*khaṭā*).⁸⁹ Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه stated that he preferred to recite and err (*khaṭā*) than to commit *lahn*.⁹⁰ Ubayy ibn

statements at such an early age in which non-Arabs were being introduced to a new foreign language, Arabic, but before learning its alphabets or vowels they had to contend with grammatical analyses of the verses of the Qur'ān.

Paul Kahle proposes that what is meant by "*i'rāb*" is that previously the Qur'ān was read without *i'rāb*. (Kahle, 1949). Zahniser states that "In spite of Kahle's support, almost no one now holds that a vernacular Qur'an was upgraded at a later time to an inflected formal and literary language". Zahniser, *Language of the Qur'an, The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies* (Ed. Mustafa Shah and Abdel Haleem): 279.

⁸¹ See for example: Kisā'ī, *Ma Talḥan fih al-Āmmah*: 99, 100, 101.

⁸² See for example: Kisā'ī, *Ma Talḥan fih al-Āmmah*: 112.

⁸³ See for example: Kisā'ī, *Ma Talḥan fih al-Āmmah*: 100, 105.

⁸⁴ See for example: Kisā'ī, *Ma Talḥan fih al-Āmmah*: 101, 108, 109, 110, 116.

⁸⁵ See for example: Kisā'ī, *Ma Talḥan fih al-Āmmah*: 102, 112, 113.


⁸⁶ See for example: Kisā'ī, *Ma Talḥan fih al-Āmmah*: 109.

⁸⁷ See for example: Kisā'ī, *Ma Talḥan fih al-Āmmah*: 103.

⁸⁸ Al-Farāhīdī, *Kitāb al-Ayn*: 1/58.

⁸⁹ Bukhārī, *Adab al-Mufrad*: 307; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaf*: 13/165.

⁹⁰ Al-Mustaghfirī, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*: 1/189; al-Hamadhānī, *al-Tamhīd*: 202.

Ka'b  advised that a person learns the *laḥn* of the Qur'ān as he learns its (correct) recitation. There is a plethora of statements that could be quoted encouraging the awareness of *laḥn* in Qur'ānic recitation.⁹¹ It was through the recognition of *laḥn* that reciters grasped correct pronunciation i.e. *faṣāḥah* or *'Arabiyyah*. On the very first page of Kisā'ī's book dedicated to *laḥn*, he writes that the knowledge of these errors is imperative for those who aspire for *faṣāḥah* (*lā budda min ahl al-faṣāḥah min ma'rifatihī*). Ibn al-Munādī (d. 336/948)⁹² is also considered of the earliest writers in the *laḥn* genre.⁹³ Therefore, it is no surprise that the earliest writings on *tajwīd*, including Abū Muzāḥim al-Khāqānī, encouraged *faṣāḥah* and the recognition of *laḥn*.⁹⁴ Up until present-day, *tajwīd* manuals define *laḥn jaliyy* (a clear error) as an error made in the basic pronunciation of the Arabic letters or vowels. Nöldeke writes that the term *tajwīd* later became “the synonym for linguistic purity (*faṣāḥah*)”. (Nöldeke, 2013: 534).

⁹¹ See *Tajwīd al-Lafḥ fi Qirā'at al-Qur'ān*: 164.

⁹² Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/44.

⁹³ 'Alī ibn Ja'far al-Sa'īdī (d. 410) references Ibn al-Munādī in three places in his book on *tajwīd*, *al-Tanbīh 'alā al-Laḥn al-Jalī wa al-Laḥn al-Khafī*: 39, 51, 54.

⁹⁴ Refer to line 21-24 of *al-Khāqāniyyah*.

The Earliest Writings on Qirā'āt

The initial reader or researcher into Islam's earliest writings may find it confusing. For example, *qirā'āt* literature stem from as early as the second half of the first *hijrī* century.⁹⁵ Of the earliest reported literature on *qirā'āt* is that of Yahyā ibn Ya'mar (d. 90/709)⁹⁶ and Abān ibn Taghlib (d. 141/758)⁹⁷, amongst others. Ibn al-Jazarī, attributes books of *qirā'āt* to the eponymous Readers, like Ḥamzah (d. 156)⁹⁸, Ḥafṣ (d. 180)⁹⁹, Kisā'ī (d. 189)¹⁰⁰, amongst others. Yet, Ibn al-Jazarī regards the *Kitāb al-Qirā'āt* of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām (d. 224/839) – a later documentation – to be the first compilation in *qirā'āt*.¹⁰¹ Ibn al-Jazarī also counts Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d. 255/869) as one of the first compilers of *qirā'āt*.¹⁰² How does one reconcile these conflicting opinions of Ibn al-Jazarī?

Schoeler divides writing during this period into two types: *hypomnēmata* and *syngamma*. The former was private written records which served as *aide-memoire* to lectures (*majālis al-'ilm*) or conversations while the latter was literary efforts composed, revised and redacted into a “published” work. (Schoeler, 2006: 46).

“We want to stress that the problem had already been solved in principle by Bergsträsser, Pretzl and Beck...As a starting point we need to remember the following: ‘primarily, we have to do with an oral tradition, which was put into writing only at a later stage.’ This clearly makes the most sense: the Qur'ānic text was read out during lectures, and the teacher explained certain problematic passages. It is perfectly conceivable that, from the very beginning, students took notes of the teachers’

⁹⁵ al-Fadlī, 2009, 40.

⁹⁶ Ibn 'Atīyyah, *al-Muqaddimatān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, (ed. Arthur Jeffery): 275-276.

⁹⁷ al-Nadīm, 1988, 276.

⁹⁸ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/494.

⁹⁹ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/11.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/539.

¹⁰¹ Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*: 1/33-34.

¹⁰² Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/320.

comments. Bergsträsser and Pretzl, however, established that the first written records of this kind [attested in sources]...date from the middle of the 2nd/8th century, the time of the younger canonical Qurʾān readers and that of the older students of the older canonical Qurʾān readers.” (Schoeler, 2006: 78).

Bergsträsser and Pretzl draw from various sources, establishing that writing occurred during their lectures. We often read that the student took notes from the teacher (*lahū ‘an-hu nuskhah*)¹⁰³, the student had a book that he wrote from the teacher (*kitābuhū ‘an-hu/qara’tu ‘alā Nāfi’ qirā’atahū wa katabtuhā fī kitābī hādhā*)¹⁰⁴, the teacher or student wrote down the reading (*kataba lī al-qirā’ah*)¹⁰⁵ etc. These are all examples within the second *hijrī* century.

“From this evidence, Bergsträsser and Pretzl drew the necessary conclusion that these *nusah* and *kutub* were not yet published literary books but purely private records, ‘lecture notes of a kind’ and thus ‘not, strictly speaking, a literature about Qurʾānic readings, but its precursor.’” (Schoeler, 2006: 78).

Many of the works appearing during this period under titles like “*kitāb al-qirā’āt*” (book of Qurʾānic readings), “*kitāb al-ḥurūf*” (differences of Qurʾānic readings)¹⁰⁶, “*ḥurūf ‘Āṣim*” (the differences of ‘Āṣim), “*kitāb ‘Amr ibn al-Ṣabbāh*” (the readings/differences of ‘Amr ibn al-Ṣabbāh)¹⁰⁷, “*al-ikhtilāf bayn Nāfi’ wa Ḥamzah*” (the differences between the readings of Nāfi’ and Ḥamzah)¹⁰⁸ were, according to Bergsträsser and Pretzl, “unpublished works”. Bergsträsser and Pretzl both agree with Ibn al-Jazarī in that the earliest authors of “published works” were Ibn Sallām and

¹⁰³ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/9, 190, 259, 269; 2/168.

¹⁰⁴ Dānī, *Jāmi’ al-Bayān*: 46, 435.

¹⁰⁵ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/11.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/539.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/342.

¹⁰⁸ Dānī, *Jāmi’ al-Bayān*: 46, 393.

Sijistānī. The book of Ibn Sallām “was editorially finished, and thus stable enough that in practice, it could also be disseminated by manual copying. In theory, however, it was still to be read out before its author.” (Schoeler, 2006: 79).

Thus, like with other parallel developments in other Islamic sciences like hadith, philology and so forth, “published books” (*syngramma*) were preceded by private or personal works which served as mnemonic aids (*hypomnēmata*). Noldeke also notes that these earlier works were precursors to the more considerable works which appeared later. (Noldeke, 2013: 545).¹⁰⁹

None of the afore-mentioned books on *qirāʾāt* are extant any longer. The earliest extant book in *qirāʾāt* is *Kitāb al-Sabʿah* of Abū Bakr ibn Mujāhid. Ibn Mujāhid occasionally references the book of *qirāʾāt* of Ibn Sallām.¹¹⁰ *Kitāb al-Sabʿah* also contains snippets of *tajwīd* discussions in it.

When it came to written copies of the Qurʾān itself, they functioned as *hypomnēmata*, in which the text was revised and corrected via *samāʿ*. (Schoeler, 2006: 80). With the compilation of the Qurʾān by ʿUthmān رضي الله عنه however, one notes that authoritative copies of the Qurʾān were sent out to the provincial capitals (*amṣār*), binding people to recite according to its skeletal text of these master copies. A teacher was sent with each copy to provide instruction regarding its oral reading. In this manner, ʿUthmān

¹⁰⁹ This is contrary to Sezgin who does not make a distinction between *hypomnēmata* and *syngramma* and interprets all these works as proper books. A person referencing *al-Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm might do the same. However, if this distinction between the two kinds of writing is not maintained, it does create confusion in interpreting all these works. This distinction was already recognised by nineteenth century scholars such as Sprenger and Goldziher. Part of the confusion is that Arabic sources do not make this distinction either, referring to all written books, whether private, scattered or edited works as “*kitāb*”. “It is therefore necessary to verify what sort of writing hides behind the term *kitāb*. The absence of the distinction between *syngramma* and *hypomnēmata* is a serious flaw which affects the whole of the *Geschichte*. Admittedly, the line between *syngramma* and *hypomnēmata* cannot always be drawn with certainty in Arabic literature...” See Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*: 79, 176.

¹¹⁰ See Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-Sabʿah*: 396; Dānī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān*: 400, 555.

ﷺ “published” the *maṣāḥif*, it now becoming *syngramma*. (Schoeler, 2006: 76). Personal *maṣāḥif* which differed with that of ‘Uthmān’s ﷺ were either burned, torn, erased (as one would find in existing palimpsests) or amended according to the copy sent by ‘Uthmān ﷺ. (A‘zami, 2003: 96-97).

Tajwīd – Early Codification

Nelson states that “*Tajwīd* is the system of rules regulating the correct oral rendering of the Qur’an.” The first compilation dedicated to this “oral rendering of the Qur’an” is considered to be *al-Khāqāniyyah* of Abū Muzāḥim al-Khāqānī (d. 325/937).¹¹¹ The poem does not hold many of the later technical terminologies and its expressions represent terms utilised during that early period. It holds terms like “*rattil*”, “*ḥadr*”, “*īrāb*”, “*faṣāḥah*” and “*lahn*”. *Al-Khāqāniyyah* also conceptualizes a few elements of *talaqqī* discussed before, like the transmission of the Qur’an, a Qur’ānic reading conforming to the ‘Uthmānic orthography, *waqf* and *qirā’āt*. Therefore, Nöldeke noted that “the entire attitude of the poem is clear evidence that the teaching of the Koranic recitation is derived from the soil of the cult of reciters.” (Nöldeke, 2013: 568). However, it should be remembered that though writings on *tajwīd* codified the sounds of the Qur’an (Nelson: 14), it did not displace the orality of the Qur’an.

“The science of *tajwīd* is itself transmitted orally, the student imitating and practicing the sounds produced by the teacher. Since many of the rules for pronunciation are uniquely applied to the Qur’an and are not applicable to the literary language or to the local dialect, they are incomprehensible without oral example. This is why the many texts which set out the rules of *tajwīd* are considered supplementary to the oral transmission. The written rules function only as an aid to help the

¹¹¹ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/321.

student identify and remember what he or she has heard.” (Nelson, 2001: 15).

In every generation there were those who were recognised as experts in Qur’ānic recitation. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ himself announced the expert reciters amongst his Companions when he remarked that “learn to recite the Qur’ān¹¹² from four: ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd, Sālim, Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal and Ubayy ibn Ka‘b” ﷺ.¹¹³ The Prophet ﷺ referred to these experts as the class of reciters (*qurrā*).¹¹⁴ The second generation Companions who read to those who read directly to the Prophet ﷺ included Abū Hurayrah, Ibn ‘Abbās, Mughīrah ibn Abī Shihāb al-Makhzūmī, amongst others ﷺ. It was via them that the various Qur’ānic readings filtered to the eponymous Readers. Dānī (d. 444/1052) lists numerous Qur’ānic experts in various categories: experts from amongst the Companions, experts in Medina, Shām, Iraq, the

¹¹² Though the most common known wording of this hadith mentions “*khudhū*” (grasp), other transmissions of this hadith also have “*istaqri’ū*” and “*iqra’ū*” (learn it’s recitation). See *Tajwīd al-Lafīḥ fi Qirā’at al-Qur’ān*: 115-116.

¹¹³ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5/27, 28, 36.

Though only four names are mentioned, it does not preclude others who were regarded as experts. Ibn Hajar discusses the various opinions regarding only four names being mentioned and offers his concluding view: all the names mentioned in these transmissions are from the tribe of Aws and the transmitter, Anas ibn Mālik ﷺ, made this statement in context of the rivalry that existed between the Aws and Khazraj tribes. For details see Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī*: 9/51.

¹¹⁴ In the military expedition of Bi’r Ma’ūnah, 70 Companions were killed who were titled “*qurrā*”. Though they were specialists in Qur’ānic recitation, they were not necessarily reliable hadith transmitters. Al-Meneese explains:

“Bazzī and Ḥafṣ were both weak by standards of ḥadīth scholars, as were many other Qur’ān transmitters, because they were not ḥadīth specialists. But at the same time, scholars were unanimous in accepting their expertise in Qur’ānic reading. A Qur’ānic reader could make mistakes in transmitting ḥadīth, reporting them by meaning and dropping some words due to not being a specialist in this field, yet still retain mastery and expertise in the Qur’ān and its variants. The converse is also true. Some senior ḥadīth experts were known to be weak in their preserving of the Qur’ān and its readings, making mistakes. Their expertise in ḥadīth did not necessarily translate into expertise in Qur’ān. At the same time, there were also individuals that master both Qur’ān and ḥadīth.” (al-Meneese, 2021: 73).

One may therefore conclude that the Qur’ānic readings and their experts are not evaluated by the standards of hadith and their specialists.

Seven eponymous Readers, their transmitters and experts of *adā'*.¹¹⁵ These Qur'anic experts devoted their lives to studying, mastering and propagating the oral rendering of the Qur'ān.

One may be inclined to think that the codification of the Qur'anic sounds started relatively late, considering that Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385) lists numerous categories of Qur'anic sciences in his *Fihrist (Catalogue)*, but mentions no books under a science named “*tajwīd*”.¹¹⁶ However, there are numerous disciplines and sciences that recorded various elements and aspects of the sounds of the Qur'ān. This is probably most apparent in the books of *qirā'āt* and those works that documented facets of the Arabic language. One of the earliest may be the treatise of Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī (d. 69/688) on Arabic grammar, in which he devised diacritical markings for the “sounding” of the letters;

“a single dot placed after, on, or below the letter constituted a *ḍamma*, *fatḥa* or *kasra*, respectively. Similarly two dots placed after, on, or below the letter indicated *ḍamma tanween* (double *ḍamma*), *fatḥa tanween* or *kasra tanween*, respectively.”¹¹⁷ (A'zami, 2003: 139-140).

Consider also the following titles preceding Abū Muzāḥim's *Khāqāniyyah*:

- 'Alī ibn Ḥamzah al-Kisā'ī (d. 189) – *Ma Talḥan fih al-Āmmah (Those [pronunciations] in which the Laity Err)*.
- Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī (d. 202) – *Kitāb al-Maqṣūr wa al-Mamdūd (The Book on Shortening and Lengthening [of sounds])* and a book on diacritics, *Kitāb al-Naqṭ wa al-Shakl*.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Dānī, *al-Urjūzat al-Mutanabbihah*: 96-143.

¹¹⁶ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*: 33.

¹¹⁷ See also Dānī, *al-Muḥkam*: 6-7.

¹¹⁸ See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*: 38; Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'āt fi Ṭabaqāt al-Lughawiyyīn was al-Nuḥāt*: 2/285.

- Abū ‘Ubayd Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 224/839) – similar to Yazīdī, he wrote a book on *madd and qaṣr*, *Kitāb al-Maqṣūr wa al-Mamdūd*.¹¹⁹
- ‘Abd Allah ibn Dhakwān (d. 242), one of the eponymous Qur’ān transmitters – he wrote *Mā Yajib ‘alā Qārī’ al-Qur’ān ‘inda Ḥarakat Lisānihī* (*That which is Compulsory upon the Reciter of the Qur’ān During Recitation*).¹²⁰
- Abū Ḥātim Sijistānī (d. 255/869) wrote books titled *Kitāb al-Faṣāḥah* (*The Book on Eloquence*), *Kitāb Ma yalḥan fī-hi al-‘āmmah* (*Those [pronunciations] in which the Laity Err*), *Kitāb al-Maqṣūr wa al-Mamdūd* (*The Book on Shortening and Lengthening [of sounds]*), *Kitāb al-Hijā’* (*The Book on the Arabic Alphabet*) and *Kitāb al-Idghām* (*The Assimilation of Letters*).¹²¹
- Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Naḥḥās (d. after 280) – he wrote *Kitāb al-Lafḥ* (*The Book on Pronunciation*) and *Kitāb al-Adā’* (*The Book on the Execution [of sounds]*). Dānī sometimes refers to this book as *Kitāb al-Lafḥ* and at times as *Kitāb al-Adā’*.¹²² It seems to be one and the same book because the discussions quoted by Dānī from this work are similar, revolving around the lengthening (*madd*) and shortening (*qaṣr*) of sounds, *tafkhīm* and *tarqīq*, amongst other topics generally found in *tajwīd* currently.
- Muṭarrif ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d. ?)¹²³ – he wrote a book on “*adā’*” (correct execution).¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*: 78.

¹²⁰ See Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/405. Abū al-Karam Mubārak (d. 550) and Sakhāwī (d. 643) both quote Ibn Dhakwān on his definition on *tajwīd*, it most likely is from this very title. See Mubārak, *al-Mibāḥ*: 1/506; Sakhāwī, *Jamāl al-Qurrā’*: 2/526.

¹²¹ See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*: 64.

¹²² See Dānī, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*: 200, 207, 354, 438, 441, 450, 706.

¹²³ Ibn al-Jazarī does not give his date of demise, but mentions that he read to the student of Warsh, Yūnus ibn ‘Abd al-A‘lā (d. 264). See Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/300, 406.

¹²⁴ See Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/300.

Titles like *Kitāb al-Naqṭ* of Khalīl (d. 170)¹²⁵, *Kitāb al-Aṣwāt* by Muḥammad ibn Mustanīr Quṭrub (d. 206), *Kitāb al-Aṣwāt* by ‘Abd al-Malik al-Aṣma‘ī (d. 217), *Kitāb al-Aṣwāt* by Abū al-Ḥasan Sa‘īd al-Akhfash (d. 221) may also be included; all discussing various aspects and elements of what was later included into the science of *tajwīd*.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*: 38.

¹²⁶ Al-Ḥamad lists the following titles:

- 1) *Kitāb al-Lughah wa Makhārij al-Ḥurūf wa Uṣūl al-Nahw* by Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan ibn Dāwūd al-Naqqād (d. before 350).
- 2) *Kitāb al-Aṣwāt* by Muḥammad ibn Mustanīr Quṭrub (d. 206).
- 3) *Kitāb al-Aṣwāt* by ‘Abd al-Malik al-Aṣma‘ī (d. 217).
- 4) *Kitāb al-Aṣwāt* by Abū al-Ḥasan Sa‘īd al-Akhfash (d. 221).
- 5) *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* by ‘Alī ibn Ḥamzah al-Kisā‘ī (d. 189).
- 6) *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* by Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Mubarrid (d. 285).
- 7) *Kitāb al-Nuṭq* by Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Aṣfahānī.
- 8) *Kitāb al-Nuṭq* by Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd Allah ibn Muḥammad al-Azdī.

See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*: 52, 55, 59, 66, 81, 85; al-Ḥamad, *Abḥāth fi ‘Ilm al-Tajwīd*: 12-13.

Tajwīd's Inextricable Link to Qirā'āt

Tajwīd is inextricably linked to the *qirā'āt*. All the aforementioned titles on *qirā'āt* would also discuss aspects of *tajwīd*. Matters pertaining to *tajwīd* are clearly discussed in *Kitāb al-Sab'ah* of Ibn Mujāhid¹²⁷ which is a book devoted to *qirā'āt*, while the Seven eponymous Readers are mentioned by the earliest writings dedicated to *tajwīd*; the poems of Abū Muzāḥim, Malaṭī (d. 377/987) and Lālakā'ī (d. after 386/996).

Tajwīd, as we know it now, deals with rules for Qur'ānic recitation and is generally applied by all Seven eponymous Readers. Gade writes that “the term *qirā'āt* usually denotes the accepted variant readings of the Qur'ān...they are minor differences in the vocalization of the same 'Uthmānic text, and all deploy the same system of guidelines for recitation, *tajwīd*.” (Gade, 2006: 4/372). Thus, “the formal discipline of reciting/reading (*ilm al-qirā'ah*) encompasses both study of the variant readings (*qirā'āt*) of the written codex or *muṣḥaf* and also the methods and rules of oral recitation (cantillation), or *tajwīd*.” (William A. Graham, 2006: 116).

Conclusively, “the study of the *qirā'āt* is, as indicated, inextricable from the science or art of *tajwīd*” (William A. Graham, 2006: 118) or it could be said that *tajwīd* forms an integral element in the *qirā'āt*. (Leemhuis, 2003).

¹²⁷ In his introduction he mentions *lahn* in recitation; a topic commonly discussed in *tajwīd*. Furthermore, matters pertaining to pronunciation and *tajwīd*, like *iṭbāq*, *hams*, *ṣafīr*, *isti'lā'* etc., are also discussed. See *Kitāb al-Sab'ah*: 45, 46, 105, 106.

Likewise, matters of *tajwīd* are also discussed in numerous places in *al-Irshād* of 'Abd al-Mun'im ibn Ghalbūn (d. 389) and *al-Ghāyah* of Ibn Mihrān (d. 381). Note that they were both in the same century as Ibn Mujāhid and Abū Muzāḥim.

Tajwīd is Interconnected with Arabic

Tajwīd is also linked to the Arabic language since the Qurʾān is in Arabic (Gilliot & Larcher, 2003: 4/109). There are numerous verses of the Qurʾān which mention the Qurʾān being in Arabic e.g. “We revealed it as an Arabic recital” (*Qurʾān ʿArabiyyan*) in Sūrah Yūsuf: 2, Sūrah Ṭāhā: 113, Sūrat al-Shūrā: 7, Sūrat al-Zukhruf: 3, amongst other verses. Discussions pertaining to Arabic phonology and phonetics overlap and are shared between *tajwīd* and the earliest writers of Arabic. Books on the Arabic language preceded writings in *tajwīd*. Therefore, discussions that would later be found in books of *tajwīd*, appeared earlier in books dedicated to Arabic, like *Kitāb al-ʿAyn* of Khalīl and *al-Kitāb* of Sībaway.¹²⁸ Both Khalīl and Sībaway discuss the *makhārij* (articulation points) and *ṣifāt* (attributes) of the Arabic letters, which appear as chapter headings in current books of *tajwīd*.

For example, when discussing the assimilation of sounds in the Arabic language, Sībaway mentions that the *nūn* may be assimilated into the *wāw* or the *yāʾ*, with nasalization or without nasalization (Sībaway, 1988: 4/453). Within the system of the Seven eponymous Qurʾān Readings, assimilation of the *nūn* into the *wāw* or *yāʾ* without nasalization is attributed to Khalaf while the remaining eponymous Readers will transmit assimilation with nasalization. In *tajwīd*, the articulation points and attributes of the *nūn*, the *wāw* and the *yāʾ* would be discussed, along with the phonological details of how the sounds should be assimilated when reciting the Qurʾān. Thus, though these sciences are all discussing the same matter, Sībaway considers its application in the Arabic language, the science of *Qirāʾāt* looks at who amongst the Readers this application would be attributed to, while *tajwīd* details the aspects of its pronunciation when reciting the Qurʾān.

¹²⁸ Al-Farāhīdī, *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*: 1/51-58; Sībaway, *al-Kitāb*: 4/431-436.

Other noteworthy contributors from grammarians and philologists to aspects of Arabic phonology and phonetics are Sayrafi (d. 368/979) in his commentary of Sībaway's *Kitāb* and Ibn Jinnī (d. 392/1002) in *Sirr Sinā'at al-I'rāb*.

In conclusion, the earliest appearances of *tajwīd*-related discussions appeared predominantly in books of *qirā'āt* and Arabic. As correct Qur'ānic recitation is grasped via oral interaction, Sībaway writes regarding the letters of the Arabic alphabet that "they can only be realized orally."¹²⁹ When presenting the different Arabic letters or sounds, Sībaway further notes those which are allowed in Qur'ānic recitation and those which are not permitted in Qur'ānic recitation (*lā tastaḥsin fī qirā'at al-Qur'ān*).¹³⁰

To a lesser degree, early *tajwīd*-related discussions are also scattered between writings on *lahn*, *faṣāḥah*, *adā'*, amongst other works. Despite the aforementioned book-titles and writings that discussed various aspects of the Qur'ān's orality, *al-Khāqāniyyah* is recognised as the first book in the science of *tajwīd*; a book dedicated to the codification of the Qur'ān's oral rendition. Soon after Abū Muzāḥim's composition, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Malaṭī (d. 377/987) compiles a poem of 59 lines on Qur'ānic recitation, a pastiche on *al-Khāqāniyyah*; with its exact meter and rhyme, paying homage to *al-Khāqāniyyah*.¹³¹ Likewise, in the same century, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-ʿIjlī al-Lālakāʾī¹³² (d. after 386/996) also compiles a poem on Qur'ānic recitation based on the same meter and rhyme of *al-Khāqāniyyah*. Lālakāʾī explicitly

¹²⁹ Sībaway, *al-Kitāb*: 4/432.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ṭalaʿat mentions another work titled *Makhārij al-Ḥurūf wa Ṣifātihā* of Ibn Abī al-Aṣḡagh al-Ḥarrānī (d. 339) that was written before Malaṭī's poem, edited by Muḥammad Yaʿqūb Turkistānī in 1991. (Ṭalaʿat, 1998: 154). However, I could not find this book of Ḥarrānī mentioned in any of the bibliographical works and the only book edited by Turkistānī with the name *Makhārij al-Ḥurūf wa Ṣifātihā* in 1991 was authored by Abu al-Aṣḡagh al-Ishbīlī, better known as Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (d. after 560).

¹³² Lālakāʾī was a student of Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Shadhāʾī, who was a student of the famous Ibn Mujāhid and Abū Muzāḥim. See al-Hamad, *The Science of Tajwīd before al-Riʿāyah and al-Taḥdīd*, Imam Shāṭibi Institute of Qur'ānic Sciences: 173; Ghāyat al-Nihāyah: 2/85-86.

mentions his reliance on Abū Muzāḥim as well as quoting a hemistich verbatim from *al-Khāqāniyyah*.¹³³

This influence of *al-Khāqāniyyah* extends into the later centuries, like the famous *Qaṣīdat al-Ḥuṣriyyah* of ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-Ghanī (d. 488/1095) in the succeeding century. The poem of Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf Khurāsānī (d. end of 400s) may also be included as a pastiche of *al-Khāqāniyyah*.¹³⁴ Though the *Nūniyyah* of Sakhāwī pays homage to *al-Khāqāniyyah*, it is not considered a pastiche due to the rhyme and meter not agreeing. This influence continues up to the present-day when Sheikh ‘Abd Allah ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Ubayd compiled his pastiche on *al-Khāqāniyyah*, *al-Khulāṣah fī ‘Ilm al-Tajwīd*.

¹³³ See line 108 of Lālakā’ī’s poem. Al-‘Ubayd, *al-Kulāṣah fī al-Tajwīd*: 151.

¹³⁴ See Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/286-287.

The Usage of the term “Tajwīd”

The term “*tajwīd*” was not used to describe Qur’ānic recitation, nor as reference to a particular science during the first *hijrī* century. This section looks at the earliest appearance of the term “*tajwīd*”, employing its literal and technical meanings.

The First Century

‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه said: “Apply “*tajwīd*” in the Qur’ān (*jawwidū al-Qur’ān*) and adorn it with the best of voices”.¹³⁵ ‘Alī رضي الله عنه explains the meaning of *tartīl* as “excellence in the (application of the) letters and knowledge of the pauses”. (*tajwīd al-hurūf wa ma‘rifat al-wuqūf*).¹³⁶

Second Century

In the second century, the word *tajwīd*, in its literal sense, is used by one of the eponymous Readers, Ḥamzah (d. 156/773), when he relates that “we learned good recitation (*jawdat al-qirā’ah*) by Ibn Abī Laylā”.¹³⁷ Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī (d. 131/749) also used it when he described the recitation of Miqsam ibn Bujrah (d. 101/720): “he did not recite well (*lam yakun jayyid al-qirā’ah*)”.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*. 1/210.

The editors of *al-Nashr*, Dr Ayman Rushdī Suwayd and Dr Sālim Jaknī Shinqīṭī, both acknowledge other versions of this narration from ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd, appearing as “*jarrid al-Qur’ān*” i.e. remove anything additional, like diacritical markings, from the Qur’ānic text. This version seems to appear in most of the sources (*al-Nashr*, ed. Shinqīṭī: 3/556; ed. Suwayd: 1/695). Suwayd asks a pertinent question as to whether one version of this narration could be considered a letter-distortion (*taṣhīf*) of the other, considering that there is much resemblance between a *wāw* and a *rā’* (جودوا and جردوا)? The answer that both him and Shinqīṭī presents is that the context will determine the word choice. This means that “*jawwidū*” is in context with what follows i.e. reciting the Qur’ān in a beautiful voice. While in the version of “*jarridū*” the rest of the narration relates that one should not mix with the Qur’ān that which is not from it. See al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al-Maṣāḥif*: 10. Additionally, in all the manuscript copies of *al-Nashr*, it appears as *jawwidū*.

¹³⁶ Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*. 1/209.

¹³⁷ Dhahabī, *Ma‘rifat al-Qurrā’ al-Kibār*: 1/113; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/165.

¹³⁸ Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī Asmā’ al-Rijāl*: 28/463.

Third Century

Muḥammad ibn Saḥnūn (d. 265/879) describes that excellence in recitation (*tajwīd al-qirā'ah*) are of the concerns of the *qurrā'*.¹³⁹ Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-A'lā (d. 264/878) records that Warsh (d. 193/809) was excellent in his recitation (*jayyid al-qirā'ah*).¹⁴⁰

One notes that the usage of the term *tajwīd* during this early period was used to describe proficient recitation of the Qur'ān, as opposed to poor recitation.¹⁴¹

Fourth Century

The earliest extant writings dedicated to proto-*tajwīd* and *qirā'āt* appear in this century. Abū Bakr ibn Mujāhid (d. 324/936) compiles his book, *al-Sab'ah*, in *qirā'āt* and Abū Muzāḥim Khāqānī his poem on "*ḥusn al-adā'*", excellence in recitation. The term *tajwīd* does not appear in either of them. However, a student of both Ibn Mujāhid and Abū Muzāḥim, Abū Bakr al-Shadhā'ī (d. 373/983), quotes Ibn Mujāhid in relating that giving the letters their rights is considered as being from "excellence in their pronunciation" (*tajwīd lafḥihā*).¹⁴² Subsequently, students of Shadhā'ī start using the term *tajwīd* in its technical sense.

In the same century Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Malaṭī (d. 377/987) compiles a poem of 59 lines on Qur'ānic recitation, a pastiche based on *al-Khāqāniyyah*; with its exact meter and rhyme, paying homage to *al-Khāqāniyyah*. Likewise, in the same century, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-'Ijlī al-Lālakā'ī¹⁴³ (d. after 386/996) also compiles a poem on Qur'ānic recitation based on the same meter and rhyme of *al-Khāqāniyyah*.

¹³⁹ Saḥnūn, *Kitāb al-Ajwibah*: 354.

¹⁴⁰ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/503.

¹⁴¹ Ibn al-Jazarī documents that "*jawdah*" is the opposite of that which is poor or bad. See *al-Nashr*: 1/210.

¹⁴² The earliest mention of this quote is by Dānī in two different works of his, *al-Taḥdīd fī al-Itqān wa al-Tajwīd*: 116; *Sharḥ al-Khāqāniyyah*: 2/229.

¹⁴³ Lālakā'ī was a student of Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Shadhā'ī, who was a student of the famous Ibn Mujāhid and Abū Muzāḥim. See al-Hamad, *The Science of Tajwīd before al-Ri'āyah and al-Taḥdīd*, Imam Shāṭibi Institute of Qur'ānic Sciences: 173; *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/85-86.

Lālakāʾī explicitly mentions his reliance on Abū Muzāḥim as well as quoting a hemistich verbatim from *al-Khāqāniyyah*.¹⁴⁴ Though the term “*tajwīd*” is not found in *al-Khāqāniyyah*, it is used in its literal sense in the compositions of both Malaṭī and Lālakāʾī in their poems during the very century in which *al-Khāqāniyyah* was compiled.¹⁴⁵ Brockelmann ascribes a work named *Tuḥfat al-Anām fī al-Tajwīd* to Abū Bakr ibn Mihrān (d. 381/991). (Brockelmann, 1983: 4/5-6). If this ascription of Brockelmann is correct, then the first usage of the term *tajwīd* in its technical sense may be from this century.

Fifth Century

The earliest usage of *tajwīd* in this century is by ‘Alī ibn Ja‘far al-Sa‘īdī (d. 410/1019), a student of Shadhāʾī; he mentions the word *tajwīd* as a distinctive science at the start of his treatise on errors. This work of Sa‘īdī is considered as one of the earliest written works dedicated to the science of *tajwīd*, subsequent to the poems of Khāqānī, Malaṭī and Lālakāʾī.¹⁴⁶ Sa‘īdī mentions that the reason for him penning this work is because he was requested to write something on excellence of articulation in the Qur’ān (*tajwīd al-lafḥ bi al-Qur’ān*).¹⁴⁷

A student of Lālakāʾī, Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-‘Umānī (d. ?)¹⁴⁸, presents an extensive chapter on *tajwīd* in his work, *al-Awsaṭ*, which he compiled in 413/1022.¹⁴⁹ Though *al-Awsaṭ*

¹⁴⁴ See line 108 of Lālakāʾī’s poem. Al-‘Ubayd, *al-Kulāṣah fī al-Tajwīd*: 151.

¹⁴⁵ See line 25 of Malaṭī’s poem and line 48 of Lālakāʾī’s poem. Al-‘Ubayd, *al-Kulāṣah fī al-Tajwīd*: 128, 142.

¹⁴⁶ Al-Ḥamad, *Abḥāth fī ‘Ilm al-Tajwīd*: 34-37.

¹⁴⁷ See al-Sa‘īdī, *al-Tanbīh ‘alā al-Laḥn al-Jalī wa al-Laḥn al-Khafī*: 20.

¹⁴⁸ Information on ‘Umānī is sparse; no dates of birth or death of ‘Umānī are given by Ibn al-Jazarī. Ibn al-Jazarī explicitly mentions that he is not aware of who ‘Umānī read to, or who read to him. (Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/223). Ibn al-Jazarī relates that ‘Umānī settled in Egypt soon after the 500’s. This date seems inaccurate because ‘Umānī mentions that he read to Lālakāʾī in Basra in the year 392 (‘Umānī, *al-Awsaṭ*: 61-62), which would have made him more than 100 years old when he settled in Egypt. Ḥājī Khalīfah suggests that he died circa 400 (*Kashf al-Ṭhunūn*: 2/1654), which is also improbable since he authored *al-Awsaṭ* in 413. (*Kitāb al-Awsaṭ*: 62). See al-Ḥamad, *The Science of Tajwīd before al-Ri‘āyah and al-Taḥdīd from Kitāb al-Awsaṭ*, Imam Shāṭibi Institute of Qur’ānic Sciences: 176.

¹⁴⁹ Al-‘Umānī, *Kitāb al-Awsaṭ*: 62.

is a book dedicated to the science of *qirāʾāt*, ‘Umānī dedicates an exclusive chapter titled “the chapter on *tajwīd*” (*bāb fi al-tajwīd*). This is distinct from the previously mentioned usages of the term *tajwīd* in that it is the first written definition of *tajwīd*. This definition of ‘Umānī is repeated by subsequent books of the later generations like Dānī¹⁵⁰, Hudhalī¹⁵¹, al-Mubārak Shahrāzūrī¹⁵² and even Ibn al-Jazarī.¹⁵³ Aḥmad ibn Abī ‘Umar al-Andarābī (died after 500/1107) attributes ‘Umānī’s definition of *tajwīd*, verbatim, to al-Khuzāʿī (d. 408/1017).¹⁵⁴

It should be noted that Abū al-Ḥaḍl al-Khuzāʿī (d. 408/1017) and al-Saʿīdī (d. 410/1019) – who used the term *tajwīd* in its technical sense in their writings – were students of Shadhāʿī, who was a student of Ibn Mujāhid. This suggests that the earliest usage of “*tajwīd*” in its technical sense was by the very person who penned the earliest extant book on *qirāʾāt*, Ibn Mujāhid. Subsequently, “*tajwīd*” is extensively used in its technical sense by Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 437/1046) in his *Riʿāyah fi Tajwīd al-Qirāʾah* which he completed in 420/1029 and by al-Dānī (d. 444/1052) in his *al-Taḥdīd fi al-Itqān wa al-Tajwīd*. *Al-Riʿāyah* seems to precede Dānī’s writing because Makkī mentions that the idea of him writing *al-Riʿāyah* came to him in 390 already, but it took him 30 years to complete. He also explicitly mentions that he has not seen anyone preceding him writing the likes of his work, *al-Riʿāyah*.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ *Al-Taḥdīd*: 68.

¹⁵¹ Hudhalī, *al-Kāmil*: 93.

¹⁵² Mubārak, *al-Miṣbāḥ*: 1/498.

¹⁵³ *Al-Nashr*: 1/212.

¹⁵⁴ *Tajwīd al-Lafḥ fi al-Qurʾān al-Karīm*: 33; *al-Īdāḥ fi al-Qirāʾāt* of Andarābī (ed. Ghanī, 2002): 344.

This definition is not mentioned by Khuzāʿī in his book, *al-Muntahā*. However, Khuzāʿī is known to have authored many books (see the introduction to *al-Muntahā*, edited by Rabbānī: 1/106); he also wrote *Tah-dhib al-Adāʾ* (*Refining Execution* [in recitation]) and *al-Wāḍiḥ* (*The Evident*). See Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 2/109. Perhaps he documented this definition in one of his other works. If this attribution of Andarābī is correct, it would place the earliest definition of *tajwīd* to an antecedent prior to *al-Awsaṭ* by at least five years because Khuzāʿī died in 408/1017 while *al-Awsaṭ* was compiled in 413/1022. It would also mean that this definition of *tajwīd* is not that of ‘Umānī’s, but perhaps that of Khuzāʿī’s. Perhaps both Khuzāʿī and ‘Umānī got this definition from a common link or it was already commonplace amongst the fraternity of reciters during this early period.

¹⁵⁵ Makkī, *al-Riʿāyah*: 52.

In conclusion, the term “*tajwīd*” in its general sense is found in quotations which date back to as early as the second and third *hijrī* centuries. In the fourth century, Malaṭī and Lālakāṭī used it in their writings; again, in its general sense. A student of Lālakāṭī, ‘Umānī, documents the earliest written definition in his work, *al-Awsaṭ*, in the fifth century. Andarābī attributes this very definition of ‘Umānī, verbatim, to Khuḏā‘ī, thus making it antecedent to ‘Umānī. It seems that the earliest usage of the term in its technical sense was by Ibn Mujāhid himself, as conveyed by his student, Shadhā‘ī. This is not improbable because ‘Umānī has a heading in his book, *al-Awsaṭ*, “the *makhārij* of the letters based on the sequence mentioned by Ibn Mujāhid”. This suggests that matters of *tajwīd* were discussed by Ibn Mujāhid in some of his written works, bearing in mind that many of Ibn Mujāhid’s works are no longer extant.¹⁵⁶ Considering the aforementioned quotation of Saḥnūn (d. 265/879) in the third century, that *tajwīd al-qirā’ah* are of the concerns of the *qurrā’*, it could be argued that the term “*tajwīd*” was commonplace, or used in small circles, amongst the fraternity of reciters during the third century already. Ibn Mujāhid’s usage of the term would therefore not be considered as extraordinary at all. If Brockelmann’s ascription of *Tuḥfat al-Anām fi al-Tajwīd* to Ibn Mihrān is correct¹⁵⁷, then it supports the argument that the word *tajwīd* was common during Ibn Mujāhid’s era. Subsequently, Makkī and Dānī offer extensive detail in their various works dedicated to the science of *tajwīd* which is used as a basis for all later compilations on the science.

¹⁵⁶ In *Jāmi’ al-Bayān*, Dānī refers to Ibn Mujāhid’s *Jāmi’* many times: 273, 287, 426, 530, 559, etc. This work is also referred to as *Kitāb al-Qirā’āt al-Kabīr*. He also wrote a number of smaller works on individual Readings. See Ḥamdān: *Muḥjam Muṣannafāt ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*: 86-91. Furthermore, on al-Sayrafī’s commentary of Sibaway’s *Kitāb*, he quotes Ibn Mujāhid on matters of *tajwīd*, like *nūn sākinah* by the letters of the throat, the *idghām* of the *qurrā’*, amongst other matters. His quotes are at times direct from Ibn Mujāhid, considering that Sayrafī was a student of his. See *Tajwīd al-Lafḥ fi al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*: 416.

¹⁵⁷ I have not found Brockelmann’s attribution of this *tajwīd* book to Ibn Mihrān corroborated by other sources.

A Synopsis of the Early Developments in Tajwīd

The oral nature of the Qurʾān required that the Qurʾān be grasped via *talaqqī* (oral reception). This practice stemmed from the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, was maintained by his Companions, and inspired the statement “recitation is methodology which is followed; the latter grasps it from the former” (*al-qirāʾah sunnat muttabaʾah yaʾkhudhu al-ākhir ʿan al-awwal*).¹⁵⁸ The codification of these Qurʾānic sounds is supplementary to *talaqqī*.

During the Prophetic period, simple terms like *tartīl*, *tarassul*, *tafsīr*, and so on, are used to describe recitation. The technical terms that are currently found in *tajwīd* manuals were not found. The Companions encouraged this slow-paced and clear recitation as opposed to a swift and unclear – *hadhramah* – recitation. With foreign elements (*ʿujmah/ʿajam*) entering into Islam, good recitation was described as being in “*ʿarabiyyah*” and “*faṣāḥah*” while errors in recitation were referred to as “*lahn*”. Due to the spread of *lahn*, generally as well as in Qurʾānic recitation, it prompted a genre of writing devoted to *lahn*. The *ʿajam* also instigated the first writings on basic rules of Arabic for non-Arabs, as well as Arabs who were affected by the *ʿajam*. Duʿalī’s treatise on Arabic within the first *hijrī* century included guidance for the vowelisation of the Qurʾānic text. These writings in Arabic later resulted in the compilation of Khalīl’s lexicon, *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, as well as Sibaway’s *al-Kitāb*, which was considered as the “Qurʾān on grammar”.¹⁵⁹ During the period of the eponymous Readers, it was not uncommon for them to have written notes (*nusakh*) or books which detailed aspects of Qurʾānic recitation. Writings on *qirāʾāt* – whether *hypomnēmata* or *syngramma* – also contained matters pertaining to what would later become the science of *tajwīd*, since they are inextricably linked. Smaller works were dedicated to specific aspects of recitation, like Kisāʾī’s book on *lahn* or Yazīdī’s work on *madd* and *qaṣr*.

¹⁵⁸ Ibn Mujāhid mentions a number of parallel statements which are echoed by many, including Sibaway in *al-Kitāb*. See Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sabʿah*: 51, Sibaway, *al-Kitāb*: 1/74.

¹⁵⁹ Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*: 50.

The eponymous Rāwī, Ibn Dhakwān's (d. 242/856) description of good recitation during this early period mentions:

- Recitation with *tartīl*, each letter distinct from the other (*taqṭīʿ al-ḥurūf*).
- Having knowledge of the articulation points (*makhārij al-ḥurūf*).
- Recitation that is within measure i.e. without exaggeration or deficiencies.
- Correct application of *iṭh-hār* of *nūn sākinah* by the letters of the throat, *tarqīq*, *idghām* and *iṭh-hār*.
- Correct application of *tafkhīm*, the *tashdīd* and the *hamzah* without exaggeration.

Similarly, the eponymous Reader, 'Āṣim's (d. 127/745) recitation was described as being with "hamz" and "madd", Nāfi' (d. 167/784) applied "tamkīn" in the letters of *madd* or he applied "maddan wasaṭan", a recitation with "taḥqīq" or without "tashdīd".¹⁶⁰

Al-Khāqāniyyah of Abū Muzāḥim al-Khāqānī is considered the earliest extant book dedicated to capturing the orality of the Qur'ān as outlined in the science of *tajwīd*. Soon afterwards Muḥammad Malaṭī (d. 377/987) compiled a pastiche of 59 lines on *al-Khāqāniyyah*.¹⁶¹ In the same century, Muḥammad Lālakā'ī (d. after 386/996) also compiled a pastiche on *al-Khāqāniyyah*. Besides the poems written in this century, Ibn al-Munādī (d. 336/948) compiled a work on *laḥn*, which is referenced by Abū 'Alī al-Bannā' (d. 471/1078) in his work on *laḥn*, *Bayān al-'Uyūb al-latī Yajib an*

¹⁶⁰ Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab'ah*: 134-135.

¹⁶¹ Ṭalā'at mentions another work titled *Makhārij al-Ḥurūf wa Ṣifātihā* of Ibn Abī al-Aṣḥagh al-Ḥarrānī (d. 339) that was written before Malaṭī's poem, edited by Muḥammad Ya'qūb Turkistānī in 1991. (Ṭalā'at, 1998: 154). However, I could not find this book of Ḥarrānī mentioned in any of the bibliographical works and the only book edited by Turkistānī with the name *Makhārij al-Ḥurūf wa Ṣifātihā* in 1991 was authored by Abu al-Aṣḥagh al-Ishbīlī, better known as Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (d. after 560).

Yajtanibuhā al-Qurrā.¹⁶² Abū ‘Alī al-Naqqār (d. 352/963)¹⁶³ also penned a work on the articulation points, *Makhārij al-Ḥurūf*.¹⁶⁴

Early in the fifth century, ‘Alī ibn Ja‘far al-Sa‘īdī (d. 410/1019), wrote his treatise on *tajwīd* which he named *Tanbīh ‘ala al-Laḥn al-Jalī wa al-Laḥn al-Khafī*. He significantly referred to *tajwīd* as a distinctive science at the start of his treatise. In 413/1022, ‘Umānī compiled a book on *qirā’āt*, *al-Awsaṭ*, which holds an independent chapter on *tajwīd* with an extensive definition. Some have attributed this definition to Khuzā‘ī (d. 408/1017). This very definition of *tajwīd* is repeated by subsequent books of the later generations like Dānī, Hudhalī, al-Mubārak Shahrazūrī and even Ibn al-Jazarī.¹⁶⁵ Subsequently, Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 437/1046) and Dānī (d. 444/1052) use the term *tajwīd* in the titles of their books and write extensively on it.

A notable work on *tajwīd* in the fifth century is *al-Mūḍīḥ fi al-Tajwīd* of Qurṭubī (d. 462/1070). He depended upon the works of Ibn Jinnī, Sa‘īdī, Makkī and Dānī before him when compiling his book.¹⁶⁶ During the fifth century, several books on *qirā’āt* have independent chapters dedicated to *tajwīd*, like *al-Kāmil* of Abu al-Qāsim al-Hudhalī (d. 465/1073), *al-Īḍāḥ* of Andarābī (d. 470/1070) and *al-Jāmi‘* of al-Rūdhābārī (d. 489/1096). *Kitāb al-Sab‘ah*, *al-Irshād* and *al-Ghāyah* written in the fourth century do not have chapters dedicated to *tajwīd*, but instead discuss matters of *tajwīd* intermittently. In the subsequent centuries there are numerous works written on *tajwīd*, which include *al-Tamhīd fi Ma‘rifat al-Tajwīd* by Abu al-‘Alā’ Hamadhānī (d. 569/1174), *Minhāj al-Tawfīq ilā Ma‘rifat al-Tajwīd wa al-Taḥqīq* and *‘Umdat al-Mufīd wa ‘Uddat al-Mujīd fi Ma‘rifat al-Tajwīd* by Sakhāwī. Hamadhānī’s work seems to draw from Ibn Mihrān, Dānī and Sa‘īdī¹⁶⁷ while Sakhāwī explicitly mentions the poem

¹⁶² Al-Bannā’ references Ibn al-Munādī on pages 39, 51 and 54.

¹⁶³ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/212.

¹⁶⁴ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*: 35.

¹⁶⁵ *Al-Nashr*: 1/212.

¹⁶⁶ See Qaddūrī’s introduction to his editing of *al-Mūḍīḥ*: 26-27.

¹⁶⁷ See Qaddūrī’s introduction to his editing of *al-Tamhīd*: 37-39.

of Ibn Khāqān. In the ninth *hijrī* century, Ibn al-Jazarī drew from all the aforementioned books of *qirā'āt*, as well as the books of *tajwīd*.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Ibn al-Jazarī lists these books of *qirā'āt* as his source-texts when compiling *al-Nashr*, indicating that only did he access to these works, but that he had studied them with teachers. See his transmission chains for these books in *al-Nashr*: 1/58-98. This includes the compilations of Sakhāwī; *Minhāj al-Tawfiq ilā Ma'rifat al-Tajwīd wa al-Taḥqīq* and *Umdat al-Mufid wa Uddat al-Mujīd fī Ma'rifat al-Tajwīd*, amongst others.

Tajwīd: Its Audience, Content and Orthoepic-phonetic Terminologies

Compilations on *tajwīd* are directed at reciters of the Qurʾān, as explicitly stated by many of their compilers. They predominantly discuss correct recitation of the Qurʾān by detailing its sounds.

“*Tajwīd* is the system of rules regulating the correct oral rendering of the Qurʾān...*Tajwīd* is believed to be the codification of the sound of revelation as it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, and as he subsequently rehearsed it with the Angel Gabriel.” (Nelson, 2001: 14).

Nelson notes that text-orientated scholars often do not grasp the significance of *tajwīd* by simply translating it from written texts. They consider a translation to be “adequate to convey its material and sense, presenting a confusing string of arbitrarily selected rules, which ignores the comprehensiveness of the science and its significance to the oral nature of the Qurʾān”. Seeman confuses *tajwīd* with melody, translating it as “cantillation of scripture”. (Paraphr. Nelson, 2001: 16).

Due to *tajwīd* being so closely connected to *qirāʾāt* and the Arabic language, many of the technical terms adopted in the science are drawn from them. For example, *qirāʾāt* has the terms *madd*, *fath*, *imālah*, *idghām*, *iṭḥ-hār*, and so on. Grammarians and philologists used these very terms when compiling their manuals on Arabic. The difference between the sciences being that the former’s presentation would be with regards to its applications in Qurʾānic transmission and the latter discussion it pertaining to Arab expression and usage. With regards to some aspects of phonology and phonetics, *tajwīd* draws terms like *jawf* (oral cavity), *ḥāfat al-lisān* (side of the tongue) and other phonetic descriptions from Arabic manuals. Often terms in *tajwīd* manuals are derived from *fiqh* and *hadith* as well. For example, Dānī using “*wujūb*” (compulsory), or explaining his transmissions of various traditions e.g. a report being “*gharīb*” (unfamiliar), it having “*ittiṣāl al-sanad*” (a connected chain of transmission)

or “*adālat al-naqalah*” (trustworthy transmitters).¹⁶⁹ Nöldeke has indicated to this reliance on grammar, philology and *fiqh*. (Nöldeke, 2013: 568). Despite this dependence upon other sciences, *tajwīd* does have orthoepic terminologies exclusive to it e.g. *tartīl*, *tarassul*, *tamkīn*, *ishbāʿ*, *fakk al-ḥurūf* etc. Describing the differences between Makkī’s *Riʿāyah* and Dānī’s *Tahdīd*, Nöldeke notes about *al-Riʿāyah*:

“The first part deals with the rules of order, the merit of the recitation of the Koran, etc., while the second part is purely linguistic, concerned with the consonants, their articulation and qualities, consonantal connections, doubling of consonants, and, in the final chapter, *nūn* and *tanwīn* in contextual pronunciation. But in the nearly contemporary work of al-Dānī (d. 444/1052), *al-Taḥdīd fil ʿilm al-tajwīd*, the paraenetic part is omitted – it continues its own development – whereas the linguistic and phonetic parts are somewhat enlarged. Here the propaedeutic character of *tajwīd* becomes even more evident.” (Nöldeke, 2013: 568).

Makkī dedicated a number of chapters exhorting the merits of recitation, even though it technically did not discuss matters pertaining to the Qurʾān’s orality. This would be a feature repeated in many manuals of *tajwīd* thereafter. Technically, *waqf* and *ibtidāʿ*, should not form part of *tajwīd* since it does not deal with its sounds specifically. However, it comprises *talaqqī* and perhaps therefore have later been included in manuals of *tajwīd*. *Waqf* was mentioned by Abū Muzāḥim in *al-Khāqāniyyah*, and Dānī expounds upon it in his commentary, presenting different types of *waqf* like *waqf tāmm*, *waqf kāfī*, *waqf ḥasan* and *waqf qabīḥ*.¹⁷⁰ Makkī, on the other hand, only discusses it when stopping on a *mushaddad*. The same could be said about the rules pertaining to the *istiʿādhah* and the *basmalah* i.e. essentially they do not form part of the science of *tajwīd*.

¹⁶⁹ See Dānī, *al-Taḥdīd fi al-Itqān wa al-Tajwīd*: 78.

¹⁷⁰ Dānī, *Sharḥ Qaṣīdah Abī Muzāḥim al-Khāqānī*: 2/421.

A noteworthy area in Arabic – as well as in Qur’ānic recitation – that *tajwīd* writings developed further was the concept of *lahn*. Though it was a term shared between these sciences, *tajwīd* divided *lahn* into two categories: *lahn jalī* and *lahn khafī*. The former was errors made in the very make-up of the word, like mispronunciation of a word’s letters or vowels. This is clear in Kisā’ī’s compilation on *lahn*, in which he only addresses *lahn jalī*. *Lahn khafī* on the other hand, was only perceived by expert reciters; only the expert, accurate teacher (*muqri’ mutqin ḍābiṭ*) and those knowledgeable of *qirā’āt* and *adā’* could recognise this kind of error.¹⁷¹ The appearance of this division of *lahn* into *jalī* and *khafī* seems to be during the fourth *hijrī* century, being mentioned by Ibn Mujāhid in *al-Sab’ah*.¹⁷² In the fifth *hijrī* century, Sa’īdī, Dānī and Qurṭubī expounded upon the concept of *lahn khafī* in Qur’ānic recitation. The discussion on *lahn khafī* is continued in subsequent centuries by the likes of Andarābī, Hamadhānī and eventually Ibn al-Jazarī.

Examples of *lahn khafī* are the correct application of certain attributes found in the Arabic consonants, like *hams*, *jahr*, *shiddah*, *rikhwah*, etc. This is similar to considering correct pronunciation of voiced fricatives, unvoiced fricatives, plosives, emphaticness, and so forth in English. Communication in Arabic, as well as in English, continues unimpeded by incorrect articulation of these phonetical details e.g. voicing the fricative in “thin” or unvoicing the fricative in “them” will not impede communication. However, when it came to Qur’ānic recitation, *tajwīd* demanded that each of these phonetical details be articulated with utmost precision. Omission of these minute phonetical details was considered as an error i.e. *lahn khafī*, even though it did not impede communication. Later, Arabic phoneticians resorted to what was documented in *tajwīd* works for the correction details of Arabic phonetics.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab’ah*: 49; Sa’īdī, *al-Lahn al-Jalī wa al-Lahn al-Khafī*: 260; al-Mar’ashī, *Juhd al-Muqill*: 85.

¹⁷² Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sab’ah*: 49; See also Ḥamad, *Abḥāth fi ‘Ilm al-Tajwīd*: 172.

¹⁷³ Ḥamad, *Abḥāth fi ‘Ilm al-Tajwīd*: 187.

Transmission versus Ijtihād

Every book of *qirā'āt* resonates the concept of transmission; a methodology implanted by the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, continued by his Companions and the Successors رضي الله عنهم.¹⁷⁴ Of recent, Nasser has fervently argued that *qirā'āt* is based on *ijtihād*.¹⁷⁵ To support his argument, he has employed various approaches. He ignores earlier scholars' reiteration of transmission – the likes of Sībaway¹⁷⁶ (d. 180/796) and Abū 'Ubayd Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 249/863) in the second and third *hijrī* centuries – and quotes a sixth *hijrī* century exegete, Ibn 'Aṭiyyah (d. 541/1147), that “the seven eponymous Readings are the result of the Readers' interpretation (*ijtihād*) of the defective 'Uthmānic consonantal outline (*rasm*) and that these Readings were accepted through the consensus of the community (*ummah*).” (Nasser, 2013: 7). He again references Ibn 'Aṭiyyah and writes that “Ibn 'Aṭiyyah openly states that the seven Readings originated due to the eponymous Readers' interpretation (*ijtihād*) of the defective 'Uthmānic *rasm*.” (Nasser, 2013: 40).

However, in the very edition of *Muḥarrar al-Wajīz* referenced by Nasser¹⁷⁷, though Ibn 'Aṭiyyah mentions *ijtihād* (*fa qara'ū bidhālik ḥasab ijtiḥādātihim*) he says nothing about a “defective 'Uthmānic *rasm*” which Nasser quotes him on, *twice*. Nasser continues his misquotation of Ibn 'Aṭiyyah and conveniently neglects to mention the initial part of the sentence in which Ibn 'Aṭiyyah very explicitly states that the *qurrā'* of the *amṣār* merely followed the differences that were transmitted to them (*tatba'ū*

¹⁷⁴ For quotations on transmission of *qirā'āt* from the first *hijrī* century until present-day, see the article of Rifā'i, 'Ādil: *Aqwāl al-Ulamā' al-Wāridah fi ann "al-Qirā'ah Sunnat Muttaba'ah wa al-Aḥkām al-Mabniyyah 'alā dhālik*, Majallat al-Jāmi'at al-Islāmiyyah bi al-Madinat al-Munawwarah, edition 158, pp. 131-180.

¹⁷⁵ Nasser insinuates a number of inaccurate claims regarding *qirā'āt* in his works. To deal with all of them are beyond the scope of this paper.

¹⁷⁶ Sībaway maintains that the correct articulation of the letters of the Arabic alphabet can only be realised orally. (*Al-Kitāb*: 4/432). By extension, this would apply to Qur'ānic recitation. In fact, with more emphasis in Qur'ānic recitation since *tajwīd* experts developed *laḥn khafī* to ensure the accurate articulation of all the phonetical attributes during recitation; a matter not realised by philologists, as mentioned previously.

¹⁷⁷ This is the edition edited by 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad and printed in Beirut by Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah in 2001.

mā ruwiya lahum min ikhtilāfāt). This is a grievous oversight from Nasser since the very scholar he quotes in support of his argument is actually stating the opposite of what he is arguing.

The concept of *ijtihād* is never unrestricted. Ibn ‘Aṭiyyah has restricted the “*ijtihād*” of the *qurrā’* to two things in the quoted paragraph:

- 1) What was transmitted to the *qurrā’* i.e. transmission.
- 2) Especially those Readings that agreed with the *rasm* (*lāsiyyamā mā wāfaqa khaṭṭ al-muṣṣaf*).

Continuing to champion the case of *ijtihād*, Nasser then interprets a statement of Ibn Mujāhid to mean that the differences in the *qirā’āt* are similar to the differences in *aḥkām* (legal rulings) i.e. “if the disagreements on *aḥkām* and *Qirā’āt* are of similar nature, such disagreements ought to be the outcome of *ijtihād*.”¹⁷⁸ (Nasser, 2013: 49-50). He writes:

“Ibn Mujāhid starts by comparing the differences in *Qirā’āt* and the disagreements among the readers to the differences in *aḥkām* (legal rulings) and the disagreements among the *fuqahā’* ‘*ikhtilafā n-nāsu fī l-qirā’āti ka-mā khtalafū fī l-aḥkām*’. This short and underdeveloped phrase is a very important statement which was not given much attention.” (Nasser, 2013: 49).

¹⁷⁸ Nasser writes that “In the same manner, the *fuqahā’* argue among each other by discussing, criticizing, refuting, and even yielding to each other’s arguments and *aḥkām*, for there are no absolute proofs that this or that legal ruling was acknowledged or rejected by the Prophet. The *fuqahā’* try to comprehend and determine the *sharīah* rules set and laid down by God through their devised principles of law (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), which generally comprise Qur’ān, traditions, *ijmā’* and *qiyās* (analogy). They agree on some points and disagree on others. Similarly, I believe that Ibn Mujāhid and the early Muslim scholars and Qur’ān readers were also trying to determine the “*sharīah*” of the Qur’ān as revealed by God i.e. the closest way in which the Prophet had recited the Qur’ān when it was revealed to him.” (Nasser, 2013: 61).

Nasser regards this statement of Ibn Mujāhid as “underdeveloped” and that it “was not given much attention”. This notion of Nasser is refuted by Nöldeke when he explains that

“the fundamental difference between *fiqh* and the Koranic readings. In *fiqh* there are given facts, and on the basis of *uṣūl* the *mujtahid* passes the appropriate *ḥukm*, but still on the basis of individual *judgement*. If the decision consists of choosing between different possibilities, these themselves are thus construed by him and his equals at the time when the problem is considered. In the science of Koranic variant readings different possibilities exist *a priori*, which, according to the prevalent dogma, are all equally divine so that the reader need do no more than choose from among them.” (Nöldeke, 2013: 487).

Similar to Nöldeke, Ibn al-Jazarī acknowledges that the *qurrā'* have *ikhtilāf* the same as the *fuqahā'*, but highlights the distinct difference between the two: the latter is based upon *ijtihād* which could hold the possibility of error while in *qirā'āt* all are equally correct (if they meet the required prerequisites, of course). The ascription of a reading to an individual or one of the eponymous readers does not mean that they invented the reading based upon *ijtihād*, but that the individual selected that particular manner of reading (*ikhtiyār*) based upon a host of transmissions that he had grasped from his teachers. Those Qur'ānic readings eventually became renowned as “his reading” e.g. the reading of Nāfi', the reading of Ibn Kathīr, etc.¹⁷⁹ The ascription of the Qur'ānic readings to individuals were even used to identify the readings of the Companions and the Successors. Ibn al-Jazarī documents that the Successor, Sa'īd ibn Jubayr used to lead the prayer during the month of Ramaḍān. He would then recite the *qirā'ah* of Ibn Mas'ūd the one night followed by the *qirā'ah* of Zayd ibn Thābit the next night.¹⁸⁰ The word “*ḥarf*” would be used synonymously as

¹⁷⁹ Dānī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*: 37; Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*: 1/52.

¹⁸⁰ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/305.

qirā'ah. For example, A‘mash would recite (*yujawwid*) the *ḥarf* of Ibn Mas‘ūd and Ibn Abī Laylā would recite the *ḥarf* of ‘Alī.¹⁸¹

Dutton has also given attention to this “underdeveloped” statement, elaborating that

“Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324/936) says that the scholars of Islam ‘differ with regard to readings as they differ with regard to legal judgements’. In other words, just as there are differences in the details of the law – most easily recognized in the differences between the different *madhhabs* (schools of law) – so, too, are there differences on the level of detail with regard to how to read the Qur’ān. Similarly, just as the differences of *fiqh* were to become simplified – or we could say restricted or standardized – to four *madhhabs* (i.e. those named after Abū Ḥanīfa, Mālik, al-Shāfi‘ī, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, assuming a Sunnī point of view), so too did the different ways of reciting the Qur’ān become simplified – or again we could say restricted or standardized – to seven readings, in particular by Ibn Mujāhid himself...” (Dutton, 2011: 4).

Furthermore, it seems farfetched that this statement of Ibn Mujāhid infers unrestricted *ijtihād* if one gauges the context in which this statement appears in the book. In the topic discussions that appear immediately after it in *Kitāb al-Sab‘ah*, Ibn Mujāhid presents numerous statements from the Companions emphasizing that one not become an innovator but instead, adhere to earlier precedents with regards to the Qur’ānic readings.¹⁸² Additionally, subsequent to this in *Kitāb al-Sab‘ah*, why would

¹⁸¹ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-Nihāyah*: 1/262.

¹⁸² Ibn Mujāhid dedicates a number of pages at the start of *Kitāb al-Sab‘ah* quoting reports of his predecessors to affirm this practice of transmission. I have mentioned them in my commentary of line seven of *al-Khāqāniyyah*, who also emphasizes the following of tradition with regards to Qur’ānic reading as opposed to *ijtihād*. Some of the statements quoted by Ibn Mujāhid are:

- Ibn Mas‘ūd stated: “Follow (*ittabi‘ū*) [the experts with regards to recitation] and do not innovate (*lā tabtadi‘ū*)”. He also said: “Recite as you have been taught”.

Ibn Mujāhid have a chapter heading titled “the chains of transmission through which the *qirāʾah* has been **transmitted** to us” (*al-asānīd allatī naqalat ilaynā al-qirāʾah*), then dedicate pages 88-101 in documenting his transmission chains (*asānīd*) for the seven *qirāʾāt*, if the *qirāʾāt* was based upon *ijtihād*?

Nasser continues his challenge for *ijtihād* in the *qirāʾāt* and attempts to show that the *qirāʾāt* do not stem from the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, but only reaches the eponymous Readers. In doing so, he wishes to support his argument that the readings are no longer divine, but due to the *ijtihād* of the *qurrāʾ*. He mentions this numerous times in his work. (See for example: Nasser, 2013: 49, 52, 53). In substantiating this, he argues for example, that

“Ibn Mujāhid is not keen to meticulously demonstrate the “sound” transmission of his chosen canonical Readings from the eponymous Readers down to the Prophet. For example, he [Ibn Mujāhid] says that Ibn Kathīr studied with Mujāhid ibn Jabr (d. 104/722), who studied with Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68-69/686-687), who in turn studied with Ubayy b. Kaʿb (d. 21/642). This is the only *isnād* Ibn Mujāhid mentions to document Ibn Kathīr’s Reading.” (Nasser, 2013: 51).

Nasser shows that the transmission only reaches Ubayy ibn Kaʿb ﷺ and not the Prophet ﷺ. However, in the chapter before the *asānīd* of the Seven *Qurrāʾ*, Ibn Mujāhid relates, via transmission, historical accounts about the Seven eponymous Readers. Here, Ibn Mujāhid mentions **seven times** that Ubayy ibn Kaʿb read to the

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- ‘Alī ﷺ said: “The Prophet has instructed you to read the Qurʾān as you have been taught”.
 - Zayd ibn Thābit ﷺ stated: “Recitation is a practice followed (*sunnah*)”.
 - Muḥammad ibn Munkadir said: “Recitation of the Qurʾān is a followed practice; the latter grasps it from the former”.
 - ‘Āmir al-Shaʿbī said: “Recitation is a practice followed, so read as those before you read”.

See Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sabʿah*: 46-52.

Prophet Muḥammad.¹⁸³ The reason why *Kitāb al-Sabʿah* does link the transmissions of the Seven *Qurrāʾ* to the Prophet ﷺ when presenting the *asānīd*, is simply because the teachers and the link of the Seven eponymous Readers to the Prophet has been mentioned in the chapter before it already.¹⁸⁴

Nasser's misquotation and selective quotations does very little to support his stance of *ijtihād* with regards to the *qirāʾāt*. Unfortunately, it also brings much of his research on *qirāʾāt* under question.



¹⁸³ See Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sabʿah*: pp. 55, 56, 57, 64, 69, 72 and 83.

¹⁸⁴ See Ibn Mujāhid, *al-Sabʿah*: 53-87.

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