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Citation

Putten, M. van. (2022). When the readers break the rules: disagreement with the consonantal text in the canonical Quranic reading traditions. *Dead Sea Discoveries: A Journal Of Current Research On The Scrolls And Related Literature*, 29(3), 438-462. doi:10.1163/15685179-02903008

Version: Publisher's Version

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

When the Readers Break the Rules

Disagreement with the Consonantal Text in the Canonical Quranic Reading Traditions

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Abstract

The Quranic text today is recited in ten canonical reading traditions with two distinct canonical transmissions each. These reading traditions are distinct in their phonological and morphological details, as well as the interpretation of the ambiguous consonantal text. However, they all have in common that they adhere to the consonantal skeleton of the standard Quran text. Despite this adherence, on rare occasions readers do deviate from this standard text. This paper examines those cases, and explores the reasons why the canonical readers felt licensed to do so. Especially 'Abū 'Amr was prone to deviate from the consonantal text in cases of perceived grammatical issues. Moreover, the readers occasionally deviated from their regional consonantal text when other regional codices had another form. Finally, readers deviated from the consonantal text, in cases where the text came in conflict with the pausal spelling principle.

Keywords

Quran – reading traditions – Qirā'āt – consonantal skeleton – *rasm* – Arabic grammatical tradition – 'Abū 'Amr – pausal spelling

1 Introduction

The ways in which the Quran has been treated in the Islamic tradition is remarkably dynamic. In the early decades of Islam there appear to have been several different (albeit still quite closely related) text types of the Quran. But very quickly—almost certainly during the reign of the third Islamic caliph

TABLE 1 The ten canonical readers and their transmitters

	Reciter	First transmitter	Second transmitter
Medina	Nāfi' (d. 169/785)	Warṣ (d. 197/812)	Qālūn (d. 220/835)
	'Abū Ġa'far (d. 130/747)	Ibn Wardān (d. 160/776)	Ibn Ġammāz (d. 170/786)
Mecca	Ibn Kaṭīr (d. 120/738)	al-Bazzī (d. 250/864)	Qunbul (d. 291/904)
Damascus	Ibn 'Āmir (d. 118/736)	Hišām (d. 245/859)	Ibn Daḳwān (d. 242/856)
Basra	'Abū 'Amr (d. 154/770)	al-Dūrī (d. 246/860)	al-Sūsī (d. 261/874)
	Yā'qūb (d. 205/820)	Rawḥ (d. 238/852)	Ruways (d. 234/849)
Kufa	'Aṣim (d. 127/745)	Ḥaḥṣ (d. 180/796)	Šu'bah (d. 193/809)
	Ḥamzah (d. 156/773)	Ḥalaf (d. 229/844)	Ḥallād (d. 220/835)
	al-Kisā'ī (d. 189/804)	al-Dūrī (d. 246/860)	al-Layṭ (d. 240/854)
	Ḥalaf (d. 229/844)	'Iṣḥāq (d. 286/899)	'Idrīs (d. 292/905)

around the year 650—the Islamic community accepted a single standard, known as the Uthmanic Text,¹ which became dominant and has remained virtually unchanged until today.² Despite this very early dominance of a single standard consonantal skeleton, or *rasm* (lit. 'tracing') as it is typically called, today most Muslims accept no less than ten different reading traditions, with two accepted canonical transmitters each, as canonical ways of reading this ambiguous *rasm*.

These reading traditions are named after famous reciters (see Table 1), mostly from the second/eighth and early third/ninth century, who would teach

1 See Van Putten, "The Grace of God"; Sidky, "On the Regionality of the Quranic Codices"; Sinai, "When Did the Consonantal Skeleton of the Quran Reach Closure?", parts I and II.

2 Codices of other text types, attributed to famous companions of the prophet, appear to have remained in some use after this standardization, especially as corroborating evidence for exegesis and sometimes legal rulings, see Harvey, "The Legal Epistemology of Qur'anic Variants." Today, only one textual trace of such non-Uthmanic text types has come down to us in manuscript form: the Sanaa Palimpsest, see Sadeghi and Bergmann, "The Codex of a Companion of the Prophet and the Qur'an of the Prophet"; Sadeghi and Goudarzi, "Šan'ā' 1 and the Origins of the Qur'an"; Cellard, "The Šan'ā' Palimpsest." Other examples of non-Uthmanic text types have only come down to us through reports in *rasm* works like Ibn 'Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, and exegeses like al-Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-Qur'an*; al-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-Bayān*.

their specific interpretation of this ambiguous *rasm*. These readings have been transmitted throughout the centuries and are a living tradition still taught and recited today. They can also differ significantly from one another in terms of phonetics and phonology (some have a fourth phonemic long vowel *ē* next to the usual *ī*, *ū*, and *ā*, and others have extensive regular assimilation across short vowels) and morphology (e.g., *‘alayhim* ‘upon them’ may also be recited *‘alayhum* and *‘alayhimū*). Readers also disagree with some frequency over the precise wording of a verse, e.g., whether a verb is read as active or passive or in the 2pl.m. or 3pl.m.—features that cannot be distinguished from the bare undotted consonantal skeleton of the text. However, something that all canonical reading traditions have in common is that they display a general adherence to the *rasm* of the Uthmanic Text. As the canon developed it is clear that adherence to the *rasm* was considered an important quality for it to be considered an acceptable reading.

While Ibn Muğāhid (d. 324/936), who canonized the first seven of the ten canonical reading traditions, does not explicitly state this requirement, his selection of readers does suggest it played a role. The famous exegete and contemporary of Ibn Muğāhid, al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) does occasionally reject readings explicitly because they do not agree with the *rasm*—clearly suggesting that that was a basis on which a reading could be rejected.³ This requirement becomes paradigmatic and Ibn al-Ğazarī (d. 833/1429), who wrote the canonical description of the three after the ten (‘Abū Ğa‘far, Ḥalaf, and Ya‘qūb), explicitly formulates adherence to the *rasm* as one of the three factors that make a reading valid (the others being correctness of Arabic grammar and a sound chain of transmission).⁴ Not all reading traditions were exactly like this; there are several non-canonical readings which have been transmitted more-or-less intact across the centuries that, while still in broad strokes agreeing with the *rasm*, deviate from it much more freely and frequently in minor details, such as the readings of al-‘A‘maš⁵ (d. 148/765) and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī⁶ (d. 110/728).⁷

3 Nasser, *The Transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qur‘ān*, 45.

4 Ibn al-Ğazarī, *Našr*, § 33.

5 In fact a teacher of the canonical reader Ḥamzah.

6 A teacher of the canonical reader ‘Abū ‘Amr.

7 Note that these non-canonical readings are exceptional in how frequently they deviate from the *rasm*. There are many other transmissions that are at least as compliant with the *rasm* as the canonical readers who nevertheless are considered non-canonical. For centuries this included the three after the seven ‘Abū Ğa‘far, Ḥalaf, and Ya‘qūb, but also other traditions which never gained a canonical status such as those of al-Yazīdī, ‘Abū Ḥātim al-Siğistānī, or Sallām ‘Abū al-Munḍir agree with the Uthmanic *rasm*.

In this aspect Quranic recitation stands in stark contrast with the Hebrew Bible which likewise has a reading tradition that interacts in interesting ways with its ambiguous consonantal skeleton. The Hebrew Bible, however, much more frequently (though still quite rarely) has readings that move away from the consonantal text. Thus in the Quranic reading traditions we do not find such exotic cases of *qarē walā katiḥ* “recited but not written” as 2 Sam 8:3 which adds a full word *parāt* absent in the consonantal skeleton in recitation, nor do we find cases like *katiḥ wla qarē* like 2 Sam 13:33 where **קח** is completely dropped from recitation. But it is exactly this stringent adherence to the *rasm* which makes it all the more interesting to examine the rare cases where the readers *do* decide to deviate from the *rasm*. What patterns, if any, can we uncover in such cases where the readers decide to deviate from the standard text?

As we will see, the motivations differ between the readers. Some would deviate from the *rasm* in cases that seem to present grammatical issues, while others would deviate from the *rasm* if they were aware that other regional standard copies of the Quran had a certain variant. Finally, there is significant difference among the readers on the exact treatment of the pronunciation of words in pausal position. Such cases come in two types. First, there are places where the readers deviate from the *rasm* in connected speech because the *rasm* was considered to represent a pausal spelling. The second category is with words which were considered to be spelled in a *non*-pausal manner, and in such cases readers would deviate from the *rasm* in pausal contexts. In the following sections we will examine these different categories.

2 The Non-conformist 'Abū 'Amr

The Basran reader 'Abū 'Amr, not only known as a famous reciter but also frequently recognised as an important early Basran grammarian, stands out among the canonical readers for deviating from the *rasm* significantly more often than the other canonical readers. His status as a grammarian appears to have played a role in his choices to deviate from the Uthmanic *rasm*, as he opts for readings that disagree with the *rasm* which are known to be grammatically awkward or problematic points in the Quranic text. While he most frequently deviates from the *rasm* among the canonical readings, these deviations are still minimal, and primarily consist of adding or replacing one of the “weak” letters *ʾalif*, *yā*, and *wāw* to the existing *rasm* rather than adding or replacing words of the canonical text with non-canonical ones—something we do see with several non-canonical readings.

2.1 'Inna hādāyni (Q20:63)

The most famous of these grammatically problematic verses no doubt is Q20:63 *ان هذين لسحران* which is variously read by the canonical readers as *'inna hādāni la-sāḥirāni* "These two are sorcerers!" or *'in hādāni la-sāḥirāni* "these two are nought but sorcerers."⁸ The first of these readings is grammatically awkward because in strict Classical Arabic grammar *'inna* 'verily, indeed' should be followed by a noun in the accusative, and that is how it is treated with almost complete consistency throughout the Quran, e.g., Q37:133 *wa-'inna lūṭan la-min-a l-mursalīna* "And indeed Lot was among the messengers." The awkwardness of the grammar was acknowledged early on since there is an early tradition attributed to 'Ā'ishah, the wife of Muḥammad, where she explicitly calls this a mistake of the Uthmanic text.⁹ Thus in al-Farrā's (d. 207/822) *Luḡāt al-Qur'ān*¹⁰ we find the following:

Ḥaddaṭanī Muḥammadun qāla ḥaddaṭanā l-Farrā'u qāla: ḥaddaṭanī 'Abū Mu'āwiyata 'an Hišāmi bni 'Urwata 'an 'abihi 'an 'Ā'ishata 'annahā su'ilat 'an qawlihī "inna hādāni la-sāḥirāni", wa-"inna lladīna 'āmanū wa-lladīna hādū wa-ṣ-ṣābi'ūna," wa-'an qawlihī "lākin-i r-rāsiḥūna fī 'ilmi minhūm wa-l-mu'minūna yu'minūna bimā 'unzila 'ilayka wa-mā 'unzila min qablīka wa-l-muqīmīna ṣ-ṣalāta" fa-qālat: yā bna 'aḥī hādā ḡalaṭun min-a l-kuttābi.

Muḥammad told me that al-Farrā' told him that 'Abū Mu'āwiyah told him on the authority of Hišām b. 'Urwah on the authority of his father (= 'Urwah b. Zubayr) on the authority of 'Ā'ishah who was asked about His speech *'inna hādāni la-sāḥirāni* "these two are sorcerers" (Q20:63) and *'inna lladīna 'āmanū wa-lladīna hādū wa-ṣ-ṣābi'ūna* "those who believed and those who judaized and the Sabians and Christians" (Q5:69; cf. the (near) doublets Q22:17, Q2:62) and about His speech *lākin-i r-rāsiḥūna fī 'ilmi minhūm wa-l-mu'minūna yu'minūna bimā 'unzila 'ilayka wa-mā 'unzila min qablīka wa-l-muqīmīna ṣ-ṣalāta* "But those firm in knowledge

8 ibn al-Ġazārī, *Naṣr*, § 3591.

9 Abdel Haleem, whose article contains a nice discussion on the ways that later grammarians tried to explain these errors, dismisses this tradition as baseless purely on the argument that 'Abū Mu'āwiyah was weak in Hadith, with no reflection as to why even someone weak in Hadith would spread such a Hadith. This leaves us with more questions than answers. Regardless of the authenticity, however, the fact that al-Farrā' transmits this report certainly makes it clear that the tradition was known early enough for several of the Quranic reciters to have been aware of it. Abdel Haleem, "Grammatical Shift for Rhetorical Purposes," 424.

10 al-Farrā', *Luḡāt al-Qur'ān*, 94f.

and among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you and the establishers of prayers [...]” (Q4:162) and she said: “O my nephew (i.e. ‘Urwah), This is an error of the scribes.”

All three examples show unexpected case morphology. *Wa-ṣ-ṣābi’ūna* ‘and the Sabians’ is unexpected for the same reason *hādāni* ‘these two’ is unexpected, the topicalizer *inna* precedes, but fails to trigger the expected accusative in this word. This is especially striking because the same word occurs in virtually identical verses Q22:17 and Q2:62 in the expected accusative form *wa-ṣ-ṣābi’īna*.¹¹ Q4:162 *wa-l-muqīmīna* ‘and the establishers’ is unexpected, because it has the case inflection that we would have expected if the verse had started with *lākinna* ‘but’, which governs the accusative, rather than the semantically more-or-less identical but morphosyntactically distinct *lākin* ‘but’, which governs the nominative. But *lākin* could not be read as *lākinna* because in that case *ar-rāsiḥūna* ‘the ones who are firm’ should have been in the accusative case as well.

Already early on, different explanations were given to explain the apparent conflict of *inna hādāni* with Classical Arabic grammar. Thus, despite this tradition from ‘Āiṣah being cited in al-Farrā’s *Luġāt al-Qur’ān*, he himself suggests in the same discussion that the tribe Banū al-Ḥārīt b. Ka’b did not inflect their dual deictic pronoun for case, and that we see this dialect reflected in this verse.¹²

How the reading *in hādāni la-sāḥirāni* “these are nought but two sorcerers” is typically explained is even less satisfying. *in* is normally a nominal negator and that is how Ibn Ḥalawayh explains it in *al-Ḥuġġah*. He suggests that *in* has the meaning *mā* ‘not’, whereas the normally asseverative *la-* has the meaning *‘illā* ‘except’ thus this reading would be “These two are nought but two sorcerers.”¹³ However, this requires one to make the rather *ad hoc* assumption that *la-*, normally ‘certainly!’ and the like, can mean ‘except’. The only other example cited for such a use is no less ambiguous.¹⁴

11 Several non-canonical readers, however, did correct this verse. ‘Abū Ḥayyān cites the non-canonical Basran ‘Āṣim al-Ġaḥḍarī. This reading is also reported for famous companions like ‘Uṭmān, ‘Ubayy, Ibn Ġubayr and, not surprisingly ‘Āiṣah, cf. ‘Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, v:325.

12 Why this passage, and this passage only would reflect this dialect is something exegetes did not seem to be particularly interested in. They content themselves with the observation and move on, as if such a switch would be unremarkable.

13 ibn Ḥalawayh, *al-Ḥuġġah*, 242.

14 Namely, Q86:4 *in kullu nafsin la-mā ‘alayhā ḥāfiẓun* “There is no human soul except one that has a guardian over it.” This is one canonical reading. Others read *lammā*, cf. ibn al-Ġazārī, *Naṣr*, § 3312.

In light of these grammatical issues, and perhaps the authority of a tradition transmitted from ʿĀʾiṣah that this word was problematic, ʿAbū ʿAmr apparently felt he was licensed to intervene and fix the grammar of this passage and adds a *yāʾ* absent in the *rasm*, thus reading the accusative *hādayni* as if it were spelled هذين. This resolves any grammatical problems that may have existed with this verse and yields the grammatical, unremarkable ʿinna hādayni la-sāḥirāni “these two are sorcerers!”

2.2 ʿAkūna (Q63:70)

There is another place where ʿAbū ʿAmr ignores the *rasm* to arrive at a grammatically more typical reading, namely in Q63:10b يقول رب لولا اخرتني الى اجل قريب فاصدق واكن من الصالحين “so that he says: My Lord, if only you would reprieve me for a little while, so that I would give alms and be among the righteous.” All readers except for ʿAbū ʿAmr read this as: *fa-yaqūla: rabbi lawlā ʾaḥḥartanī ʾilā ʾaġlin qaribin fa-ʾaṣṣaddaqa wa-ʾakun minā ṣ-ṣāliḥīna*, with *ʾakun* ‘I would be’ in the apocopate.¹⁵ The issue with this reading is obvious: the directly preceding verb in the subjunctive *fa-ʾaṣṣaddaqa* ‘so that I may give alms’ makes sense, but the following verb *wa-ʾakun* in the apocopate is difficult to motivate. As *ʾakun* is part of the same series of actions as *ʾaṣṣaddaqa* we would expect another subjunctive, i.e., *ʾakūna*. Such a construction is exactly what we find in a very similar verse Q28:47b, where indeed both verbs after the *fa-* are in the subjunctive: *rabbanā lawlā ʾarsalta ʾilaynā rasūlan fa-nattabiʿa ʾāyātika wa-nakūna min-a l-muʾminīn* “O our lord! If only you had sent us a messenger so that we would follow your signs and be among the believers.”

Grammatical exegetes of the readings had trouble accounting for this reading. Ibn Ḥālawayh says that those who read *ʾakun* take the basis of this sentence to be without the *fa-* in between thus as if it were ***lawlā ʾaḥḥartanī ʾaṣṣaddaqa wa-ʾakun min-a ṣ-ṣāliḥīna* “If only you would give me reprieve, I would give alms and be among the righteous.”¹⁶ This does not solve the grammatical issue, as the *fa-* is *not* absent, and had such a construction been intended one would expect *both* verbs to be in the apocopate form, where it is only the second that actually is.

With the limited comparable data that we have, and the rules of Classical Arabic as we know it, the *rasm* here simply appears to be incorrect. Again, ʿAbū ʿAmr intervenes in the *rasm* and decides to add the *wāw* that is necessary for

¹⁵ ibn al-Ġazarī, *Naṣr*, § 4401.

¹⁶ ibn Ḥālawayh, *al-Ḥuġġah*, 346.

this construction to be grammatical and comparable to Q28:47, so he reads *fū-ʿaṣṣaddaqa wa-ʿakūna min-a ṣ-ṣālīhīna*.¹⁷

2.3 wuqqitat (Q77:11)

Another example where ʿAbū ʿAmr prefers a reading that disagrees with the *rasm* but seems more grammatically apt—especially within the context of the Quranic corpus—is found in his reading of Q77:11. The Arab grammarians report the option of shifting *wu* and *wū* to ʿu and ʿū in Arabic.¹⁸ While this shift generally does not take place in the Arabic variety of the *rasm*, it appears to have taken place at Q77:11 اَقْتَت ʿthe time was setʼ, the passive of *waqqata* ʿto set a timeʼ, which—in line with the *rasm*—is read as ʿuqqitat by most Quranic reciters.¹⁹ This word is a phonetic anomaly in the Quran. Throughout the Quran we find countless examples where this shift has not taken place. For example, Q13:35 وَعَد is recited *wuʿida* ʿit is promisedʼ, Q3:25 وَوَفِيت is recited *wa-wuffiyat* ʿand it will be paid in fullʼ, and Q7:20 وَرِى is recited *wūriya* ʿit was concealedʼ by all canonical readers. ʿAbū ʿAmr²⁰—and the Medinan reciter ʿAbū Ġaʿfar²¹—appears to have been bothered by the exceptional status of Q77:11 اَقْتَت, and instead opts to ignore the *rasm* and read the regular *wuqqitat* instead.²²

2.4 Li-yahaba (Q19:19)

A verse where the reader ʿAbū ʿAmr decides to deviate from the *rasm*, not for grammatical reasons, but seemingly for exegetical ones is Q19:19 which concerns the annunciation to Mary by a spirit. The *rasm* of the verse reads اَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكَ لَا هَبْ لَكَ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا read by most canonical readers as *ʿinnamā ʿana rasūlu rabbiki li-ʿahaba laki ġulāman zakīyyan* ʿI am but a messenger of your Lord, [sent] so that I might give you a pure son.” The verse, in its *rasm* with لِي-ʿahaba ʿthat I giveʼ, seems to suggest that it is not God but rather the spirit (unnamed, but traditionally identified as Gabriel) who is the one who will impregnate Mary.

In an article on the annunciation in Sūrat Maryam, Sean Anthony discusses the reception and theological implications of the variant readings of this verse.

17 ibn al-Ġazārī, *Naṣr*, § 4401.

18 E.g., Sibawayh who cites *wulida* → ʿulida ʿhe was born” and *wuġūh* → ʿuġūh ʿfaces” as examples, cf. Sibawayh, *Al-Kitāb*, IV, 331.

19 ibn al-Ġazārī, *Naṣr*, § 4494.

20 Ibid.

21 There is in fact some disagreement on the authority of ʿAbū Ġaʿfar, besides *wuqqitat*, there are also reports of ʿuqqitat.

22 cf. ibn Ḥalawayh, *al-Ḥuġġah*, 360 who gives the same explanation for ʿAbū ʿAmr’s choice.

He notes that the straightforward reading appears to have been cause for some discomfort among early exegetes who wished to see it directly by God's power that Mary became pregnant with Jesus.²³ Thus, the famous Kufan grammarian and exegete al-Farrā' says: *al-hibatu min-a llāhi, ḥakāhā ḡibrīlu lahā, ka-'annahū huwa l-wāhibu* "The giving is by God, but Gabriel told it to her as if he were the giver."²⁴ This potential misunderstanding may have been the reason—although it cannot be proven—that several famous reciters decided to read this verb in the third person rather than the first person, thus 'Abū 'Amr ignores the *rasm* and instead reads it *li-yahaba* "that he give," he is followed in this by the other Basran Ya'qūb and the Medinan Nāfi'.²⁵

One may imagine, however, that knowledge of the nascent Arabic grammatical tradition may have given 'Abū 'Amr the license to read it as such. As Anthony points out, in Classical Arabic it is in fact acceptable to drop the glottal stop and when one does so, when it is preceded by *i* and followed by *a*, the resulting hiatus is resolved by inserting *y*.²⁶ As such, *li-ahaba* and *li-yahaba* would be homophonous in forms of Classical Arabic that dropped the glottal stop. While 'Abū 'Amr is known for his dropping of the glottal stop in his recitation, he normally does this only with preconsonantal glottal stop (e.g., *mūmin* ← *mu'min* and *yākul* ← *ya'kul*).²⁷ Nevertheless, it is imaginable that awareness of this option led him to feel like he had a license to opt for theologically simpler reading while not quite violating the *rasm*.

2.5 Ḥāšā li-llāhi (Q12:31, 51)

From the perspective of the Classical Arabic expression *ḥāšā li-llāhi* "God Forbid"²⁸ the Quranic *rasm* has an unusual spelling: حش لله (Q12:31, 51), lacking a letter for the final long vowel *ā*. In light of the fact that this expression also exists in Aramaic without a final vowel, e.g., חס לאלהא "God Forbid" in 11QtgJob 24:4²⁹ it seems likely that the Quranic form retains the historically original form. All readers except for 'Abū 'Amr follow the *rasm*, and thus read this verb with a final short vowel, *ḥāša li-llāhi*. Only 'Abū 'Amr ignores the *rasm* and pronounces it

23 Anthony, "The Virgin Annunciate."

24 al-Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, II, 163.

25 Ibn al-Ġazārī, *Našr*, § 3552.

26 Sibawayh, *Al-Kitāb*, III, 543.

27 ibn al-Ġazārī, *Našr*, § 1472.

28 Typically spelled حاشا لله rather than حاشى لله, despite the latter being the expected spelling considering the etymology of this expression, which must be a perfect 3sg.m. of 'to be removed'; i.e., "May it be far removed from God" → "God Forbid."

29 York, "A Philological and Textual Analysis of the Qumran Job Targum (11QtgJob)," 213.

the way that eventually becomes normative in Classical Arabic, i.e., *ḥāšā li-llāhi*, although in its pausal form he still follows the *rasm* and pronounces it *ḥāš#*.³⁰

By the time that grammarians start commenting on this form, the normative Classical Arabic form had clearly become that which 'Abū 'Amr recites, as the explanations suggests that other readers read it so that it agrees with the *rasm*. Thus ibn Ḥālawayh states that "those who maintain the 'alif' take it to be from your speech *ḥāšā, yuḥāšī* 'to be far from', but the reason for those who remove it is that they are satisfied with the *fathah* that comes from the 'alif' so they remove [the 'alif], and in doing so they follow the black writing (i.e. the *rasm*, not the coloured vocalisation dots)."³¹

It is interesting that, while 'Abū 'Amr ignores the *rasm* here in connected speech, he still feels compelled to follow the *rasm* and drop the 'alif in its pausal form. This shows that already in his time the idea that the Arabic script, first and foremost, was intended to represent the pausal pronunciation of the word played an important role in thinking about pronunciation of the Quran. So much so that the written form would override the rationally expected pausal form (which for *ḥāšā* would simply be *ḥāšā#*). For more examples of the importance of pausal forms, see section 4 below.

3 Transregionality

The Quran as we know it today was canonized by the third caliph Uthman around 650 CE. All canonical readers agree with the standard consonantal skeleton of Uthman's Quran. However, when the text was canonized (at least) four master copies were made and distributed across the Islamic empire. One was sent to Syria, one to Kufa, one to Basra, and a fourth one stayed in Medina. These four master copies have small differences in their consonantal skeleton which are reported on in detail in so-called *rasm* works, somewhat Masoretic-like works that describe in detail the specific spelling of the Uthmanic text. From extensive study of early Islamic manuscripts, it is now clear that these regional variants were a reality, and that all known Uthmanic Quranic manuscripts all descend from these four master copies.³² The different readers—as they had to agree with the *rasm*—by-and-large follow the spellings as they are

30 ibn al-Ġazārī, *Našr*, § 3335.

31 ibn Ḥālawayh, *al-Ḥuġġah*, 195.

32 Sidky, "On the Regionality of the Quranic Codices"; Vahidnia, "Whence Come Qur'ān Manuscripts?"

reported for the regional codices of the region that they are from. However, occasionally we run into readers which—despite their general agreement with their regional codex—decide to deviate from it and instead adopt forms as they are found in other regions. In certain cases the motivation for such deviations is obviously a grammatical preference, whereas in other cases the reasons for deviation are difficult to reconstruct.

3.1 *Ḥaḥṣ on Q43:71 and Q36:35*

Ḥaḥṣ, the transmitter of the Kufan reader ‘Āṣim and the now most dominant transmission of the Islamic world, goes against the Kufan *rasm* on two occasions. The first of these is Q43:71 where the Medinan and Syrian codices have *تَشْتِيهِ* whereas the Kufan and Basran codices have *نَشْتِي*.³³ Ḥaḥṣ follows the Medinan and Syrian codices, and agreeing with the Syrian Ibn ‘Āmir and Medinan readers Nāfi‘ and ‘Abū Ġa‘far by reading *taštahīhi* ‘they desire it’ unlike the other Kufan readers who follow the Kufan *rasm* and read *taštahī* ‘they desire’.³⁴ Likewise Q36:35 all codices except for Kufa have *عَمَلْتَهُ*, whereas the Kufan codex has *عَمَلَتْ*.³⁵ Here Ḥaḥṣ agrees with the non-Kufan codices and with all non-Kufan canonical readers by reading *‘amilat-hu* ‘they have made it’, whereas the other Kufans read *‘amilat* ‘they have made’.³⁶ Both of these variants occur in a very similar grammatical context, namely they act as the resumptive object pronouns of the relative clause:

wa-fihā mā taštahīhi l-ʿanfusū wa-taladdū l-ʿaʿyunu

And therein is what souls desire and eyes find sweet

li-yaʿkulū min ṭamarihī wa-mā ʿamilathu ʿaydihim

That they may eat of the fruit, and what their hands have made

Wright points out that if the relative pronoun has the function of direct object in the relative clause, a resumptive pronoun is typically used, citing examples such as *man raʾaytuhū* ‘he whom I have seen,’ *as-sāriqu llaḍi qatalahu bnī* ‘the thief whom my son killed.’ But he adds that it is “not unfrequently omitted,”

33 Sidky, “On the Regionality of the Quranic Codices,” 141.

34 ibn al-Ġazārī, *Naṣr*, § 4169.

35 Sidky, “On the Regionality of the Quranic Codices,” 141.

36 ibn al-Ġazārī, *Naṣr*, § 4006.

citing *al-mālu llaḏī taštahī ʿanfusunā* “the wealth which our souls desire” and *al-kitābu llaḏī ʾanzala llaḥu* “the book which God has sent down.”³⁷

While such constructions are common in what becomes normative Classical Arabic, this is a place where the syntax of Quranic Arabic diverges rather strongly from the standard. Use of resumptive pronouns is exceedingly rare. With *allaḏī* there are only two examples:

ʾillā ka-mā yaqūmu llaḏī yataḥabbaṭuhu š-šayṭānu min-a l-massi

except as one who stands whom Satan beats down by touch

Q2:275

*ka-llaḏī stahwathu*³⁸ *š-šayṭānu fī l-ʾarḏi ...*

like someone whom the devils lure on the earth ...

Q6:71

Relative clauses with *man* and a resumptive pronoun occur only a few times as well:

wa-minhum man ʾaḥaḏathu š-šayḥatu

Among them is the one whom the cry took.

Q29:40

man laʿanahu llaḥu wa-ḡaḏiba ʿalayhi

The one whom Allah cursed and became angry with

Q5:60

fa-sawfa taʿlamūna man yaʿtihi ʿaḏābun yuḥzīhi wa-yaḥillu ʿalayhi ʿaḏābun muqīmūn

And you will know to whom a punishment that will disgrace him will come; and upon him will befall an everlasting punishment

Q11:39, 93; Q39:39–40

37 Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 2:233.

38 Also read in the 3rd person masculine singular (with *ʾimālah*) *istahwē-hu* by Ḥamzah, cf. ibn al-Ġazārī, *Naṣr*, § 3030.

For direct object relative clauses with *mā*, the only cases where the resumptive pronoun is used are the two disputed verses already mentioned. In other words, in the Syrian and Medinan codices they occur twice, in the Basran codex it occurs once, and in the Kufan codex resumption does not happen a single time.

The very fact that Ḥaḥṣ decides to disagree with the Kufan *rasm* in exactly these places, and not places that are not disputed among the codices—e.g., Q2:102 *wa-ttabaʿū mā tatlu š-šayāṭīnu* “and follow that which the devils related” or Q5:3 *wa-mā ʾakala š-šabuʿu* “that which is devoured by wild beasts”—implies that Ḥaḥṣ was aware that these two verses had a different *rasm* in other regional codices. Ḥaḥṣ thus seems to have concluded that even though his own Kufan *rasm* lacked these forms, the fact that other codices did have it licensed him to use the construction with resumptive pronoun in these places but not in others. These choices by Ḥaḥṣ seem to anticipate that the construction with the resumptive pronoun would eventually become the preferred construction in standard Classical Arabic.

3.2 ʾAbū Ġaʿfar on Q10:22

A variant between the Syrian codex and the other codices is the reading of Q10:22 which in the Syrian codex is يسركم and in the other codices يسركم.³⁹ Considering the highly similar consonantal skeleton it seems quite likely that one is the result of a scribal error of the other.⁴⁰ In practice this results in two competing readings among the canonical readers:⁴¹

huwa lladī yusayyirukum(ū) fī l-barri wa-l-baḥri

consistent with the non-Syrian *rasm*

It is he who transports you across land and sea.

huwa lladī yanšurukum(ū) fī l-barri wa-l-baḥri

consistent with the Syrian *rasm*

It is he who scatters you across land and sea,

The reading consistent with the Syrian *rasm* is not just read by the Syrian reader Ibn ʿĀmir (who reads *yanšurukum*) but also by the Medinan ʾAbū Ġaʿfar (who

39 Sidky, “On the Regionality of the Quranic Codices,” 141.

40 But the directionality of this scribal error is difficult to determine.

41 ibn al-Ġazārī, *Našr*, § 3251.

reads *yanšurukumū*). 'Abū Ġa'far's student, Nāfi', who is also a canonical reader from Medina, reads *yusayyirukum(ū)* following the Medinan *rasm*. The exact reason why 'Abū Ġa'far preferred this reading over one consistent with the Medinan *rasm* cannot easily be recovered.

3.3 'Abū 'Amr on Q40:26

At Q40:26 there is a split between the Kufan and Basran *rasm*, which have وان and the Medinan and Syrian *rasm* which have وان.⁴² This presents itself as a difference in reading traditions:⁴³

'aw 'an yuḏhira fī l-'arḏi l-fasāda

Ḥafṣ and the Basran Ya'qūb consistent with Kufa/Basra

Or that he may cause corruption in the land

'aw 'an yaḏhara l-'arḏi l-fasādu

all other Kufans, consistent with Kufa/Basra

Or that corruption may appear in the land

wa-'an yuḏhira fī l-(')arḏi l-fasāda

The Medinans and 'Abū 'Amr, consistent with Medina/Syria

And that he may cause corruption in the land

wa-'an yaḏhara fī l-'arḏi l-fasādu

Ibn 'Āmir, and Ibn Kaṭīr consistent with Medina/Syria

And that corruption may appear in the land

'Abū 'Amr, despite being Basran, follows the Medinan/Syrian *rasm* in this case and reads identically to the Medinans Nāfi' and 'Abū Ġa'far. Going by 'Abū 'Amr's biographical data, we learn that he originally studied recitation of the Quran both in Mecca, among his teachers was Ibn Kaṭīr, and in Medina, among his teachers there was 'Abū Ġa'far.⁴⁴ Therefore, it would appear that 'Abū 'Amr decided to stick in this case to what he had learned in Medina.

⁴² Sidky, "On the Regionality of the Quranic Codices," 141.

⁴³ ibn al-Ġazarī, *Naṣr*, § 4101.

⁴⁴ al-Dahabī, *Ma'rifat al-Qurrā'*, 92.

4 The Pausal Spelling Principle

Within Classical Arabic grammatical thought it is believed that Quranic and Classical Arabic orthography spell words as if they were pronounced in isolation, i.e., that it stands both in utterance initial and utterance final position. This view is succinctly formulated by the scholar Ibn al-Sarrāğ (d. 316/929) in his book *Kitāb al-Ḥaṭṭ*, a treatise on Classical Arabic spelling rules.

The basic principle is that each word is to be written in the pronunciation as it is pronounced both utterance-initially and utterance-finally. So that it is not changed to what the word becomes when a word is in front of it, or it is connected to what is after it, so you write *الْبَن* with an *ʿalif*, regardless of whether something comes in front of it or it does not, even if you would drop it in pronunciation when a word stands before it because it is an *ʿalif al-waṣl*, and it is like that for *الْخَلِيل* with an *ʿalif*, if it is dropped when you say *bi-l-ḥalīlī* you do not drop it in the spelling (i.e. you write *بِالْخَلِيل* not *بِخَلِيل*⁴⁵). Likewise you write *عَصَا* and *قَفَا* with an *ʿalif*, even if [the *ʿalif*] is dropped due to the meeting of two unvowelled letters in your speech: *ʿaṣa bnika* and *qaḥa r-raḡūli*. So the word is just written in its isolated pronunciation, without connecting with what is before it or what is after it.⁴⁶

As words in Classical Arabic can be pronounced quite differently in pause than in context, this principle creates a considerable disconnect between what is written and what is pronounced. This perceived principle of “pausal spelling,” as it is generally called in western scholarship (though “isolated spelling” would probably be more apt), plays an important role in the readers’ theoretical framework when agreeing with or deviating from the Quranic *rasm*.⁴⁷ The Quran sometimes spells words in a way that are not quite in line with Classical Arabic norms of pronunciation. Many readers tend to be less conflicted about

45 Such spellings, however, are not uncommon in early Quranic manuscripts, see for example Cellard, *Codex Amrensis* 1, 8.

46 ibn al-Sarrāğ, *Kitāb al-Ḥaṭṭ*, 67.

47 The pausal spelling principle as described by the likes of Ibn al-Sarrāğ has mostly been accepted uncritically as the operative spelling principle in Classical Arabic as well as Quranic Arabic. However, for Quranic Arabic there is good reason to doubt that this is the correct interpretation, and since Classical Arabic orthography descends from the Quranic orthography, the principle appears to be more of a *post hoc* rationalization that is the result of imposing the Classical Arabic inflectional system onto Quranic Arabic, which appears to not have had such a system originally, cf. van Putten and Stokes, “Case in the Qurʾānic Consonantal Text.”

deviating from the *rasm* in connected speech, but in pausal position tend to choose to agree with the *rasm*. After all, words are believed to be written as they are pronounced in pause, so in pause they should be pronounced as written.

In Quranic recitation it is in principle possible to pause or continue reading on any single word, even though there are places where doing so is more natural than in others. As a result, manuals of recitation account for the non-pausal pronunciation of words that would most naturally be read pausally (e.g., verse final rhyme words) as well as nouns that would most naturally not be paused upon (e.g., between two members of a nominal construct). This runs into conflicts with the Uthmanic *rasm* which with some frequency uses pausal spellings exclusively in places with natural pauses, and uses context spellings where pausal pronunciation would be awkward. Due to the many ways that the *rasm* and the recitation in both continued and pausal pronunciation may interact with one another, it is outside of the scope of this paper to discuss every single interaction, but I will focus here on some salient and interesting examples.

4.1 *Pausal yā' Dropping*

One of the places where the pausal spelling principle comes in conflict with what the readers recite is the common shortening of word-final *-ī* in Quranic Arabic. This shortening primarily appears in pausal position—be it verse-finally or before a mid-verse pause. This form of pausal shortening is expressed in the *rasm* in such pausal positions. Rhyme confirms that this shortening led to a complete disappearance of the *-ī*, which in the case of the possessive 1sg. marker means that in pausal position the possessive pronoun is entirely unmarked, e.g., Q109:6 *لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ* *lakum dīnukum wa-liya dīn-#* ‘you have your religion and I have my religion’. But not only the 1sg. marker is affected by pausal dropping of *-ī*, it may also happen to the 1sg. object marker *-nī*, final weak nouns that end in *-ī* and rarely final weak verbs that end in *-ī*.

Several readers reinstated these *yā'āt maḥdūfah min al-ḥaṭṭ* ‘*yā's* removed from the writing.’ However, it depends on the reader and on the type of word, and whether it is paused upon how such forms are treated. For most readers the rule of reinstating the *-ī* is only applied in connected speech, whereas in pause they drop the *yā'* in order to agree with the *rasm*. Several readers maintain the *-ī* when pausing, even though this disagrees with the *rasm*. This often breaks the rhyme. While it is not explicitly mentioned in *qirā'āt* works, several readers clearly make a distinction between how they read such *yā'āt maḥdūfah* in connected speech, that depends on whether they occur verse-finally or not. The patterns are not entirely regular for any of the readers, but we can make sev-

eral generalizations. First, none of the readers lengthens the *-i* if it is a vocative phrase, unless the orthography of the Quran spells it with *yā*, so *yā-qawm-i* 'O my people', *yā-'abat-i* 'O my father', and *yā-rabb-i* 'O my lord' in connected speech, *yā-qawm-#*, *yā-'abat-#* (or *yā-'abah*, see section 4.3 below) and *yā-rabb-#*. The treatment of the other *yā'āt maḥḍufah* have been summarized in table 2.⁴⁸

'Abū 'Amr and 'Abū Ġa'far pronounce words with pausal shortening of *-ī* in the *rasm* differently depending on whether they stand at the end of a verse or not. Distinguishing between verse-internal (minor pause) and verse-final (major pause) pausal forms is not strange. Such a phenomenon is encountered in Biblical Hebrew, for example.⁴⁹ But the pronunciation of 'Abū 'Amr and 'Abū Ġa'far looks artificial; they make a distinction between words in major pause and minor pause, but the difference in pronunciation only surfaces when one does *not* pause upon it.

There are a couple of places where it is not entirely clear that we are truly dealing with pausal shortening of verbs with final *-ī* in pause. For Q89:4 *يسر yasri/yasrī, yasr#/yasrī#*, Q11:105 *يات ya'ti/ya'tī, ya't#/ya'tī#*, and Q18:64 *نابغ nabġi/nabġī, nabġ#/nabġī#* the situation is clear. These are all imperfects with shortened *ī* (in the case of Q18:64 and Q89:4 in a clearly pausal position, somewhat less clear in Q11:105). But there are two other verbs which are read Q12:12 *نرتع narta'ī, narta'ī#* and Q12:90 *يتق yattaqī, yattaqī#* by Qunbul transmitting from Ibn Kaṭīr. Grammatically, these readings are difficult to defend, if not outright wrong.⁵⁰ Thus in Q12:12 we are dealing with a result clause that follows an imperative, which should typically be in the jussive, and indeed the very next word, *wa-nal'ab* is in the expected jussive.⁵¹

'arsilhū ma'anā ġadan narta'ī wa-nal'ab, wa-'innā laḥū la-ḥāfiẓūna

Send him with us tomorrow, so we may frolic and play, we will be his guardians.

This specific reading is disagreed upon among the transmission paths transmitting from Qunbul, and Ibn Muğāhid, the canonizer of the seven readers and direct student of Qunbul does not report it. As for Q12:90, however, Ibn

48 *Waqf* is the technical term for "pause" in Arabic and *waṣl* the term for "connected speech."

49 Suchard, *The Development of the Biblical Hebrew Vowels*, 115–19.

50 ibn al-Ġazarī, *Naṣr*, § 3327, § 3356.

51 Fischer, *A Grammar of Classical Arabic, Third Revised Edition*, § 412.

TABLE 2 Treatment of *Yā'ūt Maḥdūfah* among the canonical readers

	1sg. object	1sg. possessive	Noun	Verb
Ya'qūb	Waṣl: - <i>nī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>nī</i> ^a	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>ī</i>	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>ī</i>	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: <i>ī</i>
'Abū 'Amr	Verse Final: Waṣl: - <i>nī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>n</i> ^b Verse Internal: Waṣl: - <i>nī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>n</i>	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i> ^c	Verse Final: Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i> Verse Internal: Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i>	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i>
'Abū Ġa'far	Verse Final: Waṣl: - <i>nī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>n</i> ^b Verse Internal: Waṣl: - <i>nī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>n</i>	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i> ^c	Verse Final: Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i> Verse Internal: Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i> ^d	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i>
Warṣ	Waṣl: - <i>nī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>n</i> (66x) Waṣl: - <i>nī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>n</i> (15x) Waṣl: - <i>nīya</i> ; Waqf: - <i>n</i> (1x)	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i> (14x) Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i> (8x)	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i> ^e	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i>
Qālūn	Waṣl: - <i>nī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>n</i> (70x) Waṣl: - <i>nī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>n</i> (11x) Waṣl: - <i>nīya</i> ; Waqf: - <i>n</i> (1x)	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i>	Waṣl: <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i> ^f	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i>
Ibn Kaṭīr	Waṣl: - <i>nī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>n</i> ^g	Waṣl: <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i> ^h	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>ī</i> ⁱ	Waṣl: <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>ī</i>
Rest	Waṣl: - <i>nī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>n</i> ^j	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i> ^k	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i>	Waṣl: - <i>ī</i> ; Waqf: - <i>∅</i>

- a Q5:3 واخشن اليوم "and fear me! This day" Ya'qūb reads Waṣl: *wa-ḥṣawnī*, Waqf: *wa-ḥṣawn*. The *waṣl* form is expected, as it stands before a definite article. The pausal form is unexpected.
- b While Q89:15 اكمن and Q89:16 اهنن are both verse final, they are recited *'akramanī* and *'ahānanī* as if verse-internal.
- c Q14:40 دعا is recited *du'ā'ī* in waṣl. There is no clear explanation for this exception. Q39:17 عباد الذين is recited *'bādīya llaḍīna* by al-Dūrī transmitting from 'Abū 'Amr.
- d 'Abū Ġa'far has *ka-l-ḡawābi* in Waṣl rather than the expected *ka-l-ḡawābī*.
- e Q13:9 المتعال is a single exception, simply *al-muta'ālī* in Waṣl.
- f There are four cases where Qālūn recites with -*ī* in waṣl.
- g Both transmitters agree on nine places where Ibn Kaṭīr read -*nī* in both Waṣl and Waqf. Al-Bazzī transmits two more places.
- h Al-Bazzī transmits a single exception to this rule at Q14:40 دعا which he recites *du'ā'ī* in Waṣl and Waqf.
- i Both transmitters agree on the reading of Q2:186 الداع and Q22:44 نكير with -*ī* in Waṣl and -*∅* in Waqf. Al-Bazzī has *al-muhtadī* in Waṣl and *al-muhtad* in Waqf for Q17:97 المهتد. Qunbul *ad-dā'ī* in Waṣl and *ad-dā'* in Waqf for Q54:6 الداع.
- j Ḥamzah has a single exception at Q27:36 تمدون which he reads as *tumiddūnī* in both Waṣl and Waqf. In some transmissions of Hiṣām 'an Ibn 'Āmir there is an exception for Q7:195 كيدون which is read *kiddūnī* in Waṣl.
- k Ḥamzah has a single exception at Q14:40 دعا which he reads *du'ā'ī* in both Waṣl and Waqf.

Muğāhid does mention it.⁵² Here too, the grammar of such a reading is questionable. With relative clauses with *man* in the meaning ‘whoever’, the protasis and apodosis should be in the jussive.⁵³ But Q12:90, Qunbul again reads *yattaqī* in the imperfect, even though the verb that immediately follows is read in the jussive as expected.⁵⁴

‘innahū man yattaqī wa-yaṣbir fa-‘inna llāha lā yuḍṭī ‘ağra l-muḥsinīna

Whoever fears Allah and is patient, God does not waste the reward of those who do good.

4.2 *Pausal hā’*

Another case where the *rasm* spells words pausally, and the readers had to devise a connected speech pronunciation is found with the rare occurrence of the so-called *hā’ al-sakt*. This presents itself twice in pausal verbs, and several times for a pausal form of the 1sg. possessive ending as *-iyah*.

Both the jussive Q2:259 لم يَتَسَنَّهُ “they did not spoil” and imperative Q6:90 اقْتَدِه “follow!” stand before a verse-internal pause, and they are the only cases of final-weak verb forms with a final short vowel that stand before a pause in the Quran. All other jussives and imperatives of this type are non-pausal. It thus seems that the consonantal text writes here the pausal forms *lam yatasannah#* and *iqṭadih#* with a final *hā’*, which is indeed reported as a pausal form of such forms by the Arab grammarians.⁵⁵ While most readers refuse to deviate from the *rasm* even in connected speech, the Kufan readers Ḥamzah, al-Kisā’ī, and Ḥalaf, and the Basran Ya‘qūb, drop the *hā’* in connected speech and only keep it in pause, i.e., *lam yatasanna/iqṭadi*, *lam yatasannah#/iqṭadih#*. Only the Syrian Ibn ‘Āmir has a different reading for one of these two options, he is reported to have treated the *hā’* as a pronoun, Hišām transmitted *iqṭadihi* and for ibn

52 ibn Muğāhid, *Kitāb al-Sab‘ah*, 351.

53 Fischer, *A Grammar of Classical Arabic, Third Revised Edition*, §461a.

54 Grammatical exegetes struggled with this reading as well. Ibn Ḥālawayh suggests two reasons why Qunbul may have recited this way. The first is that some Arabs did not shorten the vowel in the jussive, thus saying *lam ya’tī*, and Qunbul followed them. But Ibn Ḥālawayh makes clear that the preferred Arabic form is with a shortened vowel. The other option he adduces is that the vowel was shortened, but then was lengthened again, just like it may happen in poetry. This is not a satisfying explanation either. Where in poetry there are obvious metrical and rhyme pressures to perpetrate such a lengthening, such pressures are entirely absent in the Quran, cf. ibn Ḥālawayh, *al-Ḥuǧǧah*, 198f.

55 e.g., Sibawayh, *Al-Kitāb*, IV, 159f.

Ḍakwān both *iqṭadihī* and *iqṭadihi* are reported.⁵⁶ Grammatically, Ibn ʿĀmir's reading does not make sense. Ibn Muğāhid agreed with that assessment calling it a mistake (*ḡalat*). His student Ibn Ḥālawayh agrees and says whoever reads it as *-hi/ī* is mistaken (*fa-qad wahima*).⁵⁷

In the previous section we saw that the typical pausal form of the 1sg. possessive suffix is -Ø in the Quran, Q al-Ḥāqqah 69 is an exception to this rule, where instead we find the ending *يه* which rhymes as *-iyah*. As this is, once again a pausal form expressed in the consonantal skeleton, several readers decide to ignore the *hā'* in connected speech.⁵⁸ Q69:19, 25 كُتِبَهِ “my record” and Q69:20 حَسَابِهِ “my reckoning” are recited without the final *hā'* by Ya'qūb in connected speech, who thus reads *kitābiya*, *kitābiyah*#. As for Q69:28 مَا لِي “what I have/my wealth” and Q69:29 سُلْطَانِيهِ “my authority,” those are read without the *hā'* in connected speech not only by Ya'qūb but also by Ḥamzah, who thus read *mā liya*, *mā liyah*# and *sulṭāniya*, *sulṭāniyah*#. All other readers keep the *hā'* in connected speech. In Q101:10 we find the pausal form of the feminine third person independent pronoun هِيَ, which is read by most as *hiyah* even in connected speech, but once again Ya'qūb and Ḥamzah ignore the *rasm* and recite *hiya*, *hiyah*# instead.

4.3 Context Spelling of the Feminine Ending

In the previous two sections we saw that several complexities arise in dealing with words that are spelled pausally in the Quran from which a pronunciation in connected speech must be deduced. This in some cases leads readers to decide to ignore letters that are present in the *rasm*. However, besides this category of pausal spellings, there are also cases where words are thought to have been spelled with non-pausal spelling. In such cases, in connected speech the *rasm* can be followed, but in pause some of the readers deviate from the *rasm*.

The most obvious and prevalent of such cases are examples where the feminine ending in construct. Normally the *rasm* spells the feminine ending in construct the same as it is in the definite and indefinite forms, with a final *hā'* (هـ) which corresponds to its pausal pronunciation *-ah*#. However, not infrequently a spelling with *tā'* (ت) occurs, e.g. رَحْمَتُ اللَّهِ “God's mercy” (e.g., Q11:73), نِعْمَتُ اللَّهِ “the Grace of God” (e.g., Q2:231), or شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ “the Zaqqum tree” (Q44:43). Such spellings correspond to the pronunciation of the feminine ending in connected speech (*-at-*).

56 ibn al-Ġazārī, *Našr*, § 2374.

57 ibn Muğāhid, *Kitāb al-Sab'ah*, 262; ibn Ḥālawayh, *al-Ḥuḡḡah*, 145.

58 ibn al-Ġazārī, *Našr*, § 2376–7.

While pausing in the middle of construct phrases like these is awkward it is allowed in Quranic recitation. Therefore, the reading traditions prescribe (and differ among one another) how to deal with such an eventuality. Ibn Kaṭīr, 'Abū 'Amr al-Kisā'ī, and Ya'qūb deviate from the context spelling with *tā'* as found in the *rasm* and pronounce it with the regular pausal form of the feminine ending *-ah#* (i.e., with a *hā'* not with a *tā'*) when they pause on these words: *rahmatu lllāhi/rahmah#, ni'mata lllāhi/ni'mah#,* and *šağarata z-zaqqūmi/šağarah#* respectively.⁵⁹

All other readers maintain the ending as *-at*, in agreement with the *rasm*. For readers that do so, we find that two otherwise identical phrases in context are pronounced differently in pause, occasioned by a difference of the spelling in the *rasm*, e.g.:

Q3:107 رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ *rahmati llāhi/rahmah#* but Q11:73 رَحِمْتُ اللَّهَ *rahmatu lllāhi/rahmat#*

Q2:211 نِعْمَةُ اللَّهِ *ni'mata lllāhi/ni'mah#* but Q2:231 نَعِمْتُ اللَّهَ *ni'mata lllāhi/ni'mat#*
Q37:62 شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ *šağaratu z-zaqqūmi/šağarah#* but Q44:33 شَجَرَتِ الزَّقُّومِ *šağarata z-zaqqūmi/šağarat#*

Besides forms like these there are four words that end in stem final *-āt/-ēt-*, not all of which are strictly in construct, which undergo a pausal shift from *-āt/-ēt-* to *-āh#/-ēh#* in the reading of al-Kisā'ī: *marḍeti llāhi/marḍēh#* "God's pleasure" (e.g. Q2:207) and *bi-ḍāti ṣ-ṣudūri/bi-ḍāh#* "that of your chests" (e.g. Q3:119), *wa-lāta hīna manāšin/wa-lāh#* "while there was no time for escape" (Q38:3), and *allāt* "Al-Lāt (pre-Islamic Goddess)" *allāta/allāh#*⁶⁰ (Q53:19).⁶¹ Al-Kisā'ī is joined by Ibn Kaṭīr in reciting *hayhāti/hayhāh#* "begone!" (Q23:36).⁶²

The irregular vocative form *يَا أَبَتِي* 'O my father!', is treated as having a context spelling by Ibn Kaṭīr, Ibn 'Āmir, 'Abū Ġa'far, and treat the stem-final *-at-* as if it were the feminine ending, thus reading it with *-ah#* in pause: *yā-'abati/yā-'abah#* (e.g., Q12:4).⁶³

4.4 Nunation

A similar example of context spelling with the phrase *وَكَأَيِّنْ* *wa-ka-'ayyin* 'and how much', which spelled the *nunation* of the word with *nūn*. As *nunation* and

59 Ibid., § 2312.

60 This pausal reading should make it quite clear why it is important to clearly distinguish the emphatic *l* in *allāh* "God."

61 ibn al-Ġazari, *Naṣr*, § 2319.

62 There is disagreement for Ibn Kaṭīr's Qunbul whether he changed the final *t* or not. Ibid., § 2318.

63 Ibid., § 2317.

case vowels are typically dropped in pause, 'Abū 'Amr and Ya'qūb indeed decide to drop this *nūn* in pausal position (i.e., *wa-ka-ʾayy#*), despite it being written in the *rasm*.⁶⁴ All other cases of *nunation* are not reflected in the *rasm* and thus there is no disagreement that these are to be dropped in pause.

4.5 Reinstating Long Vowels Absent due to Context Spelling

In Quranic recitation long vowels are regularly shortened before words that start with a consonant cluster. While most of the time the *rasm* does not reflect this shortening (e.g., Q2:269 *يوتي الحكمة* *yu'ti l-ḥikmata* 'he brings wisdom'), occasionally it does (e.g., also Q2:269 *يوت الحكمة* *yu'ti l-ḥikmata* 'he brings wisdom'). In such cases, Ya'qūb reinstates the *yā* that is absent in the *rasm* in pause,⁶⁵ thus he recites Q2:269 *من يوت الحكمة* *man yu'ti l-ḥikmata/man yu'ti#* "whoever brings wisdom."⁶⁶ Al-Kisā'ī follows him in this practice only for Q27:18 *واد التمل* *wādi n-namlī/wādī#* "the valley of ants."⁶⁷ Ibn Kaṭīr follows him in this practice for Q50:41 *يوم يناد المناد* *yawma yunādī l-munādī/yawma yunādī#* "when the caller calls."⁶⁸

There are three cases where the vocative particle *'ayyuhā* is spelled shortened (cf. Q24:31 *ايه المومنون* *'ayyuha l-mu'minūna* 'O believers', Q4:133 *ايها الناس* *'ayyuha n-nāsu* 'O people'). 'Abū 'Amr, al-Kisā'ī, and Ya'qūb reinstate this *ʾalif* that is dropped from the *rasm* when pausing on this word: Q24:31 *ايه المومنون* *'ayyuha l-mu'minūna/'ayyuhā#* "O believers!", Q43:49 *يايه الساحر* *yā-'ayyuha s-sāḥiru/yā-'ayyuhā#* "O sorcerer!", Q55:31 *ايه الثقلان* *'ayyuha t-taḡalāni/'ayyuhā#* "O ye two prominent beings!"⁶⁹

5 Conclusion

In this paper we have examined the rare but salient cases where the canonical Quranic reading traditions fail to agree with the *rasm*, even though this agreement was clearly considered an important factor to determine whether a reading tradition would be considered "valid." As we have seen 'Abū 'Amr takes up a special place among the readers because he more frequently deviates from the *rasm* than the other canonical readers. Besides that, we have seen that sev-

64 Ibid., § 2383.

65 Ibid., § 2342.

66 All readers but Ya'qūb read this verb in the passive *yu'ta*, see Ibid., § 2805.

67 Ibid., § 2359.

68 Ibid., § 2364.

69 Ibid., § 2372.

eral readers also felt comfortable disagreeing with the *rasm* in places where the readers were aware that other copies of the standard text in different regions had a slightly different *rasm*.

By far the most complex interaction between what is written and what is recited, however, is found in questions of how a word should be pronounced in connected speech or when pausing upon it. The tradition identifies words considered to be spelled pausally for which a non-pausal pronunciation had to be devised, and identifies words considered to be spelled non-pausally for which a pausal spelling had to be devised.

All in all, the adherence to the written text is apparent throughout the Quranic reading traditions, which makes them *reading* traditions, not exactly independent from the written text. This dependency is, of course, also present in the Tiberian reading tradition of the Hebrew Bible, but there the oral tradition is significantly less strongly connected to the text than any of the ten canonical reading traditions of the Quran.

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