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Pronominal variation in Arabic among the grammarians, Qur'ānic reading traditions and manuscripts

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ABSTRACT

In the early Islamic period, the literary form of Arabic had an astounding amount of variation in its pronominal morphology. This paper examines the pronominal morphology of especially the third person masculine singular and plural pronouns, as they are described by the early Arabic grammarians, how they appear in the descriptions of the canonical and non-canonical reading traditions and finally the pronominal systems as they appear in actual early Qur'ānic manuscripts. It is shown that the early grammarians were much more permissive of morphological variation than one would expect from strict norms that appear later. It is also shown that the pronominal systems of the reading traditions go well beyond the kinds of variation described by these grammarians. The systems of these readers show clear clusters (a Kufan, Basran, Hijazi and a 'Classical' cluster), even though in the details reading traditions from a single region still often differ from one another. Finally, it is shown that while some of the pronominal systems known in the reading tradition literature also show up in the Qur'ānic manuscripts, there is a significant number of manuscripts that have pronominal systems unlike any of the described systems in the literary sources.

KEYWORDS

Qur'ān; Qirā'āt; Classical arabic; Qur'ānic manuscripts; Arabic grammarians; pronominal morphology

Introduction

Classical Arabic as it is presented in its normative form has a fairly uniform system for third-person suffix pronouns. Both *-hu* and *-hum* harmonise to *-hi* and *-him* if *i*, *ī* or *ay* precedes, and the singular *-hu/hi* is lengthened after short vowels to *-hū/-hī* (Wright 1996 [1859-62]: 100–1; Fischer 2002 [1972]: 142–3; Thackston 1994: 39–40). This system is likewise similar to what we encounter in the most widely circulated Qur'ānic print edition, the Medina *muṣḥaf* that reflects the reading of Ḥaḥṣ 'an (on the authority of) 'Aṣim.

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However, even within Ḥafṣ' reading we know that this is not the entire story. Ḥafṣ on one occasion lengthens the pronoun even after a long vowel, Q. 25:69 *fī-hī* (therein), and does not apply vowel harmony to *-hu* in two other occasions Q. 18:63 *'ansā-nī-hu 'illā* ([and none] made me forget except [Satan]) and Q. 48:10 *'alay-hu līlāh* ([what] he has covenanted with God). Further examination of another popular reading, namely that of Warṣ *'an Nāfi'*, reveals yet more variation, where such forms like *'alay-himū* and *humū* appear. It is clear then that the simple and uniform picture of normative Classical Arabic does not properly cover the linguistic situation of the Qur'ān in the early Islamic period. The Qur'ānic reading traditions present a much more diverse situation than the strict scholastic grammatical descriptions of the 19th- and 20th-century orientalisks have often let on; this is likewise the case for the pronominal system present in early Qur'ānic manuscripts, as already noted by Nöldeke (1860: 328).¹ Likewise, the early Arabic grammarians report many more variants of the pronominal morphology than these modern descriptions.

As it stands there is therefore a clear lacuna in terms of the description of the pronominal system of early Classical Arabic as it is reflected in the Qur'ān and described by the Arabic grammarians. The current paper aims to develop a clear and comprehensive account of the behaviour of suffixed (third-person) pronouns as they are available to us in three different sources. First, we examine how the behaviour of these pronominal systems is described by the Arab grammarians. Second, we conduct a detailed study into the many Qur'ānic reading traditions as they are recorded in the *qirā'āt* (Reading traditions) literature. Finally, we turn to Qur'ānic manuscripts and, with a large comprehensive corpus of early vocalised manuscripts, we examine the pronominal systems as they are reflected in these manuscripts.

Grammarians

While Classical Arabic is often thought of as a fairly uniform register, especially when it comes to the morphophonology, we often find that the grammarians themselves were rather lenient in allowing linguistic variation. Moreover, close examination will show that the reports and judgement of acceptability differ both by region and through time. The following section will present a fairly comprehensive treatment of the pronominal suffix system of *-hū* and *-hum* among the prominent grammarians of the first millennium CE whose works have survived,

¹Sadly, the highly insightful and detailed discussion of the reading tradition that appears in vocalised manuscripts that Nöldeke had examined, for whatever reason, did not end up in the final updated version of *Geschichte des Qorāns*.

tracking the variation they report and how their reports differ from one another. We will also discuss a few later grammarians whose comments are of some interest to the topic at hand.

Sibawayhi (d. ca. 180/796)

Sibawayhi devotes two consecutive chapters to the shape of the third-person singular and plural pronouns, the first being ‘the chapter of the persistence of the *yā*’ and *wāw* to the *hā*’ that functions as a sign of the pronoun, and their removal from it’ (*bāb ṭabāt al-yā wa-l-wāw fī l-hā*’ *allatī hiya ‘alāmat al-’iḍmār wa-ḥaḍfi-himā*, Sibawayhi *Kitāb* IV, 189–95) and ‘the chapter of what is given a *kasra* concerning the *hā*’ which is the sign of the pronoun’ (*bāb mā tuksaru fī-hi l-hā*’ *allatī hiya ‘alāmat al-’iḍmār*, Sibawayhi *Kitāb* IV, 195–8).

He takes the lengthened forms of the third person singular masculine, i.e. *-hū* and *-hī* as the default form, and describes in which contexts these are shortened. Sibawayhi tells us this happens after long vowels and diphthongs, thus one says *‘alay-hi yā fatā* (upon it, O boy), *ra ‘aytu ‘abā-hu qablu* (I saw his father before), *‘abū-hu kamā tarā* (his father is as you see, Sibawayhi *Kitāb* IV, 195–8).

It is also possible to retain the long vowels *-hū* and *-hī* regardless of context, although he comments that the short pronunciation is the better of the two readings (of the Qur’ān) (*‘aḥsan al-qirā’atayn*)² citing Q. 17:106 *nazzalnā-hu tanzīlan* (we have revealed it as revelation), Q. 7:176 *‘in taḥmil ‘alay-hi yalḥaṭ* (if you chase him, he will pant), Q. 12:20 *wa-šaraw-hu bi-ṭamanin baḥsin* (they sold him for a low price) and Q. 69:30 *ḥuḍū-hu fa-gullū-hu* (seize him, and shackle him). But, also the long pronunciation (i.e. *nazzalnā-hū*, *‘alay-hī*, *šaraw-hū*, *ḥuḍū-hū*) is Arabic (*wa-l-’itmām ‘arabī*, Sibawayhi *Kitāb* IV, 189).

He explicitly tells us that if the preceding letter does not carry a vowel, the vowel is normally lengthened (e.g. *min-hū*, *‘aṣābat-hū* etc). This is different from the form of Classical Arabic that later become normative,³ where after any closed syllable the suffix is shortened. Sibawayhi admits this possibility too, he tells us that ‘the speech of some of them’ (*qawl ba ‘ḍi-him*) is *min-hu yā fatā* (from them, O boy), *‘aṣābat-hu ḡāiḥatun* (a calamity struck him), but pronouncing it fully is better (*al-’itmām ‘aḡwad*, Sibawayhi *Kitāb* IV, 190).

²While Sibawayhi is not explicitly mentioning the reader by name, we will see below that one of the seven canonical readers, Ibn Kaṭīr, adopts this rule. It is clear that in Sibawayhi’s time, it was apparently unproblematic to call this reading inferior.

³See Fischer (2002 [1972]:142), surprisingly Wright (1996 [1859-62]:100–1) only mentions the short versions of the pronominal forms, an option that is universally considered unacceptable by all medieval grammarians.

In the same chapters Sībawayhi also discusses the long form of the plural pronouns, in this case not just the third-person suffix *-hum/him*, but all pronominal elements that end in the *mīm*, i.e. also the independent third person plural *hum*, second person plural suffix *-kum*, the verbal second-person plural *-tum* and the independent second-person plural *'antum*. With all of these the speakers have a choice: 'If you wish you can remove [the final *-ū* or *-ī*], or you can maintain it'. Thus, Sībawayhi gives the examples *'alay-kumū mālun* (wealth is upon you), *'antumū dāhibūna* (you are going), and *laday-himī mālun* (they have wealth). But one may just as well say *'alay-kum mālun*, *'antum dāhibūna* and *laday-him mālun*. Interesting to note here is the harmonised long form *-himī*, which tends to not be considered part of normative Classical Arabic, where preference is given to the form *-himū*. However, Sībawayhi is quite explicit that only 'some of them say *'alay-himū*' (Sībawayhi *Kitāb* IV, 191).

Even when people normally drop the long vowel, before a two-consonant cluster the *u* that belongs to the long vowel *-ū* reappears, thus *kun-tumu l-yawma* (today, you were), *fa'al-tumu l-ḥayra* (you have done good), *'alay-himu l-mālu* (upon them is wealth). Those that say *'alay-himi* in this context have as their basic form *'alay-himī* (which may presumably be shortened to *'alay-him*) (Sībawayhi *Kitāb* IV, 191).

The second of the two chapters specifically addresses not the length of the suffix, but the vowel of the suffix. If a *kasra* or *yā'* precedes the *hā'* (of either *-hū/ī* or *-humū/himī*), then the *hā'* receives a *i* vowel, whether it is short or long, thus *marartu bi-hī qablu* (I passed by him before), *laday-hi mālun* (he has wealth), *marartu bi-dāri-hī qablu* (I passed by his house before). However, the people of the Hijaz say *marartu bi-hū qablu*, and *laday-hū mālun* and they would recite Q. 28:81 *fa-ḥasafnā bi-hū wa-bi-dāri-hū l-'arḍa* (and we caused him and his home to sink into the ground). In other words, the dialect of the Hijaz is explicitly said to have not undergone vowel harmony. Unlike other variations in reading the Qur'ān discussed earlier by Sībawayhi, this variation is not explicitly called better or worse than the general system he describes (Sībawayhi *Kitāb* IV, 195).

He continues, saying that whoever says *wa-bi-dāri-hū l-'arḍa* [i.e. the Hijazis] also says *'alay-humū mālun* and *bi-humū dālīka* – thus connecting the long unharmonised form with the unharmonised *-hū* of the singular (Sībawayhi *Kitāb* IV, 196).⁴

While the unharmonised Hijazi forms receive no special qualification in relation to the harmonised forms, this is different from certain harmonised

⁴Rabin (1951:99) cites Sībawayhi as saying the people of the Hijaz said *bi-gulāmi-hū*, *bi-gulāmi-hum*. These examples are not mentioned by Sībawayhi. In fact, Sībawayhi does not mention the unharmonised short form *-hum* explicitly at all, only *-humū*.

forms that fall outside of Sībawayhi's normative acceptability. Thus, he informs us that people from among the Rabī'a say *min-him* 'from them'. Sībawayhi does not mince words: this is degenerate language (*wa-hāḍihī luḡa radī'a*). Among the Bakr b. Wā'il tribe, some speakers go even further and harmonise the vowel of *-kum* saying *'aḥlāmi-kim* (your dreams) and *bi-kim* (with you). With this Sībawayhi is even less pleased and says 'it is utterly degenerate' (*hiya radī'a ḡiddan*, Sībawayhi *Kitāb* IV, 196). Schematically we can represent the different options Sībawayhi describes as proper Arabic. A small arrow pointing downwards is placed besides any form that Sībawayhi values negatively compared to the other forms.

	Default system	"Some of them"	Hijaz
v-hv	-hū, -hī		-hū
v-hv	-hu, -hi	-hū, -hī ↓	-hu
C-hv	-hū	-hu ↓	-hū
-hvm	-hum(ū), -him(i)	-hum(ū), -him(ū)	-humū
-hvmv CC	-humu, -himi	-humu, -himu	-humu

Farrā' (d. 207/822)

Farrā' in his *Luḡāt al-Qur'ān* reports on the various ways the third person singular masculine, dual and plural pronouns are treated in terms of vowel harmony. He states, 'Regarding *'alay-hvm*: there are two linguistic practices. As for Qurayš and the people of Hijaz, and those eloquent [people] that surround them [who are from] Yemen, they say: *'alay-hum*, with an *u* after the *h* (*raf' al-hā*'), and (likewise) *'alay-humā*, and *'alay-hunna*, and Q. 15:6 *yā-'ayyuhā llaḍī nuzzila 'alay-hu ḍ-ḍikru* (O you to whom the reminder has been revealed), and Q. 2:2 *lā rayba fī-hu hudan li-l-muttaqīna* (there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the God-fearing), and Q. 26:210 *wa-mā tanazzalat bi-hu š-šayāṭīnu* (the devils did not reveal it), and *nazaltu bi-hu* (I lodged with him), so they [always] have an *u* after the *h* (*raf' al-hā*') (Farrā' *Luḡāt* 10).

He continues, 'And the people of Naḡd from 'Asad and Qays and Tamīm, they apply an *i* vowel to it (*yaksirūnahā*), so they say: *'alay-hi*, and *'alay-himā*, and *'alay-him*. As for Kināna and some of Banū Sa'd b. Bakr – and they are the foster family of the prophet – they also apply an *i* vowel to it, but when it is followed by a [definite article] they apply the *u* to the *h* and *m* (of the third person plural masculine), like Q. 6:111 *'ilay-humu l-malā'ikata* ([we bestowed] the angels upon them), and Q. 28:63 *'alay-humu l-qawlu* ([those] upon whom the word [has come into effect]). This is what Kisā'i chooses⁵ and it is, in our eyes, the most eloquent of linguistic practices

⁵This is indeed the reading as it is reported for Kisā'i. See the discussion in the section below.

because the prophet said “I am the most eloquent of you [all], I grew upon among my maternal uncles” (Farrā’ *Luġāt* 10–1).

Finally, he concludes ‘Some of Banū ’Asad apply an *i* to the *h* in ‘*alay-him* and an *u* to the *m* when [it is followed by] the definite article *al-*, so they say: “‘*alay-himu l-malā’ikata*”. All of the above is correct and good’. What Farrā’ does not mention explicitly is the alternative, ‘*alay-himi l-malā’ikata*, although it is implied by singling out *some* of the Banū ’Asad (Farrā’ *Luġāt* 11).

When it comes to the vowel of the plural pronouns such as ‘*antumū*, ‘*kumū* and ‘*humū*, Farrā’ tells us that ‘the Arabs are united on [both options:] not placing a vowel after the *m*, or placing an *u* after it. In their speech it is: *min-hum* or *min-humū*; ‘*alay-kum* or ‘*alay-kumu*; *kun-tum* or *kun-tumu*.⁶ We do not know it as being exclusive to anyone (to have) one of the two linguistic practices. All of them say it in both manners’ (Farrā’ *Luġāt* 33).

Finally, Farrā’ also mentions the forms with extreme vowel harmony such as *min-him*, which he attributes to Kalb, ‘Udra, Banū l-Qayn, Banū Taġlab, and Namr which is a linguistic practice that he considers to be rejected (*wa-hiya luġa marfūda*), and he adds that Namr even says *as-salāmu ‘alay-kim* (Farrā’ *Luġāt* 23).

While in *Luġāt al-Qur’ān* Farrā’ does not discuss the conditioning of the shortening of the singular pronoun to ‘*hu/hi* explicitly, he does discuss this at some length in his *Ma’ānī l-Qur’ān*. Here he says that ‘they choose to remove the *wāw* from the *hā*” thus saying *da ‘hu yaqḥabu* (let him go), *min-hu*, ‘*an-hu*, and they hardly ever say [*wa-lā yakādūna yaqūlūna*] *min-hū*, ‘*an-hū*. Here Farrā’ therefore clearly disagrees with Sībawayhi, and advocates the form that becomes standard in Classical Arabic today (Farrā’ *Ma’ānī* I, 223–4).

‘Aḥfas al-’Awsaṭ (d. 215/830)

In his *Ma’ānī l-Qur’ān*, ‘Aḥfaš al-’Awsaṭ (henceforth ‘Aḥfaš) begins by discussing suffix vowel length. For singular pronouns following a *yā*’, according to him, the Arabs shortened the *yā*’ and the *wāw* that comes after the *hā*’, which is consistent with Sībawayhi. The same applies to ‘*alif-s* and *wāw-s* before the pronoun like Q. 7:107 ‘*aṣā-hu* (his stick) and Q. 10:73 *fa-kadḏabū-hu* (so they disbelieved him). He does recognise that ‘some Arabs maintain [the length], because that is from the base (*al-aṣl*), so they say: *fa-kadḏabū-hū*, or Q. 7:64 *fa-’anḡaynā-hū* (so we saved him),

⁶The edition only writes *min-humū* with a *wāw* to denote lengthening of the *mīm*. The remaining words are only marked with a *ḍamma*. Although this may convey a difference in vowel length, we do not believe this to be the case here. However, since the edition is based on a lone manuscript and there is no way to corroborate the text, we reproduce it as such.

or *ʿaṣā-hū*, or Q. 2:2 *fī-hū* (in it), and this is the reading of the people of Medina’ (ʿAḥfaṣ *Maʿānī* 26–7).⁷ Note also that here he suggests that the people of Medina read *fī-hū* without vowel harmony.

For singular suffixes following consonants, however, ʿAḥfaṣ states that ‘some people have said: Q. 51:50 *ʿinnī lakum min-hu naḍīrun mubīnun* (I am for you, from him, a clear warner), dropping the *wāw* [of *min-hū*]. They likened the consonant to the *yāʾ*, *wāw*, and *ʿalif*. But this is not good in Arabic. The best is *min-hū naḍīrun* with the addition of a *wāw*, even if it is not written’.⁸ Here, he is in clear agreement with Sibawayhi and more opinionated at that, against Farrāʾ, his Kufan contemporary (ʿAḥfaṣ *Maʿānī* 27).

Vowel harmony after *ī*, *ay* or *i* is referred to as the practice of Banū Tamīm. ‘As for the people of Hijaz, they do *ḍamm* after *i* and after *yāʾ* as well. [God] says [Q. 2:92]: *tumma ttaḥaḍtumu l-ʿiḡla min baʿdi-hī wa-ʿantum ḡālimūna* (then you took the calf after it). The people of Hijaz [read]: *min baʿdi-hū*, maintaining the *wāw* in all locations’ (ʿAḥfaṣ *Maʿānī* 28).

ʿAḥfaṣ disapproves of shortened suffixes after short vowels as well: ‘Of the Arabs are those who drop the *wāw* or *yāʾ* in these instances as well, but this is rare and obscene. They say: *marartu bi-hi qablu* (I passed by him before). They do the same with *ḍamm*, saying: *raʾaytu-hu qablu* (I saw him before), not following with a *wāw*. We have also heard some of this from eloquent Arabs’. He ends his discussion of the singular pronoun by mentioning that some readers assimilate across the short vowel Q. 2:2 *fī-h=hudan* ([there is no doubt] in it, a guidance [for the mindful]),⁹ and other Arabs do not vowel the pronominal *hāʾ* at all, which is claimed to be attributed to ʿAzd al-Sarāt¹⁰ (ʿAḥfaṣ *Maʿānī* 28).

With respect to the realisation of the plural pronoun, the speakers are split into two groups: those who do not add any vowel to the *-hvm* suffix in context and those who do. For the latter group, ʿAḥfaṣ mentions some who add a *wāw* to form *-hvmū* unconditionally, both in Qurʾānic reading and in regular speech.¹¹ If it is preceded by an *i*, *ī* or *ay*, such as in *ʿalay-him*, *bi-him*, or *baʿdi-him*, then ‘some Arabs say *ʿalay-himī*, with the addition of a *yāʾ*, and the *kasr* of the *mīm* and *hāʾ*’. Alternatively, he mentions those who say *ʿalay-himū*, or *ʿalay-humī*. Forms such as *ʿalay-kimī* and *bi-kimī*, he refers to as obnoxious (*qabīḥ*), practically unheard of, and attributed to

⁷No Medinan reader is reported to lengthen those forms, although the Meccan reciters such as Ibn Kaṭīr and Ibn Muḥaysin do (see discussion under Reading traditions below).

⁸Note ʿAḥfaṣ’ striking argumentation here that highlights the disconnect between Classical Arabic orthography and the language that it is supposed to represent.

⁹Such an assimilation is still found in ʿAbū ʿAmr’s reading, see the discussion under Reading Traditions.

¹⁰This should be *ʿazd al-sarāt*, but the edition actually has *ʿasad al-sarāt*.

¹¹This remark by ʿAḥfaṣ concerning regular speech at least provides some evidence that he was not (exclusively) sourcing their information from Qurʾānic readings.

some of the Bakr b. Wā'il; he cites 'Aḥfaṣ al-'Akbar (d. 177/793) as having heard this in some of their poetry ('Aḥfaṣ *Ma'ānī* 29).

Regarding suffixes followed by consonant clusters, 'Aḥfaṣ prescribes shortening the long vowel, both for plural and singular, yielding *marartu bi-hi l-yawma* (I passed by him today) and *ra'aytu-hu l-yawma* (I saw him today). He concludes by dismissing the shortening of the vowels of plural pronouns like *-humū*, stating that 'it has been claimed that some Arabs vowel the *mīm* but do not follow it with a *yā*' or a *wāw* in poetry. But this is practically unheard of' ('Aḥfaṣ *Ma'ānī* 30).

Mubarrid (d. 285/899)

For the singular, Mubarrid in his *Muqtaḍab* starts by stating that the base ('aṣl) of the pronoun is always *-hū* and in pause *-h*, 'so if you pronounce it in context, you say: 'aṭaytu-hū yā raḡula (I gave it to him, O man!), ḡā'a-nī ḡulāmu-hū fa-'lam (his servant came to me, so know it!), ra'aytu ḡulāma-hū yā fatā (I saw his servant, O boy!), *marartu bi-ḡulāmi-hū* (I passed by his servant), *marartu bi-hū* (I passed by him), Q. 28:81 *fa-ḡasafnā bi-hū wa-bi-dāri-hū l-'arḡa* (and we caused him and his home to sink into the ground), 'alay-hū māluṇ (he has wealth), *hādīhī 'aṣā-hū yā fatā* (this is his stick, O boy), and *hādā 'aḡū-hū fa-'lam* (this is his brother, so know it!, Mubarrid *Muqtaḍab* I, 399)'.¹²

Different from the other grammarians, Mubarrid specifically starts his description with the 'base' forms, which Sibawayhi and others only describe as the Hijazi forms. He continues, however, saying that 'if there is a *yā*' or a *kasra* before the *hā*', then it is best (*al-'aḡsan*) that you replace the *ḡamma* with a *kasra* [...] and the *wāw* with the *yā*'. But even if you bring the base form, like we started with, that is [also] good Arabic (*fa-'arabī ḡayyid*, Mubarrid *Muqtaḍab* I, 399)'.¹² Here then, he gives explicit normative preference to harmonised forms, something that is lacking in the descriptions of the grammarians before him.

Moreover, for the shortening he says 'know that when there is an unvoveled *yā*' or unvoveled *wāw* or 'alif before the masculine *hā*', there is one who chooses to remove the *wāw* and the *yā*' after it [...] and thus his speech is Q. 7:107 *fa-'alqā mūsā 'aṣā-hu* (so Moses cast down his stick), Q. 24:54 'alay-hi mā ḡummila (and upon him is that with which he has been charged), [and they say:] *fī-hi baṣā'iru* (in it are keen insights), *ra'aytu qafā-hu yā fatā* (I saw the back of his neck, O boy!) If you pronounce it fully, that is excellent Arabic (*fa-'arabī ḡasan*), for it is the base ('aṣl) and it is an option' (Mubarrid *Muqtaḍab* I, 401).

¹²Mubarrid does not explicitly identify these base forms as being Hijazi here, unlike most other authors. But elsewhere in the book it is identified as specific to the people of the Hijaz (Mubarrid *Muqtaḍab* I, 175).

He continues to comment on the preferences of his Basran predecessors and explicitly disagrees with them, siding with Farrā': 'in the case that before the *hā*' there is an unvoveled letter that is not among these letters (i.e. 'alif, *yā*' or *wāw*) then Sibawayhi and Ḥalīl preferred full pronunciation. But to me removal is the best (*al-ḥaḍf 'indī 'aḥsan*), thus His speech is: Q. 3:7 *min-hu 'āyātun muḥkamātun* (among it are clear revelations), [and they say:] *min ladun-hu yā fatā* (from his part, O boy!, Mubarrid *Muqtaḍab* I, 401)'.

In the sections where Mubarrid discusses the morphology of the plural, he first introduces the second person plural forms, which he says can be either *-kumū*, *-tumū* or shortened to *-kum*, *-tum*. For the third person masculine plural, one switches the *kāf* with the *hā*' and 'you say: *ra'aytu-humū yā fatā* (I saw them, O boy!), *marartu bi-humū fa-'lam* (I passed by them, so know it!), and it is allowed to remove (the *wāw*), and this is good and what most people do [...]. However, it is preferable with the *hā*' to apply a *kasra* (to it) when before it there is a *kasra* or a *yā*', so you say: *marartu bi-himī* (I passed by them), *nazaltu 'alay-himī* (I visited them). One who removes (the *wāw* or *yā*') says: *marartu bi-him*, *nazaltu 'alay-him*'. One may also decide not to apply the vowel harmony on the vowel that follows the *mīm*, and 'so one says *marartu bi-himū*, but following [the vocalisation of the preceding syllable] is better ('*aḥsan*), and thus he says: *marartu bi-himī*, *nazaltu 'alay-himī*' (Mubarrid *Muqtaḍab* I, 403–5).

Similar to Sibawayhi, Mubarrid finishes up mentioning that Bakr b. Wā'il would apply vowel harmony even with *-kum*. But this is a mistake to him as well.

Mubarrid's description is significantly more normative than the previous grammarians, and he gives specific instructions on how to treat the pronominal system. His most normative system is essentially identical to what comes to be considered normative Classical Arabic, with the exception that he prefers the harmonised long form *-himī* over *-himū*.

Zağğāğ (d. 311/923)

Zağğāğ (*Ma'ānī* I, 50–3) discusses the pronouns starting with the plural pronoun, stating: 'and you have, regarding '*alay-hvm*, [two options]: adding an *u* to the *h* or adding an *i*. Thus, you say: Q. 1:7 *alladīna 'an'amta 'alay-him* ([the path] of those you have blessed) or '*alay-hum*. And the majority of the readers adhere to these two forms (*luğatayn*)'. He also discusses the optional ending, 'it is also permitted [to read] '*alay-h[i/u]mū* with a *waw*. The base ('*aṣl*) for this is the *hā*' in your speech: *ḍarabtu-hū yā fatā* (I hit him, O boy) or *marartu bi-hū yā fatā* (I passed by him, O boy!) that is articulated with a *wāw* in context. However, when you pause, you say: *ḍarabtu-h* or *marartu bi-h*' (Zağğāğ *Ma'ānī* I, 50).

In his description, Zağğāğ takes the unharmonised form of the singular pronoun to be the default while allowing the harmonised suffix as well: ‘when you say *marartu bi-hū yā fatā*, if you so choose you can also say *marartu bi-hī*. You change the *wāw* into a *yā*’ due to the *i* that precedes it’. Citing Qur’ānic verses, he states ‘it was also read Q. 28:81 *fa-ḥasafnā bi-hī wa-bi-dāri-hī l-’arḍa* or *bi-hū wa-bi-dāri-hū l-’arḍa* (and we caused him and his home to sink into the ground) – which is from the reading of the people of Hijaz’. He follows up with a summary of the possible combinations: ‘Therefore, you have four options: if you wish, you add an *i* to the *hā*’ or if you wish you maintain [the original] *ī*. It is the same in *ḍamm*: if you wish, you add an *u* to the *hā*’, or if you wish you maintain [the original] *ū*. So, you can say: ‘*alay-hi*, ‘*alay-hī*, ‘*alay-hu*, ‘*alay-hū*’ (Zağğāğ *Ma’ānī* I, 50–1).

Although Zağğāğ contextualises the unharmonised pronominal suffix as being the base (‘*aṣl*’), that status does not translate into preference in Qur’ānic readings. In fact, while previous grammarians are descriptive in their treatment of the pronominal suffix forms, with Farrā’ explicitly approving all forms he lists as being ‘correct and good’, Zağğāğ expresses explicit preference for particular forms, and distinguishes between possible forms and permitted forms in Qur’ānic reading on the basis of pre-existing tradition, a condition which was not previously stipulated. He says, ‘The [proper] reading is *i* without a full *ī* in ‘*alay-hi*; it is the best of these four options. It is also not allowed (*lā yanbağī*) to read with what is possible (*bimā yağūz*) except if there exists an authentic transmission using it or it is read by many readers’ (Zağğāğ *Ma’ānī* I, 51)¹³

He then explicitly ranks the singular pronominal suffixes, preferring shortening in closed syllables and harmony over lengthening and disharmony, ‘The most superior of languages is what is in the Qur’ān, which is His speech: Q. 3:75 ‘*alay-hi qā’iman* (standing over him).’¹⁴ Then what is next in superiority is ‘*alay-hu mālun*, with *ḍamm*. Then it is followed by ‘*alay-hī mālun*, and finally ‘*alay-hū mālun* – and it is the worst (‘*arda*’) of the four’ (Zağğāğ *Ma’ānī* I, 51). Zağğāğ’s expression of preference for the shortened harmonised form is reflected in the canonical reading traditions which mostly follow this norm as we will see below, and is likely to indicate a more developed notion of *proper* Arabic present in the late 3rd/early 4th century compared to just a century prior. We also find, once again, explicit disapproval of the lengthening of all singular pronominal suffixes after long vowels and diphthongs, which Sibawayhi expressed distaste for as well.

¹³Note that this, and his subsequent remark, explicitly suggests that a reading may be valid not only through authentic transmission but also through broad popularity of a reading. This is a striking deviation from what comes to be the orthodox view of the acceptability of a reading which requires authentic transmission.

¹⁴This statement is striking, as this seems to imply that to Zağğāğ only the harmonised form ‘*alay-hi* is Qur’ān. But as we will see in the next section, ‘*alay-hī* and ‘*alay-hu* are both reported for readers of the Qur’ān, even among the canonical readers.

Moving on to the plural pronominal suffix, he says: ‘As for their speech: *‘alay-hum*, the base form of the *hā*’ as we have described it, that it is followed by an *u*, with a loss of the [full] *ū*. However, the *hā*’ can also be followed by an *i* due to the *yā*’ which precedes it. [To summarise:] what is before the pronominal *mīm* is followed by an *u*, which is present due to the *mīm*, but it is switched to an *i* due to the *yā*” (Zağğāğ *Ma ‘ānī* I, 51–2). Zağğāğ continues by noting the popularity of *‘alay-him* and *‘alay-hum* in the Qur’ān. He then chastises Sibawayhi for quoting ‘aberrant poetry’ containing *‘aḥlāmi-kim* (your dreams), which, in his estimation, is in fact *‘aḥlāmi-kum*.

Zağğāğ concludes: ‘As for *‘alay-hvmū*, the original form of the plural is that it has an *ū* [...]. As for those who read Q. 1:7 *‘alay-humū wa-lā ḍ-ḍāllīna* ([not] those [who have earned your anger] nor those who have gone astray) – it is rare. And it is not appropriate (*lā yanbağī*) to read with anything but what is popular, despite there being people who have read like this, for it is far rarer than dropping [the *wāw*] in the speech of the Arabs’ (Zağğāğ *Ma ‘ānī* I, 52–3).

It would appear then, that in late third century Baghdad, where Zağğāğ is writing, the contextual *-ū* had all but disappeared. Once again, this is in stark contrast to what Sibawayhi and Farrā’ mention, both of whom testify to the popularity of both forms.

Nahḥās (d. 338/949)

Nahḥās was an Egyptian grammarian who travelled to Baghdad to study under Zağğāğ. In his *‘I’rāb al-Qur’ān*, he does not add significantly new information to the discussion of pronouns, but he offers a survey of regional and individual readers associated with the different options (Nahḥās *‘I’rāb* 14–5, 17). It is significant to note that Nahḥās is the first grammarian in our discussion who is potentially writing *after* Ibn Muğāhid authored his work on the seven readers, and he was also based in Baghdad.

He indicates that there are five options regarding the plural pronominal suffix, and cites Ibn ‘Abī ‘Ishāq (d. 117/735), an early Basran grammarian and the teacher of the canonical reader ‘Abū ‘Amr (d. 154/770), as reading *‘alay-humū*; Nahḥās refers to this as being the base form (*‘aṣl*) of the plural. He then reports that Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) read *‘alay-himī* for the reason of vowel harmony (lit. “because he hated to combine a *yā*’ and a *ḍamma*”). The people of Medina are said to have read *‘alay-him*, which is ‘the language of the people of Nağd’. Ḥamza and the people of Kufa reportedly read *‘alay-hum*, and, finally, ‘A’rağ (d. 130/748) read *‘alay-himū* (Nahḥās *‘I’rāb* 14–5).

Naḥḥās reports two additional aberrant forms (*luḡatān šādḡdatān*), which are *‘alay-humu* and *‘alay-himi*, with shortened final vowels. It appears that this was also the position of Mubarrid (d. 286/898), who authored an earlier but now lost work in the *‘I‘rāb al-Qur‘ān* genre, whom Naḥḥās cites as disapproving of these final two forms. The attribution of the *‘alay-him* form to Najd is consistent with what Farrā’ relays, and the readings ascribed to Ḥasan and Ḥamza are consistent with what we find in other sources, including the latter’s canonical reading (see below). However, Naḥḥās does not seem to recognise the prevalence of the *‘alay-himū* form, mentioning it as ‘the fifth (and final) form’ (*al-luḡa l-ḥāmisa*) and attributed only to a single reader (al-’A‘raḡ). This is odd considering works from within the reading tradition transmit this from numerous Hijazi readers including Qālūn *‘an Nāfi‘*, Ibn Kaṭīr, and ‘Abū Ġa‘far, as we will see in the next section on the reading traditions (Naḥḥās *‘I‘rāb* 15).

Regarding the singular pronominal suffix, Naḥḥās also lists five options, which he ranks in the same order as Zaḡḡāḡ while adding in mentions of readers, ‘Regarding the *hā*’ there are five options: the most superior is *fī-hi*, followed by *fī-hu* [...] and it is the reading of Zuhri and Sallām ‘Abū l-Munḡir. Next is *fī-hī* ... which is the reading of Ibn Kaṭīr. Also possible are *fī-hū* and *fī-h* when assimilated’ (Naḥḥās *‘I‘rāb* 17).¹⁵ Here, Naḥḥās expresses awareness of a number of readers, including, Ibn Kaṭīr, which is surprising considering his silence regarding the plural form *‘alay-himū*, also read by Ibn Kaṭīr.

Fārisī (d. 377/987)

Fārisī’s *Ḥuḡḡa* is primarily a work in defence of the readings canonised by his teacher Ibn Muḡāhid. The data of interest here are reports that he relays on the authority of ‘Abū Ḥātim al-Siḡistānī (d. 255/869), whose works are largely lost. Fārisī transmits through ‘Abū Ḥātim that the reading of ‘A‘raḡ (d. 130/748) was *‘alay-himū*, which is consistent with what Naḥḥās reports. ‘Abū Ḥātim also said that he had ‘never heard anyone recite with *kasr* of the *mīm* without following it with a *yā*’ in context, nor anyone recite with *ḍamm* of the *mīm* except that they followed it with a *wāw* in context’ (Fārisī *Ḥuḡḡa* I, 151). In other words, ‘Abū Ḥātim is indicating that those who vowel the plural suffix all lengthen it. The final relevant report from ‘Abū Ḥātim is that, during his time, the *kasr* of the *hā*’ along with the *ḍamm* of the *mīm* before a consonant cluster, as in Q. 2:61 *‘alay-himu ḡ-ḡillatu* (humiliation [struck] them), is ‘a widespread (*fāšiya*) language in the two holy cities’ (Fārisī *Ḥuḡḡa* I, 149).

¹⁵For *fī-h* Naḥḥās is undoubtedly referring to ‘Abū ‘Amr’s reading Q. 2:2 *fī-h=hudan* ([there is no doubt] in it, a guidance [for the mindfull]), with major assimilation across a short vowel.

A very interesting and revealing comment from Fārisī regarding the unconditional *ḍamm* of the *hā* ' is that 'it is the language of Qurayš, and it is the old reading' (Fārisī *Huḡḡa* I, 149). Here, Fārisī is recognising that unharmonised forms represent the oldest readings which apparently fell out of fashion for one reason or another over time.

Later grammarians

Ibn al-'Anbārī (d. 577/1181) only has a brief discussion of plural pronouns, mentioning that the base of the plural is '*alay-humū*, and that while harmonising to '*alay-him* is well and good, some unnamed grammarians expressed disapproval of the harmonised forms (Ibn al-'Anbārī *Bayān* I, 39–40). He discusses the singular pronoun in greater length, indicating that two popular ways of reading *fih* (in context) are *fī-hi* and *fī-hī*. Though both are approved, he expresses preference for the short *-i* over *-ī*, 'the reading [...] *fī-hi* is better ('*awḡah*) than [...] the reading *fī-hī*' (Ibn al-'Anbārī *Bayān* I, 44–5).

'Ukbarī (d. 616/1219) enumerates ten options for the plural pronominal suffix and indicates that all ten have been used in Qur'ānic recitation. These correspond to all possible combinations of *i* and *u* vowels following the *hā* ' with *i*, *ī*, *u*, *ū*, and no vowel following the *mīm*.¹⁶ He does not discuss any readers, except for the passing reference to Ibn Kaṭīr who is said to have read with a long *-ū*. No preference is given to any particular form either, although '*alay-himī* is noted as being 'acceptable despite being weak (*ḡā'iz 'alā ḍa f*'). This is a striking deviation from the norms as presented by Sibawayhi and later Mubarrid who clearly viewed the '*alay-himī* form as the default and even preferable form to '*alay-himū*. For the singular suffix, 'Ukbarī lists all four possibilities: *-hu*, *-hū*, *-hi*, and *-hī*, once again without expressing any preference for a particular form ('Ukbarī *Tibyān* I, 11–4).¹⁷

Hamaḍānī (d. 643/1245) reproduces an amalgamated discussion from 'Ukbarī and Zaḡḡāḡ in his work, without any new additions (Hamaḍānī *Farīd* I, 91–4).

Raḍī l-'Astarabāḍī (d. 686/1287) in his famous commentary on Ibn al-Ḥaḡīb's *Kāfiya* first mentions the Hijazi unconditional *ḍamm* of the singular pronominal suffix, giving *laday-hū* and *bi-hū* as examples, while others harmonise with *kasr*. Words such as *min-hu*, which are not preceded by a vowel are typically articulated as such by almost everyone, are reported on the authority of 'Abū 'Alī l-Fārisī to have been pronounced as *min-hī* by 'some people from Bakr b. Wā'il' ('Astarabāḍī *Šarḥ* II, 133). As for the vowel

¹⁶Such unlikely forms like '*alay-humī* should be interpreted as paradigmatic fabrications, which some readers or grammarians may have experimented with, rather than actual attested forms.

¹⁷'Ukbarī also has a work dedicated to the '*i'rāb* of aberrant (*šādḍ*) readings where he simply reproduces the same discussion.

length, 'Astarabāḍī tells us to look to what precedes the *hā*': if it is a short vowel, then the vowel following the *hā* is lengthened as in *bi-hī* or *bi-hū* and *ḍaraba-hū*. An exception to this are reportedly the tribes of Banū 'Aqīl and Kilāb, both of whom approve of the shortened forms, and even the complete dropping of the vowel. He does note that others are not so approving, and only allow it under poetic licence.

When the *hā* follows a vowelless consonant or weak consonant, such as '*alay-hv* or *min-hv*', then, he says, 'the choice is to shorten the vowel'. Here he sides with Mubarrid and Farrā' against Sibawayhi. He also notes that Ibn Kaṭīr read with unconditional vowel lengthening.

'Astarabāḍī enumerates the different vowel combinations while indicating their popularity, 'The addition of *i* to the *hā*' without lengthening is most popular after a *yā*' and less so after an *i* vowel, because the former would be like a consonant cluster. The addition of *ī* after the *hā*', such as *bi-hī* or '*alay-hī*', is more popular after an *i* vowel and less so after a *yā*' for the reasons we stated' ('Astarabāḍī *Šarḥ* II, 134–5). The *-hu* and *-hū* forms are mentioned for reference only, with no indication of them being used.

A new scenario is also described by 'Astarabāḍī for weak consonants that are dropped in jussive such as *yarḍa-h* and *nuṣli-h*, and pausal forms like '*alqi-h* and *aḡzi-h*, where there are a number of possibilities. Vowel lengthening is allowed out of consideration for the preceding vowel in speech, and shortening is also allowed out of consideration for the consonant that was dropped. The final allowance is to drop the vowel entirely, treating the contextual form as pausal. He makes explicit mention that all three of these options have been used to read the Qur'ān ('Astarabāḍī *Šarḥ* II, 135).¹⁸

Discussing the *hā*' in dual and both masculine and feminine plural suffixes, 'Astarabāḍī repeats the aberrant forms like *min-himā* and *min-him* on the authority of Fārisī. He states that those who have unharmonised singular pronouns like *bi-hū* and '*alay-hū*', namely the Hijazis, also have unharmonised duals and plurals like *ḡulāmay-humā*, *ḡulāmay-hum*, and *ḡulāmay-hunna*. Then he cites Ḥamza's reading as doing *ḍamm* of the three plurals: '*ilay-hum*, '*alay-hum*, and *laday-hum*, stating that 'it was said that the reason behind this is that the *yā*' in those words replace an '*alif*', so the *yā*' was treated as if it was the original [letter, i.e. '*alif*']. However, 'Astarabāḍī is not convinced by this and responds, 'Using this logic, it would have been necessary to read the singular, dual, and feminine plurals as '*alay-hu*, '*alay-humā*, and '*alay-hunna* –but it was not read so'.

¹⁸This is indeed the case. All jussive/imperative weak verbs that take the pronominal suffix *-h* are read without a final vowel among at least one of the ten canonical readers and many of them are read with a short vowel by some. There seems to be no patterns as to when any one reader decides to read a form vowelless, shortened form or long form (Ibn al-Ġazārī *Naṣr* II, 974–92).

He tempers his frustration by reasoning that ‘perhaps this [mismatch] is due to following a precedent (*wa-la‘alla dālika li-ttibā‘ al-‘aṭar*, ‘Astarabāḍī *Šarḥ* II, 135–6)’.

Moving on to the *mīm* in plural pronouns of the *-him* form, he affirms the contextual nature of final vowel, and opines that if it is followed by a consonant cluster, then ‘the *kasr* of the *mīm* is more fitting [*‘aqyas*], as in Q. 28:23 *min dūni-himi mra‘atayni* (besides them, two women) and in Q. 2:61 *‘alay-himi d-ḡillatu* (upon them is humiliation), in accordance to the reading of ‘Abū ‘Amr. The remaining readers employ *ḡamm* in consideration of the base form’. As for vowel lengthening, he reports that it is less popular than dropping the vowel in context, and uses Ibn Kaṭīr’s reading of *‘alay-himū* as an example. He tacitly disapproves of this, indicating that ‘the lengthening with a *-ī* (to yield *-himī*) is more fitting [*‘aqyas*] to be followed’. However, he quotes Fārisī as disapproving of lengthening with an *-ī* (‘Astarabāḍī *Šarḥ* II, 136–7).

Samīn al-Ḥalabī (d. 756/1355) reiterates that the unharmonised *hā‘* in the plural is a Hijazi feature and that vowelless *mīm*-s are most popular along with *-i* before consonant clusters (for those who harmonise *-him*).¹⁹ He once again mentions the ten options, though, unlike ‘Ukbarī, Ḥalabī states that only some of them were used in recitation (Ḥalabī *Durr* I, 70–1). This enumeration is attributed by Ḥalabī to ‘Abū Bakr b. al-‘Anbārī (d. 328/940),²⁰ who is perhaps a source for ‘Ukbarī as well.

For singular forms, Ḥalabī again cites the disharmony of the Hijazis, and quotes Ḥamza as reading Q. 20:10 *li-‘ahli-hu mkuṭū* ([he said] to his family: ‘stay’), and Ḥafṣ’ reading Q. 48:10 *‘ahada ‘alayhu lḡāha* ([what] he has covenanted with God) and Q. 18:63 *wa-mā ‘ansānī-hu ‘illā* (and none made me forget except [Satan]), all in ‘the language of the Hijaz’ (Ḥalabī *Durr* I, 88). He also comments on vowel length, stating that ‘the most popular [option], if it is not followed by a consonant cluster, and is preceded by a consonant, such as *fī-hv*²¹ and *min-hv*, is to shorten (*al-iḡtilās*), though lengthening is permitted, and it was read so by Ibn Kaṭīr. If what is before it is vowelless, then it is lengthened, although it may be shortened or dropped entirely (*tusakkan*, Ḥalabī *Durr* I, 88)’. In terms of the shortening after closed syllables, ‘Astarabāḍī and Ḥalabī both follow Farrā’s and Mubarrid’s

¹⁹This almost certainly is a reference to the popularity of ‘Abū ‘Amr’s reading, which had spread throughout much of the Medieval Muslim world. Ibn al-Ġazārī mentions, ‘the reading that people employ today in Syria, Hijaz, Yemen, and Egypt is the reading of ‘Abū ‘Amr. You would be hard pressed to find anyone teaching Qur’ān except according to his reading, especially when it comes to *farṣ* (i.e. specific variants), though they might make mistakes in the *‘uṣūl* (i.e. general principles)’ (Ibn al-Ġazārī *Naṣr* I, 265).

²⁰Not to be confused with Abū l-Barakāt b. al-‘Anbārī who dies nearly two centuries later.

²¹Arabic grammatical theory conceives of the long vowel *ī* as /iy/, hence *fī-hi* is considered as having a consonant preceding the *-hv* suffix.

preference over Sībawayhi's, while the lengthened form is acknowledged and considered good. It is not until Suyūṭī (d. 849/1445) that we get an explicit opinion in terms of correctness (*faṣāḥa*), he tells us that 'the most correct (*al-ʿaṣḥa*) is the shortening [of the vowel of *-hū*] after a *sākin*' (Suyūṭī *Ham* II, 38).

Summary

The grammarians discussed here all present a fairly consistent system. They all discuss both the option of vowel harmony in the pronouns, as well as the option without. The unharmonised forms are universally attributed to the Hijazi dialect. Especially the earlier grammarians do not seem to clearly prefer the forms with vowel harmony over those without.

From Sībawayhi onwards, we find that when a preference is expressed explicitly, all grammarians are in agreement that having the long forms of the singular pronoun *-hū/-hī* after long vowels and diphthongs is less good than shortening it. However, when it comes to preceding heavy syllables due to them ending on a consonant, there is clear disagreement between the grammarians. Sībawayhi is explicit in considering *min-hū* better than *min-hu*, and his student ʿAḥfaṣ follows him in this, going against what becomes the later classical norm. Farrāʾ, however, already advocated for the shortened form *min-hu*, an opinion shared by Mubarrid who explicitly says that forms like *min-hu* are better.

For the plural pronouns it is frequently affirmed that using either the short forms or the long forms is purely up to the speakers. Some grammarians explicitly discuss the existence of the harmonised form *-himī*, and to Sībawayhi that even seems to be the default option if one lengthens and harmonises. While some grammarians describe the *-himū* form as well, it seems clear that the *-himī* was considered the default for some time after the earliest grammarians, particularly among the Basrans.

The most striking thing that we see in this discussion is a clear shift in ideology of what is 'correct' classical Arabic. Where Sībawayhi, Farrāʾ and ʿAḥfaṣ still list most forms as being equally acceptable (with the exception of the noted disagreement on whether one says *min-hu* or *min-hū*) this changes with Mubarrid who establishes a much more normative paradigm. Mubarrid explicitly calls harmonised singular *-hi/ī* the best practice (*al-ʿaḥsan*), harmonising the plural *-him* better (*ʿaḥsan*), using short forms after heavy syllable excellent Arabic (*ʿarabī ḥasan*) and the use of short pronouns good and what most people do. His normative system is identical to the now commonly accepted classical norms. This clearly shows that by the second half of the 3rd/9th century the norms of Classical Arabic had begun to crystallise. This is in clear contrast with the grammarians before him who are much less normative and more accepting of morphological variation in

the classical language. The grammarians we examined that come after him are actually somewhat less explicitly prescriptive, but seem to take the norms prescribed by Mubarrid as an implicit norm as well.

Reading traditions

The emergence of Qurʾānic readers (*qurrāʾ*) as a distinct class of people must have coincided with the explosion of vocalised Qurʾānic manuscripts from the second century onwards. Of the countless readers who emerged across the various metropolises of the Muslim world, seven were canonised by the influential 4th/10th century scholar ʾAbū Bakr b. Muğāhid (d. 324/936). Ibn Muğāhid's efforts can be seen as an attempt to curb the multiplicative growth in reading traditions witnessed during his lifetime (Melchert 2000: 18). In his book, *Kitāb al-Sabʿa*, Ibn Muğāhid documents the readings of the Meccan Ibn Kaṭīr (d. 120/738), the Medinan Nāfiʾ (d. 169/785), the Syrian Ibn ʾĀmir (d. 118/736), the Basran ʾAbū ʾAmr (d. 154/770), and three Kufans, Ḥamza (d. 156/773), Kisāʾī (d. 189/804), and ʾAṣim (d. 127/745). It is not entirely clear why Ibn Muğāhid chose those particular readers – he does not inform us in his book – but some have suggested it may have been informed by the popularity of those readers in their respective regions, at least among the *qurrāʾ* (Nasser 2013a: 54–61; Shah 2004).²²

Although Ibn Muğāhid's selection of only seven readers relegated the remainder to the status of *šādḍ* (non-canonical),²³ many continued to be documented and transmitted in written and oral form, as evidenced by the works cited in this paper. The form of transmission and documentation varied, however. Some readings remained alive as complete systems; their *ʾisnād*-s (chains of transmitters) and specific features documented with the same degree of thoroughness as the canonical readings. Others only survived in fragmentary form, usually without *ʾisnād*-s and limited to individual words. They are commonly found as part of lists given in works dedicated to *šādḍ* readings or cited in grammatical works.²⁴

Over time, it became clear that three additional readings were still widely recognised for their transmission and reliability, despite their non-canonical status. The first was the reading of the Medinan ʾAbū Ġaʿfar (d. 130/747) who was also a teacher of the canonical-reader Nāfiʾ. The second was that of the

²²There is the question of whether the popularity of a reading among specialists was shared by the general public. For an initial inquiry on that subject, see Saleem (2019).

²³It is worth mentioning here that, despite the status of these readings as *šādḍ*, they are, as a whole not non-ʾUtmānic. While many early reports of companions of the prophet did not follow the standard consonantal skeleton of the now standard ʾUtmānic Text, the vast majority of the non-canonical readings – especially those of which we have complete transmissions – are by-and-large in agreement with the ʾUtmānic text. ʾAʾmaš and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī are notable exceptions, but even they follow the ʾUtmānic text more often than not.

²⁴See for example Ibn Ḥalawayhi's *Muḥṭaṣar* which is in fact an edited version of marginal notes to his book *al-Baḍʾ* on the canonical readings and the reading of Yaʿqūb. Ibn Ġinnī's work *al-Muḥṭaṣab* is an example of another work dedicated to non-canonical readings.

Basran reader Ya‘qūb al-Ḥaḍramī (d. 205/820). The third was the reading of Ḥalaf (d. 229/844), himself a transmitter of Ḥamza’s reading, who had synthesised his own reading (*iḥtiyār*). All three of those were eventually incorporated into the canon by Ibn al-Gazarī (d. 833/1429) in the 9th/15th century.

Individual readers rarely have a single uniform reading attributed to them. Different transmissions going back to a single reader often disagree with one another to various degrees. These differences can be due to variation on a reader’s part, intended differences (*iḥtiyār*) introduced by a transmitter, or errors in transmission. Increasing disagreements among transmitters, primarily due to the first two categories, were consolidated through a process of transmitter canonisation. A convention emerged wherein two canonical transmitters were chosen for each reader (Nasser 2013b). The resulting ten canonical readers along with their respective twenty transmitters are summarised in the table below.

District	Reader	Transmitters	
Medina	Nāfi‘ (d. 169/785)	Warš (d. 197/812)	Qālūn (d. 220/835)
Mecca	Ibn Kaṭīr (d. 120/738)	Bazzī (d. 250/864)	Qunbul (d. 291/904)
Damascus	Ibn ‘Āmir (d. 118/736)	Hišām (d. 245/859)	Ibn Ḍakwān (d.242/856)
Basra	‘Abū ‘Āmr (d. 154/770)	Dūri (d. 246/860)	Sūsi (d. 261/874)
Kufa	‘Āsim (d. 127/745)	Ḥafṣ (d. 180/796)	Šu‘ba (d. 193/809)
Kufa	Ḥamza (d. 156/773)	Ḥalaf (d. 229/844)	Ḥallād (d. 220/835)
Kufa	Kisā‘ī (d. 189/804)	Dūri (d. 246/860)	Layṭ (d. 240/854)
Medina	‘Abū Ḡa‘far (d. 130/747)	Ibn Wardān (d. 160/776)	Ibn Ḡammāz (d. 170/786)
Basra	Ya‘qūb (d. 205/820)	Ruways (d. 238/852)	Rawḥ (d. 234/849)
Kufa	Ḥalaf (d. 229/844)	‘Ishāq (d. 286/899)	‘Idris (d. 292/905)

Below we examine the pronominal suffix systems of the canonical readers named above in addition to non-canonical readers. We rely on the works of Ibn Muğāhid, Ibn Ḥālawayhi (d. 380/981), Ibn Mihrān (d. 381/992), Ibn Ğinnī (d. 392/1002), Ḥuza‘ī (d. 407/1017), Dānī (d. 444/1053), Ḥuḍālī (d. 465/1073), ‘Abū Ma‘šar al-Ṭabarī (d. 478/1086), Rūḍbārī (d. 489/1096), Nawzawāzī (d. ca. 6th/12th c.), ‘Ahwāzī (d. 446/1055), and Kirmānī (d. 6th/12th c.). When it comes to the canonical readers there is significant agreement among these sources, but with the lesser-known readers we occasionally encounter disagreements. Whenever disagreements occur these will be discussed individually.

When discussing the canonical readings, and whenever there is no further reference, we cite from Ibn Muğāhid (*Kitāb al-Sab‘a* 108–11, 130–2). For the non-canonical readers, and transmission of canonical readers not treated by Ibn Muğāhid we give the citation in the appropriate location.

Ibn Muğāhid’s *Kitāb al-Sab‘a fī l-Qirā‘āt* is today widely regarded as the first to canonise the seven readings and its structure and organisation served as a model for many descriptions of the reading traditions that followed. It is moreover the earliest extant work on the reading traditions, although it seems to have been by no means the first work of this type (Nasser 2013: 37).

Ibn Ḥālawayhi, a student of Ibn Muğāhid, authored the *Muḥtaṣar fī ṣawādd al-Qurʾān*, which is an abridgement of non-canonical readings to go along with his work *al-Badīʿ*, where he describes Yaʿqūb al-Ḥaḍramī's reading in addition to the canonical seven. The *Muḥtaṣar* is the first extant dedicated collection of non-canonical readings after his teacher Ibn Muğāhid's canonisation. Shortly after him, we have the works of Ibn Mihrān which are perhaps the earliest surviving books to completely document the additional readings of Yaʿqūb al-Ḥaḍramī, ʿAbū Ġaʿfar, and Ḥalaf in great detail. He additionally relays the reading of ʿAbū Ḥatīm al-Siğistānī (d. 250/864), a renowned Basran scholar of Qurʾānic orthography and readings.

Ibn Ġinnī studied under ʿAbū ʿAlī l-Fārisī, whose *Ḥuğḡa* work on the seven canonical readings we have already discussed. As Fārisī had been unable to author a similar work on *ṣādd* readings, Ibn Ġinnī did so instead. He produced *al-Muḥtasab fī tabyīn wuğūh ṣawādd al-qirāʾāt wa-l-ʾidāh ʾanhā*, known simply as *al-Muḥtasab*. In it he discusses the grammatical and linguistic aspects of various non-canonical readings, much in the same way the *Ḥuğḡa* literature does for canonical readings.

Ḥuzāʾī was a controversial but influential figure who was ostracised for allegedly fabricating a reading containing blasphemous variants and attributing it to ʿAbū Ḥanīfa.²⁵ Nonetheless, this did not stop later authorities, including Ibn al-Ġazarī from relying on his works. He authored *al-Muntahā* in which he documents fifteen readings. While most of the readings are of no particular interest, since we have already documented them, one in particular stands out. Ḥuzāʾī transmits the complete reading of Sallām ʿAbū l-Munḍir (d. 171/788).

Dānī is among the most famous writers on the readings, mostly due to his extremely lucid simplified learner's guide to the seven readings *al-Taysīr fī l-qirāʾāt al-sabʿ*. This work was eventually recomposed into verse form by Ṣātibī (d. 590/1194). This work, known as *al-Ṣāṭibiyya*, is still one of the main didactic poems used for the study of the seven readings today. For our purposes, though, *al-Taysīr* does not innovate at all upon the account of Ibn Muğāhid. However, his expert manual on the seven *Qirāʾāt – Ġāmiʿ al-bayān fī l-qirāʾāt al-sabʿ al-mašhūra* – is of interest. Unlike *al-Taysīr*, this work gives descriptions of the readings of many non-canonical transmitters of the seven, some of which show deviations from the standard two-*rāwī* canon.

ʿAbū ʿAlī l-Ahwāzī was another controversial scholar. He had numerous teachers – over ninety-five by some accounts – and as many students. He also amassed a suspiciously large number of extremely short *isnād*-s going back to earlier readers. A number of the individuals in those *isnād*-s had never been heard of (Ḍahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 612 #491). Still, he is an extremely

²⁵One example is Q. 35:28 where ʿAbū Ḥanīfa allegedly read: *innamā yaḥṣā ʾllāhu min ʾibādī-hi l-ʾulamāʾa* (God only fears the scholars among his servants) (Ḍahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 574 #435).

important source for later authorities. He authored many works, many of which have not survived. However, some of his smaller books, such as *Mufradat al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī* have been edited and we rely upon it here.

Within a decade of one another, both 'Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥuḍalī and 'Abū Ma'ṣar al-Ṭabarī authored the most expansive collections of reading traditions known. Ḥuḍalī wrote *al-Kāmil*, where he documents fifty different readings; we only report relevant details. It is worth noting that Ḥuḍalī's work, which we rely upon a lot, is known for having many suspect transmissions and errors (Ḍahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 16 #529). 'Abū Ma'ṣar wrote *Sawq al-'Arūs*, which stands as the largest collection of transmitted reading routes (*ṭuruq*) to have survived (and perhaps ever written). In it he collects many single strand transmissions not appearing elsewhere.

'Abū Bakr al-Rūḍbārī's book, *Ġāmi' al-Qirā'āt*, was recognised by Ibn al-Ġazarī as a work 'the likes of which have never been written' (Ibn al-Ġazarī *Ġāyat* II, 82). In it he documents the ten readings, collecting many unique single strand transmissions, in addition to the readings of Zuhri, Ibn Muḥayṣin, 'A'maṣ and numerous others. What sets it apart is Rūḍbārī's predominant reliance on oral transmission rather than previous written works; *al-Ġāmi'* was recently edited and published for the first time in 2017.

Not as much is known about 'Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Kirmānī, who authored works on Qur'ānic orthography and reading traditions. His book on non-canonical readings, *Šawādd al-Qirā'āt*, as noted in the introduction, was compiled from earlier sources. Asides from those mentioned above, Kirmānī relied upon the works of 'Abū l-Faḍl al-Rāzī (d. 454/1062), 'Ahwāzī, Zaġġāġ, and other unknown individuals whose works are lost. The same is true for Nawzawāzī, about whom virtually nothing is known.

For the following overview it is useful to define several terms formally, so that they can be described succinctly. When these terms are used below, they should be understood as defined here, unless explicitly provided with further qualification for exception.

Singular vowel harmony: *-hu/ū* becomes *-hi/ī* after *i, ī, ay*.

Singular length disharmony: *-hū/ī* occurs after light syllables, *-hu/i* occurs after heavy syllables.²⁶

Long plural pronouns: *-humū*, *'antumū* etc. rather than *-hum*, *'antum* (which will be called short plural pronouns). Harmonised long plural pronouns can be either *-himū* or *-himī* and this will be mentioned explicitly.

Plural pronouns before consonant clusters can be harmonised either as *-himu* or *-himi* or unharmonised *-humu*. In non-harmonising environments the pronouns are always *-humu*.

²⁶Note that, unlike Sibawayhi's description, syllables closed by a consonant always have short *-hu* among the Qur'ānic reading traditions.

ʿAbū Baḥriyya l-Ḥimṣī (d. ca. 80/700)

The reading of ʿAbū Baḥriyya l-Ḥimṣī was documented by Ḥuzāʿī in much detail. However, given that he lived exceptionally early and his reading is poorly attested,²⁷ we include his reading here with some scepticism. ʿAbū Baḥriyya is reported to have had singular vowel harmony and length disharmony, short harmonised plural pronouns, and an unharmonised *-humu* before consonant clusters, thus following a system identical to those of the canonical readers Kisāʿī and Ḥalaf (Ḥuzāʿī *Muntahā* 550).

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728)

The reading of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī²⁸ is recorded by ʿAḥwāzī in a dedicated *Mufrada*. Ḥasan had singular vowel harmony and length disharmony. He used long plural pronouns where the harmonised form was *-himī* rather than *himū*, e.g. *ʿalay-himī*, *min-humū*, and *bi-himī* (ʿAḥwāzī *Mufradat* 71). Plural pronouns before consonant clusters harmonised as *-himi* (i.e. *bi-himi l-ʿasbāb*, *humu l-ġālibūn*). Nawzawāzī (*Muḡnī* 368) attributes the form *ʿalay-humī* to Ḥasan.

Ibn ʿĀmir (d. 118/736)

The Damascene reader Ibn ʿĀmir²⁹ has singular vowel harmony and length disharmony, short harmonising plural pronouns and the plural pronoun harmonised before consonant clusters as *-himu*.

There is a non-canonical transmission path of Ibn Ḍakwān (d. 242/856) through Ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq that lacks vowel harmony of *-humu* before consonant clusters (Ḥuzāʿī *Muntahā* 550).

Ibn Kaṭīr (d. 120/738)

The Meccan Ibn Kaṭīr³⁰ has singular vowel harmony, but no length disharmony, always using the long pronominal forms, thus both *bi-hī* and *fi-hī*. He always employs long plural pronouns, which are harmonised as *-himū*. Before consonant clusters it is *-himu*.

ʿAbū Maʿšar al-Ṭabarī (*Sawq al-ʿArūs* II, 469ff.) and Nawzawāzī (*Muḡnī* 368) transmit that ʿAbū ʿAmr (d. 154/770) ← Ibn Kaṭīr and Ḥuzaymī (d. 4th/10th c.) ← Ibn Fulayḥ (d. ca. 270/883) ← Ibn Kaṭīr³¹ lengthen the pronouns and would not

²⁷The common link of the transmission of his reading appears to be Ḥaywa b. Šurayḥ (d. 224/839) (Ḥuzāʿī *Muntahā* 231).

²⁸Ḍahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 46 #25.

²⁹Ḍahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 59 #34.

³⁰Ḍahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 69 #35.

³¹Right to left arrow indicates transmission from the individual on the right to the individual on the left.

harmonise the plural pronoun at all, i.e. *‘alay-humū, yuzakkī-humū, sam ‘i-humū*. Before consonant clusters they also transmit an invariably unharmonised *-humu*.

Surprisingly, Ibn Ḥālawayhi reports *‘alay-humū* for Ibn Kaṭīr, even though he traces his *‘isnād* through the transmission of Ibn Muğāhid ← Qunbul (d. 291/904) ← [...] ← Ibn Kaṭīr. This is the case in his *Kitāb al-Badī*³² but the same is reported in his *‘I‘rāb al-Qirā’āt* as well (Ibn Ḥālawayhi *‘I‘rāb* 51) which makes it unlikely that this is a mistake of the copyist of the *Badī*. Ibn Muğāhid, however, is unambiguous in his wording that Ibn Kaṭīr read *‘alayhimū*.

Ḥudālī (*Kāmil* 466) reports length disharmony through Ibn ‘Uyayna (d.198/814) ← Ibn Kaṭīr.

Ibn Muḥayṣin (d. 123/741)

Ibn Muḥayṣin,³³ another Meccan reader, is reported to have had the same system as Ibn Kaṭīr, lacking singular length disharmony, and using long plural pronouns. An exception to this is found from one transmitter, Ibn [‘Abī]³⁴ Yazīd (d. ca. 2nd/8th c.), who had vowel length disharmony. Also, he transmits short harmonised plural pronouns (Ḥudālī *Kāmil* 466–7, 469).

Muḥammad b. Šihāb al-Zuhri (d. 124/741–2)

Al-Rūḍbārī documents the reading of the Medinan-turned-Damascene Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhri, a figure of course primarily known as one of the central early *ḥadīth* tradents. He lacks singular vowel harmony, and follows length disharmony, i.e. *‘alay-hu, fi-hu, bi-hū* (al-Rūḍbārī *Ġāmi‘* II, 318–9). He however exceptionally reads with vowel harmony for the words Q. 19:95 *‘ātī-hi* ([each of them] will come to him), and Q. 70:11 *bi-banī-hi* (by his children) and (Q. 70:12) *wa-‘aḥī-hi* (and his brother), Q. 70 [sic!]³⁵ *‘ummi-hī* (his mother), Q. 70:12 *šāhibati-hī* (his wife) and Q. 70:13 *wa-faṣīlati-hī* (and his nearest kin).

For the plural Zuhri has the short forms, which normally harmonised but lack harmony in three specific words *‘alay-hum, ‘ilay-hum* and *laday-hum* alone – a conditioning he shared with the canonical reader Ḥamza, for which see below. Before consonant clusters his pronouns are always unharmonised *-humu*.

³²This is based on the manuscript Ar. 3051, folio 7 v, situated at the Chester Beatty Library, a manuscript that was finished the year Ibn Ḥālawayhi died (d. 370/980) on which the only print edition is based. The edition changes this transmission to the canonical *‘alay-himū* without comment (Ibn Ḥālawayhi *Badī* 47).

³³Ḍahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 89 #41.

³⁴Not present in the edition but likely the case due to other mentions of Ibn ‘Abī Yazīd transmitting from Ibn Muḥayṣin.

³⁵Reported as being read with harmony in Q. 70 (*al-Ma ‘arīḡ*), but this word does not occur in this Sūra. A very similar sequence of words occurs in Q. 80:34–37. This is likely a mistake on Rūḍbārī’s end.

‘Āṣim (d. 127/745)

The treatment of the pronominal system by the Kufan ‘Āṣim³⁶ is identical to that of Ibn ‘Āmir. He has singular harmony and length disharmony, and short harmonised plural pronouns. Before consonant clusters the harmonised plural pronoun is *-himu*.

While this is the basic system, Ḥafṣ (d. 180/796) ← ‘Āṣim deviates from this system in several fixed locations. He reads *-hu* unharmonised in two locations: Q. 48:10 *‘alay-hu llaḥ* ([what] he has covenanted with God) and Q. 18:63 *‘ansā-nī-hu* ([and none] made me forget [except Satan]). And he reads Q. 25:69 *fī-hī* (therein) without the expected length disharmony. Šu‘ba (d. 193/809) ← ‘Āṣim does not follow him in this.

Dānī (Ġāmi‘ 164) brings a transmission from al-‘Aṣā (d. ca. 200/815) ← Šu‘ba who is said to have read *-himi* before consonant clusters with the words *‘alay-himi* and *‘ilay-himi* whenever they occur and in Q. 5:63 *wa-‘akli-himi s-suḥṭa* (and their consuming of that which is unlawful) and nothing else.

‘Āṣim al-Ġaḥḍarī (d. 128/745)

Hudālī (Kāmil 467–8) reports that the Basran ‘Āṣim al-Ġaḥḍarī,³⁷ had singular vowel harmony and length disharmony. For the plural, however, he lacked vowel harmony after *-ī* and *-ay*, thus reading *fī-hum* and *‘alay-hum*. Also, the dual *-humā* and feminine plural *-hunna* are affected by this.

‘Abū Ġa‘far (d. 130/747)

The Medinan ‘Abū Ġa‘far³⁸ has singular vowel harmony and length disharmony, but the plural has long plural pronouns and harmonises this as *-himū*. Before consonant clusters the harmonised form is *-himu*.

Ḥuzā‘ī (Muntahā 547) reports that ‘Umarī (d. ca. 270/883) ← Qālūn ← Qālūn’s teachers ← ‘Abū Ġa‘far read the long form of the pronoun only before a following *hamza*, a conditioning we will encounter again among the transmissions of Warš ← Nāfi‘ and for two non-canonical transmissions of Kisā‘ī.

‘A‘maš (d. 148/765)

One of the oldest of the Kufan reciters and a teacher of Ḥamza, ‘A‘maš³⁹ has singular vowel harmony and length disharmony and harmonising short

³⁶Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 75 #36.

³⁷Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 80 #37.

³⁸Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 49 #29.

³⁹Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 83 #39.

plural pronouns. He however lacks vowel harmony with the words *‘alay-hum* and *‘alay-humā* (Huḍalī *Kāmil* 467–8). Like most other Kufans, before consonant clusters the plural pronoun is always an unharmonised *-humu*.

‘Abū ‘Amr (d. 154/770)

The Basran ‘Abū ‘Amr⁴⁰ has singular vowel harmony and length disharmony and harmonising short plural pronouns. Before consonant clusters the harmonised plural pronoun is *-himī*.

Dānī (*Ġāmi‘* 163) reports that Ibn Ġubayr (d. 258/872) ← Yazīdī (d. 202/818) ← ‘Abū ‘Amr read penultimate words of a verse with lengthened forms of the plural pronouns, e.g. Q. 2:91 *‘in kuntumū mu‘minīn#* (if you are believers); Q. 2:22 *wa-‘antumū ta‘malūn#* (while you know). It is not mentioned explicitly how the harmonised pronoun would be treated in this case.

‘Abū Ma‘šar al-Ṭabarī (*Sawq* II, 479–80) reports for Ḥārīḡa (d. 168/784) and Hārūn (d. 170/786) ← ‘Abū ‘Amr long plural pronouns with full harmony. This gives *humū*, *la‘alla-humū*, *‘antumū*, and *la-humū*, but also *‘alay-himī*, *fī-himī*, *qulūbi-himī*, and so on. This system is identical to that of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.

Ḥamza (d. 156/773)

Ḥamza⁴¹ has singular vowel harmony and length disharmony and harmonising short plural pronouns. Before consonant clusters the plural pronoun is the unharmonised *-humu*. He lacks vowel harmony with three specific words: *‘alay-hum*, *‘ilay-hum* and *laday-hum* whenever they occur.

Huḍalī (*Kāmil* 467) transmits from ‘Abū l-Za‘rā’ (d. 283/896) ← Ḥamza that he exceptionally read Q. 16:106 *fa-‘alayhim ḡaḍabun* (so wrath is upon them).

Ḥamza breaks with the vowel harmony rule of *-hu* in two places. He reads Q. 20:10, Q. 28:29 *fa-qāla li-‘ahli-hu mkuṭū* (he said to his family: ‘stay’).

‘Abū Ma‘šar al-Ṭabarī (*Sawq* II, 469–72) reports a single strand transmission from ‘Ahwāzī ← Kisā’ī ← Ḥamza with a different pronominal system. He transmits that Ḥamza always reads the plural pronoun unharmonised (e.g. *‘alay-hum*, *fī-hum*, and *sam‘i-hum*), and that the singular pronouns was unharmonised after *ī* and *ay* (i.e. *bi-hī*, but *‘alay-hu* and *fī-hu*).

⁴⁰Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 91 #42.

⁴¹Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 112 #49.

Nāfi' (d. 169/785)

The transmitters of the Medinan reader Nāfi'⁴² agree on the treatment of the singular pronouns as having vowel harmony and length disharmony. They all agree that before consonant clusters the harmonised pronoun is *-himu*.

When it comes to the length of the plural pronoun, there is disagreement. Qālūn ← Nāfi' has the option to use the short forms *-hum/-him*, or the long forms *-humū/-himū*.⁴³ Ibn Muğāhid reports the same option for the non-canonical transmitters 'Ismā'il b. Ğa'far (d. 180/796), Ibn Ğammāz, and Musayyabī (d. 236/850). Dānī (Ĝāmi' 157) reports it for the same readers but does not mention Ibn Ğammāz.

Warš (d. 197/812) ← Nāfi' uses both the long and short plural pronouns with a specific phonetic conditioning. By default, the plural pronoun is *-hum/-him*, but when this pronoun precedes a word that starts with *hamza*, he uses the long forms *-humū/-himū*.

Dānī (Ĝāmi' 160) reports one single strand transmission from Ḥalaf b. 'Ibrāhīm (d. 402/1011) ← [...] ← Yūnus (d. 264/877) ← Warš that he left as an option whether he harmonised long form as *-himū* or *-himī*.

There are reports of several fixed locations that have exceptions to the harmonisation rule of the singular. Ibn Sa'dān (d. 231/845) ← Musayyabī ← Nāfi' follows Ḥamza in reading Q. 20:10 (and Q. 28:29) *fa-qāla li-'ahli-hu mkuṭū* (he said to his family: 'stay', Ibn Muğāhid *Sab'a* 417). Ibn al-Musayyabī ← Musayyabī reads Q. 6:46 *ya'ti-kum(ū) bi-hu nṣur* (to bring them [back]. Look!). Later this variant is also attributed to one of the transmission paths of Warš, that of 'Aṣbahānī (d. 296/908) (Ibn al-Ġazari *Naṣr* II, 994–5). Additionally, Ibn Sa'dān ← Musayyabī, and Ibn Baḥr (d. unknown) ← Musayyabī add Q. 28:81 *wa-bi-dāri-hu l-'arḍa* ([and we caused] the earth [to swallow him up] and his home) (Huḍalī *Kāmil* 466).

There are also some exceptions reported on the vowel length disharmony of the singular pronoun. Musayyabī ← Nāfi' read Q. 20:32 *wa-'ašrik-hū fi 'amrī* (and let him share my task). Both Ibn Sa'dān ← Musayyabī and Kisā'i⁴⁴ ← 'Ismā'il b. Ğa'far ← Nāfi' always read *'alay-hī* with a lengthened vowel.

Dānī (Ĝāmi' 158–9) reports a more complex conditioning for the use of the long plural pronoun for Ḥulwānī ← Qālūn. He lengthens it if 1. the next word starts with a *hamza*, e.g. Q. 2:78 *wa-min-humū 'ummiyyūn* (and among them are gentiles); 2. the next word starts with a *m*, e.g. Q. 2:201 *min-humū man yaqūlu* (but among them is he who says); 3. the next word is the end of the verse according to the Medinan verse count, e.g. Q. 2:8 *mā humū bi-mu'minīn#* (but they are not believers).

⁴²Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 104 #45.

⁴³Ibn Muğāhid records that Qālūn said of Nāfi' that he 'would not fault applying *wāw* to the [plural] *mīm*'. Ibn Muğāhid takes this to mean that Nāfi' personally did not read with this length.

⁴⁴Not the eponymous reader.

Sallām 'Abū l-Munḍir (d. 171/788)

Ḥuzā'ī transmits the complete reading of Sallām 'Abū l-Munḍir,⁴⁵ who already receives brief mention by Naḥḥās. Importantly, Sallām was a Basran-turned-Kufan reader who was a student of the Kufan eponymous reader 'Āsim and the Basrans Ġaḥḍarī and 'Abū 'Amr (Ḥuzā'ī *Muntahā* I, 417); he was also the teacher of the canonical reader Ya'qūb.

Sallām had singular length disharmony, but did not apply vowel harmony after *ī* or *ay*, so *fī-hu*, *'ilay-hu*, *'alay-hu* but *bi-hī* (Huḍalī *Muntahā* III, 573).

This distribution is parallel to the one reported for the plural and dual, where vowel harmony is likewise blocked on the short pronouns if *ī* or *ay* precedes, i.e. *'alay-hum*, *fī-hum*, *'alay-humā*, *fī-humā* (Ḥuzā'ī *Muntahā* II, 545). Before a consonant cluster the harmonised pronoun is *-himi* (Ḥuzā'ī *Muntahā* II, 550).

'Abū Ma'sar al-Ṭabarī (*Sawq* II, 479–80) adds that Sallām, like Rawḥ ← Ya'qūb does not harmonise after the short *-i* of apocopates and imperative final weak verbs.

Kisā'ī (d. 189/804)

The Kufan Kisā'ī⁴⁶ has singular vowel harmony and length disharmony, and always reads unharmonised *-humu* before consonant clusters. For his canonical transmitters, the plural pronoun is always short and harmonising.

'Abū Ma'sar al-Ṭabarī (*Sawq* II, 469–472) brings several chains of transmission through Rāzī ← Kisā'ī that make an exception to the general rule of vowel harmony with the words *'alay-hum*, *'ilay-hum* and *laday-hum*, a conditioning that is typical of his teacher Ḥamza.

The non-canonical transmitters Nuṣayr and Qutayba are fairly broadly transmitted in the works that we have examined. The earliest transmission is by Ibn Mihrān (*Ġāya* 141–2; *Mabsūṭ* 89), and a much more detailed description is found in Dānī's *Ġāmi' al-Bayān*. While they follow all the rules typical of the canonical transmissions of Kisā'ī they both occasionally make use of the long plural pronoun *-humū* when it is in a non-harmonising environment. This however only occurs in highly specific environments which are discussed in detail in the sections below.

Nuṣayr (d. ca. 240/855)

The accounts of Dānī and Ibn Mihrān differ somewhat and we will discuss both of them here. Ibn Mihrān (*Mabsūṭ* 89) tells us that Nuṣayr⁴⁷ would use long pronouns when the pronoun occurs:

⁴⁵Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 132 #59.

⁴⁶Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 149 #65.

⁴⁷Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 252 #145.

- (1) next to the final word of an *'āya*, e.g. Q. 27:3 *humū yūqinūn#* (and they are certain).
- (2) before *hamza*, e.g. Q. 2:140 *'a-'antumū 'a'lam* (are you more knowing?).
- (3) Before *m*, e.g. Q. 2:92 *ġā'a-kumū mūsē* (and Moses brought you).

But this lengthening is blocked if:

- (A) The pronoun stands in a harmonising context, e.g. Q. 6:1 *bi-rabbi-him ya'dilūn#* (they equate with their lord).
- (B) If the word is long,⁴⁸ e.g. Q. 2:23 *šuhadā'a-kum min dūni llāh* (your witnesses other than God), or if the word contains a geminate (*taqulat*), e.g. Q. 7:176 *la'alla-hum yatafakkarūn#* (so perhaps they will reflect).

Dānī (*Ġāmi'* 162–3) follows the same three main conditions but the context in which the harmony is blocked is slightly different. Like with Ibn Mihrān, vowel harmony of the pronoun blocks the lengthening, but gemination in a word does not. The only condition involved with blocking the lengthening besides that is that the word ought to be five letters or less according to the spelling of the *muṣḥaf*. In practice, this means that e.g. Q. 2:21 *la'alla-kumū tattaqūna* (so that perhaps you may become righteous) is lengthened, while in Ibn Mihrān's description it would not be.

Ibn Muğāhid (*Sab'a* 98) also transmits Nuṣayr *'an Kisā'ī* but does not report anything unusual about the plural pronouns for him (Ibn Muğāhid *Sab'a* 108–9).

Qutayba (d. ca. 200)

Ibn Mihrān (*Mabsūṭ* 89) and Dānī (*Ġāmi'* 160–1) transmit the same conditions for Qutayba.⁴⁹ When the pronoun is not harmonised it is lengthened whenever:

- (1) It is directly followed by the last word of the verse. *wa-* nor any other short word like *min* or *lā* may intervene, e.g. Q. 2:3 *mimmā razaqnā-humū yunfiqūn#* (and they spend of what We have provided for them), but Q. 26:94 *fa-kubkibū fī-hā hum wa-l-ġāwūn#* (they will be hurled into it, together with the deviators).
- (2) If it is directly followed by a word that begins with a *hamza*, e.g. Q. 2:6 *'a-'andarta-humū 'am lam* (whether you have warned them or have not [warned them]).

⁴⁸Ibn Mihrān is not explicit in defining what constitutes a 'long' word.

⁴⁹Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 196 #102.

Ya‘qūb (d. 205/820)

The earliest detailed description of his pronominal system is provided by Ibn Mihrān (*Ġāya* 140–3).⁵⁰ Ya‘qūb⁵¹ has singular vowel harmony and length disharmony. Its plural pronouns are short, and the harmonised form before consonant clusters is *-himi*. Like his teacher Sallām, Ya‘qūb lacks vowel harmony of the plural pronoun and the dual after *ī* and *ay*, thus he reads *fī-hum* and *‘alay-hum*.

There is disagreement between the two canonical transmitters of Ya‘qūb, Rawḥ and Ruways, on how to treat the plural pronoun after an apocopate/imperative form of a final weak verb that ends in *i*. Rawḥ treats those forms as if they have a shortened *ī*, and therefore treats *-hum* as if it is preceded by *ī*, e.g. Q. 7:169 *ya ‘ti-hum* ([and if an offer like it] comes to them) whereas Ruways treats this as any normal *i* and therefore applies vowel harmony, i.e. *ya ‘ti-him*.

There are two cases where Ya‘qūb harmonises against his harmonisation rule, namely in the phrase Q. 7:17 (and Q. 41:14) *min bayni ‘aydi-him wa-min ḥalfi-him* ([I will come to them] from before them and from behind them).⁵² Ruways makes an exception to his rule concerning apocopates in Q. 8:16 *wa-man yawalli-him* (and whoever turns his back on them).

Hudālī (*Kāmil* 466) reports that all readers he knows of lengthen the singular pronoun *-hū/-hī* after a single short vowel, with the exception of Naḥḥās ← Ruways ← Ya‘qūb, who is said to shorten it in the phrase *bi-yadi-hi* whenever it occurs.

It seems that Ya‘qūb chose to stick to Sallām’s plural forms but opted for the more usual harmonised form in the singular. That would put some degree of classicisation at the level of this eponymous reader. Alternatively, it could be that the transmitters of Ya‘qūb’s reading classicised his singular form.

‘Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838)

Ḥuzā’ī (*Muntahā* 550) described ‘Abū ‘Ubayd’s⁵³ treatment of pronouns as being identical to ‘Abū ‘Amr’s. Thus, the singular pronoun has vowel harmony and length disharmony, the plural pronoun is harmonised and short and before consonant clusters the harmonised pronoun is *-himi*.

⁵⁰Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 175 #79.

⁵¹Ibn Ḥālawayhi (*Muḥṭaṣar* 47) is an earlier source, but is not very detailed. He only reports that Ya‘qūb reads *‘alayhum* like Ḥamza with no further specification for either of the readers.

⁵²In his *Mabsūt*, Ibn Mihrān makes the distinction between *mā bayna ‘aydi-hum* which is read unharmonised, and *min bayni ‘aydi-him* which was harmonised. He then says that similar instances to the latter are read with *kasr* (Ibn Mihrān *Mabsūt* 87–8). The only apparent difference is the relative pronoun *mā* and preposition *min* change the syntax of *bayn*. This distinction does not make it into the canonical transmission.

⁵³Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 199 #104.

Ḥalaf (d. 229/844)

Ḥalaf⁵⁴ is a transmitter of Ḥamza, but also one of the ten canonical readers in his own right. In terms of his pronominal system, his personal reading is identical to the canonical transmissions of Kisā'ī: the singular pronoun has vowel harmony and length disharmony, the plural pronoun is short and harmonised, and before consonant clusters the plural pronoun is always an unharmonised *-humu* (Ibn al-Ġazarī *Našr* II, 868–76, 971–3).

ʿAbū Ḥātim al-Siġistānī (d. 255/869)

ʿAbū Ḥātim⁵⁵ was a famous Basran philologist, who had constructed his own reading. Ibn Mihrān (Ġāya 140–3) gives the earliest description of his reading. The singular pronoun is harmonised and has length disharmony. Before consonant clusters the harmonised plural is *-himi* (Ḥuzā'ī *Muntahā* 550). The plural pronoun is short and Ḥuzā'ī (*Muntahā* 547) reports that unlike Ya'qūb and Sallām, ʿAbū Ḥātim only lacks vowel harmony after *-ay* and not after *-ī*, i.e. *'alay-hum* but *fī-him*.

Yahyā b. Šubayḥ

Ḥuḍalī (*Kāmil* 468) dedicates a section to the reading of Yahyā b. Šubayḥ. He documents that after *ay*, the singular pronoun is shortened and harmonised in contexts such as *'alay-hi*, *'ilay-hi*, and *laday-hi*.⁵⁶ If the pronoun is preceded by an *ī* vowel, such as *nuṣlī-hu* and *nūḥī-hu*, it is read as an unharmonised *-hu*, with the exception of the words *fī-hi*, *'aḥī-hi*, *'abī-hi*, and *banī-hi*, which are harmonised, and another location specific exception is reported for Q. 18:95 *makkan-nī fī-hu rabb-ī* ([that] in which my Lord has established me [is better]) which is read unharmonised.

Apocopate final weak verbs do not trigger vowel harmony, not in the plural (as with Ruways ← Ya'qūb) nor in the singular, thus he reads: *nuṣlī-hu*, *wa-qi-hum*, and *yuhzi-hum*, with a single exception of Q. 20:75 *ya'ti-hī mu'minan* ([but whoever] comes to him as a believer) which he harmonises and lengthens in context.

Summary

The table on the following page gives an overview of the pronominal systems of the readers we have discussed above. It does not capture all the

⁵⁴Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 245 #139.

⁵⁵Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 258 #156.

⁵⁶This is reported in *al-Kāmil* as فيسكن الهاء من غير إشباع. This is clearly a corruption of فيكسر since the comment regarding shortened vowel length (من غير إشباع) would make no sense otherwise. It is reported correctly in Nawzawāzī *Muġnī* 372–3.

Reader	City	sg. length	i + sg.	ay + sg.	ī + sg.	i + pl.	'alāy-him	'ilāy-him	ladāy-him	ay + pl.	ī + pl.	pl. + CC	pl. + hamza
'A maš	Kufa	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-hum	-him	-him	-him	-him	-humu	short
Kisā'ī	Kufa	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-humu	short
Ḥalaf	Kufa	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-humu	short
Hamza	Kufa	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-hum	-hum	-hum	-him	-him	-humu	short
Kisā'ī < Hamza	Kufa	short	-hi	-hu	-hu	-hum	-hum	-hum	-hum	-hum	-hum	-humu	short
'Āšim	Kufa	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-himu	short
'Abū 'Ubayd	Kufa	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-himi	short
'Abū 'Amr	Basra	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-himi	short
'Abū Ḥatīm	Basra	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-hum	-hum	-hum	-hum	-him	-himi	short
Ya qub	Basra	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-hum	-hum	-hum	-hum	-hum	-himi	short
'Āšim al-Ğahdarī	Basra	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-hum	-hum	-hum	-hum	-hum	-himi	short
Sallām	Basra	short	-hi	-hu	-hu	-him	-hum	-hum	-hum	-hum	-hum	-himi	short
Hasan	Basra	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-himī	-himī	-himī	-himī	-himī	-himī	-himi	long
'Abū Bahriyya	Syria	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-humu	short
Ibn 'Āmir	Syria	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-himu	short
Ibn Kaṭir	Mecca	long	-hi	-hi	-hi	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himu	long
Ibn Muḥaysin	Mecca	long	-hi	-hi	-hi	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himu	long
Warr	Medina	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-himu	long
Qālūn (1)	Medina	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-himu	short
Qālūn (2)	Medina	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himu	long
Hulwānī < Qālūn	Medina	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-himū	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-himu	long
'Abū Ğa'far	Medina	short	-hi	-hi	-hi	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himū	-himu	long
Zuhri	Medina	short	-hu	-hu	-hu	-him	-hum	-hum	-hum	-him	-him	-humu	short
Yahyā b. Šubayḥ	Unknown	short	-hi	-hi	-hu	-him	-him	-him	-him	-him	-hum	-humu	short

details of the readings, specifically lacking isolated deviations from the general system of several of the readers. The readers are organised by the city in which they were active. The labels of the different columns refer to the following:

sg. length: Lists whether the singular pronoun is short *-hu/-hi* or long *-hū/-hī* after heavy syllables.

i/ī/ay + sg.: these denote the harmonisation of the singular pronoun in the three harmonising environments of Classical Arabic.

i/ī/ay + pl.: these denote the shape of the plural pronoun in the three harmonising environments of Classical Arabic.

'alay-him/'ilay-him/laday-him: Lists the shape of the plural pronoun with these specific lexical items.

pl. + CC: lists the shape of the pronoun before a two consonant cluster in harmonising environments.

pl. + hamza: shape of the plural pronoun (*hvm* or *hvmū*) when the next word starts with a *hamza*

Incomplete non-canonical descriptions

The canonical and non-canonical readings elaborated above have descriptions which are quite complete. *Qirā'āt* works also document the remnants of additional non-canonical readers, though not in full detail. We do not attempt to verify the veracity of the transmissions, nor exhaustively collect all transmissions of a particular reader, but we give an overview of the reports here.

Hudālī (*Kāmil* 466–7) reports the pronominal system of the famous early exegete Muğāhid b. Ġabr (d. 104/722),⁵⁷ who is said to have simply had singular vowel harmony and vowel length disharmony, thus reading forms like *fī-hi*, *'alay-hi*, *min-hu*, *'an-hu*. The plural pronouns were short and harmonising, and before consonant cluster the harmonised pronoun was *-himu* (Hudālī *Kāmil* 468).

Šibl b. 'Abbād al-Makkī (d. ca. 160/777),⁵⁸ is reported to have had the option to either read with singular vowel length disharmony or have long vowels in all environments (Hudālī *Kāmil* 466–7), with vowel harmony in both cases. He likewise has the option to use the long plural forms *-humū/-himū* or the short ones instead (Hudālī *Kāmil* 468).

Before two consonant clusters the harmonised plural pronoun is *-himu*. Ṭalḥa b. Muṣarrif b. 'Amr (d. 146/764),⁵⁹ used *-himi*, not *-himu* in harmonising environments before two consonant clusters (Hudālī *Kāmil* 467).

⁵⁷Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 42 #23.

⁵⁸Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 128 #54.

⁵⁹Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 81, #38.

Like Sallām 'Abū l-Mundir, Ibn Miqsam (d. 354/965) would not apply vowel harmony to *-hu* if an *ī* or *ay* preceded (Huḍalī *Kāmil* 466). Muslim b. Ḡundab (d. 110/729) reportedly had an unharmonised third person masculine singular pronoun *-hu* for Q. 2:2 *lā rayba fī-hu* (there is no doubt in it) (Ibn Ḥālawayhi *Muḥtaṣar* 2). Ibn Ḡinnī (*Muḥtaṣab* I, 44) adds that the plural for him is *'alay-humū*. Ibn Ḥālawayhi (*Muḥtaṣar* 1) attributed *'alay-humu* (no mention of length of the vowel after the *m*) to Ibn 'Abī 'Ishāq (d. 117/735). Ibn Ḡinnī (*Muḥtaṣab* I, 44) explicitly attributes length to his reading: *'alay-humū*.

'Isā b. 'Umar al-Ṭaqaḥī (d. 149/766)⁶⁰ read *'alay-humū* (Ibn Ḡinnī *Muḥtaṣab* I, 44; Nawzawāzī *Muḡnī* 367). 'Abd Allāh b. Yazīd (d. 213/829) read *'alay-humū* (Ibn Ḡinnī *Muḥtaṣab* I, 44). 'Amr b. Fā'id (d. 201/816) is said to have read *'alay-himi* according to Ibn Ḥālawayhi (*Muḥtaṣar* 1),⁶¹ with no comment on length and *'alay-himī* according to Ibn Ḡinnī (*Muḥtaṣab* I, 44). Between Ibn Ḡinnī (*Muḥtaṣab* I, 44) and Nawzawāzī (*Muḡnī* 367–8), several forms of the plural pronoun are attributed to 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Hurmuz al-'A'raḡ (d. 117/736): *'alay-humū*, *'alay-himū*, *'alay-himu* and *'alay-humu*.

Analysis

The data collected on the readers with complete descriptions contain sufficient information for detailed numerical analysis. We use a statistical procedure known as principal component analysis (PCA) which allows us to visualise and interpret the data present in the summary table. PCA produces a two-dimensional map whose axes capture the maximum amount of variance in the data. For an excellent non-technical introduction of PCA, applied to Qur'ānic data, see Sadeghi (2011: 247–52); we will forgo reproducing a description of the technique here.

Figure 1 shows the PCA of the pronominal suffix treatment of readers enumerated in the summary table. Each dot represents a reader coloured by their respective region. The clustering of readers into groups is immediately apparent. We have shaded and labelled the four primary groups based on the majority of readers and corresponding pronominal features. The Hijazi group contains the expected readers, both Meccan and Medinan, with the additional presence of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who we will return to later. What unifies the Hijazi group is plural vowel harmony (*min-hum* but *'alay-him*), the use of a *u* before consonant clusters (*'alay-himu* *ḍ-ḍillatu*), and

⁶⁰Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 126 #58.

⁶¹In the manuscript of Ibn Ḥālawayhi's *Kitāb al-Bādi* with the collection of *Ṣawāḍḍ* written in the margin held at the Chester Beatty Library, written in Ibn Ḥālawayh's death year (370 AH), the manuscript actually reads *'alay-humi* for both 'Amr b. Fā'id and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. This is presumably a copyist error, but considering the age of the manuscript, we cannot dismiss it altogether.

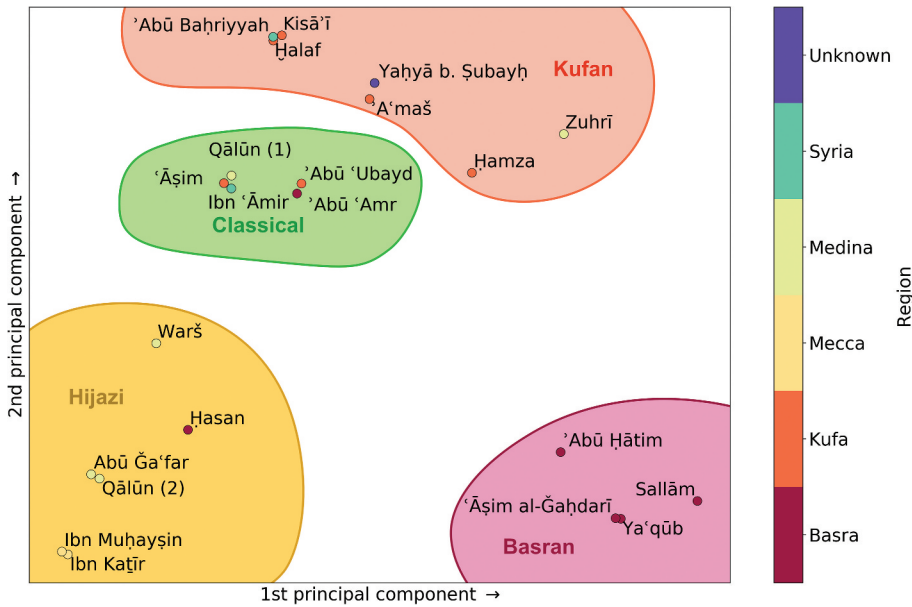


Figure 1. Principal component analysis (PCA) of main Qur'ānic readers' treatment of singular and plural pronominal suffixes.

lengthening of the plural pronoun (*min-humū 'ilay-him-ū*). The separation between Meccans and Medinans is driven by the unconditional lengthening of the singular pronominal suffix *-hū/-hī* for the former readers. Warš, a transmitter of the Medinan Nāfi', is distinguished from the remaining Hijazis by conditioning lengthening of the plural in the presence of a subsequent *hamza*. The lack of a complete application of plural lengthening places him farther removed from the rest of the group and closer to the classical group.

The Basran cluster contains exclusively Basran readers, all of whom have unharmonised plurals after *ay* (i.e. *'alay-hum*, *miṭlay-hum*) and harmonise with *-himi* in front of consonant clusters (i.e. *bi-himi l-'asbāb*). Indeed, this latter feature is found among all Basran readers, including Ḥasan and the canonical 'Abū 'Amr who are not found in the Basran cluster. 'Abū 'Amr's reading is far closer to the classical group which we discuss below. The Basran group, apart from 'Abū Ḥātim, also lacks harmony after *ī* (*fī-hum*).

The Kufan group is not as distinct as the others and exhibits a greater degree of variability. The Kufans 'Āšim and Abū 'Ubayd are also excluded from it. In general, they harmonise their plurals, except before consonant clusters where they read *-humu* (i.e. *bi-him min* but *bi-humu l-'asbāb*). 'A'maš additionally reads *'alay-hum* while Ḥamza adds *'ilay-hum* and *laday-hum*, putting the latter slightly closer to the Basran group.

The fact that regional pronominal traditions do emerge from the data allows us to say something about the readers who are outside of their region. We find that Zuhri, who is Medinan, has a pronominal system far closer to the Kufan one, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī is closer to Hijazi, and Abū Baḥriyya, a Homsī reader, has a decidedly Kufan system. What stands out is that all three readers are among the earliest, with death dates of 124/741, 110/728, and ca. 80/700 respectively. This implies that at least in the late 1th/7th century, regional pronominal systems had not yet crystallised into their characteristic forms. Not all early readers have anomalous pronominal systems though, as evidenced by Ibn Kaṭīr, who died in 120/738, and ‘Āṣim al-Ġaḥḍarī, who died in 128/745, who have prototypical ones for their respective regions. Of course, this is not unexpected since the emergent regional systems must have come from somewhere. Nonetheless, we can tentatively suggest that the stabilisation of pronominal systems around the mid-2nd/8th century may prove to be related to other aspects of the reading traditions or perhaps even with the beginning of the grammatical tradition, and both warrant further investigation.

Another corollary of strong regional traditions is the ability to use pronominal features as a regional litmus test. In our case, we would apply this to the reader Yaḥyā b. Ṣubayḥ, about whom very little is known. He is said to have been the first person to popularise Qur’ānic readings in Nishapur (Mizzī *Tahḍīb* XXXI, 382). His pronominal system suggests that he has a Kufan reading. However, a glance at his students and teachers in *ḥadīṭ* suggests a Basran connection, and Huḍālī states that he got his reading from the Meccan ‘Amr b. Dīnār (Huḍālī *Kāmil* I, 293). However, Ibn al-Ġazārī explicitly rejects this and instead informs us that he actually learned from ‘Ibrāhīm b. Ṭahmān who learned from the Kufan canonical reader ‘Āṣim (Ibn al-Ġazārī *Ġāya* II, 374).

This validates the use of pronominal features as a means of regional identification – with one major caveat: our collection of non-canonical reader transmissions has demonstrated that pronominal features are remarkably fluid. Readers often mix features associated with different regions, and in particular lengthening of the plural pronoun. Huḍālī states, ‘there is not a single one of the readers who did not have lengthening of the *mīm* transmitted from them, either by many transmitters or few, except for Ḥamza and his transmitters [who only transmitted short forms]’ (Huḍālī *Kāmil* III, 579). Therefore, in identifying unknown readings in Qur’ānic manuscripts, where pronominal features become especially handy, one must keep this in mind.

The fourth and final group is the classical group. As the name suggests, the classical group represents the system which becomes part of normative Classical Arabic, namely short harmonised plurals (*min-hum*, *alay-him*)

and harmonised singulars with length disharmony (*bi-hī*, *fī-hī*). Three of the readers have completely identical systems also agreeing on using the vowel *u* before consonant clusters (*‘alay-himu ḡ-dīllatu*). ‘Abū ‘Amr and ‘Abū ‘Ubayd (who have the same system) only deviate from the other three in front of consonant clusters, where they use *-himi* instead. The main distinguishing factor between the Hijazi and the classical cluster is the latter group’s use of the short plural pronouns. It is worth noting that, unlike the other three groups, the classical group contains a reader from every single region in our analysis (Kufa, Basra, Hijaz, Syria). The fact that the pronominal system on which readers from different regions converge appears to be identical to what later becomes Classical Arabic could very well be an early testimony of an emerging transregional linguistic norm that ends up becoming the strict Classical Arabic as we know it today.

As we saw above, striking regional trends appear when we examine the pronominal systems of Qur’ānic readers. However, when we compare the regional trends as found in the reading traditions to what the Arab grammarians describe for dialect geography, we notice that these regional trends do not map onto the grammarian dialect geography at all. This is best exemplified by comparing the reading tradition of the Hijaz to what is described for the Hijaz by Farrā’ in his *Luḡāt al-Qur’ān*. He reports that the people of the Hijaz and Qurayš in particular lack vowel harmony for both the singular and plural (*bi-hū*, *fī-hu*, *‘alay-hu* and *‘alay-hum*) (Farrā’ *Luḡāt* 10). However, a total lack of vowel harmony is not attested in any regional group of readers at all, least of all the Hijazi cluster, none of whom lack vowel harmony in any environment. Instead, the defining feature of the Hijazi cluster is the lengthened pronouns, a feature which Farrā’ explicitly describes as an option for all dialects of Arabic (Farrā’ *Luḡāt* 33). Instead, we find that the use of unharmonised pronouns is typical for the Basran cluster – although not a single reader applies it unconditionally to both the singular and the plural as described for the Hijaz.⁶²

General harmony (*‘alay-hi* and *‘alay-him*) is ascribed to the Najdi tribes of ‘Asad, Qays, and Tamīm, with ‘Asad reportedly breaking consonant clusters with the vowel *u* (*‘alay-himu l-malā’ikatu*).⁶³ The behaviour of ‘Asad is what we find among the crystallised Hijazi and classical groups.⁶⁴ Farrā’ also states that Kināna and some of Banū Sa’d b. Bakr harmonise plurals except before consonant clusters (*‘alay-him* but *‘alay-humu l-qawlu*); this is a pattern we find among the Kufan group.

⁶²Interestingly, the reading of Zuhri, who was a Qurašī, is the closest (although not identical) to the description given by Farrā’, with unharmonised singulars, unharmonised plurals before consonant clusters, and a lack of harmony with the words *‘alay-hum*, *‘ilay-hum*, and *laday-hum*.

⁶³Implicit in this is that the remaining tribes, i.e. Qays and Tamīm, maintain harmony, i.e. *‘alay-himi l-malā’ikatu*.

⁶⁴It is worth noting that ‘Āšim, who was a *mawlā* of ‘Asad has a pronominal system that is identical to what is reported for ‘Asad.

Most significantly, however, is the fact that a large number of readers have pronominal systems that are simply not described by the grammarians at all. The Basran clusters' phonetically conditioned disharmony, where *ī* and *ay* (generally) block vowel harmony in the plural only, whereas *i* triggers vowel harmony is a system which not only never gets a dialectal attribution, but does not even get acknowledged at all. Likewise, the lexical exceptions as we find with the reader Ḥamza who only blocks harmony on the words '*alay-hum*, '*laday-hum* and '*ilay-hum* and not for example on '*mitlay-him* or '*alay-himā* is a type of conditioning that is unique to reading traditions and outside of the scope of the grammarians. Likewise, the complex conditioning of the long forms of the plural pronouns such as found in the reading of Warš ← Nāfi' and Qutayba and Nuṣayr ← Kisā'i seem to be exclusive to Qur'ānic readings.

The fact that the reading traditions do not align with dialect geography, and indeed frequently show patterns that do not belong to dialects at all is difficult to understand as a failing of the Arabic grammarians who are generally thorough, show significant agreement between each other and are quite tolerant of variation in the pronominal system. Instead, it seems that the reading traditions were not the object of study for the grammarians, but rather the result of it. The readers seem to have composed their pronominal systems quite deliberately combining different morphological options from different dialects into a single reading. Such forms must be seen as artificial linguistic practice as part of a performance register of recitation rather than forming an accurate portrayal of the varieties of Arabic that the grammarians described.

The artificiality of the readers is especially transparent with the conditioned use of the long pronouns by Warš. He only uses long pronouns when the next word starts with a *hamza*. However, phonetically there is no obvious reason why a *hamza* would cause the epenthesis of a long vowel -*ū* between *m* and *hamza*. In fact, within Warš' phonological system we would rather expect the *hamza* to be dropped in such an environment as Warš drops word-initial *hamza* if the previous word ends in a consonant (Ibn al-Ġazarī *Našr* II, 1282–4). Even if we admit the possibility that every variety of Arabic had access to both long and short forms of the plural pronouns as the grammarians repeatedly affirm, there is no obvious path to explain why Warš would have started using the long forms exclusively in front of *hamza*.

From a perspective of performance, however, this behaviour is easier to understand. Warš' reading is well-known for its extensive use of overlong vowels (*madd*). In Qur'ānic recitation it is customary to pronounce any long vowel overlong when it stands in front of a *hamza* (*malāā'ikatu*, *šāā'a llaḥu*) or long consonant (*aḍ-ḍāāllīn*). There is disagreement on how long this vowel should be, and whether the overlong pronunciation before *hamza* should be just as long word-internally as across word-boundaries. Warš treats those two environments the same and pronounces them the longest of

all readers (Dānī *Taysīr* 30). Moreover, he is unique in also making vowels overlong when a *hamza* precedes them (‘*āādam*) (Dānī *Taysīr* 31). Using long pronouns before *hamza* gave him yet another opportunity to apply his excessively overlong vowels. It stands to reason that Warš’ conditioned long pronouns were a conscious choice to achieve the artistic effect of introducing even more opportunities of overlong vowels in his reading.

Such evidently artificial features of the reading traditions are by no means limited to the pronominal system, Van Putten (2018: 97–101) shows, for example, that the treatment of the loss of *hamza* in certain reading traditions cannot be explained as the result of regular sound change and must likewise be artificial.

Manuscripts

So far, we have looked at the pronominal systems in the literary sources, both from the perspective of the Arab grammarians and the Qur’ānic reading traditions. In both of these types of sources we find a large amount of variation, which deviates markedly from what becomes the Classical norm. However, especially in researching the Qur’ānic readers, we are stuck with literary sources reporting on the readings of people that lived at least a century before even the earliest authors. Were the eponymous readers really the most popular during their lifetimes and beyond? Where do readers outside of the canon fit in?

There is a way to answer these questions. It was already noticed by Nöldeke (1860: 328) more than 150 years ago, that Qur’ānic manuscripts frequently reflect pronominal systems that fall outside of the canonical systems, these manuscripts can give us essential insights into these central questions of the linguistic history of the Qur’ān. There are hundreds of vocalised Kufic manuscripts that span a period from around the 2nd/8th to the 4th/10th century. These manuscripts can give us a great deal of information about how the literary sources relate to the reality from the time that the readers were active.

For this research we have collected information of the pronominal system of all the Qur’ānic manuscripts we could find access to. In some cases, this meant we had many pages to check, in other cases we were only able to access a single photo of a single folio. However, very often even such fragmentary material was enough to establish several important facts about the vocalisation of the pronouns due to the fact that pronouns are, of course, rather common in the corpus. We have collected data in a corpus of 402 distinct manuscripts, ranging from single folios to near-complete *muṣḥaf*-s. We have made the data and analysis available on Github, and these can be accessed at https://github.com/hsidky/quranic_pronouns. In general,

we have accessed these manuscripts either through the Corpus Coranicum website,⁶⁵ the Gallica website for manuscripts from the Bibliothèque nationale de France,⁶⁶ the Cambridge University Library website,⁶⁷ or the Chester Beatty Library website.⁶⁸ In the case of any other manuscript, we give the full reference in the notes of our database.⁶⁹

Vocalisation

Several studies have already looked at the vocalisation systems of Qur'ānic manuscripts, most notably Dutton (1999, 2000) and George (2015a; 2015b). Muehlhaeusler (2016) presents some additional remarks to vocalisation. While Dutton in particular has studied the pronominal systems present in these manuscripts, none of the authors have looked at which systems appear in these manuscripts in a systematic way.

The majority of the manuscripts we have looked at use the Kufic vocalisation system. This makes use of red dots to mark different forms of the pronoun. A red dot above a letter marks *fatha*, a red dot on the baseline, usually after a letter, marks the *damma*, and a red dot below a letter marks the *kasra*. This system has no way to mark vowel length. Therefore, we cannot distinguish *-hu* from *-hū* or *-hi* from *-hī*, *-humū* from *-humu* or *-himī* from *-himi*.⁷⁰

For the singular, this means that it is not possible to distinguish Ibn Kaṭīr's system from that of the other canonical readings. For the plural the lack of distinction is fairly insubstantial. While forms with short vowels are reported, these are extremely marginal and not significant. We will therefore assume that vowels on the *mīm* denote the long vowel by default in context, and a short vowel when it stands in front of a consonant cluster.

Some of these manuscripts use a variety of different colours at the same time to denote different readings. For example, (رب) below from Paris, BnF Arabe 350a, f. 120 v, l. 5 denoted *rabbi-himi* (*l-hudā*) in red, *rabbi-hum(u)* in green and *rabbi-himu* in gold. Occasionally, secondary colours form clear and consistent readings, but most of the time they simply seem to be designed to show off the vocaliser's knowledge of other options, and are marked rather inconsistently. In such cases, reading the different options often leaves room

⁶⁵<http://www.corpuscoranicum.de/>.

⁶⁶<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>. The naming conventions of the manuscripts in certain volumes is based on Déroche (1983).

⁶⁷<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/islamic/1>.

⁶⁸https://viewer.cbl.ie/viewer/browse/-/1/SORT_TITLE/DC:islamiccollection/.

⁶⁹For the locations of some of these libraries, we have used several abbreviations. BnF = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. StaBi = Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, CBL = Chester Beatty Library, CUL = Cambridge University Library.

⁷⁰There are a few manuscripts that use an elongated red line (e.g. Paris, BnF Arabe 329d) to mark the *madd*, that is the overlong articulation of a long vowel before a *hamza*. If such a vowel is written above a pronominal suffix, we can confirm the vowel is long. But examples of this vocalisation are rare in the Kufic manuscripts, and encountering the right phonetic environment for it is even rarer, so this is not usually informative.

for ambiguity. The green vocalisation in this manuscript, for example, could technically also be read as the very rarely reported *rabbi-humi*.



Another complication is that many manuscripts have a very minimalist approach to writing word-internal vowels. While case vowels before the suffix are written more often than not and final vowels are almost always written, the internal vowel of *hum* is not commonly written.

As such, *-hī* and *-hū* can always be distinguished, and the presence of long pronouns such as *ʾantumū*, *-kumū*, *-humū* can easily be distinguished from *ʾantum*, *-kum* and *-hum*. But manuscripts do not always give enough information to allow *-himū* to be distinguished from *-humū* nor *-hum* from *-him*.

Pronominal features

In order to carry out our analysis, we defined categories for each pronominal feature, bearing in mind the limitations of the vocalisation system we noted above. For the singular pronoun, we consider it either harmonised or unharmonised. In her study of vocalisation in several C.I.⁷¹ manuscripts Cellard (2015: 368) noticed that some manuscripts that lack vowel harmony after *-i* in the singular do harmonise *bi-hī* while others do not. We quickly recognised that this indeed is the case more broadly across different manuscripts and we included it as a separate feature. Four different features of the plural pronoun were also considered. The length and vowel of the *mīm* is either short, long, or conditioned in the same way as the reading of Warš – that is, present only before *hamza*. The third person plural after an *ay* diphthong (i.e. *ʾalay-him/ʾalay-hum*, *ʾilay-him/ilay-hum*) is either *-him* or *-hum*. The same classification is made after an *ī* vowel (i.e. *fī-him/fī-hum*). Finally, the behaviour of the vowel after the *hāʾ* and *mīm* in harmonising environments prior to *ʾalif al-waṣl* (i.e. *ʾalay-himu l-ʾaḏāb/ʾalay-humu l-ʾaḏāb*). The following table summarises the described features: Examples of what these looks like in the vocalised Qurʾānic manuscripts are shown below.

⁷¹For the classification of the Qurʾānic script styles see Déroche (1983).

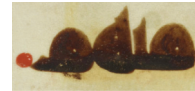
Feature	Categories	Example
Singular pronoun	Harmonised	<i>'amri-hī</i>
	Unharmonised	<i>'amri-hū</i>
<i>bi-hī</i>	Harmonised	<i>bi-hī</i>
	Unharmonised	<i>bi-hū</i>
Plural <i>mim</i>	Short	<i>kuntum</i>
	Long	<i>kuntumū</i>
	Warš	<i>kuntum tušrikūn/kuntumū 'iyyāh</i>
<i>-ayhim</i>	Harmonised	<i>'alay-him</i>
	Unharmonised	<i>'alay-hum</i>
<i>-ihim</i>	Harmonised	<i>fi-him</i>
	Unharmonised	<i>fi-hum</i>
<i>-ay-him + 'alif al-waṣl</i>	<i>-himi</i>	<i>'alay-himi l- 'aḏāb</i>
	<i>-himu</i>	<i>'alay-himu l- 'aḏāb</i>
	<i>-humu</i>	<i>'alay-humu l- 'aḏāb</i>
	<i>-humi</i>	<i>'alay-humi l- 'aḏāb</i>

Unharmonized singular

bi-rahmati-hū Qur'ān of 'Āmāğūr, f. <32>, l. 2.

bi-hū/-hu

bi-hū Wetzstein II, 1913, f. 27v, l. 20

Long plural

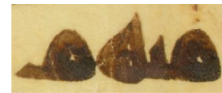
min-humū Qur'ān of 'Āmāğūr, f. <43>, l. 3

Harmonized singular

al-'ahli-hī Paris, BnF, Arabe 337d, 51v, l. 8

bi-hī/-hi

bi-hī Paris, BnF, Arabe 350a, f. 122r, l. 2

Short plural

min-hum Paris, BnF, Arabe 337d, 50r, l. 11

Plural pronoun before waṣl

Bi-himi l-'a ... (red); *bi-humu l-'a* (green) Paris, BnF, Arabe 337d, 50r, l. 9.

Analysis

While the vast majority of manuscripts contain features that are classifiable into the categories enumerated above, a few contain more complex conditioning or appear to be inconsistent.⁷² Since they only amount to a very small fraction of the total number of manuscripts, we have chosen to omit them from our analysis. In addition, because

⁷²For example, Paris, BnF, Arabe 349c has an unharmonised *'ilay-hu* but harmonised *'aḥihi*.

plural pronouns before *waṣl* and conditioning of the plural *hā'* occur relatively infrequently, we have no observations for many of the fragments surveyed. Therefore, we initially consider three features: singular pronoun harmony, *bi-hī*, and plural *mīm* for which we have the most data. The remaining features we shall return to later.

The table below shows the prevalence of the different features combinations across 287 manuscripts which contain enough data to unambiguously identify the system. Out of the twelve theoretically possible combinations, only six are actually attested.

Style	Singular	Harmony of <i>bi-hī</i>	Form of plural <i>mīm</i>	Number	%
<i>Classical</i>	Harmonised	<i>bi-hī</i>	Short	149	51.9%
<i>Long style</i>	Harmonised	<i>bi-hī</i>	Long	24	8.4%
<i>Warš</i>	Harmonised	<i>bi-hī</i>	<i>Warš</i>	62	21.6%
<i>Undescribed</i>	Unharmonised	<i>bi-hī</i>	Long	46	16.0%
<i>Hijazi</i>	Unharmonised	<i>bi-hū</i>	Long	5	1.7%
<i>Arabe 340d</i>	Unharmonised	<i>bi-hī</i>	Short	1	0.4%

What immediately catches the eye is the fact that the combination of long pronouns with unharmonised singular pronouns, excluding *bi-hī*, is surprisingly common. In fact, it is almost as common as manuscripts that have a pronominal system in the style of *Warš* and significantly more common than manuscripts that have canonical systems with long pronouns such as 'Abū Ġa'far and Ibn Kaṭīr. While the reading(s) characterised by this specific combination of features is quite common in the manuscripts we surveyed, it is completely absent in the descriptions of the reading traditions, canonical or non-canonical. This therefore puts into strong focus just how much manuscripts have still to teach us about the reading of the Qur'ān in the early Islamic period and how small a portion of the readings that existed was documented.

The 'Classical' pattern is the most dominant in the manuscript record. This is to be expected, because if we define this category by vowel harmony, the harmony of *bi-hī* and absence of a long vowel *ū* after the *mīm* of plural forms, this covers the reading of eight of the ten canonical readers ('Āṣim, Ibn 'Āmir, 'Abū 'Amr, Ḥamza, Kisā'i, Ḥalaf, Ya'qūb, and some transmissions of Nāfi'). It is, in fact, somewhat surprising that this system only shows up in a bit more than half of the manuscripts. Considering as it makes up 80% of the canonical readers, one would probably expect that percentage to be even higher.

We may look at the manuscripts with the Classical pattern at a slightly higher resolution, examining their treatment of the harmonised pronoun before a two consonant cluster. Here there are three

patterns. The normative style with *-himu*, the Basran style with *-himi* and the Kufan style with *-humu*. The sample of manuscripts that attest a word in such a context along with the other three options is 46 manuscripts. Of these, 23 (= 50%) have the Basran style, 8 (= 17%) have the Kufan style and 15 (= 33%) have the normative style. Thus, we see that the Basran style is the most popular, followed by the normative system, then finally the Kufan style.

It is possible to further define manuscripts that unambiguously have one of the systems of the canonical readings, but by then the number of manuscripts become so small that they are not worth tabulating. We may add that there is one manuscript that seems to have the pronominal system similar, but not quite identical to that of Ya‘qūb (Cod. Arab. 38),⁷³ five manuscripts with the pronominal system of Kisā‘ī or Ḥalaf (Paris, BnF, Arabe 339, Arabe 361f, Arabe 366c, Cod. Arab. 37, CUL, MS Add. 1137) and eight manuscripts with the pronominal system that corresponds to that of Ḥamza (Paris, BnF, Arabe 330b, Arabe 6140d, Arabe 325j, Arabe 364b, Wetzstein II 1918, 1928, 1921a, 1915). All of them thus make up only a small percentage of our corpus.

Correlation to script style

There is a variety of different popular styles of writing in Qur’ānic manuscripts that have been used in at different times and in different places, whose classification has been pioneered by Déroche (1983). Comparing the five vocalisation styles as they appear in the manuscripts to the Kufic styles in which these manuscripts have been written reveals several strong correlations between writing style and vocalisation style as shown in the table below. We have only included styles which had a minimum of five vocalised manuscripts with the relevant data available for it.

The presence of strong correlations between script style and vocalisation style tells us something about the manner of production of these manuscripts. As vocalisation almost invariably uses a different ink applied with a different tool from the text, it is not *a priori* obvious that vocalisation would be contemporary with the production of the text, or would even have been applied in the same scribal context. However, the fact that we can see clear correlations between ‘schools’ of script style and ‘schools’ of pronominal morphology reflected in the vocalisation, make it highly unlikely that vocali-

⁷³The third person plural pronoun in harmonising environments is *-humu*, not *-himi*.

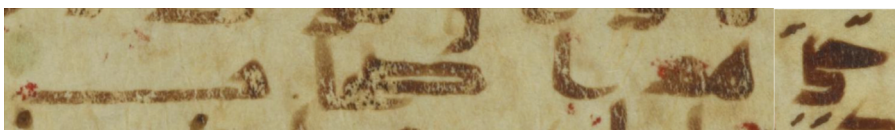
		Pronominal style				
Script Style		Long Style	Classical	Warsh	Undescribed	Hijazi
	C.I	33%	22%	11%	11%	22%
	B.Ib	17%	50%	17%	17%	0%
	B.II	7%	17%	7%	67%	0%
	D.I	5%	66%	11%	18%	0%
	D.IV	16%	20%	16%	48%	0%
	D.III	12%	47%	41%	0%	0%
	D./D.III	0%	58%	42%	0%	0%
	D commune	0%	62%	38%	0%	0%
	Group D	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%
	D.Va	0%	75%	25%	0%	0%
	D.Vb	0%	88%	12%	0%	0%
	E.I	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%
	NS.I	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
	NS.III	0%	33%	67%	0%	0%

sation happened in a context independent of the manuscript production. These separate schools were likely one single centre of production. The manuscript would be produced in a style proper to that school, and vocalised according to the norms of those schools.

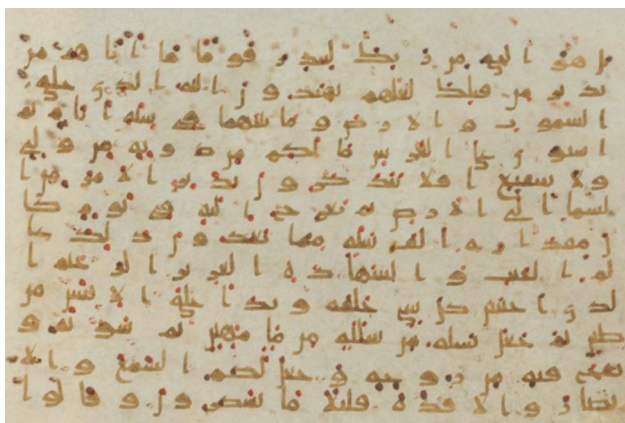
B.II and the Undescribed pronoun style

There is a strong correlation between the B.II script style and the undescribed pronoun vocalisation style. Out of 30 B.II manuscripts, 20 of them exhibit this unique pronominal system. The initial basis for the script style classification used above is Déroche (1983). However, when we look at several of the diverging B.II manuscripts that do not follow the Undescribed style, it quickly becomes clear that they deviate from the standard B.II style in a variety of ways. Here it is worth also examining Milo (2010) who describes the B.II style not just from the perspective of letter shapes, but also its script grammar. We will see that several of the putative B.II manuscripts in Déroche's classification should probably be reconsidered as either substyles of B.II, or unclassified altogether. The result of this is a further increase in the correlation between the Undescribed pronoun style and the B.II script.

Ms. Add. 1149 is classified by the Cambridge University Library website as B.II style. While it has several features that are palaeographically similar to B.II, such as a *hā'* that straddles the baseline, there are many other features both of letter shape and script grammar that make it look closer to some subtype of D. The *mīm* generally is a semicircle that sits on the baseline, rather than circular straddling it (Déroche 1983: 38); the *ġīm/hā/hā'* stacks with all consonants (Milo 2010: 282–3), and the returning stroke on the final *yā'* and *qāf* consists of two fully horizontal strokes (Milo 2010: 273). These are all features not typical for the B.II style.



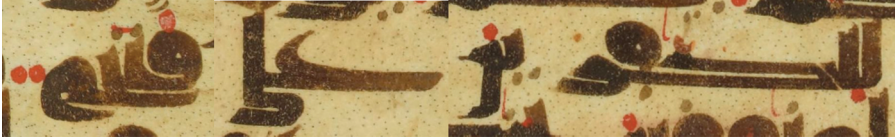
CUL, Ms. Add. 1145 is likewise identified as B.II, but is written in a highly informal script style, which seems closer to a subtype of the D style than B.II. The medial *hā'* is triangular and does not clearly straddle the baseline, the *yā'* and *qāf* returns fully most of the time. However, we classify this manuscript exactly, it is clear that its production is quite distinct from the highly controlled B.II styles that have the Undescribed pronominal system.



Paris, BnF, Arabe 338b is likewise a quite informal looking manuscript, with surprisingly few lines to the page for a B.II manuscript (only 10), while more typical examples in this style have 15 or 16 lines. Nevertheless, in terms of script grammar and letter shapes, this manuscript should probably be considered a form of the B.II style.

Paris, BnF, Arabe 6982, while classified by Déroche (1983: 74, no. 43) as B.II should clearly not be classified in this group. While its circular *mīm* and straddling *hā'* indeed are similar to B.II, the shape of the strokes is very distinct with very sharp points, unknown for B.II. More importantly there

are several features in its script grammar that clearly set it apart from typical B.II manuscripts, such as the stacking *ġim/hā* 'hā', fully returning final *yā* and *qāf* (typical of the D style), and an extremely long initial *ʿayn/ġayn*. Medial *fā* 'qāf' frequently stands far above the baseline, while in the B.II style it typically lies on the baseline, being very similar in shape to the medial *mīm* of the D style (Milo 2010: 271).



The remaining manuscripts in this style that do not have the Undescribed pronominal system are all quite typical examples of the B.II style.

D.III, the Warš system, and its maghrebi origins

Another striking correlation is the very high percentage of the Warš system of pronouns present in D.III, D.I/D.III (and the less formal 'D Commune' style) manuscripts. George (2015b: 97) notes a certain correlation between the D.III style and what is reported in the Classical sources as the Maghrebi vocalisation system. Warš *'an Nāfi* (and to a lesser extent Qālūn *'an Nāfi*) quickly became the dominant reading in the Maghreb and it still is today. This is because North Africans adhere to the Maliki legal school whose eponymous founder, Mālik b. 'Anas, explicitly stated that he considered Nāfi's reading to be *sunna* (communal practice).⁷⁴ Thus, the correlation between the D.III style and the Warš pronominal system might be considered further confirmation that indeed D.III is (in part) a typical Maghrebi style of Kufic.

Of course, identifying only the pronominal system of the manuscript is not necessarily a foolproof way to identify the reading tradition as that of Warš. However, a cursory examination of some of the manuscripts within this group indeed identifies several other typical features that make the Warš identification fairly certain. Paris, BnF, Arabe 325 g, Arabe 341a, Arabe 375d, Arabe 334 l, and Dublin, CBL Is. 1411 (all D.III manuscripts) all show the typical Warš feature of *naql*, i.e. the dropping of the *hamza* when it immediately followed a word that ends in an unvowelled consonants, e.g. *al-'albāb* → *alalbāb* (Ibn al-Ġazarī *Našr* II, 1282–4). This is marked in all of these manuscripts as a line above the vowel sign that cancels the *hamza*, as seen for example in Paris, BnF, Arabe 325 g:

⁷⁴Dahabī *Ṭabaqāt* 105.



Paris, BnF, Arabe 325 g, f. 30 v: *al-ʿalbāb* → *alalbāb* and *ġunāḥun* → *ġunāḥunan* (Q. 2:197-8).

Marking *waṣl* using a red stroke is indeed associated with the Maghrebi vocalisation style (George 2015a: 15).⁷⁵ Although not explicitly discussed by George or Dutton, Dānī's work on dotting, *al-Muḥkam*, also dedicates a section to the specific features of the reading of Warš. Dānī states that *naql* is treated in the same manner as *waṣl*, i.e. with a horizontal stroke (Dānī *Muḥkam*: 214–5). We therefore wish to carefully suggest that the production of D.III manuscripts with the vocalisation of the Warš reading tradition indeed took place in the Maghreb/al-Andalus.

We also note that the NS.III style has a quite strong association with the Warš pronominal system. The Palermo Qur'ān (dated 372/982) – clearly Maghrebi in origin in its broader sense –, likewise is transparently identifiable as the reading of Warš, and as George (2015b: 81) observes follows a vocalisation system that is clearly identifiable as Maghrebi (using a blue dot with red line above to mark *naql*). It seems therefore quite possible that the NS.III style also has some association with the Maghreb.

Decrease in pronominal system variety over time

As a general expectation, with the passage of time and the eventual rise of the canonical readings, one should ultimately see a convergence upon canonical pronominal systems. And this effect does appear to bear out when looking at D and later script styles. As far as the palaeographic chronology of the D script style, Déroche indicates on the basis of *waqf*-s (endowment notice) that the D.I style was in full use at the beginning of the 3rd/9th century (Déroche 1992: 36f.). However, he notes the challenge of establishing a relative chronology for the remaining D scripts due to the limited number of dated artefacts and overlapping intervals for those which are dated. Perhaps an exception to this is the D.V subgroup where he observes an 'external influence' on the proto-typical D style (Déroche 1992: 37).

⁷⁵George also reports that *ʿalif al-waṣl/sila* in Medina and Maghreb/al-Andalus may be marked by a small red circle. However, this appears to be only a theoretical suggestion by Dānī who states 'and if it was marked by a small circle, that would be good too because the circle is used by the Medinans and their dotters as a marker of *sukūn* and a letter which is dropped from speech. This is one of those subtleties that is lost on keen people, let alone idiots' (Dānī *Muḥkam* 211).

On the basis of the distribution of pronominal systems in each script style, we would like to tentatively suggest an earlier *terminus post quem* for the D.I and D.IV styles relative to the rest, followed by D.III, then the remaining sub types follow. Both D.I and D.IV contain a significant number of examples of the Undescribed system to the exclusion of all other styles. Examples of the Long style system are also present, shared by D.III, which we have discussed above.

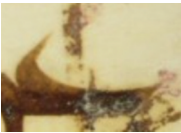
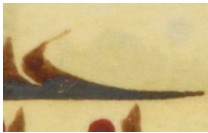
There are two D.I manuscripts with the Undescribed system worthy of note. The first is the 'Āmāgūr Qur'ān, commissioned by the Turkic governor of Damascus 'Āmāgūr (d. 265/878). This is approximately a generation prior to Ibn Muğāhid who dies 324/936. The second is one donated to the Great Umayyad Mosque of Damascus in 298/911 by one 'Abd al-Mun'im b. 'Aḥmad (George 2015a: 20). It too is from around the lifetime of Ibn Muğāhid, and we can see that perhaps as late as the turn of the 4th/10th century, this totally undocumented system was still in use. A comprehensive investigation of reading traditions that are present in manuscripts before and after Ibn Muğāhid to determine the exact extent of his impact remains a topic for future research.

As for an explanation of the shared pronoun similarity between D.I and D.IV, we suggest that they are palaeographically very closely related and that perhaps the salient differences between them were largely motivated by layout constraints. D.I is a large hand, with typically 6–7 lines, and occasionally even fewer per page while D.IV is a much smaller hand with a layout closer to that of B.II with generally 15 or 16 lines per page; examples of the two are shown below.



A more detailed comparison of letter shapes for D.I, D.IV, and D.III is presented below as well. The D.III 'alif has a noticeably longer and tapered return compared to D.I and D.IV. The *lām of the lām-'alif* is also vertical. Final *nūn* does not have an initial flare or sharp angle in D.III and is constant thickness throughout, with a horizontal bottom stroke. Finally, initial 'ayn and ġīm for D.III have a very fine initial taper as opposed to a diagonal edge for D.I and D.IV. While there are subtle differences between D.I and D.IV as present in the 'alif and *nūn* for example, the D.IV shapes look very much like compressed versions of their D.I counterparts, as there is less room for broad curves and angular shapes in the compressed 15–16

line layout. We think that the similarities in the letter shapes of D.I and D.IV as well as the pronominal systems their vocalisations reflect, suggest that they were produced in similar time spans or regions of production.⁷⁶

Letter	D.I	D.IV	D.III
<i>'alif</i>			
<i>lām-'alif</i>			
<i>nūn</i>			
<i>'ayn</i>			
<i>ġīm</i>			

Moving beyond the D.I, D.IV, and D.III styles, we find an overwhelming preference for the Classical system in D.V (especially D.Vb) and NS.I. With the D.III/NS.III group above we saw that the style fairly strongly correlated with the reading of Warš *'an Nāfi'* which – along with other palaeographical considerations – gives the impression that at least a significant part of the manuscripts in these styles were produced in the Maghreb/al-Andalus. The

⁷⁶It is also worth appreciating that D.IV has an extremely high percentage of the Undescribed system, this pronominal system is almost as common in D.IV as it is in the B.II style. While these two styles are clearly distinct, it is striking to note that both styles typically have a similarly high number of lines to the page; these two features may suggest a closer connection between their production contexts.

overwhelming preference in these later styles towards the Classical pronominal system would suggest that they were rather produced and vocalised in the east, where readers with the classical system would become dominant, especially 'Abū 'Amr would gain great popularity (see footnote 19).

Also on palaeographical grounds, there is reason to connect D.Vb and NS.I to the eastern realm. What comes to be known as the 'Persian' Kufic style (variously called Bent Kufic, tall-Kufic, semi-Kufic and even, inappropriately Qarmatian), a script of the 5th/11th – 6th/12th century in Iraq and Persia, such as found in the British Library's Or. 6573 has very obvious links especially with the angular NS.I style.⁷⁷ The focus on long and slanted ascenders on the *ṭā* and final *kāf* are clearly anticipated in the D.Vb style, which shares clear affinities with the later NS.I style.

The New Style script is also close to early non-Qur'ānic calligraphic styles used in the Mashreq, which are quite distinct from the script that comes to dominate the Maghreb. Compare, for example, the copy of Ibn Ḥālawayhi's *Kitāb al-Badī* held at the Chester Beatty Library (Ar. 3051), which dates to 370/980 – the same year Ibn Ḥālawayhi died in Syria. For this reason, it is believed that the manuscript was likely copied in Syria, or at least outside of the Maghreb.⁷⁸ Had this been a Qur'ānic manuscript, it would probably have been classified as NS.I. The similarities of this manuscript to, for example, QUR286 of the Khalili collection (Déroche 1992: 142–3, no. 78) are apparent and warrant further investigation.

Before concluding this discussion, it is worth mentioning that the Long style, despite being canonical, clearly fell out of favour in the later script styles. Our survey contained over 100 manuscripts in such later script styles and not a single one contained long pronouns. This nicely illustrates that, despite the seven readings all enjoying canonical status, this did not necessarily translate to equal popularity. There are undoubtedly manuscripts not included in our survey which do contain long style pronouns, but our sample seems large enough to register a marked drop in its popularity. This is also consistent with the statement by Zağğāğ quoted earlier who notes the popularity of shortened forms and the comparatively rare lengthened long pronouns.

Conclusion

In this paper we have conducted an extensive survey of the morphology of the third person singular and plural pronouns of Arabic from different sources. The medieval grammarians in general present a consistent picture

⁷⁷The style is so close to NS.I that Arberry in his catalogue of the manuscripts at the Chester Beatty Library in fact combines them both under the header of 'Persian' Kufic manuscripts. The later 'Persian' Kufic manuscripts, still are fairly distinct by having much more ornamental shapes of the vertical ascenders, and extremely high ascender height compared to the general letter shape height (Arberry 1967:10–4).

⁷⁸The copyist's *nisba* is Rūgbārī, which is located in modern day Iran and is also suggestive of an Eastern provenance.

of the variation in pronominal forms. Nonetheless, we do observe a few important differences. Apart from Sibawayhi and his student 'Aḥfaṣ, the remainder do not prefer that the pronoun be lengthened after a closed syllable (e.g. *min-hu* vs. *min-hū*). Mubarrid appears to mark the beginning of strongly endorsing what becomes the normative Classical Arabic system. He states that harmonised singular *-hi/ī* and plural *-him* is the best practice, as is the use of short forms after heavy syllables and the use of short plural pronouns. This system is identical to normative Classical Arabic.

Moving on to the reading traditions, we find them to be in stark contrast to what the grammarians describe. The readers have a vast number of highly specifically conditioned environments in which allomorphs of the pronouns appear, probably most clearly exemplified by the transmitters Qutayba and Nuṣayr from Kisā'ī but likewise present in the conditioning of harmonised forms of the pronouns in the Basran group of readers. But the grammarians never describe such systems. Their model is quite clear: either you have vowel harmony of *-hū* and *-hum* after *i*, *ī* and *ay* (the Najdi practice) or you do not (the Hijazi practice). Compare this to Ya'qūb, who only applies vowel harmony to the singular *-hū* in all those environments, whereas for the plural *-hum*, he only does it after *ī* and *ay* but never after *i*. Such a rather unusually conditioned system is never described by the grammarians. This would perhaps not be altogether surprising for grammarians that are roughly contemporary with the early readers, but it is striking that even in the centuries that follow, later grammarians never feel the need to describe such systems, nor are such reading systems ever explained as a 'dialect' of one tribe or the other. All this suggests is that what the medieval scholars believed to be 'arabī was something self-evidently different from *qirā'a*.

That being said, the readers clearly do draw upon variation in morphology and theoretical concepts that they describe. Warṣ could not have decided to use long forms of the plural pronouns, had he not known about their existence, and he could not have decided to use them *only* when *hamza* followed if he had had no concept of what a *hamza* was.

Besides the disconnect between the grammarians and the reading traditions, there is yet another disconnect that deserves attention. The literary tradition transmits a large number of readings with vastly different pronominal systems, some of which retain quite complex conditioning. While some of the details between the different readers are lost in the somewhat limited tools that vocalised Qur'ānic manuscripts have to express them, it is still clear that there is a major gap between what we find in the literary tradition and what we find in vocalised manuscripts.

While three of the ten canonical readers have harmonised pronouns and long plural pronouns (the 'Hijazi cluster'), this system is almost entirely absent in the manuscript record; this is despite surveying over 400 vocalised manuscripts. Whenever a reading has long plural pronouns, it

overwhelmingly lacks vowel harmony in the pronouns (with the exception of *bi-hī*). Other canonical systems like that of Ya‘qūb and others from the ‘Basran cluster’ are barely found at all. In light of these absences, one comes to wonder to what extent the 7 (and later the 10) readings that came to be accepted as canonical were very representative of the popular recitation of the Qur’ān.

Another point of disconnect is the striking fact that after the Classical and Warš systems, the system that lacks vowel harmony in all words except *bi-hī* along with long plural pronouns is extremely popular and even more common than ‘Abū ‘Amr’s, Ḥamza’s or Kisā’ī’s systems. Despite this extraordinary popularity, this system is not known in the literary tradition at all, not among the canonical readers nor among the non-canonical ones. This lack of description cannot be seen as the result of this tradition simply having died out by the time the readings start being described. We have at least two dated manuscripts from the lifetime of Ibn Muğāhid, namely the Qur’ān of ‘Amāğūr dated shortly before 262/876 and the Qur’ān of ‘Abd al-Mun‘im dated before 298/911, that have this pronominal system. It seems that the description of this reading was decided *against* despite its apparent popularity in the manuscript record.

During our analysis of the manuscripts, we found a correlation between dotting and script style. For example, we find that two thirds of the B.II manuscripts surveyed contain the undescribed pronominal system discussed above. The Warš system of pronouns is also frequently present in the D.III, D.I/D.III, and D Commune style manuscripts. The fact that there is a correspondence between script style and vocalisation indicates that the dotting is contemporary with the manuscripts.⁷⁹

Despite the fact that we carried out the most extensive survey of vocalised manuscripts to date, we still maintain that our findings are to be interpreted with caution. Many of the 400 manuscripts surveyed are of unknown provenance, while others are known to have been acquired from Syria, Egypt, or North Africa. The number of manuscripts surveyed does not matter if they are not representative of the overall population of manuscripts during those time periods. Recent information on the manuscript collections of Iran may prove this to be the case. While right now we only have very limited access to these manuscripts, a preliminary examination suggests that they have different vocalisations despite belonging to the standard script style classifications. Time will tell whether we will see a larger concentration of the pronominal systems of the readers which were nearly entirely absent from the manuscripts we surveyed. This however, does not change our major findings; namely that the grammarians do not describe the systems used by the readers, and that manuscripts

⁷⁹The correlation between script and vocalisation would also seem to make intuitive sense of the rather surprising fact that latter Abbasid script styles consistently have *less* consonantal dotting than the earlier Hijazi and early Kufic styles. The lack of dotting seems to be explicitly intended to give room for the coloured diacritical dotting to remove these ambiguities, rather than leaving it to the consonantal skeleton to do so.

contain pronominal systems not described by either the grammarians or *qirā'āt* works. Thus, the mystery remains as to how and why pronominal systems were used into the 4th/10th century that evaded characterisation in the vast literature presented above.

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