

Tropology and Inimitability: Ibn ʿĀshūr’s Theory of *tafsīr* in the Ten Prolegomena to *al-Taḥrīr wa’l-tanwīr*

Gibril Fouad Haddad

UNIVERSITI BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

To date, over 50 Masters and Doctoral dissertations written in the universities of the Arab world have been devoted to the thirty-volume *al-Taḥrīr wa’l-tanwīr* by the Tunisian Qāḍī and Rector of Zaytūna, Muḥammad al-Ṭāhīr b. ʿĀshūr (d. 1973), one of the most influential and encyclopædic authors of his generation.¹ There are only a handful of published book-length works in Arabic on the *Taḥrīr*² and, despite recent advances in English-language scholarship on the typology of *tafsīr*,³ none in English,⁴ while translations of works of Qur’anic hermeneutics into English in general can be counted on the fingers of one hand.⁵ In the first 125 pages of *al-Taḥrīr wa’l-tanwīr* Ibn ʿĀshūr presents his approach in the form of a modern *mufasssīr*’s manual consisting of a preamble and ten prolegomena. This paper sums up the contents of this important contemporary treatise and situates it as a proposed rediscovery of Qur’anic inimitability (*iʿjāz*, lit. ‘incapacitation’) and a curriculum for exegetes that identifies the disciplines needed to study the Qur’an, beginning with rhetoric and tropology.

Ibn ʿĀshūr’s Education, Scholarly Output, and Views⁶

Muḥammad al-Ṭāhīr b. Muḥammad b. Qāḍī Muḥammad al-Ṭāhīr Ibn ʿĀshūr (1296–1393/1879–1973) hailed from a leading Moroccan family of Shādhilī Idrīsīs who had settled in Andalusia, emigrated back to Morocco shortly before the Reconquista, and finally resettled in Tunisia. His paternal grandfather was chief Mālikī judge, Muftī and *Naqīb al-ashrāf* (‘Prefect of Sharīfs’) in Tunis while his maternal grandfather was the first ever minister for ʿAlī Bey III. After memorising the Qur’an and learning French he began his education at al-Zaytūna—Tunisia’s principal institution of Islamic learning—in 1892 at the age of thirteen. His teachers included his maternal grandfather, the then Prime Minister Muḥammad al-ʿAzīz Būʿshūr (1825–1907), who also taught another teacher of his, the conservative Shaykh

Journal of Qur’anic Studies 21.1 (2019): 50–111

Edinburgh University Press

DOI: 10.3366/jqs.2019.0368

© Centre of Islamic Studies, SOAS

www.eupublishing.com/jqs

Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Sharīf al-Bijā^ʿī (1868–1921) who emigrated to Ottoman lands; Ṣālim b. ʿUmar Bū Ḥājib al-Banbalī (1829–1924)—a senior *faqīh* and philologist with whom he thoroughly studied the *Muwattaʿ*⁶ and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, which gave Ibn ʿĀshūr the grounding in *ḥadīth* studies he put to use in the *tafsīr* as well as in independent works on these two collections; Muḥammad al-Nakhlī; the Ḥanafī Maḥmūd b. al-Khūja; and Aḥmad Jamāl al-Dīn of the Banū Khayār (fl. 1905), a *faqīh* with whom he read *Qatr al-nadā* in grammar and al-Dardīr in Mālikī *fiqh*. He completed his studies in 1896, having quickly distinguished himself as an exceptional student, following which he was appointed to teach at the Ṣādiqiyya College in 1900. Three years later he became a first-class Professor at Zaytūna, then a State Deputy Administrator of Zaytūna in 1904 at age 25. The latter post gave him his first platform to express his views on education reform, as did his appointment as a member of the revision committee for educational programmes in 1908, where his contributions covered reform in the cities of Kairouan, Sousse, Sfax, Tozeur, and Gafsa. The essays he published in 1967 on Islamic education in the Arab world entitled *Alaysa al-subḥu bi-qarīb?* (*‘Is it not Almost Dawn?’*), subtitled ‘Arabo-Islamic Teaching: Historical Study and Reformist Views’, were actually started in 1902 (at age 23) and finished in 1907. This is a youthful work in which he is prone to exaggerate.⁷ He was certainly marked by Muḥammad ʿAbduh’s second visit to Tunis in 1903, and later penned an anonymous defense of the latter’s Transvaal *fatwā*.⁸ In 1908 he was also appointed to the Mixed Property Council (whose court had been created by the French in 1888 to promote the interests of French colonists in real estate matters, and as part of the calculated erosion of Shariʿa courts). From 1913 to 1923 he held the post of top Mālikī qāḍī,⁹ at which time he joined the ‘Academic Supervisory Bureau’ of Zaytūna—its administrative committee. He left the judiciary and returned to teaching in 1923 (at Zaytūna and at the famed Sadiqiyya college founded in 1875 by the Islamic modernist Khayruddin Pasha) only to be appointed ‘Deputy Chief Muftī’,¹⁰ the same year. In 1932, he became Rector of Zaytūna with the title of Shaykh al-Zaytūna in 1932 as well as ‘Shaykh al-Islam of the Mālikī School’—the first Mālikī scholar to be given such a title, which was created for him.¹¹ Then, in 1933 he was branded as pro-French for not unconditionally endorsing a *fatwā* published by the Muftī of Bizerte stating that naturalised Tunisians had left Islam. This charge was consistent with past accusations that he had not taken a stand against the 1930 neo-crusader Eucharistic Congress organised by the French in Carthage (near Tunis) to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the occupation of Algeria.¹² Ibn ʿĀshūr was appointed Shaykh al-Zaytūna again from 1944 to 1955, at which time he introduced the teaching of physics, chemistry, and algebra, eliminating from the syllabus some traditional materials he considered irrelevant to modern Islamic learning, in the face of opposition. His contemporaries described him as being indefatigable, conscientious, prolific, courteous, and humble despite his superior erudition and sharp analytical mind, as well as a superb public speaker and top philologist.¹³ Yet, despite this,

Basheer M. Nafi's remark that '[t]ime and again throughout his career, Ibn ʿĀshūr proved to be a non-activist reformist, a somewhat detached intellectual ... politically cautious and socially ambivalent' seems apt.¹⁴

At the same time as teaching, administering Zaytūna, delivering *fatwās*, promoting reform, and supervising cases and pronouncing verdicts as Senior Qādī, Ibn ʿĀshūr found time to produce dozens of books and an untold number of articles. In 1947 he published a landmark two hundred-page work on legal theory entitled *Maqāṣid al-sharīʿa*—echoing the title and scope of an earlier work, *Maḥāsin al-sharīʿa*, by the Shāfiʿī jurist al-Qaffāl al-Kabīr (d. 365/976)—in which he built on al-Shāṭibī's (d. 790/1388) own concept of these purposes, notably adding new ones such as freedom and creating tolerance (*al-samāha*), 'the first of the attributes of the Sharia and the greatest of its objectives'.¹⁵ Most of his forty-odd works revolve around language and literature, specifically rhetoric (*Mūjaz al-balāgha*; on *al-Muṭawwal* and its commentaries; lessons on Qur'anic inimitability, the last two unpublished); usage, semantic and oratory (*Uṣūl al-inshāʾ wa'l-khaṭāba*; an edition of al-Baṭalyūsi's *al-Iqtidāb* with commentary; and *Gharāʾib al-istiʿmāl*, the latter two unpublished); poetry (works on the *muʿallaqāt*, *al-Hamāsa*, al-Mutanabbī, al-Nābigha, Suḥaym, and al-Aʿshā) including encyclopædic editions and commentaries (such as his annotated edition of the Andalusian poet Ibn Khāqān's (480–528/1087–1134) *Qalāʾid al-ʿiqyān*, and Bashshār b. Burd's (96–168/715–784) *Dīwān*; and grammar (on Khalaf al-Aḥmar's *Muqaddima*, unpublished). He also devoted time to history (*Tārīkh al-ʿArab*, unpublished); Šūfism (an oft-republished commentary on al-Būšīrī's panegyric *Burdāt al-madīh* entitled *Shifāʾ al-qalb al-jarīh*); *fatwās* and legal verdicts (*al-Fatāwā*; *Qaḍāyā wa-aḥkām sharʿiyya*); jurisprudence (*al-Waqf wa-āthāruhu fī al-Islām*); lessons on al-Khalīl (*Dirāsāt fī al-luġha* and *Masāʾil fiqhiyya wa-ʿamaliyya*, both unpublished); biography (*Tarājim baʿd al-aʿlām*, unpublished); two major *ḥadīth* commentaries, respectively on the *Muwattaʾa* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, both of which he had read closely with the jurist and philologist Shaykh Sālim b. ʿUmar Bū Ḥājib al-Banbalī; legal theory and philosophy (*al-Tawḍīḥ wa'l-taṣḥīḥ* on al-Qarāfi's *Tanqīḥ*, *Maqāṣid al-sharīʿa al-Islāmiyya*, *Ārāʾ ijtihādiyya*, unpublished); and ancient medicine (correction and commentary on Ibn Zahr's *al-Intiṣār li-Jālīnūs*, a defense of Galen).

Ibn ʿĀshūr became Rector of Zaytūna for a second time, at 77 years of age, on the invitation of Tunisia's first President, Habib Bourguiba, in 1956, the year Tunisia gained its independence after 75 years of French protectorate and the accompanying secularisation of Tunisian public education. That year the first volume of his magnum opus came out, the Qur'anic commentary entitled *Taḥrīr al-maʿnā al-saḍīd wa-tanwīr al-ʿaql al-jadīd min tafsīr al-Kitāb al-majīd* ('Verification of the Sound Meaning and Enlightenment of the New Mind in the Exegesis of the Glorious Book'),¹⁶ better known as *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr* ('The Verification and Enlightenment'), comprising the prolegomena and commentaries on *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* and *Juzʾ ʿAmmā*.¹⁷ This was

followed by a further 29 volumes, the last of which was published in 1970, three years before his death. This *Tafsīr* was over half a century in the making, as is shown by several quotations from his maternal grandfather Muḥammad al-°Azīz Bū°shūr (d. 1907), one of which he dates thus: ‘My grandfather the minister dictated to me one night in the year 1318/1900 ...’, that is, when Ibn °Āshūr was but 21 years old.¹⁸ In one of his very last works, the 1964 *Uṣūl al-niẓām al-ijtimā°ī fī al-Islām*, he revisits his previous discussions of freedom and tolerance and concludes that a Muslim’s freedom of religion excludes apostasy but includes:¹⁹

the choice of any doctrinal school he wishes, given that they vary in the degrees of right and wrong. Thus a Muslim can be a Salafī, an Ash°arī or a Māturīdī Sunnī; or he can be a Mu°tazilī; a Khārijī; a Zaydī; or an Imāmī ... We do not declare apostate any of those who pray to the same *qibla*.

The Prolegomena

This is the first study in a European language on Ibn °Āshūr’s theory of *tafsīr* in his one-hundred-and-thirty-page ‘Ten Prolegomena’ (*al-Muqaddimāt al-°ashr*) to *al-Taḥrīr wa’l-tanwīr*, which sums up his approach to Qur’anic hermeneutics.²⁰ The *Muqaddimāt* cover definitions, methodology, the sources and bases on which Ibn °Āshūr built, the disciplines from which he borrowed, and the tools which he used in order to extract original analyses and fresh views for the benefit of modern readers of the Qur’an. They reveal the author’s mastery of his craft and the utility of his proposal for a modern streamlining of the science of *tafsīr*. His renewed focus on the understanding of linguistic inimitability (*al-i°jāz al-lughawī*) invites future *mufasssirs* to reassess their scholarship and eliminate superfluous aspects. He organised the Qur’anic disciplines around their essential themes, put complex thoughts and analyses into everyday language, and explained technicalities without subjecting readers to jargon or overly succinct allusions. In the process, he couched his text in a pure Arabic idiom to reflect its subject-matter and displayed erudition and originality with his authoritative references and novel insights.²¹ In his preamble he states his two intentions of discovering new meanings of the kind previous exegetes had either missed or left unspoken, and, secondly, formulating a middle position between their various interpretive stances:²²

[I made] it incumbent on myself to bring out, in the exegesis of the Qur’an, allusive points (*nukat*) I have seen no one find before me, and to arbitrate, as it were, among the schools of exegetes, sometimes lending support and sometimes standing in opposition. For contenting oneself with habitual discourse is an impoverishing (*ta°fīl*) of the Qur’anic outpour, which is never exhausted.

The hunt for *nukat* and *laṭā'if* is indeed the exegete's goal, short of which a *tafsīr* remains a glossary. Seven centuries before, al-Bayḏāwī described his own endeavour as 'a book in this discipline that would contain the essence of all that has reached me ... including brilliant allusions (*nukat bāri'a*) and marvelous subtleties (*laṭā'if rā'i'a*) which I and those before me have brought to light'.²³

The preamble ends by staking the claim of the *Tahrīr* to both classicism and authoritative innovation: 'In sum it contains the best of what is found in the *tafsīrs*, and it also contains better than what is found in the *tafsīrs*.'²⁴ The authorial stance of continuator-cum-arbitrator—an exegete's trope²⁵—is itself the result of cogitation and seasoned experience, as Ibn ʿĀshūr had indicated in the opening pages of the preamble. He thus presents the *Tahrīr* as the sum of a lifetime of study and reflection into which, like many exegetes before him, he has poured his mastery of all that qualifies as ancillary disciplines to Qur'anic exegesis, particularly the arts of language. This is reflected in the length of the last of the ten prolegomena (30 pages) entitled 'On the Miraculous Inimitability of the Qur'an' while all the others are between eight and thirteen pages long except for the eighth ('The Name *Qur'an* and the Ordering and Names of its Verses and Chapters'), which comes in at 23 pages. It is for this same reason that the *Tahrīr* has been described as 'on the whole a rhetorical, tropological, linguistic, and rationalistic exegesis that is mindful of transmitted narrations and also concerns itself with the Qur'anic readings'.²⁶

1. *Tafsīr is the Science of Qur'anic Exegesis and ta'wīl is its Synonym*

Ibn ʿĀshūr begins his prolegomena with seven pages discussing definitions, entitled 'Regarding *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* and the fact that *tafsīr* is a science'. *Tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* are usually respectively translated as 'lexical exegesis', 'commentary (as a genre)', and 'manifest meaning' on the one hand and, on the other, 'hermeneutics' and 'interpretation', particularly 'figurative interpretation.' *Fasara* in Arabic means 'to lay bare' (*kashafa*), and thus the primary meaning of its cognate *tafsīr* is indeed 'paraphrastic gloss', while *āla* means literally 'to return' (*raja'a*, *āda*). By virtue of such return, Ibn ʿĀshūr contends, *ta'wīl*, far from straying away from the original meaning, is in fact a foundational/jurisprudential (*bi'l-ma'nanā al-uṣūlī*) regrounding of sense *back* to both meaning and intent.²⁷

awwalahu means 'he referred it back to the purport' (*arja'ahu ilā al-ghāyat al-maqṣūda*), and the purport of a vocable is its meaning and whatever the speaker intends by it.

Ibn ʿĀshūr further posits that in Arabic usage and etymology—and according to Thaʿlab (Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Shaybānī, d. 291/904), Ibn al-Aʿrābī (Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ziyād al-Hāshimī, d. 231/846), Abū ʿUbayda (d. 210/825), and al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 502/c. 1108) among other linguists and exegetes—as well as

in the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunna, *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* are synonyms. Either one may be used indifferently to mean both a literal paraphrase and a further exploration of meanings beyond the letter of the text, although 'some have reserved *tafsīr* for the apparent meaning (*al-ma'cna al-zāhīr*), and *ta'wīl* for the ambiguities (*al-mutashābihāt*).'²⁸ This is illustrated by fact that early exegetes, such as Mujāhid (d. 102/721), Abū °Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/839), and al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/c. 922), primarily seem to have used the two terms interchangeably.²⁹ Ibn °Abbās (d. 68/688) gave *ta'wīl* a deeper meaning on two occasions: first in his statement 'I am among those who know its *ta'wīl*'³⁰ in commentary on Q. 3:7, and none knows its interpretation (*ta'wīl*) except God and those firmly grounded in knowledge, and his quadripartite typology of hermeneutics:³¹

Tafsīr has four different perspectives (*awjuh*): a *tafsīr* familiar to Arabs because it is their own language; a *tafsīr* no one has any excuse not to know; a *tafsīr* known only to the people of learning; and a *tafsīr* whose *ta'wīl* is known only to God.

As is demonstrated in the list below, synonymity is in line with the usage suggested in the very titles of early *tafsīrs*, while later ones more openly imply a deeper level of exegesis by the word *ta'wīl*:

al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923): *Jāmi' al-bayān °an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*

Abū Muslim al-Iṣfahānī (d. 322/934): *Jāmi' al-ta'wīl li-muḥkam al-tanzīl*

al-Māturīdī (d. 333/945): *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*

al-Tāj al-Kirmānī (d. after 500/1107): *Gharā'ib al-tafsīr wa-°ajā'ib al-ta'wīl*

al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1143): *al-Kashshāf °an ḥaqā'iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa-°uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta'wīl*

al-Bayḍāwī (d. 708?/1308?): *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta'wīl*

al-Nasafī (d. 710/ 1310): *Madārik al-tanzīl wa-ḥaqā'iq al-ta'wīl*

Two more precise understandings of *ta'wīl* are also established, 'dream interpretation' and 'applicable Sharī'c a meaning'. The first is self-explanatory in both its Qur'anic (e.g., throughout *Sūrat Yūsuf*) and Sunnaic contexts. The second stood for a type of knowledge that required depth and insight beyond mere lexicology, as in al-Khiḍr's *ta'wīl* of what had left Moses perplexed (Q. 18:78 and 82) and the *ḥadīth* 'O God, give him [Ibn °Abbās] deep understanding in religion and teach him *ta'wīl*',³² or the passage of time, as in the befalling of a known but heretofore unactualised disclosure: *Do they await but its final unfolding (ta'wīlahu)? The day its final unfolding comes, those that had forgotten it before shall say, Indeed, our Lord's messengers certainly brought truth* (Q. 7:53, cf. Q. 10:39) and the warning Muqātil attributes to Ibn °Abbās, 'Learn the *ta'wīl* before others come and make *taw'īl* according to the wrong *ta'wīl*!'³³ Both it and the understanding of *ta'wīl/tafsīr* synonymity are at the core of the use of the term *ta'wīl* in both the Qur'an (cf. Q. 3:7, Q. 4:59, Q. 17:35) and Sunna. This is illustrated in

the mutually elucidatory dichotomies proposed by scholars (see Table 1 below), while al-Ālūsī (d. 1270/1854) defined *ta'wīl* as 'indisputably defined today as a divinely-inspired cue and transcendent gnoses unveiling themselves to the wayfarers from behind the shutters of phrases and pouring down from the rain-clouds of the unseen on the hearts of gnostics, while *tafsīr* is other than that.'³⁴

	What <i>tafsīr</i> is	What <i>ta'wīl</i> is
Ibn ʿAbbās	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * partly known to the scholars * partly known to the Arabs * partly known to all (<i>ḥalāl</i> & <i>ḥarām</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * known to God alone
al-Māturīdī ³⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * the province of the <i>ṣaḥāba</i>; * categorical assertion of a gloss, equivalent to witnessing; * single perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * the province of the jurists; * exposition of the upshot of the matter (<i>bayān muntahā al-amr</i>); * steering the discourse to its plausible meaning; * preponderant but non-categorical explanation; * multiple perspectives
Abū Ṭālib al-Thaʿlabī ³⁶ (d. c. 488/1095)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * lexical usage (<i>waḍʿ al-laḥẓ</i>); * marker of intent (<i>dalīl al-murād</i>); * narration (<i>riwāya</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * subaudition (<i>bāʿin al-laḥẓ</i>), * real intent (<i>ḥaqīqat al-murād</i>); * expertise (<i>dirāya</i>)
al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī ³⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * mostly about words, especially single words and difficult words, but also subtext such as background stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * mostly about meanings and entire clauses; * showing whether general or specific usage applies
al-Baghawī ³⁸ (d. 516/1122)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * about the circumstances of revelation, the importance of the verse and its background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * shifting (<i>ṣarf</i>) the verse to a plausible meaning suitable to its context
al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) ³⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * narration (<i>riwāya</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * expert knowledge (<i>dirāya</i>)
al-Kāfyajī ⁴⁰ (d. 879/1474)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * transmissive and narrative; * the province of the <i>ṣaḥāba</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * linguistic and expert; * the province of the jurists

Table 1. The *mufasssirs*' Understanding of *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*.

After it has been made clear that Ibn ʿĀshūr includes all of the above in his understanding of *tafsīr*, we can better appreciate his technical definition of it as:⁴¹

the science that investigates the exposition of the meanings of the Qurʾanic vocables and all that is inferred therefrom, *whether in abridged or in extensive fashion* ... its subject-matter being the *vocables* of the Qurʾan from the perspective of the investigation of its *meanings*.

He then proceeds to defend the appellation of ‘science’ (*ʿilm*) in relation to *tafsīr*. Although not a science in the sense of ‘universally applicable propositions for demonstrable empirical claims’ (*maṭlūbāt khabariyya yubarhan ʿalayhā ... wa-hiya qaḍāyā kullīyya*), *tafsīr*, he says, was nevertheless considered to be a science for six possible reasons:

- (i) Since *tafsīr* gave rise to so many disciplines and general principles, it is considered the first of them, and a general principle in and of itself.
- (ii) In their classification of the sciences, scholars have said that to posit demonstrable universally applicable propositions as the precondition for something to be called a science is only a prerequisite for the ratiocinative disciplines (*al-ʿulūm al-maʿqūla*). It is not a precondition for the sacro-legal and literary disciplines, for which it is enough that its avenues of investigation bestow a kind of scholarly perfection to their practitioners, and the highest among them in this is *tafsīr*.
- (iii) Terminological definitions are ‘verifications’ (*al-taʿārīf al-laḥẓiyya taṣḍīqāt*)⁴² according to some expert logicians, because they end up as propositions from which countless meanings may be derived, which makes them tantamount to universal rules. The probative factor of Arabic poetry and other linguistic proof-texts, for example, acts as a demonstration for these propositions. This is one example of the derivative disciplines mentioned in the first bullet point above, which shows that *tafsīr* is comparable to a science.
- (iv) The recourse to general principles is a constant of *tafsīr*. Before addressing passages such as *Whatever verse We abrogate ...* (Q. 2:106), and *none knows its interpretation* (Q. 3:7), and *of the Book are the finalised verses* (Q. 3:7), one must first establish the principles of abrogation (*al-nashk*), those of interpretation (*al-taʾwīl*), and those of unabrogable finality (*al-muḥkam*) respectively. The sum total of such groundings is called a science by extension.
- (v) Since it behoves *tafsīr* to also cover the clarification of the bases of legislation and its general principles, it follows that it deserves to be called a science in this respect as well. However, exegetes have focused on the meanings of the Qurʾan to such an extent that they have neglected the principles of legal theory in the course of their activity, except in a few cases.

(vi) *Tafsīr* was the first thing Muslim scholars worked upon before turning to the rest of the sciences. The acquisition of mastery in the disciplines related to *tafsīr* led to the development of comprehensive sciences that are more specifically related to the Qur'an than to anything else. Hence, *tafsīr* itself was named a science. As the discipline *sine qua non* for understanding the speech of God it is the pre-eminent sacred science, as is described by al-Ghazālī in the first book of *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* and al-Bayḍāwī in the preamble to his *Tafsīr*. It also deserves to be thus described as the conglomerate of the knowledge of Meccan and Medinan suras, of the abrogant and the abrogate, of the bases of the rules of legal theory such as the *'āmm* ('general') and the *khāṣṣ* ('specific'), of the Qur'anic readings, and of many other aspects of the contents of the Qur'an.⁴³

Scholars, furthermore, have approached *tafsīr* according to the two broad methodologies respectively known as 'transmission' (*athar*), famously represented by Mālik b. Anas and Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, and 'theory' (*naẓar*), represented by the likes of al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923) and Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī (d. 377/987), although Ibn 'Āshūr goes on to show (see below, section 3) that al-Ṭabarī, in reality, is much more analytical than he himself was prepared to admit. Then came 'two major linguistic exegetes who were contemporaries, one in the East and one in the West', al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1143) who emphasised linguistics, and Ibn 'Aṭīyya (d. 546/1151) who emphasised jurisprudence.⁴⁴ These are Ibn 'Āshūr's top two sources in his *Tafsīr*, followed by other exegetes, as well as grammarians, philologists, and canonists; among those he cites less than ten times are al-Mahdawī (d. 430/1039),⁴⁵ al-Ṭabarsī (d. 560/1165), and Abū al-Su'ūd (d. 982/1574), with the conspicuous absence of al-Rummānī, Yaḥyā b. Sallām, and Muḥammad 'Abduh (d. 1323/1905) who are only mentioned two or three times⁴⁶ despite the high esteem in which he held them (see Table 2).

Author	Work	Citations
al-Zamakhsharī	<i>al-Kashshāf</i> and <i>Asās al-balāgha</i>	800
Ibn 'Aṭīyya	<i>al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz</i>	400
al-Rāzī	<i>Mafātīḥ al-ghayb</i> ('and perhaps <i>Durrat al-tanzīl</i> ') ⁴⁷	250
Ibn al-'Arabī al-Mālikī	<i>Aḥkām al-Qur'ān</i>	200
al-Ṭabarī	<i>Jāmi' al-bayān</i>	170
al-Farrā'	<i>Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān</i>	140
al-Wāḥidī	<i>Tafsīrs</i> and <i>Asbāb al-nuzūl</i>	125

Author	Work	Citations
al-Zajjāj	<i>Ma^ʿānī al-Qur^ʿān</i>	118
al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī	<i>Mufradāt al-Qur^ʿān</i> ('and perhaps <i>Durrat al-tanzīl</i> ') ⁴⁸	110
al-Taftāzānī	<i>Hāshiyat al-Kashshāf</i>	100
Ibn Hishām	<i>Mughnī al-labīb</i> and <i>al-Tadhkira</i>	100
Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī	<i>al-Ḥujja li'l-qurrā^ʿ al-sab^ʿa</i>	90
al-Fayrūzābādī	<i>al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ</i> and <i>Baṣāʿir dhawī al-tamyīz</i>	90
Abū Ḥayyān	<i>al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ</i>	80
al-Bayḍāwī	<i>Anwār al-tanzīl</i>	80
al-Ṭībī	<i>Hāshiyat al-Kashshāf</i>	80
al-Sakkākī	<i>Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm</i>	80
Abū ʿUbayda	<i>Majāz al-Qur^ʿān</i>	75
al-Ghazālī	<i>Iḥyā^ʿ</i> , <i>al-Asnā</i> , <i>al-Muṣtaṣfā</i> , <i>al-Mustazhirī</i> , <i>al-Wajīz</i>	70
al-Sayyid al-Jurjānī	<i>Ḥawāshī al-Kashshāf</i> and <i>Sharḥ al-Miftāḥ</i>	65
Ibn Jinnī	<i>Sharḥ al-Ḥamāsa</i>	60
al-Mubarrad	<i>al-Kāmil</i>	60
Ibn ʿArafa al-Tūnisī	<i>Tafsīr (bi-taqyīd al-Ubbī)</i>	60
ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī	<i>Dalāʿil al-iʿjāz</i>	50
al-Ālūsī	<i>Rūḥ al-ma^ʿānī</i>	50
Ibn al-Ḥājjib	<i>Mukhtaṣar</i> , <i>Amālī</i> , <i>Kāfiya</i> , and <i>Īdāḥ al-mufaṣṣal</i>	50
Qāḍī ʿIyād	<i>al-Shifā</i> , <i>Ikmāl al-Muʿlim</i> , and <i>Tartīb al-madārik</i>	50
al-Baghawī	<i>Ma^ʿālim al-tanzīl</i>	40
al-Khafājī	<i>Hāshiyat Anwār al-tanzīl</i>	40
al-Suyūfī	<i>al-Durr al-manthūr</i> and <i>al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qur^ʿān</i>	30
al-Naḥḥās	<i>Ma^ʿānī al-Qur^ʿān</i>	30

Author	Work	Citations
al-Marzūqī	<i>Sharḥ al-Hamāsa</i>	30
Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī	<i>Ḥāshiyat al-Kashshāf, Sharḥ al-Miftāḥ, Sharḥ al-Kullīyyāt</i>	25
Abū Muslim al-Iṣfahānī	<i>Jāmi' al-ta'wīl li-muḥkam al-tanzīl</i>	25
ʿUmar al-Qazwīnī	<i>al-Kashf ʿalā al-Kashshāf</i>	20
al-Thaʿlabī	<i>al-Kashf wa'l-bayān</i>	20
al-Jaṣṣāṣ	<i>Aḥkām al-Qurʾān</i>	20

Table 2. Citations in Ibn ʿĀshūr's *Tafsīr* in descending order of frequency.⁴⁹

Abrogation

Ibn ʿĀshūr does expound his perspectives on *naskh* at length when he turns to explain *Whatever verse We suppress (nansakh) or cause to be forgotten, We supply better or the like thereof ...* (Q. 2:106), at which time he covers its meaning, its linguistic usage and cognates, its applications, the fact that literal *naskh* is an existential (*wujūdī*) replacement of one entity by another, the circumstances of revelation, the parsing of the verse and more. He defines the function of *naskh* in the context of this verse as a double duty: although literally applicable to certain Qurʾanic verses and *sharʿī* rulings—‘because addressing the Muslims is more important than addressing the Jews’—nevertheless it also applies to prior revelations.⁵⁰ There is therefore, implied in the verse, a rebuke of the Medinan Jews who seized upon the Qurʾan’s confirmation of the divine origin of the Torah as an excuse to reject both the Prophet’s status and the authority of the Qurʾan over them. He defines *naskh* in legal theory as ‘the removal of a *sharʿī* ruling with a direct address’ from the Lawgiver, ‘which excludes resumptive legislation (*al-tashrīʿ al-mustaʿnaf*), since it is not a removal, and excludes the cancellation of primal non-liability (*rafʿ al-barāʿat al-aṣliyya*) through resumptive legislation, since primal non-liability is not a legal ruling but a mere continuation of the non-legally-liable status of people before the coming of a sacred dispensation to them’.⁵¹

Ibn ʿĀshūr stands with the scholarly majority in affirming the abiding presence, in the Qurʾanic text, of verses whose legislative force was abrogated but whose recitational and scriptural status remains forever (*naskh al-ḥukm dūn al-tilāwa / al-rasm*)—the most frequent of the three types of abrogation (both wording and ruling, wording but not ruling, ruling but not wording).⁵² A Qurʾanic verse can be abrogated by a *ḥadīth*, even a non-mass-transmitted one in his view, such as the Prophet’s statement on the Farewell Pilgrimage, ‘Behold! no bequest for inheritors’ (*alā lā waṣīyyata li-wārith*).⁵³ His view

on the reason why the script (*rasm*) of such verses remains is based on his theory of style as the foremost proof of the Qur'an's miraculous inimitability.⁵⁴

After their legislative status was abrogated there was no reason for them to remain recited and written in the Qur'anic volumes other than what their cluster contains of eloquence, in that three of their verses weld together as the [minimum-length] challenge to produce the like thereof. An example is the verse of bequest in the Sura of Contracts [= Q. 5:106–108].

This remarkable finding in relation to the structure of abrogated content is confirmed by another three-verse cluster that had made bequests to parents and close relatives a categorical obligation in *Sūrat al-Baqara* (Q. 2:180–182), then was also abrogated after the verses of inheritance made all bequests a voluntary choice.⁵⁵

2. *The Auxiliary Disciplines of tafsīr are Arabic, athar, asbāb, and uṣūl*

In his second prolegomenon entitled 'Where the Science of *tafsīr* Draws From' Ibn ʿĀshūr lists 'the seamless whole formed of the science of Arabic and the science of reports as well as the history of the Arabs and the principles of jurisprudence ... some also mention dialectic theology and the science of the Qur'anic readings'.⁵⁶ The latter, he avers, are linguistic proofs rather than exegeses.⁵⁷ By the 'science of reports' (*ʿilm al-āthār*) is meant *ḥadīth*, encompassing not only the sayings reported from the Prophet Muḥammad but also those of his Companions and of their Successors (which form the bulk of exegetical reports) as well as the historical occasions of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*).⁵⁸ 'The science of Arabic' consists in 'the body of the language (*matn al-lughā*), morphology (*al-taṣrīf*), grammar (*al-naḥw*), semantic (*al-maʿānī*), and rhetoric (*al-bayān*)', as inferred from 'the orations of the Arabs, their poetry, and the constructs of their stylists (*bulaghāʾ*)'.⁵⁹ Contrary to al-Suyūṭī, he excludes law from the auxiliaries of exegesis 'because the understanding of the Qur'an does not hinge on the questions of *fiqh*'.⁶⁰ He concludes with a caveat that the fact that the science of exegesis takes advantage of these disciplines does not contradict its status as the head and foundation of all the Islamic sciences.⁶¹

The Qur'an is replete with allusions, ellipses, questions meant as affirmations or exhortations, apostrophes, recurring leitmotifs, similes, and parables that all patently qualify as rhetorical tropes both in themselves and in their syntactic-semantic contexts. Semantics and rhetoric are therefore of primary import to Qur'anic commentary because of their indispensable roles in demonstrating the inimitability of the Qur'anic style.⁶² Al-Zamakhsharī invokes 'curses on whoever dares treat Qur'anic commentary when devoid of these two sciences!';⁶³ an echo of al-Wāḥidī's strenuous reminders in the introduction to his *Basīṭ*.⁶⁴ This preoccupation with *iʿjāz* by way of the theme of eloquence (*balāgha*) is central to Ibn ʿĀshūr's *Tafsīr*. It explains why he

brings it up in almost all of his prolegomena⁶⁵ and why he so often cites the Ḥanafī Mu[°]tazilī al-Sakkākī's (d. 626/1229) *Miftāḥ al-°ulūm* (over 80 times in the *Taḥrīr*), which is devoted to *ma°ānī* and *bayān*, and its commentaries by al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), al-Sayyid al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413), al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī (d. 739/1339), and others. Another much-cited source is °Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078) and his seminal treatises *Dalā°il al-i°jāz* ('The Proofs of Qur'anic Inimitability') and *Asrār al-balāgha* ('The Secrets of Eloquence'). Ibn °Āshūr excerpts a rebuttal of anthropomorphists from the former's section on sapiential metaphor (*al-majāz al-ḥikmī*).⁶⁶

A certain crowd that dabble in Qur'anic commentary without knowledge habitually misconstrue the kernels of vocables that are applied to signify metaphor and figurativeness to have an external sense—that is to say, literal—thereby corrupting the meaning, invalidating the purport and depriving themselves and the listeners knowledge of the very place of eloquence and the place of honour!

Ibn °Āshūr devotes the next page to diagnose the reason for such incompetence as an absence of what he calls 'taste' (*dhawq*), defined by his grandfather the minister Muḥammad al-°Azīz Bū°shūr as:⁶⁷

originating from proficiency in the usage of the stylists (*tatabbu° isti°māl al-bulaghā°*) ... and reflecting on the speech that has most definitely reached the apex of eloquence. The claim to possess such perceptive taste can only be accepted from the elite, and it weakens and strengthens according to one's assiduous pursuit of such reflection.

Examples of speech that has reached the apex of eloquence are the Mu°allaqāt, *Dīwān al-ḥamāsa*, *Nahj al-balāgha*, al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt*, and the epistles of Badī° al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī.⁶⁸ Ibn °Āshūr returns to this theme further down and adopts al-Sakkākī's identification of *dhawq* as the one innate sense that is indispensable in understanding inimitability (*i°jāz*).⁶⁹ Although he maintains silence on Ibn °Āshūr, Isa Boullata in his survey of the stylistic inimitability of the Qur'an in exegetical literature points out that Bint al-Shāṭi° (°Ā°isha °Abd al-Raḥmān, 1913–1998), 'the first woman ever to write Qur'an exegesis ... disagrees with those who ascribe the *i°jāz* of the Qur'an to anything but its unique style'.⁷⁰ This is an unmistakably Ibn °Āshūrian position as well.⁷¹

3. *Athar is Not a Method and ra°y is a Misnomer for naẓar and °ilm*

The third prolegomenon is 'On the Soundness of *tafsīr* Through Other Than Transmitted Sources and the Meaning of Speculative Exegesis (*tafsīr bi al-ra°y*) and

the Like'. In the first prolegomenon Ibn ʿĀshūr had opposed 'reports' (*āthār*) not to 'opinion' (*raʿy*) but to 'theory' (*naẓar*). Here, he severely rebukes those who consider that exegesis should be only transmitted from the Prophet:⁷²

They have indeed narrowed the vastness of meanings of the Qur'an and the springs of the sciences that can be extracted from it! They have, moreover, contradicted themselves in what they themselves compiled of exegeses, and have imputed errors to their predecessors in what the latter interpreted! For they have no other recourse than to admit that the imāms of the Muslims among the Companions and those that follow never limited themselves to merely narrate whatever exegesis had reached them from the Prophet (upon him blessings and peace).

The above critique is important on several levels. It is indeed an oversimplification of *tafsīr* to pigeonhole it as either/or between the two epithets of 'transmissive' (*bi'l-maʿthūr*) and 'speculative' (*bi'l-raʿy*), as if one were automatically exclusive of the other on the one hand and, on the other, as if the two terms were transparent. In reality the vast majority of the exegesis of the early centuries is *raʿy*-based, including much of what is commonly described as transmissive, since the latter category consists mostly of non-Prophetic reports, which is thus not 'divinely ordained' (*tawqīfī*), and is hence speculative.⁷³ In this respect the observation that the *raʿy*-based *tafsīr* reports from second-generation Muslims exceed those of the Companions and the Prophet by far is accurate (even in al-Suyūṭī's *al-Durr al-manthūr*, which Ibn ʿĀshūr adduces as an archetype of *tafsīr bi al-maʿthūr*).⁷⁴ Indeed the Prophet himself validated speculation when he allowed the Companions—and, by extension, all subsequent generations—to use their own insights in the understanding and practical application of certain verses even if they might be mistaken.⁷⁵ Another corrective level is that the *maʿthūr/raʿy* dichotomy implies the hierarchisation of the former over the latter—since nothing can compete with the transmitted divine sources of the Qur'an and Sunna—which implies or leads to an inherent devalorisation of exegetical *raʿy*, especially in light of *ḥadīths* condemning it, whereas such *ḥadīths* are understood by scholars as warnings against 'reprehensible innovation' (*bidʿa*), specifically the strains and sects characterised by orthodoxy as heterodox, and not in absolute terms.⁷⁶ Lastly, to restrict the meanings of the Qur'an strictly to what was authentically transmitted from the Prophet is a reductionism unfit of the polysemy characteristic of the divine idiom⁷⁷ and, it might be added, of the Qur'an's pervasive injunction to use one's mind. Widening the criterion of transmission to only include Companion reports (as Ibn ʿĀshūr claimed al-Suyūṭī did in *al-Durr al-manthūr*) is also problematic and does not resolve the above-mentioned contradictions. The Successors and their successors' own unique and qualified interpretations abound in al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*⁷⁸ and, as was just observed, form the bulk of what is very loosely described as *tafsīr bi'l-athar*. In fact, al-Ṭabarī himself

almost invariably injects his own linguistic analyses and rational choices into the transmitted data, against his own purely *atharī* agenda. Ibn ʿĀshūr remarks on this apparent contradiction in order to castigate pure *athar* as a lack of method:⁷⁹

Al-Ṭabarī bound himself in his *Tafsīr* to keep to whatever was related from the Companions and Successors; however, he does not fail to summarise that in line with his own choice with regard to each verse, and give preponderance to some over others on the basis of witness-texts from the discourse of Arabs. This is enough proof of his transgressing the limit he had set for himself—to keep strictly to transmitted *tafsīr*. The latter way is not a method! Baqī b. Makhlad preceded him in that (we have not seen his *Tafsīr*) and al-Ṭabarī's contemporaries did the same, for example Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Mardawayh, and al-Ḥākim. How truly good are those who did not confine themselves, in Qur'anic exegesis, to what was transmitted, such as al-Farrā' and Abū ʿUbayda among the early scholars, al-Zajjāj and al-Rummānī among those who followed, and those who [later] trod in their path, such as al-Zamakhsharī and Ibn ʿAṭīyya!

The Qur'an itself, Ibn ʿĀshūr says, demands of readers the reflection and analysis that constitute the letter and spirit of exegetical *ra'y*. The latter is not mere 'opinion' (which is usually meant in the negative sense of *al-ra'y al-madhūm*, 'reprehensible opinion') but the essence of analytical investigation and understanding conveyed by several much more appropriate terms such as *ta'wīl* ('interpretation'), *fiqh* ('thorough comprehension'), *tafakkur* ('reflection'), *tafahhum* ('applied understanding'), *tadabbur* ('contemplation'), *istinbāt* ('inference'), *tahlīl* ('analysis'), and other terms. Such was the approach of the major exegetes among the Companions themselves,⁸⁰ as well as that of subsequent scholars whose view was that 'applied understanding (*al-tafahhum*) even with sparse reading is preferable to abundant reading without'.⁸¹ In the process of exonerating *ra'y* from spurious charges of herodoxy, Ibn ʿĀshūr seems to deliberately cut the proponents of *ma'thūr* down to size not only as diminutive and unappreciative of the inexhaustible meanings of the Qur'an, but as a hindrance to the science itself: 'If, by *ma'thūr*, they mean what is related from the Prophet and the Companions exclusively—and this is what transpires from al-Suyūṭī's handiwork [in *al-Durr al-manthūr*]⁸²—then this overly narrow purview does not help the experts of *tafsīr* one iota!' This anti-*atharī* stance, the inaccurate statement about the *Durr* (which in reality contains mostly reports from the post-Companion layers) and the fact that he listed the Sunnī arch-master of *atharī* exegesis, al-Ṭabarī, last among his major sources, but al-Zamakhsharī first, did not go unnoticed by at least one 'Salafī' reviewer.⁸³ In the tenth prolegomenon Ibn ʿĀshūr will mention ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's reference to the Arabic language as historically the most reliable of all sciences to the

Arabs themselves. His son will go further in his own work and recast the *athar/ra*²y dichotomy as *athar/ilm*, and linguistic exegesis as the scientific *tafsīr* (*tafsīr ʿilmī*) par excellence (see ‘Conclusions’ below).

Ibn ʿAshūr then, finally, lists types of exegesis that qualify as unfounded opinion: (i) sourceless musings; (ii) incompetence; (iii) heresy such as Ismāʿilism and other types of Bāṭinism (‘esotericism’) as exemplified by Qāshānī’s *Tafsīr* (commonly misattributed to Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī) and the *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ* (‘Epistles of the Brethren of Purity’)—lambasted by al-Ghazālī and his student Ibn al-ʿArabī al-Mālikī; (iv) exclusivist glosses (‘it means this and nothing else’⁸⁴); (v) incautious haste, as if the Qur’an were explainable in the same way as a literary text.⁸⁵

The prolegomenon concludes with a discussion of the elements of authentic *tafsīr ishārī*, or allusive exegesis, commonly known as Ṣūfī *tafsīr*.⁸⁶ Ibn ʿAshūr first mentions al-Ghazālī’s valuable distinctions between it and esotericism then expands on the latter with three requisite criteria without which exegesis ceases to be Ṣūfī and falls into Bāṭinism: (i) the metaphorical tenor of the Ṣūfī gloss is supported by the lexical vehicle and closely parallels the conventional gloss, as in the interpretation of the *ḥadīth* ‘angels do not enter a house in which is found a dog or an image’ to refer to the house of the heart sullied by the presence of evil traits of character that prevent the divine light from entering it; (ii) *tafāʿul* or the ‘detection of a divine encouragement’ through reading the text in an unconventional manner congruent with one’s highest priorities, for example reading *man dhā alladhī yashfaʿu ʿindahu* (who is he who can intercede with Him) as *man dhalla dhī, yashfaʿ indahu* (whoever humbles that one [the rebellious soul] shall intercede with Him);⁸⁷ and (iii) the perpetual receptivity for sapiential meanings that typifies self-aware souls that take every Qur’anic admonition personally.⁸⁸ These brief pointers on Ṣūfī exegesis show Ibn ʿAshūr’s awareness of Ibn Juzayy’s (d. 741/1340) inclusion of *taṣawwuf* among the requisite disciplines of Qur’anic hermeneutics in his own authoritative introduction to *tafsīr*.⁸⁹ (The overall structure and subject matter of the ten prolegomena closely resembles Ibn Juzayy’s twelve-chaptered introduction in his *al-Tashīl li-ʿulūm al-tanzīl* in several places.) They also show his mastery of specialised concepts, terminology, and positions among other learned references to Ṣūfism and some of its lesser-known figures (such as Luṭfu’llāh al-Arḍarūmī and Ibn Barraġān) that come up time and again in the *Taḥrīr*,⁹⁰ interspersed with an emphasis on the clear demarcation of Ṣūfī orthodoxy from what he calls extremist views (*ghulūww*, *ghulāt*) including the Bābīs and Bahāʾīs.⁹¹

4. The Parameters of Exegesis and the *maqāsid* of the Qur’an

Ibn ʿAshūr devotes his fourth prolegomenon, ‘What is Incumbent as the Exegete’s Mission (*gharaḍ*)’, to detailing the ‘higher objective’ (*al-maqṣad al-aʿlā*) of the Qur’an—‘the haleness of the states of individuals, communities, and civilisations’ and

'the exposition of all the ways that pertain to the preservation of the objectives of the religion (*ḥifẓ maqāṣid al-dīn*)' which, he says, is 'the divine intent (*murād Allāh*) in the Qur'an'. Such intent, however, is couched in the Arabic language for a variety of reasons. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the divine address concerns first those that have intimate knowledge and practice of that language. It does not mean that law-giving concerns them exclusively—which is precluded by the timeless universality of the sacred law—nevertheless.⁹²

Truly His objectives are the purging of the souls of the Arabs who were chosen, as we said, for receiving His sacred law and disseminating it. So they are the first addressees before the rest of the proselyted (*ummat al-da^cwa*). Hence, inevitably, their conditions must be taken into account, and much of the Qur'an purports to address them specifically and reform their states.

Ibn ʿAshūr lists the 'root objectives (*al-maqāṣid al-aṣliyya*) which the Qur'an came to expound' as eight: (i) sound doctrine; (ii) noble character; (iii) law-giving in the public and private spheres; (iv) unified governance of the *umma*; (v) historical paradigms; (vi) learning and education towards the acquisition of wisdom; (vii) admonition; and (viii) incapacitation [of denial] (*i^cjāz*).⁹³

Therefore the mission of the exegete is to expose whatever he attains or investigates of the divine intent in the Book in the fullest way made possible by the meaning without going against the wording, touching upon everything that clarifies the intent of the objectives of the Qur'an ... together with the establishment of its conclusive argument to that effect should there be any unclarity, or to pre-empt any rejection on the part of an arrogant or ignorant naysayer.⁹⁴

In the application of the above objectives exegetes, according to Ibn ʿAshūr, broadly follow one of three methodologies. The default method is to confine oneself to the manifest locutions of the original meanings of semantic roots (*al-ẓāhir min al-ma^cnā al-aṣli li'l-tarkīb*). The second is to extract meanings justified by what the wording or context point to, beyond the manifest locution, but contradicting neither usage nor the purport of the Qur'an. These are the necessary follow-ups on syntax and morphology that are specific to Arabic and the province of rhetoric and tropes. The third is to infer and expand on various issues evoked by meanings or help to elucidate them, or to match Qur'anic meanings with certain sciences in a way that relates to the objectives of law-giving. An example of the latter is the remark that the verses *And the day We set the mountains in motion* (Q. 18:47) and *When the sun is wound up* (Q. 81:1) refer to the ending of the world by means of earthquakes and the cessation of gravitational attraction respectively.⁹⁵

This prolegomenon contains an important reminder that exegetes need to be acquainted with the scientific knowledge of their time, as the latter bears on a renewed understanding of the meanings of the Qur'an.⁹⁶ Ibn ʿAshūr takes apart al-Shāṭibī's claims that 'the criteria of understanding and explaining is restricted to what all the [early] Arabs knew and could understand' and that 'since the Qur'an addressed unlettered (*ummī*) Arabs, it follows that the *sharīʿa* is unlettered' with six arguments that revolve around the principle that the Qur'an is a living, universal, normative and evolutionary text that cannot be pinned down to a single culture or moment in time.⁹⁷ This is crucial to Ibn ʿAshūr because, as a proponent of the rhetorical normativeness of the Qur'an, he is diametrically opposed to al-Shāṭibī's stance on Qur'anic normativity.⁹⁸

The prolegomenon ends with a list of four tiers of knowledge and their relationship to the Qur'an: (i) the Qur'anic sciences such as the histories of the Prophets, the redress of character, laws, doctrines, linguistic and rhetorical principles; (ii) the sciences that enhance the exegete's knowledge such as wisdom, astronomy, and biology; (iii) sciences implied by the Qur'an or that support it, such as geology, medicine, and logic; and (iv) sciences that are unrelated to it, either because of their spuriousness (for example, bird-flight auguries, omens, and mythology), or because they do not help in exegesis (for example, prosody and versification).⁹⁹

5. *The Occasions of Revelation (asbāb al-nuzūl)*

The fifth prolegomenon provides a corrective on two misuses of the branch exegetical discipline of *asbāb al-nuzūl*. The first is the endemic misrepresentation of weak reports as reliable, in which Ibn ʿAshūr cites al-Wāḥidī's condemnation of unscrupulous fabricators.¹⁰⁰ The second is over-contextualisation, or the restriction of applicability to the original context of revelation exclusively of other circumstances and persons. It is, he says, a well-established principle that 'the import is taken from the universality of the wording, not from the particularity of the circumstance' ('*al-ʿibratu bi-ʿumūm al-laḥẓ, lā bi-khuṣūṣ al-sabab*').¹⁰¹

Ibn ʿAshūr organises authentic reports on *asbāb al-nuzūl* into five categories: (i) reports on which the proper understanding of the verse depends, such as the first verse of *Sūrat al-Mujādila* (Q. 58), *God has heard the words of she that disputes with you concerning her husband*, or some of the verses that mention *certain people*; (ii) verses of legal rulings that arose from historical incidents, the details of which add nothing to the understanding of those rulings other than confirmation and strength; (iii) verses on historical incidents knowing the details of which only serves illustrative purposes; (iv) historical incidents that match the contents of verses although the revelation of the latter was unrelated, so their matching is purely explanatory and illustrative; (v) reports that clarify and qualify undefined verses (*tabyīn mujmal*) such as the one that contextualises Q. 5:44, *Those who do not judge in accordance with what God has revealed are indeed the unbelievers*, as referring to Christians who do not judge in

accordance with the Gospels; so the clause *Those who do not judge* is not conditional in absolute terms but merely adjectival.¹⁰² It can be seen that only the first and the fifth categories are indispensable since any deficiency in them can result in misconstruing a verse or being unable to understand its meaning, whereas dispensing with the second to fourth categories will not hurt the exegete. This finding illustrates Ibn ʿĀshūr's take on *asbāb al-nuzūl* as a discipline 'in patent need of streamlining in the activity of *tafsīr*'.¹⁰³

Most importantly, in the context of current *asbāb* studies, the prerequisite of authenticity is established by al-Wāḥidī and Ibn ʿĀshūr from the word *go*. This prerequisite is firmly ignored by those who are typically prone to dismiss the entire enterprise of *ḥadīth* authentication as a meaningless enterprise. For example, Andrew Rippin's critique of John Wansbrough's claim that the essence of *asbāb* reports was to establish the chronological sequence of revelation and that their primary reference was in works of *aḥkām al-Qurʿān* is marred by a preoccupation with representing *asbāb* as pure fiction from beginning to end. In the process he also seems oblivious to basic aspects of the genre, perhaps because they are so obvious. A brief critique of Rippin's ideas can cast light on various points made by Ibn ʿĀshūr in his discussion of *asbāb*:

1. *Asbāb* are a *ḥadīth* sub-genre and therefore subject to the same gamut of verification concerns and processes (and hierarchy scales) as all *ḥadīths*. None of the authorities Rippin cites put them all on the same level of probative force or treated them all as indifferently dismissible; what is *his* reason for doing so other than his own arbitrary convenience?

2. Rippin's observation that the style of most *asbāb* reports is anecdotal is a tautology, since a recounting of circumstances proposes to reveal the historical background to certain incidents (here, Qur'anic teachings) as they first took place, a background that was hitherto unknown. This is the very definition of *anecdota*. To then claim, on the basis of this tautology, that the predominant role of *asbāb* must have been a tale-teller's (*qāṣṣ*) motivation to produce juicy narrative is another circular fallacy.

3. The obvious *primary* purpose of *asbāb* reports is, as Ibn ʿĀshūr indicates at the two ends of his list, vital disambiguation. The purpose was not, as claimed by Rippin, edification (although inevitably edifying, as are all things connected to the Prophet), much less entertainment; nor was it, as claimed by Wansbrough, the establishment of legal rulings which are established independently of them, nor to establish the sequence of revelation, which is the province of *al-nāsikh wa'l-mansūkh*.

4. Any multiplicity of apparently authentic *asbāb* can be explained as concomitant with the revelation of the same verse or verses on more than one occasion or, if such *asbāb* are proposed by Companions or Successors, as exegetical *ijtihād*, which is informed conjecture and analysis, not literary invention.

5. As Ibn ʿĀshūr showed in the eighth prolegomenon, *asbāb al-nuzūl* may even help the exegete to determine the reason behind a particular sequencing of the verses, even if the determination of historical sequence is not their principal function, contrary to what Wansbrough has claimed.

Ibn ʿĀshūr ends the prolegomenon with a flourish related to the proofs of Qurʾanic inimitability:¹⁰⁴

There is an great additional benefit to the circumstances of revelation: it is that the fact that the Qurʾan was being revealed upon the occurrence of certain incidents indicates its inimitability from the perspective of extemporaneousness, which is one of the two paths of the Arab masters of eloquence in their aphorisms. So its revelation at the befalling of incidents cuts short the pretext of those who claimed it was but *tales of the ancients*.

6. *The Qurʾanic Readings (qirāʾāt)*

Although any reader of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī will be aware of their opinion that the variant canonical, ‘mass-transmitted’ (*mutawātir*) and ‘anomalous’ (*shādhdh*) readings may add to our understanding of the Qurʾan, Ibn ʿĀshūr’s position, in apparent opposition to the established practice of previous linguistic exegetes, is that knowledge of the *qirāʾāt* is not strictly an exegetical requirement and has little to do with Qurʾanic commentary. His opinion, reminiscent of that held by al-Jurjānī, is that such knowledge primarily concerns linguistics and that, for the most part, such variants do not constitute any change in the meaning of the verses.¹⁰⁵ As he has already stated in the second prolegomenon, in his opinion the *qirāʾāt* are linguistic proofs rather than exegeses, and ‘comparable to poetic witness-texts’.¹⁰⁶

Ibn ʿĀshūr concedes that the *qirāʾāt* are connected to *tafsīr* in the sense that they are related to the sciences of the Arabic language and the five regions of the early master codices, Medina, Mecca, Kufa, Basra, and Syro-Palestine, where ‘each party would read in the Arabic intonations (*lahjāt*) of their people’. It is possible, he proposes, that the variants in such readings were the elements of a linguistic grammar of Arabic and a deliberate effort on their parts to preserve the language together with the preservation of the Qurʾan itself, because the two were so intimately connected. The ‘readings that contravened the ʿUthmānic *muṣḥaf*—meaning its actual *rasm*, contents and/or order such as those of Ibn Masʿūd, Ubayy b. Kaʿb, and Sālim *mawlā* Abī Ḥudhayfa—were gradually discarded or fell out of use. As for the Prophetic readings of the Qurʾan that are authentically narrated in books such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and yet not found among the ten or fourteen canonical readings:¹⁰⁷ since these are lone-narrated reports (*āḥād*), their recitation is valid *only* by those who heard them directly, and not by the rest of the

umma. The reason for this is simple: 'mass-transmitted readings cannot be superseded by non-mass-transmitted ones', even if such cases are commonly referred to as *qirāʾat al-nabiyy* by al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn ʿAṭīyya, and others.¹⁰⁸

As for the variants that constitute change in the reading of the words but not their *rasm*, such as *malik* and *mālik* (Q. 1:4), *nanshiruhā* and *nanshizuhā* (Q. 2:259), or *kudhhibū* and *kudhibū* (Q. 12:110): 'the assumption is that revelation came in the two forms for the sake of polysemy (*takthīran li'l-maʿānī*)',¹⁰⁹ and 'is the equivalent of incorporation (*taḍmīn*) in Arabic usage, double-entendre (*tawriya*) and univocal double-entendre (*tawjīh*) in tropes (*badīʿ*), and corollaries (*mustatbaʿāt al-tarākīb*) in semantics (*ʿilm al-maʿānī*)'.¹¹⁰ The above comes as an implied continuation of the rebuke of univocal and monosemic exegetes in the third prolegomenon.

Ibn ʿĀshūr then adduces one version of the mass-transmitted *ḥadīth* on the seven *aḥruf*¹¹¹ as a patent proof that 'the variance in readings is well-established on the part of the Prophet himself'. This is well-established in the numerous occurrences of the expressions *ḥarf Ubayy* and *ḥarf Ibn Masʿūd* in the commentaries (*ḥarf Zayd b. Thābit* and *ḥarf Ḥaḥṣa* are much rarer) to mean their respective readings, as noted by Versteegh.¹¹² Even in later usage *ḥarf* is sometimes used to refer to the various canonical readings, as illustrated by Ibn al-ʿArabī's (d. 543/1148) loose use of the term in *Qānūn al-taʾwīl* to refer to the seven and the ten *qirāʾāt*.¹¹³

I excelled in the Qur'an from age nine, then [my father] assigned me three teachers, one of them in order to master the Qur'an in its seven *aḥruf* which God Most High had gathered it up in, and which the Truthful One highlighted by saying, 'The Qur'an was revealed according to seven *aḥruf* among other details ... By age sixteen I had read about ten of the *aḥruf* of the Qur'an.

However, it would be an anachronism to confuse the *aḥruf* mentioned in the *ḥadīth* with the later canonical seven readings. Ibn al-ʿArabī himself dismisses the consolidation (*dabt*) of seven Qur'anic readings as:¹¹⁴

something that has no basis in the sacred law ... I believe that when the Prophet said, 'The Qur'an was revealed according to seven *aḥruf*,' some ignorant people thought those were the seven readings, and this is not correct according to any scholar whatsoever; while others sought propitiation from those terms and said: 'Come, let us gather up seven readings.'

Ibn ʿĀshūr likewise clarifies that any equating of the seven *aḥruf* with the seven *qirāʾāt* is a grave mistake typical of the uneducated, and that no scholar has ever claimed it to be so. The variant of the seven *aḥruf ḥadīth* he references states that ʿUmar b.

al-Khaṭṭāb objected to the recitation of Hishām b. Ḥakīm b. Ḥizām as contravening the way he himself had learnt it from the Prophet, only to be told that both readings matched the way it was revealed, and that ‘Truly this Qur’an was revealed according to seven *aḥruf*, therefore recite of it whatever comes easily’.¹¹⁵

Ibn ʿĀshūr then selects what he calls ‘the finest’ of the fifty-odd interpretations of the seven *aḥruf ḥadīth*¹¹⁶ after subsuming their approaches under two headings: those that consider it abrogated and those that consider it unabrogated.¹¹⁷

His approach to the account of ʿUmar’s disagreement with Ibn Ḥizām is speculative, as he muses that it might have to do with permitted variance in the order of the suras while reading inside prayer, rather than any of the above-mentioned theories. He takes this up again in the eighth prolegomenon, which is devoted to the sura and verse ordering of the Qur’an. This view not only robs the number seven of any meaning but also does not support the rationale given in the ‘seven *aḥruf*’ versions of Ibn ʿAbbās and Ubayy b. Kaʿb whereby the Prophet wanted to alleviate difficulty for the *umma*: does keeping to a strict sequence qualify as difficult?¹¹⁸ Ibn ʿĀshūr also does not address the fact that both ʿUmar and Ibn Ḥizām were from Quraysh, which precludes a native dialectical disparity between the two and raises the question whether the latter was a specialist of variants before the letter.

Ibn ʿĀshūr then summarises his basic rules regarding the criteria of acceptance of a Qur’anic reading: it is not enough that (i) it must match the *rasm* of the ʿUthmānic *muṣḥaf* and that (ii) it must conform to one or more of the forms that are possible in the Arabic language, but also (iii) the report of its practice must have a sound chain of transmission. He quotes Ibn al-ʿArabī al-Mālikī as showing an important distinction between the latter criterion of soundness (*ṣiḥḥa*) and the criterion of mass-transmission (*tawātur*): ‘The imāms agree that the readings that do not contravene the wordings written in ʿUthmān’s *muṣḥaf* are mass-transmitted even if they vary in the ways of articulation and modalities of utterance.’¹¹⁹ ‘The meaning of this’, he comments, ‘is that their mass-transmitted status is an extension of the mass-transmitted status of the form in which the *muṣḥaf* was written; and whatever utterance can be said to match the *muṣḥaf* formwise, even if it is at variance, is acceptable, even if it is not mass-transmitted [in itself], since the presence of variance in it precludes the claim of mass transmission’.¹²⁰ Ibn ʿĀshūr concludes with a helpful note that he has built his commentary primarily on the reading of Qālūn (from Nāfiʿ) as the Medinan reading par excellence and because it is the main reading of the people of Tunisia.¹²¹

7. The Qur’anic Narratives (*qaṣaṣ al-Qurʾān*)

The peculiarity of the Qur’anic approach to historical accounts is that although they were meant to divert and console the Prophet, they are invariably sapiential and never purely anecdotal narratives. Rather, they keep leading the listener to the leitmotiv of the

protagonists' faith or lack thereof, and to what a contemporary theorist of Qur'anic commentary, Sayyid Usama al-Azhari, has called 'the divine existential laws governing human societies that permeate the Qur'an and form the subject of one of its essential sciences', which makes the study of civilisational history integral to Qur'anic hermeneutics in elucidation of what the Qur'an calls 'the pattern (*sunna*) of God in His creation.'¹²² In addition they are allusive and euphemistic in style, thus resembling reminders more than narrative accounts. They are marked by concision and serve pointed purposes—such as the science of correlations (*munāsabāt*), which is discussed in the next prolegomenon—even in their repetitiveness, of which that with the least benefit is mnemonics and that with the foremost is related to eloquence and the various aspects of stylistic inimitability. A unique argument made by Ibn ʿĀshūr here is that the collective weight of these narratives about figures and incidents from Biblical and Evangelical sources negates the idea that the early Muslim recipients of the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* were 'unlettered/unscriptured' (*ummī*), as such narratives anticipate an audience who are well-grounded in knowledge among the *ahl al-kitāb*.¹²³ This remark echoes his earlier rejection (already discussed in section 4) of al-Shāṭibī's doctrine of the *umma*'s essential character as an *ummī* community in that sense.¹²⁴

Ibn ʿĀshūr lists ten civilisational, sacro-historiographical, ethico-moral, doctrinal, and stylistic benefits of Qur'anic narratives: (i) the overtaking by Muslims of their Jewish and Christian counterparts as recipients of prophetic and gentile histories that qualify them as knowledgeable; (ii) the omission of all non-sapiential details from the descriptions of characters and events (such as genealogies, names, place-names, etc.) to focus exclusively on the moral of their stories; (iii) 'historical knowledge of the sequential subordination of effects to their causes' which is the teaching of *sunnat Allāh* mentioned in the previous paragraph; (iv) the rebuke of pagans implied in recounting what happened to those who opposed their prophets in the past; (v) recurrence of a Qur'anic first, the style of typology and dialogism (*al-tawṣīf wa'l-muḥāwara*), which were both alien to the Arabic stylistic heritage; (vi) the concretisation of narrative effected by linking its characters to the sensory experience of listeners, as in Q. 14:45, *and you have dwelt in the dwelling-places of those who wronged themselves, and it became clear to you how We dealt with them*; (vii) their value in training Muslims to recognise the vastness of the world and greatness of past human communities so as to avoid the traps of hubris and self-delusion; (viii) their value in terms of instilling in the early Muslims the ambitions to pursue world leadership, rather than settling for short-term raid-and-vendetta lifestyles and remaining a subservient pawn of the two world powers of the Persians and the Byzantines; (ix) raising the consciousness of the power of God as the sole and exclusive superpower; (x) making its audience aware of the legal and civilisational outlooks of past cultures, such as the parameters of enslavement as a criminal penalty in Pharaonic Egypt in *Sūrat Yūsuf*.¹²⁵

The ways in which the above list can be usefully connected to disciplines and subjects assumed to be unrelated to the *qaṣaṣ* category are incalculable. The latter four alone evoke moral historiography, the philosophy of history, political doctrine, international relations, credal doctrine and theology, and comparative history of law.

8. *The Naming, Ordering, and Enumeration of the Qur'an's Contents*

This eighth prolegomenon, entitled ‘The Name *Qur'ān* and the Ordering and Names of Verses and Chapters’ is the second longest after the tenth, which concerns Qur'anic incapacitation of disbelief and inimitability. The profusion of material Ibn ʿĀshūr was required to cover, the variety of scholarly disciplines that needed to be drawn on in covering the issues, the variety of interpretations that needed to be addressed in some respects, and the incidental rebuttal of orientalist claims and heretical views that Ibn ʿĀshūr included may all be possible reasons for the special length of these two sections.

Ibn ʿĀshūr begins by defining the term *Qur'ān* as:¹²⁶

... the speech God Most High revealed in Arabic to Muḥammad (upon him blessings and peace) through the intermediary of Gabriel so that the Messenger would convey it to the community in the wording in which it was revealed to him for the purpose of being applied and the reading, inside their prayers, of whatever part thereof was feasible to them; and He made its reading worship ... It is the entirety of what is written in the Qur'anic volumes (*maṣāḥif*), which comprises 114 suras, the first of which is the *Fātiḥa* and the last *Sūrat al-Nās*.

He recounts over 20 other names for the Qur'an, the most famous being *al-Tanzīl* (‘the Revelation’), *al-Kitāb* (‘the Book’), *al-Furqān* (‘the Discernment’), *al-Dhikr* (‘the Reminder/Remembrance’), *al-Waḥy* (‘the Prophetic Inspiration’), and *Kalām Allāh* (‘The Discourse of the One God’). His explication of these names touches on issues that go beyond conventional exegesis and reflect on the civilisation, founding doctrines, and social body of the Muslim community itself. For example, the name *al-Furqān* brings us into the sphere of the *umma*'s identity as the last religious community to discern between true and false understandings of monotheism and the divine attributes. *Al-Kitāb* shows the Qur'an's prophetic self-aware projection of itself as ‘the Book’ even at a time it had not yet acquired that status physically (in such verses as Q. 2:2 and Q. 18:1), as well as its reference to the act of writing down the Qur'an as enjoined upon the community from the time of the Prophet, not to mention the centrality of reading which was enjoined literally from the first moment the Qur'an began to be revealed, with the ninety-sixth sura, entitled *Iqra'* (‘Read!’).¹²⁷

A rather odd report follows, that the Companions came up with the name *muṣḥaf* at the time of its collection under Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq after first proposing and rejecting *injīl*

(‘Evangel’) and *sifr* (‘Sefer’) due to their respective Christian and Jewish connotations, ‘whereupon Ibn Mas‘ūd said, “I saw in Abyssinia a book they called *al-muṣḥaf*”, so they called it a *muṣḥaf*. This report seems unfounded for several reasons: (i) it has no known chain; (ii) it is not mentioned in the main sourcebook on the topic, Ibn Abī Dāwūd’s (d. 316/928) exhaustive *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif* nor in any of the early and late *ḥadīth* sources; (iii) it is unheard of other than in a couple of late non-*ḥadīth* works (al-Zarkashī sources it back to a chainless report in Ibn Abī al-Damm al-Muẓaffarī’s [d. 642/1244] *Tārīkh*, while al-Suyūṭī sources it to the latter and to Ibn Ashtah’s [d. 491/1098] lost *al-Maṣāḥif*); (iv) the word *muṣḥaf* is originally Arabic and not an Arabised borrowing (*mu‘arrab*), hence it is nowhere discussed in the books of *gharīb*. Ibn ‘Āshūr leaves all of the above factors unmentioned, let alone any discussion of authenticity.¹²⁸ He addresses the difference between *ṣuḥuf* and *muṣḥaf* further down, saying that the former refers to an unintegrated collection of written materials including not only loose leaves (*ṣaḥīfa*, pl. *ṣuḥuf*) but also animal skins (*qita‘ al-adīm*) and palm stalks (*‘usub*), while the latter is an integrated volume. This is corroborated by ‘Uthmān’s order, ‘Copy the loose leaves into the volumes’ (*insakhū al-ṣuḥuf fī al-maṣāḥif*).¹²⁹ He concludes that the sound position is that such a volume had already been assembled by the time of Abū Bakr.¹³⁰

Ibn ‘Āshūr then moves on to explore verse-endings, pause-and-resumption, pithiness, and musicality. He first reviews the criteria for defining what constitutes an *āya*, their appellation as such, their divinely-ordained status (*tawqīfiyya*) according to al-Zamakhsharī and others, their order, the various counts of their exact number (6,204; 6,214; 6,219; 6,225; 6,236; 6,616),¹³¹ *al-ḥurūf al-muqatta‘a* (‘the disconnected letters’) that count as discrete verses and those that do not, the longest verse and the shortest one. Following this, he proposes as the most probable default criterion for delimiting an *āya* its rhyming consimilarity with the general scheme of verse-endings (*tatamāthal fī awākhir ḥurūfihā aw tataqārab*) in any given sura, a science known as *fawāṣil* or verse-endings. The *Fātiḥa*, for example, has clear *-īm* and *-in* verse-endings allowing listeners to demark and number as separate verses the discrete phrases ending in those sounds. This, in his opinion, is a viable theory because the verses that do not end with consimilar *fawāṣil* are very rare, for example *Ṣād wa’l-Qur’āni dhī’l-dhikr* (Q. 38:1), which is followed by a series of *qalqala*-type verse-endings of a different nature than *-ikr*. He posits that another reason to highlight the verse-endings is because their musicality enhances the power of audition and is part and parcel of the miraculous inimitability of the Qur’an.¹³² More explicitly yet, in terms of *i‘jāz*, it allows its challenge in eloquence to sink in.¹³³

The other important pausal device of *al-waqf wa’l-ibtidā*, the science of ‘pause and resumption’, is not primarily connected to the *fawāṣil* according to Ibn ‘Āshūr,¹³⁴ in keeping with his view that pause and resumption are based on meaning while the *fawāṣil* are based on assonance and compositional structure. More importantly, he

views the verse-ending pauses as part of the oratorical challenge of the entire Qur'an because they highlight the Qur'an's unique pithiness and musicality. The interconnectedness of the latter two qualities with the Qur'an's compositional style is high on the list of the aspects of its *i'jāz*.¹³⁵ This may well be one of the reasons behind the emphasis on slow and deliberate delivery time after time in the Qur'an, for example, : *And a Recitation We have made distinct (wa-qur'ānan faraqnāhu) so that you would recite it unto people with delay (‘alā mukthīn), and We have revealed it at intervals (wa-nazzalnāhu tanzīlā) (Q. 17:106); and We have recited it to you part after part / slowly and deliberately (wa-rattalnāhu tartīlā) (Q. 25:32); And do recite the Qur'an part after part / slowly and deliberately (Q. 73:4); Do not hasten with the Qur'an before its revelation to you is concluded (Q. 20:114); Do not move your tongue with it to hasten it! (Q. 75:16). Furthermore, al-Dānī says, ‘verse-endings are sectionings (maqāṭi‘) in themselves, and most of the time coincide with meaning-completion (al-tāmm)’.¹³⁶ Al-Shāṭibī was therefore correct in listing ‘closure of meaning’ as the last of the four indicators of *fawāṣil*.¹³⁷*

Moving on to discuss verse and sura sequence, the sequential ordering of the verses, Ibn ʿĀshūr states, was determined by the Prophet and is therefore divinely-ordained (*bi-tawqīf*). It is part of the inimitable aspect of the Qur'an due to its intimate connection to many of the rhetorical, linguistic, semantic, historical, and other aspects of *i'jāz*. He pointedly remarks that ‘it was never reported that the Companions at any time wavered as to [what constituted] the sequential ordering of the verses’. Two related sciences that were mentioned in previous prolegomena, the *munāsabāt* and *asbāb al-nuzūl*, may help the exegete to determine the reason behind a particular sequence, even if one or both of these sciences might at other times be irrelevant or inapplicable. Nor is it necessary to always find a *munāsaba* unless it makes sense or imposes itself.¹³⁸

The state of the Qur'an is as the state of the orator who applies himself to deal with current issues, as varied as they may be, and shift from state to state according to circumstance. That is why one finds, in the Qur'an, many parenthetical phrases. These were either prompted by the reasons that imposed their revelation or are unrelated to those reasons.

Ibn ʿĀshūr reviews several rationales for recitation pauses-and-resumptions and silence-marks (*sukūt*), which are all related to variant readings as well as to the science of verse-endings (*fawāṣil*), and he shows that differences in meaning can occur depending on the way certain verses are recited with or without pauses.¹³⁹

As for the exclusively Islamic term *sūra*, which is usually translated as ‘chapter’, Ibn ʿĀshūr agrees with the established view that it is taken from *sūr*, the wall that surrounds a precinct, as each sura consists in a clearly delineated group of words distinct from the

next group. Such divisions of the text, as explained by al-Bayḏāwī and others, serve, amongst other things, to re-energise the reader.¹⁴⁰ Ibn ʿĀshūr restates the consensus that the Qur'an's consistence of 114 Suras was firmly established from Prophetic times among the Companions, with Ibn Masʿūd's dissenting count proving the exception to the rule. As in the case of the ordering of the verses, he again positively asserts that 'the Companions at no time wavered as to the number of the suras of the Qur'an to our knowledge.' The sequencing of verses within the suras, moreover, was also by Prophetic ordainment (*bi-tawqīf min al-nabī*) as was, by inference, the subsuming of certain contents as integrally forming certain suras. However, he says, it is not established that the sequencing of suras was also by Prophetic ordainment, and some reports attribute that sequencing to the Companions. (This may be the reason behind Ibn ʿĀshūr's statement in the preamble that he did not deem the examination of sura-sequencing correlation [*tanāsub mawāqīʿ al-suwar baʿḏuhā ithra baʿḏ*] as part of the exegete's duties).¹⁴¹ There were, he acknowledges, some differences in the sequential ordering of both suras and verses within suras among the early volumes of the Companions. The Prophet himself is said to have once recited *al-Baqara*, followed by *al-Nisāʾ*, followed by *Āl ʿImrān* within a single *rakʿa*, and such was not forbidden even in later times according to Ibn Baṭṭāl (d. 449/1057). It is likewise reported that ʿĀʾisha did not mind if verses were occasionally recited in reverse order within the same sura. All this is superseded by the Companions' subsequent agreement over the ʿUthmānic sequencing of both suras and verses, as is the position of the majority of the scholars.¹⁴² The prolegomenon ends with a summary of various theories related to the different proper names of each sura and a name-list of those who had memorised the Qur'an entirely in the lifetime of the Prophet.¹⁴³

9. *All the Meanings that Pure Arabic can Possibly Mean are Intended*

Despite its brevity (only eight pages), the ninth prolegomenon is one of the most assertive, starting with its very title: 'The Meanings that are Made Possible by Qur'anic Phrases are Considered Intended by those Sentences'. It deals with Qur'anic polysemy (broached previously, in the third and sixth prolegomena) in accordance with the rule spelled out earlier about the Qur'an's economy of the 'multiplication of meanings with the pithiest expressions'.¹⁴⁴ These axiomatic rules for exegetes, Ibn ʿĀshūr says, ensure the meanings of the Qur'an cannot be manipulated into interpretive straightjackets of univocality.¹⁴⁵

Since the Qur'an is revealed by One whose knowledge is all-encompassing, it follows that every meaning made possible by its cognates in the purest current usage of the masters of Arabic eloquence for the like of such cognates, as long as there is no explicit or compelling legal or lexical or Prophetically-ordained proof of an impediment, is deemed to be meant in that context.

Ibn ʿĀshūr follows up this all-important exegetical principle with examples from *ḥadīths* that illustrate how the Prophetic explanation of various verses is oftentimes unexpectedly polysemic, either by way of literalism, such as his onetime application of the word *daʿākam* in Q. 8:24, *Obey God and the messenger when H/he calls you to that which gives you life*, to mean his literal call to Ubayy b. Kaʿb;¹⁴⁶ or by way of figurativeness, as in his reacting to Umm Kulthūm bt ʿUqba b. Abī Muʿayt’s refusal to return to polytheist Mecca after her emigration to Medina by reciting Q. 30:19, *He brings out the living from the dead*.¹⁴⁷

Jurists, likewise, have ventured beyond the immediate meaning of many a verse to infer legal rulings, such as the lawfulness of *jiʿāla* (‘wages’) and *kafāla* (‘guaranty’) from Q. 12:72, *he who brings it shall have a camel load*. Al-Shāfiʿī inferred the binding nature of *ijmāʿ* (‘consensus’) from Q. 4:115, *And whoso ever opposes the messenger after guidance has been shown to him, and follows other than the believers’ way ...*¹⁴⁸ ‘Therefore’, Ibn ʿĀshūr advises exegetes, ‘do not remain boxed in when meanings abound around you! ... All of the different senses allowed by the words of the Qur’an, its syntax, its parsing, its indications ... must be addressed.’¹⁴⁹ In this holistic approach exegetes resemble legal theorists, whose view is that being as inclusive of a variety of meanings as possible is more precautionary. Such a stance also reflects the view that ‘Arabic is the purest of all human languages, in that it is the richest in meanings, most concise in wordings, and chastest in expressions’.¹⁵⁰ The prolegomenon ends with a brief documentation of the exegesis of homonymic layers (*al-mushtarak*) and a defense of the polysemic method used by the author in his Qur’anic commentary.¹⁵¹ This dual linguistic and legal-theoretical polysemy is a further development of Ibn ʿĀshūr’s systematic rejection of *athar* exclusivism.

10. *The Miraculous Inimitability (iʿjāz) and Tropology*¹⁵² *of the Qur’an*

With its thirty pages, this comprises the last and longest of the ten prolegomena. Named ‘On the Miraculous Inimitability of the Qur’an’, it also aims to be the most important and innovative. It is here that Ibn ʿĀshūr deploys the full panoply of his mastery of literary tropes and, while grounding his own literary theory in the writings of the authorities in Qur’anic *iʿjāz*, streamlines and illustrates what they meant in a succinct manner. He opens with a Zamakhsharīan flourish, highlighting the inseparable connection of *iʿjāz* with eloquence and its importance to hermeneutics:¹⁵³

I have never seen any target at which the arrows of perspicuities loosed their piercing heads nor any goal for which the steeds of energies raced and yet returned discomfited, content with whatever spattering they could obtain of the mighty raincloud, like the probing of the various aspects of *iʿjāz*, which truly has obsessed the scholars of eloquence from the start, and continues to do so ... As for myself I wish by this

introduction to offer you, thoughtful reader, a mere suggestion—neither an idle dream nor a leisurely meadow picnic on a summer noonday—only a glimpse by which you may see how the Qur'an is inimitable and ascertain the angles of its inimitability ... You might even find in this introduction principles and points that eluded those who broached the *i'jāz* of the Qur'an before me such as al-Bāqillānī, al-Rummānī, al-Khaṭṭābī, °Iyād, and al-Sakkākī. So do be watchful for them and search them out the way you clear the ash away from hot coals! Truly the relevance of this introduction to *tafsīr* is that the Qur'anic exegete's commentary on the meanings of the Qur'an is not reckoned to meet the definition of perfection in its goal as long as it does not comprise the exposition of the minutiae of the aspects of eloquence in the verses it strives to explain ... And the upshot of its inimitability is that the entire mission of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon him blessings and peace) was built on the staggering miracle (*mu'jīza*) of the Qur'an, and that its conclusive proof is inseparable from that miracle until the Day of Resurrection!¹⁵⁴

Ibn °Āshūr dismisses, as do the majority of scholars, the theory of *ṣarfa* ('diversion') put forward mainly by Mu°tazilīs and Ibn Ḥazm, according to which the reason the opponents of Islam did not produce any verbal or literary equivalent to the Qur'an, despite its challenging them to do so, was not because of its inherent inimitability but only because their minds were wholly diverted from it. The point of the challenge, furthermore, resided in the compositional structure (*nazm*)¹⁵⁵ of an entire sura, however short, rather than a mere verse or group of verses in which *nazm* cannot be witnessed integrally. This compositional structure prioritises style before content.¹⁵⁶

The essential pre-requisites of miraculous Qur'anic inimitability, according to Ibn °Āshūr, are three: (i) eloquence (*balāgha*), (ii) invention (*ibdā'*) and (iii) wisdom (*ḥikma*), to which, he says, many scholars add (iv) knowledge of the unseen (*°ilm al-ghayb*). The first two aspects are directed towards Arabophones in particular while the latter two are directed to mankind at large.¹⁵⁷

(a) Inimitable Eloquence

Ibn °Āshūr adopts al-Sakkākī's (d. 626/1229) identification of *dhawq*—which he broaches in the second prolegomenon on the auxiliary disciplines of exegesis—as 'the innate sense *sine qua non* in understanding inimitability'.¹⁵⁸ This author, although Mu°tazilī, and his widely taught *Miftāḥ al-°ulūm*, a foundational textbook on Arabic rhetoric, influenced Ibn °Āshūr's literary formation from a tender age as can be gleaned from the fact that his maternal grandfather gifted him a copy which he had transcribed in his own hand for him from beginning to end.¹⁵⁹ In the manner of the prefatory

typologies of his precursors (see the ‘Conclusions’ section below), he lists as the characteristics of eloquent speech and its minutiae:

- i) division (*taqṣīm*), such as that of the *Fātiḥa* in three parts;¹⁶⁰
- ii) paronomasia (*tajnīs*), as in *they forbid* (*yanhawna*) and *avoid* (*yanʿawna*) (Q. 6:26) and *they deem* (*yaḥsabūna*) that they do excel (*yuḥsinūna*) (Q. 18:104). The former is alliterative while the latter is diacritical. These are among the embellishing tropes (*muḥassināt badīʿiyya*) that Ibn ʿĀshūr finds even more prevalent in the Qurʾan than in Arabic poetry;¹⁶¹
- iii) parallelism (*muṭabaqa*) as in the pairing of *yuḍillu* and *yahdī*, respectively terms for misguidance and guidance, to mean one and the same thing in Q. 22:4, *yuḍilluhu wa-yahdīhi ilā ʿadhābiʿl-saʿīr* (*He verily will mislead him and will guide him to the punishment of the Flame*);
- iv) proverbialising/allegorising (*tamthīl*),
- v) apostrophic redirection (*iltifāt*),¹⁶²
- vi) similitude (*tashbīh*) and
- vii) metaphor (*istiʿāra*), all of which are abundant and perhaps the four most scrutinised tropes in *tafsīr* literature;
- viii) preclusion (*iḥtirās*), as in Q. 47:15, *labanin lam yataghayyar ṭaʿmuhu* (*milk with incorruptible taste*), to preclude any disappointing intimation of resemblance to the all-too-familiar;
- ix) tacit indicativeness (*al-dilālat al-maṭwiyya*) as in the suggestion that wrongdoers are never on a par with rightdoers in the Hereafter which one may read into Q. 45:22, *And God has created the heavens and the earth with truth*, due to its coming in close succession to the words *Or do those who commit ill deeds suppose that We shall make them as those who believe and do good works* in Q. 45:21;
- x) pre-positioning and post-positioning (*taqdīm wa-taʿkhīr*), two figures of speech of immeasurable importance in the exploration of Qurʾanic concision and polysemy;
- xi) rhetorical allusive points (*nukat balāghiyya*), such as any combination of these aspects which is perceptible only to experts. This is the strongest of the characteristics of Qurʾanic inimitability in Ibn ʿĀshūr’s view.
- xii) chasteness and eloquence of language (*faṣāḥat al-lafz*) and
- xiii) fluidity of compositional structure (*insijām al-naẓm*), both of which typify highly sapiential discourse, as opposed to more clumsy phrases found in non-Qurʾanic high literature such as *mustashzīrāt* (‘dishevelled’) and *kanahbal* (‘huge oak’) in Imruʿ al-Qays’s *Muʿallaqa*; finally
- xiv) purified idiom (*ṣarāḥat al-kalimāt*), ‘in that no word in the Qurʾan can be found to fall short of its desired indicativeness in the form in which it is used’, whether in all its

literal meanings such as *alā ḥard* (early in the day, Q. 69:25) or metaphorically, or implicatively.¹⁶³

(b) Types of Inimitable Invention

The second of the four essential prerequisites of Qur'anic inimitability is *ibdā'* or invention, which is most obviously visible in its being formed of a type of prose previously unheard of among the Arabs. They knew of no higher medium than poetry: as stated by the caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, 'Poetry was the science of that nation and they possessed no sounder science (*lam yakun lahum ʿilmun aṣahha minhu*)'¹⁶⁴—and yet the Qur'an is not poetry, as admitted by the foremost of Arab experts in the time it was being revealed, such as Unays b. Junāda al-Ghifārī and others. They named it poetry only as an approximation. Nevertheless, despite its being prose with long discourses and complex meanings, it was easier to memorise than poetry. The fact that such aspects only added to the weight of its challenge did not escape knowledgeable early opponents such as al-Walīd b. al-Mughīra, ʿUtba b. Rabīʿa, and al-Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith, and is part of the inexhaustibility of substance implied in the phrase *none knows its interpretation* in Q. 3:7, and *none knows its interpretation except God and those who are well-grounded (wa'l-rāsikhūn) in knowledge, who say ...*¹⁶⁵ Here, as well as in his commentary on the same verse in *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān*, Ibn ʿĀshūr follows the minority position (held by Ibn ʿAbbās in one of two versions, Mujāhid, al-Rabīʿ b. Sulaymān, Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. al-Zubayr, Abū Jaʿfar al-Naḥḥās, the Shāfiʿī, Ibn Fūrak, Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ʿAṭīyya, Ibn al-Ḥājib, al-Bayḍāwī, and Abū al-Suʿūd) that the conjunction *wāw* ('and') affixed to *al-rāsikhūn* in the above verse is for coordination (*ʿatf*), not resumption (*istiʿnāf*), hence the pause after *God* is not considered binding.¹⁶⁶ In the majority reading the pause is a 'binding pause (without which a wrong meaning might be suggested)' (*waqfun lāzim*).¹⁶⁷ Accordingly the verse is read: *None knows its interpretation except God. And those who are well-grounded in knowledge say (yaqūlūn): We believe in it*, where *rāsikhūn* is in the nominative as the subject of *yaqūlūna* as a resumption, not as a co-ordination adjoined to *Allāh*.¹⁶⁸

Ibn ʿĀshūr goes on to discuss the ways in which the Qur'an pioneered many specific aspects of Arabic style. Among these aspects are its gathering together admonition and law-making in undifferentiated expressions and its energetic shifts from one rhetorical art to another such as parenthesis (*taʿrīd*), association (*tanẓīr*), supplementation (*tadhīl*), connotations and synonyms (*mutarādīfāt*) in repetitive contexts, and redirection as already mentioned. Stylistic shifts are more apt to retain the reader's attention, and one of the objectives of the Qur'an is to stimulate the high frequency of its reading times as inferred from Q. 73:20, *Therefore read whatever is easy for you*. Supporting the idea of this ease of access is the correlational thread (*tanāsub*) running through the entire Qur'an 'as if it were a single word of

vast meanings' (Ibn al-^cArabī al-Mālikī) or 'a single chapter' (al-Rāzī) which, according to al-^cIzz b. ^cAbd al-Salām, whom Ibn ^cĀshūr quotes, suggests miraculously:¹⁶⁹

Correlation (*munāsaba*) is a beautiful science. The precondition of beautiful connectedness in speech (*irtibāṭ al-kalām*) is that it occurs in a unified subject whose beginning is connected to its end. When it occurs over different causes it will lack inter-connectedness. The Qur'an came down over twenty-odd years and bears on different rulings that were legislated for different reasons. Anything thus described can hardly be expected to be interconnected.

Like structuring, recitation is, Ibn ^cĀshūr points out, also another important innovative aspect of Qur'anic inimitability since it transcends vocabular and syntactical structures. The 'eloquent pause' (*sukūt al-mutakallim al-balīgh*) has the distinct capacity of turning whatever follows it into an explicative resumption (*al-isti'nāf al-bayānī*), which is a grammatical and rhetorical category in itself.¹⁷⁰ Applications of rhetorical silence can also be related to ellipsis (*ijāz ḥadhf*) and amplification (*itnāb*), as in the respective positioning of the pause before or after *fīhi* in Q. 2:2, *dhālika'l-kitābu lā rayba fīhi hudan*, which may be represented in English with punctuation and glyphs as: *that is the Book no doubt [glyph] therein, [glyph] a Guidance*. Another example of stylistic innovation Ibn ^cĀshūr mentions is what he calls 'semantic variegation' (*talwīn al-ma'ānī*), where repetition never occurs uniformly but always with a synonymic or connotative variation to avoid monotony, even in the case of (i) number in suffix pronouns, as in Q. 66:4, *in tatūbā ilā'llāhi fa-qad ṣaḡhat qulūbukumā* (*If you both repent to God! For the hearts of the two of you certainly swayed*) where *hearts* was put in the plural to avoid a heavy pairing of the *alif* dual subject pronoun with the dual possessive pronoun, which would have yielded *qalbākumā*; or (ii) gender, as in Q. 6:139, *wa-qālū mā fī buṭūni hādhihi'l-an'āmi khāliṣatun li-dhukūrinā wa-muḥarramun 'alā azwājinā* (*and they said: whatever is in the bellies of such cattle is reserved [fem.] for our males and forbidden [masc.] for our wives*), where the gender for the two adjectives *khāliṣatun* and *muḥarramun* switches, although both have one and the same referent, *mā* ('whatever'). These and other tropes form examples of what al-Zamakhsharī described as the Qur'an's constant drive for 'brilliant verbal versatility' (*li-yaftanna al-kalām iftinānan*).¹⁷¹

Also among the stylistic innovations of the Qur'an, Ibn ^cĀshūr points out, is the expansion of Arabic belles-lettres (*adab*) beyond the registers of poetry (*shī'r*) and prose (*nathr*). *Shī'r* used genealogy (*nasīb*), martial poetry (*ḥamāsa*), elegy/dirge (*rithā'*), satire (*hijā'*), boasting (*fakhr*), facetiae (*mulah*) and praise (*madīḥ*),¹⁷² while *nathr* used oratory (*khuṭab*), proverbs (*amthāl*), and dialogue (*muḥāwarāt*).¹⁷³

Moreover the Qur'an covered all the fields and activities of life and yet managed to be more memor(is)able than both poetry and prose. Thus its spread among the Arab tribes was swift.¹⁷⁴

Add the fact that its substance was reality unalloyed with mendacious exaggerations and vain boasts, which gave it the sway of truth and made it the delight of listeners. This is because its impact was spiritual and not merely verbal or semantic.

(c) Stylistic Firsts (*mubtakarāt*) of the Qur'an

Ibn ʿĀshūr recapitulates as follows the stylistic firsts of the Qur'an:

- i) its departure from the norms of poetry and oratory;
- ii) its coming in the form of a book meant to be memorised and recited;
- iii) the polished arrangement of its legislative message in minute details (*tahrīr al-ifādat al-ʿilmiyya al-tashrīʿiyya al-daqiqa*);
- iv) its structural division into suras and internal stylistic subdivisions (*al-taswīr wa'l-taqīm*);
- v) its narrative and allegorical style in describing the Hereafter as well as relating past accounts (*al-uslūb al-qaṣaṣī wa-tamthīl al-aḥwāl*);
- vi) the recasting of narrative quotations according to the demands of its own inimitability (*al-taṣarruf al-iʿjāzī fī ḥikāyat aqwāl al-maḥkī ʿanhum*);
- vii) the blending of consimilar verse-endings, unheard-of chapter-openings and *in medias res* contents (*al-fawāṣil wa'l-fawātiḥ wa'l-hujūm ʿalā al-gharāḍ*);
- viii) multifarious ellipses (*al-tafannun fī al-ḥadhf*).¹⁷⁵ As Makkī al-Qaysī (d. 437/c. 1045) said, 'Ellipsis and concision are part of the Qur'an's inimitability, as is pithiness', what is more, Ibn ʿĀshūr adds, 'without obscurity or ambiguity' (*maʿa ʿadam al-iltibās*).¹⁷⁶
- ix) its qualified recourse to incorporation (*taḍmīn*) which is related to elliptic concision (*ijāz al-ḥadhf*), amplification (*itnāb*), homonyms as discussed in the ninth prolegomenon, and letter or vowel-dependent variants in recitation as well as meaning as discussed in the sixth.
- x) its pairing firm speech (*jazāla*) with compassionate speech (*riqqa*) in almost every sura, which embody the two respective stylistic registers of punishment and mercy.¹⁷⁷ The regular pairing of deterrence with encouragement, threat with promise, warning with glad tidings, or of the divine Names and Attributes of punishment with the Names and Attributes of mercy was included by Ibn ʿAbbās and subsequent exegetes among what they called the *kulliyāt* or semantic and stylistic 'invariables' of the Qur'an,¹⁷⁸ which Ibn ʿĀshūr calls its 'compositional and vocabular customs' (*ʿādāt al-Qurʾān min naẓmiha wa-kalimiha*).¹⁷⁹

(d) Stylistic Customs of the Qur'an

Ibn ʿĀshūr then lists the following examples of stylistic and semantic customs of the Qur'an on the basis of observations by al-Zamashsharī, al-Rāzī, al-Kafawī in his *Kulliyāt*, and al-Suyūṭī in the *Itqān*:

- i) the use of mostly inseparable doublets such as *naḥ*^c and *ḍarr*, *al-samā*^ʿ and *al-arḍ*, in addition to those pointed out by al-Jāhīz such as *ṣalāt* and *zakāt*, *jū*^c and *khawf*, *janna* and *nār*, *al-muhājirīn* and *al-anṣār*, *jinn* and *ins*, etc.;
- ii) following up every threat with promise and every warning with glad tidings within digressive clauses (*istitrād*) and parentheses (*iʿtirād*);
- iii) using the past tense to describe the events of the hereafter to convey their inescapable certainty;
- iv) following up long discussions of legal obligations with a mention of divine attributes or the states of prophets and the hereafter for illustrative emphasis;
- v) using the unqualified demonstrative personal pronoun *hāʾulāʾi* to refer exclusively to the pagans with contempt (a form comparable to the pejorative *isti* in Latin);
- vi) omitting the conjunction of co-ordination *wāw* in dialogic narratives, such as *wa-idh qāla rabbuka liʾl-malāʾikati innī jāʿilun ... qālū ... qāla ... fa-qāla ... qālū ... qāla ...* (Q. 2:30–33, instead of *wa-qāla* or *wa-qālū* throughout).

(e) Wisdom

The third of the essential prerequisites of Qur'anic inimitability, according to Ibn ʿĀshūr is 'its content of sapiential meanings and sciential indications' (*al-maʿānī al-ḥikmiyya waʾl-ishārāt al-ʿilmiyya*), where *ʿilm* is subdivided into the two types of 'conventional' (*iṣṭilāḥī*) within the temporal and cultural confines of each respective civilisation, and 'real' (*ḥaqīqī*), which is 'the attainment of truths and realities that crown their possessors with perfection and benefit in this life and the next'. Both types are avenues of human perfection and both are found in the Qur'an. Ibn ʿĀshūr includes in the first type knowledge of Judeo-Christian stories, religious rulings and ancient peoples that typified ancient high culture, and in the second type the Qur'anic call for deductive and inductive knowledge beyond what was already available in the intellectual legacy of the people of its time. He asserts, against al-Shāṭibī once again, the trans-historicity and trans-nationality of Qur'anic inimitability and of its knowledge content.¹⁸⁰

(f) Knowledge of the Unseen-

Ibn ʿĀshūr includes this final aspect only as a concession to preceding exegetes who counted the Qur'anic foretelling of future historical events, such as that of a forthcoming victory of the Romans within three to nine years of their defeat to the Persians in the year 615 CE at the opening of *Sūrat al-Rūm*, among the proofs of the

divine origins of the Qur'an.¹⁸¹ This particular type of miraculousness, however, 'does not have additional relevance to the composition of the Qur'an or the way its purity of speech and superlative eloquence both point to the highest meanings'.¹⁸² He concludes the prolegomenon with the reassertion of its opening salvo against the proponents of the theory of *ṣirfa* ('diversion'). Rather than some external collusion of events distracting or preventing generations of Qur'anophobes from opposing the Qur'an, it was very much its own internal structure, style, and language that defeated them. As al-Bayḍāwī said, the Qur'an had simply 'challenged the champions of eloquence among the pure-blooded Arabs and found none capable of response'.¹⁸³

Conclusion

Ibn ʿĀshūr's Ten Prolegomena can be described as an applied demonstration of the hermeneutical category entitled 'prerequisites of the exegete' (*shurūṭ al-mufasssīr*) for the chief purpose of demonstrating Qur'anic *iʿjāz*, which consists mostly in what is considered the unmatched perfection of style and polysemy of the Book. His entire career fits the exegete's ideal agenda summarised by al-Wāḥidī in the preamble to his major *tafsīr*: 'to learn grammar and literature—for verily they are both its two pillars—master their principles, and painstakingly examine the pathways of Arab idioms'.¹⁸⁴ Likewise according to Ibn al-ʿArabī at the conclusion of his autobiographical treatise of applied exegesis entitled *Qānūn al-taʿwīl*, such prerequisites consist mostly in knowledge of Arabic, a gift of linguistic inference of which Ibn ʿAbbās was the archetype, and strict God-wariness,¹⁸⁵ while al-Suyūṭī (in Type 78 of the *Itqān*) and others list about two dozen qualifications, again mostly related to language but also including God-given gifts and God-wariness.¹⁸⁶ Underpinning the strong emphasis on the analysis of the constituents of form and meaning is belief in the divine authorship of the language of the Qur'an and prophetic agency in the determination of its structure, and in God Himself as 'the objective of every consideration, discourse, and act' of the seeker of knowledge.¹⁸⁷ In the *Tahrīr wa'l-tanwīr* (no less than in the rest of Islamic hermeneutics) these beliefs are axiomatic. The concept of *iʿjāz* or miraculous inimitability is proposed as their central evidentiary proof and Ibn ʿĀshūr contends that every *tafsīr*, by definition, is meant to illustrate this proof and demonstrate its workings in the meaning and significance of the text of the Qur'an. Furthermore, as pointed out by Walid Saleh, his son al-Fāḍil b. ʿĀshūr (1909–1970), in his survey of the great *tafsīrs* of Islamic civilisation, reserved the term *tafsīr ʿilmī* not for the modernistic, scientific *tafsīrs* that attempted to find in the Qur'an predictions of the findings of the modern sciences, but to philologically-based exegesis of the Qur'an.¹⁸⁸ The *Tahrīr* thus presents the *iʿjāz* of the Qur'an as the ultimate object of scholarly knowledge, and itself as a model of the philological-exegetical science of that science.

Although Western scholarship might find it impossible to concede to the Qur'an the status of the literally God-given and God-phrased text it holds in Islamic tradition, nevertheless both perspectives agree with E.D. Hirsch, Jr. that 'an interpreter's preliminary generic conception of a text is constitutive of everything that he subsequently understands'.¹⁸⁹ They also agree in principle on the contextual interpretive typology brought about by that conception:¹⁹⁰

By classifying the text as belonging to a particular genre, the interpreter automatically posits a general horizon [=context] for its meaning ... The interpreter's job is to specify the text's horizon as far as he is able and this means, ultimately, that he must familiarise himself with the typical meanings of the author's mental and experiential world.

In the case of the divinely-authored Qur'an revealed to, then dictated in turn by, the Prophet, the 'typical meanings' are gleaned through what the scholars have identified as the fundamental *shurūṭ al-mufasssīr*: mastery of Qur'anic Arabic; of the Prophet's teaching and methodology—not only in his direct sayings but in the guidelines he gave for independent inference; of the Arabic language at large; and the individual gift (*mawhibā*) of the exegetes in probing what God meant,¹⁹¹ all in conformity with the rule that 'the meaning of a text is the author's meaning',¹⁹² in this case the super-author. The Prolegomena's contribution is to show that the necessary set of tools required are primarily linguistic in nature. Yet another convergence is Hirsch's distinction between 'textual meaning' and 'significance',¹⁹³ which corresponds to several hermeneutical pairings already discussed such as *ma'thūr/nazar*, *tafsīr/ta'wīl*, particularised historical *asbāb* and universal applicability, finite text, and infinite polysemy. Ibn ʿĀshūr has applied such concepts in continuity with classical tradition while Muslim modernists, on the other hand, have recast *ta'wīl*'hermeneutics' as a portmanteau term for a type of secularising, anthropocentric deconstructionism divorced from its long-established meanings.¹⁹⁴

In light of the above findings, Ibn ʿĀshūr's Prolegomena can be characterised as a treatise on Qur'anic *i'jāz* in its own right. A second look at his principal sources in the *Tahrīr* confirms this description, in addition to the fact that he brings up the word and its cognates nearly a thousand times. His tropological lists and typologies of the stylistic 'firsts' and 'customs' of the Qur'an are faithful reformulations of classical *tafsīr*-introductory hermeneutical theories such as Muqātil's typology of the seventeen main tropes of *tafsīr*, Abū ʿUbayda's 39 types of metonymy (*majāz*), al-Ṭabarī's seventeen defining tropes of style (*bayān*, especially concision and its ancillaries), al-Māwardī's eight types of Qur'anic *i'jāz*, al-Thaʿlabī's fourteen rules of hermeneutics, al-Qurtubī's five prerequisites of the *mu'jiza* and ten types of *i'jāz*, Ibn Juzayy's 22 main figures of *bayān*, etc. Some of the concision-related tropes such as *majāz* and

euphemism (*kināya*) were listed by al-Shāfi'ī in his *Risāla* to illustrate his view on the transparency of *bayān* as transcending ambiguity for the qualified reader.¹⁹⁵ It is for the latter and only for the latter that Ibn ʿĀshūr's son will go as far as to forward that:¹⁹⁶

... for us Muslim multitudes, the magnificent Qur'an is a discourse designative of its meanings with a designation taken through the crystal-clear, customary way for the designation of Arabic discourse. Accordingly it does not need *tafsīr* at the root, but only as a contingent need born of two causes; the first is the fact that the Qur'an was revealed and conveyed in stages over more than twenty years [and then reordered]¹⁹⁷ ... the second is that the Qur'an's crystal-clear fundamental designations ... are followed by meanings whose vocabular forms yield vague or unidentified designations, where the form can be construed as the reiteration of distinct meanings that might be confused with the original meaning and whose intent is not clear.

A literalist critic, al-Ṭarhūnī, saw Ibn ʿĀshūr's laborious questioning of whether *tafsīr* can be considered a science as violative of all previous practice which, as a rule, not only considered it so, but the chief and fountainhead of all Islamic disciplines.¹⁹⁸ However (although Ibn ʿĀshūr elsewhere does seem to vaunt *fiqh* as the best science¹⁹⁹), his conclusions show that he thought the very same beyond doubt:²⁰⁰

Tafsīr was the first thing the scholars of Islam worked upon before working upon the rest of the sciences ... it is correct to consider it the head (*ra's*) of the Islamic sciences just as al-Bayḍāwī described it ... [it] is the first of the Islamic sciences to emerge ... and it is also the noblest of all the Islamic sciences and its head in actuality.

At first sight this is just another exegete's topos—as found, for example, in the preambles of the *tafsīrs* of Tha'labī, Ibn ʿAṭīyya, al-Bayḍāwī, and al-Tha'ālibī—naturally derived from the over-arching consideration that the object of *tafsīr*, the Qur'an itself, was the foundation for all the sciences, as stated by al-Rāzī:²⁰¹

The Qur'an is the origin of the sciences one and all (*aṣl al-ʿulūm kullihā*), so that the science of dialectic theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*) is all in the Qur'an, and the science of Islamic law (*ʿilm al-fiqh*) is all taken from the Qur'an, likewise the science of legal theory (*ʿilm uṣūl al-fiqh*), the science of grammar and linguistics (*al-naḥw wa'l-lughā*), the science of renunciation of the world (*al-zuhd fī al-dunyā*), etc.

Yet the topos does not preclude such a representation from being, at least partially (as to being the core science aside from being the best one) historically and literally true. Versteegh has shown that:²⁰²

one could say that *in nuce* the early commentaries contain all elements found in later commentaries, but what is more, they also contain the material which at a later stage became a specialised field of research in different Islamic sciences ... We are not saying here that all Islamic disciplines have their origin in *tafsīr*; what we do maintain is that the first elements of scholarship for almost all disciplines, before they were established as disciplines *sui generis* are found in the early discussions about the revealed text.

Ibn ʿĀshūr took a notable stand in showing the two terminological dichotomies *tafsīr/taʿwīl* and *maʿthūr/raʿy* as soft and the opposite of clearcut. In light of the fact that *maʿthūr*, which literally means ‘transmitted’, implies a type of knowledge transmitted from the Prophet, and that most of even the transmissive *tafsīrs* (e.g. Mujaḥid, Qatāda, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn ʿUlayya, Sufyān, Mālik, al-Shāfiʿī, etc.) contain many if not mostly non-Prophetic reports (as we have pointed out with regard to al-Ṭabarī and *al-Durr al-manthūr*), it is technically true that, as Walid Saleh stated, ‘Most of the *tafsīr bi-al-maʿthūr* is in reality a *tafsīr bi-al-raʿy*’.²⁰³ However, it would be an over-statement and typological blunder to assert ‘the fictitious nature of the difference between the two’. Not only have their respective representatives been understood and consistently referred to as one or the other genre, but also such categorisation is based on overall emphasis within any given work, not some criterion of necessary mutual exclusivity.

Unlike Ibn Juzayy, Ibn ʿĀshūr tends to exclude Ṣūfism from the typology of *tafsīr* disciplines *stricto sensu*, and *fiqh* as well with rare exceptions, the former in practice and the latter in both practice and theory. The reality of the matter, whether in modern exegeses or in the rest of the classical tradition, is that scholars have picked and chosen across the disciplines according to inspiration and context. The speculative models (Goldziher, Wansbrough) that gave *fiqh* and *taṣawwuf* overly preponderant roles are of limited use besides the obvious (for example, self-understood Ṣūfī *tafsīrs* or the *aḥkām* genre).²⁰⁴ Otherwise, beyond their self-declared primary emphasis on language, the analytical commentaries tapped the various Islamic disciplines freely and inclusively.

Lastly, a remarkable sub-theme of Ibn ʿĀshūr’s ‘Prolegomena’ and of his entire *tafsīr* is the quiet recognition of the non-Sunnī (particularly Muʿtazilī) contributions to the genre and the continuation of the systematically Sunnified integration of the Muʿtazilī linguistic method codified by al-Jurjānī in the fifth/eleventh century and illustrated by

al-Bayḍāwī in the seventh/thirteenth. The non-Sunnī affiliation of at least five linguistic exegetes for whom, as we cited (section 3 on *athar* and *ra'y*), Ibn ʿĀshūr reserves high praise—al-Farrāʾ, Abū ʿUbayda, al-Zajjāj, al-Rummānī, al-Zamakhsharī—is revealing of his integrative approach to non-Sunnī hermeneutics in the formation of his ideal of *tafsīr*.²⁰⁵ We have also seen (Table 1) that Ibn ʿĀshūr often cites the Muʿtazilīs al-Sakkākī and Abū Muslim al-Ḥafḥānī in the *Tahrīr*. As shown by Walid Saleh in his article on al-Fāḍil b. ʿĀshūr's (the son) survey of the history of *tafsīr* entitled *al-Tafsīr wa-rijālulu*, the ʿĀshūrs viewed linguistic-analytical-scientific *tafsīr* as the brainchild of Muʿtazilism 'forcefully wrested from their hands by Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī' at the vanguard of the rest of the Sunnī-Ashʿarī scholars.²⁰⁶ Similarly, al-Bayḍāwī's *Anwār al-tanzīl* had 'raided the battlefield of the *muḥaddithīn* and the philologists and wrested it completely from them' to become 'the apex of the scientific method in interpreting the Qur'an'²⁰⁷ and provide the filter through which Sunnī-Ashʿarī tradition was able to go back and include al-Zamakhsharī's *Kashshāf* as not only safe, but worthy of study.²⁰⁸ The *Tahrīr*, with its heaviest reliance on the *Kashshāf* then the rest of linguistic *tafsīr* tradition, is, in line with Abū al-Suʿūd and al-Ālūsī (both also short-listed in *al-Tafsīr wa-rijālulu*), a continuation and revival of the Bayḍawīan project in modern times, what is more, conceived in a neo-Bayḍawīan idiom. Further studies can bear on the extent to which this classicistic contribution to the genre authored by the Tunisian qāḍī, educationist reformist, and renovator stands out from the other three foremost exegeses of the century, Abduh and Riḍā's *Tafsīr al-manār* (1927), Mawḍūdī's *Tafhīm al-Qurʾān* (1942–1972), and Sayyid Qutb's *Fi zīlāl al-Qurʾān* (1951–1965).

NOTES

1 I would like to thank Prof. Ibrahim Mohamed Zein of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) for encouraging me to work on *al-Tahrīr wa'l-tanwīr*; Prof. Mohamed Khadraoui, specialist in Qur'anic hermeneutics at al-Zaytouna University for his generous help in clarifying some aspects of Ibn ʿĀshūr's thought; the two anonymous readers for their helpful comments on the first draft of this paper; and the *JQS* editor, Dr Helen Blatherwick, for the meticulous touches that brought this article to its final state.

2 See http://vb.tafsir.net/tafsir31934/#.VoM_CtJ95hE; al-Ghazālī, *Mabāḥith al-tashbīh*; Ḥamad, *al-Taqrīb*; al-Zahrānī, *Athar al-dilālāt*; Ūsālim, *al-Ikhtiyārāt al-ʿilmiyya*; Aḥmad, *Athar al-siyāq*; Birrī, *al-Maqāyīs al-balāghīyya*; Ṣāqir, *Manhaj*; Khān, *al-Jānīb al-fiqhī*.

3 For example, Daneshgar and Saleh, *Islamic Studies Today*; Görke and Pink, *Tafsīr and Islamic Intellectual History*; Bauer, *Aims, Methods and Contexts*; Vishanoff, *The Formation of Islamic Hermeneutics*; Saleh, *The Formation*; Berg, *The Development of Exegesis*; Rippin, *Approaches*.

4 Nafī, 'Ṭāhir ibn ʿĀshūr', is mostly biographical; Saleh, 'Marginalia and Peripheries', is about al-Ṭāhir b. ʿĀshūr's son Muḥammad al-Fāḍil b. ʿĀshūr and his survey of *tafsīr* history entitled *al-Tafsīr wa-rijālulu*.

5 See von Denffer's 'Ulūm al-Qurʾān and the translations of al-Suyūṭī's *al-Itqān* in *The Perfect Guide*, al-Dihlawī's *al-Fawz al-kabīr*, and al-Azhari's *Introduction*.

6 See Nafi, ‘Tāhīr ibn ʿĀshūr’; Maḥfūz, *Tarājim*, vol. 3, pp. 304–309; Green, *The Tunisian Ulama*, pp. 103, 249–250; Sadok Zmerli, *Figures Tunisiennes*, translated as al-Zammarlī, *Aʿlām Tunisiyyūn*, pp. 361–366; al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, vol. 6, p. 174; Ṣaqr, *Manhaj*, pp. 9–11.

7 As shown, for example, by his sweeping verdict that ‘most Muslims have become Murjīʿites’ because, in his view, they consider themselves infallibly heaven-bound. Other oversimplifications are his dismissal of the great issues of *kalām* as either superfluous or extreme transcendentalisation (*ghulūw fī al-tanzīh*) and of teachers as given to superficial mumbo-jumbo, his idealisation of early scholarship as accepting of opponents, and his view of Muʿtazilis as the closest of all sects to agreement with Ashʿarīs (Ibn ʿĀshūr, *Alaysa*, pp. 180–182, 200). For an in-depth discussion of this work see El-Mesawi, ‘Naqd and Islah’.

8 See Sedgwick, *Muḥammad Abduh*, and Nafi, ‘Tāhīr ibn ʿĀshūr’, pp. 9, 27–28 n. 34–39.

9 The city of Tunis had two judges, one belonging to the dominant Maliki school and the other to the minority Ḥanafī school. See Green, *Tunisian Ulama*, pp. 33–34.

10 Ottoman influence dictated that the Tunisian Shaykh al-Islam be Ḥanafī, and the Chief Mufti (*bashmufti*) Mālīkī although, originally, the title was reserved for the highest-ranking mufti-*ālim* of the Ottoman Sultanate; but ‘Aḥmad Bey’s introduction of the title to the hierarchy of the Tunisian ‘*ulamā*’ is indicative of his intention to assert Tunisia’s independence’ (Nafi, ‘Tāhīr ibn ʿĀshūr’, p. 27 n. 21).

11 At which time the Ḥanafī Shaykh al-Islam Aḥmad Bayram resigned in protest, but there seems to have been political pressures targeting him as a representative of the old order of ‘*ulamā*’ authority. See Nafi, ‘Tāhīr ibn ʿĀshūr’, pp. 6, 10–11.

12 See the interviews published on Mar 30, 2015 by Al Jazeera Documentary at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l9hy0rTt63Q> (as of 9 May 2017) from 24’50” to 28’10” where several Tunisian academics state that some ‘*ulamā*’ were actually part of the supervisory committee of the congress and ‘did not condone, but did join’, including Ibn ʿĀshūr.

13 A famous colleague of Ibn ʿĀshūr, Muḥammad al-Khiḍr Ḥusayn, stated: ‘I am no less impressed by his stellar manners and courteousness than by his scholarly genius’ (Maḥfūz, *Tarājim*, vol. 3, p. 306).

14 Nafi, ‘Tāhīr ibn ʿĀshūr’, p. 9.

15 ‘*al-Samāḥa awwal awṣāf al-sharīʿa wa-akbar maqāṣidihā*’ (Ibn ʿĀshūr, *Maqāṣid*, pp. 61–63).

16 It would not be correct to say, as Walid Saleh does, that ‘The title of this massive twenty volume [presumably in some edition] commentary is *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-Tanwīr*; translated into English it is “Liberation and Enlightenment.” So that is what the reformist Sunni camp thought they could do through the Qur’an: nothing short of achieving the aims of modernity, liberation and enlightenment’ (Saleh, ‘Marginalia and Peripheries’, p. 311). Nevertheless Ibn ʿĀshūr was certainly aware that, in short form, the title of his work could be construed as at least partly pointing to ‘liberation and enlightenment’ in the politico-ideological sense.

17 At Dār al-Kutub al-Sharqiyya in Tunis. ʿĪsā Bābī al-Ḥalabī’s publication of the first two volumes of the *Taḥrīr* followed in 1964 and 1965 as the second batch, not the first, contrary to Ṣaqr’s claim in *Manhaj*, p. 12. Dār al-Kutub al-Sharqiyya then brought out the first ten volumes in 1969, to which al-Ziriklī (d. 1976) referred in his remark ‘ten volumes of it have been brought out so far’ in the third edition (1969) of his biographical dictionary *al-Aʿlām* (vol. 6, p. 174).

18 Ibn ʿĀshūr, *Tafsīr*, vol. 16, p. 113, *sub Sūrat Maryam* Q. 19:41–42. See also vol. 1, p. 21 (Second Prolegomenon), 185, 193 (*al-Fātiha*); vol. 2, p. 139 (*al-Baqara* Q. 2:178); vol. 17, p. 189 (*al-Ḥajj* Q. 22:2); vol. 19, p. 20 (*al-Furqān* Q. 25:32); and vol. 26, p. 129 (*Muḥammad* Q. 47:35).

19 Ibn ʿĀshūr, *Uṣūl al-niẓām*, pp. 171–172. This passage has displeased both sides of the debate: <http://www.azahera.net/showthread.php?t=8792> and <https://tinyurl.com/kasu7s4> (Ashʿarīs); https://minhajcanal.blogspot.com.eg/2015/05/blog-post_405.html (Salafīs), as of 9 May 2017.

20 The *Muqaddimāt* were summarised in under three pages by Massimo Campanini in *L'esegesi musulmana*. Campanini's approach to Ibn ʿĀshūr, on top (or because) of its extreme brevity, lacks depth and accuracy.

21 See Naṭūr, 'Tafarrudāt al-Ṭāhir b. ʿĀshūr'.

22 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 7.

23 al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār*, vol. 1, p. 6. The *nukta* was defined as the nuance or 'minute point' (*al-nukta hiya al-daḡīqa*) (al-Nābulusī, *al-Ajwiba*, Question 126, p. 301, citing Shaykh Khālid al-Azhārī's *Sharḥ Qawā'id al-i'rāb*), 'the subtle question brought out perspicuously and cogitatively. It derives from "scratching (*nakata*) the ground with a spear", leaving its trace there: the nuance was named a *nukta* because thoughts leave their trace on it' (al-Qūnawī, *Hāshiyat al-Qūnawī*, vol. 1, p. 426).

24 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 8.

25 On the whole genre of Quranic exegesis as one big cumulative, self-correcting text in which encyclopædic *tafsīrs* 'allowed the doctrine of *ijmā'* (consensus) to be operative' (see Saleh, *Formation*, pp. 14–20).

26 Ṭarḥūnī, *al-Tafsīr wa'l-mufasssīrūn*, vol. 2, pp. 738–739.

27 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 16, first prolegomenon.

28 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 16, first prolegomenon.

29 See Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Risālat al-Tadmuriyya*, p. 59, and Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'at*, vol. 17, p. 199; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 6, p. 2,261, type 77.

30 Narrated by Ibn al-Mundhir, al-Ṭabarī, al-Naḥḥās, Ibn al-Jawzī, and others in their *tafsīrs* under Q. 3:7.

31 Narrated by Muqātil, ʿAbd al-Razzāq, al-Ṭabarī, and others in the preambles to their *tafsīrs*, and by Ibn al-Mundhir in his *Tafsīr* under Q. 3:7.

32 Narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās in Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vol. 4, p. 225, no. 2397 and others.

33 This specific understanding of *ta'wīl* as applicable meaning and practice is also related from Mujāhid himself. See Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar*, pp. 63–64.

34 al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī*, vol. 1, p. 103.

35 First words of his *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, type 77.

36 al-Tha'ālībī in the introduction of *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥisān* quotes from Abū Ṭālib al-Tha'labī's *Tafsīr* as does al-Suyūṭī in Type 77 of the *Itqān* and in *al-Iklīl fi istinbāt al-ta'wīl* under *al-Fātiha*, at vol. 1, p. 5. He might be al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Saffāh b. Naṣr al-Tha'labī al-Āmudī al-Dimashqī, mentioned as a *muhaddīth* in Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 14, p. 312, no. 1,607.

37 In al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, type 77.

38 al-Baghawī, Preamble to *Ma'ālim al-tanzīl*.

39 al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Ḥāshiya 'alā al-Kashshāf*, preamble, as cited in al-Ṭayyār, *Mafhūm al-tafsīr*, pp. 108–109.

40 al-Kāfyajī, *al-Taysīr*, pp. 21–26.

41 Ibn ʿĀshūr, *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 11–12, first prolegomenon, my emphasis.

42 The word *taṣdīq* is here used by Ibn ʿĀshūr in its acceptance in logic, defined by al-Rāzī thus: ‘Conceptualisation (*al-taṣawwur*) is the apprehension of quiddity without a judgment of negation or affirmation of it, as when you say “the human being” (*al-insān*), first you understand its meaning, then you judge it to be either actual or nonexistent. That prior understanding is conceptualisation, while verification (*al-taṣdīq*) is that you pass judgment over it either with negation or with affirmation’ (al-Rāzī, opening words of his *Maʿālim uṣūl al-dīn*; see also the opening words of his *Muḥaṣṣal*. See Dghaym, *Mawsūʿat*, vol. 1, p. 313b, entry *taṣdīq*).

43 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 12–13, first prolegomenon.

44 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 15–16, first prolegomenon.

45 On this Tunisian exegete see al-Ṭarḥūnī, *al-Taḥsīr waʾl-mufasssīrūn*, vol. 2, pp. 582–609.

46 Of al-Rummānī’s *tafsīr* only material covering from part of *Sūrat Ibrāhīm* to part of *Sūrat al-Kahf* is extant, see Rufayda, *al-Naḥw*, vol. 1, p. 574 n. 1. On Yaḥyā b. Sallām’s *Tafsīr* see the first footnote in the section entitled ‘Polysemy and the Seven *aḥruf*’ and al-Fāḍil b. ʿĀshūr, *al-Taḥsīr wa-rijāluḥu*, pp. 29–38. On the connection with ʿAbduḥ see above, section entitled ‘Ibn ʿĀshūr’s Education and Views.’

47 Here Ibn ʿĀshūr is misinformed as the *Durrat al-tanzīl wa-ghurrat al-taʾwīl* (on homonyms=*mutashābih lafẓī*) was authored neither by al-Rāzī nor by al-Rāghib, but by al-Khaṭīb al-Iskāfī (d. 420/1029).

48 See previous note.

49 This table was compiled using the Shāmila search engine. On the latter, see Belinkov et al., ‘Shamela’.

50 See Haddad, ‘Abrogation’, pp. 63–64.

51 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 654–657. For other definitions and discussions see Ḥasan, *Muʿjam*, pp. 307–310, and Kamālī, *Principles*, pp. 149–167.

52 See Powers, ‘The Exegetical Genre’, p. 125.

53 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 2, p. 150, *sub* Q. 2:180. See Haddad, ‘Abrogation’, pp. 59–61, sections ‘Modalities’ and ‘Mutual abrogability of Qur’an and Sunna’; al-Kattānī, *Naẓm al-mutanāthir*, pp. 167–168, no. 189 on differing views regarding its mass-transmitted status; and Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *al-Badr al-munīr*, vol. 7, pp. 263–269.

54 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 104, tenth prolegomenon.

55 See, for example, al-Zuhrī, *al-Nāsikh waʾl-mansūkh*, p. 20; Qatāda, *al-Nāsikh waʾl-mansūkh*, p. 35; Ibn Sallām, *al-Nāsikh waʾl-mansūkh*, pp. 155–165, 230–237; al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh waʾl-mansūkh*, vol. 1, pp. 480–486, vol. 2, pp. 301–315; Makkī al-Qaysī, *al-Īdāh*, pp. 140, 275; Ibn Salāma, *al-Nāsikh waʾl-mansūkh*, pp. 16, 42–43; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Nāsikh waʾl-mansūkh*, vol. 2, pp. 207–209; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh al-Qurʾān*, pp. 158–165, 319–321; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muṣaffā*, pp. 17–18, 29–30; Ibn al-Bārīzī, *Nāsikh al-Qurʾān*, p. 25, 32.

56 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 18, second prolegomenon.

57 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 25, second prolegomenon.

58 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 24, second prolegomenon.

59 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 18, second prolegomenon.

60 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 26, second prolegomenon. If *tafsīr* itself does not hinge on *fiqh*, then a fortiori its sub-branch of the ‘occasions of revelation’ (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), does not hinge on legal rulings (*aḥkām*), contrary to John Wansbrough’s view that ‘the *asbāb* material has its primary reference point in works devoted to deriving law from the text of the Qur’an’ as given by Rippin, ‘The Function of *asbāb al-nuzūl*’, p. 1. Rippin’s counter-view, as we point out in section five of this paper, is also far off the mark.

61 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 27, second prolegomenon.

62 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 19, second prolegomenon.

63 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 19, second prolegomenon, cf. al-Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, preamble.

64 'Those who are ignorant of the Arabic tongue and the multitude of its vocabulary and the myriad ways of its expressions are also ignorant of the totality of the knowledge of the Book ... Mālik b. Anas said, "Do not bring me a man unlearned in the Arab dialects who interprets the Book of God, or I will make an example of him" ... The one who tries to attain mastery of this Book with such ignorance is like the one who shows up at the battle-field without arms or tries to fly without wings ... [O]ne does not really know the meaning of God's words unless one is in command of the foundations of language and grammar ... [My] reader has to be a master of literature and grammar, able to follow an argument and a dispute. As for the novice and the trainee, he will be like someone trying to unlock a lock without a key', etc. (see Saleh, 'The Introduction', pp. 76 [English] / 96 [Arabic], 77/94, 79/92, and 82/88).

65 See *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 10, first prolegomenon; the fourth prolegomenon (vol. 1, pp. 38–39) on the priorities and responsibilities imposed on Arabs by the mere fact that the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic; the end of the seventh prolegomenon when discussing repetitiveness in the Qur'anic narratives (vol. 1, pp. 68–69); and the entire tenth prolegomenon.

66 al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il al-i'jāz*, ed. Maḥmūd Shākīr (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1984; rept. Maṭba'at al-Madānī, 1413/1992), p. 305; parenthetical comment by Ibn 'Āshūr. Cf. *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 20, second prolegomenon.

67 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 21, second prolegomenon.

68 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 21, second prolegomenon.

69 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 107, tenth prolegomenon. Here *dhawq* can be assimilated to the *mawhiba* or God-given gift which al-Suyūṭī and others listed among the prerequisites of exegetes, cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 6, pp. 2,274–2,276, type 78, beginning. See our conclusion and the related note citing al-Suyūṭī's list in full.

70 Boullata, 'The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qur'an', pp. 152–153.

71 It has been said that her work merely 'implemented the methodology developed by the Egyptian philologist and theologian Amīn al-Khūlī (1895–1966), Bint al-Shāṭi's husband' (Wahyudi MH, 'Literary Interpretation of the Qur'an', p. 20).

72 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 32, third prolegomenon.

73 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 28, third prolegomenon.

74 al-Ṭarḥūnī, *al-Tafsīr wa'l-mufasssīrūn*, vol. 2, p. 746; Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar*, pp. 55–56.

75 Such as 'Adī b. Ḥātim's idiosyncratic understanding of the verse *eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn* (Q. 2:187) to refer to actual threads of different colours, which the Prophet gently corrected days after the fact, as narrated by al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 3, pp. 250–251. Several others had also followed this erroneous view as narrated from Sahl b. Sa'd al-Sā'idī by al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Aḥkām*, vol. 1, p. 451, §1013.

76 See the definition of praiseworthy *ra'y* as 'creative thinking (*ijtihād*) based on the principles' of the Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, consensus, and the Arabic language in Ibn Ḥajar, *Fathḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 13, p. 189; Ibn al-Qayyim, *I'lām al-muwaqqi'in*, vol. 1, p. 83; al-Kawtharī, *Fiqh*, pp. 23–24; and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' bayān*, vol. 2, pp. 844–863, and vol. 2, p. 1,052.

77 A fourth objection might be added, namely that *athar*-based *tafsīrs* are by no means safe nor devoid of the intrusion of forgeries and *Isrā'iliyyāt*. These abound in the *atharī* commentaries of

al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Kathīr, and others. Thus *athar* in itself forms no guarantee of accuracy or reliability.

78 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 32–33, third prolegomenon.

79 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 33, third prolegomenon.

80 For example Ibn ʿAbbās, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, and Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq.

81 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 29–30, third prolegomenon.

82 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 32, third prolegomenon.

83 Ṭarḥūnī, *al-Tafsīr wa'l-mufasssīrūn*, vol. 2, pp. 738, 746.

84 al-Suyūṭī himself in *Nawāhid al-abkāḥ*, his supercommentary on al-Bayḍāwī's *Anwār al-tanzīl*, appears to fall prey to this kind of judgment in his remonstrances against al-Bayḍāwī when he feels that the latter departs from the trodden path over the exegesis of certain verses, particularly when he gives preference to *raʿy* over *athar* in Suyūṭī's view. See al-Bayḍāwī, *Lights of Revelation*, pp. 45–46, 55–56, 208.

85 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 30–34, third prolegomenon.

86 See Elias, 'Ṣufī *tafsīr* Reconsidered'.

87 See, for another example, the reading of the definition of *iḥsān* in the famous *ḥadīth* of Gabriel, 'to worship God as if you see Him, for if you see Him not (*fa-in lam takun tarāh*), He sees you (*fa-innahu yarāk*)' as proposed by Ibn ʿArabī in his very brief *Kitāb al-fanāʾ*, pp. 1–17: 'It contains an allusion (*ishāra*) to the station of self-effacement and extinction (*maqām al-maḥū wa'l-fanāʾ*) and the gist of it is, "if you are not" (*fa-in lam takun*), that is, if you become nothing and extinguish your self to the point that you no longer exist, then "at that time you shall see Him" (*fa-innaka ḥīna'idhin tarāh*).' On Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's objection to this reading on grammatical grounds and its rebuttal, see Haddad, *Sunna Notes III*, Appendix.

88 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 35–36, third prolegomenon. It is related that ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb sometimes lost consciousness after reciting a verse from the Qur'an, whereupon he would be taken ill and remain bed-ridden for days: on this and other similar evidence see Haddad, 'Impressibility of the Salaf'.

89 Ibn Juzayy, *Kitāb al-tashīl*, vol. 1, p. 8. See Furber, *Ibn Juzayy's Sufic Exegesis*.

90 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 508 (Q. 2:55–56); vol. 13, p. 44 (Q. 12:84–87); vol. 15, p. 363 (Q. 18:60); vol. 16, p. 16 (Q. 18:78–82); vol. 17, pp. 55–56 (Q. 21:30); vol. 18, p. 124 (Q. 23:99–100); vol. 18, p. 192 (Q. 24:23–25); vol. 18, p. 202 (Q. 24:29); vol. 19, p. 82 (Q. 25:74); vol. 21, pp. 151–152 (Q. 31:12); vol. 21, pp. 250–251 (Q. 33:1); vol. 25, p. 143 (Q. 42:51); vol. 27, p. 414 (Q. 57:24); vol. 29, pp. 150–151 (Q. 69:52); vol. 30, p. 254 (Q. 85:21–22).

91 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 3, p. 200 (Q. 3:20); vol. 8, p. 176 (Q. 7:56); vol. 22, p. 13 (Q. 33:33); vol. 22, pp. 46–47 (Q. 33:40).

92 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 38–39, fourth prolegomenon.

93 I usually translated *iʿjāz* as 'inimitability' while 'incapacitation' is its literal sense and 'incapacitation of denial' its intended meaning.

94 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 40–41, fourth prolegomenon.

95 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 42–43, fourth prolegomenon. See Morrison, 'Reasons for a Scientific Portrayal'; Khir, 'The Qur'an and Science'; and ʿAwaḍ, *al-Tafsīr al-ʿilmī*.

96 Notably its 'paradigms of science' as al-Rāzī often did, even if such a requirement was much more rarely articulated by premodern ʿulamāʾ (e.g., al-Ghazālī in the *Iḥyāʾ* and *Jawāhir al-Qurʾān*, Ibn al-ʿArabī al-Mālikī in *Qānūn al-taʾwīl*, the Tunisian Ṣufī Ibn Abī al-Faḍl al-Mursī

(570–655/1174–1257) in his *Tafsīr*, and al-Suyūfī in the *Itqān*—type 65—as well as *Muṭarak al-aqrān* and *al-Iklīl fī istinbāt al-tanzīl* than by modern ones and even if already al-Rāzī did not consider the Qur'an to be a scientific textbook: 'the Qur'anic text to which Rāzī wants to restrict himself and his fellow commentators does not have scientific import, nor does it provide binding scientific facts' (see Dallal, *Islam, Science, and the Challenge*, pp. 117–118, 127–129; see also his article 'Science and the Qur'an' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*. On al-Ghazālī and al-Suyūfī's take on this issue see al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa'l-mufasssīrūn*, pp. 349–356).

97 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 44–45, fourth prolegomenon; vol. 1, p. 128, tenth prolegomenon. See also al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, vol. 2, pp. 109–150, book of *Maqāṣid*, part 2, 'Exposition of the Objective of the Lawgiver in Instituting the Sharī'a to Instil Understanding', questions 3–4. The latter passage contains a discussion of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an intended as a rebuttal of its validity, with which Muḥammad al-Dhahabī agrees (*al-Tafsīr wa'l-mufasssīrūn*, vol. 2, pp. 356–362). By 'evolutional' I mean Ibn ʿĀshūr's view that the Qur'an by its nature keeps lending itself to new understandings, as borne out by the profusion of its commentaries.

98 In his *Muwāfaqāt*, al-Shāṭibī says that 'This blessed sacred law is unlettered (*ummiyya*) because its people are so ... Sacred law was instituted with the characteristics of unletteredness (*ʿalā wasf al-ummiyya*) because its people are thus characterised ... Many went too far in making claims about the Qur'an: they attributed to it every science known to the ancients and the moderns among the natural sciences, the abstract sciences (*al-taʿālim*), logic, dialects, and every kind of theory propounded by the practitioners of these disciplines and their like ... This is incorrect!' (al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, vol. 2, pp. 109–111, 127).

99 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 45, fourth prolegomenon.

100 See al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb nuzūl*, pp. 95–98.

101 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 46–47, fifth prolegomenon. See also Shaḥḥāta, *ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*, pp. 81–94.

102 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 47–50, fifth prolegomenon.

103 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 46, fifth prolegomenon.

104 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 50, fifth prolegomenon.

105 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 51, sixth prolegomenon, cf. al-Jurjānī, *Dalāʾil al-iʿjāz*, pp. 109–110: 'With few exceptions, the readings mentioned by the commentators do not seem to have any relevance, neither for religious discussions, nor for legal ones.' See Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar*, p. 79, cf. pp. 84, 92, where he views the *qirāʾāt* as a specialised sub-genre which did not feature strongly in early *tafsīrs* but in later ones. His purview is limited to the *tafsīrs* of Mujāhid, al-Thawrī, al-Kalbī, Muqātil, and ʿAbd al-Razzāq, although he also generalises (p. 182), about *Majāz al-Qurʾān*, that 'Abū ʿUbayda did not find anything interesting to transmit from the opinions of the [Qur'anic] readers about the structure of the Qur'anic language, nor about its lexicon'.

106 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 25, second prolegomenon.

107 The main seven canonical Readers (*qurrāʾ*) are Nāfiʿ, Ibn Kathīr, Abū ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlāʾ, Ibn ʿĀmir, ʿĀṣim, Ḥamza, and al-Kisāʾī. The 'main eight' are the preceding plus Yaʿqūb, the 'main ten' add Abū Jaʿfar Ibn al-Qaʿqāʾ and Khalaf al-Bazzār while the 'fourteen' add Ibn Muḥayṣin, al-Yazidī, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and al-Aʿmash although—as Ibn ʿĀshūr states (vol. 1, p. 54)—the latter four readings are not considered permissible inside prayer according to Mālik and al-Shāfiʿī. See also Ibn al-Bādhish, *Kitāb al-Iqnāʿ*; Ibn Ghalbūn, *al-Tadhkira*; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Sharḥ Ṭayyibat al-nashr*; and Melchert, 'Ibn Mujāhid'.

108 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 54, sixth prolegomenon.

109 For one of the earliest extant treatises on Quranic polysemy see Ibn Sallām (d. 200/815), *al-Tasārif*.

110 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 55, sixth prolegomenon. See also Cachia, *The Arch Rhetorician*, pp. 44–45 ('the deceptive series' = *tawjīh*), 69–72 ('double entendre' = *tawriya*), 122 ('incorporation' = *taḍmīn*), 131–132 ('corollary' = *istiḥbā'*).

111 Narrated from 23 and up to 30 Companions: al-Kattānī, *Naẓm al-mutanāthir*, pp. 173–174, no. 197.

112 See al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr, ḥarf Ubayy*: vol. 1, p. 92; vol. 2, p. 680; vol. 4, p. 329; vol. 4, p. 580; vol. 4, p. 584; vol. 6, p. 166; vol. 9, p. 617; vol. 11, p. 420; vol. 12, p. 345; vol. 12, p. 377; vol. 15, p. 83; vol. 15, p. 277; *ḥarf Ibn Mas'ūd*: vol. 6, p. 37; vol. 7, p. 691; vol. 7, p. 705; vol. 8, p. 118; vol. 9, p. 288; vol. 9, p. 520; vol. 10, p. 116; vol. 11, p. 420; vol. 14, p. 475; vol. 14, p. 534; vol. 15, p. 83. See also Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar*, p. 81.

113 Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Qānūn al-ta'wīl*, p. 70.

114 Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-ʿAwāṣim*, vol. 2, p. 198.

115 al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* ('Khuṣūmāt, Bāb: Kalām al-khuṣūm ba'ḍuhum fī ba'ḍi'); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* ('Ṣalāt al-musāfirīn, Bāb: Bayān anna al-Qur'ān ʿalā sab'ati aḥruf'); *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 56 and vol. 1, p. 59, sixth prolegomenon.

116 See al-Qārī, *Ḥadīth al-aḥruf al-sab'a*; al-Qaṭṭān, *Nuzūl al-Qur'ān*; al-Dānī, *al-Aḥruf al-sab'a*; ʿItr, *al-Aḥruf al-sab'a*; al-Maṭrūdī, *al-Aḥruf al-Qur'āniyya al-sab'a*; Shukrī, *Baḥth ḥawla nuzūl al-Qur'ān*; Shaḥḥāta, *ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān*, pp. 235–250; Abū Shāma, *al-Murshid al-wajīz*, pp. 78–116; al-Ḥamad, *Rasm al-muḥḥaf*, pp. 129–152; Gilliot, 'Les sept "lectures"' part 1 and part 2; Dutton, 'Orality, Literacy and the "Seven Aḥruf"'.

117 In the abrogated-status camp (Ibn ʿUyayna, Ibn Wahb, al-Bāqillānī, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, al-Ṭaḥāwī, and Ibn al-ʿArabī), one view interpreted the seven *aḥruf* as referring to the dialects (*luḡhāt*) of the Arabs (they differed as to which seven dialects precisely), which were all superseded by the dialect of Quraysh. (The four caliphs, Sa'īd b. al-ʿAṣ, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥārith b. Hishām, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, and Ibn ʿAbbās were all from Quraysh; Zayd b. Thābit and Ubayy b. Ka'b from Najjār; Ibn Mas'ūd from Hudhayl.) In addition to the interpretation of the *aḥruf* as 'dialects' they interpreted them as synonyms (*murādifāt*), whereby the *ḥadīth* gave leeway to replace any given word with up to seven different synonyms such as *ka'l-ʿihni al-manfūsh* becoming *ka'l-ṣūfi al-manfūsh*—both meaning 'like scattered wool'—in Ibn Mas'ūd's reading. The latter is famously related to have rescued (a temporary fix according to al-Qurṭubī) a man who could not help mispronounce *ṭa'āmu'l-athīm* ('food for the felon') as *ṭa'āmu'l-yaīm* ('food for the orphan') by instructing him to read *ṭa'āmu'l-fājir* ('food for the criminal') instead. A second view questioned whether the numeral 'seven' was to be understood literally, or as a metaphor for open-ended leeway and multitude. Among those that considered the *ḥadīth* unabrogated one view interpreted it to refer to various aspects of speech such as literal and figurative, or to aspects of the Qur'an such as command and prohibition, among other unconvincing speculations. Others deemed the *aḥruf* to refer to Arab dialects exactly as they were found in the revealed verses, not in the modality of reading. In other words they were etched in stone and it was not up to the reader to interchange them, such as the word *sikkīn* ('knife') which Abū Hurayra said was new to him as 'we would only say *mudya*'. Al-Suyūṭī counted 50 different Arab dialects in the Qur'an. Finally, some said the *aḥruf* only meant the different ways of pronunciation among the Arabs, such as *faṭḥ* versus *imāla* (e.g. *hal atāka ḥadīthu Mūsā* becoming *hal atēka ḥadīthu Mūsé*), lengthening or shortening the vowel (e.g. *yakhda'ūn/yukhādi'ūn, qātala/qutīla*), glottal stop (*hamza*) versus softening (e.g. *mu'mīn/mūmin, nabīyyīn/nabī'in*). See *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 56–58, sixth prolegomenon.

118 The Ibn ʿAbbās version has: ‘Gabriel made me read according to one *ḥarf* so I asked him again; and I kept asking him for more and he went on giving me more, until he ended up at seven *aḥruf*’ (al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ* [‘Badʾ al-khalq, Bāb: Dhikr al-malāʾika’]; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* [‘Ṣalāt al-musāfirīn, Bāb: Bayān anna al-Qurʾān ʿalā sabʿat aḥruf’]). Ubayy b. Kaʿb’s version has: ‘Gabriel came to the Prophet and said, “God commands you to make your community read according to one *ḥarf*.” He said, “I ask God His leniency and forgiveness: truly my community will not be able to withstand that.” He then came to him a second time and said something similar, and so until he reached seven *aḥruf*’ (see Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* [‘Ṣalāt al-musāfirīn, Bāb: Bayān anna al-Qurʾān ʿalā sabʿat aḥruf’]; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan* [‘Ṣalāt, Bāb: Unzila al-Qurʾān ʿalā sabʿat aḥruf’]; al-Nasāʾī, *Sunan* [‘Ifititāḥ, Bāb: Mā jāʾa fī al-Qurʾān’]). Another version of the *ḥadīth* from Ubayy has: ‘O Gabriel, I was sent to a community of unlettered people, among them are the old woman, the hoary old man, the little boy, the little girl, and the man who has never read anything in his life.’ He replied: ‘O Muḥammad, truly the Qurʾān has been revealed according to seven *aḥruf*’ (see al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan* [Abwāb al-Qirāʾat, Bāb: Mā jāʾa anna al-Qurʾān unzila ʿalā sabʿat aḥruf]).

119 This is in fact a loose paraphrase of the text found in Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Awāṣim*, vol. 2, pp. 201–202, which Ibn ʿĀshūr was apparently quoting from memory. A contemporary ʿĀshūrīan scholar stated that Ibn ʿĀshūr’s surviving students have confirmed that the entire *Taḥrīr* was in fact dictated by the master to his students from memory, then abridged to its present form. See al-Sharīf, *Sharḥ wa-taʿlīq ʿalā al-Muqaddimāt*, Class One at minute 52.

120 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 60, sixth prolegomenon, see also vol. 1, p. 53.

121 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 63, sixth prolegomenon. On the Qurʾanic readings see note 107 above.

122 See Principle 11 of al-Azhari, *Introduction*, pp. 83–86.

123 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 64–65 and vol. 1, pp. 68–69, seventh prolegomenon. Also, ‘By *ummiyyīn* they [the Jews] referred to those who were not recipients of a [heavenly] book from old’ (*al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 3, p. 287 [sub Q. 3:75]), and ‘*Ummī* is a descriptive of perfection for the Prophet while it is a descriptive of defectiveness for other than him’ (*al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 9, p. 133 [sub Q. 7:157]).

124 As opposed to the lesser senses of ‘Gentile’, ‘Arab’, ‘of the common folk/masses’, ‘heathen’, ‘Meccan’, or ‘Jews unversed in the law’. On these and more interpretations of *ummi*, see Günther, ‘Muḥammad, the Illiterate Prophet’; Goldfeld, ‘The Illiterate Prophet’; and Mathewson Denny, ‘The Meaning of “Ummah”’. Tetel Andersen and Carter, *Languages in the World*, p. 95; Morgan, *Essential Islam*, p. 108; and Ourya, ‘Illiteracy of Muḥammad’, all offer musings that the Prophet must have known how to write but little or no proof.

125 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 65–68, seventh prolegomenon.

126 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 70–71, eighth prolegomenon.

127 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 72–73, eighth prolegomenon.

128 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 73–74, eighth prolegomenon. See also al-Zarkashī, *Burhān*, vol. 1, pp. 281–282 (type 15); al-Suyūfī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 2, p. 344, type 17. The latter adduces a second version in Ibn Ashtah where the story centres around Sālim’s *mawlā* Abī Ḥudhayfa and his being the first to gather a *muṣṣaḥaf* (*Itqān*, vol. 2, p. 382, type 18).

129 al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan* (‘Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, wa-min Sūrat al-Tawba’); Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, vol. 1, pp. 195–201, nos 67, 70.

130 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 87, eighth prolegomenon.

131 See al-Dānī, *al-Bayān*; al-Suyūfī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, p. 435, type 19.

132 *al-Taḥrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 74–78, eighth prolegomenon.

- 133 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 83 (last par.), eighth prolegomenon.
- 134 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 77, eighth prolegomenon.
- 135 See °Itr, °*Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, pp. 209–212.
- 136 al-Dānī, *al-Muktafā*, pp. 145.
- 137 al-Qāsim b. Firruḥ al-Shāḥibī's four indicators of the *fawāṣil* are (i) the matching of a verse to what precedes and follows it in length or brevity, (ii) the conformity of the last or penultimate syllabic groups or long vowels in the verse-endings of the same sura, (iii) agreement on the counting of its like as discrete verses, and (iv) the conclusion of discourse. See al-Qāḍī and Da°bis, *Ma°ālim al-yusr*, pp. 31–52. See also al-Mursī, *Fawāṣil al-āyāt*.
- 138 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 79–81, eighth prolegomenon.
- 139 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 82–84, eighth prolegomenon.
- 140 See al-Bayḍāwī, *The Lights of Revelation*, pp. 420–422.
- 141 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 8, preamble.
- 142 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 84–89, eighth prolegomenon.
- 143 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 90–92, eighth prolegomenon.
- 144 See *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 32, third prolegomenon and vol. 1, p. 55, sixth prolegomenon, see above, 'Polysemy and the Seven *aḥruf*'.
- 145 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 94, ninth prolegomenon.
- 146 al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi° al-ṣaḥīḥ* ('Tafsīr, Bāb: Yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū istajībū ...'); Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan* ('Ṣalāt, Bāb: Fātiḥat al-Kitāb'); al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan* ('Abwāb Faḍā°il al-Qur'ān, Bāb Mā jā°a fī faḍl al-Fātiḥa'); al-Nasā°ī, *Sunan* ('Ifitāḥ, Bāb: Ta°wīl qawl Allāh °azza wa-jall').
- 147 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 94–95, ninth prolegomenon. The latter report is taken from Ibn °Aṭīyya—who sources it back to Qāḍī °Iyāḍ—and is nowhere else to be found. See also Ibn °Aṭīyya, *al-Muharrar al-wajīz*, vol. 4, p. 332.
- 148 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 96, ninth prolegomenon.
- 149 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 97, ninth prolegomenon.
- 150 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 98, ninth prolegomenon.
- 151 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 97–100, ninth prolegomenon.
- 152 On Qur'anic tropology see al-Zamalkānī, *al-Mujīd*, and al-Suyūṭī, *I°jāz al-Qur'ān*.
- 153 See Zubir, *Balāghah as an Instrument of Qur'ān Interpretation*, p. 1.
- 154 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 101–102, tenth prolegomenon. On *i°jāz* see al-Bāqillānī, *I°jāz al-Qur'ān*; al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān i°jāz al-Qur'ān*, and al-Rummānī, *al-Nukat fī i°jāz al-Qur'ān*, all in Boullata (ed.), *Thalāth rasā°il*, translated by Boullata as *Three Treatises*; Anon., *Sharḥ Risālat al-Rummānī*; Audebert, *al-Ḥaṭṭābī et l'inimitabilité du Coran*; Qaḍī °Iyāḍ's writings on *i°jāz* in *Majmū° rasā°il*; al-Sakkākī, *Miftāḥ*.
- 155 See 'agencement' in Gilliot, *Exégèse*, pp. 77, 81, etc.
- 156 On *ṣarfa* see Ḥurayz, *Naẓarāt min al-i°jāz al-bayānī*, pp. 23–84; al-Aṭraḥ, *Risāla*, pp. 167–195, 'al-qawl bi al-ṣarfa wa'l-radd °alayhī'.
- 157 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 103–107, tenth prolegomenon. He comments: 'The latter aspect, insofar as it relates to past events, is miraculously inimitable to the scriptureless Arabs specifically, but not to the People of the Book ... nor to the arrogant, who replied that he was being informed by some people' (p. 105). On various orientalist constructs of Qur'anic authorship see Sanni, Review of *The Qur'ān in Context*, p. 305; al-Ghazālī, *al-Qur'ān al-karīm*, pp. 39, 52–58; Ḥusayn, 'al-Maṣādir al-khayāliyya'; and the writings of Claude Gilliot.

158 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 107, tenth prolegomenon; cf. vol. 1, p. 21, second prolegomenon.

159 *Jawhar al-Islām* 3–4 (tenth year), p. 12, and al-Ghālī, *Shaykh al-Jāmi' al-a'zam Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ibn 'Āshūr*, p. 42 as cited in al-Zahrānī, *Athar al-dilālāt*, p. 320.

160 See the *ḥadīth* 'I have divided the *Fātiha* between Me and My servant into two halves ...' in Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* ('*Ṣalāt*, Bāb: Wujūb qirā'at al-Fātiḥa fī kull rak'a'); and the four *Sunan*.

161 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 119, tenth prolegomenon.

162 See Abdel Haleem, 'Grammatical Shift for Rhetorical Purposes'.

163 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 107–113, tenth prolegomenon. See also Cachia, *The Arch Rhetorician*, pp. 19–31, paronomasia; pp. 51–52, parallelism; pp. 58–59, division; pp. 82–83, preclusion/prevention; pp. 83–86, simile; pp. 88–89, metaphor; p. 106, redirection.

164 Narrated thus through from 'Abd Allāh b. 'Awn al-Muzanī, from Muḥammad b. Sīrīn, from 'Umar by Muḥammad b. Sallām al-Jumāhī (d. 231/846) in his *Ṭabaqāt* (vol. 1, p. 24), while Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī (d. 456/1064) in *al-'Umda*, vol. 1, pp. 27–28, narrates it as 'they possessed no science more knowledgeable (*lam yakun lahum 'ilmun a'lam minhu*)'.

165 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 113–116, tenth prolegomenon.

166 See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 5, pp. 217, 220–221; al-Naḥḥās, *Ma'ānī*, vol. 1, pp. 351–354; al-Bayḍāwī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, p. 244; Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, *Tafsīr al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, vol. 2, p. 401; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, vol. 3, p. 461; Abū al-Su'ūd, *Tafsīr Abī al-Su'ūd*, vol. 1, p. 440.

167 See al-Dawsarī, *Mukhtaṣar*, p. 139, no. 458.

168 See al-Farrā', *Ma'ānī*, vol. 1, p. 191; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 5, p. 221; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, vol. 3, p. 459; al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 211; al-Qarnī, *Kulliyāt*, vol. 1, p. 121; al-Qārī, *al-Minaḥ*, p. 264.

169 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 115–116, tenth prolegomenon. See also Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, *al-Ishāra*, p. 221; al-Zarkashī, *Burhān*, vol. 1, p. 132; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 5, p. 1,836–1,838, type 62; al-Suyūṭī, *Mu'tarak al-aqrān*, vol. 1, pp. 43–44; and al-Suyūṭī, *Marasid al-matali'*. Compare this with Carl Ernst's remark in the beginning of the chapter entitled 'Medinan Suras' of his *How to Read the Qur'ān*, at p. 155: 'a number of scholars ... argue that there is a lack of coherence in the Medinan suras in comparison with the much tighter structure observed in the Meccan suras. Indeed, it would be fair to say that many readers of the Qur'an have despaired of finding a literary structure in these often long and complicated compositions.'

170 See Tabāna, *Mu'jam al-balāghat*, pp. 50–53.

171 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 117–118, tenth prolegomenon. See al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 4, p. 129.

172 See the types covered in Schoeler, 'The Genres', esp. pp. 5f., 10, 14–16, 19–21, 26, 37.

173 See the third chapter of Beeston, *The Cambridge History*, covering these genres as well as letters, legal documents, and treaties.

174 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 118–119, tenth prolegomenon.

175 See al-Tha'ālibī, *al-I'jāz wa'l-ijāz*, and Khallūf, *Uslūb al-ḥadhf*.

176 al-Qaysī, *al-Hidāya*, vol. 6, p. 4,285; Ibn 'Āshūr, *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 122, tenth prolegomenon.

177 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 120–124, tenth prolegomenon.

178 See al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, vol. 4, p. 167; Ibn al-Qayyim, *Jalā' al-afḥām*, p. 188, and al-Qarnī, *Kulliyāt*, vol. 1, pp. 119–120. See the introduction to al-Bayḍāwī, *The Lights of Revelation*, pp. 26–29.

179 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 124, tenth prolegomenon.

180 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 125–129, tenth prolegomenon.

181 For example, ‘The prediction made in the initial verses of this Surah is one of the most outstanding evidences of the Quran’s being the Word of Allah and the Holy Prophet Muhammad’s being a true Messenger of Allah’ (Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding*, vol. 8 [Beginning of Notes on *Sūrat al-Rūm*]).

182 *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, p. 129, tenth prolegomenon.

183 al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, vol. 1, p. 5.

184 See Saleh, ‘The Introduction’, pp. 74 and 98.

185 Ibn al-^oArabī, *Qānūn al-ta’wīl*, pp. 366–368.

186 These are: philology (*lughā*), grammar (*nahw*), morphology (*taṣrīf*), etymology (*ishtiḳāq*), semantics (*ma’ānī*), rhetoric (*bayān*), tropes (*badī’*), Qur’anic readings (*qirā’āt*), principles of creed and jurisprudence (*al-aṣṣaḥ*), circumstances of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), historical accounts (*qaṣaṣ*), abrogators (*nāsikh*), abrogated (*mansūkh*), applied law (*fiqh*), the vague and the anonymous (*al-mujmal wa'l-mubham*), gifts (*‘ilm al-mawhibā*), awareness of modern science (*al-‘ilm al-ḥadīth*), aiming to explain the Qur’an through itself in the first place, then through the Sunna, possessing sound belief and orthodoxy in the practice of the religion, purifying one’s intention through simple living, and expertise in parsing (*i’rab*). See al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 6, pp. 2,274–2,276, type 78, beginning; al-Haytamī as quoted by his student al-Qārī in the latter’s *Mirqāt al-mafātīh sharḥ Mishkāt al-maṣābīh*, commentary on the *ḥadīth* ‘*Man qāla fī al-Qur’āni bi-ra’yihī fa-aṣāba fa-qad akḥṭa*’ (‘Whoever speaks about the Qur’an based on his mere opinion and is correct, has erred’); and ^oItṛ, *‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, p. 88, after Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā’s preamble to *al-Manār*.

187 Ibn al-^oArabī, *Qānūn al-ta’wīl*, p. 117. See also the first book of al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā’*, where the direct knowledge of God is the supreme goal of the scholar and the very definition of knowledge.

188 Saleh, ‘Marginalia and Peripheries’, p. 301, see also Ibn ^oAshūr al-Fāḍil, *al-Tafsīr wa-rijāluhu*, pp. 43–50.

189 Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation*, p. 74.

190 Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation*, pp. 222–223.

191 Mostly through the connectors that Versteegh has listed ‘Ya^onī, ay, yaqūlu, yurīdu, ^oanā, ma^onāh ...’ (Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar*, p. 97).

192 Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation*, p. 25. See also pp. 12, 31: ‘It would be absurd to evaluate the stylistic felicity of a text without distinguishing between the author’s intention to convey a meaning and, on the other hand, his effectiveness in conveying it ... Verbal meaning is whatever someone has willed to convey by a particular sequence of linguistic signs and which can be conveyed (shared) by means of those linguistic signs.’

193 See Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation*, pp. 210–219.

194 For example, the works of Mohammed Arkoun, Hasan Ḥanafī, Nasr Abu Zayd, Muhammad Shahrur, Mohamed Talbi, Abdullah Saeed, etc. See section entitled ‘Historicity of the Qur’ān and Hermeneutics’ in Campanini, *The Qur’ān*, pp. 48–65. This approach is more in line with what Hirsch Jr. called a ‘philosophical form of radical historicism’ and ‘the cult of the new’ where the past becomes ‘ontically alien’ to us and, instead, ‘opinion is as real as an empirical fact and, given enough currency, becomes itself an empirical fact that must be reckoned with’ (Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation*, p. 41).

195 See Vishanoff, *Formation*, pp. 46–47, and Saleh, *Formation*, pp. 12, 84–87. I found Vishanoff’s idiosyncratic translation of *majāz* as ‘transgressive usage/language’ unhelpful.

Claude Gilliot, *Exégèse*, pp. 71–87, cites the typologies of Abū °Ubayda, al-Ṭabarī, and al-Shāfi°ī (as well as, pp. 118–119, Muqātil’s similar checklist in his own *tafsīr*), however, he begrudges al-Ṭabarī the merit of treating *i°jāz* as a doctrine in its own right, which he reserves to ‘later treatises by that name’ such as, at the earliest, al-Rummānī’s (d. 386/996). Gilliot claims that the term ‘inimitability’ being tainted by its later doctrinal elaboration is the reason he opted to translate *i°jāz* as ‘precellence’ instead. The latter is a highly problematic translation of *i°jāz*, sacrificing accuracy for a metaphorical, diluted, generic type of excellence which neither suggests incapacitation nor precludes inimitability. Further, he states (p. 71), ‘De plus, Tabari n°emploie jamais ce nom d°action [*i°jāz*] dans le sens esthétique et littéraire qu°on lui connaît. Dans son introduction, notamment, on ne trouve que le verbe *a°ġaza* (rendre incapable de) dont le sujet est les Arabes contemporains de M. [=the Prophet].’ However, even if al-Ṭabarī does not use the noun, nevertheless he does use the forms *a°jaz*, *ya°jiz*, and *mu°jiz* in the same sense of stylistic unmatchableness, notably under the verses of stylistic challenge. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, p. 200 (end of Q. 1:7, *mu°jizata*); vol. 1, p. 395 (Q. 2:23, *ya°jizu*); vol. 1, p. 396 (ditto, *a°jazu*, *ya°jizu*, *ya°jizū*); vol. 12, p. 184 (Q. 10:38, *a°jazu*); vol. 12, p. 343 (Q. 11:13 *mu°jizatin*). In the Introduction itself (vol. 1, p. 4) al-Ṭabarī mentions the Qur’an’s ‘far-reaching proofs and inimitable verses’ (*al-āy al-mu°jiza*). The latter usage qualifies as esthetic and literary in the later acceptance, not least in the passage on *wa-lā°l-dāllīn* (Q. 1:7) which Gilliot himself cites (p. 81), in which the term *mu°jiza* (under-translated as ‘miracles’) is used to show that the Torah and the Bible are devoid of the inimitable style of the Qur’an. A few lines down, he quotes al-Ṭabarī’s discussion of what he means in the patently esthetic and literary context which is the unmistakable foundation of the doctrine of *i°jāz* as the incapacitation of would-be imitators: ‘son admirable agencement (*naẓm*), son merveilleux arrangement (*rasf*), sa composition originale (*ta°līfuhu l-badī°*), à tel point que les experts en beau langage se sont épuisés en vain à dire [les beautés de] la texture [ne serait-ce que] d°une partie de ce Livre, que les poètes sont restés éberlués par sa composition et que le sens de ceux qui s’y entendent a été confondu, incapables qu°ils étaient de produire quelque chose de semblable’ (Gilliot, *Exégèse*, p. 81, emphasis mine).

196 Ibn °Āshūr al-Fāḍil, *al-Tafsīr wa-rijāluhu*, p. 12. See also Saleh, ‘Marginalia and Peripheries’, pp. 290–291.

197 Ibn °Āshūr al-Fāḍil, *al-Tafsīr wa-rijāluhu*, p. 10.

198 See Ṭarhūnī, *al-Tafsīr wa°l-mufasssīrūn*, vol. 2, p. 765.

199 *al-Tahrīr wa°l-tanwīr*, vol. 11, p. 62 (*sub* Q. 9:122).

200 *al-Tahrīr wa°l-tanwīr*, vol. 1, pp. 13–14, first prolegomenon, cf. vol. 1, p. 27, end of second prolegomenon.

201 al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 2, p. 127 (*sub* Q. 2:23). Al-Naysābūrī in *Gharā°ib al-Qur°ān*, vol. 1, p. 192 (*sub* Q. 2:23), added astronomy, semantics, and rhetoric, ‘and what you will’.

202 Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar*, p. 92.

203 Saleh, *Formation*, p. 16 and n. 28.

204 See Saleh, *Formation*, pp. 12–13, and especially p. 17: ‘When one encounters a Qur’an commentary that has all the six elements outlined in Goldziher’s characterization, what sort of commentary are we to call it?’

205 Abū °Ubayda was a Kharijī, al-Rummānī and al-Zamaksharī were Mu°tazilis, and it has been said that al-Farrā° (d. 207/822), also, leaned to Mu°tazilism.

206 Ibn °Āshūr al-Fāḍil, *al-Tafsīr wa-rijāluhu*, pp. 70, 78.

207 Ibn °Āshūr al-Fāḍil, *al-Tafsīr wa-rijāluhu*, pp. 107, 114.

208 Ibn °Āshūr al-Fāḍil, *al-Tafsīr wa-rijāluhu*, pp. 116–117. See Saleh, ‘Marginalia and Peripheries’, pp. 303–306.

Bibliography

- Abdel Haleem, M.A.S., 'Grammatical Shift for Rhetorical Purposes: *iltifāt* and Related Features in the Qur'ān', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 55:3 (1992), pp. 407–432.
- Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, ed. Muḥammad °Awwāma, 2nd edn (5 vols, Jeddah: Dār al-Qibla li'l-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya; Beirut: Mu°assasat al-Rayyān, 1419/1998).
- Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, *Tafsīr al-baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, ed. °Ādil Aḥmad °Abd al-Mawjūd, °Alī Muḥammad Mu°awwaḍ, Zakariyyā °Abd al-Majīd al-Nūṭī, Aḥmad al-Najūlī al-Jamal (8 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1413–1993).
- Abū Shāma, *al-Murshid al-wajīz ilā °ulūm tata°allaq bi'l-kitāb al-°azīz*, ed. Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1424/2003).
- Abū'l-Su°ūd, *Tafsīr Abī al-Su°ūd, aw: Irshād al-°aql al-salīm ilā mazāyā al-Kitāb al-karīm* (5 vols, Cairo: al-Maṭba°at al-Miṣriyya, 1347/1928; reprt. Riyadh: Maktabat al-Riyāḍ al-Ḥadītha, [1971]).
- Aḥmad, Ibrāhīm Sayyid, *Athar al-siyāq fī tawjīh al-ma°nā fī tafsīr al-Tahrīr wa'l-tanwīr* (Cairo: Dār al-Muḥaddithīn, 2008).
- al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma°ānī fī tafsīr al-Qur°ān al-°azīm wa'l-sab° al-mathānī*, ed. Māhīr Ḥabbūsh et al. (30 vols, Beirut: Mu°assasat al-Risāla, 1431/2010).
- Anon., *Sharḥ Risālat al-Rummānī fī i°jāz al-Qur°ān*, ed. Zakariyyā Sa°id °Alī (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-°Arabī, 1417/1997).
- al-Aṭrash, Riḍwān Jamāl, *Risāla fī al-i°jāz al-Qur°ānī* (Kuala Lumpur: Research Centre, IIUM, 2007).
- Audebert, Claude-France, *al-Ḥaṭṭābī et l'inimitabilité du Coran: traduction et introduction au Bayān I°ğaz al-Qur°ān* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1982).
- °Awad, Bakr Zakī, *al-Tafsīr al-°ilmī li'l-āyāt al-kawniyya: tārikhuhu*, at http://yyu.edu.tr/abis/admin/dosya/1287/dosyalar/1287_15102015183410_98002.pdf.
- al-Azhari, Usama al-Sayyid Mahmud, *Introduction to the Principles of Qur°ānic Exegesis*, tr. Mostafa Badawi ([Birmingham:] Islamic Village, 2014).
- al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr al-Baghawī al-musammā Ma°ālim al-tanzīl*, ed. °Abd al-Razzāq al-Mahdī (5 vols, Beirut: Dār Iḥyā° al-Turāth al-°Arabī, 1420/2000).
- al-Bāqillānī, *I°jāz al-Qur°ān*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣāqr (Cairo: Dār al-Ma°ārif, [1954]).
- Bauer, Karen (ed.), *Aims, Methods and Contexts of Qur°ānic Exegesis (2nd/8th–9th/15th c.)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press and Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2013).
- al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta°wīl al-musammā Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣubḥī Ḥallāq and Maḥmūd al-Aṭrash (3 vols, Damascus: Dār al-Rashīd; Beirut: Mu°assasat al-°Imān, 1421/2000).
- , *The Lights of Revelation and the Secrets of Interpretation: Ḥizb One of the Commentary on the Qur°ān by al-Bayḍāwī*, ed. and tr. Gibril Fouad Haddad (Manchester: Beacon Books; Brunei Darussalam: UBD Press, 2016).

- Beeston, A.F.L., T.M. Johnstone, R.B. Serjeant, and G.R. Smith (eds), *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature, Vol. I: Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- Belinkov, Yonatan, Alexander Magidow, Maxim Romanov, Avi Shmidman, and Moshe Koppel, 'Shamela: A Large-Scale Historical Arabic Corpus', *Proceedings of the Workshop on Language Technology Resources and Tools for Digital Humanities (LT4DH)*, Osaka, Japan, 11–17 December 2016, pp. 45–53, at <https://www.clarin-d.net/images/lt4dh/LT4DH-2016.pdf> [accessed 3 May 2017].
- Berg, Herbert, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam* (Abingdon—New York: Routledge, 2000).
- Birri, Ḥawwās, *al-Maqāyīs al-balāghiyā fī tafsīr al-Tahrīr wa'l-tanwīr* (Beirut: al-Muʿassasa al-ʿArabiyya li'l-Dirāsāt wa'l-Nashr, 2002).
- Boullata, Isa J., 'The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qurʾān: *iʿjāz* and Related Topics' in Andrew Rippin (ed.), *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qurʾān* (Oxford—New York: Oxford University Press—Clarendon Press, 1988; reprt. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2013), pp. 153–171.
- , (ed.), *Thalāth rasāʾil fī iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*, 2nd edn (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1968).
- , (tr.), *Three Treatises on the Iʿjāz of the Qurʾān: Qurʾānic Studies and Literary Criticism* (Reading: Garnet Publishing, [2014]).
- al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ: wa-huwa al-Jāmiʿ al-musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ al-mukhtaṣar min umūr rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh ʿalayhi wa-sallam wa-sunanihi wa-ayyāmihi*, ed. Muḥammad al-Zuhrī al-Ghamrāwī, 2nd edn (8 vols in 3, Būlāq: al-Maṭbaʿat al-Kubrā al-Amīriyya, 1314/1896, reprt Cairo: Muṣṭafā Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1323/1905).
- Cachia, Pierre, *The Arch Rhetorician or The Schemer's Skimmer: A Handbook of Late Arabic badīʿ drawn from ʿAbd al-Ghanī an-Nābulusī's Nafaḥāt al-azhār ʿalā nasamāt al-ashār* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 1998).
- Campanini, Massimo, *L'esegesi musulmana del Corano nel secolo ventesimo* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2008).
- , *The Qurʾān: Modern Muslim Interpretations*, tr. Caroline Higgitt (London—New York: Routledge, 2011).
- Dallal, Ahmad, *Islam, Science, and the Challenge of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).
- , art. Science and the Qurʾān' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*.
- Daneshgar, Majid, and Walid Saleh (eds), *Islamic Studies Today: Essays in Honor of Andrew Rippin* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
- al-Dānī, *al-Muktafā fī al-waqf wa'l-ibtidā*, ed. Yūsuf al-Marʿashlī, 2nd edn (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risāla, 1407/1987).
- , *al-Bayān fī ʿadd āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. Ghānim al-Ḥamd (Kuwait: Markaz al-Makhtūṭāt wa'l-Turāth wa'l-Wathāʾiq, 1414/1994).
- , *al-Aḥruf al-sabʿa li'l-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd al-Muḥaymin Ṭaḥḥān (Jeddah: Dār al-Manāra li'l-Nashr wa'l-Tawzīʿ, 1418/1997).

- al-Dawsarī, Ibrāhīm, *Mukhtaṣar al-‘ibārat li-mu‘jam muṣṭalahāt al-qirā’āt* (Riyadh: Dār al-Ḥadāra li’l-Nashr wa’l-Tawzī‘, 1429/2008).
- von Denffer, Ahmad, *‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān: An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur’ān* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1983).
- Dghaym, Samih, *Mawsū‘at muṣṭalahāt ‘ilm al-kalām al-Islāmī* (2 vols, Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān, 1998).
- al-Dhahabī, Muḥammad Ḥusayn, *al-Tafsīr wa’l-mufasssīrūn*, 7th edn (3 vols, Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 2000).
- al-Dihlawī, Shāh Waliyyullāh, *al-Fawz al-kabīr fī uṣūl al-tafsīr: The Great Victory on Qur’ānic Hermeneutics* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 2014).
- Dutton, Yasin, ‘Orality, Literacy and the “Seven Aḥruf” Ḥadīth’, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 23:1 (2012), pp. 1–49.
- Elias, Jamal J., ‘Sufī tafsīr Reconsidered: Exploring the Development of a Genre’, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 12 (2010), pp. 41–55.
- Ernst, Carl, *How to Read the Qur’ān: A New Guide, With Select Translations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
- al-Farrā’, Ma‘ānī al-Qur’ān, ed. Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Najjār and Aḥmad Yūsuf Najātī, 3rd edn (3 vols, Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1403/1983).
- Furber, Musa, *Ibn Juzay’s Sufic Exegesis: Selections from Kitāb al-Tashīl li-‘Ulūm al-Tanzīl* (n.p.: Islamosaic, 2016).
- al-Ghālī, Balqāsīm, *Shaykh al-Jāmi‘ al-a‘zam Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir bin ‘Āshūr: ḥayātuhu wa-āthāruhu* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1996).
- al-Ghazālī, Mushtāq Bashīr, *al-Qur’ān al-karīm fī dirāsāt al-mustashriqīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā’is, 1429/2008).
- al-Ghazālī, Shu‘ayb b. Aḥmad, *Mabāḥith al-tashbīh wa’l-tamthīl fī tafsīr al-Tahrīr wa’l-tanwīr li-Ibn ‘Āshūr* (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Jāmi‘at Umm al-Qurā, 1435/2014).
- al-Ghazālī, Zayn al-Dīn Abū Hāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* (10 vols, Jeddah: Dār al-Minhāj li’l-Nashr wa’l-Tawzī‘, 1432/2011).
- Gilliot, Claude, ‘Les sept “lectures”: corps social et Écriture révélée’ Part 1, *Studia Islamica* LX (1985), pp. 1–25.
- , ‘Les sept “lectures”: corps social et Écriture révélée’ Part 2, *Studia Islamica* LXIII (1986), pp. 49–62.
- , *Exégèse, langue et théologie en Islam: L’exégèse coranique de Tabari* (Paris: Librairie Vrin, 1990).
- Goldfeld, Isaiah, ‘The Illiterate Prophet (*Nabī Ummī*): An Enquiry into the Development of a Dogma in Islamic Tradition’, *Der Islam* 57 (1980), pp. 58–67.
- Görke, Andreas, and Johanna Pink (eds), *Tafsīr and Islamic Intellectual History: Exploring the Boundaries of a Genre* (London: Oxford University Press, 2014).

- Green, Arnold H., *The Tunisian Ulama: 1873–1915* (Leiden: Brill, 1978).
- Günther, Sebastian, 'Muḥammad, the Illiterate Prophet: An Islamic Creed in the Qur'an and Qur'anic Exegesis', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 4:1 (2002), pp. 1–26.
- Haddad, Gibril Fouad, *Sunna Notes III: The Binding Proof of the Sunna* (Birmingham: al-Qur'an wa'l-Sunna Association, 2010).
- , 'Abrogation', *The Integrated Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān (IEQ): Vol. 1*, ed. Muzaffar Iqbal et al. (Sherwood Park: Center for Islamic Sciences, 2012).
- , 'Impressibility of the Salaf: Notes on the Psychology of the Early Muslims', http://www.livingislam.org/n/ims_e.html (as of 13 May 2017).
- al-Ḥamad, Ghānim Qaddūri, *Rasm al-muṣṣḥaf: dirāsa lughawiyya tārikhiyya* (Baghdad: al-Lajnat al-Waṭaniyya, 1402/1982).
- Ḥamad, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, *al-Taqrīb li-tafsīr al-Taḥrīr wa'l-tanwīr* (2 vols, Riyadh: Dār Ibn Khuzayma li'l-Nashr wa'l-Tawzīc, 2012).
- Ḥasan, Khālid Ramaḍān, *Mu'jam uṣūl al-fiqh* (Cairo: Dār al-Ṭarābīshī li'l-Dirāsāt al-Insāniyya, 1998).
- Hirsch, E.D. Jr, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven—London: Yale University Press, 1967).
- Ḥurayz, Sāmī, *Naẓarāt min al-i'jāz al-bayānī fī al-Qur'ān al-karīm* (Amman: Dār al-Shurūq, 2005).
- Ḥusayn, Muḥammad Bahā' al-Dīn, 'al-Maṣādir al-khayāliyya fī dirāsāt al-mustashriqīn li'l-Qur'ān al-karīm', *Majallat al-sharī'a wa'l-dirāsāt al-Islāmiyya* 6 (1426/2005), pp. 1–41.
- Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, ed. Muḥibb al-Dīn °Abd al-Sabḥān Wā'iz, 2nd edn (2 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyya, 1423/2002).
- Ibn °Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm wa-faḍlihi*, ed. Abū al-Ashbāl al-Zuhayrī (2 vols, Dammam: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1414/1994).
- Ibn °Abd al-Salām, *al-Ishāra ilā al-ī'jāz fī ba'ḍ anwā' al-majāz*, ed. °Uthmān Ḥilmī ([Cairo:] al-Maṭba'at al-°Āmira, 1313/1895).
- Ibn °Arabī, *Kitāb al-fanā' fī al-mushāhada* ('Book of Self-Extinction in Witnessing'), tr. Stephen Hirtenstein and Layla Shamash, *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn °Arabi Society* 9 (1991), pp. 1–17.
- Ibn al-°Arabī, *Kitāb al-°awāṣim min al-qawāṣim*, ed. °Abd al-Ḥamid b. Bādīs (2 vols, Algiers: al-Maṭba'at al-Jazā'iriyya al-Islāmiyya, 1345/1926).
- , *al-Nāsikh wa'l-mansūkh fī al-Qur'ān al-karīm*, ed. °Abd al-Kabīr al-Mudaghri (Rabat: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa'l-Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyya, 1988).
- , *Qānūn al-ta'wīl*, ed. Muḥammad al-Sulaymānī, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990).
- Ibn °Asākir, *Tārikh Madīnat Dimashq*, ed. Muḥibb al-Dīn °Amrawī (80 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1421/2001).
- Ibn °Āshūr, Muḥammad al-Fāḍil, *al-Tafsīr wa-rijāluhu* (Cairo: Majma' al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyya fī al-Azhar, 1970, reprt. 1417/1997).

- Ibn °Ashūr, Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir, *Maqāṣid al-sharī°a al-Islāmiyya* (Tunis: al-Maṭba°a al-Fanniyya, 1366/1946).
- , *Tafsīr al-tahrīr wa°l-tanwīr* (30 vols in 15, Tunis: Dār al-Tūnisiyya li°l-Nashr, 1984).
- , *Uṣūl al-nizām al-ijtimā°ī fi al-Islām*, 2nd edn (Tunis: al-Sharika al-Tūnisiyya; Algiers: al-Mu°assasa al-Waṭaniyya, 1985).
- , *Alaysa al-subḥu bi-qarīb?* (Tunis: Dār Suḥnūn; Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2006).
- Ibn °Aṭiyya, *al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz fi tafsīr al-Kitāb al-°azīz*, ed. °Abd al-Salām °Abd al-Shāfi Muḥammad (6 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1422/2001).
- Ibn al-Bādhish, *Kitāb al-Iqnā° fi al-qirā°āt al-sab°*, ed. °Abd al-Majīd Qaṭāmish (2 vols, Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1403/1983).
- Ibn al-Bārizī, *Nāsikh al-Qur°ān wa-mansūkhuhu*, ed. Ḥātim Ṣāliḥ al-Dāmin, 3rd edn (Beirut: Mu°assasat al-Risāla, 1405/1985).
- Ibn Ghalbūn, *al-Tadhkira fi al-Qirā°āt al-thamān*, ed. Ayman Rushdī Suwayd (2 vols, Jeddah: al-Jamā°a al-Khayriyya li-Taḥfīz al-Qur°ān, 1412/ 1991).
- Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī bi-sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Fu°ād °Abd al-Bāqī and Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (13 vols, Beirut, Dār al-Ma°rifa, 1379/1959).
- Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad, *al-Musnad*, ed. Shu°ayb al-Arnā°uṭ et al. (50 vols, Beirut: Mu°assasat al-Risāla, 1416–1421/1995–2001).
- Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh al-Qur°ān*, ed. Muḥammad Ashraf al-Mālībārī (Medina: al-Jāmi°a al-Islāmiyya, 1404/1984).
- , *al-Muṣaffā bi-akuff ahl al-rusūkh min °ilm al-nāsikh wa°l-mansūkh*, ed. Ḥātim Ṣāliḥ al-Dāmin (Beirut: Mu°assasat al-Risāla, 1405/1984).
- Ibn al-Jazarī, *Sharḥ Ṭayyibat al-nashr fi al-qirā°āt al-°ashr*, ed. Anas Mahra, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1420/2000).
- Ibn Juzay, *Kitāb al-tashīl li-°ulūm al-tanzīl* (4 vols, Cairo: Maṭba°at Muṣṭafā Muḥammad, 1355/1936).
- Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *al-Badr al-munīr fi takhrīj al-aḥādīth wa°l-āthār al-wāqi°a fi al-Sharḥ al-kabīr*, ed. Majdī Amīn and °Abd Allāh Sulaymān (10 vols, Riyadh: Dār al-Hijra li°l-Nashr wa°l-Tawzī°, 1425/2004).
- Ibn al-Qayyim, *I°lām al-muwaqqi°in °an Rabb al-°ālamīn*, ed. Yūsuf Aḥmad al-Bakrī and Shākīr Tawfiq al-°Arūrī (3 vols, Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1997).
- , *Jalā° al-Aḥām*, ed. Zā°id b. Aḥmad al-Nushayrī (Mecca: Dār °Ilm al-Fawā°id, 1425/2004).
- Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-°Umda fi maḥāsīn al-shi°r wa-ādābihi wa-naqdihi*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn °Abd al-Jalīl, 5th edn (2 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1401/1981).
- Ibn Sallām, al-Qāsim, *al-Nāsikh wa°l-mansūkh fi al-Qur°ān al-°azīz wa-mā fīhi min al-farā°id wa°l-sunan*, ed. Mūḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Mudayfir (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1997).

- Ibn Sallām, Yaḥyā, *al-Taṣārīf: Tafṣīr al-Qurʾān mimmā ishtabahat asmāʾahu wa-taṣarrafat maʿānīhi*, ed. Hind Shalabī (Amman: Muʿassasat Āl al-Bayt, 1429/2008).
- Ibn Salāma, *al-Nāsikh waʾl-mansūkh*, 2nd edn (Cairo: Dār Muṣṭafā Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1387/1967).
- Ibn Taymiyya, Aḥmad, *al-Risālat al-Tadmuriyya: mujmal iʿtiqād al-salaf* (Riyadh: Maṭbūʿat Jāmiʿat al-Imām Muḥammad b. Saʿūd al-Islāmiyya, 1408/1988).
- , *Majmūʿat al-fatāwā*, ed. ʿĀmir al-Jazzār and Anwar al-Bāz, 3rd edn (37 vols, al-Manṣūra: Dār al-Wafāʿ, 1426/2005).
- ʿItr, Ḥasan Diyāʾ al-Dīn, *al-Aḥruf al-sabʿa wa-manzilat al-qirāʾāt minhā* (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islāmiyya, 1409/1988).
- ʿItr, Nūr al-Dīn, *ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān al-karīm*, 6th edn (Damascus: self published, 1416/1996).
- al-Jumaḥī, Muḥammad b. Sallām, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr (2 vols, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Madanī, 1974).
- al-Jurjānī, ʿAbd al-Qāhir, *Dalāʾil al-iʿjāz*, ed. Maḥmūd Shākīr (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1984; reprt. Maṭbaʿat al-Madanī, 1413/1992).
- al-Kāfyajī, Muḥyī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sulaymān, *al-Taysīr fī qawāʿid ʿulūm al-tafsīr*, ed. Muṣṭafā Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudṣī, 1419/1998).
- Kamali, Mohammad Hashim, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, revised edn (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1991).
- al-Kattānī, Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar, *Naẓm al-mutanāthir fī al-ḥadīth al-mutawātir*, 2nd edn (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Salafiyya, [1983?]).
- al-Kawtharī, Muḥammad Zāhid, *Fiqh ahl al-ʿIrāq*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda (Aleppo: Maktab al-Maṭbūʿat al-Islāmiyya, 1970).
- Khallūf, Muṣṭafā Shāhir, *Uslūb al-ḥadhf fī al-maʿānī waʾl-iʿjāz* (Amman: Dār al-Fikr, 1430/2009).
- Khān, Nāʾila Muḥammad, *al-Jānib al-fiqhī fī tafṣīr al-Tahrīr waʾl-tanwīr*, www.alukah.net/publications_competitions/0/41754/.
- Khīr, Bustamī Mohamed, ‘The Qurʾān and Science: The Debate on the Validity of Scientific Interpretations’, *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 2:2 (2000), pp. 19–35.
- Maḥfūz, Muḥammad, *Tarājim al-muʾallifīn al-Tūnisīyyīn*, 2nd edn (5 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1994).
- Mathewson Denny, Frederick, ‘The Meaning of “Ummah” in the Qurʾān’, *History of Religions* 15:1 (1975), pp. 34–70.
- al-Maṭrūdī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, *al-Aḥruf al-Qurʾāniyya al-sabʿa* (Riyadh: Dār ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1411/1991).
- Mawdudī, Syed Abul Aʿla, *Towards Understanding the Qurʾān*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari (11 vols, Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1988–2015).

- Melchert, Christopher, 'Ibn Mujāhid and the Establishment of Seven Qur'anic Readings', *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000), pp. 5–22.
- El-Mesawi, Mohamed El-Tahir, 'Naqd and Islah: Ibn Ashur's Comprehensive Critique and Reform Efforts Regarding Islamic Learning and Education', *Al Shajarah* 17:2 (2012), pp. 139–183.
- Morgan, Diane, *Essential Islam: A Comprehensive Guide to Belief and Practice* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010).
- Morrison, Robert, 'Reasons for a Scientific Portrayal of Nature in Medieval Commentaries of the Qur'ān', *Arabica* 52:2 (2005), pp. 182–203.
- al-Mursī, Kamāl al-Dīn, *Fawāṣil al-āyāt al-Qur'āniyya* (Alexandria: al-Maktab al-Jāmi'ī li'l-Ḥadīth, 1420/1999).
- al-Nābulusī, °Abd al-Ghanī, *al-Ajwiba °alā mi'atin wa-wāhidin wa-sittīna su'ālan*, ed. Imtithāl al-Ṣaghīr (Damascus: Dār al-Fārābī li'l-Ma'ārif, 1422/2001).
- Nafī, Basheer M., 'Ṭāhir ibn °Ashūr: The Career and Thought of a Modern Reformist °ālim, with Special Reference to His Work of *tafsīr*', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*. 7:1 (2005), pp. 1–32.
- al-Naḥḥās, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān al-karīm*, ed. Muḥammad °Alī al-Ṣābūnī (6 vols, Mecca: Jāmi'at Umm al-Qurā, 1408/1988).
- , *al-Nāsikh wa'l-mansūkh fī kitāb Allāh °azza wa-jalla wa-ikhtilāf al-°ulamā' fī dhālika*, ed. Sulaymān al-Lāhim (3 vols, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1412/1991).
- al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī bi-sharḥ al-ḥāfiẓ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī wa-Ḥāshiyat al-Imām al-Sindī* (8 vols, [Cairo]: al-Maṭba'at al-Miṣriyya, 1348/1930; reprt 8 vols in 4, Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-°Arabī, n.d.).
- Naṭūr, al-Ḍayf b. Rābiḥ, 'Tafarrudāt al-Ṭāhir b. °Ashūr fī Ṭahrīrihi °an al-Zamakhsharī fī Kashshāfihi wa-Ibn °Aṭīyya fī Muḥarrarihi wa'l-Bayḍāwī fī Anwārihi' (Unpublished PhD dissertation, al-Jāmi'a al-Islāmiyya al-°Ālamiyya, 1431/2009).
- al-Naysābūrī, Niẓām al-Dīn, *Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān wa-raghā'ib al-Furqān*, ed. Zakariyyā °Umayrāt (6 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1416/1996).
- Ourya, Mohamed, 'Illiteracy of Muhammad' in Coeli Fitzpatrick and Adam Hani Walker (eds), *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God* (2 vols, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2014), vol. 1, pp. 283–286.
- Powers, David S., 'The Exegetical Genre *nāsikh al-Qur'ān wa mansūkhuhu*' in Andrew Rippin (ed.), *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988; reprt. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2013), pp. 131–152.
- al-Qāḍī, °Abd al-Fattāh, and Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Da'°bīs, *Ma'ālim al-yusr sharḥ Nāẓimat al-zuhr fī °ilm al-fawāṣil li'l-Imām al-Shāṭibī* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Azhar, 1949).

- Qaḍī °Iyād, *Majmū° rasā°il fī i°jāz al-Qur°ān al-karīm*, ed. Bashīr Dayf al-Jazā°irī (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2015).
- al-Qārī°, °Abd al-°Azīz, *Ḥadīth al-aḥruf al-sab°a: dirāsa li-isnādihi wa-matnihi wa-ikhtilāf al-°ulamā° fī ma°nāhu wa-ṣilatihu bi°l-qirā°āt al-Qur°āniyya* (Beirut: Mu°assasat al-Risāla, 1423/2002).
- al-Qārī°, °Alī, *Mirqāt al-mafātīh sharḥ Mishkāt al-maṣābīh*, ed. Ṣidqī Muḥammad Jamīl al-°Aṭṭār (11 vols, Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1994).
- , *al-Minaḥ al-fikriyya fī sharḥ al-muqaddimat al-Jazariyya*, ed. Usāma °Aṭāyā and Aḥmad Shukrī, 2nd edn (Damascus: Dār al-°Awthānī li°l-Dirāsāt al-Qur°āniyya, 1433/2012).
- al-Qarnī, Burayk b. Sa°id, *Kulliyāt al-alfāz fī al-tafsīr* (2 vols, Riyadh: self-published, 1426/2006).
- Qatāda, *al-Nāsikh wa°l-mansūkh fī kitāb Allāh ta°ālā*, ed. Ḥātim Ṣāliḥ al-Dāmin, 2nd edn (Beirut: Mu°assasat al-Risāla, 1406/1985).
- al-Qaṭṭān, Mannā°, *Nuzūl al-Qur°ān °alā sab°at aḥruf* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 1991).
- al-Qaysī, Makkī, *al-Īdāḥ li-nāsikh al-Qur°ān wa-mansūkhīhi wa-ma°rifat uṣūlihi wa-ikhtilāf al-nās fīhi*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥasan Farḥāt (Jeddah: Dār al-Manāra, 1406/1986).
- , *al-Hidāya ilā bulūgh al-nihāya*, ed. al-Shāhid al-Būshaykhī (13 vols, Sharjah: Jāmi°at al-Shāriqa, 1429/2008).
- al-Qūnawī, °Iṣām al-Dīn Ismā°il b. Muḥammad, *Ḥāshiyat al-Qūnawī °alā Tafsīr al-Bayḍawī*, ed. °Abd Allāh °Umar (20 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1422/2001).
- al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī al-mushtahar bi°l-Tafsīr al-kabīr wa-Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (32 vols, Cairo: al-Maṭba°at al-Bahiyya, 1357/1938, reprt Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1401/1981).
- , *Ma°ālim uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Ṭaha °Abd al-Ra°ūf Sa°d (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-°Arabī, 1984).
- , *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa°l-muta°akhhirīn min al-°ulamā° wa°l-ḥukamā° wa°l-mutakallimīn* (Cairo: al-Maṭba°at al-Ḥusayniyya al-Miṣriyya, 1323/1905).
- Rippin, Andrew, 'The Function of *asbāb al-nuzūl* in Qur'anic Exegesis', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 51:1 (1988), pp. 1–20.
- , (ed.), *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur°ān* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988; reprt. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2013).
- Rufayda, Ibrāhīm °Abd Allāh, *al-Naḥw wa-kutub al-tafsīr*, 3rd edn (2 vols, Benghazi: al-Dār al-Jamāhīriyya li°l-Nashr wa°l-Tawzī° wa°l-I°lān, 1399/1990).
- al-Sakkākī, *Miftāḥ al-°ulūm*, ed. Akram °Uthmān Yūsuf (Baghdad: Maṭba°at Dār al-Risāla, 1402/1982).

- Saleh, Walid A., *The Formation of the Classical Tafṣīr Tradition: The Qurʾān Commentary of al-Thaʿlabī* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).
- , ‘Marginalia and Peripheries: A Tunisian Historian and the History of Qurʾanic Exegesis’, *Numen* 58 (2011), pp. 284–313.
- , ‘The Introduction to Wāḥidī’s *al-Basīʿ*’ in Karen Bauer (ed.), *Aims, Methods and Contexts of Qurʾanic Exegesis (2nd/8th–9th/15th c.)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press and Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2013), pp. 67–100.
- Sanni, Amidu Olalekan, Review of Angela Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michel Marx (eds), *The Qurʾān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾanic Milieu* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2011) in *Journal of Islamic Studies* (2015) 16:3, pp. 305–310.
- Ṣaqr, Nabīl Aḥmad, *Manhaj al-imām al-Ṭāhir b. ʿĀshūr fī al-tafṣīr* ([Alexandria:] al-Dār al-Miṣriyya, 1422/2001).
- Schoeler, Gregor, ‘The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry’, *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5/6 (2010–2011), pp. 1–48.
- Sedgwick, Mark, *Muḥammad Abduh* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2010).
- Shahḥāta, ʿAbd Allāh Maḥmūd, *ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān* (Cairo: Dār Gharīb, 2002).
- al-Sharīf, Muḥammad Mūsā, *Sharḥ wa-taʿlīq ʿalā al-Muqaddimāt al-ʿashr min tafṣīr al-Tahrīr waʾl-tanwīr* (20 audio classes), <https://archive.org/details/kgaghb> [accessed 8 May 2017].
- al-Shāṭibī, Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, ed. Ḥasan Mashhūr Salmān (6 vols, al-Khubar, KSA: Dār Ibn ʿAffān, 1417/1997).
- al-Shinqīfī, Muḥammad al-Amīn, *Aḍwāʾ al-bayān fī idāḥ al-Qurʾān biʾl-Qurʾān* (9 vols, Mecca: Dār ʿIlm al-Fawāʿid, 1426/2005).
- Shukrī, ʿAfāf ʿAlī, *Baḥṭh ḥawla nuzūl al-Qurʾān ʿalā sabʿat aḥruf wa-baʿd maṭāʿin Jūldsīhīr [Goldziher]* (Kuwait: Jāmiʿat Kuwait, 1422/2001).
- al-Suyūfī, Jalāl al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Kamāl al-Dīn Abī Bakr, *Nawāhid al-abkār wa-shawāriḍ al-afkār [Ḥāshiyat Tafṣīr al-Bayḍāwī]* [from Sura 1 to Sura 9]. Ed. Aḥmad Ḥājj Muḥammad ʿUthmān [vol. 1], Muḥammad Kamāl ʿAlī [vol. 2], and Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī al-Durūbī [vol. 3]. Unpublished Ph.D. diss. (3 vols, Mecca: Jāmiʿat Umm al-Qurā, 1423–1425/2002–2004).
- al-Suyūfī, *Muʿtarak al-aqrān fī iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*, ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn (3 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1408/1988).
- , *al-Durr al-manthūr fī al-tafṣīr biʾl-maʿthūr*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (17 vols, Cairo: Markaz Hajar liʾl-Buḥūth, 1424/2003).
- , *Marasid al-mataliʿ fī tanasub al-maqatiʿ waʾl-mataliʿ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-ʿAskar (Riyadh: Dār al-Minhaj, 1426/2005).
- , *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, ed. Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Qurʾāniyya (7 vols, Medina: Muḥammaʿ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibāʿat al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf, 1426/2005).
- , *Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān wa-asrār al-tanzīl al-mawsūm Faṭḥ al-Jalīl liʾl-ʿabd al-dhalīl*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Qādir (Damascus: Dār al-Wathāʿiq, 2006).

- , *The Perfect Guide to the Sciences of the Qur'ān*, tr. Hamid Algar, Michael Schub, Ayman Abdel Haleem (Reading: Garnet Publishing 2011).
- Tabāna, Badawī, *Mu'jam al-balāghat al-ʿArabiyya*, 3rd edn (Jeddah: Dār al-Manāra; Riyadh: Dār al-Rifāʿī, 1408/1998).
- al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī et al. (26 vols, Cairo: Dār Hajar, 1422/2001).
- al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ mushkil al-āthār*, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnāʾūṭ (16 vols, Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risāla, 1415/1994).
- , *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, ed. Saʿd al-Dīn Ünal (2 vols, Istanbul: İSAM, 1418/1998).
- al-Ṭarḥūnī, Muḥammad b. Rizq, *al-Tafsīr waʾl-mufasssīrūn fī gharb Ifrīqiyyā* (2 vols, Dammam: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1426/2005).
- al-Ṭayyār, Musāʿid, *Mafhūm al-tafsīr waʾl-taʾwīl waʾl-istinbāt waʾl-tadabbur waʾl-mufasssīr*, 2nd edn (Riyadh: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1427/2006).
- Tetel Andersen, Julie, and Phillip M. Carter, *Languages in the World: How History, Culture, and Politics Shape Language* (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2016).
- al-Thaʿālibī, Abū Zayd ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Makhlūf, *Tafsīr al-Thaʿālibī al-musammā biʾl-Jawāhir al-ḥisān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAlī Muʿawwad, ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd, and ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Sinna (5 vols, Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī and Muʿassasat al-Tārīkh al-ʿArabī, 1418/1997).
- al-Thaʿālibī, *al-Iʿjāz waʾl-ḥijāz*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, 2nd edn (Damascus: Dār al-Bashāʾir, 1425/2004).
- al-Tirmidhī, [*Sunan.*] *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, and Ibrāhīm ʿAṭwah ʿAwaḍ, 2nd edn (5 vols, Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1398/1978).
- Ūsālim, Muḥammad al-Nadhīr, *al-Ikhtiyārāt al-ʿilmiyya liʾl-ʿallāma Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir b. ʿĀshūr min khilāl tafsīrihi* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2009).
- Versteegh, Cornelis H.M., *Arabic Grammar and Qurʾānic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1993).
- Vishanoff, David R., *The Formation of Islamic Hermeneutics: How Sunni Legal Theorists Imagined Revealed Law* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2011).
- al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb nuzūl al-Qurʾān*, ed. Māhir Yāsīn al-Faḥl (Riyadh: Dār al-Maymān, 1426/2005).
- Wahyudi MH, Jarot, 'Literary Interpretation of the Qurʾān: *Fawāṣil al-āyāt, qasam* and *istifhām*, Three Examples from Bint al-Shāṭi's *Tafsīr*', *Islamic Studies* 37:1 (1998), pp. 19–28.
- Wansbrough, John, *Qurānic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2004).
- al-Zahrānī, Mushrif b. Aḥmad, *Athar al-dilālāt al-lughawiyya fī al-tafsīr ʿinda al-Ṭāhir b. ʿĀshūr* (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Rayyān, 2009).

- al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl wa-ʿuyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-taʾwīl*, ed. ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd et al. (6 vols, Riyadh: Maktabat al-ʿUbaykān, 1418/1998).
- al-Zamalkānī, *al-Mujīd fī iʿjāz al-Qurʾān al-majīd*, ed. Khālid al-Mashhadānī (Amman: Dār ʿAmmār, 1426/2006).
- al-Zammarlī, al-Ṣādiq, *A ʿlām Tūnisiyyīn*, tr. Ḥamādī al-Sāḥilī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1986).
- al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 3rd edn (4 vols, Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1404/1984).
- al-Ziriklī, Khayr al-Dīn, *al-A ʿlām: qāmūs tarājīm li-ashhar al-rijāl waʾl-nisāʾ min al-ʿArab waʾl-mustaʿribīn waʾl-mustashriqīn*, 15th edn (8 vols, Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm liʾl-Malāyīn, 2002).
- Zubir, Badri Najib, *Balāghah as an Instrument of Qurʾān Interpretation: A Study of al-Kashshāf* (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2008).
- al-Zuhrī, *al-Nāsikh waʾl-mansūkh*, ed. Ḥātim Ṣāliḥ al-Ḍāmin, 3rd edn (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1418/1998).