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ORAL READING TRADITIONS AND SCRIPTURAL HERMENEUTICS: THE EXEGETICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PAUSAL SYSTEMS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AND THE QUR'ĀN

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Abstract

The oral reading traditions of the Hebrew Bible and the Qurʾān have a number of affinities. Recent literature shows that these parallels include orthoepic features, the pluriformity of the oral reading traditions, as well as the representation of non-standard oral traditions in written form. The present article takes this comparative effort one step forward. It explores how pauses influence the exegesis of the Hebrew Bible and the Qurʾān. That is, it examines the impact of the Masoretic pausal accent signs and the pausal suggestions in the Quranic *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* (pausing and beginning) literature on exegesis. Examining several case studies, the article points out parallels in the ways both reading traditions employ pauses in exegesis. Without denying the differences between the two systems, some of which are highlighted in the article, it is found that both seem to operate in conceptually similar ways.

1. Introduction[1]

Various parallels between the reading traditions of the Hebrew Bible and the Qurʾān have already been identified by Geoffrey Khan. These include the orthoepic features (measures for ensuring maximum

[1] *Author's note*: I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers and the editors of the *Journal of Semitic Studies* for their insightful suggestions, corrections, and comments. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the following scholars for kindly answering my queries: Basheer Hemyari, Benjamin Williams, Cressida Ryan, John Screnock, and Sebastian P. Brock. I will mention further debts at specific points in the article. The remaining defects are my responsibility alone. All translations in this article are my own unless stated otherwise. I would like to dedicate this article to Alison G. Salvesen.

clarity in the Tiberian reading tradition akin to the Quranic *taǧwīd*),[2] the pluriformity of the oral reading traditions (the *qere*, and the existence of the Tiberian, Babylonian, and Palestinian reading traditions on the one hand, and the *qirāʾāt*, Quranic variant readings, on the other),[3] the representation of non-standard oral traditions in written form (the Quranic codices deviating from ʿUṯmān's recension compared with the appearance of the oral *qere* in written form in some Qumran manuscripts),[4] as well as the impact of political developments in Quranic transmission on the Tiberian reading tradition (Ibn Muǧāhid's [d. 324/936] canonisation of the seven readings and the discontinuation of the Tiberian oral tradition).[5] This cultural exchange also involved matters of presentation—it has been advanced that the Jews borrowed the codex format of the Qurʾān (*muṣḥaf*) in their transition from scrolls to codices.[6] This article focuses on

[2] Geoffrey Khan, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew*, Volume I (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2020), 99–100. See also Geoffrey Khan, 'Orthoepy in the Tiberian Reading Tradition of the Hebrew Bible and Its Historical Roots in the Second Temple Period', *Vetus Testamentum* 68:3 (2018): 378–401.

[3] Khan, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew*, Volume I, 35–9; 53–4; 97. On this intersection, see Daniel J. Crowther, 'Qumrān and Qurʾān', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 43:1 (2018): 109–29; Haggai Ben-Shammai, '"The Qurʾān has been brought down in seven modes of articulation": on possible parallels (or antecedents) to an old Islamic tradition', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 49 (2020): 147–76. In this context, a potential Quranic parallel to the Masoretic *ketiv we-la qere* phenomenon (where a word is written but not read) has been briefly noted by Nicolai Sinai, 'Beyond the Cairo Edition: On the Study of Early Quranic Codices', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 140:1 (2020): 189–204, at 202. Also in this context, Marijn van Putten has recently suggested that in the same way the Masoretic Text can offer linguistic information about the Hebrew Bible, the Quranic consonantal text can be utilised to shed light on the *ʿarabiyyah* of the Qurʾān. See Marijn van Putten, *Quranic Arabic From its Hijazi Origins to its Classical Reading Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 9. For a study of the Masoretic variants, see Lazar Lipschütz, 'Kitāb al-Khilaf: The Book of the Ḥillufim Mishael Ben Uzziel's Treatise on the Differences Between Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali', *Textus* 4:1 (1964): 1–29. The standard text on *qirāʾāt* is Abū al-Ḫayr Ibn al-Ǧazarī, *an-Našr fī al-qirāʾāt al-ʿašr*, ed. Ayman Rušdī Suwayd, 5 vols. (Beirut, Istanbul: Dār al-Ġawṯānī, 2018).

[4] Khan, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew*, Volume I, 55–6.

[5] Ibid, 111–12. For a comprehensive study of Ibn Muǧāhid, see Shady Nasser, *The Second Canonization of the Qurʾān Ibn Mujāhid and the Founding of the Seven Readings* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

[6] Geoffrey Khan, *A Short Introduction to the Tiberian Masoretic Bible and its Reading Tradition* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012), 5–7. On similarities in orthography, see Geoffrey Khan, 'Standardisation and Variation in the Orthography

another area of parallel reading practices, namely, pauses and exegesis. The ensuing analysis demonstrates how the pausal systems influence the exegesis of the Hebrew Bible and the Qur'ān respectively.

That pausal accents affect the exegesis of the Hebrew Bible is already established.[7] Likewise, the value of recitational pauses for exegesis is known in the Muslim tradition through the discipline of *al-waqf wa-l-ibtidā'* (pausing and beginning).[8] In this light, the present article breaks no new ground in these respective disciplines, but rather contributes to the understanding of parallels. By juxtaposing traditions, this article highlights correspondences and discrepancies and finds that the two scriptural traditions operate in similar ways vis-à-vis the pausal systems and exegesis. This leads us to the following question: what is the purpose of this exercise in comparative semitic philology and comparative exegesis? Four reasons can be

of Hebrew Bible and Arabic Qur'ān Manuscripts', *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 5 (1990–1991): 53–8.

[7] For some studies, see Esra Shereshevsky, 'The Accents in Rashi's Commentary', *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 62:4 (1972): 277–87; Lea Himmelfarb, 'The Exegetical Role of the *Paseq*', *Sefarad* 58:2 (1998): 243–60; Michael Carasik, 'Exegetical Implications of The Masoretic Cantillation Marks in Ecclesiastes', *Hebrew Studies* 42 (2001): 145–65; Tobie Strauss Sherebrin, 'Biblical Accents: Relation to Exegetical Traditions', in Geoffrey Khan (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241_ehll_EHLL_COM_00000380, accessed on 21 August 2023; Boris Kleiner, 'Masoretic Accents and Phrasing in the Hebrew Bible Recitation: New Reflections', *Vetus Testamentum* 72:4–5 (2022): 650–75; Sung Jin Park, *The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents: Divisions and Exegetical Roles beyond Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 116–31. For the sake of completeness, I should mention that the value of accents in communicating the meaning of the Bible is also recognised in the Syriac tradition; see George Phillips, *A Letter by Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa, on Syriac Orthography, also a Tract by the Same Author, and a Discourse by Gregory Bar Hebraeus on Syriac Accents* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1869), 34–6; Johan M.V. Lundberg, 'Dots, Versification and Grammar: Re-evaluating the Grammatical Significance of Syriac Pausal Dots and Their Relationship to Verse Division', *Dead Sea Discoveries* 29:3 (2022): 366–87. It is also suggestive to consider the studies comparing Greek ekphonetic neumes—the musical notations used in Byzantium for reciting the Bible—with Masoretic accents, given that both have bearings on exegesis. See, for instance, Gudrun Engberg, 'Greek Ekphonetic Neumes and Masoretic Accents', in Miloš Velimirović (ed.), *Studies in Eastern Chant*, Volume I (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 37–49; E. J. Revell, 'Hebrew Accents and Greek Ekphonetic Neumes', in Miloš Velimirović (ed.), *Studies in Eastern Chant*, Volume IV (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 140–70.

[8] For a monograph length study, see Musā'id b. Sulaymān b. Nāṣir aṭ-Ṭayyār, *Wuqūf al-Qur'ān wa-aṯaruhā fī at-tafsīr: dirāsah naẓariyyah ma'a at-taṭbīq 'alā al-waqf al-lāzim wa-l-muta'ānīq wa-l-mamnū'* (Medina: Mağma' al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibā'at al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf, 1431 [2010]).

discerned. First, studying these traditions together may shed light on the question of borrowing. This article is a preliminary step toward understanding the similar mechanisms through which pauses function exegetically. Understanding this may allow us, in the future, to pursue a historical inquiry and answer the question of whether there was a point of contact and possible influence between these recitation traditions with respect to pauses and exegesis.[9] Secondly, and even if one brackets out the question of historical influence and cultural exchanges, this comparative work remains useful, for it shows us alternative ways of reading and interpreting Scriptures. This work contributes to the more general field of interpretation and can therefore appeal to anyone interested in the close reading of texts especially in oral settings.[10] Third, it is hoped that the present article will enhance our understanding of each tradition *individually* as well as our appreciation of the overall hermeneutical climate in the Near East. I say *individually* given that, to borrow the words of Reuven Firestone, '[s]tudies in comparative exegesis help to highlight and uncover textual or conceptual nuances that may be unknowable without reading across religious systems'.[11] Put differently, description through comparison in the study of religion sharpens our analytical tools and categories,[12] and therefore enhances people's understanding of their own traditions. I will give one concrete example to illustrate this. In explaining the origins of the *qere*, Khan writes: 'To understand the origin of the *qere* it is helpful to compare it to the phenomenon of

[9] On points of contact between the Tiberian, Syriac, and Arabic linguistic traditions—with a focus on the vocalisation systems—see Nick Posegay, *Points of Contact: The Shared Intellectual History of Vocalisation in Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2021). For Jewish interactions with the Qur'ān, see Magdalen M. Connolly and Nick Posegay, 'A Survey of Personal-Use Qur'an Manuscripts Based on Fragments from the Cairo Genizah', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 23:2 (2021): 1–40.

[10] This intersects with the area of 'modes of reception' and 'performative interpretation'. See, for example, Andrew Davies, 'Oratorio as Exegesis: The Use of the Book of Isaiah in Handel's *Messiah*', *Biblical Interpretation* 15:4–5 (2007): 464–84; Tala Jarjour, *Sense and Sadness: Syriac Chant in Aleppo* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); L. Edward Phillips, 'Liturgy as Performative Interpretation', in Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 271–81.

[11] Reuven Firestone, 'Patriarchy, Primogeniture, and Polemic in the Exegetical Traditions of Judaism and Islam', in Natalie B. Dohrmann and David Stern (eds), *Jewish Biblical Interpretation and Cultural Exchange: Comparative Exegesis in Context* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 108–23, at 123.

[12] See Oliver Freiberger, *Considering Comparison: A Method for Religious Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 33–6.

oral reading traditions of the Qurʾan known as *qirāʾāt*'.[13] Here, Khan elucidates a phenomenon related to the transmission of the Hebrew Bible by comparing it to a similar phenomenon in the history of the Qurʾān. The fourth and final justification for this comparison is that it can enrich the inter-faith discourse.

The trajectory of this article is as follows. I begin with a concise introduction into the system of accents that annotate the Hebrew Bible, and the Qurʾān's 'pausing and beginning' literature. I then reflect on comparative parameters and limitations and go on to analyse a number of case studies structured thematically. These will occupy the bulk of the article. Finally, the conclusion recapitulates my findings.

2. The System of Accents in the Hebrew Bible and the Qurʾān's *Waqf* and *Ibtidāʾ* Genre

The Tiberian Masoretic tradition contains various components intended to preserve the integrity of the Hebrew Bible one of which is the system of accent signs (*ṭᵉʿāmīm*).[14] These signs, added above and below the words, have a number of functions: they serve as cantillation marks for the purposes of musical chanting; they indicate the position of stress in a word; and they function exegetically in marking the syntax/meaning through the grouping of words and phrases—in other words, as punctuation.[15] In Gesenius' words, the latter category of usage shows 'the logical (syntactical) relation of single words to their immediate surroundings, and thus to the whole sentence'.[16]

[13] Geoffrey Khan, 'Continuities and Parallels in the Transmission of the Hebrew Bible in the Second Temple Period and in the Middle Ages', in Élodie Attia and Antony Perrot (eds), *The Hebrew Bible Manuscripts: A Millennium* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 408–38, at 413.

[14] Note that there are two systems of Tiberian *ṭᵉʿāmīm*; one for Psalms, Proverbs, and most of Job, and the other for the remaining books of the Hebrew Bible. See Daniel J. Crowther, 'Why Are There Two Systems of Tiberian Ṭeʿamim?', in Daniel J. Crowther, Aaron D. Hornkohl, and Geoffrey Khan (eds), *Studies in the Masoretic Tradition of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2022), 289–327.

[15] Israel Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, trans. and ed. E. J. Revell (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1980), 158; Khan, *A Short Introduction*, 37–41; Sung Jin Park, '"Pointing to the Accents in the Scroll": Functional Development of the Masoretic Accents in the Hebrew Bible', *Hebrew Studies* 55 (2014): 73–88; For more details, see Park, *The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents*.

[16] Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, rev. A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 58. In this context, Joseph Habib has recently

Correspondingly, the Muslim tradition developed graphic signs to mark pauses in the Qurʾān. However, these are seemingly later developments as they are generally absent from the earliest Qurʾān codices.[17] Yet, Muslims also developed a standalone discipline to mark when readers should pause (*al-waqf*) and when they should resume recitation (*al-ibtidāʾ*).[18]

argued that the great Jewish philosopher and exegete Saʿīd al-Fayyūmī (d. 942 CE)—hereafter, Saadya—*implicitly* referred to the accents and considered them as instrumental for clarifying obscurities. The suggestion that Saadya was referring to the accents, and underscoring their exegetical role, is important for understanding the function of the accents given that Saadya had direct access to the Tiberian Masoretes. See Joseph Habib, 'Does Saadya Refer to The Accents in His Introduction to The Pentateuch?', in Daniel J. Crowther, Aaron D. Hornkohl, and Geoffrey Khan (eds), *Studies in the Masoretic Tradition of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2022), 377–416. In addition, recent work has shown that the *ṭeʿāmīm* have ramifications beyond the grammar and syntax—they also convey *narrative information* that is necessary for understanding Biblical stories. See Benjamin Williams, '"Some Fanciful Midrash Explanation": *Derash* on The *Ṭeʿamim* in The Middle Ages and Early Modern Period', in Daniel J. Crowther, Aaron D. Hornkohl, and Geoffrey Khan (eds), *Studies in the Masoretic Tradition of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2022), 329–76.

[17] Note the absence of discussions pertaining to pausal marks in the following studies on Quranic manuscripts: Yasin Dutton, 'Red Dots, Green Dots, Yellow Dots and Blue: Some Reflections on the Vocalisation of Early Qur'anic Manuscripts: Part I', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 1:1 (1999): 115–40; Yasin Dutton, 'Red Dots, Green Dots, Yellow Dots and Blue: Some Reflections on the Vocalisation of Early Qur'anic Manuscripts: Part II', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 2:1 (2000): 1–24; Alain George, 'Coloured Dots and the Question of Regional Origins in Early Qur'ans (Part I)', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 17:1 (2015), 1–44; Alain George, 'Coloured Dots and the Question of Regional Origins in Early Qur'ans (Part II)', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 17:2 (2015), 75–102; Éléonore Cellard, 'The Ṣanʿāʾ Palimpsest: Materializing the Codices', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 80:1 (2021): 1–30. Yet, it is worth mentioning in this regard that Eléonore Cellard is of the opinion that pausal signs are represented in some early manuscripts—such as Codex Amrensis 1—with the same symbols that are used for verse division (email correspondence on 13 March 2023). For Codex Amrensis 1, see Éléonore Cellard, *Codex Amrensis 1* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Éléonore Cellard, 'The Written Transmission of the Qurʾan during Umayyad Times Contextualising the Codex Amrensis 1', in Andrew Marsham (ed.), *The Umayyad World* (London: Routledge, 2021), 438–63. The topic of pausal signs in early Qurʾān manuscripts will require a separate detailed study.

[18] The main contributions to this genre include Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim b. Baššār al-Anbārī, *Kitāb Īḍāḥ al-waqf wa-l-ibtidāʾ fī Kitāb Allāh ʿazza wa-ǧall*, ed. Muḥyī ad-Dīn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Ramaḍān, 2 vols. (Damascus: Maǧmaʿ al-Luġah al-ʿArabiyyah bi-Dimašq, 1971); Abū Ǧaʿfar Aḥmad b. Muḥammad an-Naḥḥās, *al-Qaṭʿ wa-l-iʾtināf*, ed. ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Maṭrūdī (Riyadh: Dār ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1992); Abū ʿAmr ʿUṯmān b. Saʿīd ad-Dānī, *al-Muktafā fī al-waqf*

With regard to their historical depth, it is believed that the Masoretic accent signs extend as far back as the Second Temple Period.[19] As for the Muslim tradition of 'pausing and beginning' in the Qurʾān, the foremost authority on *qirāʾāt*, Ibn al-Ǧazarī (d. 833/1429), noted that the first book in the science of *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* was authored by Šaybah b. Niṣāḥ (d. circa 130/747).[20] This does not preclude the possibility that the phenomenon may well have been in circulation as an oral tradition before being committed to writing. In all cases, one of the earliest books to reach us today belongs to the third/ninth century, namely, *al-Waqf wa-l-ibtidāʾ fī Kitāb Allāh ʿazza wa-ǧall* composed by Abū Ǧaʿfar Muḥammad b. Saʿdān aḍ-Ḍarīr al-Kūfī (d. 231/845).[21] Where and how this genre originated remains uncertain, but in light of these dating considerations, there is a possibility that the Hebrew Bible cantillation system influenced the development of the Qurʾān's pausal system. However, this tentative suggestion requires evidence, which is beyond the purview of the present article.

The Tiberian diacritical accents that annotate the Hebrew Bible are of two types: disjunctive and conjunctive. Disjunctive accents mark phrasal divisions, that is, they separate word-segments and

wa-l-ibtidā, ed. Yūsuf ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Marʿašlī (Beirut: Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 1987); Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ṭayfūr as-Saǧāwindī, *ʿIlal al-wuqūf*, ed. Muḥammad al-ʿĪdī, 3 vols. (Riyadh: Maktabat ar-Rušd Nāširūn, 2006); Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Ušmūnī, *Manār al-hudā fī bayān al-waqf wa-l-ibtidā* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1973). Note the absence of the final *hamzah* /ʾ/ of *wa-l-ibtidā* in the titles of *al-Muktafā* and *Manār al-hudā* for the purposes of rhyme with *al-Muktafā* and *al-hudā* respectively. For brief, yet useful, comments on pausing and verse divisions in the performance of the Qurʾān, see Angelika Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity*, trans. Samuel Wilder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 156–58.

[19] Khan, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew*, Volume I, 56–85; E. John Revell, 'The oldest evidence for the Hebrew accent system', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 54 (1971): 214–22; Aaron D. Hornkohl, *The Historical Depth of the Tiberian Reading Tradition of Biblical Hebrew* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2023).

[20] Šams ad-Dīn Abū al-Ḫayr Muḥammad Ibn al-Ǧazarī, *Ġāyat an-nihāyah fī ṭabaqāt al-qurrāʾ*, (eds) Gotthelf Bergsträsser and Otto Pretzl, 2 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ḫānǧī, 1932–1933), I: 330.

[21] Abū Ǧaʿfar Muḥammad b. Saʿdān aḍ-Ḍarīr al-Kūfī, *al-Waqf wa-l-ibtidāʾ fī Kitāb Allāh ʿazza wa-ǧall*, ed. Muḥammad Ḫalīl az-Zarrūq (Dubai: Markaz Ǧumʿah al-Māǧid li-ṯ-Ṯaqāfah wa-t-Turāṯ, 2002). On Ibn Saʿdān, see Ibn al-Ǧazarī, *Ġāyat an-nihāyah*, II: 143. My assessment that Ibn Saʿdān's work is one of the earliest books on *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* is also shared by ʿĀdil as-Sunayd, *al-Iḫtilāf fī wuqūf al-Qurʾān al-karīm* (Riyadh: Kursī al-Qurʾān al-Karīm wa-ʿUlūmih Ǧāmiʿat al-Malik Suʿūd, 1436 [2014]), 105.

require readers to apply pauses. Conjunctive accents control the words located *between* the disjunctives, and serve the function of connecting words together.[22] As for the Qurʾān, there are different systems for marking pauses—there is no one universally accepted classification.[23] One way divides the pauses into three basic types: *tāmm* (complete), *ḥasan* (good), and *qabīḥ* (inappropriate/ugly). The first category is when the segment is semantically independent—although, of course, it cannot be absolutely independent—of what precedes and what follows. In this case, it is preferred that the reciters pause on this self-contained segment and begin, as a new sentence, the phrase that follows. The *ḥasan* category is where the *following* phrase has some semantic connection with the segment being recited. Thus, the reciters can pause on the recited segment, but when resuming they are expected to connect both the *current* word segment and what follows it. The *qabīḥ* category is one where the reciters are discouraged from pausing—they should continue until they find a meaningful segment to stop on.[24] In the terminology of Hebrew accents, it could be said that the *tāmm* is disjunctive; the *ḥasan* is a hybrid form, it is disjunctive in one aspect and conjunctive in another; and the *qabīḥ* has zero pausal value, so it lies within the conjunctive domain.

As remarked above, there are three functions for the Masoretic cantillation signs: marking musical notation, word-stress, and syntax. In this comparative article, I shall only focus on the third type: syntax-related accents. This is because the codices and print editions of the Qurʾān do not contain any marks for musical chanting,[25] so no

[22] Khan, *A Short Introduction*, 37; Park, *The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents*, 2–3; Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 29.

[23] The fact that there is no uniform classification for the Quranic *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* reminds us of the pluriformity of the Hebrew Bible accents, for they are represented by three different traditions: the Tiberian, the Babylonian, and the Palestinian systems. On the Babylonian accents, see Ronit Shoshany, 'Biblical Accents: Babylonian', in Geoffrey Khan (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241_ehll_EHLL_SIM_000518, accessed on 23 August 2023. For the Palestinian accentuation, see E. J. Revell, *Biblical Texts with Palestinian Pointing and Their Accents* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977).

[24] See Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh az-Zarkašī, *al-Burhān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 4 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat Dār at-Turāṯ, n.d.), I: 342–75; Ǧalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, 7 vols. (Medina: Maǧmaʿ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibāʿat al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf, 1426 [2005]), II: 539–75.

[25] Perhaps the fact that there is no 'prescriptive' musicalisation in Quranic recitation relates to the existence of some opposition in the Muslim tradition to assimilating the Qurʾān to music. See briefly, Earle Waugh, *The Munshidīn of Egypt: Their*

comparison with the Hebrew Bible will be feasible in this aspect. Likewise, no marks for stress are to be found in material evidence, that is, codices and print editions. Furthermore, Quranic sciences in general—that is, including *tafsīr*, *taǧwīd*, and classical Quranic grammatical treatises—do not seem to discuss stress in any detail.[26] In this context, and more generally, some Arabists have argued that Classical Arabic contained no stress at all.[27] The Karaite grammarian Abū al-Faraǧ Hārūn (active in the first half of the 11th century) was well aware of this crucial difference between the Hebrew and Muslim traditions of recitation when he wrote:

> Surely you see that Muslims, whether they be two or more, cannot read with the same degree of coordination as the Jews read, since each one has his own way [of reading] (**לאן לכל ואחד מנהם טריקה** [لأن لكل واحد منهم طريقه]). One emphasises [lit. 'makes heavy'] a place that another

World and Their Song (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 24–6. For a collection of quotes from early and later scholars on this matter, see Ayman Rušdī Suwayd, *al-Bayān li-ḥukm qirāʾat al-Qurʾān al-karīm bi-l-alḥān* (Jeddah: al-Ǧamāʿah al-Ḫayriyyah li-Taḥfīẓ al-Qurʾān al-Karīm, 1991). See also in this context Lois Ibsen al Faruqi, 'The Cantillation of the Qurʾān', *Asian Music* 19:1 (1987): 2–25; and more recently Peter McMurray, 'Qur'an Alphabetics and the Timbre of Recitation', in Emily I. Dolan and Alexander Rehding (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Timbre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 93–120.

[26] On the absence of accent prescriptions in *taǧwīd* manuals, see Geoffrey Khan, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew*, Volume II (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2020), 5. There are, however, non-systematic treatments in the classical manuals of *taǧwīd* and *qirāʾāt* concerning the application of some form of stress occasionally. The topic of stress in the *taǧwīd* tradition has been studied with some detail in an insightful study by ʿAlī b. Saʿd al-Ġāmidī al-Makkī, 'an-Nabr fī qirāʾat al-Qurʾān al-mubīn 'inda al-mutaqaddimīn wa-l-mutaʾaḫḫirīn wa-l-muʿāṣirīn' (freely accessible online). He finds that these accents do not have chains of transmission going back to the Prophet, and that they were not known to the earliest generations of reciters—they were later developments. One example of such stresses is the application of an accent to distinguish the different types of the particle *mā* (for instance, whether it is negational or a relative pronoun). Although not an exact analogy, this reminds us of the gemination of consonants to distinguish between homophones in Biblical Hebrew. See on this point Geoffrey Khan, 'How was the *dageš* in Biblical Hebrew **בָּתִּים** Pronounced and Why is it There?', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 63:2 (2018): 323–51, at 341. For a recent, though brief, comparison between the prosody of the Hebrew Bible and the Qurʾān, see Boris Kleiner, 'Sound of Quantitative Metres in Medieval Hebrew Poetry', *Journal of Semitic Studies* [fgad017, advance article] (2023): 1–25, at 16–19; 21.

[27] Harris Birkeland, *Stress Patterns in Arabic* (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1954). See also Dimitry Frolov, *Classical Arabic Verse: History and Theory of ʿArūḍ* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 57–61.

softens (**פהדא יתקל מוצע יכפפה גירה** [فهذا يثقل موضع يخففه غيره]). One reads melodically a place that another reads flat.[28]

To clarify—and this is an important methodological caveat—the comparison in this article is *not* between neatly identical categories, that is, it is not between the accent marks in the Masoretic Text and pausal marks in Qurʾān codices. Rather, it is between the Masoretic accent marks and what the *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* literature proposes to be pausal locations in Quranic recitation. This is because, as remarked above, *early* Qurʾān codices do not *usually* contain pausal accent marks. The *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* literature is naturally not the equivalent of the Masoretic Text, but rather corresponds to the Masoretic notes—such as *Masora Parva* and *Masora Magna*—and more precisely to the independent Tiberian Masoretic compilations such as *Oḳlah we-Oḳlah*.[29] Given this caveat, it should be understood that I am making a *conceptual* comparison, that is, I compare how divisions enhance exegesis in both traditions irrespective of where those divisions are prescribed. I will, however, consider some of the accent sigla in the print editions of the Qurʾān used today. In the remaining parts of the article, I will examine closely how both traditions resemble each other in terms of the application of pausal signs as interpretive tools.

3. Case Studies

I have attempted to group case studies, from both traditions, according to similarities in the use of pauses. Although the cases are organised into generic sections to enable comparison at a higher abstract level, I have also tried to choose some examples that show greater resemblance in terms of specific content. This, I hope, will enable us to better observe how the Tiberian and Quranic traditions converge in this form of exegetical creativity.

[28] Khan, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew*, Volume II, 34–5. I have slightly deviated from Khan's translation and transcribed some of the Judaeo-Arabic into the Arabic script. I transcribed موضع without *tanwīn*—the accusative marker—in following the Judaeo-Arabic.

[29] See Israel Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, 128–31. For an edition, see Fernando Díaz Esteban, *Sefer ʾOklah Wĕ-ʾOklah: Colección de Listas de Palabras Destinadas a Conservar la Integridad del Texto Hebreo de la Biblia entre los Judios de la Edad Media* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1975).

3.1 Resolving Syntactical Ambiguity

3.1.1 Identifying the Subject of a Verb

In passages which can be read in more than one way, because of an inherent syntactical ambiguity, pauses can be used to identify what the Masoretes and scholars of the Qurʾān understand to be the correct meaning. An example from the Hebrew Bible can be found in Genesis 24:34 (presented first without the accents): וַיֹּאמַר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אָנֹכִי.[30] Syntactically, this short verse can be understood in three different ways, with varying levels of plausibility: 'And he said: "I am Abraham's servant"'; 'And a servant said: "I am Abraham"'; 'And a servant of Abraham said: "[It is] I"'.[31] Perhaps relying on the same *Vorlage*, the Septuagint follows the syntax of the Masoretic Text closely: Καὶ εἶπεν Παῖς Αβρααμ ἐγώ εἰμι, translating to 'And he said, "I am Abraham's servant"'. Even if not compelling contextually, the Septuagint can also yield two additional readings: 'And a servant said: "I am Abraham"'; 'And a servant of Abraham said: "I am"'.[32] The Peshiṭta adjusts the structure to: ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܥܒܕ ܕܐܒܪܗܡ.[33] By delaying the proper noun (*abrohom* [I apply West Syriac vowels throughout]) and inserting the particle ܕ /d/, 'of', to indicate the construct binding, it reduces the ambiguity. Rather than three options, we are left with: 'And he said: "I am Abraham's servant"'.[34]

[30] The Masoretic Text is from *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, (eds) K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1977).

[31] Park, *The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents*, 117–18; Joshua R. Jacobson, *Chanting the Hebrew Bible: The Art of Cantillation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 22.

[32] The Septuagint is cited according to *Septuaginta: id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes Editio altera*, (eds) A. Rahlfs and R. Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006). John William Wevers notes that another Septuagint witness reorders the servant's phrase to παις ειμι εγω του αβρααμ. See John William Wevers, *Genesis Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum,* Volume I (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1974), 231.

[33] For the Peshiṭta text, I rely on the Leiden edition, accessible from *Peshitta Online*, (eds) Bas Ter Haar Romeny and Wido Th. van Peursen. Leiden: Brill, 2020. Available at: https://scholarlyeditions.brill.com/peso/, accessed on 16 July 2022.

[34] I am grateful to an editor of the *Journal of Semitic Studies* for pointing to me that these changes may not have been intended to reduce the ambiguity of the Hebrew text, but were rather motivated by different Syriac grammatical preferences regarding genitive constructions and verbless clauses. On the Peshiṭta Genesis and its translation technique, see R. B. ter Haar Romeny, 'Techniques of Translation and Transmission in the Earliest Text Forms of the Syriac Version of Genesis', in

This is confirmed by the punctuation mark—a one-point grapheme, representing a period—in the seventh-century Codex Ambrosianus (MS 7a1), the basis of the Leiden edition of the Peshiṭta.[35] Saadya's Judaeo-Arabic *tafsīr* clearly chooses the first interpretation: **קאל אנא עבד אברהים** (قال أنا عبد إبراهيم), 'He said: "I am Abraham's servant"'.[36]

Now, let us go back to the Masoretic Text. Supplying the accentual marks, it reads thus: **וַיֹּאמֶר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אָנֹכִי׃**. The main point here is the disjunctive accent, the *aṯnāḥ*, which separates *way-yōmar* from the rest of the sentence and thus clarifies that *ʿe͏̱ḇe͏̱ḏ* is not the subject of the verb. Next is the conjunctive *mēr͏ᵉk͏̱ā* which connects *ʿe͏̱ḇe͏̱ḏ* to *a͏̱ḇrāhām*. The latter is punctuated with the disjunctive *ṭiṗḥā* isolating *ʿe͏̱ḇe͏̱ḏ a͏̱ḇrāhām* as one smaller *inner* unit. Finally, the *soṗ pāsūq* and the *sillūq*—both disjunctives—mark the ending of the verse. The result is that the verse reads: 'And he said: "I am Abraham's servant"'—in agreement with the construal of the Peshiṭta translator(s).[37]

P.B. Dirksen and A. van der Kooij (eds), *The Peshitta as a Translation: Papers Read at the II Peshitta Symposium Held at Leiden 19–21 August 1993* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 177–85; Jerome A. Lund, 'Genesis in Syriac', in Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen (eds), *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 537–60.

[35] See folio 7r, column 3, line 11 of Codex Ambrosianus in the facsimile edition of Antonio Maria Ceriani, *Translatio Syra Pescitto Veteris Testamenti Ex Codice Ambrosiano Sec. Fere VI Photolithographice Edita Curante Et Adnotante* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1883), 13. On this punctuation, see George Anton Kiraz, *Tūrrāṣ Mamllā: A Grammar of the Syriac Language: Orthography*, Volume I (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012), 115. It should be noted, moreover, that the apparatus of the Leiden edition records that manuscript 12b2 has a variant reading ܕܥܒܕ (*d-ʿaḇdo*). The ܕ augment introduces direct speech and, in this way, attempts to precisely locate the subject. On this function of the ܕ particle, see Theodor Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1904), 300.

[36] J. Derenbourg, *Oeuvres Completes de R. Saadia Ben Iosef Al-Fayyoûmî: Version Arabe du Pentateuque*, Volume I (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1893), 36. Despite some issues with this edition, it is the best we have until the critical edition is published. See Eliezer Schlossberg, 'Towards a Critical Edition of the Translation of the Torah by Rav Saadia Gaon', *Judaica: Beiträge zum Verstehen des Judentums* 67 (2011): 129–45.

[37] An anonymous reviewer for the *Journal of Semitic Studies* noted that the occurrence of the minor pausal form *way-yōmar,* rather than the contextual *way-yōmer,* removes the potential ambiguity in this case. See, briefly, Christo H.J. van der Merwe, Jacobus A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 111. For more details, see Joshua Blau, 'On Pausal Lengthening, Pausal Stress Shift, Philippi's Law and Rule Ordering in

A similar process for specifying the identity of the speaker is observed in the Quranic literature on pausing and beginning in a verse on Abraham and Lot. Q. 29:26 states: فآمن له لوط وقال إني مهاجر إلى ربي. Literally, the verse reads: 'Thereupon, Lot believed him, and he said, "I will flee to my Lord"'.[38] The question here concerns the subject of the third-person masculine singular perfect verb *qāla*—is it Abraham (as also supported by the context) or Lot? Grammatically, both options are viable, and therefore the Qur'ān commentarial tradition is split on this matter, though it seems that the majority opinion is that the subject is Abraham, because he is the one who migrated.[39] The earliest books of *waqf* and *ibtidā'* available to us either do not comment on this verse or support the majority opinion—that Abraham is the subject. The former is represented by al-Anbārī (d. 328/940) and Abū ʿAmr ad-Dānī (d. 444/1053).[40] The latter approach is found in the work of an-Naḥḥās (d. 338/949) who writes that the pause on *fa-āmana lahū lūṭ* is a 'sufficient pause' (*qaṭʿun kāfin*), meaning, as I have understood him, that it is appropriate to pause here (i.e., on *lūṭ*) and then resume with the following word (i.e., *wa-qāla*). He then explains that this is based on the opinion holding that it was Abraham who migrated.[41] A similar pause is found in al-Ušmūnī's (d. circa 1100/1688) *Manār al-hudā*, wherein it is described as appropriate (*ṣāliḥ*).[42] According to al-Ušmūnī's system, which is explained in the introduction to his book, this type of

Biblical Hebrew', *Hebrew Annual Review* 5 (1981): 1–13. I think, however, that this does not eliminate the ambiguity altogether and, thereby, the accents are required.

[38] Unless stated otherwise, the text of the Qur'ān used in this article is that of the Ḥafṣ (d. 180/796) *ʿan* ʿĀṣim (d. 127/744) reading according to the Kufan verse system. The translations of the Qur'ān are from M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an: A New Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), with occasional changes.

[39] See Ibn Ǧarīr aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin at-Turkī, 26 vols. (Riyadh: Dār ʿĀlam al-Kutub li-ṭ-Ṭibāʿah wa-n-Našr wa-t-Tawzīʿ, 2003), XVIII: 283–5; Ǧār Allāh Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar az-Zamaḫšarī, *al-Kaššāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq at-tanzīl wa-ʿuyūn al-aqāwīl fī wuǧūh at-taʾwīl*, ed. Ḫalīl Šīḥā (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 2009), 818; Faḫr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ġayb* (*at-Tafsīr al-kabīr*), 32 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1401 [1981]), XXV: 56; Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*, (eds) Zuhayr Ǧuʿayd *et al.*, 11 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2010), VIII: 352; Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-maʿānī fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm wa-s-sabʿ al-maṯānī*, 30 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ at-Turāṯ al-ʿArabī, n.d.), XX: 152.

[40] Al-Anbārī, *Kitāb Īḍāḥ al-waqf wa-l-ibtidāʾ*, II: 827; ad-Dānī, *al-Muktafā fī al-waqf wa-l-ibtidā*, 443–4.

[41] An-Naḥḥās, *al-Qaṭʿ wa-l-iʾtināf*, 522.

[42] Al-Ušmūnī, *Manār al-hudā*, 296.

pause is permissible—the reciter is given the discretion to choose whether to pause or to continue (*yaǧūzu l-waqfu ʿalayhi wa-tarkuh*). This is due to the existence of competing semantic considerations.[43]

It will quickly become clear from examining some early Qurʾān manuscripts that pausal marks are generally lacking.[44] Furthermore, some Qurʾān manuscripts that are roughly contemporaneous to the oldest *complete* Masoretic manuscript, the early eleventh-century Codex Leningradensis,[45] do not show signs of pausal accent marks either.[46] The case is different in the print editions of the Qurʾān. For example, the 1924 Cairo edition agrees with the *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* literature quoted above and inserts a graphic pausal mark above *lūṭ*, a small *mīm* (لوطۢ). According to the definitions given by the editorial committee of this edition, in an appendix, this siglum indicates a compulsory pause (*ʿalāmatu l-waqfi l-lāzim*); the reader *must* pause here.[47] Another widespread edition, the Medina *muṣḥaf*, replicates the same pausal mark.[48]

To summarize, the Quranic reading tradition, in a manner similar to the Masoretic reading tradition, applies a pause to identify more

[43] Ibid, 12–13.

[44] See, for example, Kairo, al-Maktaba al-Markaziyya li-l-Maḫṭūṭāt al-Islāmiyya, Großer Korankodex [dated tentatively: 700 CE]; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Or. 6814 [dated tentatively: 680–798 CE]; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Petermann I 38 (Ahlwardt 339) [dated tentatively: 750–900 CE]; and Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Is. 1615 I [dated tentatively: 750 CE]. I have accessed these manuscripts in their digitised form, and derived the dating information, from the Corpus Coranicum website. Available at: https://corpuscoranicum.de/en, accessed on 17 July 2022 (the names of the manuscripts and their transliterations follow the Corpus Coranicum website).

[45] Yosef Ofer, 'St. Petersburg I Firkovitch B19a Manuscript of the Hebrew Bible', in Geoffrey Khan (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241_ehll_EHLL_COM_00000614, accessed on 19 July 2022.

[46] This is the case of, for example, Doha, Qatar National Library, HC.MS.00715 [tentatively dated: 1000–1200 CE].

[47] *Al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf* (Cairo: Maṣlaḥat al-Misāḥah, 1342 [1924]), 524; n (ن). For a brief history of the Cairo edition with some critical comments, see ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Qāḍī, *Tārīḫ al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ǧundī, n.d.), 60–6.

[48] *Muṣḥaf al-Madīnah an-Nabawiyyah* (Medina: Maǧmaʿ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibāʿat al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf, 1417 [1996]), 399; y (ي). The Medina Ḥafṣ *muṣḥaf* has been published in more than one edition. The differences between the editions include the pausal marks. In this article, I draw on the first edition, printed on an yearly basis between 1405/1984 and 1421/2000. On the process of publishing this edition, see ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Qāriʾ, *at-Taqrīr al-ʿilmī ʿan Muṣḥaf al-Madīnah an-Nabawiyyah* (Medina: Maǧmaʿ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibāʿat al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf, 1406 [1986]).

precisely the subject of a verb. I am not suggesting, however, that the two examples are completely identical—in the case of the Masoretic Text the pause occurs after 'and he said', while in the case of the Qur'ān it occurs before 'and he said'. Rather, my point is that they are similar in that they mark the subject of the verb.

3.1.2 Identifying the Referent of a Pronoun

Accents also help to identify the referents of pronouns. The following passages illustrate this process. Let us begin with Ecclesiastes 1:5, וְזָרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וּבָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְאֶל־מְקוֹמוֹ שׁוֹאֵף זוֹרֵחַ הוּא שָׁם׃.[49] The *Revised Version* translates to 'The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he ariseth', and the *Jewish Study Bible* renders as, 'The sun rises, and the sun sets—And glides back to where it rises'.[50] The divisions marked by the accent signs seem to structure the phrase as follows (and I will focus on the disjunctives). First, we notice the placement of the major break, *aṯnāḥ*, on the second occurrence of the word for sun, *haš-šāmęš*. This produces the following segment: וְזָרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וּבָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, 'and the sun has risen, and the sun has gone down'.[51] Within this segment is another disjunctive, the *ṭipḥā*, on the first occurrence of the word for sun. However, because the *aṯnāḥ* is higher in the accentual hierarchy, it governs a larger domain—the *ṭipḥā* represents a smaller domain *within* the constituency of the *aṯnāḥ*.[52]

Moving on to the next clause, we meet a *little zāqēp̄* on *mᵉqômô*. It creates the following unit: וְאֶל־מְקוֹמוֹ. This punctuation, the *little zāqēp̄*, separates the unit which literally reads 'and to his place' from

[49] See the discussion and commentary in Carasik, 'Exegetical Implications of The Masoretic Cantillation Marks in Ecclesiastes', 147–8; Choon-Leong Seow, *Ecclesiastes: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 107; James L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press LTD, 1988), 63–4; Robert D. Holmstedt, John A. Cook, and Phillip S. Marshall, *Qoheleth: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017), 56–7.

[50] *The Holy Bible* (Oxford: The University Press, 1886), 494; Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (eds), *The Jewish Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1602.

[51] Note that I have translated both verbs as perfect verbs, although it is possible to render them into participles, as in the above translations. See on this point Stuart Weeks, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ecclesiastes: Introduction and Commentary on Ecclesiastes 1.1–5.6* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2020), 282–3.

[52] On this hierarchy, see Park, *The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents*, 10–13.

the remaining parts of the verse. This has led to an exegetical complication. Perhaps the more natural syntax is to connect this phrase with what follows it, so it bears the meaning of: 'and hastens to its place …'.[53] But the Masoretic divider—the accent—creates a disconnection. The Septuagint reads καὶ εἰς τὸν τόπον αὐτοῦ ἕλκει·, 'and draws along to its place'. We also notice that the Septuagint's verse division does not coincide with the Masoretic Text. The former places the verse divider earlier; the unit ἀνατέλλων αὐτὸς ἐκεῖ (which corresponds to זוֹרֵחַ הִוא שָׁם) is shifted to the beginning of verse 6. If we are to rely on the verse divisions, this might be signalling that the Septuagint relocates the accentual division (i.e., shifting it from וְאֶל־ מְקוֹמוֹ to שׁוֹאֵף). Perhaps trying to escape this problem, the Peshiṭta eliminates the pronoun altogether reading: ܘܠܬܪ ܕܙܪܚ (*w-la-ṯar d-ḏonaḥ*), 'and to the place where it rises'.[54] The Leiden Peshiṭta apparatus does not record any variant readings. How, then, are we to explain the Masoretic placement of a divider on *mᵉqômô*? Carasik has suggested that it was triggered by a desire to indicate that the third-person suffix refers to God, not to the sun, that is, to a place of God's

[53] The word for sun in Biblical Hebrew, *šęmęš*, vacillates between the feminine and masculine, and so the masculine pronoun in וְאֶל־מְקוֹמוֹ can refer to the sun. See Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. M.E.J. Richardson, 5 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1994), IV: 1589–90; Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, María Ángeles Gallego, and Geoffrey Khan, *The Karaite Tradition of Hebrew Grammatical Thought in its Classical Form: A Critical Edition and English Translation of al-Kitāb al-Kāfī fī al-Luġa al-ʿIbrāniyya by ʾAbū al-Faraj Hārūn ibn al-Faraj*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2017), II: 978–9; 986–7; James T. Robinson, *Asceticism, Eschatology, Opposition to Philosophy: The Arabic Translation and Commentary of Salmon Ben Yeroham on Qohelet (Ecclesiastes)* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 198–9.

[54] I pointed ܕܢܚ as a participle in following the Mosul Peshiṭta. See Clemens Joseph David (ed.), *The Syriac Bible According to the Mosul Edition*, 3 vols. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010), II: 166 (ܡܨܥܐ). Also see *Proverbs, Qoheleth and Song of Songs According to the Syriac Peshitta Version with English Translation*, trans. Robert Owens, (eds) George Kiraz and Joseph Bali (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2022), 164. However, The Leiden Peshiṭta contains no dot above or below the word, so it is difficult to discern whether it is a perfect, *dnaḥ*, or a participle, *donaḥ*. I am grateful to an editor of the *Journal of Semitic Studies* for helping me think about this point. Also note that I did not represent the *olaph*, /ʾ/, in transliteration because it is unpronounced—according to the West Syriac tradition, when the voweled *olaph* follows an unvoweled consonant, the *olaph* quiesces and its vowel is shifted to the preceding consonant. See on the pronunciation of the *olaph*, Stefanie Rudolf and Michael Waltisberg, 'Phonologie und Transkription des Syrischen', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 170:1 (2020): 19–46, at 25–6.

choosing—the sun is going to His place.[55] In summary, the accent possibly signals the change of referent.

A similar pronominal shift—again to God—is marked by a pause in the Quranic *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* literature concerning Q. 48:9, لتؤمنوا بالله ورسوله وتعزروه وتوقروه وتسبحوه بكرة وأصيلا 'so that you may believe in God and His Messenger, support Him, honour Him, and praise Him morning and evening'. The exegetical literature raises a question about the referents of the third-person singular masculine object-pronouns in the following three plural prefix-conjugation subjunctives, 'support Him, honour Him, and praise Him'—whether to posit that they are *all* referring to God, or to take the first two (i.e., the pronouns in *wa-tuʿazzirūhu* and *wa-tuwaqqirūhu*) as pertaining to the Prophet and the third (i.e., the pronoun in *wa-tusabbiḥūhu*) as a reference to God.[56] The underlying motivation for this question in the commentary tradition seems to be the idea that praising, *tasbīḥ*, is exclusively reserved for God. Commenting on this, aṭ-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) writes that the object-pronoun, the *hāʾ*, in *wa-tusabbiḥūhu* refers only to God not the Prophet (*min ḏikri Llāhi waḥdahū dūna r-Rasūl*). He also cites a non-canonical *qirāʾah*, variant, that substitutes the pronoun with the name of God: *wa-yusabbiḥū Llāha* (in the third-person rather than the second-person).[57]

What concerns us most for the purposes of this article is that this exegesis did not go unnoticed in the *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* literature. An-Naḥḥās mentions an opinion holding that the pause on *wa-tuwaqqirūhu* is complete, *tamām* (and note how the terminology switches between *tāmm* and *tamām* in different works). This means that the reciter then begins with *wa-tusabbiḥūhu* to indicate the pronominal shift.[58] In a similar manner, Abū ʿAmr ad-Dānī advances

[55] Carasik, 'Exegetical Implications of The Masoretic Cantillation Marks in Ecclesiastes', 148.

[56] Az-Zamaḫšarī, *al-Kaššāf*, 1025; ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Zād al-masīr fī ʿilm at-tafsīr*, ed. Zuhayr aš-Šāwīš, 9 vols. (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī and Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2002), VII: 427; al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-maʿānī*, XXVI: 96.

[57] Ibn Ǧarīr aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-bayān*, XXI: 253.

[58] An-Naḥḥās, *al-Qaṭʿ wa-l-iʾtināf*, 670. Before him, however, al-Anbārī wrote that the pause on *wa-tuwaqqirūhu* is not complete (*ġayru tāmm*) because the following verb, *wa-tusabbiḥūhu*, is co-ordinated with it (*nasaqun ʿalayh*). Nonetheless, he notes that praising can only be to God. See al-Anbārī, *Kitāb Īḍāḥ al-waqf wa-l-ibtidāʾ*, II: 900–1. I think he is trying to say that the pause on *wa-tuwaqqirūhu* is not complete because it is grammatically co-ordinated with the verb that follows it, but that should not be an issue because, even if the reciter connects them, it is semantically apparent that praising only belongs to God. In other words, the pause is redundant.

that there is a sufficient pause (*kāfin*) on *wa-tuwaqqirūhu*, writing that what comes after this verb relates to God because praising can only be attached to God (*wa-mā baʿdahū li-Llāhi taʿālā iḏ-i t-tasbīḥu lā yakūnu illā li-Llāhi ʿazza wa-ǧall*).[59] According to this approach, the unit is divided as follows so as to indicate that the suffixed pronoun in the final verb of the sequence refers to God rather than the Prophet: وتعزروه وتوقروه followed by وتسبحوه بكرة وأصيلا. References to this pause are absent in early Qurʾān codices,[60] as well as the print editions of Cairo (1924) and Medina.[61] However, it appears in two other print editions. The first is the edition written according to the *riwāyah* of Warš (d. 197/812) from Nāfiʿ (d. 169/785) and printed in Medina: it marks *wa-tuwaqqirūhu* with a small *ṣād* , which is—following the tradition of the Maghreb—the only pausal punctuation used to signal pauses (if we exclude verse dividers) in the entire edition (compare this mono-form pausal system with the sophistication of the Tiberian accentuation).[62] Clearly, this is to indicate the shift in referent. This pause is attested in another edition, also printed in Medina, known as *Muṣḥaf nastaʿlīq* (referring to its orthographic style).[63]

3.2 Rhetorical Emphasis

Pauses are frequently employed to highlight that certain words should be emphasised. We find this, for instance, in Genesis 38:6, וַיִּקַּח יְהוּדָה אִשָּׁה לְעֵר בְּכֹרוֹ וּשְׁמָהּ תָּמָר׃, ‘And Judah took a wife for Er his

[59] Ad-Dānī, *al-Muktafā fī al-waqf wa-l-ibtidā*, 528.

[60] See, for example, Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi: M 1 [dated tentatively: 800 CE]; Dublin, Chester Beatty Library: Is. 1615 I [dated tentatively: 750 CE]; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek: Petermann I 38 (Ahlwardt 339) [dated tentatively: 750–900 CE]; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France: Arabe 345 (c) [dated tentatively: 700–900 CE].

[61] *Al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf*, 670; *Muṣḥaf al-Madīnah an-Nabawiyyah*, 511.

[62] In this article I refer to the first edition of the Medina Warš *muṣḥaf*; see *Muṣḥaf al-Madīnah an-Nabawiyyah wafqa riwāyat Warš ʿan al-Imām Nāfiʿ* (Medina: Maǧmaʿ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibāʿat al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf, 1428 [2007]), 464. Interestingly, the second edition of the Medina Warš *muṣḥaf* removes this pausal sign; see *Muṣḥaf al-Madīnah an-Nabawiyyah wafqa riwāyat Warš ʿan al-Imām Nāfiʿ* (Medina: Maǧmaʿ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibāʿat al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf, 1440 [2018]), 511. For a discussion on the pausal tradition of the Maghreb, and some comments on Medina's Warš *muṣḥaf*, see ʿAbd al-Hādī Ḥamītū, *Qirāʾat al-Imām Nāfiʿ ʿinda al-Maġāribah min riwāyat Abī Saʿīd Warš*, 7 vols. (Morocco: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-š-Šuʾūn al-Islāmiyyah, 2003), IV: 185–235.

[63] See, for instance, the following *nastaʿlīq* edition: *al-Qurʾān al-Karīm* (Medina: Maǧmaʿ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibāʿat al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf, 1431 [2010]), 512.

firstborn, and her name was Tamar'. The major disjunctive, the *aṯnāḥ*, on *bᵉḵôrô*, 'his firstborn', splits the verse into two main parts: the first וַיִּקַּח יְהוּדָה אִשָּׁה לְעֵר בְּכוֹרוֹ and the second :וּשְׁמָהּ תָּמָר. Thus, 'and her name (was) Tamar', stands as an independent unit. The purpose is to emphasise the introduction of Tamar into the narrative.[64] While the Peshiṭta mirrors the Hebrew exactly, ܘܫܡܗ ܬܡܪ, the Septuagint omits the feminine suffix and renders with a relative clause: ᾗ ὄνομα Θαμαρ, 'whose name (was) Tamar'.

In the Qurʾān, an example of a similar rhetorical pause appears in Q. 61:6, concerning a saying of Jesus: يا بني إسرائيل إني رسول الله إليكم مصدقًا لما بين يدي من التوراة ومبشرا برسول يأتي من بعدي اسمه أحمد 'Children of Israel, I am sent to you by God, confirming the Torah that came before me and bringing good news of a messenger to follow me whose name will be Ahmad'. The phrase ومبشرا برسول يأتي من بعدي اسمه أحمد 'bringing good news of a messenger to follow me whose name will be Ahmad' can be read as one unit as in all the early Qurʾān manuscripts and print editions I have consulted.[65] We find, however, in *Manār al-hudā* a pause on *baʿdī*. The author describes it as a permissible pause (*ǧāʾiz*) and says that the sentence after it is resumptive (*ʿalā stiʾnāfi mā baʿdah*).[66] I take this to be motivated by a desire to emphasise the name of the Prophet—to mark this aspect of the verse. According to this pause, the verse-unit is structured thus: ومبشرا برسول يأتي من بعدي followed by اسمه أحمد. Both these examples from the Hebrew Bible and the Qurʾān share a similar structure and a similar rhetorical purpose—the phrase introducing the name is isolated for the sake of emphasis.

3.3 Conflict between Pausal Forms and Accent Signs

In Biblical Hebrew, pausal forms primarily occur at the end of semantic and syntactic units, that is, at the ends of verses or with disjunctive accents within verse boundaries (mostly with the major accents, but occasionally with minor accents). The difference between pausal and

[64] See Park, *The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents*, 124.

[65] Examples of early Qurʾān manuscripts include, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Petermann I 38 (Ahlwardt 339) [dated tentatively: 750–900 CE]; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek: Wetzstein II 1913 (Ahlwardt 305) [dated tentatively: before 710 CE]; Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı, 50385 (Gotthelf Bergsträßer archives) [dated tentatively: 700–800 CE]. For the print editions, see *al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf*, 739; *Muṣḥaf al-Madīnah an-Nabawiyyah*, 552.

[66] Al-Ušmūnī, *Manār al-hudā*, 391.

contextual forms resides in two aspects: the vowel quality and the position of stress.[67] Arabic also has pausal forms. These are generated in a few ways, including the following: first, eliding the final vowel, that is, the difference between the pausal and medial/contextual forms manifests in the absence or presence of final vowels; second, by deleting the *tanwīn* (final vowel + the letter *nūn* /n/); third, by replacing the *tanwīn* (*-an*) with *-ā* for the accusative termination; fourth, by replacing the *-at* with *-ah*.[68]

While the Masoretic Text shows an alteration between pausal and non-pausal forms (as it is vocalised), this is not always discernible in the earliest Qurʾān codices. The latter do not *normally* mark the difference between full and pausal forms as they are generally non-vocalised.[69] I say 'normally' given that pausal forms can sometimes be identified in early Qurʾān codices. In this regard, the work of van Putten and Stokes is important. They have shown that in the Quranic consonantal text the word-final *-ī* is shortened. For example, in Q. 89:9 we find بالواد (*bi-l-wād*), 'in the valley', rather than the full-form بالوادي (*bi-l-wādī*). This shortening occurs in a pausal position—at the end of a verse.[70] Other examples include the apocopate لم يتسنه (*lam yatasannah*), 'it has not spoiled', in Q. 2:259 and the imperative

[67] E. J. Revell, 'Pausal Forms in Biblical Hebrew: Their Function, Origin And Significance', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 25 (1980): 165–79; Joshua Blau, *Phonology and Morphology of Biblical Hebrew: An Introduction* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 154–5; E. J. Revell, 'The Occurrence of Pausal Forms', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 57:2 (2012): 213–30; Steven E. Fassberg, 'Pausal Forms', in Geoffrey Khan (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241_ehll_EHLL_COM_00000273, accessed on 18 July 2022.

[68] See W. Wright, *A Grammar of The Arabic Language*, 2 vols., 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), II: 368–73; Robert D. Hoberman, 'Pausal Forms', in Lutz Edzard and Rudolf de Jong (eds), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_COM_vol3_0251, accessed on 18 July 2022. For a comparison between Hebrew and Arabic, see Saul Levin, 'The Correspondence between Hebrew and Arabic Pausal Verb-Forms', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 131:2 (1981): 229–33.

[69] On the question of case endings and full/partial vocalisation in Quranic Arabic, see Marijn van Putten and Phillip W. Stokes, 'Case in the Qurʾānic Consonantal Text', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 108 (2018): 143–79; Pierre Larcher, 'Une «rime cachée» dans Cor 23, 12–14? Histoire du texte et histoire de la langue', *Arabica* 68:1 (2021): 36–50; and more recently van Putten, *Quranic Arabic*, 182–214.

[70] Van Putten and Stokes, 'Case in the Qurʾānic Consonantal Text', 156–8. See also Van Putten, *Quranic Arabic*, 142–3; 267. For manuscripts showing this, see Dublin, Chester Beatty Library: Is. 1414 [dated tentatively: 800–900 CE]; Istanbul:

اقتده (*iqtadih*), 'follow', in Q. 6:90, both of which are suffixed with a final *hā'* /h/ to indicate a pause.[71] The same also applies to certain nouns with the first singular possessive pronoun when they occur in pause; for instance, كتابيه (*kitābiyah*), 'my book' (Q. 69:19; 69:25).[72] This final *hā'* /h/ is known as the '*hā'* of silence' (*hā' as-sakt*) and is discussed in grammar and *qirā'āt* works.[73]

Now, it has been observed with respect to the Masoretic tradition that there are occasions where an apparent mismatch between a pausal form and an accent exists. Put differently, a word represented by a pausal form may have a conjunctive accent—the accent extends the boundary *implied* by the vocalisation (i.e., the pausal form).[74] The apparent conflict between pausal vocalisation and accent in the Hebrew Bible and the Qurʾān is the theme of this section. My principal aim is to show that this phenomenon exists in both the Masoretic and Quranic reading traditions—without claiming an exact correspondence—and that it has exegetical ramifications. I will adduce some examples to illustrate this.

In Exodus 32:24, we read וָאֹמַר לָהֶם֮ לְמִי זָהָב֒ הִתְפָּרֵקוּ֙ וַיִּתְּנוּ־לִ֔י. This phrase is rendered in the *Revised Version* as, 'And I said unto them, "Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off"; so they gave it

Topkapı Sarayı, Medina 1a, (Gotthelf Bergsträßer archives) [= Karatay no. 3: M. 1] [dated tentatively: 700–900 CE].

[71] Van Putten, *Quranic Arabic*, 290–1. For an example of a manuscript where *iqtadih* and *lam yatasannah* appear in this form, see Berlin, Staatsbibliothek: Wetzstein II 1913 (Ahlwardt 305) [dated tentatively: before 710 CE]. The recognition of a pause in these two instances is evidenced in *waqf* and *ibtidā'* works (as-Sağāwindī, *'Ilal al-wuqūf*, I: 333–5; II: 482) as well as some print editions (*al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf*, 55; 176). For the variant readings, see Ibn al-Ǧazarī, *an-Našr fī al-qirā'āt al-'ašr*, III: 1925.

[72] See, for example, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library: MS Add. 1150 [dated tentatively: 800–1000 CE].

[73] Ibn Yaʿīš, *Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*, 10 vols. (Cairo: Idārat aṭ-Ṭibāʿah al-Munīriyyah, n.d.), IX: 45–8; Ibn al-Ǧazarī, *an-Našr fī al-qirā'āt al-'ašr*, III: 1901–9; 1924–7.

[74] See E. J. Revell, *The Pausal System: Divisions In The Hebrew Biblical Text As Marked By Voweling And Stress Position* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015), 1–3; Vincent DeCaen and B. Elan Dresher, 'Pausal Forms and Prosodic Structure in Tiberian Hebrew', in Aaron D. Hornkohl and Geoffrey Khan (eds), *Studies in Semitic Vocalisation and Reading Traditions* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2020), 331–77; Khan, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew*, Volume I, 50–1; and more recently, Yochanan Breuer, 'Dissonance Between Masoretic Vocalisation and Cantillation in Biblical Verse Division', in Daniel J. Crowther, Aaron D. Hornkohl, and Geoffrey Khan (eds), *Studies in the Masoretic Tradition of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2022), 243–88.

me'.[75] This was cited by Kleiner as an example of what he described as 'manipulative accentuation'.[76] It can be interpreted in two different ways based on the fact that grammatically the *hitpa'el* הִתְפָּרֻקוּ can be read as a third-person common plural perfect or a masculine plural imperative. The first reading is based on the recognition of the pausal vowels in הִתְפָּרֻקוּ (that is, the occurrence of a long vowel, the *qameṣ,* in pausal form).[77] This pausal form may indicate that the verb is part of the previous clause and is, therefore, a masculine plural imperative, giving the following meaning: 'And I said to them, "Whoever has gold, break [it] off", and they gave [it] to me'. Thus, the unit can be, with some *simplification* (that is, disregarding some subdivisions of the accentual phrasing), divided into the following two parts: first וָאֹמַר לָהֶם לְמִי זָהָב הִתְפָּרֻקוּ and secondly וַיִּתְּנוּ־לִי.

A different picture emerges if we take account of the accents. There is a disjunctive accent on זָהָב, a *little zāqēp̄*, and another disjunctive on הִתְפָּרֻקוּ, a *ṭipḥā*. The effect of the *little zāqēp̄* on זָהָב is that it finishes the phrase. In other words, the phrase ends on זָהָב, and then הִתְפָּרֻקוּ begins a new clause; הִתְפָּרֻקוּ is associated with the following words (presumably, the *ṭipḥā* on הִתְפָּרֻקוּ has no effect—it does not preclude הִתְפָּרֻקוּ from forming a phrasal constituent with what follows it). The outcome is that הִתְפָּרֻקוּ is interpreted as a plural perfect verb, resulting in the following translation: 'And I said to them, "Who has gold?", they broke [it] off and gave [it] to me'. Hence, the first segment is וָאֹמַר לָהֶם לְמִי זָהָב and the second is הִתְפָּרֻקוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ־לִי. The second interpretation, the one based on the accents, has an exegetical value as Kleiner points out—to paint a more positive picture of Aaron.[78] Or as Propp puts it: 'This unnatural

[75] *The Holy Bible*, 68.

[76] See the discussion in Kleiner, 'Masoretic Accents and Phrasing in the Hebrew Bible Recitation', 665–7; Breuer, 'Dissonance Between Masoretic Vocalisation and Cantillation in Biblical Verse Division', 265–8.

[77] On the change of vowels in pause generally and in the *hitpa'el*, see P. Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2011), 96–7, 146; Geoffrey Khan, *The Early Karaite Tradition of Hebrew Grammatical Thought: Including a Critical Edition, Translation and Analysis of the Diqduq of ʾAbū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf Ibn Nūḥ on the Hagiographa* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 53; Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 150–1.

[78] For commentaries on this passage and its context, see A. H. McNeile, *The Book of Exodus with Introduction and Notes* (London: Methuen and Co. LTD, 1908), 204–7; U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1952), 417–22; Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press LTD, 1974), 569–70.

exegesis may have been developed to exculpate Aaron from actually demanding gold'.[79]

With respect to the other witnesses, both the Septuagint and the Peshiṭta reflect the first interpretation—that הִתְפָּרָקוּ is an imperative—with some variations in the translation. The Septuagint reads, καὶ εἶπα αὐτοῖς Εἴ τινι ὑπάρχει χρυσία, περιέλεσθε. καὶ ἔδωκάν μοι· ('And I said to them, "If there is gold to anyone, take [it] off", and they gave [it] to me'), while the Peshiṭta translates as, ܐܡܪܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܡܢ ܕܕܗܒ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܢܗܒ ܠܝ. ܘܝܗܒܘ ܠܝ ('And I said to them, "Whoever has gold, bring [it] to me", and they brought [it] to me')—where the Greek *perielesthe* and the Syriac *aytaw* are both plural imperatives.[80] The Christian-Arabic translation of the Torah, as represented in the tenth-century manuscript Sinai Arabic 2 of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, chooses to translate as a jussive: فقلت لهم من كان له ذهب فلياتى به, 'So I said to them, "whoever has gold, let him bring it"' (folio 130v).[81] In contrast, the Vulgate reads *tulerunt et dederunt mihi*, 'they took and brought [it] to me', in which *tulerunt* is not an imperative but a past tense verb.[82] On the face of it, Saadya's Judaeo-Arabic *tafsīr* seems to allow for both readings. He writes: פפכוה.[83] This consonantal skeleton can be vocalised either as a plural imperative *fa-fukkūh*, 'so, separate it/take it off', or as a third-person plural masculine perfect verb, *fa-fakkūh*, 'so, they separated it/took it off'.

I now proceed to illustrate this phenomenon as it appears in the Qur'ān. I will show this through two examples. The first is taken from the feminine imperfect verb in Q. 2:233, لا تضار والدة بولدها

[79] William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19-40* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 561.

[80] It is noteworthy that Breuer, 'Dissonance Between Masoretic Vocalisation and Cantillation in Biblical Verse Division', 268, puts forward that the plain meaning of the verse supports reading the verb as an imperative. He explains why it is *not* a past tense: 'A past tense form would be expected to appear in an inverted tense form, as is usual in a narrative chunk and in keeping with the surrounding past forms … The exceptional form here shows that this is an imperative concluding Aaron's words'.

[81] I have accessed the digital images available at: https://sinaimanuscripts.library.ucla.edu/catalog/ark:%2F21198%2Fz1572wqs, accessed on 21 July 2022. The most detailed study of this particular translation is by Ronny Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch: A Comparative Study of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

[82] *The Vulgate Bible: Volume 1 The Pentateuch Douay-Rheims Translation*, ed. Swift Edgar (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 452–3.

[83] Derenbourg, *Oeuvres Completes de R. Saadia Ben Iosef Al-Fayyoûmî*, Volume I, 129.

'a mother shall not be pressed for her child'. The same applies to the masculine imperfect verb in Q. 2:282, ولا يضار كاتب ولا شهيد 'and let not either writer or witness be pressed'. Let me focus on the former case, Q. 2:233. In contradistinction to the other canonical readers who read either *tuḍārru* or *tuḍārra*, Abū Ǧaʿfar (d. 130/748) read in two ways: *tuḍārra* and *tuḍār*—the latter by degeminating the final consonant and by reading without *iʿrāb* (but rather with *sukūn*). That is to say that he read his second reading *without* the final short vowel *in context* (and, of course, in pause too).[84] Abū Ǧaʿfar's second mode (*tuḍār*) is what concerns me here. I take it as a case in which there is a degree of dissonance—a word occurring in a pausal form, but in a *non-pausal* position. My argument is predicated on the fact that this word neither aligns with any pausal suggestion in the codices and the *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* literature, nor does it appear at the end of the verse—the reciter is *not* expected to pause here.[85] More importantly, pausing on this word disconnects the verb from its subject and thus fails to yield good sense. The upshot is that we have here a pausal pronunciation in a non-pausal position, according to one of the readings of Abū Ǧaʿfar—and this is, *in some ways*, reminiscent of the mismatch between pausal forms and conjunctive accents in the Hebrew Bible.

My second Quranic example concerns a word appearing at the end of a verse. These locations naturally call for pauses and, thereby, words at the ends of verses are to be treated as pausal. Viewed in this way, I propose that an accent which contradicts the pausal form in the Masoretic Text *roughly equals* a case where the pausal sign in a *muṣḥaf* (or the pausal suggestion in the *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* literature) contravenes the verse boundary in the Qurʾān (perhaps due to syntactic and/or semantic connections). To put the matter differently, in the case of the Masoretic Text discussed above, there is a mismatch between the boundary set by the pausal form and the boundary determined by the accent, while in the present Quranic case a mismatch exists between the boundary set by the verse division and the boundary

[84] Ibn al-Ǧazarī, *an-Našr fī al-qirāʾāt al-ʿašr*, IV: 2204–5. One of the ways in which this reading was justified was to say that Abū Ǧaʿfar treated the context as if it was a pause (*uǧriya l-waṣlu fīhi muǧrā l-waqf*); see Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*, (eds) ʿI. Ḥassūnah *et al.*, 11 vols. (Cairo: Dār Haǧar, 2015), II: 502. For a detailed study of this phenomenon, see Ḥawlah Ǧaʿfar Iršīd al-Qarālah, 'Iǧrāʾ al-waṣl muǧrā al-waqf wa-l-ʿaks fī an-naḥw al-ʿarabī' (Ph.D. dissertation; Mutah: Ǧāmiʿat Muʾtah, 2006).

[85] For an example of a codex where pauses are absent, see Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France: Arabe 339 [dated tentatively: 700–1000 CE]. For the absence of an accent in the literature see, for instance, as-Sağāwindī, *ʿIlal al-wuqūf*, I: 313.

dictated by the pausal sign/suggestion. The common denominator is the existence of *competing boundaries* in both reading traditions.

Several cases in which a division indicated by the verse ending contradicts the division designated by the *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* literature are found in the Qurʾān. The classical paradigm case comes from Q. 107:4–5, فويل للمصلين // الذين هم عن صلاتهم ساهون. Both verses can be translated as, 'So woe to those that pray, and are heedless of their prayer'. There seems to be a consensus that 'So woe to those who pray' stands as an independent verse,[86] and according to the widely accepted rule, pausing at the ends of verses—though not obligatory—is recommended.[87] However, and although unlikely, this may create a minor problem. This is because the meaning is only complete when both verses are read together. Therefore, isolating the first verse may risk giving the impression, even if only momentarily, that 'those who pray' *in general* are liable to punishment. Of course, this is not the case. In other words, the break indicated by the verse division interrupts the connection between 'those who pray' (*li-l-muṣallīn*) and its qualification through the relative marker 'those' (*alladīna*) and what follows. But as remarked, misinterpreting the verse is a remote possibility, and perhaps this explains why the books of *tafsīr* do not *normally* comment on this matter—no real problem existed.[88]

Examining the literature on *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* reveals that the early works of this genre are generally silent on this matter; they are not concerned with any possible misinterpretation.[89] However, the later

[86] There is a designated branch of Quranic studies devoted to the study of verse endings and the differences between traditions on whether to apply a division. The most detailed description in a Western language is by Anton Spitaler, *Die Verszählung des Koran* (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1935). See also Raymond K. Farrin, 'The Verse Numbering Systems of The Qur'an: A Statistical and Literary Comparison', *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association* 4 (2019): 3–58. The presence of disagreements with regard to verse divisions is also found in the traditions of the Hebrew Bible; see Jordan S. Penkower, 'Verse Divisions In The Hebrew Bible', *Vetus Testamentum* 50:3 (2000): 379–93. To my knowledge, no difference between the regional verse-numbering systems has been reported on Q. 107:4. See Abū ʿAmr ad-Dānī, *al-Bayān fī ʿadd āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. Ġānim Qaddūrī al-Ḥamad (Kuwait: Markaz al-Maḫṭūṭāt wa-t-Turāṯ wa-l-Waṯāʾiq, 1994), 291; ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Qāḍī, *al-Farāʾid al-ḥisān fī ʿadd āy al-Qurʾān wa-maʿah šarḥuh Nafāʾis al-bayān* (Medina: Maktabat ad-Dār, 1404 [1983]), 74–5.

[87] For a good discussion, see aṭ-Ṭayyār, *Wuqūf al-Qurʾān wa-aṯaruhā fī at-tafsīr*, 37–48.

[88] See, for example, Ibn Ǧarīr aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-bayān*, XXIV: 659–64; al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-maʿānī*, XXX: 242.

[89] Al-Anbārī, *Kitāb Īḍāḥ al-waqf wa-l-ibtidāʾ*, 988; an-Naḥḥās, *al-Qaṭʿ wa-l-iʾtināf*, 822; ad-Dānī, *al-Muktafā fī al-waqf wa-l-ibtidā*, 630–1.

work, *Manār al-hudā*, comments forcefully that pausing at the end of Q. 107:4, *li-l-muṣallīn*, is inappropriate (*qabīḥ*) because it misconstrues what God intended to communicate (*fa-innahū yūhimu ġayra mā arādahu Llāhu taʿālā*).[90] Thus, to rectify this potential problem and render the phrase harmless, it has been suggested that both verses are to be joined as a coherent unity: فويل للمصلين الذين هم عن صلاتهم ساهون. Consistent with the early Quranic codices in which we do not find any indication to this suggestion,[91] the 1924 Cairo edition does not provide any pausal marks. The same applies to the Medina edition.[92] However, the second-print of the Cairo edition, published in 1952, takes this matter seriously, inserting a small (ۘ), 'no', on *li-l-muṣallīn* to indicate that pausing on *li-l-muṣallīn* is impermissible.[93] In other words, the (ۘ) sign in this case can be understood as a conjunctive accent occurring at the end of a verse.[94]

To summarize, these examples show the parallel ways in which both the Masoretic and Quranic reading traditions employ accents to bypass pausal forms/positions and, thereby, to make exegetical points.

[90] Al-Ušmūnī, *Manār al-hudā*, 435.

[91] See, for example, Dublin, Chester Beatty Library: Is. 1615 II [dated tentatively: 750 CE]; Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi: M 1 [dated tentatively: 800 CE]; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France: Arabe 349 (b) [dated tentatively: 750–900 CE]; Doha, Qatar National Library: HC.MS.03155 [dated on the colophon: 1198 CE].

[92] *Al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf*, 823; *Muṣḥaf al-Madīnah an-Nabawiyyah*, 602.

[93] For the 1952 Cairo edition, published by Maṣlaḥat al-Misāḥah and Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah in 1371/1952, I have relied on a facsimile of that edition published by the Jordanian Ministry of Education; *al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf* (Damascus and Beirut: Dār ar-Rašīd, 1414 [1993]), 823. Of note here that the second edition of Medina's Ḥafṣ *muṣḥaf* removes all the (ۘ) signs, as opposed to the first edition which included them on some occasions (though not with respect to Q. 107:4). See on this matter ʿAlī b. ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Ḥuḍayfī, 'Ǧuhūd al-laǧnah al-ʿilmiyyah li-murāǧaʿat muṣḥaf al-Madīnah an-Nabawiyyah fī al-muǧammaʿ wa-dawruhā fī al-iʿdād wa-t-tadqīq', in *Nadwat ṭibāʿat al-Qurʾān al-karīm wa-našrih bayna al-wāqiʿ wa-l-maʾmūl*, 6 vols. (Medina: Maǧmaʿ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibāʿat al-Muṣḥaf aš-Šarīf, 1436 [2014]), VI: 2911–75, at 2958–60.

[94] Here, the Masoretic and Quranic traditions part ways, for there is no verse in the Masoretic Text that ends with a conjunctive accent. James D. Price notes that a 'Silluq always occurs on the last word of a verse'. See James D. Price, 'Exegesis and Pausal Forms with Non-Pausal Accents in the Hebrew Bible'. Paper Presented at the Southeastern Regional Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, March 18, 2006. Available at https://jamesdprice.com/images/Pausal_Forms_ETS_paper.pdf, accessed on 1 July 2023, 1–21, at 1, footnote 1. I am grateful to Sung Jin Park for comments on this point. Nonetheless, there are cases in the Hebrew Bible in which the meaning is not completed at the end of a verse. See, for an example, Joseph Habib, 'Yaʿqūb al-Qirqisānī's Twenty-Fifth through Thirty-Seventh Exegetical Principles', *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 113:3 (2023): 507–33, at 521.

3.4 Theological Exegesis

The previous sections have explored instances where the Masoretic cantillation marks indicate pauses. Let us now examine a slightly different phenomenon: a case where the rabbinic traditions suggest a pause, *in contrast* to the Masoretic cantillation, with the purpose of exonerating a prophet—a form of theological exegesis. This will be compared to an example from the Qurʾān where the *tafsīr* literature as well as the *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* works suggest a pause in order to present a prophet in a morally acceptable way.[95] Incidentally, both examples involve the potential charge of lying.[96]

For the Hebrew Bible, the passage in question comes from Genesis 27:19:[97] וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־אָבִיו אָנֹכִי עֵשָׂו בְּכֹרֶךָ, 'And Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau, your firstborn"' (Septuagint: καὶ εἶπεν Ιακωβ τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ Ἐγὼ Ησαυ ὁ πρωτότοκός σου ['And Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau, your firstborn"']; Peshiṭta: ܘܐܡܪ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܠܐܒܘܗܝ ܐܢܐ ܥܣܘ ܒܪܟ ܒܟܪܟ ['And Jacob said to his father, "I am your son, your firstborn Esau"']). The Masoretic cantillation, through the use of the conjunctive *azlā*, suggests that *ānōḵî* is connected with what follows it, generating the meaning of, 'I am Esau your firstborn'. This appears to have unsettled some commentators as it entails the possibility that Jacob was lying. To remedy this, a pause has been suggested on *ānōḵî*, after which *ʿēsāw bᵉḵōrᵉḵā* constitute an independent unit. This segmentation, which goes *against* the Masoretic cantillation, clears Jacob from the charge of lying. The resulting units have been variably interpreted either as

[95] The underlying motif is the notion of *ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ* (the sinlessness of the prophets). See Gerald R. Hawting, 'The development of the doctrine of the infallibility (*ʿiṣma*) of prophets and the interpretation of Qurʾān 8:67–69', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 39 (2012): 141–63. For a comparison, see Moshe Zucker, 'The Problem of *ʿIṣmat al-Anbiyāʾ* – Prophetic Immunity to Sin and Error – in Islamic and Jewish Literatures', [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 35 (1966): 149–73; and briefly Raphael Dascalu, *A Philosopher of Scripture: The Exegesis and Thought of Tanḥum ha-Yerushalmi* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 78–9.

[96] On this topic and on deception from the Jewish perspective, see Shira Weiss, *Ethical Ambiguity in the Hebrew Bible: Philosophical Analysis of Scriptural Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 120–94.

[97] I have benefited in my analysis of this example from Carasik, 'Exegetical Implications of The Masoretic Cantillation Marks in Ecclesiastes', 146. For commentaries on this episode, see S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis with Introduction and Notes* (London: Methuen and Co. LTD, 1904), 255–62; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 203–13.

'I am to receive the Ten Commandments, but Esau is your firstborn', or as 'I am who I am, but Esau is your firstborn'.[98]

I now turn to the Qurʾān. A similar case appears in Q. 21:63 and involves Abraham. In summary, Q. 21:58 explicitly states that Abraham destroyed his people's idols, save for one. When he was later interrogated by his people, he denied this, saying: بل فعله كبيرهم هذا 'No, it was done by the biggest of them—this one' (Q. 21:63). The thought that Abraham could have lied troubled the commentators. One solution offered in the *tafsīr* literature was to propose a pause on the perfect verb *faʿalah*—in order to split this unit into two parts—and then to *imply* two words after *faʿalah*.[99] According to this suggestion, Abraham's words are divided as follows: بل فعله as one unit, and كبيرهم هذا as the ensuing independent unit. After supplying the implied words, the unit reads, 'whoever did it, did it!' (*faʿalahū man faʿalah*). The next clause then begins with *kabīruhum hāḏā*, interpreted as 'this one is the biggest of them'. With this pause, Abraham is no longer presented as lying; he did not attribute the breaking of the idols to the biggest one. This interpretation is reflected in the *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ* literature, and even attributed to the canonical reader al-Kisāʾī (d. 89/805).[100]

[98] *Midrash Rabbah* reads: 'I am to receive the Ten Commandments, but Esau is your firstborn'. For the Hebrew text, see J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck (eds), *Bereschit Rabba mit kritischen Apparat und Kommentar*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Verlag M. Poppelauer, 1927), II: 730. For the English translation, see *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis II*, trans. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon (London: The Soncino Press, 1939), 593–4. Ibn Ezra also records that some scholars interpret Jacob's words along these lines: 'I am who I am and Esau is your firstborn'. The Hebrew text of Ibn Ezra's commentary is available in the Second Rabbinic Bible, *Mikraʾot Gedolot*, edited by Jacob ben Hayyim and printed in Venice by the Daniel Bomberg press in 1524–1525. For a modern edition, see Menachem Cohen (ed.), *Mikraʾot Gedolot 'Haketer' Genesis Part II* (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1999), 18–19. For the English translation, see *Ibn Ezra's commentary on the Pentateuch: Genesis (Bereshit)*, trans. H. Norman Strickman and Arthur M. Silver (New York, NY: Menorah Publishing Company, Inc., 1988), 262. This reading also appears in the mystical work, the *Zohar*: 'I am—interrupted by an accent sign—that is to say: "*I am* who I am, but *Esau is your firstborn*"'. See *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition,* Volume III, trans. Daniel C. Matt (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 12. Also see James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as it was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 359–60. Saadya provides the following translation of the Hebrew: **אנא עשו בכרך** (أنا عسو بكرك), 'I am Esau, your firstborn'. See Derenbourg, *Oeuvres Completes de R. Saadia Ben Iosef Al-Fayyoûmî*, Volume I, 41.

[99] Ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ġayb*, XXII: 185; al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-maʿānī*, XVII: 65–6.

[100] Al-Ušmūnī, *Manār al-hudā*, 250. It is not, however, found in the early codices and print editions I have consulted.

It is clear from these two examples that both reading traditions utilise the pauses for theological considerations.

4. Conclusion

I have sought in this article to analyse the role of pauses in the exegesis of the Hebrew Bible and the Qurʾān. This has been attempted by examining how the accents of the Masoretic reading tradition on the one hand, and the pausal suggestions of the Quranic *waqf* and *ibtidā*ʾ literature on the other, affect the exegesis of the Hebrew Bible and the Qurʾān respectively. A number of case studies in four sections have been explored, covering syntactic ambiguity, rhetorical emphasis, the conflict between pausal forms and accents, as well as theological exegesis. Analysis of the passages demonstrates that, for both reading traditions, pauses can have exegetical functions and can offer interpretive insights not attainable otherwise. It also shows similarities in the reading practices of the Masoretes and the *qurrā*ʾ—the similarity in the exegetical motivations, concerning pauses, has been identified across all the cases examined. But there are also differences. One major difference is that the Masoretic tradition developed a robust, hierarchical, and complex system of cantillation with deep historical roots—Abū al-Faraǧ Hārūn claimed that it extends back to ‘the time of the Prophets’, מקררה מן זמאן אלאנביא (مقررة من زمان الأنبيا).[101] As for the Qurʾān, it is difficult to ascertain whether the earliest Qurʾān codices were annotated with punctuation to mark the pausal positions, although my impression is that they generally did not. Later Qurʾān manuscripts and print editions contain pausal marks, but they are not as developed as the Masoretic accents.

The benefit of this comparison is to improve our understanding of the reading practices of the Jewish and Muslim scriptural traditions from a comparative perspective. Juxtaposing these two traditions allows us to fine tune the distinctions between them and to see the intersections and points of contact that might have been a result of a shared intellectual milieu in Late Antiquity and the High Middle Ages.

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[101] Khan, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew*, Volume II, 28–9.