



Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

TOPICS IN THE SYNTAX OF QUR'ĀNIC ARABIC

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Ohad Kayam
Linacre College, Oxford

Under the supervision of
Dr Nicolai Sinai

May 2023

© Copyright by Ohad Kayam, 2023. All rights reserved.

Abstract

Many features of Qurʾānic Arabic do not fit within the grammar of Classical Arabic as described by medieval grammarians. This calls for a specialised grammar of Qurʾānic Arabic, which should be composed based on a descriptive investigation of the Qurʾān as a self-contained corpus. Studies have lately been conducted on some aspects of the phonology, morphology and syntax of the language of the Qurʾān; however, the work – particularly in syntax – is far from complete. The present thesis seeks to contribute to the recent research of the grammar of Qurʾānic Arabic, especially its syntax. Each part systematically describes the linguistic feature around which it revolves. Emphasis is put on aspects that are unique to the Qurʾān, some of which have hitherto been unexplored in research, as opposed to extra-Qurʾānic Arabic.

The first part explores the semantics and grammatical function of the word *nafs* in the Qurʾān. After identifying its two core meanings, "person" and "soul", and the semantic fields related to them in the Qurʾān, the part focuses on *nafs* as a grammatical element. It shows that *nafs* expresses individual reflexivity (e.g., "yourself") and that *ʾanfus* mostly expresses individual or collective reflexivity (e.g., "yourselves") and in certain verses may express reciprocity ("each other"). It is also maintained that *nafs* may optionally be used when a pronoun is expected (e.g., *ʾiḏ baʿaṯa fīhim rasūlan min ʾanfusihim* vs *wa-bʿaṯ fīhim rasūlan minhum*).

The second part provides a detailed analysis of the restrictive, exceptive and adversative usages of the particle *ʾillā*. Each of these usages is further put in a broader linguistic perspective. Noteworthy case studies are further discussed, as well as the treatment of *ʾillā* in traditional grammatical thought, especially developments reflected by the differences between Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* and post-Sībawayhi grammatical works.

Although each topic requires a distinctive treatment according to its own criteria of analysis, all linguistic investigations above share a common methodological approach. A crucial part of this method is the awareness of intra-Qurʾānic parallels, which ought to be integral to all research on Qurʾānic Arabic. No less important should be consulting pre-modern Qurʾān commentaries and other classical and modern Islamic works on Qurʾānic Arabic and pre-Islamic material.

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv

INTRODUCTION 1

PART I: A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF *NAFS* IN THE QUR'ĀN 16

OVERVIEW 16

CHAPTER 1: THE LEXICAL SENSES OF *NAFS* 22

1.1. The core meaning of "soul" 23

1.2. The core meaning of "person" 29

1.3. Summary 37

CHAPTER 2: *NAFS* AS A REFLEXIVE PRONOUN 39

2.1. Introduction 39

2.2. Individual reflexivity 41

2.3. Collective reflexivity 42

2.4. Reciprocal reflexivity 43

2.5. Traditional exegetical explanations 56

2.6. Summary 57

CHAPTER 3: *NAFS* AS AN OPTIONAL SUBSTITUTE FOR A PRONOUN 59

3.1. As the second of two pronouns coreferential with a similar antecedent 59

3.2. In enumerations 63

3.3. Summary 64

CHAPTER 4: QUR'ĀNIC CASE STUDIES RELATED TO *NAFS* 65

4.1. Several instances of *nafs* in the context of reward and punishment 65

4.2. Q 91:7–10 69

4.3. "(Human) life" 71

4.4. Q 5:80 73

4.5. *Nafs* in the story of Joseph (Q 12) 74

4.6. Summary 78

CONCLUSIONS 79

PART II: A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF *'ILLĀ* IN THE QUR'ĀN 80

OVERVIEW 80

CHAPTER 5: RESTRICTIVE *'ILLĀ* CONSTRUCTIONS 85

5.1. "Only" 85

5.2. "Without" 96

5.3. Summary 100

CHAPTER 6: EXCEPTIVE *ʾILLĀ* **101**
6.1. "Except (for)", "apart from", etc. 101
6.2. "Unless" 104
6.3. Exceptive *ʾillā* vs *ġayr* 110
6.4. *ʾIllā* used as a marker of exclusion 112
6.5. Summary 118
CHAPTER 7: ADVERSATIVE *ʾILLĀ* **120**
7.1. Introduction: Adversative relations 120
7.2. Contrastive *ʾillā*: "But not", "not so", etc. 126
7.3. Corrective *ʾillā* 132
7.4. Restrictive/non-restrictive divide and a diachronic note 137
7.5. Adversative *ʾillā* vs *lākin(na)* 138
7.6. Summary 143
CHAPTER 8: CROSS-TYPE INVESTIGATIONS OF *ʾILLĀ* CONSTRUCTIONS **144**
8.1. The relationship between informational focus and the type of *ʾillā* 144
8.2. The position of *ʾillā* phrases in relation to their host 151
8.3. *Fa-* following *ʾillā* constructions 158
8.4. *ʾIllā* followed by a sentence 164
8.5. The influence of rhyme 171
8.6. Summary 173
CHAPTER 9: QUR'ĀNIC CASE STUDIES RELATED TO *ʾILLĀ* **175**
9.1. Q 12:68: Jacob's satisfied need and the fate of Joseph's brothers 175
9.2. Iblīs's refusal to prostrate himself before Adam 176
9.3. *Mā NQM (min) … ʾillā ʾan …* 178
9.4. Q 22:40 182
9.5. Summary 186
CHAPTER 10: COMMENTS ON *ʾILLĀ* IN TRADITIONAL GRAMMATICAL THOUGHT **187**
10.1. The change in the concept of *inqiṭāᶜ* in traditional grammatical thought 187
10.2. *ʾIllā* functioning as an attribute 194
10.3. Summary 199
CONCLUSIONS 200
CONCLUDING REMARKS **203**
REFERENCES **208**

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my profound gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Dr Nicolai Sinai, for his patient guidance and wise advice throughout the work on this thesis. I am also grateful to Taher Azzam, my dear friend, for being a constant source of support, both professionally and emotionally.

My sincere thanks are also extended to Professor Eitan Grossman, Professor Simon Hopkins, Dr Saqib Hussain, Dr Almog Kasher, Professor Geoffrey Khan, Tal Kittenplon, Dr Marianna Klar, Professor Christopher Melchert, Dr Iyas Nasser, Dr Yaara Perlman, Professor Arik Sadan, Dr Behnam Sadeghi, Dr Christian Sahner, Dr Nora Schmid, Professor Devin Stewart and Dr Joseph Witztum for insightful comments and valuable conversations on parts of this thesis.

I would further like to thank the Sheikh Zayed Endowment Fund at the University of Oxford for financial support during my DPhil course.

Finally, I am thankful to my family and friends for their unwavering support in times of need. Last but not least, I want to thank my brilliant partner Nehir for patiently standing by my side and always finding ways to lift my spirits in the most challenging parts of this journey. Little Salma, this is for you.

Introduction

Qurʾānic Arabic as part of the history of the Arabic language

Despite the myriads of Arabic written texts available to researchers nowadays, scholarly opinions differ on the history of the Arabic language. There is neither one chronological nor one geographical description of the history of Arabic that is accepted by all researchers. This is primarily due to the fact that most of the available materials are fairly late and because materials found centuries apart from each other are linguistically very similar. The reason for this similarity, which is foreign to any natural language, is simple: from a certain point in time, sometime after the circulation of the first Arabic grammar book known to research – that is, Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* ("The Book") – the texts that have been preserved were standardised, written according to the rules laid out by grammarians. Compared to the vast amounts of available material from this point onwards, the body of linguistic evidence predating the standardisation is very slim. The further back in time one goes, the less evidence there is. The Qurʾān, the sacred text of Islam, is one of the earliest and best-preserved extant witnesses of Arabic prose, albeit rhymed prose. The Arabic found in the Qurʾān is therefore highly valuable for the history of the Arabic language. But how is the Qurʾān related to the other early Arabic texts?

One of the earliest attempts to identify the Arabic of the Qurʾān was undertaken by Karl Vollers in his *Volkssprache und Schriftsprache im alten Arabien*, published in 1906. Vollers concluded that the Qurʾān was written in the Ḥijāzī common dialect and was later changed by grammarians to match the standard of the literary language that had been developed. His quite radical conclusions were subsequently heavily criticised,[1] and his theory has remained, until very recently,[2] mainly untouched.

By the 1940s, the question of the language of the Qurʾān had become associated with the understanding of the broader linguistic situation in Arabia at the time of its composition.[3] Did the diglossia found nowadays in Arabic exist in the first half of

[1] Most notably by Geyer ("Review") and Nöldeke ("Zur Sprache").

[2] See the discussion on Van Putten below.

[3] It is to be remarked here that the research discussed below is not concerned with the language of the Qurʾān *per se*. However, since the Qurʾān remains one of the oldest pieces of evidence at our

the 7th century? Was there a shared register of Arabic used alongside spoken dialects at the time when the Qurʾān was composed? If so, how different were the dialects from that register? And was the Qurʾān written in that common, inter-tribal register or in the language of one of the Arabian dialects of Arabic? All of these questions have been debated for decades. The following is a brief summary of the various views on the early history of Arabic relevant to the language of the Qurʾān.

Some researchers have argued that there was one super-tribal, case-inflected, synthetic[4] Old Arabic language in Arabia. I include in this scenario a linguistic situation in which ancient Neo-Arabic dialects existed alongside a common, inter-tribal Old Arabic, but the typological differences among the dialects, as well as between the dialects and Old Arabic, were insignificant. One of the prominent proponents of this view is Joshua Blau. According to him, there was no diglossia prior to Islam, but subsequently the linguistic situation underwent drastic change. During the Arab conquests, people from different tribes settling together in military camps blurred the differences between the dialects, and the contact with foreign local peoples led to the emergence of new Neo-Arabic vernaculars, now significantly distinguished from Old Arabic in their being uninflected and more analytic.[5] The Qurʾān, according to this description, was proclaimed either in the super-tribal Old Arabic or in an ancient Neo-Arabic dialect. This is reflected, *inter alia*, in the virtual absence of pseudo-corrections in it. Although Blau admits that this is an *argumentum ex silentio*, he nevertheless argues that such absence of pseudo-corrections is unexpected in a linguistic situation in which the spoken and literary language are distinct.[6]

---

disposal, its language has been adduced as part of the discussions on the history of the Arabic language in general.

[4] Synthetic languages tend to use more bound morphemes in a word than analytic languages. Compare, for instance, the more synthetic use of *ʾaqrab*, "nearer", with the more analytic use of the adjective *qarīb* ("near") + *ʾafḍal* (denoting "more") to create the comparative in Blau, *ASP*, 234–235 = §127. See further Blau, "Diglossia", 3–4.

[5] See, e.g., Blau, *Emergence*, esp. 1–18 (ch. 1) and 216–228 (addenda and corrigenda); Blau, "Diglossia"; See also Fück, *Arabiya*; Versteegh (*Pidginization*; for the critique of Versteegh's theory and his response, see Versteegh, "Pidginization revisited").

[6] Simon Hopkins has undermined the tenability of Blau's pseudo-corrections argument, asserting that while their absence does indicate a good command of the language, this command may be acquired and does not necessarily mean that the composer was born into the language. In his "On diglossia in pre-classical Arabic", he further discusses several instances of unexpected forms in the

Other scholars have proposed that two distinct Arabic types were already present in pre-Islamic Arabia. Wolfdietrich Fischer, a representative of this school of thought, has suggested that the spoken everyday language and the literary language coexisted already in Muḥammad's time.[7] As for the nature of that literary Arabic existing alongside the spoken dialects, Fischer, as well as many others, has described it as broadly identical to the language used in poetry.[8] It was accordingly termed "poetic koine".[9] This poetic koine, it was argued, or perhaps a close version of it, is also the language of the Qurʾān.[10] Some scholars assumed that it was different from all ancient dialects; others argued that it was based on one or several Arabian dialects.[11] Fischer asserted that it was used in, e.g., poetry, the sayings of soothsayers (*kuhhān*; sg. *kāhin*), and speeches, as well as in the Qurʾān. He classified the language of the Qurʾān as belonging to the pre-classical layer of the language, since, despite being transmitted in a linguistically standardised manner, it exhibits some archaic features.[12]

While it is difficult to determine with certainty from the materials that are currently available to researchers what the linguistic state of affairs in pre-Islamic Arabia was, it is to be remarked that both theories above consider the language of the Qurʾān to belong to the same type as that of poetry and other literary sources, such as the prose portions of the *ʾAyyām al-ʿarab* and at least certain parts of the *ḥadīṯ*,[13] although not without reservations.[14]

Arabic of the Qurʾān that are visible through the Qurʾānic consonantal text. See Hopkins, "Diglossia". Further cases of pseudo-corrections are discussed in Van Putten, *QA*, esp. 150–181 (ch. 6).

[7] See Fischer, *Grammatik*, 2 = Fischer, *Grammar*, 2; Fischer et al., "Neuarabische", esp. 86–89, and the literature cited on pp. 88–89.

[8] E.g., Fischer, "Classical Arabic", 187–188, and see further below.

[9] See Rabin, "Beginnings", 23–24 and the literature cited therein.

[10] See, e.g., Fleisch, *Introduction*, 96–101; Blachère, *Introduction* (1st=2nd ed.), 156–169; Rabin, *AWA*, 3–4; Rabin, "Beginnings", 23–24; Rabin et al., "*ʿArabiyya*"; Ferguson, "Koine"; Fischer, "Altarabische"; "Classical Arabic", 187–188; Holes, *Modern Arabic*, 11–17.

[11] For a more detailed summary of the various views (or assumptions – see below), see Rabin, *AWA*, 17.

[12] See, e.g., Fischer, "Altarabische", 38–40; Fischer, "Classical Arabic", 187–188. But cf. Ullmann, "Vorklassisches Arabisch".

[13] See, e.g., Rabin et al., "*ʿArabiyya*"; Fischer, "Altarabische", 38–40 and the literature therein. But see Owens, *Linguistic history*, 39, n. 8.

[14] Rabin summarises some of these reservations in his "Beginnings", 21–22. Among them is the question of the authenticity of the poetic verses, which were occasionally reworked to eliminate a

Recently, a new approach, championed by Marijn van Putten and Ahmad Al-Jallad, has been proposed.[15] In a recent book, Van Putten argues that the Arabic of the Qurʾānic textual skeleton overwhelmingly, and in a highly consistent fashion, exhibits phonological and morphological Hijazi features and is thus to be considered Hijazi.[16] Examining Qurʾān manuscripts and other materials that are available nowadays but were not at Vollers's disposal more than a century ago, Van Putten thereby revives some of the conclusions reached by Vollers regarding the Qurʾān being written in a Hijazi dialect. At the same time, however, Van Putten rejects Vollers's hypothesis that the later grammarians subjected the Qurʾānic text to massive reworking. He also rejects some of Vollers's conclusions regarding the linguistic features of that Hijazi dialect, such as its complete loss of case distinctions.[17]

Van Putten further challenges many of the aforementioned scholarly perceptions of the history of Arabic. He asserts that although the poetic koine was claimed to exist, its features were never described.[18] Moreover, he holds that the grammarians did not operate within a dichotomy between dialects and poetic koine.[19] Grammarians such as Sībawayhi and al-Farrāʾ rather described the *ʿArabiyya*, a language that contains features from various dialects, which they all deemed to be features of *al-ʿarabiyya*.[20] What is now called "Classical Arabic", he continues, is the

---

grammatical oddity that they contained. In this context, Hopkins (*Studies*, xxxviii–xl) remarks that there is no real way of differentiating, for instance, pre-Islamic from early Islamic poetry.

[15] According to Al-Jallad and Van Putten's approach, the Qurʾānic consonantal text (*rasm*) is to be treated as any other epigraphic text. If the orthography is taken seriously, they assert, it will be found that the language of the Qurʾānic consonantal text is distinct from the Classical Arabic that reached full standardisation centuries later. See Al-Jallad, *Psalm fragment*, esp. 59–73; Al-Jallad, "*Sūrat al-baqárah*"; Van Putten, "Feminine ending"; Van Putten, "Triphthongs"; Van Putten, "Hamza"; Van Putten, "Phonetics"; Van Putten, "Dissimilation"; Van Putten and Stokes, "Case".

[16] Van Putten, *QA*, 99–149.

[17] For Van Putten's treatment of Vollers's conclusions compared to his own, see Van Putten, *QA*, 146–149, and *passim*.

[18] Van Putten, *QA*, 2–3.

[19] Van Putten, *QA*, 15–46. Owens (*Linguistic history*, esp. 34–78 = ch. 2) also criticises the Old Arabic vs Neo Arabic distinction as being a merely postulated, artificial framework not "grounded in comparative linguistic theory" and calls for a linguistically grounded methodology for describing the history of Arabic, which would yield not a "linear dichotomous development", but rather a "multiply-branching bush, whose stem represents the language 1,300 years ago" (ibid, 77–78).

[20] In Van Putten's words, the *ʿarabiyya* is "any form of Arabic that the grammarians deem fit to describe" (*QA*, 3–4). This is opposed to Classical Arabic, whose rules have become the normative

outcome of a negotiation and crystallisation process,[21] which ended in a language distinct from that of the Qurʾānic consonantal text. The picture portrayed by Van Putten, then, is one in which there are initially only Arabian dialects – which do not exist alongside an elevated register or any other type of common super-tribal Old Arabic language – and the Qurʾān is written in one of those dialects. Finally, Van Putten also casts doubt on the perception of Qurʾānic Arabic as being similar to the language of poetry. He argues that, while this similarity has been asserted, it has never been demonstrated. To do so, each of these corpora should first be described independently.

Van Putten's call for action should be endorsed. Remarks on many peculiarities – or unique features – of both the language and the style of the Qurʾān are scattered across various works, mostly as part of a description of Classical Arabic,[22] and systematic studies of certain aspects of the language of the Qurʾān have also been published,[23] such as its verbal system,[24] negation[25] and certain particles.[26] Nevertheless, these attempts do not amount to a comprehensive grammar of the Qurʾān.[27] Not only is there now more information than ever before, but the information is much more readily available. Old Qurʾān manuscripts and early Arabic papyri have been found, examined and made available for researchers around the world and the knowledge of linguistics in general and Semitic linguistics in particular has significantly advanced and expanded. To discover more about the relations between the Arabic found in the Qurʾān and other Arabic corpora, such as

---

standard later on and which is described in grammars such as those of Wright and Fischer (see ibid, as well as below).

[21] Van Putten, *QA*, 215–231.

[22] E.g., Brockelmann, *Grundriss*; Nöldeke, *Zur Grammatik*; Nöldeke, "Zur Sprache"; Fleischer, *Kleinere Schriften*; Reckendorf, *Syntaktische Verhältnisse*; Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*; Fischer, *Grammar*.

[23] For a useful summary of studies on Qurʾānic Arabic as well as studies including Qurʾānic Arabic, see Talmon, "Grammar and the Qurʾān". Studies on the orthography, phonology and morphology of the Qurʾān published after Talmon's article include Birnstiel, "Selected features"; Al-Jallad, "*Sūrat al-baqárah*"; Larcher, "Le dit et l'écrit"; Larcher, "Rime cachée"; Van Putten, *QA*; as well as Van Putten, Stokes and al-Jallad's articles cited in n. 15 above.

[24] E.g., Reuschel, *Aspekt und Tempus*; Leemhuis, *D and H stems*.

[25] E.g., Bergsträsser, *Verneinungs- und Fragepartikeln*; Wehr, "Zur Funktion"; Birnstiel, "Selected features".

[26] E.g., Miquel, "*Ḥattā*"; Ambros, "*lākin* und *lākinna*".

[27] One attempt, which has been quite neglected and is "far from complete" (Talmon, "Grammar and the Qurʾān", 350), is Nedjar, *Grammaire fonctionnelle*.

pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry and the later Classical Arabic, each corpus should first be subjected to independent grammatical description. Only when such grammars are written can comprehensive comparisons be made, demonstrable conclusions be drawn and the understanding of the history of Arabic be improved.

Thesis objectives, methodology and sources

The present thesis aims to contribute to the linguistic endeavours to describe the language of the Qurʾān, especially its syntax, systematically. I have selected and examined two important yet understudied particles, viz., *nafs* and *ʾillā*.

Two factors that guided my selection of these two particles are that they perform multiple functions and that they exhibit a high number of occurrences, almost 1,000 altogether. The 663 occurrences of *ʾillā*, for instance, make it one of the most important particles in the Qurʾān. It is given much attention in pre-modern commentaries and other scholarly works, in which one often finds lengthy explanations of, and frequent scholarly debates on, its syntactical analysis.[28] Its multifunctionality is also a source of confusion among modern Qurʾān translators, which is reflected in the various translations suggested for the same verse or passage that indicate different, sometimes conflicting, interpretations of the text.

An additional motivation for preferring certain questions over others is the current state of research. The grammatical case of the complement of *ʾillā*, for instance, has been given much attention in previous analyses of *ʾillā*. Unlike those analyses, the present thesis almost never deals with the case of the complement of *ʾillā*; instead, it shifts the focus to other important functional and syntactical aspects of this particle that have not been paid sufficient attention. In the context of Qurʾānic Arabic in particular, the grammatical case of the complement of *ʾillā* is also mostly unrecoverable from the Qurʾānic consonantal text. The small number of instances in which its case ending is apparent in the *rasm* also makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions regarding this topic.

[28] References to such debates are scattered throughout the thesis. Many of them are mentioned in ʿUḍayma, I.1, 230–385.

The final factor in my selection of topics is the advance in general linguistic research on reflexivity and reciprocity,[29] which are relevant to *nafs*, as well as on adversativity and exceptive constructions,[30] which are relevant to *ʾillā*. Even though none of the studies on these topics focuses on Arabic, the information that they contain provides a broad linguistic context, which permits improved analyses of the particles discussed in this thesis (see further below). By tying together the analysis of Qurʾānic grammar and modern linguistics, I hope to suggest promising avenues for future work.

The examination of these particles was conducted in two main stages. The first one is restricted to the corpus of the Qurʾān and the second involves further literature. First, each particle was analysed from the perspective of the Qurʾānic corpus alone – that is, considering only the linguistic features and stylistic criteria derived from the Qurʾān itself and without using any commentaries or secondary sources – to ensure a reading as uninfluenced as possible by later interpretations. The verses were mostly dealt with on a case-by-case basis, but the following factors were regularly taken into account in the analysis.

Intra-Qurʾānic parallels

One significant and oft-remarked feature of the Qurʾānic text is the profusion of intra-Qurʾānic parallels – that is, similar but not necessarily identical text units of various lengths, which may resemble each other not only in wording but also, for instance, in syntactic structure. Their close affinity and their appearance in various contexts make them a powerful and hitherto underexploited tool for analysing the text.

Attention to intra-Qurʾānic parallels is by no means new to research. Their meaning and importance have been discussed in several studies, although a comprehensive systematic study of them is yet to be published.[31] Existing studies

[29] Most notably Evans et al., *Reciprocals*; Nedjalkov, *Reciprocal constructions*; König and Gast, *Reciprocals and reflexives*.

[30] Most recent works include García Álvarez, "Generality and exception" (exceptive constructions) and Izutsu, "CCC" (adversativity). Both refer to previous works. Further important milestones in the research on adversative relations are presented in §7.1 below.

[31] The genre of traditional works on intra-Qurʾānic parallels is called *al-wujūh wa-l-naẓāʾir* or *al-ʾašbāh wa-l-naẓāʾir*. Intra-Qurʾānic parallels are also sometimes referred to as *al-ʾāyāt al-mutašābihāt*, a term

have mainly focused on the significance of intra-Qurʾānic parallels for the understanding of the composition and relative chronology within the Qurʾān.[32] The present thesis will show how important these intra-Qurʾānic parallels can prove for the research of the language of the Qurʾān as well.

The following is an example of the use of intra-Qurʾānic parallels related to *nafs*, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1:

> Q 82:5 *ʿalimat* ***nafsun*** *mā qaddamat wa-ʾaḫḫarat*
> [then] [every] person shall know what s/he accomplished and failed to accomplish.

> Q 75:13 *yunabbaʾu* ***l-ʾinsānu*** *yawmaʾiḏin bi-mā qaddama wa-ʾaḫḫar*
> Upon that day man shall be told what he accomplished and failed to accomplish

Although the wording of these two verses is not identical, they exhibit several similarities. They use *nafs* and *insān* as the subjects of the verbs *qaddama* and *ʾaḫḫara*; *nafs* and *insān* are the subjects of the cognitive verbs *ʿalima* and *nabbaʾa* (in the passive voice); and both verses share the context of the Day of Judgement. These common points all assist in paralleling *nafs* with *insān* and thereby showing that the former not only refers to the abstract site of thoughts and emotions but also denotes "person".

---

that is also used in legal contexts as the opposite of *muḥkam*, "clear" (for which see Kinberg, "Ambiguous"). See also the next footnote.

[32] Joseph Witztum ("Variant traditions"), for instance, stresses the importance of a "long[-]overdue" systematic study of intra-Qurʾānic parallels to discover more on, *inter alia*, the formation of the text. See his article for a helpful survey of various approaches to intra-Qurʾānic parallel passages as well as two illuminating case studies. His studies often emphasise the importance of identifying differences, or points of tension, between the parallel passages, as well as the similarity and differences between the various parallel passages and pre-Islamic materials (see also, e.g., his more recent "Thrice upon a time"). Other recent articles on the matter include Stewart, "Theory" and Reynolds, "Doublets". In the former, Devin Stewart clarifies the details and background of Wansbrough's theory of variant traditions in the Qurʾān and challenges it by revisiting Wansbrough's case study of the parallel stories of Šuʿayb. In the latter, Gabriel Reynolds focuses on a much narrower definition of intra-Qurʾānic parallels, which he terms "doublets" (defined on p. 11). Based on his preliminary findings, he argues that the existence of doublets in a quite significant number and their distribution into Meccan/Meccan and Medinan/Medinan groups point to a three-stage redaction process, from oral (or written) composition through two pre-canonical (Meccan and Medinan) corpora to a single canonical Qurʾān.

The end-rhyme

In studying individual corpora, the characteristics of each corpus should be carefully considered. Qurʾānic rhymed prose cannot be described without paying attention to Qurʾānic rhyme and its influence on the text.[33] As Devin J. Stewart has highlighted in several studies, many peculiar features of Qurʾānic Arabic – when compared to extra-Qurʾānic Arabic – result from the need for the end of verses to rhyme.[34]

A simple example pertains to word order. In Qurʾānic Arabic, as in extra-Qurʾānic Arabic, the object in an unmarked sentence follows the verb governing it:

> Q 7:36 *wa-llaḏīna* ***kaḏḏabū bi-ʾāyātinā*** *wa-****stakbarū ʿanhā*** *ʾulāʾika ʾaṣḥābu n-nāri...*
> But those who deny the truth of our (God's) signs and are scornful of them – those are the companions of the fire...

> Q 6:66 *wa-****kaḏḏaba bihī*** *qawmuka wa-huwa l-ḥaqqu*
> Your[s] people have denied it, though it is the truth.

However, towards the end of the verse, mostly in the verse's last stich and in certain rhyme environments more frequently than in others, the object might precede the governing verb, allowing the verb to be positioned in the rhyming slot:

> Q 37:21 *hāḏā yawmu l-faṣli llaḏī kuntum* ***bihī tukaḏḏibūn***
> This is the Day of Separation, which you said was a lie.

As this occurs in the Qurʾān quite frequently, one might think that this is a grammatical feature of Qurʾānic Arabic, whereas it should really be viewed as a stylistic device.[35] In other words, insufficient awareness of the influence of the end-rhyme could lead to an inaccurate description of the language of the Qurʾān.[36]

---

[33] This influence may be illustrated, e.g., by comparing Q 20:123 with Q 2:38. While the wording of both verses is very similar, they present a different ending formula, most probably on account of the rhyme.

[34] See Stewart, "*Sajʿ*"; Stewart, "Rhymed prose"; Stewart, "Poetic license".

[35] See also Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 90.

[36] This discussion focuses on word order, but the use of *kuntum tukaḏḏibūn* in Q 37:21 should also be noted. Compare this use of *kānū yafʿalūn* with that of *faʿalū* in Q 6:66 and 7:36. When describing the verbal system of the Qurʾān, the use of *kāna* + imperfect should be described based upon other verses, in which this verbal construction is not affected by rhyme considerations. Indeed, this has not escaped Reuschel, who remarks on rhyme throughout his *Aspekt und Tempus*.

Although modern scholarship has dealt to some extent with the phenomena of rhyme restrictions and rhyme fillers,[37] there is still too little awareness of their prevalence in the Qurʾānic text and their influence on the grammar of the Qurʾān. While this thesis does not aim to undertake a comprehensive study of Qurʾānic rhyme, nor do the questions asked in it pertain directly to rhyme, the end-rhyme has been regularly considered in its analysis. When relevant, I draw attention to the rhyme in footnotes throughout the thesis. I also dedicate a short section to the influence of rhyme in Chapter 8.

Variant readings

For syntactical investigations, variant readings are an important tool at the disposal of the Qurʾān researcher mainly when they reflect differences in the interpretation of the text or in case endings. Although variant readings have regularly been consulted throughout the work on the thesis, they have turned out to be mostly irrelevant to the questions investigated in it. With regard to *ʾillā*, for instance, most relevant variant readings reflect differences in the grammatical case assigned to the complement of *ʾillā*; however, for reasons mentioned above, the case ending of the complement of *ʾillā* has not been paid much attention in the thesis. Moreover, its case does not assist in finding solutions to the issues examined in the part on *ʾillā*. For instance, let us examine Q 11:81:

> Q 11:81 *qālū yā-lūṭu ʾinnā rusulu rabbika lan yaṣilū ʾilayka fa-ʾasri bi-ʾahlika bi-qaṭʿin mina l-layli wa-lā yaltafit minkum ʾaḥadun* ***ʾilla*** *mraʾataka ʾinnahū muṣībuhā mā ʾaṣābahum ʾinna mawʿiduhumu ṣ-ṣubḥu ʾa-laysa ṣ-ṣubḥu bi-qarīb*
>
> They said, 'O Lot, we are the messengers of your[s] Lord. They will not reach you[s]. Travel with your[s] family for a part of the night, and let none of you[p] turn round, except your[s] wife. That which smites them will also smite her. Their appointed time is the morning. Is not the morning near?'

[37] Rhyme restrictions may be defined as changes made to words or sentences to fulfil the need for rhyme, such as the word order in the example above. One type of rhyme restriction, which is perhaps more frequently used when it is more difficult to rhyme by manipulating the verse's final word or sentence, is adding a rhyming word to the rhyming slot. This could be exemplified by the Qurʾānic usage of word *mubīn*, for which see Chapter 5, n. 9.

Several readers are reported to have read *ʾilla mraʾatuka* in the nominative.[38] The reading in the accusative allows for Lot's wife both to be excepted from the immediately preceding sentence *wa-lā yaltafit minkum ʾaḥadun*, "and let none of you[p] turn round", and to be excepted from the longer preceding unit *fa-ʾasri bi-ʾahlika … ʾaḥadun*, "Travel with your[s] family … turn round".[39] The nominative reading only allows the former possibility.[40] However, none of these readings change the answer to the question how to classify *ʾillā* in this instance, as according to both readings it is exceptive. Furthermore, these two variant readings, as is usually the case with variant readings,[41] do not reflect differences in the Qurʾānic consonantal text,[42] which makes it impossible to determine which variant reading (if any) is the original one.

A question that I did try to answer in the thesis is whether *ʾillā* can be followed by a sentence. This has been suggested for several verses, including Q 11:81.[43] In this context, what follows *ʾillā* in this verse as well as in almost all its intra-Qurʾānic parallels may also be read as an independent sentence: "but your[s] wife – that which smites them will also smite her".[44] The case ending of "your[s] wife", however, cannot decisively be shown to be related to this question.[45]

---

[38] Al-Ḫaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, IV, 116–118.

[39] For the former option, see Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, I, 318–319 = ch. 189 (further discussed in Chapter 10), in which Sībawayhi discusses the accusative invariably assigned to the complement of *ʾillā* when following negative sentences. The unit containing the generalisation from which the complement of *ʾillā* is excepted will be termed "host" (see §6.1). For examples of the host extending over more than a single sentence, see §8.2.4.

[40] Al-Fārisī, *al-Ḥujja*, III, 261–264.

[41] See Leemhuis, "Readings"; Van Putten, *QA*, 53–55 and the literature therein.

[42] This, however, is not true for all complements of *ʾillā*, most notably *qalīl*. See Chapter 8, n. 5.

[43] See al-Ḫaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, IV, 117; Bergsträsser, *Verneinungs- und Fragepartikeln*, 80. I could not find this verse among those listed in ʿUḍayma, I.1, 332–334. For the topic of *ʾillā* followed by a sentence, see §8.4 below.

[44] Q 7:83, 15:60, 27:57, 29:32, 29:33. Note that all of these may equally be interpreted such that the complement of *ʾillā* is simply the phrase "your[s]/his wife" (*imraʾataka*/*imraʾatahū*). The complement of *ʾillā* can only be read as a phrase in Q 26:171 and 37:135. To be sure, by an "independent sentence" I do not mean a sentence that can be subsumed under the "without" category (see §5.2 below), but a unit independent from the sentence preceding an adversative *ʾillā* (see Chapter 7 below). The question is mainly discussed in §§8.3, 8.4 and 9.2.

[45] If the nominative has anything to do with *imraʾatuka* being the subject of a sentence following *ʾillā*, then one would expect all other parallels in which the part following *ʾillā* can be read as a sentence to have a nominative variant reading, too. However, a variant reading in the nominative is documented

The contents of the Qurʾān

Finally, at the risk of stating the obvious, familiarity with the contents of the Qurʾān is of no less importance, especially when dealing with syntax and semantics. As an example, I will briefly mention the following short passage, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7:

> Q 4:29 *yā-ʾayyuha llaḏīna ʾāmanū lā taʾkulū ʾamwālakum baynakum bi-l-bāṭili* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *takūna tijāratan ʿan tarāḍin minkum*
>
> O believers, consume not each other's property in vanity, **but** let it[46] be trading by mutual consent among you[p]

The syntax allows for *ʾillā* to be read as exceptive – that is, "**unless** it be trading by mutual consent among you". However, this reading would suggest that in certain circumstances a believer may consume another believer's property in vanity, which is categorically forbidden in the Qurʾān. *ʾIllā* in this verse is not exceptive, but adversative.

Thus far, the first stage of the examination was described. In the second stage, I consulted secondary sources, including pre-modern Qurʾān commentaries and grammatical works as well as classical and modern Islamic works on Qurʾānic Arabic. Despite being at times influenced by theological considerations, these writings amount to centuries of study of various aspects of the Qurʾān and hold a great deal of information. Thus, they are highly useful in the analysis of the Qurʾānic corpus. One important modern work worth mentioning here is Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḫāliq ʿUḍayma's rather neglected *Dirāsāt li-ʾuslūb al-Qurʾān al-karīm* ("Studies in the style of the Holy Qurʾān"), which is dedicated to a study of Qurʾānic Arabic from a traditional point of view. ʿUḍayma discusses the usage of the particles, the verbs and the nominal patterns used in the Qurʾān, including their variant readings, as well as the syntactical features it includes, discussing

---

only for this verse, not consistently for all other possible verses allowing more than one syntactical analysis. The same can be argued for the ʾIblīs parallels, which are discussed in §9.2. All seven parallels may be read in two possible ways, namely, such that *ʾillā* is followed either by a sentence or by a mere phrase. However, only one of the parallels, Q 2:34, has the variant reading *ʾiblīsu* in the nominative alongside the accusative *ʾiblīsa*; for all other parallels, only the accusative case is assigned to ʾIblīs. It would be better, then, to associate the nominative reading with the analysis of the host of the exception phrase, as the traditional analysis suggests.

[46] That is, the trading. For a more detailed discussion of the variant readings and their translations, see §7.3.2.

noteworthy cases and summarising points of dispute in Islamic scholarship regarding the Arabic of the Qurʾān.

At the second stage, I also took advantage of recent advances in the linguistic literature. As mentioned above, reciprocity, adversativity and exceptive constructions have all lately benefitted from extensive advances in cross-linguistic studies; however, none of those studies covers Arabic. The present thesis thus contributes to both linguistics and Qurʾānic Studies. The former will gain new data from Qurʾānic Arabic, including, *inter alia*, its unusual distribution of adversative connectives. The latter will benefit from an improved linguistic analysis of Qurʾānic Arabic, which places, for instance, the reciprocal usage of *ʾanfus* in a broader linguistic context and provides tools for distinguishing exceptive from adversative *ʾillā*.

The comprehensiveness of the analysis provided in this thesis has led to discovering features that previous research has hitherto neglected. Thus, Chapter 3 describes the (optional) usage of *nafs* as a substitution for the second of two pronouns coreferential with a similar antecedent – a feature that, to the best of my knowledge, has never been discussed before. For instance, alongside Q 2:129 *wa-bʿaṯ fīhim rasūlan* ***minhum***, "when he (God) raised up among them a messenger from them(selves)", one finds Q 3:164 *ʾiḏ baʿaṯa fīhim rasūlan* ***min ʾanfusihim***, in which, after the pronoun complementing *fī* in *fīhim*, *min ʾanfusihim* is utilised instead of *minhum*.

Other features, which were previously only briefly discussed, are explored in more detail. Chapter 5 defines the restrictive use of *ʾillā* more accurately, shifting the focus from *ʾillā* itself to a restrictive construction, which includes both *ʾillā* and the negative particle that always precedes it. In other words, the chapter uses the broader linguistic perspective to look at the usage of *ʾillā* differently: it is not *ʾillā* that, following negation, yields the meaning of "only", but it is both the negating particle and *ʾillā* that produce this sense. Chapter 5 also dedicates a separate discussion to the "without" category, a sub-class of the restrictive usage of *ʾillā* that, to my knowledge, has never been given its own description.

Thesis overview

The thesis consists of two parts, each containing different investigations. **Part I** explores the usages of *nafs* and its plural forms, *ʾanfus* and *nufūs*, in the Qurʾān. **Chapter 1** focuses on its occurrences as a noun (that is, not as part of the grammar)

and provides a lexicographical survey of its meanings and the contexts in which they appear. **Chapter 2** revolves around the usage of *nafs* as a reflexive particle. It shows that *nafs* is used to express individual reflexivity (e.g., "yourself") and that its plural form *ʾanfus* is used to express individual and collective reflexivity (e.g., "yourselves") as well as reciprocity ("each other"). **Chapter 3** suggests a syntactical analysis of the instances of *nafs* that do not fall under the rubrics of Chapters 1 and 2. It discusses the optional usage of *nafs* or *ʾanfus* where a pronoun could be utilised. **Chapter 4** gathers comments on difficult cases.

Part II offers a systematic analysis of the particle *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān. Chapters 5–7 constitute the core of the analysis. Each chapter opens with an introduction that provides a general linguistic context, which is followed by a classification of sub-types and examples. **Chapter 5** revolves around restrictive *ʾillā* constructions, which yield English translations such as "only" and "without". **Chapter 6** focuses on exceptive *ʾillā*, which is often translated into English as "except" and, when complemented by an *ʾan* clause, as "unless". With the definitions of exceptive constructions laid out in Chapter 6, **Chapter 7** establishes the usage of *ʾillā* as an adversative particle. As a contrastive particle, *ʾillā* may be translated as "but not" (≠ "except"), and as a corrective particle it translates into "but" (German *sondern*). This chapter also provides a comparison with *lākin(na)*. **Chapter 8** examines certain characteristics of *ʾillā* across its various types. It includes investigations related to informational focus; the syntactical position of the *ʾillā* phrases in relation to the proposition to which they are semantically related; the use of *fa-* after *ʾillā* constructions; a case showing that *ʾillā* may be followed by a sentence, not only by a phrase or an equivalent thereof; and cases of rhyme influence. **Chapter 9** discusses noteworthy case studies of *ʾillā* constructions in the Qurʾān. **Chapter 10** is the outcome of two investigations of the way in which *ʾillā* was analysed by pre-modern scholars. These seek to portray a development in grammatical thought of *ʾillā* constructions as reflected by the differences between Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* and later pre-modern grammatical and exegetical works.

* * *

The transliteration is based on the reading of Ḥafṣ from ʿĀṣim, although variant readings, when relevant, are also provided. Final words of verses are transliterated

in their pausal form. When a passage longer than a single verse is quoted, the verses are separated either by full stops or by verse numbers.

In the transliteration of verses and other long texts, the definite article before a "sun letter" reflects assimilation; e.g., *rabbu s-samāwāti wa-l-ʾarḍi*. In the transliteration of short phrases and terms that are not part of a text, each word is transliterated as a separate word; e.g., *nafs al-ʿaql wa-l-tamyīz*.

The pronominal suffix of the 3rd-person masculine singular is transliterated long after a short syllable and short after a long syllable; thus, e.g., *ʿalā nafsihī*, but *ʾatāhu*.

Long vowels at the end of words are transliterated short if followed by a consonant cluster; thus, e.g., *ʿalā ʾanfusikum*, but *ʿala llāhi*.

In lists of verse numbers, when the verses are not listed in numerical order, similar verses are grouped together.

When there is more than one occurrence of a word in a given verse, the symbol "#" specifies the occurrence number; e.g., in Part I, Q 16:111#2 refers to the second occurrence of *nafs* in Q 16:111.

The translations of the Qurʾānic verses are taken from Alan Jones's translation of the Qurʾān, with adaptations based generally on the translations of Arthur J. Arberry, Uri Rubin, Rudi Paret and Richard Bell. The number and (occasionally) gender of the pronouns in the 2nd and 3rd persons are indicated in my translations by superscript letters: s = singular; d = dual; p = plural; m = masculine; f = feminine. Note that more than one superscript letter may be used; e.g., "they^{f} are a garment for you^{mp}, and you^{mp} are a garment for them^{f}" (Q 2:187). Since feminine pronouns occur in the Qurʾān much less often than masculine ones, the reader is to assume that the gender is masculine unless otherwise indicated. "s/he" is occasionally used for "he or she".

References to Qurʾānic commentaries include the sūra and verse numbers unless the Qurʾānic reference is clear from the context.

Part I: A linguistic study of *nafs* in the Qurʾān

Overview

The word *nafs* occurs in the Qurʾān 295 times, of which 140 are in the singular form and 155 are in two plural forms, viz., *ʾanfus* (153 times) and *nufūs* (twice). Its dual form never appears. In two verses, a hidden pronoun in the 3rd person feminine singular functioning as the subject of the verb *balaġat* possibly refers to *nafs*, although the word does not explicitly occur.[1]

Qurʾān translators have occasionally struggled with the translation of *nafs*. In certain verses, when some translate *nafs* as a lexical item (see below), others understand it as a reflexive object; in other verses, it is clear that *nafs* should be understood as a lexical item, but translators still differ on its translation.[2] To cite but a few instances, while Arberry translates Q 2:110 *wa-mā tuqaddimū li-ʾanfusikum min ḫayrin* as "whatever good you shall forward to your souls' account", Paret prefers "und was ihr für euch (im Erdenleben) vorweg an Gutem tut" and likewise Asad opts for "whatever good deed you send ahead for your own selves".[3] Pickthall translates Q 4:111 *wa-man yaksibu ʾiṯman fa-ʾinnamā yaksibuhū ʿalā nafsihī* as "Whoso committeth sin committeth it only against himself", but prefers "Whoso doeth right, it is for his soul, and whoso doeth wrong, it is against it" for Q 45:15 *man ʿamila ṣāliḥan fa-li-nafsihī wa-man ʾasāʾa fa-ʿalayhā*.[4] For *nufūs* in Q 17:25 *rabbukum ʾaʿlamu bi-mā fī nufūsikum* ("God knows very well what is in your[p] *nufūs*"), Arberry, Asad and Abdel Haleem translate "heart(s)", Pickthall prefers "minds", and Homerin suggests "within yourselves".[5] Q 2:286 *lā yukallifu llāhu nafsan ʾillā wusʿahā* is translated by

---

[1] Q 56:83 and 75:26. See further Chapter 1, n. 39. The word "*nafs*" in this part of the thesis may occasionally refer to all three forms – that is, both in the singular and in the plural. Whenever "*nafs*" appears in the English text (e.g., in §4.2), it is referred to as "it".

[2] As will be shown below (esp. in Chapter 4), the differentiation between the various possible meanings of *nafs* occasionally proves quite difficult indeed.

[3] Note, however, that Asad himself later translates Q 2:223 *wa-qaddimū li-ʾanfusikum* as "but first provide something for your souls". For *QDM*, see also §4.4 below.

[4] For a discussion of this verse, see §4.1 below.

[5] Homerin, "Soul", 82. See further in the literature review below.

Arberry as "God charges no soul save to its capacity", whereas Asad opts for "God does not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear".[6]

Previous scholarship on *nafs*

The meaning of *nafs*, or certain aspects thereof, has been investigated or commented on by several modern scholars. To the best of my knowledge, Edwin E. Calverley was the first to dedicate an article to *nafs*. In his "Doctrines of the soul (*nafs* and *rūḥ*) in Islam", he discusses the overlap between the semantic fields of *nafs* and *rūḥ*, which gradually developed over time. In the Qurʾān, as is also briefly discussed below (§1.1.2), these terms convey different notions and connotations. The latter is associated with God and the supernatural, whereas the former is strongly associated with human subjects. It was only later, Calverley shows, that these words began to overlap in meaning (at least partially) and to be used interchangeably.[7]

The first modern scholar to devote an article to the various senses of *nafs* in the Qurʾān is Régis Blachère. Blachère portrays a linear development of the meaning of *nafs*.[8] He identifies a "primitive" notion of *nafs*, namely, "vital breath", "soul", related to the meaning of *nəp̄əš* in Hebrew and *napištu* in Akkadian in the sense of "throat, mouth". This notion, he says, has essentially to do with what leaves the perishable flesh when it is asleep or dead, and temporarily returns to it while it is awake or alive.[9] Certain aspects pertaining to the origin of the term still appear in the Qurʾān, to wit, its relation to desire, lust, temptation, inciting to evil and greed. However, its sense has undergone a certain development. The *nafs* has an individual responsibility for its deeds on the Day of Judgement, in whose context it occurs

[6] It should be noted that, since "soul" in English may refer to a human being (see "soul, n." (n. 9), *OED Online*, www.oed.com/view/Entry/185083), there are cases in which *nafs* is translated into English as "soul" but understood as "person". Apart from Q 2:286, this is evident, for instance, from Arberry's translation of Q 6:158: "[...] On the day that one of thy Lord's signs comes it shall not profit a soul (*nafsan*) to believe that never believed before, or earned some good in his belief (*ʾīmānuhā*)". Another example from his translation is Q 7:189: "It is He who created you[P] out of one living soul (*min nafsin wāḥidatin*), and made of him (*minhā*) his spouse (*zawjahā*) that he might rest in her (*li-yaskuna ʾilayhā*)".

[7] Calverley, "Doctrines".

[8] Blachère, "Note".

[9] Blachère, "Note", 70–71. This view was later adopted by Van Ess (*Gedankenwelt*, 31).

much more frequently than *ʾinsān*, "man". This, however, does not mean that *nafs* conveys a notion similar to what Christians call "conscience".[10]

Nafs is also used in contexts in which *ṣadr* and *qalb* are found. In this sense, it is the place containing the thoughts, perhaps even the "heart of hearts" (*for intérieur*). This is already moving away from the basic meaning of *nafs*, says Blachère. Other developed senses are "human being", "person" and "mankind".[11]

Finally, Blachère briefly discusses the reflexive sense of *nafs* and mentions a few reciprocal occurrences, too. The meaning of all of these, he asserts, is close to that of "soul" and "person". "It is only our European linguistic consciousness that makes us understand it as reflexive".[12]

The psychological and corporal dimensions of *nafs*, especially those related to the core meaning of "soul", both in poetry and in the Qurʾān, have been discussed extensively by Tilman Seidensticker. In a monograph on the heart and its semantic field in Old Arabic,[13] he discusses the terms *qalb*, *fuʾād*, *lubb*, *janān*, *kabid*, *ṣadr* and *nafs* and various mental processes to which they are related, such as love, fear, belief, will/desire and understanding.[14] Seidensticker then analyses each term in three dimensions: (1) the mental dimension, which includes the mental processes mentioned above; (2) the physical dimension; that is, whether the terms can be located in the human body; and (3) the stylistic valence (*Stilwert*) of the term, especially whether or not it belongs to a poetic register of expression.

Although the analysis is narrowed to 20 Qurʾānic occurrences of *nafs* only,[15] Seidensticker's illuminating study places *nafs* (in the sense of "soul")[16] in its proper

---

[10] Blachère, "Note", 72–75.

[11] Blachère, "Note", 74–75.

[12] Blachère, "Note", 76–77.

[13] Seidensticker, *Herz*. The occurrences discussed in his work are taken from poetry – pre-Islamic to ʿUmar ibn ʾAbī Rabīʿa (d. 93/712 or 103/721) – as well as from the Qurʾān.

[14] Due to the high number of occurrences of *nafs* found in poetry, the analysis was narrowed to pre-Islamic poetry only.

[15] The verses are as follows: Q 2:87, 4:128, 5:30, 12:53#2, 12:68, 20:96, 21:102, 41:31, 43:71, 50:16, 53:23, 59:9#2, 64:16#2, 79:40 (Wollen, Begehren, etc.); 9:118, 20:67 (Furcht); 27:14, 30:8 (Verstand); 8:53, 13:11 (Glauben/Unglauben). Q 5:70 may be added to the category of "Wollen, Begehren, etc.".

[16] Seidensticker prefers consistently to employ the term "soul", which, he concedes, is often somewhat unsatisfactory, instead of using half a dozen different translations for the same Arabic term. See pp. 144–145, in which he also discusses Van Ess's decision to translate *nafs* as "ich" (in the sense of "Sitz der Triebe") in his *Gedankenwelt* (31, esp. n. 1).

semantic context and shows how close the affinity between *nafs* and *ṣadr* is.[17] The range of semantic categories found in the Qurʾān is narrower than in pre-Islamic poetry.[18] Within the broad semantic field of "heart", there is a partial semantic overlap between *nafs* and *ṣadr* on the one hand, and *qalb* and *fuʾād* on the other, and to a lesser extent between each of these pairs and *kabid*.[19]

Other meanings of *nafs* are not at the heart of Seidensticker's work; nevertheless, he discusses them briefly.[20] The reflexive use of *nafs* exists both in poetry and in the Qurʾān; so does the sense of "Person, jemand", which is often construed as "(human) life".[21] Expectedly, *nafs* in the sense of the people on the Day of Judgement, which appears already from the first Meccan period,[22] occurs much less frequently in poetry than in the Qurʾān.

Two of Blachère's assertions, in Seidensticker's view, are not compelling.[23] He rejects the understanding of *ʾanfus* in Q 39:42 and 9:55/85 as "vital breath".[24] The second claim that he finds unpersuasive is that *ʾanfus* in Q 9:118 *wa-ḍāqat ʿalayhim ʾanfusuhum* is related to the sense of "throat, mouth". According to Seidensticker, it should rather be construed like *ṣadr* in Q 15:97 *yaḍīqu ṣadruka*, "your[s] breast is straitened", which expresses a sense of fear,[25] or perhaps distress.

In his entry "Soul" in the *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*,[26] Th. Emil Homerin shortly summarises both semantic and grammatical aspects of *nafs* in the Qurʾān. First, he discusses its grammatical function as a reflexive object.[27] Then, on the semantic level, he discusses *nafs* as reflecting negative human traits, namely greed,

---

[17] As will be further discussed below (§1.1.1), additional Qurʾānic evidence can be adduced to show this affinity, which extends beyond the focus of Seidensticker's work.

[18] See Seidensticker, *Herz*, 154–157 = §2.5.2 (Qurʾān); 146–153 = §2.5.1 (poetry); 158 = §2.5.3 (comparison).

[19] See Seidensticker, *Herz*, 163–171 = §3.

[20] Seidensticker, *Herz*, 142–145.

[21] Cf. below, and see §4.3 for a discussion of this sense.

[22] Seidensticker, *Herz*, 144.

[23] Seidensticker, *Herz*, 144.

[24] Seidensticker, *Herz*, 144; Blachère, "Note", 70–71. See further §1.1 below.

[25] Seidensticker, *Herz*, 144. However, according to Seidensticker (ibid), this peculiar formulation should not affect the conclusion that *nafs* (unlike *ṣadr*) cannot be located in the body – on which see Seidensticker, *Herz*, 159–162; 167–168 = §3.2. Cf. also Q 11:12 *wa-ḍāʾiqun bihī ṣadruka*, "and your[s] breast is straitened by it".

[26] Homerin, "Soul".

[27] Homerin, "Soul", 82. *Nafs* expressing reciprocity is not mentioned in the article.

selfishness and concupiscence, as well as its meanings of "living person" and "human life". This last sense is discussed in the article alongside examples occurring in three main contexts, to wit, killing and death, the Day of Judgement and the creation.[28]

Recently, Nicolai Sinai has devoted a short entry to *nafs* in his *Key terms of the Qurʾān*, in which he summarises the various lexical senses and grammatical usages of *nafs* and concentrates primarily on its anthropological significance.[29] What is termed "soul" in the present part is defined in his entry as related to "certain aspects of the interior dimension of human personhood". In this sense, "the lower self" and "the vital self" may well be more accurate. Possibly as a result of an extension of this basic meaning, he adds, Qurʾānic *nafs* also refers to an entire living human person.

Sinai concludes that Qurʾānic *nafs* is closer to what *nafs* denotes in pre-Islamic poetry than to Biblical *nεp̄εš*. Another assertion has to do with whether the Qurʾānic notion of the *nafs* fits a Platonistic understanding of the human individual as comprising a material body and a living soul. Sinai maintains that, although this perception of the soul is evident from late antique Christian works, it cannot be decisively substantiated that it exists in the Qurʾān.[30] These matters are beyond the scope of the present part of this thesis.

As presented above, modern research on *nafs* has mostly dealt with the following questions:

❖ The lexical meanings of *nafs*:
- Specifying the various senses of *nafs* and its broader semantic field
- Identifying an original sense and developments thereof in Arabic (or within the Qurʾān in particular)
- Comparing *nafs* with *rūḥ*
- Comparing *nafs* to its cognates in other Semitic languages
- Localising the *nafs* in the body

❖ The grammatical function(s) of *nafs*

[28] Homerin, "Soul", 83–84. See further below (§1.2).

[29] Sinai, *Key terms*, 681–691 (s.v. "*nafs*").

[30] Sinai, *Key terms*, 685. See also Rahman, *Major Themes*, 78, arguing against the claim that there is a dualism of body and soul in the Qurʾān.

The present part discusses the lexical senses of *nafs*, *ʾanfus* and *nufūs* as well as their grammatical usages. Attention will be given to the contexts in which these terms appear, to traditional exegetical views and to pre-Islamic sources when relevant. As a general remark, I wish to clarify that by discussing medieval commentaries I do not intend to imply that pre-modern exegetes were necessarily interested in the question of the exact sense of *nafs* or of what reflexivity type it expresses. However, it is occasionally possible to infer from their discussions how they understood *nafs*.

In **Chapter 1**, it is argued, in line with earlier works, that *nafs* has two core literal senses, viz., "soul" and "person". This section also identifies the main contexts to which each core meaning is related: (1) the Day of Judgement; (2) killing and death; (3) the creation. **Chapter 2** intends to contribute to both linguistic and Qurʾānic research by discussing and exemplifying the various grammatical usages of *nafs*. While the usage of *nafs* and *ʾanfus* as reflexive markers is well known, reciprocal *ʾanfus* has only briefly been noted or hinted at.[31] In addition, there has lately been an enormous advance in research of reflexivity and reciprocity from a cross-linguistic perspective. While recent linguistic works explore aspects and grammatical constructions of reflexivity and reciprocity in many languages, almost none of them mentions Arabic.[32] **Chapter 3** gathers verses that fit neither the first nor the second chapter. It shows that *nafs* or *ʾanfus* may occur in the Qurʾān where a pronoun is expected. Finally, **Chapter 4** discusses difficult cases. In some of these cases, it is difficult to determine whether *nafs* is to be understood as a lexical item or as a reflexive object; in other cases, it is the exact lexical meaning that is unclear.

[31] Reckendorf draws attention to Q 2:84–85 *ʾanfusakum* being reciprocal in a brief footnote (*Arabische Syntax*, 286, n. 1). Blachère ("Note", 76–77; esp. 76, n. 2), too, briefly remarks on Q 2:84 and points out the ambiguity of Q 2:54 *lā taqtulū ʾanfusakum*. Paret comments on reciprocal occurrences of *ʾanfus* in his *Kommentar*, terming them "collective" – see further n. 20 below. Ambros (*Concise dictionary*, 272 [*NFS*]) includes both "reciprocity" and "dichotomy" among the meanings conveyed by plural *ʾanfus* – cf. Chapter 2, n. 41.

[32] The only work in which I found a discussion and examples from Arabic (including a few Qurʾānic verses) is the recently published *The NP-strategy for expressing reciprocity* by Elitzur A. Bar-Asher Siegal. However, the book does not focus on the reciprocal reading of reflexive markers.

Chapter 1: The lexical senses of *nafs*

The term *nafs* (pl. *ʾanfus* or *nufūs*) in the Qurʾān has two core lexical meanings. As is inevitably the case in any description of ancient concepts with modern words, these meanings are mere approximations:

(i) A core meaning of "soul", which refers to the (abstract)[1] place in which thoughts and emotions are kept, at times hidden, and in which God's signs are perceived. This core meaning is related to the semantic field of human emotions, desires, belief and intellect.[2] It is for this reason, I assume, that *nafs* is occasionally translated into English as "heart", "mind" and "the self".[3] In this sense, *nafs* is sometimes contrasted with the outside – that is, with what one outwardly says, does or shows.

(ii) A core meaning related to "person", "human being", which is also linked to translations such as "individual", "everyone" and "each one". This sense refers to a living person as a whole.

Two basic guidelines may be helpful in identifying a lexical occurrence of *nafs* and *ʾanfus* in the Qurʾān:[4] when (I) *nafs* is indefinite,[5] or (II) *nafs*/*ʾanfus* is referred to by another syntactical element, it should mostly be understood as a lexical item meaning either "person" or "soul".[6] The element referring to *nafs* or *ʾanfus* may be (a) a verb whose subject is *nafs*/*ʾanfus*; (b) a quantifier or an attribute (*kull*,[7] *wāḥida*);

---

[1] See Seidensticker, *Herz*, 159–162, 168–171.

[2] Seidensticker, *Herz*, esp. 154–158.

[3] "Heart": e.g., Arberry on Q 3:154 *yuḫfūna fī ʾanfusihim mā lā yubdūna laka*; "mind": e.g., Asad and Pickthall on Q 12:18 and 12:83 *bal sawwalat lakum ʾanfusukum ʾamran*. For "self", see Rahman, *Major Themes*, 12; for "baser self", see M. Mir, "Joseph", 12, as well as Sinai's definition in the literature review in the overview of Part I above. See also Van Ess, *Gedankenwelt*, 31, where *nafs* is translated as "ich" (on which see further n. 16 in the literature review above).

[4] Both Qurʾānic occurrences of *nufūs* (viz., Q 17:25 and 81:7) are to be understood as lexical items.

[5] Plural *ʾanfus* and *nufūs* never occur in indefinite forms in the Qurʾān, although the article in Q 2:155 *wa-l-ʾanfusi* indicates the genus (*lām al-jins*; on which see Wright, I, 269 = §345, rem. a).

[6] But see §§4.1 and 4.2 below.

[7] As Sinai (*Key terms*, 682–683) points out, *nafsun* and *kullu nafsin* are also very close in meaning. See also al-Zarkašī, II, 388; ʿUḍayma, I.3, 493. Al-Ṭabarī (XXIV, 175) paraphrases Q 82:5 *nafsun* as *kullu nafsin*, "each person". Al-Māturīdī (X, 444) explains the same verse using *al-ʾanfus*, "the persons", which conveys a similar meaning.

(c) a pronominal suffix; (d) a relative pronoun. All of the above is exemplified in the following:

(I+IIa) Q 82:5 *ʿalimat* ***nafsun*** *mā qaddamat wa-ʾaḫḫarat*
[then] [every] person shall know what s/he accomplished and failed to accomplish.

(IIa) Q 5:30 *fa-tawwaʿat lahū* ***nafsuhū*** *qatla ʾaḫīhi*
Then his soul prompted him to kill his brother

(IIa) Q 2:87 *ʾa-fa-kullamā jāʾakum rasūlun bi-mā lā tahwā* ***ʾanfusukumu*** *stakbartum*
and whenever there came to you[p] a messenger with what your[p] souls did not desire, you[p] became arrogant

(IIb+IIc) Q 32:13 *wa-law šiʾnā la-ʾātaynā kulla* ***nafsin*** *hudāhā*
If we (God) had so willed, we could have given every person his guidance

(I+IIc) Q 2:286 *lā yukallifu llāhu* ***nafsan*** *ʾillā wusʿahā*
God charges no one but his/her capacity

(IId) Q 6:151 *wa-lā taqtulu* ***n-nafsa*** *llatī ḥarrama llāhu ʾillā bi-l-ḥaqqi*
and do[p] not kill the person that God has forbidden, except by right.

The following sections intend to provide a general taxonomy of the literal meanings of *nafs*, *ʾanfus* or *nufūs*.

1.1. The core meaning of "soul"[8]

1.1.1. Concepts related to this core meaning

Most occurrences of *nafs* in this sense have been dealt with in Seidensticker's monograph, in which he has shown that *nafs*, both in poetry and in the Qurʾān, is

[8] The occurrences of *nafs* in this core meaning are as follows: Q 2:109, 9:118, 4:65, 16:7, 25:21, 20:67, 35:8, 3:154#1, 12:68, 27:14, 30:8, 2:265, 8:53, 13:11, 2:87, 5:70, 53:23, 5:30, 12:18, 12:83, 20:96, 50:16, 12:53#2, 12:53#1 (?; see §4.5 below), 4:128, 59:9#2, 64:16#2, 21:102, 41:31, 43:71, 4:4, 79:40, 2:235 (twice), 2:284, 3:154#2, 5:52, 11:31, 58:8, 7:205, 17:25, 5:116#1, 18:28 (on which see Sinai, *Key terms*, 690–691), 6:93, 2:130? (see Lane, IV, 1376 [*SFH*]).

conceptually linked to emotions,[9] desires, belief and intellect.[10] Almost all occurrences of *nafs* following *fī* are related to these semantic fields.[11]

As mentioned above, both Blachère and Seidensticker point to a close resemblance between *nafs* and *ṣadr* ("chest", "breast"). The following are examples of *nafs* in the sense of "soul" as defined above, followed by intra-Qurʾānic parallels that illustrate the strong connection, both conceptually and linguistically, between *nafs* and *ṣadr*, and thereby cement Seidensticker's observation.

(i) Need:[12]

Q 12:68 *ḥājatan fī* ***nafsi*** *yaʿqūba*
a need in Jacob's soul

Q 40:80 *ḥājatan fī* ***ṣudūrikum***
a need in your[p] breasts

Q 59:9 *wa-lā yajidūna fī* ***ṣudūrihim*** *ḥājatan mimmā ʾūtū*
and they do not find in their breasts any need for what they have been given

(ii) Fear:[13]

Q 20:67 *fa-ʾawjasa fī* ***nafsihī*** *ḫīfatan mūsā*[14]
and Moses conceived a fear in his soul

Q 59:13 *la-ʾantum ʾašaddu rahbatan fī* ***ṣudūrihim*** *mina llāhi*
you[p] arouse greater fear in their breasts than God

[9] The only emotion that Seidensticker identified in the Qurʾān is fear, unlike poetry, in which *nafs* is related to a wider variety of emotions (Seidensticker, *Herz*, 145–153). See further below.

[10] Seidensticker, *Herz*, esp. 154–158. Desire/greed and thoughts are also mentioned in Blachère, "Note", 72 and 75 (respectively). See also al-Māturīdī, VI, 264 (on Q 12:68; quoted in n. 12 below).

[11] Exceptions are Q 2:234#2/2:240, 4:63; 41:53, 51:21, 57:22.

[12] Seidensticker, *Herz*, 125 (*ṣadr*); 155–156 (*nafs*). See also al-Māturīdī, VI, 264 (on Q 12:68): *al-ḥājatu fi n-nafsi ʾaḥadu šayʾayni: ʾimma r-raġbatu wa-ʾimma r-rahbatu, ka-qawlihī "wa-lā yajidūna fī ṣudūrihim ḥājatan"*, "the need with regard to the soul is one of two things: either desire or fear, as [demonstrated by] his (i.e., God's) words: 'and they do not find in their breasts any need' [Q 59:9]".

[13] Seidensticker, *Herz*, 122–123 (*ṣadr*); 154 (*nafs*). Note that two different words denoting "fear" occur.

[14] The occurrence of Mūsā at the end of the verse is most probably on account of the rhyme.

(iii) Distress/anguish:[15]

Q 4:65 *ṯumma lā yajidū fī* ***ʾanfusihim*** *ḥarajan mimmā qaḍayta*
then they shall find in their souls no anguish concerning your[s] verdict

Q 7:2 *fa-lā yakun fī* ***ṣadrika*** *ḥarajun minhu*
so let there be no anguish in your[s] breast because of it[16]

(iv) (False) pride:

Q 25:21 *la-qadi stakbarū fī* ***ʾanfusihim***
they have waxed proud in their souls

Q 40:56 *ʾin fī* ***ṣudūrihim*** *ʾillā kibrun*
in their breasts is nothing but pride

Closely related to one's thoughts and beliefs, *nafs* may also be defined as "the inside", often in contradiction to one's (outward) speech or deeds.[17]

Q 7:205 *wa-ḏkur rabbaka fī nafsika taḍarruʿan wa-ḫīfatan wa-dūna l-jahri mina l-qawli*
remember your[s] Lord within your[s] soul, humbly and fearfully, not loud of voice

A prominent concept related to this notion of the *nafs* is that God knows whatever is in one's *nafs*; that is, whatever one conceals inside and does not outwardly display. As shown below, the close affinity between *nafs* and *ṣadr* extends to these two notions, too:

(i) God knows what is in one's *nafs* or *ṣadr*:

Q 5:116 *taʿlamu mā fī* ***nafsī***
you[s] know what is in my soul

Q 2:235#2 *wa-ʿlamū ʾanna llāha yaʿlamu mā fī* ***ʾanfusikum*** *fa-ḥḏarūhu*
and know that God knows what is in your[p] souls, so be wary of him

---

[15] See also al-Māturīdī, III, 242 (on Q 4:65). He links between the soul (*nafs*), the heart (*qalb*) and the chest (*ṣadr*) and adduces Q 6:125 *wa-man yurid ʾan yuḍillahū yajʿal ṣadrahū ḍayyiqan ḥarajan*, "and whomsoever he [God] desires to lead astray, he makes his breast tight and narrow".

[16] Seidensticker, *Herz*, 122–123 (*ṣadr*): "Furcht (oder wenigstens Beunruhigung)". Although Q 4:65 appears to convey a similar notion, I could not find it among the occurrences of *nafs* deemed "analysable" in Seidensticker's work.

[17] The occurrences belonging to this category are Q 2:235 (twice), 2:284, 3:154#2, 5:52, 11:31, 58:8, 7:205, 17:25 and 5:116#1.

Q 11:31 *allāhu ʾaʿlamu bi-mā fī* ***ʾanfusihim***
God knows very well what is in their souls

Q 17:25 *rabbukum ʾaʿlamu bi-mā fī* ***nufūsikum***
your[p] Lord knows very well what is in your[p] souls

Q 40:19 *yaʿlamu ḫāʾinata l-ʾaʿyuni wa-mā fī* ***ṣ-ṣudūr***
he knows the treachery of the eyes and what is in the breasts

Q 29:10 *ʾa-wa-laysa llāhu bi-ʾaʿlama bi-mā fī* ***ṣudūri*** *l-ʿālamīn*
does God not know very well what is in the breasts of all people[18]?

e.g. Q 11:5 *ʾinnahū ʿalīmun bi-ḏāti* ***ṣ-ṣudūr***
surely he (God) knows what is within the breasts

(ii) Hiding (one's genuine thoughts or intentions) in the *nafs* or *ṣadr*; such attempts of concealment are useless:[19]

Q 3:154 *yuḫfūna fī* ***ʾanfusihim*** *mā lā yubdūna laka*
They conceal in their souls what they show not to you[s]

Q 2:284 *wa-ʾin tubdū mā fī* ***ʾanfusikum*** *ʾaw tuḫfūhu yuḥāsibkum bihi llāhu*
Whether you[p] disclose what is in your[p] souls or hide it, God shall make reckoning with you[p] for it.

Q 3:29 *qul ʾin tuḫfū mā fī* ***ṣudūrikum*** *ʾaw tubdūhu yaʿlamhu llāhu*
say, 'Whether you[p] hide what is in your[p] breasts or disclose it, God knows it'

Q 2:235#1 *wa-lā junāḥa ʿalaykum fīmā ʿarraḍtum bihī min ḫiṭbati n-nisāʾi ʾaw ʾaknantum fī* ***ʾanfusikum*** *ʿalima llāhu ʾannakum sa-taḏkurūnahunna*
There is no fault in you[p] concerning the proposal of marriage to women, whether you[p] openly allude to it or keep it concealed in your[p] souls. God knows that you[p] will be mindful of them.

[18] Seidensticker (*Herz*, 116) defines *ṣadr*, *inter alia*, as "die Brust oder [der] Brustkorb als Teil des menschlichen (oder tierischen) Körpers". However, I could not find definitive instances of animal breasts cited in his monograph, nor could I find any in the Qurʾān. See also Ambros, *Concise Dictionary*, 193–194 (*ʿLM*).

[19] Note the variety of verbs denoting hiding that occur alongside both *nafs* and *ṣadr*.

Q 27:74 (≈Q 28:69) *wa-ʾinna rabbaka la-yaʿlamu mā tukinnu* ***ṣudūruhum*** *wa-mā yuʿlinūn*
your[s] Lord knows what their breasts conceal, and what they disclose

Additional (indirect)[20] evidence:

Q 5:52 *fa-yuṣbiḥū ʿalā mā ʾasarrū fī* ***ʾanfusihim*** *nādimīn*
and then they will become remorseful for what they kept secret within their souls.

Q 12:77 *fa-ʾasarrahā yūsufu fī* ***nafsihī*** *wa-lam yubdihā lahum*
but Joseph secreted it in his soul and disclosed it not to them

Q 64:4 (≈Q 11:5) *wa-yaʿlamu mā tusirrūna wa-mā tuʿlinūna wa-llāhu ʿalīmun bi-ḏāti* ***ṣ-ṣudūr***
and he knows what you[p] conceal and what you[p] disclose; God knows what is within the breasts

Q 67:13 *wa-ʾasirrū qawlakum ʾawi jharū bihī ʾinnahū ʿalīmun bi-ḏāti* ***ṣ-ṣudūr***
Be secret in your[p] speech, or proclaim it – he knows what is within the breasts

The *munāfiqūn* are often described as behaving in a certain manner or saying one thing while thinking another:[21]

Q 5:52 *fa-tara llaḏīna fī qulūbihim maraḍun yusāriʿūna fīhim yaqūlūna naẖšā ʾan tuṣībanā dāʾiratun fa-ʿasa llāhu ʾan yaʾtiya bi-l-fatḥi ʾaw ʾamrin min ʿindihī fa-yuṣbiḥū ʿalā mā ʾasarrū fī* ***ʾanfusihim*** *nādimīn*
You[s] see those in whose hearts is sickness vying with one another to come to them [i.e., to the Jews and Christians], saying, 'We fear lest a turn of fortune smite us'. But it may be that God will bring the victory, or some command from him, and then they will come to regret what they kept secret within their souls.

However, not only they conceal thoughts or intentions in their souls. For instance, let us take another look at Q 2:235:

Q 2:235 *wa-lā junāḥa ʿalaykum fīmā ʿarraḍtum bihī min ẖiṭbati n-nisāʾi ʾaw ʾaknantum fī* ***ʾanfusikum*** *ʿalima llāhu ʾannakum sa-taḏkurūnahunna wa-lākin lā tuwāʿidūhunna sirran ʾillā*

[20] Unlike Q 5:52 and 12:77, in which *fī nafs-* explicitly appears as the complement of *ʾasarra*, God's knowledge of what is in one's *ṣadr* can only be inferred from Q 64:4, 11:5 and 67:13 by linking the content of the last stich, according to which God knows what is in one's breast, to what precedes it, namely, God's knowledge of what people conceal.

[21] See also Q 2:204–207, in which the pleasing speech is contrasted with what is in one's heart (*mā fī qalbihī*; v. 204), of which one's deeds (v. 205) are indicative.

ʾan taqūlū qawlan maʿrūfan wa-lā taʿzimū ʿuqdata n-nikāḥi ḥattā yabluġa l-kitābu ʾajalahū wa-ʿlamū ʾanna llāha yaʿlamu mā fī ***ʾanfusikum*** *fa-ḥḏarūhu wa-ʿlamū ʾanna llāha ġafūrun raḥīm*

There is no fault in you[p] concerning the proposal of marriage to women, whether you[p] openly allude to it or keep it concealed in your[p] souls. God knows that you will be mindful of them[f]. But do not make troth with them secretly, but[22] speak honourable words. And do not resolve on the knot of marriage until the book has reached its term; and know that God knows what is in your souls, so be fearful of him; and know that God is forgiving and clement.

This verse addresses the believers. It states that there is neither fault in openly alluding to a marriage proposal to women nor in (inwardly) thinking about them (#1). The warning towards the end of the verse, according to which God knows what is in one's *nafs* (#2), is related to the preceding prohibition to *resolve* on the knot of marriage – an internal process taking place within one's mind. Nevertheless, the verse continues, God knows about it.

1.1.2. *Nafs* vs *rūḥ*

While in post-Qurʾānic Arabic *nafs* and *rūḥ* are at times used interchangeably, in the Qurʾān they convey different meanings, which do not overlap.[23] As is shown above, *nafs* denoting "soul" is related to human beings and is closely associated with human behaviour. Unlike *nafs*, *rūḥ* appears in the Qurʾān in contexts related to God. It refers to what God blows into his creation after shaping it (Q 15:29/38:72, 32:9, 21:91/66:12), or to a supernatural element linked to him: it is sent by God (Q 16:2, 19:17), ascends to God with the angels or descends with them by his leave (Q 70:4, 97:4), is sent by God to the prophets to aid them (Q 2:87, 2:253, 5:110)[24] or as part of the revelation (Q 42:52), or is otherwise described as related to God's command (*ʾamr*; Q 17:85).[25] In eschatological scenes in which both *nafs* and *rūḥ* occur, the latter is on the "side" of God and the angels, whereas the *ʾanfus* are those whose fate is decided (see below).

[22] For this translation of *ʾillā*, see §7.3.2 below.

[23] Calverley, "Doctrines", 254–255. See also Blachère, "Note", 71–72; Homerin, "Soul", 80–81.

[24] In which cases the phrase *rūḥ al-qudus*, "the holy spirit", occurs.

[25] See also, e.g., Sells, "Spirit"; Griffith, "Holy spirit".

1.2. The core meaning of "person"[26]

Most occurrences of *nafs* in the Qurʾān belong to the core meaning of "person". The contexts in which they appear may be divided into three main categories: (1) the Day of Judgement; (2) killing and death; (3) the creation. In this section, selected occurrences of *nafs* in this core meaning will be presented. The selected verses are primarily ones in which the meaning of *nafs* as "person" is evident. This is also the focus of the discussions following the verses.

1.2.1. The Day of Judgement

Nafs in the core meaning of "person" most frequently occurs in the context of the Day of Judgement. This includes various eschatological scenes, passages on the reward given to believers and the punishment inflicted upon non-believers (the roots *JZY* and *WFY*) in accordance with their earthly deeds (the roots *KSB* and *QDM*)[27], and the burden with which every person shall be laden (the root *KLF*). In such cases, *nafs* appears mostly indefinite. Let us, for instance, examine Q 39:70:

> (68) *wa-nufiḫa fi ṣ-ṣūri fa-ṣaʿiqa man fi s-samāwāti wa-man fi l-ʾarḍi ʾillā man šāʾa llāhu ṯumma nufiḫa fīhi ʾuḫrā fa-ʾiḏā hum qiyāmun yanẓurūn* (69) *wa-ʾašraqati l-ʾarḍu bi-nūri rabbihā wa-wuḍiʿa l-kitābu wa-jīʾa bi-n-nabiyyīna wa-š-šuhadāʾa wa-quḍiya baynahum bi-l-ḥaqqi wa-hum lā yuẓlamūn* (70) *wa-wuffiyat* ***kullu nafsin*** *mā ʿamilat wa-huwa yaʿlamu bi-mā yafʿalūn* (71) *wa-sīqa lladīna kafarū ʾilā jahannama zumaran* [...] (73) *wa-sīqa lladīna ttaqaw rabbahum ʾila l-jannati zumaran* [...]
>
> (68) For the trumpet shall be blown, and whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth shall swoon, save whom God wills. Then it shall be blown again, and lo, they shall stand, beholding. (69) And the earth shall shine with the light of its Lord, and the book shall be set in place, and the prophets and witnesses shall be brought, and judgement shall justly be made between them, and they shall not be wronged. (70) Every person shall be paid in full for what s/he has wrought; and he knows very

---

[26] The occurrences of *nafs* in this core meaning are the following: Q 2:48 (twice), 2:123 (twice), 2:281, 2:233, 2:286, 3:25, 3:30#1, 3:145, 3:161, 3:185, 4:1, 5:32 (twice), 5:45 (twice), 6:70, 6:98, 6:151, 6:152, 6:158, 6:164, 7:42, 7:189, 10:30, 10:54, 10:100, 11:105, 13:33, 13:42, 14:51, 16:111#1, 16:111#3, 17:33, 18:74 (twice), 20:15, 20:40, 21:35, 21:47, 23:62, 25:68, 28:19, 28:33, 29:57, 31:28, 31:34 (twice), 32:13, 32:17, 36:54, 39:6, 39:42, 39:56, 39:70, 40:17, 45:22, 50:21, 59:18, 63:11, 65:7, 74:38, 75:2, 81:7, 81:14, 82:5, 82:19 (twice), 86:4, 89:27.

[27] For an extensive discussion of these two roots, both in the Qurʾān and in early Islam, see Bravmann, *Spiritual background*, 107–114 and 95–100. See also §4.4 below.

well what they do. (71) Then the unbelievers shall be driven in companies into hell [...] (73) Then those that feared their Lord shall be driven in companies into paradise [...]

After a description of (some of) the events that shall take place on the Day of Resurrection, the Qurʾān goes on to the judgement itself. Every *nafs* shall be fully requited for its works (v. 70): the *kāfirūn* will then be brought to hell (vv. 71–72), and the *muttaqūn* to paradise (vv. 73–74). Q 39:70 *kullu nafsin*, then, includes both the *kāfirūn* and the *muttaqūn*, which are categories of people.

Q 50:21 belongs to a different Qurʾānic eschatological scene, in which the person standing trial is part of all mankind, or *kullu nafsin*, mentioned at the beginning of the passage:

(20) *wa-nufiḫa fi ṣ-ṣūri ḏālika yawmu l-waʿīd* (21) *wa-jāʾat* ***kullu nafsin*** *maʿahā sāʾiqun wa-šahīd* (22) *la-qad kunta fī ġaflatin min hāḏā fa-kašafnā ʿanka ġiṭāʾaka fa-baṣaruka l-yawma ḥadīd* (23) *wa-qāla qarīnuhū hāḏā mā ladayya ʿatīd* (24) *ʾalqiyā fī jahannama kulla kaffārin ʿanīd* (25) *mannāʿin li-l-ḫayri muʿtadin murīb* (26) *allaḏī jaʿala maʿa llāhi ʾilāhan ʾāḫara fa-ʾalqiyāhu fi l-ʿaḏābi š-šadīd* (27) *qāla qarīnuhū rabbanā mā ʾaṭġaytuhū wa-lākin kāna fī ḍalālin baʿīd* (28) *qāla lā taḫtaṣimū ladayya wa-qad qaddamtu ʾilaykum bi-l-waʿīd* (29) *mā yubaddalu l-qawlu ladayya wa-mā ʾanā bi-ẓallāmin li-l-ʿabīd* (30) *yawma naqūlu li-jahannama hali mtalaʾti wa-taqūlu hal min mazīd* (31) *wa-ʾuzlifati l-jannatu li-l-muttaqīna ġayra baʿīd* (32) *hāḏā mā tūʿadūna li-kulli ʾawwābin ḥafīẓ* [...]

(20) And the trumpet shall be blown; that is the Day of the Threat. (21) And each person shall come, and with it a driver and a witness. (22) 'You[s] were heedless of this; therefore, we have now removed from you[s] your[s] covering, and so your[s] sight today is piercing.' (23) And his companion shall say, 'This is what I have made ready.' (24) 'Cast, you twain, into hell every froward unbeliever, (25) every hinderer of the good, transgressor, disquieter, (26) who set up with God another god; therefore, you twain, cast him into the terrible chastisement.' (27) And his companion shall say, 'Our Lord, I made him not insolent, but he was in far error.' (28) He (God) shall say, 'Dispute not before me! For I sent you[p] beforehand the threat. (29) The word is not changed with me; I wrong not my servants.' (30) Upon the day we shall say unto hell, 'Are you[fs] filled?' And it shall say, 'Are there any more to come?' (31) And paradise shall be brought forward to the god-fearing, not afar: (32) 'This is that you[p] were promised; it is for every mindful penitent.' [...]

Note the 3rd-pers. masc. sg. suffix attached to v. 27 *ʾaṭġaytuhū*, which refers to the *nafs* – that is, the person – brought to justice, who presumably blamed the *qarīn* for

having led him astray.[28] The following two pairs of intra-Qurʾānic parallels lead to a similar conclusion:

> Q 2:48/2:123 *wa-ttaqū yawman lā tajzī* ***nafsun*** *ʿan* ***nafsin*** *šayʾan*
> and beware of a day when no person shall avail another person

> Q 31:33 *yā-ʾayyuha n-nāsu ttaqū rabbakum wa-ḫšaw yawman lā yajzī* ***wālidun*** *ʿan* ***waladihī*** *wa-lā* ***mawlūdun*** *huwa jāzin ʿan* ***wālidihī*** *šayʾan*
> O men, fear your[p] Lord, and dread a day when no father shall avail his child, and no child shall avail his father whatsoever.

> Q 82:5 *ʿalimat* ***nafsun*** *mā qaddamat wa-ʾaḫḫarat*
> [then] [every] person shall know what s/he accomplished and failed to accomplish.

> Q 75:13 *yunabbaʾu* ***l-ʾinsānu*** *yawmaʾiḏin bi-mā qaddama wa-ʾaḫḫar*
> Upon that day man shall be told what he accomplished and failed to accomplish[29]

It appears that Q 82:5 focuses on every individual, whereas Q 75:13 mentions mankind as a whole; yet the similar eschatological scene, in which every human being will be judged on the Day of Resurrection, indicates that *nafs* in Q 82:5 is associated with the core meaning of "person".[30]

Facing the last judgement, the moral agents will either blame themselves for doing evil in their earthly lives or be calm and content knowing that they have done good deeds. This is, in my view, the context in which Q 75:2 *bi-n-nafsi l-lawwāmah* and Q 89:27 *an-nafsu l-muṭmaʾinnah* should be put.[31] It was only at a later stage – for instance, in the concept of *nafs* and *mujāhadat al-nafs*, "taming one's lower self", in Sufism – that these became terms referring to the soul and conscience.[32]

---

[28] See al-Zamaḫšarī, V, 600 (on Q 50:27). Traditional exegetes identify the *qarīn* with Satan (*al-šayṭān*; see, e.g., al-Zamaḫšarī, V, 599 [on Q 50:23]; al-Ṭabarī, XXI, 440–441 [on Q 50:27–28]) or with a certain demon (or jinn) that was appointed to the judged person in the latter's earthly life (*šayṭānuhu llaḏī kāna muwakkalan bihī fi d-dunyā* – al-Ṭabarī, XXI, 440–441; see also Q 43:36, and Sinai, *Key terms*, 450–462 [s.v. "*shayṭān*"]).

[29] This parallel has also been pointed out by Blachère ("Note", 73). For a brief discussion of this verse and its translation, see Bravmann, *Spiritual background*, 167. See also §4.4 below.

[30] See also Seidensticker, *Herz*, 143–144.

[31] As Blachère ("Note", 73) seems to imply. Cf. Homerin, "Soul", 82–83; Van Ess, *Gedankenwelt*, 31. Sinai (*Key terms*, 687 n. 21) makes a compelling case for Q 75:2 as referring to a person but is more hesitant regarding Q 89:27.

[32] For *nafs* and *mujāhadat al-nafs* in Sufism, see, e.g., Knysh, *Sufism*, 90, 108–112, 117–118.

The same applies to verses such as the following, in which *nafs* occurs with the roots *KSB*,[33] *WFY* (in form II)[34] and *KLF*:

> [Q 2:278 *yā-ʾayyuha lladīna ʾāmanu ttaqū llāha*...] Q 2:281 *wa-ttaqū yawman turjaʿūna fīhi ʾila llāhi ṯumma tuwaffā* ***kullu nafsin*** *mā kasabat*
> [O believers, fear God...] And fear a day wherein you[p] shall be returned to God, and every person shall be paid in full what s/he has earned
>
> Q 3:25 *fa-kayfa ʾiḏā jamaʿnāhum li-yawmin lā rayba fīhi wa-wuffiyat* ***kullu nafsin*** *mā kasabat*
> How, then, will it be when we (God) gather them for a day whereon is no doubt, and every person shall be paid in full what s/he has earned
>
> Q 2:286 *lā yukallifu llāhu* ***nafsan*** *ʾillā wusʿahā lahā mā kasabat wa-ʿalayhā ma ktasabat*
> God charges no one but to the degree that s/he is capable of being charged; standing to his/her account is what s/he has earned, and against his/her account what s/he has merited.[35]

The following parallels, in which men (*al-nās*) are (part of) the grammatical subject of *kasaba* – as is *nafs* in the verses above – cement the assertion that *nafs* denotes "person" in this context.

> Q 35:45 *wa-law yuʾāḫiḏu llāhu n-nāsa bi-mā kasabū...*
> If God should take men to task for what they have earned...
>
> Q 30:41 *ẓahara l-fasādu fi l-barri wa-l-baḥri bi-mā kasabat ʾaydi n-nāsi*
> Corruption has appeared in the land and sea, for that men's own hands have earned

---

[33] For a discussion of *KSB*, see §4.4 below, esp. n. 21.

[34] For *WFY* in form V, see §1.2.2 below.

[35] The root *KLF* appears in the Qurʾān 7 times in form II. In Q 6:152, 7:42 and 23:62 *lā nukallifu nafsan ʾillā wusʿahā*, the subject of *nukallifu* is God, and *nafs* and *wusʿ* are its two direct objects ("We [i.e., God] do not burden any *nafs* but [according to] its capacity"). Q 2:286 (cited above) is syntactically very similar, as is Q 65:7 *lā yukallifu llāhu nafsan ʾillā mā ʾātāhā*. Q 2:233 *lā tukallafu nafsun ʾillā wusʿahā* is formulated in the passive voice. In all of the above, *nafs* means "person". Q 4:84 *lā tukallafu ʾillā nafsaka*, however, is slightly different. *Nafs* in this verse is reflexive. Unlike Q 2:233 *tukallafu*, whose subject is *nafs*, in Q 4:84 the subject (= the object in the "original"/reconstructed active-voice sentence) is you[s], and the ("originally" second) object is *nafsaka*. The reconstructed active-voice sentence would then be *lā yukallifuka llāhu ʾillā nafsaka*, "God does not hold you[s] responsible for anything but yourself (i.e., your[s] own deeds)". Q 4:84, then, should be translated "You[s] will not be held responsible (by God) but for yourself (i.e., for your[s] own deeds)".

Particularly noteworthy is Q 81:7:

> Q 81:7 *wa-ʾiḏa n-nufūsu zuwwijat*
> when the *nufūs* are paired

Homerin rejects, justly in my view, the notion that *zuwwijat* refers to the soul's rejoining the body on the Day of Judgement. Rather, he maintains, and so does Sinai, that this verse describes the pairing of individuals of the same kind on that day: the righteous shall be paired with fellow righteous individuals, and the evil shall be gathered along with their ilk.[36] This interpretation of the "pairing" on the Day of Judgement, I would suggest, could be corroborated and perhaps even taken a step forward. Consider the following verse:

> Q 56:7 *wa-kuntum ʾazwājan ṯalāṯah*
> and you[p] become three kinds

This verse is part of a description of the series of events that are to take place on the Day of Judgement. One of these events is the sorting of mankind according to their earthly deeds. The following verses elaborate on the three types of people. *ʾAzwāj* in this context, then, refers to types of people, as is attested elsewhere in the Qurʾān.[37] Mankind will not be divided into groups of two people; rather, people will be divided into types, which will then be grouped together. It may therefore be argued that the verb *zawwaja* in the context of the Day of Judgement denotes "to sort or divide into types/kinds", the types including those who are sent to paradise and those who end in hell. The translation of Q 81:7 would then be "when the persons/people shall be sorted (into kinds)".

1.2.2. Killing and death

In the contexts of killing (the root *QTL*) and death (the root *MWT*), *nafs* occurs 20 times in 17 verses.[38] In two more verses, pointed out by Seidensticker, *nafs* does not explicitly appear but is possibly referred to.[39] Here are two examples:

---

[36] See Homerin, "Soul", 83; Sinai, *Key terms*, 685.

[37] See Ambros, *Concise Dictionary*, 123 (*ZWJ*).

[38] Q 2:72, 3:185, 21:35, 29:57, 5:45 (twice), 6:151, 17:33, 25:68, 5:32 (twice), 18:74 (twice), 20:40, 28:19, 28:33, 31:34#2, 3:145, 63:11, 39:42.

[39] Q 56:83 *ʾiḏā balaġati l-ḥulqūm*, "when it/they reach(es) the throat [of the dying]"; Q 75:26 *ʾiḏā balaġati t-tarāqiya*, "when it/they reach(es) the clavicles". See Seidensticker, *Herz*, 160–162. The hidden

Q 6:151/17:33 (≈Q 25:68) *wa-lā taqtulu* ***n-nafsa*** *llatī ḥarrama llāhu ʾillā bi-l-ḥaqqi*
and do[p] not kill the person that God has forbidden, except by right.

Q 31:34 *wa-mā tadrī* ***nafsun*** *māḏā taksibu ġadan wa-mā tadrī* ***nafsun*** *bi-ʾayyi ʾarḍin tamūtu*
No one knows what s/he shall do tomorrow, and no one knows in what land s/he shall die.[40]

As to this latter example, all occurrences of the root *DRY* have to do with the knowledge that people have,[41] which further strengthens the interpretation of *nafs* as "person". Q 3:145 and 3:185, too, shed light on the meaning of *nafs* in the context of its death (the root *MWT*):

Q 3:145 *wa-mā kāna* ***li-nafsin*** *ʾan tamūta ʾillā bi-ʾiḏni llāhi kitāban muʾajjalan wa-man yurid ṯawāba d-dunyā nuʾtihī minhā wa-man yurid ṯawāba l-ʾāḫirati nuʾtihī minhā*
It is not given to any person to die, save by the leave of God, at an appointed time. Whoso desires the reward of this world, we (God) will give him of this; and whoso desires the reward of the other world, we will give him of that.

Q 3:185 ***kullu nafsin*** *ḏāʾiqatu l-mawti wa-ʾinnamā tuwaffawna ʾujūrakum yawma l-qiyāmati fa-man zuḥziḥa ʿani n-nār wa-ʾudḫila l-jannata fa-qad fāza*
Every person shall taste death; you[p] shall be paid in full your[p] wages on the Day of Resurrection. Whosoever is removed from the fire and admitted to paradise shall win the triumph.

Both verses' opening statements, which refer to *nafs*, are followed by a statement regarding the reward or punishment given to persons. Provided that both statements are conceptually linked, *nafs* in these verses should be construed as "person".

---

pronoun in this latter verse may in principle also refer to *qulūb* – cf. Q 33:10 *wa-balaġati l-qulūbu l-ḥanājira*, "and [your] hearts reached [your] throats"; Q 40:18 *ʾiḏi l-qulūbu lada l-ḥanājiri*, "when the hearts are in the throats" – although Seidensticker (ibid) provides persuasive evidence for his assertion.

[40] See al-Rāzī, XXV, 166, in which it is the [person] seeking God's knowledge that is addressed: *ṯumma qāla li-ḏālika ṭ-ṭālibi ʿilmahū: yā ʾayyuha s-sāʾilu [...] wa-lā taʿlamu māḏā taksibu ġadan [...] wa-lā taʿlamu ʾayna tamūtu [...]*, "and then he (i.e., God) said to that seeker of his (i.e., God's) knowledge: O seeker, [...] neither do you[s] know what you[s] will earn tomorrow, [...] and neither do you[s] know where you[s] will die [...]". This indicates that al-Rāzī understood *nafs* in this verse as "person".

[41] Except for Q 31:34 quoted above, there are 10 Qurʾānic occurrences of this root in form I and another 17 in form IV.

The word sequence *kullu nafsin ḏāʾiqatu l-mawti*, "every *nafs* shall taste death", occurs not only in Q 3:185 cited above, but also in Q 21:35 and 29:57. In both verses, as in Q 3:185, the phrase is followed by the second person plural.[42] The contexts provided by the verses preceding both Q 21:35 and 29:57 lend further support to the understanding of *nafs* in these verses as "person". Q 21:34 reads *wa-mā jaʿalnā li-bašarin min qablika l-ḫulda ʾa-fa-ʾin mitta fa-humu l-ḫālidūn*, "We (God) have not assigned to any mortal before you[s] to live forever; therefore, if you[s] die, will they live forever?"; Q 29:56 begins with the vocative expression *yā-ʿibādiya llaḏīna ʾāmanū*, "O my (God's) believing servants", whose referent is the same as that of Q 29:57 *turjaʿūn*.

Examples of *nafs* occurring with the root *QTL* include the following:

> Q 18:74 *fa-nṭalaqā ḥattā laqiyā ġulāman fa-qatalahū qāla ʾa-qatalta* ***nafsan*** *zakiyyatan bi-ġayri nafsin*
> So they departed; then, when they met a youth, he (the servant) slew him. He (Moses) said, 'Have you[s] slain an innocent human being, and did not do so in retaliation for a slain one?

> Q 5:32 *min ʾajli ḏālika katabnā ʿalā banī ʾisrāʾīla ʾannahū man qatala* ***nafsan*** *bi-ġayri* ***nafsin*** *ʾaw fasādin fi l-ʾarḍi fa-ka-ʾannamā qatala n-nāsa jamīʿan wa-man ʾaḥyāhā fa-ka-ʾannamā ʾaḥya n-nāsa jamīʿan*
> Therefore we (God) prescribed for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul, other than in retaliation for [another] soul or for corruption in the land, will be as if he had killed all the people; and whoever keeps one alive will be as if he had kept the life of all the people.

> Q 20:40 *wa-qatalta* ***nafsan***
> and you[s] [i.e., Moses] killed a person[43]

---

[42] Q 21:35 *wa-nablūkum*, "and we (God) try you[p]"; Q 21:35 and 29:57 *ṯumma ʾilaynā turjaʿūn*, "then unto us (scil., to God) you[p] shall be returned". Note that this latter sentence, which is shared by both verses, is in fact an ending formula. As such, its final word is bound to restrictions imposed by the rhyme. Differently put, the usage of a plural verb in these verses may in principle be motivated by rhyme considerations – that is, for the verse to end in *-ūn* and thereby match the rhyme of the adjacent verses. Therefore, the fact that a plural verb occurs in this ending formula should in itself be taken *cum grano salis*, or only as supportive evidence.

[43] Cf. Ex. 2:11–14. See Speyer, *Biblischen Erzählungen*, 246–248.

Q 28:19 *fa-lammā ʾan ʾarāda ʾan yabṭiša bi-llaḏī huwa ʿaduwwun lahumā qāla yā-mūsā ʾa-turīdu ʾan taqtulanī kamā qatalta* ***nafsan*** *bi-l-ʾamsi*

But when he would have assaulted the man who was an enemy to them both, the man said, "Moses, do you[s] desire to kill me, as you[s] killed a person yesterday?"[44]

Another verb used in the Qurʾān in the context of death is *tawaffā* (passive *tuwuffiya*),[45] as in the following verse:

Q 39:42 *allāhu yatawaffa* ***l-ʾanfusa*** *ḥīna mawtihā wa-llatī lam tamut fī manāmihā fa-yumsiku llatī qaḍā ʿalayha l-mawta wa-yursilu l-ʾuḫrā ʾilā ʾajalin musamman*

God takes people at the time of their death, and those who have not died, in their sleep; he withholds those against whom he has decreed death and releases the others to a stated term.

According to this verse, God takes the person – as a whole (see below)[46] – either at the time of death or while sleeping.[47] According to other verses, it is the angels who take the living person in his or her death.[48]

The reason for construing *ʾanfus* in this verse as "persons" is twofold. First, in all 23 other verses in which the root *WFY* in form V occurs, its direct object (when in the active voice) or subject (when in the passive voice) is human.[49] Second, the verse not only mentions the death of the *ʾanfus*, but also their sleep (*manām*). Of the other eight Qurʾānic occurrences of the root *NWM*, seven mention human individuals sleeping,[50] and the remaining verse (Q 2:255) states that sleep does not seize God.[51]

---

[44] See the previous footnote.

[45] For a comprehensive discussion of this verb and its usage in the Qurʾān, see Zahniser, "*Tawaffā*". For a discussion of Q 39:42, see ibid, 19–20. Note, however, that *al-ʾanfus* (following Pickthall) is translated as "souls".

[46] See also n. 51 below. But cf. Q 6:93, in which only the soul seems to be taken.

[47] For God's taking the person in his or her sleep, see also Q 6:60 *wa-huwa llaḏī yatawaffākum bi-l-layli*, "It is he who takes you[p] by night". For God as the one taking the person at the time of death (cf. the next footnote), see Q 5:117, 10:46, 13:40, 40:77, 10:104, 16:70 (active voice); 22:5, 40:67, 2:234, 2:240 (passive voice); 3:193, 7:126, 12:101 (imperative). See also n. 51 below.

[48] Q 8:50, 47:27, 4:97, 16:28, 16:32 (the angels); 32:11 (the angel of death); 6:61, 7:37 ([God's] messengers); 4:15 (death). To be sure, there is no contradiction between both groups of verses, as the angels are God's messengers (Q 6:61, 7:37).

[49] In the latter case, *min* occasionally occurs, whose complement is human.

[50] Q 7:97, 8:43, 25:47, 30:23, 37:102, 68:19, 78:9.

[51] As Homerin ("Soul", 83) mentions, al-Zamaḫšarī (V, 308 [on Q 39:42]) discusses the likeness of the sleep to death. Contrary to Homerin's understanding, however, the distinction between *nafs al-ʿaql wa-l-tamyīz* and *rūḥ* is not al-Zamaḫšarī's. In fact, al-Zamaḫšarī cites this opinion – which, he says, is

1.2.3. The creation

Nafs occurs in the context of the creation 6 times.[52] According to Q 6:98, God created mankind from one *nafs*.

> Q 6:98 *wa-huwa llaḏī ʾanšaʾakum min nafsin wāḥidatin*
> It is he (God) who produced you[p] from one *nafs*

Q 4:1, 7:189 and 39:6 mention the creation of the mate (*zawj*) of the *nafs*. Q 7:189 reveals that the gender of the first *nafs* is masculine:[53]

> Q 7:189 *huwa llaḏī ḫalaqakum min nafsin wāḥidatin wa-jaʿala minhā zawjahā li-yaskuna ʾilayhā*
> It is he (God) who created you[p] out of one *nafs* and made of it its mate so that he might find comfort in her.

Based on Q 4:1, the *nafs* may already be identified as Adam:[54]

> Q 4:1 *yā-ʾayyuha n-nāsu ttaqū rabbakumu llaḏī ḫalaqakum min nafsin wāḥidatin wa-ḫalaqa minhā zawjahā wa-batta minhumā rijālan kaṯīran wa-nisāʾan*
> Mankind, fear your[p] Lord, who created you[p] of one *nafs*, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them scattered abroad many men and women

1.3. Summary

This chapter has explored the lexical senses of *nafs* in the Qurʾān. It has been shown that the sense of "soul" is associated with various mental, emotional and intellectual processes, and that the sense of "person", which occurs in the Qurʾān

---

ascribed to Ibn ʿAbbās – only to dismiss it: *wa-ṣ-ṣaḥīḥu mā ḏakartu ʾawwalan li-ʾanna llāha ʿazza wa-ʿalā ʿallaqa t-tawaffiya wa-l-mawta wa-l-manāma jamīʿan bi-l-ʾanfusi wa-mā ʿanaw bi-nafsi l-ḥayāti wa-l-ḥarakati wa-nafsi l-ʿaqli wa-t-tamyīzi ġayru muttaṣifin bi-l-mawti wa-n-nawmi wa-ʾinnama l-jumlatu hiya llatī tamūtu wa-hiya llatī tanāmu*, "And the correct [view] is that which I mentioned at the beginning [i.e., earlier on p. 308], since God the mighty and exalted attributed all of [the following] – mortification, death and sleep – to persons (*al-ʾanfus*). What they meant by "*nafs* of life and movement" (*nafs al-ḥayāt wa-l-ḥaraka*) and by "*nafs* of reason and distinction" (*nafs al-ʿaql wa-l-tamyīz*) is not characterised by death and sleep; rather, it is the [person as a] whole that dies and sleeps". This passage actually maintains what I argue: all three elements – *tawaffā*, *māta* and *nāma* – are associated in the Qurʾān only with human individuals; al-Zamaḫšarī, too, understood *ʾanfus* in this verse as "persons" as a whole.

[52] Q 6:98; 4:1, 7:189, 39:6; 31:28; 91:7. For a discussion of this last verse, see §4.2 below.

[53] As already mentioned by Homerin ("Soul", 84). See also Sinai, *Key terms*, 683. No variant readings are recorded for *li-yaskuna*.

[54] See also al-Zarkašī, III, 427.

more often, refers to human beings as a whole. The main contexts in which this latter lexical meaning appears in the Qurʾān have further been identified, namely, (1) the Day of Judgement; (2) killing and death and (3) the creation.

Chapter 2: *Nafs* as a reflexive pronoun

2.1. Introduction

In Qurʾānic Arabic, as in extra-Qurʾānic Arabic, *nafs* often functions as a reflexive marker. As such, its sole plural form in the Qurʾān is *ʾanfus* and never *nufūs*.[1] In cases in which *nafs* is reflexive, the subject of the verb or the verbal form governing *nafs* normally agrees with the suffix attached to it in person, gender and number.[2] Singular suffixes are attached to *nafs*, and plural suffixes to *ʾanfus*. Semantically, it will be shown, the plural *ʾanfus* expresses a range of meaning wider than that of singular *nafs*, including – albeit quite rarely – reciprocity ("each other").

It should be noted that, in both Qurʾānic and extra-Qurʾānic Arabic, reflexivity is not solely expressed by *nafs* or *ʾanfus*. It may also be expressed, *inter alia*, by using pronominal suffixes attached either to accusative nouns governed by a verb or to prepositions annexed to a verb.[3]

---

[1] This is also the case in extra-Qurʾānic Classical Arabic – see Wright, II, 280–282 = §139. A reflexive use of *nufūs* may be found outside the Qurʾān; however, it is much rarer than *ʾanfus* and possibly restricted to poetry. See, e.g., the following poems by the *muḫaḍram* poet Ḫurāša ibn ʿĀmir ibn al-Ṭufayl and by the pre-Islamic poet ʿUrwa ibn al-Ward, respectively, in al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, II, 272–273 (the variants in square brackets are from Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihī, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, VI, 26): *wa-ʾinnakumū ʾiḏ taḫnuqūna nufūsakum / lakum taḥta ʾaẓlāli l-ʿiḍāhi jarāʾirū*, "When you[P] throttle yourselves, what awaits you[P] under the shades of thorny trees are crimes" (al-Ṭawīl); *ʿajibtu lahum ʾiḏ* [*lim*] *yaḫnuqūna nufūsahum / wa-maqtaluhum ʿinda* [*taḥta*] *l-waġā kāna ʾaʿḍarā* [*ʾajdarā*], "I am astonished that they throttle themselves; their death in battle would have been more acceptable" (al-Ṭawīl). Another poetic verse by the pre-Islamic poet ʿAlqama, cited by Bravmann (*Spiritual background*, 96), reads *ʾiḏā ʿarafū mā qaddamū li-nufūsihim mina š-šarri ʾinna š-šarra murdin ʾarāhiṭā*, "Then they would have realised what evil they had done for themselves – indeed, evil ruins people" (al-Ṭawīl; I follow Bravmann's translation). Note that in all three poetic verses, *ʾanfusahum* would not fit the metre, and that al-Jāḥiẓ himself uses *ʾanfusahum*, and not *nufūsahum*, in his description of the incident to which the first two verses relate. This may indicate that the normal plural reflexive marker is *ʾanfus*, and it is occasionally replaced with *nufūs* in poetry on account of the metre. Following Calverley's ("Doctrines") conclusion, occurrences such as *qad wahabū nufūsahum li-l-bārī* (Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihī, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, V, 248) are to be better understood as "they gave their souls to the Maker" (unlike Q 33:50).

[2] But see the discussion of Q 3:61 below. See also Wright, II, 280–282 = §139, in which the rather odd *raʾaytu nafsahū* (translated "I have seen himself") is brought as an example. I could not find the source from which this example is taken.

[3] See Wright, II, 271–272 = §135; Brockelmann, *Grundriss*, II, 261–262, 327 = §180, §216c; Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 286 = §144; and see §2.4 below. For a Qurʾānic example, see the discussion on Q 2:84–85 under §2.4 below. Reflexive accusative pronominal suffixes may be suffixed only to verbs that

Cross-linguistically, reflexivity may encompass various conceptual situations, including the following:[4]

(1) An event involving a single referent acting on himself/herself (henceforth singular [individual] reflexivity).

(2a) A set of events involving multiple participants, each acting on himself/herself (henceforth plural individual reflexivity).

(2b) A set of events involving multiple participants, each acting on himself/herself and/or on others within the same group or category, or at least neither of these two subevents is excluded (henceforth collective reflexivity).

(2c) A set of events involving multiple participants, each (single referent or subgroup) acting on others – and not on himself/herself – within the same group or category. This meaning is very close to reciprocity (henceforth reciprocal reflexivity).[5]

---

belong to the category of *ʾafʿāl al-qalb* or *al-qulūb*, "verbs of the heart", on which see, e.g., Wright, II, 48–52 = §24b(β); Brockelmann, *Grundriss*, II, 326–327 = §216a.

[4] Concepts 1, 2a and 2c are presented in Heine and Miyashita, "Intersection", 169. For concept 2b, see Maslova, "Reflexive encoding", 240–242. See also the next footnote.

[5] By using the term "reciprocal reflexivity", I wish to place the reciprocal sense of *ʾanfus* in its proper linguistic context. As discussed in §2.6 below, *nafs* is first and foremost a reflexive object. When used in the plural, it may express reflexivity, reciprocity or include both. Furthermore, this is not the most common means to express reciprocity in Qurʾānic Arabic (see §2.4 below). The phenomenon of reflexive markers expressing reciprocity is known from other languages as well – see esp. Heine and Miyashita, "Intersection", 188–189, in which the authors characterise the reflexive-reciprocal category as follows: (a) with singular referents, the category expresses reflexivity only; (b) with multiple antecedents (i.e., plural or conjoined subject referents), the category is likely to be ambiguous, expressing both reflexivity and reciprocity; (c) with multiple antecedents of certain verbs (i.e., "inherently reciprocal" verbs) or in specific contexts, the category expresses reciprocity only; (d) in view of their overlapping structure (cf. [b]), there is no categorial boundary setting reflexive and reciprocal readings apart. See also Geniušienė, *Typology*, 253–255, 317–318; Geniušienė, "Properties", 435–440; König and Gast, "Reciprocity and reflexivity", esp. 19–26.

Maslova ("Reflexive encoding", 231–233) distinguishes between reflexive reciprocals and reflexive-based reciprocals. The former term refers to ambiguous constructions, which can formally express both reflexivity and reciprocity; the latter refers to cases in which a disambiguating expression is added, allowing only a reciprocal reading. It is unclear to me whether this disambiguating component may, in her view, be not only morphological or syntactical, but also lexical. Disambiguating elements I found in the Qurʾān are mostly lexically based (but see §2.4 below). On reflexive/reciprocal polysemy in the Qurʾān, see further below (§2.4, n. 11).

As will be shown below, all of the above are expressed in the Qurʾān by *nafs* (1) or *ʾanfus* (2a, 2b and 2c) in either the accusative or the genitive.[6] The exact sense depends primarily on the context and is occasionally quite difficult to determine.

2.2. Individual reflexivity

Singular and plural individual reflexivity may be exemplified by the following verses:

> Q 3:93 *kullu ṭ-ṭaʿāmi kāna ḥillan li-banī ʾisrāʾīla ʾillā mā ḥarrama ʾisrāʾīlu ʿalā* ***nafsihī*** *min qabli ʾan tunazzala t-tawrātu*
> All food was lawful to the Children of Israel save what Israel forbade for himself before the Torah was sent down.
>
> Q 33:50 *wa-mraʾatan muʾminatan ʾin wahabat* ***nafsahā*** *li-n-nabiyyi*
> and any believing woman, if she gives herself to the Prophet
>
> Q 66:6 *yā-ʾayyuha llaḏīna ʾāmanū qū* ***ʾanfusakum*** *wa-ʾahlīkum nāran waqūduha n-nāsu wa-l-ḥijāratu*
> O believers, guard yourselves and your[p] families against a fire whose fuel is men and stones
>
> Q 13:16 *qul ʾa-fa-ttaḫaḏtum min dūnihī ʾawliyāʾa lā yamlikūna* ***li-ʾanfusihim*** *nafʿan wa-lā ḍarran*
> Say, 'Then have you[p] taken others beside him to be your[p] protectors who cannot benefit or harm [even] themselves?'

[6] Qurʾānic occurrences of both individual and collective reflexivity expressed by *nafs*: Q 2:9, 2:44, 2:54#1, 2:57, 2:90, 2:102, 2:110, 2:187, 2:207, 2:223, 2:228, 2:231, 2:234 (twice), 2:240, 2:272, 3:28, 3:30#2, 3:69, 3:93, 3:117 (twice), 3:135, 3:168, 4:64, 4:97, 4:107, 4:110, 4:113, 4:135, 5:25, 5:105, 6:12, 6:20, 6:24, 6:26, 6:123, 6:130 (twice), 7:9, 7:23, 7:53, 7:37, 7:160, 7:172, 7:177, 7:188, 7:192, 7:197, 9:17, 9:35, 9:36, 9:42, 9:70, 10:44, 10:49, 11:21, 11:101, 12:54, 13:16, 14:22, 14:45, 16:28, 16:33, 16:111#2, 16:118, 18:6, 18:35, 20:41, 21:43, 23:103, 25:3, 26:3, 27:44, 28:16, 29:40, 30:9, 33:50, 34:19, 35:32, 37:113, 39:15, 39:53, 40:10, 42:45, 57:14, 59:9, 59:19, 64:16#1, 65:1, 66:6, 73:20, 75:14 (following Jones's translation).

2.3. Collective reflexivity

Examples of collective reflexivity are presented below. The referents in such cases, as in the reciprocal reflexive category (see §2.4 below), usually belong to a certain group or category, such as the believers (*al-muʾminūn/al-muʾminīn*), the unbelievers (*allaḏīna kafarū*) and the people of Abraham (*qawm ʾibrāhīm*). In many of these cases, the participants act both on themselves and on others from their group, or at least none of these possibilities can be excluded.[7] These collective situations may also be described as if the entire group is acting on itself as a whole, or as a single unit. Here are a few examples:

> Q 3:69 *waddat ṭāʾifatun min ʾahli l-kitābi law yuḍillūnakum wa-mā yuḍillūna ʾillā* ***ʾanfusahum***
> A party of the People of the Book wish to make you[p] go astray, yet they make to stray none but themselves

> [Q 3:166–167 *wa-li-yaʿlama l-muʾminīn. wa-li-yaʿlama llaḏīna nāfaqū* ...] Q 3:168 *allaḏīna qālū li-ʾiḫwānihim wa-qaʿadū law ʾaṭāʿūnā mā qutilū qul fa-draʾū ʿan* ***ʾanfusikumu*** *l-mawta ʾin kuntum ṣādiqīn*
> [so that he might know the believers, and so that he might know the hypocrites ...], those who, while sitting at home, said of their brothers, 'Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed'. Say, 'Then avert death from yourselves, if you[p] speak the truth.'

> Q 14:22 *fa-lā talūmūnī wa-lūmū* ***ʾanfusakum***
> So do not blame me, but blame yourselves[8]

[7] The phenomenon of reflexive-collective marker encompassing the reciprocal sense is known from other languages as well. See Maslova, "Reflexive encoding", 240–242. For further discussion, see §2.6 below.

[8] In Q 14:21, we are told that on the Day of Judgement those who were arrogant (*allaḏīna stakbarū*) will tell their weak followers (*al-ḍuʿafāʾ*) that they cannot avail them against the chastisement of God. It will be revealed that Satan had no authority over the ones who answered his calls; i.e., both those who were arrogant and their followers. The quoted part from Q 14:22 is Satan's words to his followers. The context provided by Q 14:21 allows two interpretations for Q 14:22: (1) Every one of Satan's followers should blame himself or herself (i.e., plural individual reflexivity); (2) Those who were arrogant should blame themselves and their followers should blame them as well as themselves. This latter possibility makes it a possible case of collective reflexivity.

A noteworthy case is the following:

> Q 3:61 *fa-man ḥājjaka fīhi min baʿdi mā jāʾaka mina l-ʿilmi fa-qul taʿālaw nadʿu ʾabnāʾanā wa-ʾabnāʾakum wa-nisāʾanā wa-nisāʾakum* ***wa-ʾanfusanā wa-ʾanfusakum*** *ṯumma nabtahil fa-najʿal laʿnata llāhi ʿala l-kāḏibīn*
>
> And whoso disputes with you[s] concerning him (God), after the knowledge that has come to you[s], say, 'Come now, let us call our sons and your[p] sons, our wives and your[p] wives, *ʾanfusanā* and *ʾanfusakum*, then let us humbly pray and so lay God's curse upon the ones who lie.'

This verse is part of a passage dealing with the nature of Jesus as a man made of flesh and blood. God tells Muḥammad to invite those who are at odds with this notion of Jesus to settle the dispute in a ceremony of objurgation (or mutual imprecation; *mubāhala*, *mulāʿana* or *liʿān*).[9]

As illustrated in Figure 1 below, the subject of *nadʿu* is both the believers and the Christians, while the suffixes *-nā* and *-kum* each refer only to one of these groups: the former to the believers and the latter to the Christians. In this verse, then, *ʾanfusanā wa-ʾanfusakum* are a single unit. It is the combination of both that functions as the reflexive object referring back to the subject of *nadʿu*: let us [all – we and you[p]] each call [our own people], we [calling] ourselves and you[p] [calling] yourselves.[10]



Figure 1: An illustration of the pronouns' referents in an excerpt from Q 3:61. Reference to both the believers and the Christians is marked in purple; to the believers only, in blue; and to the Christians only, in red.

2.4. Reciprocal reflexivity

As is the case in many other languages, multi-participant reflexive *ʾanfus* may also express reciprocity. This usage is quite rare in the Qurʾān compared with other

[9] Schmucker, "*Mubāhala*"; Schleifer, "Banu 'l-Ḥāriṯh b. Kaʿb".

[10] Or, as al-Nasafī (I, 261) puts it, *ʾay yadʿu kullun minnā wa-minkum ʾabnāʾahū wa-nisāʾahū wa-nafsahū ʾila l-mubāhalati*, "i.e., let each one of us and of you[p] call his sons, his wives and himself to an objurgation". Cf. al-Zamaḫšarī (I, 565): *kullun minnī wa-minkum*, "each one of me and of you[p]", which seems less likely. If this was indeed the case, *ʾanfusanā* would have to refer to both sides, which would have rendered the use of *wa-ʾanfusakum* pointless. For other occurrences of *ʾanfus* at the end of a list, see also §3.2 below.

means of expressing reciprocity (see further below). For convenience, I will hereafter use "reciprocal *ʾanfus*" instead of "reciprocal reflexive *ʾanfus*".

The reflexive/reciprocal polysemy of *ʾanfus* does not depend on syntax, but on semantics. Syntactically, the usage of reciprocal *ʾanfus* is identical to that of reflexive *ʾanfus*. Thus, reciprocals can in principle be thought of as reflexives. However, the context may allow a reciprocal understanding or make it preferable. In any event, the reciprocal sense of *ʾanfus* is secondary to its reflexive meaning.[11]

It is more common to find in the Qurʾān other strategies to express reciprocity, all of which are not restricted to Qurʾānic Arabic but are found in extra-Qurʾānic Arabic as well. The most common (non-reflexive) reciprocal construction includes two occurrences of *baʿḍ*, e.g., Q 2:76 *wa-ʾiḏā ḫalā baʿḍuhum ʾilā baʿḍin*, "but when they meet one another in private"; Q 5:51 *baʿḍuhum ʾawliyāʾu baʿḍin*, "they are friends of each other".[12] I could not find in the Qurʾān verbs used both with *ʾanfus* and with *baʿḍ*, although Q 49:11 *wa-lā talmizū ʾanfusakum* and Q 49:12 *wa-lā yaġtab baʿḍukum baʿḍan* are very close in meaning (see further the discussion on Q 49:11 in this section as well as §2.6 below). This might result from the formulaic nature of Qurʾānic Arabic or might be a mere coincidence.

Other means to express reciprocity include the use of certain verbal patterns, e.g., Q 28:15 *yaqtatilāni*, Q 49:9 *iqtatalū*, Q 52:25 *yatasāʾalūn*, Q 68:30 *yatalāwamūn* and Q 4:29 *tarāḍin*,[13] with or without the use of the prepositions *bayna* and *fī*.[14]

Reckendorf has drawn attention to yet another means to express reciprocity in Classical Arabic, namely, binary constructions containing argument inversion; e.g., Q 2:187 *hunna libāsun lakum wa-ʾantum libāsun lahunna*, "they[f] are a garment for you[mp], and you[mp] are a garment for them[f]"; Q 6:52 *mā ʿalayka min ḥisābihim min šayʾin wa-mā min ḥisābika ʿalayhim min šayʾin*, "nothing of their account falls upon you[s], and

[11] See also n. 5 above, as well as the discussion in §2.6 below.

[12] See Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 161 = §91.4; Fischer, *Grammar*, 86 = §139.

[13] See Wright, I, 32–33, 38–40, 42 = §§43a, 50, 56.

[14] See Wright, II, 180–181 = §67; Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 286–287 = §145; Fischer, *Grammar*, 166 = §308. *Bayna* may perhaps also be described as a disambiguating component (see n. 5 above) – see Q 4:29 and 57:20 *baynakum*.

nothing of your[s] account falls upon them". Other such Qurʾānic examples found in Reckendorf's works are Q 5:5 and 24:26.[15]

Before discussing the occurrences of reciprocal *ʾanfus* in more detail, three general remarks on reciprocity are to be made that are relevant to the following discussions. From a cross-linguistic perspective, all of the characteristics discussed below are not unique to Arabic:

(1) As mentioned above in the present section regarding Qurʾānic *ʾanfus* in particular, semantics plays a very significant role in defining the exact nature of any mutual relationship between participants.[16] The variety of relations between reciprocants (or mutuants)[17] is truly astounding. For the purposes of the present thesis, it should be borne in mind that reciprocity is not necessarily restricted to a single event in which the referents act on each other simultaneously or in close time proximity, as in the case of fighting or exchanging curses. It can also, for instance, describe a set of asymmetrical (or non-mutual) subevents in which a certain referent from a given group or category acts on another referent from the same group or category so that in each subevent the latter does not act on the former in return, as in the case of mutual visiting.

(2) The terms "participant" and "referent", which are used in this chapter interchangeably, do not necessarily refer to a single (human) object, but can relate

---

[15] See Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 327 = §165.12; see also Reckendorf, *Paronomasie*, 150 = §37. To these one may add Q 14:22 *mā ʾanā bi-muṣriḫikum wa-mā ʾantum bi-muṣriḫiyya*, "I cannot aid you[p], and neither can you[p] aid me"; Q 12:24 *wa-la-qad hammat bihī wa-hamma bihā*, "and she desired him, and he desired her"; Q 2:145 *mā tabiʿū qiblataka wa-mā ʾanta bi-tābiʿin qiblatahum wa-mā baʿḍuhum bi-tābiʿin qiblata baʿḍin*, "they will not follow your[s] direction of prayer; you[s] are not a follower of their direction of prayer, neither are they followers of one another's direction of prayer"; Q 109:2–3 *lā ʾaʿbudu mā taʿbudūn. wa-lā ʾantum ʿābidūna mā ʾaʿbud*, "I serve not what you[p] serve, and you[p] are not serving what I serve"; Q 109:4–5 *wa-lā ʾanā ʿābidun mā ʿabadtum. wa-lā ʾantum ʿābidūna mā ʾaʿbud*, "nor am I serving what you[p] have served, neither are you[p] serving what I serve". Q 30:19 *yuḫriju l-ḥayya mina l-mayyiti wa-yuḫriju l-mayyita mina l-ḥayyi*, "He (God) brings forth the living from the dead, and he brings forth the dead from the living", and 31:29 [*ʾanna llāha*] *yūliju l-layla fi n-nahāri wa-yūliju n-nahāra fi l-layli*, "[That God] merges the night with the day and the day with the night", mentioned by Reckendorf (loc. cit.), do not belong here in my view, since there is not necessarily a connection between the objects: the sentences cannot necessarily be formulated as "God causes: A and B act on each other", but rather as "God causes: A_1 becomes B_1, and God causes: B_2 becomes A_2".

[16] For the semantics of reciprocals, see, e.g., Dalrymple et al., "Reciprocal expressions", 159–182; Nedjalkov, "Overview", 6–9; Haspelmath, "Further remarks", 2087–2090; Evans et al., "Introduction"; Majid et al., "Semantics".

[17] According to Haspelmath, "Further remarks", 2087–2088.

to a subgroup that includes multiple referents (see especially the discussion on Q 2:54 below).[18] It is for this reason, among others, that I suggest that Ambros's "dichotomy" be counted as a type of reciprocity.[19]

(3) The difference between reciprocity and collective reflexivity (§2.3 above) is that the agent and the patient of a reciprocal action are necessarily different, whereas those of a collective reflexive action may also be identical.

All 11 occurrences of reciprocal *ʾanfus* are briefly elaborated upon below.[20] In determining the reciprocal meaning of *ʾanfus*, the following were taken into account (when applicable): (1) the semantics of the verb; (2) the contextual information given in the verse or the passage; (3) intra-Qurʾānic parallels; (4) pre-Islamic materials; (5) traditional interpretations. Since traditional exegetical explanations regarding the cases of reciprocal *ʾanfus* tend to recur, I summarised them in §2.5 below.

---

[18] See, e.g., example 4 in Heine and Miyashita, "Intersection", 171.

[19] Ambros (*Concise dictionary*, 272 [*NFS*]) makes a distinction between reciprocity and what he defines as "dichotomy" – that is, an action of certain members of a group on other members in the same group. He exemplifies this usage by adducing Q 2:85 *taqtulūna ʾanfusakum*, "you^{p} kill one another", implying that, unlike Q 49:11 *wa-lā talmizū ʾanfusakum*, "and do not defame each other", the act of killing is not fully reciprocal: one participant killing another does not allow for the latter to kill the former. Whereas there is indeed a difference between killing and defamation when only two participants are involved, such a distinction is not necessarily valid for a larger group, which is typically the case with mutual killing. When the number of participants is large, "killing one another" simply denotes multiple killings performed by members of at least two opposing parties within the same group. Nedjalkov and Geniušienė ("Questionnaire", 402) describe mutual killing as "generally denoting situations with more than two participants and an unpaired distribution of the roles". As to the Qurʾān itself, I could not find occurrences of *ʾanfus* referring to situations in which only two participants are involved. Moreover, in light of the above-mentioned large variety of semantic relations between reciprocants, that actions X and Y are not of the same nature does not mean that "X each other" and "Y each other" should not be both deemed reciprocal. See also the discussion on Q 2:54#2 below.

[20] Paret has briefly commented on almost all of the verses discussed below, saying they have "kollektive, nicht individuelle Bedeutung". See Paret, *Kommentar*, 19 (Q 2:54). The verses that he mentions are the following: Q 2:54[#2], 2:84, 2:85, 4:29, 4:66, 24:61[#2], 30:28[#2], 49:11. While no comments relevant to our topic are found in his commentary on Q 21:64, 24:12 and 33:6, his translations of Q 21:64 and 33:6 reflect a reciprocal reading of *ʾanfus* – see below, nn. 47 and 56 (respectively). As for Q 24:12, Paret's understanding appears to be different from mine (see below).

Q 49:11

> Q 49:11 *wa-lā talmizū* ***ʾanfusakum*** *wa-lā tanābazū bi-l-ʾalqābi*
> And slander not *ʾanfusakum* (secretly), neither revile one another by nicknames.

The agent and patient of *lamaza*, "defame", "talk behind s.o.'s back",[21] are usually disparate, which rules out plural individual reflexivity. Furthermore, *wa-lā talmizū ʾanfusakum* is close in meaning (1) to the following clause, in which a reciprocal verb is utilised, and (2) to Q 49:12 *wa-lā yaġtab baʿḍukum baʿḍan*, "neither backbite one another", in which a reciprocal construction occurs.[22] A reciprocal reading of *ʾanfus* in Q 49:11 therefore seems appropriate: "And slander not one another (secretly)".

Q 4:29

> Q 4:29 *yā-ʾayyuha llaḏīna ʾāmanū lā taʾkulū ʾamwālakum baynakum bi-l-bāṭili ʾillā ʾan takūna tijāratan ʿan tarāḍin minkum wa-lā taqtulū* ***ʾanfusakum*** *ʾinna llāha kāna bikum raḥīmā*
> O believers, consume not each other's property in vanity, but let [the trading] be trading by mutual consent among you[p].[23] And kill not *ʾanfusakum*. God is compassionate to you[p]

The clause in which *ʾanfus* appears follows two clauses that deal with commerce among the believers, which is reciprocal by nature. Excluding the final stich, reciprocity is expressed in every clause.[24] It is unsurprising that traditional commentators unanimously concur that *ʾanfusakum* is not individual reflexive.[25] *ʾAnfusakum* should be construed as reciprocal: "and kill not one another".

---

[21] *WKAS*, II.3, 1359–1362.

[22] See also the discussion in §2.6 below.

[23] For a discussion on this translation, see §7.3.2 below.

[24] *Baynakum* in the first clause and *tarāḍin* in the second (see nn. 13 and 14 above), as well as the lexical reciprocal *tijāra*, "trade, trading".

[25] One account, quoted in some commentaries (e.g., Ibn Kaṯīr, II, 269–270), might however suggest an individual reflexive understanding of *ʾanfusakum*. According to it, having been sent by the Prophet on a mission, ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ experienced nocturnal emission in an extremely cold night. In the morning, fearing for his life, he did not perform total ablution (*iġtisāl*) with water, but with sand (*tayammum*), and then prayed in the company of his friends. When the expedition returned and ʿAmr told the Prophet about [the morning prayer], he said, "[but] ʿAmr, you[s] prayed next to your[s] friends while being impure!" ʿAmr then explained the circumstances and cited Q 4:29 *wa-lā taqtulū ʾanfusakum ʾinna llāha kāna bikum raḥīmā*. In response, the Prophet is reported to have laughed and said nothing further. The understanding of *wa-lā taqtulū ʾanfusakum* reflected in this tradition, then, is

Q 24:61#2

> Q 24:61 *fa-ʾiḏā daḫaltum buyūtan fa-sallimū ʿalā* ***ʾanfusikum*** *taḥiyyatan min ʿindi llāhi mubārakatan ṭayyibatan*
>
> When you[p] enter houses, greet *ʿalā ʾanfusikum* with a greeting from God, blessed and good

The verb *sallama* with the preposition *ʿalā* conveys the meaning of greeting.[26] Since the agent and the patient of such a verb ought to be disparate, *ʾanfus* can be construed neither as individual nor as collective reflexive.[27]

Al-Māwardī (IV, 126) summarises the main traditional views on *ʾanfusikum* in this verse: (1) when you enter your own houses, greet the dwellers of your house and your families (*ʿalā ʾahālīkum wa-ʿiyālikum*); (2) when you enter mosques, greet whomever is in them; (3) when you enter other people's houses, greet them;[28] (4) when you enter houses, greet the people of your faith (*ʿalā ʾahli dīnikum*); (5) if you enter empty houses, pray peace for yourselves, saying *as-salāmu ʿalaynā wa-ʿalā ʿibādi llāhi ṣ-ṣāliḥīna*, "peace be upon us and upon God's righteous servants".[29] Al-Zajjāj (IV, 54) adds another option, namely (6) *maʿnāhu fa-l-yusallim baʿḍukum ʿalā baʿḍin*, "its meaning is 'let you[p] greet one another'".[30]

All traditional interpretations of *ʾanfusikum* above primarily have to do with greeting the people present in the place which one enters, be it a mosque or a house. As for *ʾanfus*, options 1–4 above emphasise each (asymmetrical) event of entering a place, option 6 looks at the entire set of events (see further below), and the fifth interpretation reflects an individual/collective reflexive understanding.

This fifth interpretation, I believe, is not the text's intention. It hinges on the understanding of *buyūtan* as "*empty* houses", but there is nothing in the verse's

---

"do not kill yourselves" – that is, *ʾanfusakum* is interpreted as expressing individual reflexivity. However, the tradition takes the verse completely out of context and seems merely anecdotal.

[26] E.g., Lane, IV, 1412b (*SLM*); Ambros, *Concise dictionary*, 137 (*SLM*). As is further discussed below, this is one of only two Qurʾānic occurrences of *sallama* with *ʿalā* (with the possible exception of Q 33:56, in which *ʿalayhi* could technically have been by elided from the final stich: *ṣallū ʿalayhi wa-sallimū [ʿalayhi] taslīmā*, "bless him and pray him peace"), the other being Q 24:27.

[27] But cf. below.

[28] Cf. Q 24:27–28 below.

[29] See further n. 32 below. Other variations of greetings are suggested in other commentaries – see, e.g., al-Rāzī, XXIV, 37–38.

[30] A similar explanation of this verse is suggested by al-Rāzī, III, 87 (on Q 2:54).

context (vv. 58–61) to suggest that the houses referred to in the verse are empty. On the contrary, the passage has to do with privacy etiquette among members of the early Muslim community, which by definition requires more than a single participant. The discussion of empty houses seems influenced by that of Q 24:27–28:[31]

> Q 24:27–28 *yā-ʾayyuha llaḏīna ʾāmanū lā tadḫulū buyūtan ġayra buyūtikum ḥattā tastaʾnisū wa-tusallimū ʿalā ʾahlihā [...]. fa-ʾin lam tajidū fīhā ʾaḥadan fa-lā tadḫulūhā ḥattā yuʾḏana lakum [...]*
>
> O believers, do not enter houses other than your[p] houses until you[p] first make sure that there are people present and greet the people thereof [...]. And if you[p] find not anyone therein, enter them not until leave is given to you[p].

Note that the sentence containing the verb *sallama* here presupposes the presence of the inhabitants of the house. Only then does the passage address the event of entering an empty house, in which case no greeting is mentioned.

One additional remark is in order. In the real world, greeting (like talking) is usually reciprocal; that is, when referent A greets referent B, B normally greets A back. However, it is not necessarily so by definition; for instance, after a quarrel, A may greet B only to be met with silence. Accordingly, the Qurʾānic stipulation in this verse, I submit, does not concern the people present in the house, but only the people entering it. This is not to say that *ʾanfus* is not reciprocal. Just as if the Qurʾān commanded the believers to visit one another, it addresses the believers collectively and stipulates that they are to greet one another upon entering a house. However, since greeting is not symmetrical by definition, and since *sallimū* has the same subject as the preceding verb *daḫaltum*, only the believers entering the house, I contend, are obliged to greet their fellow believers; the people present in it are not bound by this divine commandment.[32]

---

[31] Q 24:58–61 and 24:27–31 are indeed very similar in content. Both deal with entering houses and related privacy issues. It is thus unsurprising that Q 24:61#2 is occasionally explained simply by citing Q 24:27 (see, e.g., Ibn ʾAbī Ḥātim, VIII, 2650 [no. 14896]).

[32] This proposition reduces a certain discrepancy, which is perhaps apparent only at first glance, between Q 24:61 and 24:27–28. One might think that, unlike the commandment in Q 24:27–28, in which the believers entering the house are clearly addressed, according to Q 24:61 *both sides* – i.e., both the believers entering the house and the ones present in it – ought to greet each other. Exegetes were aware of the similarity between the two passages. This is reflected, for instance, in al-Māturīdī, VII, 599, in which *al-buyūt al-maskūna*, "inhabited houses", is explicitly related to Q 24:27 *lā tadḫulū*

Q 24:12

> Q 24:12 *lawlā ʾiḏ samiʿtumūhu ẓanna l-muʾminūna wa-l-muʾmināt**u*** ***bi-ʾanfusihim*** *ḫayran wa-qālū hāḏā ʾifkun mubīn*
>
> Why, when you[p] heard it, did the believing men and women not think good thoughts of *ʾanfusihim*, and say, 'This is a manifest calumny'?

Without having to resort to the well-known "incident of the slander" (*ḥadīṯ al-ʾifk*),[33] further contextual information is provided at the beginning of the previous verse: *ʾinna llaḏīna jāʾū bi-l-ʾifki ʿuṣbatun minkum*, "those who came with the slander are a band of you[p]" (Q 24:11). It can be inferred from the plain text, then, that some of the believers falsely accused other believers, and that the Qurʾān reproves this false accusation. By *bi-ʾanfusihim*, the Qurʾān refers to the believers slandering *fellow believers*, or *one another*.[34] A collective reading is possible, too;[35] however, the context makes a reciprocal understanding preferable.

Q 2:54#2

> Q 2:54 *wa-ʾiḏ qāla mūsā li-qawmihī yā-qawmi ʾinnakum ẓalamtum ʾanfusakum bi-ttiḫāḏikumu l-ʿijla fa-tūbū ʾilā bāriʾikum* ***fa-qtulū ʾanfusakum*** *ḏālikum ḫayrun lakum ʿinda bāriʾikum*

---

buyūtan ġayra buyūtikum. However, I could not find in traditional works any discussion of the two passages being incongruent. That this seeming incomplete overlap has not troubled the exegetes only strengthens my view that there is in fact no difference between the Qurʾānic stipulation in Q 24:61 and 24:27–28.

[33] According to Islamic tradition, ʿĀʾiša, the Prophet's wife, accompanied him on an expedition against the Banū Muṣṭaliq in 6/628. On their way back to Medina, ʿĀʾiša lost her necklace and went looking for it. The convoy then departed without noticing her absence. A young man named Ṣafwān ibn al-Muʿaṭṭal later found her and brought her back with him to Medina. ʿĀʾiša's return alone in the company of Ṣafwān generated accusations among several influential people in Medina. See further Afsaruddin, "ʿĀʾisha".

[34] But cf. Paret's translation, "Warum haben denn, als ihr davon hörtet, die gläubigen Männer und Frauen nicht ihrerseits (gleich) eine gute Meinung (von ʿĀʾischa) gehabt", which, to the best of my understanding, points to a different interpretation of *bi-ʾanfusihim* (see Wright, II, 280–282 = §139). Relating *bi-ʾanfusihim* to the core meaning of "soul" may at first glance seem tempting, but inner-thinking is expressed in the Qurʾān by using the preposition *fī*, not *bi-* (see §1.1 above).

[35] Such a reading would mean that *al-muʾminūna wa-l-muʾmināt**u*** encompasses the slandered believers, too – that is, that the verse addresses all believing men and women, including the ones subject to slandering.

> And when Moses said to his people, 'My people, you[p] have wronged yourselves by your[p] taking the calf; now turn to your[p] creator and slay *ʾanfusakum*. That will be better for you[p] in your[p] creator's sight...'

At face value, *ʾanfusakum* may be construed either as individual reflexive ("kill yourselves"), or as reciprocal ("kill one another").

Although some traditional exegetes mention the literal (*ẓāhiruhū*/*ʿala l-ẓāhir*) individual reflexive meaning as a possibility,[36] they generally reject it and conclude that the Banū ʾIsrāʾīl were ordered to kill one another.[37] The primary reason for this seems to be their familiarity with either the Biblical story (see below) or traditions based on it to a certain extent.[38]

This verse alludes to Exodus 32:26–35, according to which, having descended from Mount Sinai and found out about the golden calf, Moses has the tribe of Levi kill 3,000 other Israelites, including their own relatives and friends, to appease God's anger.[39] This Biblical parallel, then, describes Israelites killing other Israelites, and not themselves. Provided that this Qurʾānic verse is indeed based on the story from Exodus, *ʾanfus* should be construed as reciprocal.

It is noteworthy that the Levites in the Biblical story are a distinct subgroup of agents only, whereas the rest of Moses's people are patients only. In other words, this seems to be a special case in which the agents and the patients do not change roles. This, I assume, applies to what Ambros has termed "dichotomy".[40] However, bearing in mind both that reciprocity can refer not only to individuals but also to subgroups, and that this situation is very similar to other types of reciprocal situations expressed by reciprocal constructions in other languages,[41] I maintain that Ambros's "dichotomy" is in fact a sub-type of reciprocity, and not a different sense of *ʾanfus*. Reciprocal situations, I concede, would normally seem to require at

---

[36] See, e.g., al-Zamaḫšarī, I, 269; al-Rāzī, III, 86.

[37] See, e.g., al-Qurṭubī, II, 110–111; al-Rāzī, III, 86–87.

[38] As traditions cited by al-Ṭabarī (I, 679–687) indicate, as well as the following commentary, which is ascribed to Ibn ʿAbbās: *"fa-qtulū ʾanfusakum" fa-l-yaqtuli llaḏī lam yaʿbudi l-ʿijla llaḏī ʿabadahū*, "'slay *ʾanfusakum*' – let whoever did not worship the calf slay whoever worshipped it". Such an interpretation cannot have been emerged from the plain Qurʾānic text.

[39] See also Speyer, *Biblischen Erzählungen*, 326–327.

[40] Ambros, *Concise dictionary*, 272 (*NFS*). See also n. 19 above.

[41] Especially the type termed "melee" or "brawl" – see, e.g., Dalrymple et al., "Reciprocal expressions", §3.3 = 171–172.

least one participant to switch roles (at least potentially), even in situations of "weak reciprocity",[42] yet *ʾanfusakum* in Q 2:54 *fa-qtulū ʾanfusakum* cannot be regarded as reflexive, since it expresses a situation in which individual reflexive subevents are excluded.

Q 2:84–85

> Q 2:84–85 *wa-ʾiḏ ʾaḫaḏnā mīṯāqakum lā tasfikūna dimāʾakum wa-lā tuḫrijūna* ***ʾanfusakum*** *min diyārikum [...]. ṯumma ʾantum hāʾulāʾi taqtulūna* ***ʾanfusakum*** *wa-tuḫrijūna farīqan minkum min diyārihim*
>
> And [recall] when we took a covenant from you[p]: 'You[p] shall not shed your[p] own/each other's blood, neither expel *ʾanfusakum* from your[p] dwellings' [...] Then there you[p] are killing *ʾanfusakum*, and expelling a party of you[p] from their dwellings

This pair of verses provides a valuable comparison: the quoted part from Q 2:85 presents a reality opposite to the covenant outlined in Q 2:84. According to the covenant, the Jews should not shed *their own* (or *each other's*) blood (v. 84 *lā tasfikūna dimāʾakum*), but here they are, killing *one another* (v. 85 *taqtulūna ʾanfusakum*); the pact also stipulates that the Jews should not expel *fellow Jews* (or *one another*) from their dwellings (v. 84 *wa-lā tuḫrijūna ʾanfusakum min diyārikum*), yet here they are, throwing out a party of their own from their houses (v. 85 *wa-tuḫrijūna farīqan minkum min diyārihim*).

In terms of linguistic usage, because it is paralleled with *wa-tuḫrijūna farīqan minkum min diyārihim* (v. 85), *lā tuḫrijūna ʾanfusakum min diyārikum* (v. 84) is evidently not individual reflexive. Both *ʾanfusakum* and the suffix *-kum* in *diyārikum* are meant to express reciprocity. The same applies to the suffix *-kum* in *lā tasfikūna dimāʾakum* (v. 84) and in its parallel *taqtulūna ʾanfusakum* (v. 85).[43] In sum, the passage should be translated as follows:

> And [recall] when we took a covenant from you[p]: 'You[p] shall not shed your[p] own/each other's blood, neither expel one another from your[p] dwellings' [...] Then there you[p] are killing one another, and expelling a party of you[p] from their dwellings

[42] See the previous footnote.

[43] Traditional exegetes generally agree on this interpretation. See al-Zamaḫšarī, I, 291–292; al-Ṭabarī, II, 201–202, 205–209; al-Qurṭubī, II, 236–237; al-Rāzī, III, 183–184; al-Jalālayn, 39–40. See also §2.5 below.

Q 4:66

> Q 4:66 *wa-law ʾannā katabnā ʿalayhim ʾani qtulū* ***ʾanfusakum*** *ʾawi ḫrujū min diyārikum mā faʿalūhu ʾillā qalīlun minhum*
> If we (God) had prescribed for them: 'Kill *ʾanfusakum*' or 'Leave your dwellings', they would not have done it, except a few of them

This verse is reminiscent of Q 2:84–85 and 2:54 (discussed above). It is thus unsurprising that some commentators mention the Jews in their interpretations of *uqtulū ʾanfusakum*, e.g., by continuing the protasis, saying, "as we had prescribed for the Banū ʾIsrāʾīl",[44] or by mentioning a boasting competition between a Jew and one of the Prophet's companions, in which the former took pride in the fact that the Jews had followed the order to kill each other, to which the latter replied that the Muslims would do the same if so ordered.[45] Like the rest of the Qurʾānic occurrences of *QTL* + reflexive *ʾanfus*, *uqtulū ʾanfusakum* should be understood here as reciprocal; that is, "kill one another".

Q 21:64

This verse is taken from the story of Abraham (Q 21:51–70). After discovering that their idols were smashed except for one, Abraham's people confront him, suspecting that he is the culprit. Abraham accuses the only idol that remained intact and invites his people to confirm his version of events by asking the idols – that is, if they are able to speak. Then comes the following:

> Q 21:64 *fa-rajaʿū ʾilā* ***ʾanfusihim*** *fa-qālū ʾinnakum ʾantumu ẓ-ẓālimūn*
> So they returned to *ʾanfusihim*, and they said, 'Surely it is you[p] who are the evildoers!'

Despite some exegetical views that suggest otherwise,[46] the simplest understanding seems to be that Abraham's people turned to one another and exchanged blame. *ʾAnfusihim* should be read as reciprocal.[47]

---

[44] See, e.g., al-Jalālayn, 301.

[45] See, e.g., al-Ṭabarī, VII, 207.

[46] See, e.g., al-Jalālayn, 1207, who probably suggest an individual reflexive reading of *ʾanfusihim* by adding *bi-l-tafakkur* to *rajaʿū ʾilā ʾanfusihim*; i.e., "[returned to themselves] and thought".

[47] As suggested, e.g., by al-Qurṭubī, XIV, 225. See also Paret's translation: "Da wandten sie sich wieder sich selber zu".

It should be noted, however, that this case is on the edge between reflexivity and reciprocity. The use of *ʾanfusihim* in this case may simply express that the group of people confronting Abraham excluded him from the conversation and acted on itself as a group. In reality, the difference between the two possibilities is slight (see also §2.6 below).

Q 30:28#2

> Q 30:28 *hal lakum min mā malakat ʾaymānukum min šurakāʾa fī mā razaqnākum fa-ʾantum fīhi sawāʾun taḫāfūnahum ka-ḫīfatikum* ***ʾanfusakum***
> Do you[p] have, among what your[p] right hands own, associates in what we have provided for you[p], so that you[p] are equal in regard to it, you[p] venerating them as you[p] venerate *ʾanfusakum*?

This is a Qurʾānic similitude: God's not having associates is similar to (free) men's not treating their slaves as equals and not sharing their possessions (or the right to inherit them)[48] with them. *Taḫāfūnahum ka-ḫīfatikum ʾanfusakum* should be understood in this verse as "venerating them as you[p] venerate [other free men] like you[p]", or indeed "as you[p] venerate each other".[49]

Q 33:6

> Q 33:6 *an-nabiyyu ʾawlā bi-l-muʾminīna min* ***ʾanfusihim*** *wa-ʾazwājuhū ʾummahātuhum wa-ʾulu l-ʾarḥāmi baʿḍuhum ʾawlā bi-baʿḍin fī kitābi llāhi mina l-muʾminīna wa-l-muhājirīna*
> The prophet is closer to the believers than *ʾanfusihim*, and his wives are their mothers. Those who are bound by blood are closer to one another in the book of God than the believers and the emigrants

The previous two verses, vv. 4–5, disapprove of the *ẓihār* oath[50] as well as of the adoption of children. Male believers may declare their wives prohibited to them for sexual relations as "their own mothers' back", but this does not make their wives equivalent to their mothers. The same is said regarding adopted children: these are perhaps declared to be real children, but God does not deem them as such (v. 4). Adopted sons should be called after their (real) fathers, and if their fathers are

[48] According to one view. See al-Māturīdī, VIII, 268.

[49] See, e.g., al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-maṣūn*, IX, 41–42.

[50] For which see Hawting, "Oaths", 563.

unknown, then they are the believers' brothers in religion or clients (*mawālīkum*;[51] v. 5). V. 6, then, depicts the "correct" hierarchy between the Prophet, his wives and the believers: (1a) the closeness of every believer to the Prophet comes first; perhaps in contrast to what was said regarding female believers in v. 4; (1b) the Prophet's wives are [as] mothers to the believers (so no believer can marry them); next in the hierarchical order is (2) kinship; and then comes (3) communal relations and relations to one's clients (*ʾawliyāʾ*; cf. v. 4 *mawālīkum*).

Provided that *ʾawlā* is meant to convey closeness in terms of loyalty,[52] the interpretation of the first clause of Q 33:6 hinges upon the meaning of *ʾanfus*, of which I could find two main traditional interpretations:[53] (1) *ʾAnfusihim* should be understood lexically ("their souls"), and apply, e.g., to cases in which the Prophet's order contradicts the believer's will.[54] This reading is somewhat close to an individual reflexive reading ("themselves"), which compares how close the Prophet is to every member of his community with how close every member is to *himself/herself* (that is, to the believer's own will). (2) The loyalty of every community member to the Prophet is compared with that of the community members to *each other*; thus, the believers should follow orders given by the Prophet and prefer him over any other believers, including their parents and children.[55] In light of the other Qurʾānic occurrences of reciprocal *ʾanfus*, as well as the context, a reciprocal reading should be at least considered a possibility; in my view, this possibility is also the preferred one.[56] The closeness to the Prophet outweighs any other relations between any two members of the believing community; that is, the closeness of every believer to the Prophet outweighs the closeness the believers to *one another*.

---

[51] Following Ambros, *Concise dictionary*, 297 (*WLY*; under "pl. *mawālī*"). Rubin translates "friends".

[52] See Ambros, *Concise dictionary*, 296 ("*ʾawlā*" [*WLY*], no. 1c). Paret suggests "Glaubensfreunde" – see his *Kommentar*, 398 (Q 33:6) and 192–193 (Q 8:72). For other possible meanings, see al-Zamaḫšarī, V, 50–51.

[53] Both are outlined in al-Naḥḥās, *ʾIʿrāb*, 764–765.

[54] See also al-Jalālayn (1506): *"an-nabiyyu ʾawlā bi-l-muʾminīna min ʾanfusihim" fīmā daʿāhum ʾilayhi wa-daʿathum ʾanfusuhum ʾilā ḫilāfihī*, "'The prophet is closer to the believers than their (own) souls' – regarding what he (the Prophet) calls them for, but their souls induce them to do the opposite". See also al-Qurṭubī, XVII, 60–62; al-Zamaḫšarī, V, 50–51.

[55] See al-Māturīdī, VIII, 353–354.

[56] This also reflects Paret's comprehension of this verse: "Der Prophet steht den Gläubigen näher, als sie selber (untereinander)".

2.5. Traditional exegetical explanations

In what appears to be an effort to justify the use of *ʾanfus* to express collective and reciprocal reflexivity, commentators suggest several explanations, including the following:

- ❖ The Muslims are as a single soul.[57]
- ❖ People are referred to in the Qurʾān as the same person if they are related by lineage (*ʾaṣl*, *nasab*) or share the same religion.[58]
- ❖ The Muslims are of one origin (*baʿḍuhum min baʿḍin*)[59] and of the same creed (*milla*), which means that killing a fellow Muslim is like killing oneself.[60]
- ❖ Killing another person is like killing oneself, since the killing will be retaliated (*qiṣāṣ*).[61]
- ❖ *ʾAnfus* should be understood metaphorically; that is, as in "let yourselves be killed" (*istaslimū li-l-qatli*),[62] or "expose yourselves to death in jihad" (*taʿarraḍū bihā li-l-qatli fi l-jihādi*).[63]

Exegetes occasionally interpret *ʾanfus* using an explanatory expression that includes a gloss for *ʾanfus* and usually also an identification of the group or category to which the suffix attached to it refers. Thus, for instance, al-Rāzī (III, 87 [on Q 2:54]) explains Q 49:11 *ʾanfusakum* as *ʾiḫwānakum mina l-muʾminīna*, "your[p] fellow believers"[64] and Q 24:12 *bi-ʾanfusihim* as *bi-ʾamṯālihim mina l-muslimīna*, "Muslims like them",[65] and Ibn ʾAbī Ḥātim interprets Q 24:61 *fa-sallimū ʿalā ʾanfusikum* as *yaʿnī baʿḍukum ʿalā baʿḍin ʿalā ʾahli dīnikum*, "i.e., one another; [greet] the people of your[p]

---

[57] *Wa-qāla "bi-ʾanfusihim" liʾanna ʾahla l-ʾislāmi kullahum bi-manzilati nafsin wāḥidatin liʾannahum ʾahlu millatin wāḥidatin* (al-Ṭabarī, XVII, 212 [on Q 24:12]); *ka-l-nafsi l-wāḥida* (al-Rāzī, III, 87 [on Q 2:54]); *ka-nafsin wāḥidatin* (al-Rāzī, X, 74 [on Q 4:29]; al-Māturīdī, I, 407 [on Q 4:29]).

[58] Al-Zamaḫšarī, I, 291 (on Q 2:84); al-Rāzī, III, 183 (on Q 2:84); al-Wāḥidī, I, 445 (on Q 3:61) along these lines.

[59] Possibly alluding to (e.g.) Q 3:195.

[60] Al-Ṭabarī, VI, 637–638 (on Q 4:29).

[61] Al-Ṭabarī, II, 201 (on Q 2:84); al-Zamaḫšarī, I, 291 (on Q 2:84); al-Rāzī, III, 183 (on Q 2:84); al-Qurṭubī, II, 236 (on Q 2:84).

[62] Al-Rāzī, III, 87 (on Q 2:54).

[63] Al-Bayḍāwī, II, 82 (on Q 4:66).

[64] So does al-Wāḥidī, I, 445 (on Q 3:61).

[65] Likewise, al-Jalālayn, 1471 (on Q 30:28): *ʾamṯālakum mina l-ʾaḥrāri*, "free men like you[p]".

religion".[66] The group or category meant by the verse is occasionally identified through a vocative expression; e.g., *fa-ʾantum mustawūna maʿahum fīmā razaqnākum ḫāʾifūhum ka-ḫawfi baʿḍikum baʿḍan ʾayyuha s-sādatu*, "so that you[p] are equal to them in what we (God) have provided for you[p], venerating them as you[p] venerate one another, O slave owners[67]".[68]

2.6. Summary

This chapter has discussed the usage of *nafs* as a reflexive particle and the various types of reflexivity that it can encode: *nafs* expresses individual reflexivity, and *ʾanfus* may express individual reflexivity, collective reflexivity and, in certain verses, reciprocity.

The following is a brief discussion that intends to place the reciprocal reading of *ʾanfus* in its proper linguistic context and comment on its translation. Plural *ʾanfus*, like singular *nafs* – in Qurʾānic and extra-Qurʾānic Arabic alike – is not a reciprocal marker, but a reflexive one. The number of occurrences in which *ʾanfus* encodes reciprocal situations is small and the reciprocal meaning of *ʾanfus* can only be extracted from the context, not the grammar. Linguistically, the reciprocal meaning is a natural result of the multi-participant reflexive meaning. For instance, the literal understanding of Q 21:64 *fa-rajaʿū ʾilā ʾanfusihim* is that, after speaking to Abraham, his people returned "to themselves"; that is, spoke to others from their own group – a conversation from which Abraham was excluded. Yet, in reality, this is no different from a reciprocal reading, according to which Abraham's people spoke to *each other*. Similarly, as has been argued above, in the real world there is little difference between Q 49:11 *wa-lā talmizū ʾanfusakum* and Q 49:12 *wa-lā yaġtab baʿḍukum baʿḍan*. Both prohibit believers from backbiting fellow believers – that is, forbid any referent(s) to act on any other referent(s) from the same group or category.

In other words, the verses quoted in §2.4 show that the reflexive marker *ʾanfus*, at least in Qurʾānic Arabic, can encode reciprocal situations, although this happens quite rarely. Through this usage, Qurʾānic Arabic joins a long list of world languages

[66] Ibn ʾAbī Ḥātim, VIII, 2650 (no. 14899).

[67] Lane, IV, 1462c (*SWD*).

[68] Al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-maṣūn*, IX, 42 (on Q 30:28).

whose reflexive marker may also express reciprocity. In many other languages, including English,[69] the reflexive marker *cannot* express reciprocal situations.[70] *ʾAnfus*, however, as is shown above, *can* encode such situations. In principle, therefore, any translation to English cannot but translate these occurrences of *ʾanfus* using a reciprocal construction, such as "each other".

The reciprocal actions expressed by *ʾanfus* in the Qurʾān are mostly asymmetrical[71] – that is, they describe a set of subevents in each of which referent A unidirectionally acts on referent B, where both A and B belong to the same group: kill (Q 2:54, 2:84, 2:85, 4:29, 4:66), expel (Q 2:84, 2:85), think (Q 24:12), greet (Q 24:61), defame (Q 49:11), fear/venerate (Q 30:28), be loyal (Q 33:6; if so interpreted). Each of these events describes a participant acting on *members of his/her own group or category*, whereas the entire set describes the participants of the group or category acting on *each other*. Therefore, effective translations for reciprocal *ʾanfus* may include "each other/one another", as well as "your/their own X" and "(your/their) fellow X".[72] Note, however, that a translation such as "each other" could mislead the reader into thinking that the action is, or should be, performed by both sides. Thus, it might better be avoided – if possible – in cases in which only one subgroup acts (or should act) unidirectionally on another (e.g., Q 24:61).

[69] Geniušienė, *Typology*, 208. It appears, however, that even English may very rarely use its reflexive marker to express reciprocity – see ibid, 209, no. 101.

[70] Compare, for instance, English "kill yourselves" with Q 2:54 *fa-qtulū ʾanfusakum*. The former has only one interpretation, namely, "commit suicide" (i.e., plural individual reflexivity), whereas the latter – as we have seen above – also allows a reciprocal reading – that is, "kill one another".

[71] As appears to be the case with many mutual situations. See Kemmer, *Middle voice*, 256, note 65.

[72] X stands for the group or category: "believers", "people", etc.

Chapter 3: *Nafs* as an optional substitute for a pronoun

In the previous two chapters, the occurrences of *nafs*, *ʾanfus* and *nufūs* were classified into two categories, viz., as a lexical item and as a reflexive marker. The present chapter gathers 21 instances that do not fall under any of these categories. It thereby discusses a usage of *nafs* that has thus far been overlooked.

In the cases that are included in this chapter, *nafs*/*ʾanfus* occurs where a pronoun may in principle have been utilised. As will be shown below, this substitution is optional; it almost always takes place when the element to which it refers (either underlined or otherwise noted upon below) has already appeared as a pronoun. In the first 15 verses presented below (§3.1), *ʾanfus*, and more rarely *nafs*, occurs as the second of two pronouns coreferential with a similar antecedent; in 6 more verses (§3.2), *ʾanfus* appears as part of an enumeration. Verses whose wordings are similar are grouped together. Some of the verses are followed by intra-Qurʾānic parallels and additional comments.[1]

3.1. As the second of two pronouns coreferential with a similar antecedent

Q 3:164 *ʾiḏ baʿaṯa fīhim rasūlan* ***min ʾanfusihim***[2]
when he (God) raised up among them a messenger from them(selves)

In this verse, *minhum* could have equally been utilised instead of *min ʾanfusihim*, as is indicated in the following intra-Qurʾānic parallels: Q 2:151 *kamā ʾarsalnā fīkum rasūlan* ***minkum***; Q 2:129 *rabbanā wa-bʿaṯ fīhim rasūlan* ***minhum***; Q 23:32 *fa-ʾarsalnā fīhim rasūlan* ***minhum***. However, *ʾanfus* is not employed in verses such as Q 62:2 *huwa llaḏī baʿaṯa fi l-ʾummiyyīna rasūlan* ***minhum***, in which the first occurrence is an explicit noun, and not a pronoun. Similar are the following two verses:

---

[1] Note that this chapter provides a range of translations of *nafs*/*ʾanfus*, rather than a single one, to match various possible contexts.

[2] Note the variant readings *min ʾanfasihim*, "among their most excellent", for Q 3:164 *min ʾanfusihim*, and *min ʾanfasikum*, "among your[p] most excellent", for Q 9:128 *min ʾanfusikum* (al-Ḫaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, I, 615 [on Q 3:164]; III, 484 [on Q 9:128]). Since no variant readings are documented for Q 16:89 (see below), and since the phenomenon of *ʾanfus* functioning as a substitute for a pronoun is not restricted to these verses but appears in other verses, too, these variant readings, I suggest, are secondary.

Q 9:128 *la-qad jāʾa<u>kum</u> rasūlun* ***min ʾanfusikum***
Now there has come to you[p] a messenger from [among] you[p][3]

Cf. Q 16:113 *wa-la-qad jāʾa<u>hum</u> rasūlun* ***minhum*** and Q 6:130 *ʾa-lam yaʾti<u>kum</u> rusulun* ***minkum***.

Q 16:89 *wa-yawma nabʿaṯu fī kulli ʾummatin šahīdan ʿalay<u>him</u>* ***min ʾanfusihim***
And the day we shall raise up from every nation a witness against them from amongst them

The same characteristics are found in the following verses:

Q 4:63 *wa-ʿiẓhum wa-qul la<u>hum</u> fī* ***ʾanfusihim*** *qawlan balīġā*
And admonish them, and say to them penetrating words about them

Q 18:51 *mā ʾašhadtu<u>hum</u> ḫalqa s-samāwāti wa-l-ʾarḍi wa-lā ḫalqa* ***ʾanfusihim***
I did not make them witnesses of the creation of the heavens and earth, neither of the creation of them(selves)

Q 30:21 *wa-min ʾāyātihī ʾan ḫalaqa la<u>kum</u> min* ***ʾanfusikum*** *ʾazwājan li-taskunū ʾilayhā*
And of his signs is that he created for you[p], of yourselves, spouses, that you[p] might repose in them

Q 42:11 *jaʿala la<u>kum</u> min* ***ʾanfusikum*** *ʾazwājan wa-mina l-ʾanʿāmi ʾazwājan* [...]
He has appointed for you[p], of yourselves, pairs, and pairs also of the cattle [...]

Q 16:72 *wa-llāhu jaʿala la<u>kum</u> min* ***ʾanfusikum*** *ʾazwājan* [...]
God has appointed for you[p], of yourselves, wives [...]

An additional factor that perhaps influences the use of *ʾanfusikum* in Q 30:21, 42:11 and 16:72 may be the verses that describe the original act of creation, especially Q 4:1, 7:189 and 39:6 (quoted in §1.2.3 above). According to these verses, God created all humankind from a single *nafs*, and from this *nafs* he created its mate (*zawj*). Analogously, it could be argued, the Qurʾān uses the same language when addressing the believers' spouses, even though the spouses were not actually created from the believers as occurred in the first creation.

[3] Note al-Jalālayn, 378: *ʾay minkum*, "i.e., from you[p]".

Q 3:165 *qultum ʾannā hāḏā qul huwa* ***min ʿindi ʾanfusikum***
you[p] said, 'How is this?' [i.e., how has this happened to us?] Say: 'This is from your[p] own selves. […]'

In this verse, *ʾanfus* may also add emphasis; that is, the boldfaced phrase seems to express "*you*[p] are the ones responsible for this", or "this is all because of *you*[p]". Emphasis, or contrastive focus, can be felt in the following verse as well, perhaps since *nafsika* appears in it in contradiction to God.

Q 4:79 *mā ʾaṣābaka min ḥasanatin fa-mina llāhi wa-mā ʾaṣābaka min sayyiʾatin* ***fa-min nafsika***
Whatever good visits you[s], it is of God; whatever evil visits you[s] is of you[s].

Cf. the preceding verse: *wa-ʾin tuṣibhum ḥasanatun yaqūlū hāḏihī min ʿindi llāhi wa-ʾin tuṣibhum sayyiʾatun yaqūlū hāḏihī* ***min ʿindika*** *qul kullun min ʿindi llāhi fa-mā-li-hāʾulāʾi l-qawmi lā yakādūna yafqahūna ḥadīṯā*, "And if a good thing visits them, they say, 'This is from God'; but if an evil thing visits them, they say, 'This is from you[s]'. Say: 'Everything is from God'. How is it with this people? They scarcely understand any tiding" (Q 4:78).[4] A similar contradiction – and perhaps emphasis, too – is found in Q 10:15:

Q 10:15 *wa-ʾiḏā tutlā ʿalayhim ʾāyātunā bayyinātin qāla llaḏīna lā yarjūna liqāʾanā ʾti bi-qurʾānin ġayri hāḏā ʾaw baddilhu qul mā yakūnu lī ʾan ʾubaddilahū* ***min tilqāʾi nafsī*** *ʾin ʾattabiʿu ʾillā mā yūḥā ʾilayya ʾinnī ʾaḫāfu ʾin ʿaṣaytu rabbī ʿaḏāba yawmin ʿaẓīm*
And when our (God's) signs are recited to them, clear signs, those who look not to encounter us say, 'Bring a Qurʾān other than this, or alter it.' Say: 'It is not for me to alter it of my own accord. I only follow what is revealed to me. Truly I fear, if I should rebel against my Lord, the chastisement of a dreadful day.'

The next instance is the following:

Q 24:6 *wa-llaḏīna yarmūna ʾazwājahum wa-lam yakun lahum šuhadāʾu ʾillā* ***ʾanfusuhum*** *fa-šahādatu ʾaḥadihim ʾarbaʿu šahādātin bi-llāhi ʾinnahū la-mina ṣ-ṣādiqīn*
And those who cast it up on their wives having no witnesses except themselves, the testimony of one of them shall be to testify by God four times that he is of the truthful

[4] Q 4:78 and 4:79 seem to deliver opposite messages, unless the latter concerns the Prophet alone. This apparent contradiction seems to be the reason for various additions to the consonantal text and variant readings of it, including *fa-min taʿsika*, "because of your[s] mischief", for *fa-min nafsika*, which relies on the very close orthographical similarity between *nafs* and *taʿs* (al-Ḫaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, II, 115). Exegetes were indeed troubled by this question – see, e.g., al-Rāzī, X, 195–198.

In both Qurʾānic and extra-Qurʾānic Arabic, when *ʾillā* is followed by the nominative there is no reason not to use the pronoun *hum*.[5] Yet, *ʾanfusuhum* is used.

> Q 3:178 *wa-lā yaḥsabanna llaḏīna kafarū ʾannamā numlī laḥum ḫayrun* ***li-ʾanfusihim***
> And let not the unbelievers suppose that the indulgence we grant them is better for them

The characteristics of this verse match those of the verses above; that is, instead of **ʾannamā numlī lahum ḫayrun lahum*, the verse reads *ḫayrun li-ʾanfusihim*. Therefore, I suggest it be classified similarly, especially since the person is the one to be requited on the Day of Judgement, and not the soul.[6]

The following three verses apparently belong to this category as well:

> Q 30:28 *ḍaraba lakum maṯalan* ***min ʾanfusikum***
> He (i.e., God) has struck for you[p] a similitude from yourselves [i.e., from your[p] lives or experiences in life]

> Q 17:14 *iqraʾ kitābaka kafā* ***bi-nafsika*** *l-yawma ʿalayka ḥasībā*[7]
> Read your[s] book! You[s] (yourself) suffice this day as a reckoner against you[s]

> Q 9:120 *mā kāna li-ʾahli l-madīnati wa-man ḥawlahum mina l-ʾaʿrābi ʾan yataḫallafū ʿan rasūli llāhi wa-lā yaġrabū bi-ʾanfusihim ʿan* ***nafsihī***
> It is not for the people of Medina and for the Bedouins who dwell around them to stay behind God's Messenger, and to prefer themselves to him

While *bi-ʾanfusihim* seems a normal reflexive use, regarding *nafsihī* as reflexive would be odd, as would also "soul" and "person". The simplest interpretation of *nafsihī* seems to be "him", as if *ʿanhu* appeared.

It should be noted that, while other verses belonging to this category include a pronoun that is coreferential with the antecedent (in this case, the Prophet), in this verse no pronoun referring to the Prophet precedes *nafsihī*.

An additional, less preferred explanation (in my view) is that the use of *nafsihī* is the result of attraction – that is, following *bi-ʾanfusihim*, *ʿan nafsihī* was utilised

---

[5] Qurʾānic examples of a pronoun following *ʾillā* include Q 6:59 *lā yaʿlamuhā ʾillā huwa*, "none knows them but he" and Q 7:187 *lā yujallīhā li-waqtihā ʾillā huwa*, "none shall reveal it at its proper time but he".

[6] As concluded in §1.2.1 above. See also the discussion in §4.1 below, esp. nn. 3 and 4.

[7] Cf., for instance, the pronouns attached to *bi-* in Q 46:8 and 25:58 *kafā bihī*; Q 21:47 *kafā binā*.

instead of *ʿanhu*. If this were indeed the case, then this verse would be deemed an exception; the general tendency rather seems to be avoiding the recurrence of *nafs* by replacing it with a pronoun.[8]

3.2. In enumerations

In the following six verses, *ʾanfus* occurs in an enumeration of items, or in conjunction with another nominal phrase or clause. In all these verses, *ʾanfus* never appears first in the enumeration.[9] As in the section above, in five verses out of the six *ʾanfus* appears when the topic is already known.[10]

> Q 24:61 *laysa ʿala l-ʾaʿmā ḥarajun wa-lā ʿala l-ʾaʿraj ḥarajun wa-lā ʿala l-marīḍi ḥarajun wa-lā ʿalā* ***ʾanfusikum*** *ʾan taʾkulū min buyūtikum ʾaw* [...]
>
> There is no fault in the blind, and there is no fault in the lame, and there is no fault in the sick, neither in you[p], that you[p] eat of your[p] houses or [...]

> Q 41:53 *sa-nurīhim ʾāyātinā fi l-ʾāfāqi wa-fī* ***ʾanfusihim*** *ḥattā yatabayyana lahum ʾannahu l-ḥaqqu*
>
> We shall show them our signs in the horizons and in them(selves), till it is clear to them that it is the truth.

> Q 57:22 *mā ʾaṣāba min muṣībatin fi l-ʾarḍi wa-lā fī* ***ʾanfusikum*** *ʾillā fī kitābin min qabli ʾan nabraʾahā*
>
> No disaster strikes in the land or among you[p] unless it is in a record, before we (God) bring it into being.

> Q 51:20–21 *wa-fi l-ʾarḍi ʾāyātun li-l-mūqinīn. wa-fī* ***ʾanfusikum*** *ʾa-fa-lā tubṣirūn*
>
> In the earth are signs for those having sure faith, and in you(rselves); do you[p] not see?

---

[8] See, e.g., Q 5:32 *ʾaḥyāhā*, as well as Q 45:15 *fa-ʿalayhā*, Q 17:7 *fa-lahā* and their parallels (discussed in §4.1 below).

[9] In Q 24:61, 41:53, 57:22, 51:20–21 and 32:27, *ʾanfus* occurs last. *ʾAnfusihim* in Q 36:36 may also be counted last in the enumeration – see n. 11 below.

[10] The passage Q 24:58–61 is all formulated in the 2nd person, like the suffix attached to *ʾanfus* in Q 24:61 *wa-lā ʿalā ʾanfusikum*; Q 57:22 *fī ʾanfusikum* is preceded by Q 57:20 *iʿlamū* and Q 57:21 *sābiqū*; Q 36:36 *wa-min ʾanfusihim* occurs after Q 36:33 *wa-ʾāyatun lahum*; and many 3rd-pers. masc. pl. suffixes appear in Q 32:23–26, before our Q 32:27. Q 51:20–21 *fī ʾanfusikum* occurs in the point in which the speech changes from the 3rd person (vv. 15–19) to the 2nd person (vv. 20–23), so the 2nd person suffix attached to *ʾanfus*, albeit not preceded by the 2nd person, still matches its immediate context in person.

Q 36:36 *subḥāna llaḏī ḫalaqa l-ʾazwāja kullahā mimmā tunbitu l-ʾarḍu wa-min* ***ʾanfusihim*** *wa-mimmā lā yaʿlamūn*

Glory be to him who created all the pairs of what the earth produces, and of them(selves), and of what they know not.[11]

The formulation of the following verse is particularly noteworthy:

Q 32:27 *ʾa-wa-lam yaraw ʾannā nasūqu l-māʾa ʾila l-ʾarḍi l-juruzi fa-nuḫriju bihī zarʿan taʾkulu minhu ʾanʿāmuhum* ***wa-ʾanfusuhum***

Have they[12] not seen how we (God) drive the water to the dry land and bring forth crops therewith, whereof their cattle and they eat?

Despite what the literal understanding of this verse might suggest at first glance, the intention seems to be that the cattle eat the crops brought forth by God, and so do *they* (and not their souls). Compare this verse to the following two parallels:

Q 79:33/80:32 *matāʿan* ***lakum*** *wa-li-ʾanʿāmikum*

A provision for you^{p} and for your^{p} beasts.

These two parallels include the same items in a reversed order. However, while the pronoun *-kum* is found in Q 79:33/80:32, in Q 32:27 *ʾanfusuhum* is used. This comparison further shows that Q 32:27 *ʾanfusuhum* simply denotes "they", and that *ʾanfus* is used where a pronoun could equally be expected.

3.3. Summary

This chapter has shown that *nafs* or *ʾanfus* may occur in the Qurʾān instead of a pronoun. In some of the verses included in this chapter, *nafs*/*ʾanfus* replaces what would be the second of two pronouns referring to the same antecedent. In other verses, *ʾanfus* appears last in an enumeration.

[11] The third and final nominal phrase on this list, viz., *wa-mimmā lā yaʿlamūn*, may be no more than an ending formula utilised for the verse to match the end-rhyme.

[12] The pronoun "they" probably refers here to the unbelievers.

Chapter 4: Qurʾānic case studies related to *nafs*

This chapter gathers verses in which it is unclear whether *nafs*/*ʾanfus* should be understood as a lexical item ("person" or "soul") or as a grammatical marker. It also includes exceptions to the categories discussed in the preceding chapters.

4.1. Several instances of *nafs* in the context of reward and punishment

The first noteworthy case study includes 17 verses that share a similar structure. All verses convey the notion that acting righteously is for one's own benefit and doing evil contributes to one's own future punishment. As is shown below, some of the verses include only the righteous or the sinful, while others refer to both:

> Q 4:111 *wa-man yaksibu ʾiṯman fa-ʾinnamā yaksibuhū* ***ʿalā nafsihī***
> And whosoever earns a sin, earns it only to his own loss (lit. against himself/his soul)

> Q 29:6 *wa-man jāhada fa-ʾinnamā yujāhidu* ***li-nafsihī***
> Whosoever struggles, struggles only to his own gain (lit. for himself/his soul)

> Q 35:18 *wa-man tazakkā fa-ʾinnamā yatazakkā* ***li-nafsihī***
> And whosoever purifies himself, purifies himself only for his own good (lit. for himself/his soul)

> Q 27:40 *wa-man šakara fa-ʾinnamā yaškuru* ***li-nafsihī*** *wa-man kafara fa-ʾinna rabbī ġaniyyun karīm*
> Whosoever gives thanks gives thanks only for his own good (lit. for himself/his soul), and whosoever is ungrateful – my Lord is sufficient and generous.[1]

> Q 31:12 *wa-la-qad ʾātaynā luqmāna l-ḥikmata ʾani škur li-llāhi wa-man yaškur fa-ʾinnamā yaškuru* ***li-nafsihī*** *wa-man kafara fa-ʾinna llāha ġaniyyun ḥamīd*
> Indeed, we gave Luqmān wisdom: 'Give thanks to God. Whosoever gives thanks gives thanks only for his own good (lit. for himself/his soul), and whosoever is ungrateful – God is sufficient and laudable.'[2]

[1] For this ending formula, see the discussion on Q 24:5 under §8.3.2.
[2] See previous footnote.

Q 27:92 *wa-mani htadā fa-ʾinnamā yahtadī* ***li-nafsihī*** *wa-man ḍalla fa-qul ʾinnamā ʾanā mina l-munḏirīn*

Whosoever is guided, is only guided to his own gain (lit. for himself/his soul); and whosoever goes astray, say, 'I am naught but a warner.'

Q 34:50 *qul ʾin ḍalaltu fa-ʾinnamā ʾaḍillu* ***ʿalā nafsī*** *wa-ʾini htadaytu fa-bi-mā yūḥī ʾilayya rabbī*

Say, 'If I go astray, I go astray only to my own loss (lit. against myself/my soul); if I am guided, it is by what my Lord reveals to me.'

Q 47:38 *hā-ʾantum hāʾulāʾi tudʿawna li-tunfiqū fī sabīli llāhi fa-minkum man yabḫalu wa-man yabḫal fa-ʾinnamā yabḫalu* ***ʿan nafsihī*** *wa-llāhu l-ġaniyyu wa-ʾantumu l-fuqarāʾu*

There you[p] are called upon to expend in God's way, and some of you[p] are niggardly. Whoso is niggardly is niggardly only at his own expense (lit. to himself/his soul). God is the sufficient; you[p] are the needy ones.

Q 48:10 *fa-man nakaṯa fa-ʾinnamā yankuṯu* ***ʿalā nafsihī*** *wa-man ʾawfā bi-mā ʿāhada ʿalayhu llāha fa-sa-yuʾtīhi ʾajran ʿaẓīmā*

Then whosoever breaks his oath breaks it but to his own hurt (lit. against himself/his soul); and whoso fulfils his covenant made with God, God will give him a mighty wage.

Detached from any other context, it is difficult to determine from the verses cited above whether doing good (or evil) counts in favour of (or against) the *person* or of *his/her soul*. In the former case, *nafs* is understood as a reflexive object; in the latter, *nafs* is construed as "soul".

As is shown in §1.2.1 above, in the context of reward and punishment on the Day of Judgement, *nafs* is understood as "person", and not as "soul",[3] and it is the person who is accountable for his/her earthly deeds, and not the soul.[4] This conclusion points to a reflexive reading of *nafs*. The following verse, which is structured in a similar fashion and conveys the same idea, lends further support for this view:

[3] Cf. Blachère, "Note", 73. See also Seidensticker, *Herz*, 143–144; Homerin, "Soul", 83–84.

[4] Homerin ("Soul", 83–84) has also reached the conclusion that it is the person, and not the soul, that is held responsible for his or her beliefs and actions. Sinai (*Key terms*, 682–683) concurs with his assertion.

Q 30:44 *man kafara <u>fa-ʿalayhi kufruhū</u> wa-man ʿamila ṣāliḥan* ***fa-li-ʾanfusihim*** *yamhadūn*[5]
Whoso commits unbelief, his unbelief shall be charged against him; and whosoever does righteousness, for themselves they are preparing a smooth bedstead (in paradise).

Q 4:110 *yaẓlim nafsahū*, which precedes Q 4:111 *ʿalā nafsihī* (quoted above), may also strengthen this view. All Qurʾānic occurrences of *nafs* governed by a verbal form of the root *ẒLM* are reflexive.[6] One may justly argue that two different usages of *nafs* may be found even in the same verse, as is indeed the case in Q 16:111; nevertheless, vv. 110–112 form a passage, and both occurrences of *nafs* in this passage seem connected.

Thus far, three pieces of evidence supporting a reflexive reading of *nafs* in the nine verses above have been presented. The following seven verses, however, seem at first glance to suggest otherwise:

Q 41:46/45:15 *man ʿamila ṣāliḥan fa-li-nafsihī wa-man ʾasāʾa* ***fa-ʿalayhā***
Whoso does righteousness, it is *li-nafsihī*, and whoso does evil, it is *ʿalayhā*.

Q 6:104 *qad jāʾakum baṣāʾiru min rabbikum fa-man ʾabṣara fa-li-nafsihī wa-man ʿamiya* ***fa-ʿalayhā***
Clear proofs have come to you[p] from your[p] Lord. Whoso sees clearly, it is *li-nafsihī*, and whoso is blind, it is *ʿalayhā*.

Q 17:7 *ʾin ʾaḥsantum ʾaḥsantum li-ʾanfusikum wa-ʾin ʾasaʾtum* ***fa-lahā***
If you[p] do good, you[p] do good *li-ʾanfusikum*, and if you[p] do evil, it is *lahā*.

[5] The use of pl. *ʾanfus* in this verse – as opposed to *li-nafsihī*/*ʿalā nafsihī* in the verses quoted above and below – is in all likelihood on account of the end-rhyme. The rhyme of Sūra 30 is *-ūn*/*-īn*/*-īm*. Unlike all other verses, the apodosis of *wa-man ʿamila ṣāliḥan* is the verse's final stich. Therefore, it should be formulated in a way that matches the end-rhyme. Placing a prefix-conjugated verb in the masculine plural at the end of the verse is one of the most common means to achieve such a rhyme. This, however, also entails using plural *ʾanfus* instead of singular *nafs*.

[6] This is evident primarily from verses such as Q 3:117#2, 16:33 and 16:118, in which it is said that God "did not wrong them, but they wronged themselves". See also Q 29:40 and 30:9, and see Ambros (*Concise dictionary*, 178 [*ẒLM*], note to transitive usage, no. 2), who translates "to put oneself in the wrong, to render oneself liable to be punished" (i.e., reflexive).

Q 10:108 *qul yā-ʾayyuha n-nāsu qad jāʾakumu l-ḥaqqu min rabbikum fa-mani htadā fa-ʾinnamā yahtadī li-nafsihī wa-man ḍalla fa-ʾinnamā yaḍillu* ***ʿalayhā***
Say: 'O men, the truth has come to you[p] from your[p] Lord. Whosoever is guided, is only guided *li-nafsihī*, and whosoever goes astray, it is only *ʿalayhā*.'[7]

Q 17:15 *mani htadā fa-ʾinnamā yahtadī li-nafsihī wa-man ḍalla fa-ʾinnamā yaḍillu* ***ʿalayhā***;
Q 39:41 *fa-mani htadā fa-li-nafsihī wa-man ḍalla fa-ʾinnamā yaḍillu* ***ʿalayhā***
Whosoever is guided, is only guided *li-nafsihī*, and whosoever goes astray, it is only *ʿalayhā*.

It appears that the suffix *-hā* attached to either *ʿalā* or *li-* rather supports a lexical reading of *nafs* as "soul", which then leads to the conclusion that the soul is being requited in the last judgement, and not the person as a whole.

Weighing all factors, it would seem that the only support for construing *nafs* as "soul" is the suffix *-hā* in these seven verses. In fact, if *fa-ʿalā nafsihī* occurred instead of *fa-ʿalayhā*, there would not be any reason to doubt that *nafs* is reflexive, as all other clues above indicate that the person is the one to be requited on the Day of Judgement.

Now, another factor may be at play, namely, avoiding the recurrence of *nafs* by replacing it with a pronoun. This phenomenon in itself is by no means unique to Qurʾānic Arabic. However, as their name suggests, pronouns normally replace nouns. Used as a reflexive object, *nafs* may technically be deemed a noun, but it no longer operates as such; its function has moved to the grammatical realm. It no longer refers to an (abstract) object in the world, but rather fulfils the grammatical function of referring back to the agent or signifying that the agent and the patient of the action are identical. Yet *nafs* is replaced in these verses by *-hā* although it functions as a reflexive object.[8] This substitution is perhaps easier since the seven verses contain a bipartite sentence whose first and second clauses are structured identically. The similar structure facilitates tracing back the "noun" to which the suffix *-hā* in the second clause refers.

[7] Homerin ("Soul", 82) translates this *nafs* as reflexive.

[8] It is noteworthy that reflexive *nafs* is occasionally referred to by exegetes too using the suffix *-hā* – see, e.g., al-Bayḍāwī, II, 82 (Q 4:66), in which *bihā* in *taʿarraḍū bihā li-l-qatli fi l-jihādi* refers back to a reciprocal *ʾanfus* (see Chapter 2, n. 63 above).

4.2. Q 91:7–10

Somewhat similar to the case in §4.1 is that of *nafs* governed by *zakkā*.

> Q 4:49 *ʾa-lam tara ʾila llaḏīna yuzakkūna* ***ʾanfusahum*** *bali llāhu yuzakkī man yašāʾu wa-lā yuẓlamūna fatīlā*
> Have you[s] not regarded those who purify themselves (lit. themselves/their souls)? Nay; only God purifies whom he will; and they shall not be wronged one whit.

> Q 53:32 *huwa ʾaʿlamu bikum ʾiḏ ʾanšaʾakum mina l-ʾarḍi wa-ʾiḏ ʾantum ʾajinnatun fī buṭūni ʾummahātikum fa-lā tuzakkū* ***ʾanfusakum*** *huwa ʾaʿlamu bi-mani ttaqā*
> [...] He knows you[p] very well [from the time] when he raised you from the earth and when you were foetuses in your mothers' bellies. Do not assert yourselves (lit. yourselves/your[p] souls) to be pure. He knows very well who fear God.

It appears, at least from Q 4:49 *man yašāʾu*, "whom he (God) will", that *ʾanfus* is used as a reflexive object, as God purifies human subjects, and not their souls. Moreover, all other Qurʾānic occurrences of *zakkā* take a human object.[9] The root appears in two other verbal forms as well: once in form I, viz., Q 24:21 *wa-lawlā faḍlu llāhi ʿalaykum wa-raḥmatuhū mā zakā minkum min ʾaḥadin ʾabadan*, "were it not for God's favour upon you[p] and his mercy, not one of you[p] would have ever been pure" – which suggests that it is the person as a whole (and not the soul) that is pure – and eight times in the reflexive form V, which may in itself indicate that *ʾanfus* in, e.g., Q 4:49 *yuzakkūna ʾanfusahum* is to be construed as a reflexive object.[10] Q 91:7–10, however, present a difficulty:

> (7) *wa-nafsin wa-mā sawwā***hā** (8) *fa-ʾalhama***hā** *fujūra***hā** *wa-taqwā***hā** (9) *qad ʾaflaḥa man zakkā***hā** (10) *wa-qad ḫāba man dassā***hā**
> (7) By [every][11] *nafs* and he who[12] shaped **it** (8) and inspired **it** to lewdness and god-fearing! (9) Prosperous is he who purifies **it**, (10) and failed has he who corrupts **it**.

---

[9] Q 24:21; 2:129, 2:151, 2:174, 3:77, 3:164, 9:103, 62:2.

[10] Q 20:76, 35:18 (twice), 79:18, 80:3, 80:7, 87:14, 92:18.

[11] Note that, unlike almost all other complements of *wāw al-qasam* (the preposition *wa-* used in oaths) both in the Qurʾān and in extra-Qurʾānic Arabic, Q 91:7 *nafs* is indefinite. Both Wright (II, 175–176 = §62) and Reckendorf (*Arabische Syntax*, 331 = §165b) only adduce examples in which the complement of this particle is definite; neither could I find indefinite complements in Pedersen, *Eid*. Indeed, it stands to reason that the object by which one swears would be definite (see also ʾAbū Ḥayyān, VIII, 443 [on Q 85:3]). Therefore, in line with the second opinion stated in al-Zamaḫšarī, VI, 382, as well as

According to the essential guidelines put forth at the beginning of Chapter 1, the use of a pronoun instead of *nafs* should in principle indicate that *nafs* is to be understood as a lexical item. From vv. 9–10, it seems that there is a difference between the person, who is the subject of the verbs, and the *nafs* – which leads to interpreting *nafs* as "soul". This, however, tallies neither with the verses cited above, according to which it is the entire person that is purified, nor with the shaping of the *nafs* appearing in v. 7.[13] The shaping is part of the process of creation, which is to do with the human being as a whole.[14] Furthermore, let us examine the following intra-Qurʾānic parallel to Q 91:9:

> Q 87:14 *qad ʾaflaḥa man* ***tazakkā***
> Prosperous is he who has purified himself.

The reflexive verb *tazakkā*, it appears, carries the same meaning as Q 91:9 *zakkāhā*. Both denote the same as *zakkā nafsahū*, "(whoever) purifies himself". That *zakkāhā* (with the suffix *-hā*) occurs in Q 91:9, and not *tazakkā*, seems to be on account of the rhyme.

To sum up, Q 91:7–10 seems to play on two categories of *nafs* (perhaps intentionally). In vv. 7–8, *nafs* is related to the core meaning of "person", while in vv. 9–10 it functions as a reflexive object. However, reflexive *nafs* in vv. 9–10 is substituted by the suffix *-hā*. This substitution, as shown in §4.1 above, occurs

---

with that of ʾAbū Ḥayyān (loc. cit.), I contend that Q 91:7 *wa-nafsin*, albeit indefinite in form, should be construed as definite in meaning – that is, "by *every* person". Two more Qurʾānic instances of *wāw al-qasam* complemented by an indefinite noun are Q 52:2 *wa-kitābin masṭūr*, "[and] by a scripture inscribed", and Q 85:3 *wa-šāhidin wa-mašhūd*, "[and] by a witness and by what shall be witnessed". Note that all three cases are part of a series of oath expressions (viz., Q 91:1–6; 52: 1, 4–6; 85:1–2). As to these last two occurrences, ʾAbū Ḥayyān (VIII, 144 [on Q 52:2]; 443 [on Q 85:3]) suggests that both indefinite complements carry a general sense; thus, Q 52:2 *kitāb*, for instance, should be understood as every holy scripture that God sent down. In his discussion of *wāw al-qasam*, ʿUḍayma (I.3, 490–494) analyses the *wa-* in Q 52:2 *wa-kitābin* not as a particle of oath, but as the conjunction *wa-*, "and". Despite citing Q 91:1–5 (without v. 6), he does not mention Q 91:7.

[12] Literally: "that which shaped it". *Mā* and *man* are occasionally used in the Qurʾān interchangeably; e.g., Q 4:3 *fa-nkiḥū <u>mā</u> ṭāba lakum mina n-nisāʾi*, "marry such women as seem good to you[p]". See al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī*, II, 415–416; Ibn Yaʿīš, *Šarḥ*, V, 482–484 (*Faṣl* 182); ʿUḍayma, I.3, 6; 151–152.

[13] The roots *FJR* and *WQY* are also associated in the Qurʾān with persons rather than souls (e.g., Q 71:27 and 2:189). The subject of both v. 7 *sawwāhā* and v. 8 *ʾalhamahā* is God.

[14] See, e.g., Q 18:37 *sawwāka rajulā*, "he (God) shaped you[s] as a man"; Q 82:7 *allaḏī ḫalaqaka fa-sawwāka fa-ʿadalak*, "who created you[s] and shaped you[s] and wrought you[s] in symmetry"; Q 15:29/38:72 *sawwaytuhū*, "I (God) have shaped him".

several times in the Qurʾān; in Q 91:9–10, it is likely the result of the need to maintain the end-rhyme.

4.3. "(Human) life"

Several occurrences of *nafs*, some of which seem to literally denote "person" and others to express reflexivity, are better understood as "(human) life". This is evident in particular from the verses presented in this section.[15]

In Q 2:155, although "lives" is a possible interpretation, "persons" may equally suffice, provided that the Qurʾān addresses not each and every member of the believers separately, but the believers collectively:

> Q 2:155 *la-nabluwannakum bi-šayʾin mina l-ḫawfi wa-l-jūʿi wa-naqṣin mina l-ʾamwāli* ***wa-l-ʾanfusi*** *wa-ṯ-ṯamarāti*
> We will try you[p] with some [experience] of fear and hunger, and loss of possessions and lives and crops

Somewhat similar is Q 3:186:

> Q 3:186 *la-tublawunna fī ʾamwālikum* ***wa-ʾanfusikum***
> You[p] shall be tried in your[p] possessions and your[p] lives

Provided that the Qurʾān addresses the believers collectively in this verse as well, even though *ʾanfus* may be construed as "persons/people", "lives" would be simpler.

In nine additional verses,[16] *ʾanfus* may be interpreted as a reflexive object; that is, "themselves";[17] nevertheless, the verses seem to refer to the believers' lives.[18] In these verses, *ʾanfus* occurs conjoined with *ʾamwāl*, the former always being second.

---

[15] The verses in this section are presented in a chronological order, according to both the traditional and the western chronological schemes. According to both schemes, all verses are Medinan.

[16] The following is a list of the occurrences in a chronological order: Q 8:72, 4:95 (twice), 49:15, 61:11, 9:20, 9:41, 9:44, 9:81 and 9:88.

[17] The reward received by those who struggle (Q 4:95 end), their positioning at a higher rank than others (Q 4:95#2, 9:20) and the association of the struggle with one's belief (Q 49:15) all indicate that the believers are addressed here individually. Therefore, if *ʾanfus* is indeed interpreted as reflexive, the reflexivity would be individual.

[18] Blachère ("Note", 76) translated this *ʾanfus* in this formula as a reflexive object: "combattez de vos biens et de vos personnes". Homerin ("Soul", 83) suggests "strive in the way of God with your property and lives".

As exemplified below, both appear with a plural suffix, are governed by *bi-* and are connected to a verbal form (verb/active participle) of *jāhada*.

> Q 8:72 *ʾinna llaḏīna ʾāmanū wa-hājarū wa-jāhadū bi-ʾamwālihim* ***wa-ʾanfusihim*** *fī sabīli llāhi wa-llaḏīna ʾāwaw wa-naṣarū ʾulāʾika baʿḍuhum ʾawliyāʾu baʿḍin*
> Those who believe and have emigrated and struggled with their possessions and their lives in the way of God, and those who have given refuge and help – those are friends of one another.

> Q 4:95 *lā yastawi l-qāʿidūna mina l-muʾminīna ġayru ʾuli ḍ-ḍarari wa-l-mujāhidūna fī sabīli llāhi bi-ʾamwālihim* ***wa-ʾanfusihim*** *faḍḍala llāhu l-mujāhidīna bi-ʾamwālihim wa-ʾanfusihim ʿala l-qāʿidīna darajatan wa-kullan waʿada llāhu l-ḥusnā wa-faḍḍala llāhu l-mujāhidīna ʿala l-qāʿidīna ʾajran ʿaẓīmā*
> Those of the believers who sit still, other than those who are suffering some injury, are not on an equal footing with those who struggle in God's way with their possessions and their lives. God has preferred in rank those who struggle with their possessions and their lives over the ones who sit at home; yet to each God has promised the reward most fair; and God has preferred those who struggle over the ones who sit at home for the bounty of a mighty wage

> Q 9:41 *infirū ḫifāfan wa-ṯiqālan wa-jāhidū bi-ʾamwālikum* ***wa-ʾanfusikum*** *fī sabīli llāhi ḏālikum ḫayrun lakum ʾin kuntum taʿlamūn*
> Go forth, light and heavy! Struggle in God's way with your[p] possessions and your[p] lives; that is better for you[p], if only you[p] knew.

ʾAnfus occurs in conjunction with *ʾamwāl* (albeit in an opposite order) in Q 9:111, too:

> Q 9:111 *ʾinna llāha štarā mina l-muʾminīna* ***ʾanfusahum*** *wa-ʾamwālahum bi-ʾanna lahumu l-jannata yuqātilūna fī sabīli llāhi fa-yaqtulūna wa-yuqtalūna*
> God has bought from the believers their lives and their possessions in exchange for paradise; they fight in the way of God; they kill and are killed.

A piece of evidence to support the view that *ʾanfus* should be interpreted as a reflexive object in the verses cited above is the seemingly contemporary use of *šarā*, "sell", with the object *ḥayāt*, "life", in a poetic verse of Kaʿb ibn Mālik (d. 50/670 or 53/673; al-Ṭawīl):

> *wa-kūnū ka-man yašri l-ḥayāta taqarruban / ʾilā malikin yuḥyā ladayhi wa-yurjaʿū*

And be like one who sells [his] life, so that you[p] can gain the favour of a king by whom men live and to whom they resort.[19]

4.4. Q 5:80

One of the most common Qurʾānic notions regarding the Day of Judgement is that God will wrong no one on that day and each individual will be requited according to what he/she has done in his/her earthly life.

Q 40:17 *al-yawma tujzā kullu nafsin bi-mā kasabat lā ẓulma l-yawma ʾinna llāha sarīʿu l-ḥisāb*
Today each person shall be recompensed for what s/he has earned; no wrong today. God is swift at the reckoning.

Q 3:181–182 *la-qad samiʿa llāhu qawla llaḏīna qālū ʾinna llāha faqīrun wa-naḥnu ʾaġniyāʾu sa-naktubu mā qālū wa-qatlahumu l-ʾanbiyāʾa bi-ġayri ḥaqqin wa-naqūlu ḏūqū ʿaḏāba l-ḥarīq. ḏālika bi-mā qaddamat ʾaydīkum*[20] *wa-ʾanna llāha laysa bi-ẓallāmin li-l-ʿabīd*
God has heard the saying of those who said, 'God is poor, and we are rich'. We shall write down what they have said, and their slaying the prophets without right, and we shall say, 'Taste the chastisement of the burning. That is for what your[p] hands have done; God is never unjust unto his servants.'

As is evident from these two examples, the act of doing in one's earthly life is expressed by the root *KSB*, as well as by the root *QDM* in form II.[21] Understanding *qaddama* as "do in one's earthly life" assists in construing *ʾanfus* as reflexive objects in Q 2:110/73:20 *wa-mā tuqaddimū **li-ʾanfusikum** min ḫayrin*, "whatever good you[p] shall do for yourselves [...]".[22] The agent of *qaddama* is "they", and *ʾanfusikum*, following *li-*, makes the beneficiary identical to the agent. The following verse, however, is slightly different:

---

[19] The translation is adapted from Bravmann, *Spiritual background*, 21. For a discussion of *šarā nafsahū* in the Qurʾān and in early Islam, as well as a possible connection to *iḫtāna nafsahū*, see ibid, 20–21.

[20] Additional verses in which the hands occur as the grammatical subject of *qaddama* are Q 2:95, 4:62, 8:51, 18:57, 22:10, 28:47, 30:36, 42:48, 62:7 and 78:40. See also Bravmann, *Spiritual background*, 95–98. Another parallel, according to which God writes what one does in one's earthly life (*qaddama*), is Q 36:12.

[21] For an extensive discussion of these roots, see Bravmann, *Spiritual background*, 95–100 (*QDM*) and 107–114 (*KSB*).

[22] Additional Qurʾānic occurrences of *qaddama* with *li-* in this sense are Q 2:95, 2:223, 38:60 and 38:61. See also Bravmann, *Spiritual background*, 98–100.

Q 5:80 *tarā kaṯīran minhum yatawallawna llaḏīna kafarū la-biʾsa* ***mā qaddamat lahum ʾanfusuhum*** *ʾan saḫiṭa llāhu ʿalayhim wa-fi l-ʿaḏābi hum ḫālidūn*

You[s] see many of them making unbelievers their friends. Evil is *mā qaddamat lahum ʾanfusuhum*; God is incensed with them, and in torment they shall dwell forever.

In this verse, the agent is *ʾanfusuhum* and the beneficiary is *hum*, "they". Read literally, therefore, it is as if the souls of the unbelievers do evil, from which they – that is, the unbelievers – shall suffer in the hereafter.[23]

Q 5:80 *ʾanfusuhum* may in principle be interpreted as "their souls", and as such be associated with Q 5:30 *ṭawwaʿat lahū nafsuhū qatla ʾaḫīhi*, "Then his soul prompted him to kill his brother", and Q 12:18/83 *sawwalat lakum ʾanfusukum ʾamran*, "No; but your[p] souls tempted you[p] to do something [wrong]", as all of these verses describe the soul's enticing to commit undesirable acts.[24]

However, it is also possible, in my view, to count Q 5:80 *mā qaddamat lahum ʾanfusuhum* as semantically equal to Q 2:110/73:20 *mā tuqaddimū li-ʾanfusikum* (with difference in person) and translate it into "what they have done to themselves".[25]

4.5. *Nafs* in the story of Joseph (Q 12)

There are thirteen occurrences of *nafs* in Q 12. Following the discussions in the previous chapters, *nafs* should be construed as "soul" in five of these occurrences: vv. 18/83 *bal sawwalat lakum ʾanfusukum ʾamran*, "no; but your[p] souls tempted you[p] to do something [wrong]"; v. 53 *ʾinna n-nafsa la-ʾammāratun bi-s-sūʾi*, "indeed the soul incites to evil"; v. 68 *ḥājatan fī nafsi yaʿqūba*, "a need in Jacob's soul";[26] and v. 77 *fa-ʾasarrahā yūsufu fī nafsihī*, "but Joseph secreted it in his soul". "Soul" would however yield little sense in Q 12:54 *wa-qāla l-maliku ʾtūnī bihī ʾastaḫliṣhu li-nafsī*, in which the king wants Joseph for *himself*, not for his *soul*, and there is no apparent reason to doubt that they later spoke alone (vv. 54b–55).[27]

---

[23] As Bravmann (*Spiritual background*, 95–96) has remarked – and is evident from Q 3:181–182 and 2:110/73:20 – the deeds related to *qaddama* may be both good and evil.

[24] But see the previous footnote. For a discussion of Q 5:30, 12:18 and other verses in which the soul incites to evil, see Witztum, "Syriac milieu", 134–136. See also Homerin, "Soul", 82.

[25] Cf. Q 32:27 *taʾkulu minhu ʾanʿāmuhum wa-ʾanfusuhum*, "whereof their cattle and they eat", discussed in §3.2 above.

[26] This verse is further discussed in §9.1 below.

[27] See also the *tafsīr* ascribed to Ibn ʿAbbās (p. 253): *ʾaḫuṣṣahū li-nafsī dūna l-ʿazīzi*, "and he will be mine [only], and not Potiphar's (lit. so that I will appropriate him for myself, not [for] Potiphar)".

The remaining seven occurrences can be split into two categories: Q 12:53 *wa-mā ʾubarriʾu nafsī* (§4.5.1) and another six occurrences (vv. 23, 26, 30, 32, 51 twice), which consist of the verb *rāwada* governing both a direct object and *ʿan*, the latter being complemented by *nafs* + a suffix referring back to the direct object (§4.5.2).

4.5.1. Q 12:53

Perhaps the most elusive of all occurrences is Q 12:53 *wa-mā ʾubarriʾu nafsī*. On the one hand, apart from being a simple and natural way of interpretation, the patient of *barraʾa* in two other Qurʾānic occurrences is human only,[28] which might point to a reflexive reading of *nafsī*; that is, "I do not declare myself innocent". On the other hand, *nafs* appears again in the next clause, *ʾinna n-nafsa la-ʾammāratun bi-s-sūʾi*, "indeed the soul incites to evil", in which *nafs* is unanimously understood as meaning "soul", and the two clauses seem conceptually inseparable. Another aspect that should be taken into account is the fact that *tabarraʾa*, the reflexive counterpart of *barraʾa*, occurs (with *min*) four times.[29] On the one hand, one may wonder why *tabarraʾa* is not used in Q 12:53, too, if reflexive *nafs* was intended; on the other hand, as in the case of *tazakkā* and *zakkā nafsahū* ("he purified himself") discussed in §4.2 above, the parallel usage of a reflexive verb might in itself support a reflexive reading of *nafsī*.

Of importance may also be the identity of the speaker in vv. 52–53.[30] The commentators discuss three possible speakers, to wit, Potiphar's wife, Joseph and Potiphar. The last proposition seems rather untenable;[31] the first two are both plausible. The verses appear to be a continuation of the words of Potiphar's wife at the end of v. 51. The mention of God, however, seems foreign to her speech and

---

[28] Q 33:69 *fa-barraʾahu llāhu mimmā qālū*, "and God declared him (Moses) innocent of what they alleged"; Q 24:26 *ʾulāʾika mubarraʾūna mimmā yaqūlūna*, "those are declared innocent of what is alleged [of them]".

[29] Q 2:166, 2:167 (twice), 9:114. Q 28:63, in which the verb takes *ʾilā* and has a different sense, was excluded from this count.

[30] See also Witztum, "Syriac milieu", 218, n. 117.

[31] According to this proposition, Potiphar would like Joseph to know that he did not betray him in his absence (i.e., while Joseph was incarcerated). At that point of the story, however, Potiphar has not been mentioned for a long time, which makes this suggestion – albeit grammatically possible – the least plausible one.

more typical of that of Joseph, but the latter speaks only earlier, in v. 50, and no change of speaker is marked in the text.

Some exegetes do not ascribe vv. 52–53 to Joseph for theological reasons. They first acquit him of desiring Potiphar's wife in v. 24, and accordingly assert that, since he did nothing wrong, he cannot have claimed that he, or his soul, was not innocent. While this view stems from theological considerations, one must concede that the question of the speaker in vv. 52–53 is inevitably interwoven with the question of whether Joseph desired Potiphar's wife. If Joseph did not desire Potiphar's wife, there is no reason for his saying that his soul was not innocent.[32]

4.5.2. *Rāwada*

The verb *rāwada* appears in the Qurʾān eight times, of which seven are in Q 12 and one in Q 54:37. In all occurrences, the verb governs both a direct object and *ʿan* and is usually translated into English as "solicit":

> Q 12:61 *qālū sa-nurāwidu ʿanhu ʾabāhu*
> They said, 'We will solicit him [i.e., Benjamin] from our father'

> Q 54:37 *wa-la-qad rāwadūhu ʿan ḍayfihī*
> And they had solicited his [i.e., Lot's] guests from him

However, the idiomatic expression occurring in the other six verses, in which the complement of *ʿan* is *nafs*, does not translate to English as literally.[33] The following are representative examples:[34]

> Q 12:23 *wa-rāwadathu llatī huwa fī baytihā ʿan nafsihī*
> And the woman in whose house he was [i.e., Potiphar's wife] solicited him.

> Q 12:26 *qāla hiya rāwadatnī ʿan nafsī*
> He (Joseph) said, 'She solicited me.'

---

[32] This is also evident from the writings of commentators who allow both readings, such as al-Qurṭubī (XI, 375–377), whose sole justification for attributing vv. 52–53 to Joseph is the latter's desire.

[33] Ambros (*Concise dictionary*, 118 [*RWD*]), for instance, translates "to entice s.o. away from s.o.", but is obliged to translate our six occurrences as "to try to seduce s.o. (sexually)" without a literal equivalent.

[34] It is worthy of note that this idiom occurs not only in the narration of the event (e.g., Q 12:23), but also in the protagonists' speech (e.g., Q 12:26).

Q 12:51 *mā ḫaṭbukunna ʾiḏ rāwadtunna yūsufa ʿan nafsihī*

'What about that affair of yours[fp] (the Egyptian ladies) when you[fp] solicited Joseph?'

The question, then, is how *nafs* in these six verses should be understood literally. I found only a few commentators who are interested in this question. Many others seem content with an explanation such as *ṭalabat minhu ʾan yuwāqiʿahā*, "she asked him to sleep with her".[35] A commentary ascribed to Ibn ʿAbbās, however, clearly suggests that he understood *nafs* as "soul": it glosses, e.g., Q 12:53 *nafsī* with *qalbī*, "my heart" (p. 253), and Q 12:23 *rāwadathu ʿan nafsihī* with *ṭalabathu ʾan tastamkina min nafsihī*, "she sought to get a hold of his soul" (p. 248).[36]

The meaning of form III *rāwada* is derived from that of the ground form *rāda*, "to come and go, to go to and fro".[37] *Rāwada* then essentially denotes the attempt to obtain something from someone by coming again and again, repeatedly asking for it, despite the other participant's reluctance.[38]

According to Lane, when the endeavour is to make someone do something, *rāwada* is followed by *ʿalā*,[39] whereas the attempt to turn someone *away from* something is signified by *ʿan*.[40] This fits with both the brothers' endeavour to persuade Jacob to give Benjamin to them (Q 12:61) and Lot's people's efforts to get him to forsake his guests (Q 54:37). As to the idiomatic expression under discussion, a reflexive reading of *nafs* would perhaps imply something along the lines of Joseph having two kinds of "self", say, physical and moral, and Potiphar's wife attempting to turn his physical self away from his moral self. Such a concept of *nafs*, however, seems foreign to the Qurʾān. According to Lane, it is Joseph's disdain (or disdainful incompliance), purpose or will that Potiphar's wife tried to turn him from. This interpretation dovetails with Seidensticker's depiction of the soul as the source of emotions and will.

---

[35] See, e.g., al-Qurṭubī, XI, 305; al-Bayḍāwī, III, 160.

[36] Cf. his exegesis of the reflexive *nafs* in Q 12:54 in n. 27 above.

[37] Lane, III, 1184a–b (*RWD*).

[38] See Wright, I, 32–33 = §43a. That an *attempt* is expressed in our story is evident from the words of Potiphar's wife in Q 12:32: *wa-la-qad rāwadtuhū ʿan nafsihī fa-staʿṣama*, "Yes, I did try to seduce him, but he abstained".

[39] Lane, III, 1184a–b (*RWD*). This usage does not occur in the Qurʾān.

[40] Lane, III, 1184a–b (*RWD*). The sense of "away from" tallies with the basic sense of *ʿan* – see Wright, II, 139–144 = §49. Lane's explanation of *rāwada ʿan* also matches the other Qurʾānic occurrences of this verb (see below).

4.6. Summary

The case studies discussed in this chapter have shown the fluidity in the meaning of *nafs*. It is occasionally quite difficult to include *nafs* in a certain category, as it sometimes seems to be on the edge between two categories. In other cases, while most occurrences of *nafs* in a certain context seem to belong to one category, others seem to fit into another category better. It is perhaps on account of these blurry boundaries that Blachère has maintained that the European linguistic consciousness is what makes us understand *nafs* as reflexive.[41]

[41] Blachère, "Note", 76–77.

Conclusions

The first part of this thesis has explored the semantics and grammatical function of *nafs* in the Qurʾān. In the first chapter, two core meanings of *nafs* were identified, namely, "person" and "soul". The former has to do with the entire human being, and thus may also refer to human life; the latter is related to the interior dimensions of human individuals, where feelings are kept and mental processes such as thoughts, intentions and understanding take place. It is therefore associated with interior psychological strife.

The second chapter focused on *nafs* as a reflexive particle. Functioning as a reflexive object, *nafs* expresses individual reflexivity, and *ʾanfus* mostly expresses individual or collective reflexivity and in certain verses (discussed in §2.4) encodes reciprocity.

The third chapter had primarily to do with cases that belong neither to the lexicon nor to the reflexive use of *nafs*. Here it was shown that *nafs* or *ʾanfus* may optionally occur where a pronoun could be utilised. This could be either instead of the second of two pronouns referring to the same antecedent or in conjunction with (an)other noun(s) or nominal phrase(s).

Finally, the case studies included in the fourth chapter demonstrated, mainly by extracting contextual clues of various intra-Qurʾānic parallels and weighing them against each other, that certain occurrences of *nafs* cannot be easily subsumed under one of the categories of *nafs* described in Chapters 1–3.

Part II: A linguistic study of *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān

Overview

The particle *ʾillā* – originally a contraction of *ʾin lā* – appears 663 times in 605 Qurʾānic verses. In Qurʾānic Arabic, *ʾillā* is used to express restriction, exception and adversativity. In **Chapters 5–7**, the core of this analysis, these usages of *ʾillā* will be examined in this order (more on this main portion of the analysis below). What might seem to be an arcane grammatical distinction, it will be shown, may have important legal ramifications. **Chapter 8** includes investigations that are not related to a single category of *ʾillā*. It explores aspects of the relationship between *ʾillā* and informational focus (§8.1); the syntactical position of the *ʾillā* phrases in relation to the proposition to which they are semantically related (§8.2); the use of *fa-* after *ʾillā* constructions (§8.3); a case showing that *ʾillā* may be followed by a sentence, not only by a phrase or an equivalent thereof (§8.4) and cases of the influence of end-rhyme (§8.5). **Chapter 9** includes case studies that revolve around *ʾillā* constructions. **Chapter 10** examines the way in which *ʾillā* was treated in pre-modern scholarship. It seeks to portray a development in grammatical thought of *ʾillā* constructions as reflected by the differences between Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* and later pre-modern grammatical and exegetical works.

Previous scholarship on *ʾillā*

Traditional grammatical works[1] usually divide *ʾillā* constructions into three types:[2]

(i) *Istiṯnāʾ muttaṣil* ("connected/continuous exception", "verbundene Ausnahme"); e.g., *qāma l-qawmu ʾillā zaydan*, "the people rose except Zayd"; *mā qāma l-qawmu ʾillā zaydun*, "the people did not rise except Zayd".

[1] As will be discussed in Chapter 10, this common grammatical analysis of *ʾillā* became prevalent after Sībawayhi's time.

[2] The English translations of the Arabic terms, as well as the examples, are taken from Carter, "Exceptive sentences" (on which see further §10.1 below). The German translations of the Arabic terms are taken from Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 502 = §262. As will be discussed in §10.1 below, this division reflects traditional grammatical thought later than that of Sībawayhi. The term "discontinuity", which is based on the prominent concept of grammatical effect (*ʿamal*) in traditional grammatical thought, is explained in §10.1 as well.

(ii) *Istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ* ("disconnected/discontinuous exception", "abgeschnittene Ausnahme"), also termed *istiṯnāʾ min ġayr al-ʾawwal* and *istiṯnāʾ min ġayr al-jins*; e.g., *mā fi d-dāri ʾaḥadun ʾillā ḥimāran*, "there is not in the house anyone, but [there is] a donkey".

(iii) *Istiṯnāʾ mufarraġ* ("exhaustive/empty exception", "rektionslose Ausnahme"[3]); e.g., *mā qāma ʾillā zaydun*, "there did not rise except Zayd".

Note that *istiṯnāʾ mufarraġ* (iii) may be detected through the syntax, whereas the differentiation between *istiṯnāʾ muttaṣil* (i) and *munqaṭiʿ* (ii) is based mainly on semantics.[4]

Many traditional grammatical views on *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān are summarised in Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḫāliq ʿUḍayma's *Dirāsāt li-ʾuslūb al-Qurʾān al-karīm*. This important work includes an extensive section on *ʾillā*,[5] in which ʿUḍayma classifies and discusses noteworthy cases of *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān, which have often been analysed differently by various pre-modern scholars. ʿUḍayma further draws attention to a wide array of questions raised by pre-modern scholars concerning *ʾillā* constructions by devoting a sub-section to each of these questions. For instance, he discusses various, often disputed aspects related to *al-istiṯnāʾ al-munqaṭiʿ*[6] and dedicates sub-sections to whether *al-istiṯnāʾ al-mufarraġ* can occur when *ʾillā* is preceded by an affirmative sentence,[7] to whether *ʾillā* may occur in the sense of *wa-*, "and",[8] and to the function of *ʾillā* as an attribute (*naʿt*).[9]

The descriptions of the usage of *ʾillā* in modern grammars of Classical Arabic largely follow the traditional ones. The following review focuses on cases in which the *ʾillā* phrase follows the proposition that it qualifies or contradicts, since this is

---

[3] Reckendorf follows Fleischer (*Kleinere Schriften*, II, 95–98) here, but the concept of the *ʾillā* that has no grammatical influence, or the exception made void [of government] (Wright, II, 338 = §186a), may be traced back already to Sībawayhi (*al-Kitāb*, I, 315 = ch. 186; and see below). All references to Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* are to Derenbourg's edition.

[4] See also §10.1 below.

[5] ʿUḍayma, I.1, 230–385.

[6] ʿUḍayma, I.1, 254–255, 328–361, 370–375. See also §10.1 below.

[7] ʿUḍayma, I.1, 234–236, 264–279. Cf. the discussion on verses such as Q 2:45 in §8.1.1 below.

[8] ʿUḍayma, I.1, 375–377. This sense of *ʾillā*, argued by Kūfan grammarians, is not discussed in the present part of the thesis since I have found no compelling evidence to support it. See also Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, *al-ʾInṣāf*, 232–236.

[9] ʿUḍayma, I.1, 246–251. See §10.2 below.

the only construction found in the Qurʾān. Modern grammars classify *ʾillā* as an exceptive particle and divide *ʾillā* constructions into three main types: (1) when *ʾillā* follows an affirmative proposition; (2) when *ʾillā* follows a negative proposition and the general term is expressed, in connection with which an analogy to interrogative and hypothetical conditional sentences is often mentioned; (3) when *ʾillā* follows a negative proposition and the general term is not expressed (which corresponds to *istiṯnāʾ mufarraġ*).

In a section on adversative, restrictive and exceptive sentences, William Wright classifies *lā*, *lākin*, *lākinna* and *bal* as the primary adversative particles, *ʾinnamā* as one of the most important particles used for limitation or restriction, and *ʾillā* as the most important exceptive particle.[10] He divides the exceptive constructions into two, affirmative and negative propositions, including (2) and (3) above in the same section. Most of Wright's discussion of *ʾillā* revolves around the grammatical case of the excepted element, which will not be given much attention in this part of the thesis. He also mentions various types of sentences that may occur after *ʾillā*, as well as the use of *ʾillā ʾan(na)* in the sense of "but".[11] It should be remarked that *ʾillā ʾanna* is never attested in the Qurʾān, but only in extra-Qurʾānic Arabic.

Hermann Reckendorf's description of the usage of *ʾillā* is more refined.[12] After an introduction of the relevant terminology and the grammatical case of the excepted element (§262.1–3), he mentions and exemplifies, *inter alia*, the usage of affirmative sentences whose verb has a negative meaning (such as *ʾankara* and *ʾabā*; §262.4), the adversative usage of *ʾillā* (§262.5),[13] various types of sentences that may occur after *ʾillā* (§262.6), the usage of "verbs of omission" before *ʾillā* (§262.7), using *ʾillā* to express surprise (§262.8) and its usage in oaths (§§262.9, 262.12).

Régis Blachère and Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes mention *ʾillā* both among the exceptive particles, in which one finds a three-type division, and in their discussion of what they term "subordonnées exceptives", which corresponds to

[10] Wright, II, 333–344 = §§184 (adversative), 185 (restrictive), 186 (exceptive).

[11] Wright, II, 340 = §186, rem. g.

[12] Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 502–512 = §262.

[13] It is to be noted that *ʾillā* in both the Qurʾānic example and the example that Reckendorf adduces from Huḏalī poetry can equally be read as exceptive. See further §9.2, and cf. Chapter 7 as well as §8.4 below.

French *ne … que*.[14] They also count *ʾillā ʾanna*, "however", as an adversative connective.[15]

Wolfdietrich Fischer terms *ʾillā* a particle of exception and restriction. He, too, divides sentences with *ʾillā* into three categories: affirmative sentences, negative sentences [containing the general term] and negative sentences in which "only the exception is identified", in which case "a positive restriction ('only') is expressed".[16]

The analysis in this part

The present part of the thesis is dedicated to a detailed, systematic analysis of the use of *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān. Unlike previous research, the grammatical case of the complement of *ʾillā* will be discussed only rarely, when crucial for the case at hand. The core analysis divides the usage of *ʾillā* into three categories: (1) restrictive *ʾillā* constructions (Chapter 5); (2) exceptive *ʾillā* (Chapter 6); and (3) adversative *ʾillā* (Chapter 7). The types are ordered according to their frequency in the Qurʾān. Each chapter includes a linguistic introduction relevant to the type that is discussed. The introductions not only place each type in a broader linguistic context but also provide useful linguistic criteria for making distinctions between the types.

While traditional analyses of *ʾillā* are taken into account,[17] this part does not rely on them. In §5.1, for instance, *ʾillā* itself is not considered restrictive; instead, in accordance with the broader linguistic typology of restrictive constructions, it is considered part of a restrictive construction together with the preceding negative particle. Another example is the "without" category (§5.2). While instances of this type of *ʾillā* appear in grammars among the examples of the various possible complements of *ʾillā*, the "without" category is never presented as a class of its own, even though it has distinctive characteristics. However, the reader will find that traditional views and modern research occasionally independently rely on similar

[14] Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Grammaire*, 406 = §387 (phrase simple exceptive); 445–446 = §§443–444 (subordonnées exceptives). The latter construction will not be analysed in this thesis as a form of subordination – see §5.1 below.

[15] Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Grammaire*, 479–480 = §494.

[16] Fischer, *Grammar*, 168–169 = §310.

[17] Such analyses include the commonly held (post-Sībawayhi) analysis presented above, Sībawayhi's own analysis of *ʾillā* (which is discussed in Chapter 10) and any other analyses of certain occurrences of *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān.

considerations when subsuming a case of *ʾillā* under a certain type. The criteria for classifying *ʾillā* as adversative constitute a prominent example: the findings of modern research correspond, at least to a certain extent, to the pre-modern (post-Sībawayhi) grammatical thinking of *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ*.

Since *ʾillā* constructions do not always consist of a general term and an exception phrase, I will use the terms "part A" for what precedes *ʾillā*, which in exceptive constructions includes the general term, and "part B" for what follows *ʾillā*, which in exceptive constructions includes the excepted element, as illustrated in Figure 2 below.

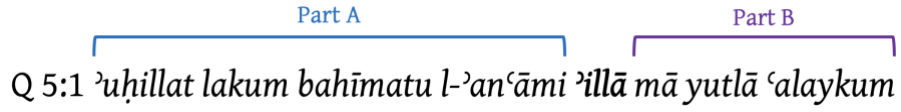

Figure 2: A schematic illustration of parts A and B in an exceptive sentence

Finally, a significant portion of the analysis of *ʾillā* constructions in this part of the thesis can be distilled into two important factors, which will further be clarified by the discussions and examples throughout the analysis. For now, the following definitions of these two factors should suffice:

- **The syntactical completeness of part A** – if part B contains an indispensable part of the sentence, such as the subject, the predicate or an object of a verb, then part A is considered syntactically incomplete: omitting part B from the sentence would result in an incomplete sentence.
- **The completeness of the message conveyed by part A** – if part B contains a crucial part of the message that the sentence conveys, the message, or information, conveyed by part A is considered incomplete.

These two factors may be represented in the following flowchart, which will be revised in §7.2.1 below:



Figure 3: A summary of all types of ʾillā *constructions based on the completeness of their syntax and their message*

Chapter 5: Restrictive *ʾillā* constructions

5.1. "Only"[1]

5.1.1. Introduction: Exclusiveness strategies

Cross-linguistically, there are two main strategies to express exclusiveness. One strategy is through an element like "only" in English. Languages that use this strategy include German ("nur"), Turkish ("sadece"), Finnish ("vain") and Tagalog ("lang").[2] Another strategy is using negation and an exceptive phrase (henceforth

[1] The occurrences of this type of *ʾillā* are the following: Q 2:9, 2:26, 2:78#2, 2:80, 2:83#1, 2:99, 2:111, 2:143#1, 2:174, 2:233, 2:269, 2:286, 3:7 (twice), 3:24, 3:64, 3:69, 3:73, 3:111, 3:126#2, 3:144, 3:185, 4:46, 4:62, 4:64, 4:84, 4:113, 4:117 (twice), 4:120, 4:142, 4:155, 4:169?, 4:171, 5:25, 5:75, 5:99, 5:110, 5:117, 6:7, 6:25, 6:26, 6:29, 6:32, 6:38, 6:48, 6:50, 6:57, 6:59#1, 6:90, 6:116 (twice), 6:123, 6:138, 6:148#2, 6:152 (twice), 6:160, 6:164, 7:42, 7:99, 7:105, 7:126, 7:155, 7:169, 7:184, 7:187 (twice), 7:188#2, 8:10 (twice), 8:31, 8:34, 8:35, 9:18, 9:31#1, 9:32, 9:47, 9:51, 9:54#1, 9:74, 9:79, 9:107, 10:15, 10:36, 10:45, 10:66 (twice), 10:83, 11:2, 11:7, 11:16, 11:26, 11:27 (twice), 11:36, 11:40#2, 11:50, 11:88#1, 11:105, 12:40 (thrice), 12:67, 12:81, 12:87, 12:104, 12:109, 13:26, 14:9, 14:10, 14:11#1, 16:43, 16:79, 16:127, 17:23, 17:41, 17:47, 17:52, 17:59 (twice), 17:60 (twice), 17:64, 17:76, 17:82, 17:85, 17:94, 17:105, 18:5, 18:16, 18:22 (twice), 18:55, 18:56, 19:64, 20:103, 20:104, 20:108, 21:7, 21:107, 23:24, 23:25, 23:33, 23:37, 23:38, 23:114, 24:3 (twice), 24:31#2, 24:54, 25:4, 25:8, 25:41, 25:44, 25:56, 26:115, 26:137, 26:154, 26:186, 27:68, 27:81, 28:19, 28:36, 28:80, 28:84, 29:18, 29:43, 29:46#1, 29:47, 29:49, 29:64, 30:53, 30:58, 31:32, 33:12, 33:13, 33:14, 33:16, 33:18, 33:20, 33:22, 34:14, 34:21, 34:43 (thrice), 34:46, 35:23, 35:39 (twice), 35:40, 35:42, 36:15 (twice), 36:17, 36:29, 36:47, 36:49, 36:53, 36:54, 36:69, 37:15, 37:39, 38:7, 38:15, 38:70, 38:87, 39:3, 40:4, 40:13, 40:25, 40:29 (twice), 40:37, 40:40, 40:50, 40:56, 41:14, 41:35 (twice), 41:43, 42:48, 43:20, 43:58, 43:59, 44:35, 45:24 (thrice), 45:32, 46:9 (twice), 46:17, 46:21, 46:25, 46:35#1, 48:15, 51:56, 53:4, 53:23 (twice), 53:28, 53:29, 53:39, 55:33, 56:79, 57:20, 58:2, 65:7, 67:19, 68:52, 69:37, 71:6, 71:21, 71:24, 71:27, 71:28, 74:24, 74:25, 74:31#3, 74:31#4, 78:30, 79:46, 81:27, 83:12, 85:8, 92:15, 98:5; 7:20; 2:213, 2:272, 2:275, 3:19, 3:65, 3:126#1, 3:147, 6:23, 7:5, 7:82, 9:38, 9:114, 10:5, 10:19, 11:51, 11:54, 11:88#2, 11:104, 11:109, 13:14 (twice), 16:64, 16:77, 17:102, 18:63, 19:93, 21:36, 26:99, 27:56, 29:24, 29:29, 30:8, 31:28, 34:28, 38:14, 40:78, 42:14, 44:39, 45:17, 45:25, 46:3, 54:50, 67:9, 67:20, 74:31#1, 74:31#2, 98:4; 7:58, 10:72, 11:29, 12:31, 26:109, 26:113, 26:127, 26:145, 26:164, 26:180, 34:47, 35:43#1; 10:3, 10:35, 15:8, 15:21#2, 15:85, 16:7, 18:24, 21:28, 35:11#1, 41:47, 42:51, 64:11; 2:114, 3:145, 4:92#2, 6:111, 10:100, 12:76, 13:38, 14:11#2; 2:132, 3:102, 9:54#2, 9:54#3, 12:106, 14:4; 2:32, 2:163, 2:255#1, 3:2, 3:6, 3:62, 4:87, 5:73, 6:17, 6:102, 6:106, 7:158, 9:31#2, 9:118, 9:129, 10:90, 10:107, 11:14, 11:43?, 13:30, 16:2, 18:39, 20:8, 20:14, 20:98, 21:25#2, 21:87, 23:116, 27:26, 28:70, 28:88#1, 35:3, 37:35, 39:6, 40:3, 40:62, 40:65, 44:8, 47:19, 59:22, 59:23, 64:13, 73:9; 20:109? (except/only); 14:22? (only/except/adversative)

[2] The information from Finnish and Tagalog as well as on Greek and Irish below is taken from von Fintel and Iatridou, "Anatomy", 448. The information from Turkish is from Nehir Banaz (pers. comm.).

NEG + EXCEPTIVE). Examples of languages using this strategy are French ("ne … que"), Greek, Irish and Qurʾānic Arabic. Some languages utilise both strategies. Modern Hebrew, for instance, has both *rak* ("only") and NEG + *ela*, the latter construction being used in a higher, more literary register. In some Arabic dialects today, *bass* is used for expressing "only" alongside a NEG + EXCEPTIVE construction.

Various semantic analyses have been made in linguistic research to capture the exact semantics of each strategy.[3] Attempts have also been made to create a unified set of semantic rules that apply to both strategies.[4] For the purposes of the present thesis, however, one need not resort to these analyses. Instead, emphasis will be put on describing the NEG + EXCEPTIVE strategy as used in Qurʾānic Arabic.

5.1.2. NEG + *ʾillā* expressing exclusiveness in the Qurʾān

Expressing exclusiveness ("only") is the most common usage of *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān. In all instances included in this category, *ʾillā* follows negation, which fits well the cross-linguistic description of expressing exclusiveness through the NEG + EXCEPTIVE strategy. The data from Qurʾānic Arabic also indicate that it is sentential negation (by, e.g., *mā* and *lā*), not constituent negation (by *ġayr*), that is utilised.[5]

The NEG … *ʾillā* construction is by far the most common means to express exclusiveness in the Qurʾān, the other two being *ʾinnamā* (e.g., Q 3:20; cf. Q 5:99) and, to a certain extent, the root *WḤD* (e.g., Q 60:4). Particles such as *faqaṭ*, which are used in extra-Qurʾānic Classical Arabic to denote "only",[6] do not occur in the Qurʾān. As reflected by the translations of the examples below, a common way to translate this type of *ʾillā* into English is by omitting both the negating particle and *ʾillā* and adding "only" to the English sentence; e.g., for Q 2:269, adding "only" to *yaḏḏakkaru ʾulu l-ʾalbāb*, "those possessed of understanding are mindful".

Q 2:269 *wa-**mā** yaḏḏakkaru **ʾillā** ʾulu l-ʾalbāb*
but only those possessed of understanding are mindful.

Q 4:120 *wa-**mā** yaʿiduhumu š-šayṭānu **ʾillā** ġurūrā*
but Satan promises them only delusion.

---

[3] See, e.g., Horn, "Exclusive company"; von Fintel and Iatridou, "Anatomy".
[4] Such is the attempt made in von Fintel and Iatridou, "Anatomy".
[5] See also the discussion on Q 22:40 in §9.4 below. Sentential negation applies to the entire sentence. Constituent negation applies to a particular part of the clause.
[6] See Wright, I, 286 = §362.

Q 4:142 *wa-ʾiḏā qāmū ʾila ṣ-ṣalāti qāmū kusālā yurāʾūna n-nāsa wa-**lā** yaḏkurūna llāha **ʾillā** qalīlā*

When they stand for prayer, they do so lazily, making a show before the people and remembering God only a little.

Q 2:80 *wa-qālū **lan** tamassana n-nāru **ʾillā** ʾayyāman maʿdūdatan*

And they say, 'The Fire will touch us only for a few days.'

Q 2:163 *wa-ʾilāhukum ʾilāhun wāḥidun **lā** ʾilāha **ʾillā** huwa*

your[p] god is one god; he is the only god (= there is no god but him).

Q 41:14 ***ʾallā** taʿbudū **ʾillā** llāha*

saying, 'Serve only God.'[7]

Q 9:118 *wa-ẓannū ʾan **lā** maljaʾa mina llāhi **ʾillā** ʾilayhi*

and they realised[8] that the only refuge from God is [turning] to him.

Q 6:7 ***ʾin** hāḏā **ʾillā** siḥrun mubīn*

'This is merely magic.'[9]

Q 2:78#2/45:24 *(wa-)**ʾin** hum **ʾillā** yaẓunnūn*

They only conjecture.

---

[7] Compare, e.g., Q 4:36 *wa-ʿbudu llāha wa-lā tušrikū bihī šayʾan*, "Serve[p] God and do not associate anything with him" and Q 39:2 *fa-ʿbudi llāha muḫliṣan lahu d-dīn*, "So serve[s] God, devoting [your] religion solely to him", both of which also convey the fundamental idea of worshipping God alone via other means of expression.

[8] The root *ẒNN* in the Qurʾān seems to express not only speculation and assumption but also realisation. Another occurrence of this sense of the root is, e.g., Q 38:24. After giving his judgement David realises (*ẓanna*) that he has been tested.

[9] The word *mubīn* is a rhyme filler (cf. Q 28:36 *mā hāḏā ʾillā siḥrun muftaran* in a non-final position, as well as Q 74:24 *ʾin hāḏā ʾillā siḥrun yuʾṯar*, in which *mubīn* would not be a good fit for the rhyme environment). Stewart ("*Mubīn*") argues that this word has three meanings, viz., "clear", "clearly an X" and "expressing oneself clearly", that it mostly shares its semantic value with *bayyin* and that its occurrence in the Qurʾān is conditioned by rhyme and rhythm. I would add that, since this word appears in the Qurʾān only at the end verses and completes their rhyme scheme and since there are intra-Qurʾānic parallels with and without the word *mubīn*, the semantic value of this word – at least in some verses – should not be overemphasised. Thus, for instance, one may prefer to rely on the meaning within Q 5:99, which states that the Prophet's mission is simply to convey God's message, rather than inferring that the Prophet was to deliver his message *clearly*, as might be understood from Q 24:54 and Q 29:18.

As the examples above indicate, part A in the instances belonging to this category is very often negative and syntactically incomplete, as in Q 6:7 and 2:78#2. In such cases, the part necessary for completing the sentence is found after *ʾillā*. When part A is syntactically complete, the message conveyed by it is not complete, as in Q 4:142 and 2:80.[10]

According to Azar's analysis of the corresponding construction in Modern Hebrew, the negating particle and *ʾillā* are two discontinuous constituents forming together a single syntactical construction at the simple-clause level. In other words, parts A and B are essentially one complete sentence, to which both the negating particle and *ʾillā* are added to express exclusiveness. In Q 2:78#2, for instance, both *ʾin* and *ʾillā* are added together as a single syntactical construction at the simple-clause level to express exclusiveness: *(hum) yaẓunnūn* > ***ʾin*** *hum* ***ʾillā*** *yaẓunnūn*. That the negating particle and *ʾillā* function as a single syntactical unit can further be demonstrated by examples such as Q 15:8:

> Q 15:8 *mā nunazzilu l-malāʾikata* ***ʾillā*** *bi-l-ḥaqqi*
> We (God) only send down the angels with the truth.

In such sentences, omitting the *ʾillā* phrase would reverse the polarity of the original proposition: if *ʾillā bi-l-ḥaqqi* were omitted, one would be left with *mā nunazzilu l-malāʾikata*, "We (God) do not send down the angels"; however, the verse presupposes the exact opposite, namely, that the angels *are* sent down. The underlying proposition here is the affirmative *nunazzilu l-malāʾikata bi-l-ḥaqqi*. The exclusiveness is then not expressed through *ʾillā* alone; rather, it forms a construction with the negating particle.[11]

Azar shows that in Modern Hebrew the two elements, the negation and the exceptive marker, must be discontinuous – that is, the negator cannot immediately precede *ela*.[12] All Qurʾānic instances indicate that the same condition applies to Qurʾānic Arabic, too. A good example is the occurrence of *hum* in Q 2:78#2 cited above. The use of this separate pronoun even though it is clearly expressed by the verb *yaẓunnūn* shows that the negating particle and *ʾillā* must not immediately follow each other.

---

[10] See further the discussion in §8.1.2 below.

[11] This point will further be discussed in §8.1 below.

[12] Azar, 138–139 = §3.

Unlike Modern Hebrew or French, however, a finite verb may follow *ʾillā* in Qurʾānic Arabic. The verb is mostly in the imperfect form (as in Q 2:78#2 above). I found only one perfect verbal form following *ʾillā* of this type:[13]

Q 38:14 *ʾin kullun* ***ʾillā*** *kaḏḏaba r-rusula*
All [of them] denied the truth of the messengers.

It is also worthy of note, as will be discussed in more detail in §5.1.5 below, that while the use of "only" when translating *ʾillā* constructions may work in many cases in which part A is (negative and) syntactically incomplete, it is not necessarily the case for every such occurrence of NEG + *ʾillā*. Nevertheless, "only" may be found in translations of *ʾillā* regardless of its function.[14]

5.1.3. *ʾIllā* following rhetorical questions

ʾIllā following rhetorical questions is analogous to the "only" type.[15] Compare the following pairs of intra-Qurʾānic parallels (Q 27:90 vs Q 37:39; Q 16:35 vs Q 36:17; Q 21:3 vs Q 23:24):

Q 27:90 *hal tujzawna* ***ʾillā*** *mā kuntum taʿmalūn*
'Are you[p] recompensed for anything but what you did?'

Q 37:39 *wa-mā tujzawna* ***ʾillā*** *mā kuntum taʿmalūn*
and you[p] will only be recompensed for what you did.

Q 16:35 *fa-hal ʿala r-rusuli* ***ʾilla*** *l-balāġu l-mubīn*
And is the messengers' duty anything but to deliver the message?[16]

Q 36:17 *wa-mā ʿalaynā* ***ʾilla*** *l-balāġu l-mubīn*
Our duty is only to deliver the message.

Q 21:3 *hal hāḏā* ***ʾillā*** *bašarun miṯlukum*
Is this anything but a mortal like you[p]?

Q 23:24 *wa-mā hāḏā* ***ʾillā*** *bašarun miṯlukum*
This is only a mortal like you[p].

---

[13] All other cases in which *ʾillā* is followed by a perfect verbal form belong to the "without" type (see §5.2 below).

[14] See, e.g., Jones's translation of Q 19:62 and 56:25–26.

[15] Q 2:130, 10:32, 12:25, 15:56, 16:106; 37:59; 6:47, 34:17, 46:35#2; 2:210, 6:158, 7:53, 7:147, 9:52, 10:102, 16:33, 16:35, 17:93, 21:3, 27:90, 34:33, 35:43#2, 43:66, 47:18, 55:60; 12:64.

[16] For *mubīn*, see n. 9 above.

The parallels above show that the rhetorical questions correspond to Sadock's "queclaratives" – that is, interrogative sentences that have the force of an assertion of opposite polarity.[17] Since they contain no negator, these questions seem positive, yet their effect is that of a negative assertion. In other words, these rhetorical questions have a negative bias: they create an expectation for a negative answer.

When following polar (= yes–no) rhetorical questions introduced by *hal* or *ʾa-*, *ʾillā* may be translated as "anything/anyone but". After other (= *wh-*) rhetorical questions, such as those introduced by *man*, it may be translated as "except" or "other than".

> Q 3:135 *wa-man yaġfiru ḏ-ḏunūba ʾilla llāhu*
> and who forgives sins other than God (or and who but God forgives sins)[18]
>
> Q 12:25 *qālat mā jazāʾu man ʾarāda bi-ʾahlika sūʾan ʾillā ʾan yusjana ʾaw ʿaḏābun ʾalīm*
> She said, 'What is to be the recompense of a man who purposes evil against your folk other than that he be imprisoned, or a painful punishment?'

The (expected) answers for the examples above are "no one" and "nothing", and the assertions expressed by these questions are "{nobody but/only} God forgives sins" and "the recompense … should {be nothing other than/only be} that he be imprisoned, or a painful punishment", respectively.

5.1.4. The use of a verb or expression with a negative sense in part A

In four verses, part A is worded affirmatively, but it contains the verb *ʾabā*, "refuse", or the expression *maʿāḏa llāhi*, "God forbid", which have a negative meaning.[19] These cases of *ʾillā* are also subsumed under the "only" type. *ʾIllā* translates into "anything/anyone but".

> Q 17:89 *fa-ʾabā ʾakṯaru n-nāsi ʾillā kufūrā*
> but most of mankind refuse anything but unbelief.
>
> Q 12:79 *maʿāḏa llāhi ʾan naʾḫuḏa ʾillā man wajadnā matāʿanā ʿindahū*
> God forbid that we should seize anyone but the one with whom we found our goods.

---

[17] See Sadock, "Queclaratives".

[18] This translation works for this verse since "who" is paraphrasable with a universal determiner ("everybody"/"nobody"). The negative bias of this rhetorical question leads to the interpretation that the answer is "nobody". For the English constructions, see von Fintel, "Exceptive constructions", 133–134.

[19] Q 17:89, 17:99, 25:50; 12:79. See also Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 506 = §262.4.

5.1.5. Assigning informational focus using restrictive constructions

In §5.1.2 above, I argued that understanding certain restrictive *ʾillā* constructions of the "only" type as expressing exclusiveness does not always work. This section will explore the reason for that. *ʾIllā* constructions will be discussed in the context of the linguistic field of Information Structure (henceforth IS). Of the various IS roles, the discussions in this section will mainly concentrate on focus and its relations to the restrictive *ʾillā* construction.[20]

The informational approach to focus adopted for the purposes of this thesis is the one found in Vallduví and Engdahl's "The linguistic realization of information packaging", in which focus is defined as the "informative, newsy and contrary-to-expectation part of the proposition – the actual information update potential of a sentence". This is opposed to "ground", which is defined as the "noninformative, known or predictable part".[21] Focus may be narrower, (usually) extending over one constituent, or wider, extending over a larger portion of the proposition.[22] These will not be distinguished below.

It should be remarked that IS literature often deals with languages whose prosody is accessible to research. The original prosody of the Qurʾān, however, is inaccessible to researchers today, and the present thesis does not purport to make any claims regarding it. Nevertheless, as will be shown below, the focused constituent of the proposition may – at least occasionally – be inferred from the written text alone. This focused part will be marked in capital letters. The specific considerations for detecting the focus in a given proposition will also be discussed below.

Let us begin by comparing the intra-Qurʾānic parallels underlined below:

> Q 2:213 *kāna n-nāsu ʾummatan wāḥidatan fa-baʿaṯa llāhu n-nabiyyīna mubašširīna wa-munḏirīna wa-ʾanzala maʿahumu l-kitāba bi-l-ḥaqqi li-yaḥkuma bayna n-nāsi fīma ḫtalafū fīhi wa-ma ḫtalafa fīhi* ***ʾilla*** *LLADĪNA ʾŪTŪHU min baʿdi mā jāʾathumu l-bayyinātu baġyan baynahum fa-hada llāhu llaḏīna ʾāmanū...*

[20] The relationship between informational focus and *ʾillā* constructions is also discussed in §8.1 below.

[21] Vallduví and Engdahl, "Information packaging", 462–465 = §2.1.1. For a summary of terms related to focus and ground in former literature, see ibid.

[22] Vallduví and Engdahl, "Information packaging", 462–465 = §2.1.1; Dalrymple and Nikolaeva, *Objects and information structure*, 47–48 = §3.2.1. See also Lambrecht, *Information structure*, 221–238.

The people were one community. Then God sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and as warners; and he (God) sent down with them the Scripture with the truth, to give decisions between the people about that on which they differed. Those who differed about it were THE PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN GIVEN IT after the clear proofs had come to them, through outrage amongst them. God guided those who believed...

Q 3:19 *ʾinna d-dīna ʿinda llāhi l-ʾislāmu wa-ma ḫtalafa lladīna ʾūtu l-kitāba* ***ʾillā*** *MIN BAʿDI MĀ JĀʾAHUMU L-ʿILMU baġyan baynahum wa-man yakfur bi-ʾāyāti llāhi...*

Religion with God is submission. Those to whom the Scripture has been given differed AFTER KNOWLEDGE CAME TO THEM, through outrage amongst them. Those who do not believe in God's signs...

Even though the wording of the underlined word sequences is almost identical, the main messages conveyed by these parallels are different: while the new information in Q 2:213 is the *identity* of the people who fell into disagreement, in Q 3:19 the identity of the disagreeing people is known, or presupposed, and the informational part of the message is the *time* of their disagreement.

In both verses, then, the informational part, or the focused part, is the complement of a restrictive *ʾillā* of the "only" type. In other words, the parallels above show how restrictive *ʾillā* constructions may be utilised as a syntactic means to assign focus to (a) certain constituent(s) of the proposition.[23]

Another type of focus, namely, contrastive focus, appears in Q 2:9:

(8) *wa-mina n-nāsi man yaqūlu ʾāmannā bi-llāhi wa-bi-l-yawmi l-ʾāḫiri wa-mā hum bi-muʾminīn* (9) *yuḫādiʿūna LLĀHA WA-LLAḌĪNA ʾĀMANŪ wa-mā yaḫdaʿūna ʾillā ʾANFUSAHUM wa-mā yašʿurūn*

(8) There are some people who say, 'We believe in God and the Last Day', but they are not believers. (9) They try to deceive GOD AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE, but only THEMSELVES they deceive; yet they are not aware.

In its context, the *ʾillā* construction in Q 2:9 may well be interpreted as expressing exclusiveness. For this reason, the common translations "but they deceive only

[23] This is not to suggest that *ʾillā always* precedes the focused constituent – see further §8.1 below. Birnstiel ("Selected features", 44–45) has already mentioned the usage of the pattern *mā faʿala ... ʾillā* to assign focus to various sentence constituents. This section as well as §8.1 below aim to provide a more general analysis, which is not necessarily related to a specific syntactical pattern.

themselves" and "but they deceive none but themselves" work here.[24] However, there is another layer of understanding that the translator should consider: there is a contrast between God and the genuine believers, on the one hand, and the hypocrites, on the other hand. This could be translated in English as "but it is THEMSELVES that they deceive". The translation presented above, "but only themselves they deceive" (taken from Arberry), combines both the exclusiveness, by using "only", and the contrastive focus, by changing the word order.

Unlike in Q 2:9, the restrictive component in Q 2:275 is more questionable:

> (274) *allaḏīna yunfiqūna ʾamwālahum bi-l-layli wa-n-nahāri sirran wa-ʿalāniyyatan fa-lahum ʾajruhum ʿinda rabbihim wa-lā ḫawfun ʿalayhim wa-lā hum yaḥzanūn* (275) *allaḏīna yaʾkulūna r-ribā lā yaqūmūna ʾillā KA-MĀ YAQŪMU LLAḎĪ YATAḪABBAṬUHU Š-ŠAYṬĀNU MINA L-MASSI* [...]
> (274) Those who spend their possessions by night and day, secretly [or] openly, have their reward with God. There will be no fear on them, nor will they grieve. (275) [Conversely,] those who live on usury will rise AS DOES THE ONE WHO IS PROSTRATED BY THE TOUCH OF SATAN.

The sentence in v. 275 would have been semantically identical had the NEG ... *ʾillā* construction not been used – that is, it would be equal in meaning to *allaḏīna yaʾkulūna r-ribā yaqūmūna ka-mā yaqūmu llaḏī yataḫabbaṭuhu š-šayṭānu mina l-massi*. This shows that the NEG ... *ʾillā* construction serves more to assign focus to the constituent following *ʾillā* than to express exclusiveness.[25] In other words, this verse does not necessarily convey that this is the *only* way in which those who live on usury will rise;[26] rather, it emphasises the way that they will rise, perhaps as opposed to the reward that will be given to the people mentioned in the previous verse. Translating this verse using "only" would thus impede the accurate understanding of this verse in English.

[24] See, e.g., the translations of Jones, Asad and Pickthall.

[25] Cf. Birnstiel, "Selected features", 89, n. 153, in which this *ʾillā* is analysed as conveying an afterthought. This would suggest that the verse conveys that those who live in usury will *not* rise, while the verse presupposes that they *will* rise. I could not find any commentary arguing otherwise.

[26] Contrary to, e.g., Jones: "Those who live on usury will rise only as does the one who is prostrated by the touch of Satan".

As another example, consider the following set of intra-Qurʾānic parallels:[27]

Q 27:56 (≈ 7:82) ***fa-mā kāna jawāba***[28] ***qawmihī ʾillā ʾAN QĀLŪ*** *ʾAḪRIJŪ ʾĀLA LŪṬIN MIN QARYATIKUM…*
And the answer of his people was,[29] 'EXPEL THE FAMILY OF LOT FROM YOUR[P] SETTLEMENT…'

Q 29:24 ***fa-mā kāna jawāba qawmihī ʾillā ʾAN QĀLU*** *QTULŪHU ʾAW ḤARRIQŪHU*
The answer of his people was, 'KILL[P] HIM OR BURN HIM!'

Q 29:29 ***fa-mā kāna jawāba qawmihī ʾillā ʾAN QĀLU*** *ʾTINĀ BI-ʿAḎĀBI LLĀHI ʾIN KUNTA MINA Ṣ-ṢĀDIQĪN*
The answer of his people was, 'BRING GOD'S TORMENT TO US, IF YOU[S] ARE TELLING THE TRUTH.'

Q 45:25 *wa-ʾiḏā tutlā ʿalayhim ʾāyātunā bayyinātin* ***mā kāna ḥujjatahum ʾillā*** *ʾAN QĀLU ʾTŪ BI-ʾĀBĀʾINĀ ʾIN KUNTUM ṢĀDIQĪN*
And when our (God's) signs are recited to them as clear proof, their argument is, 'BRING OUR FOREFATHERS [BACK TO LIFE], IF YOU[S] TELL THE TRUTH.'

Q 6:23 *ṯumma* ***lam takun fitnatuhum ʾillā ʾAN QĀLŪ*** *WA-LLĀHI RABBINĀ MĀ KUNNĀ MUŠRIKĪN*
Then their attempt at deception[30] will be to say, 'BY GOD, OUR LORD, WE DID NOT ASSOCIATE OTHERS WITH GOD.'[31]

---

[27] Birnstiel ("Selected features") discusses Q 6:23 on p. 89 and addresses its parallels on p. 49, probably because of the difference in case marking between *fitna* and the rest of the parallels.

[28] The accusative of *jawāb*, *ḥujja* and *qawl* in these examples is unexpected, since these words seem not to be the predicate (but see Birnstiel's suggestion in n. 31 below). Al-Ṭabarī (VI, 122) prefers the accusative case because of a broad consensus on this reading among the readers of the ʾAmṣār (*li-ʾijmāʿi qaraʾati l-ʾamṣāri ʿalā ḏālika naqlan mustafiḍan wirāṯatan ʿani l-ḥujjati*). He also seems to have read Q 6:23 *fitnatuhum* as *fitnatahum* (see ibid).

[29] Unlike the translation of Q 2:9 above, in which the focus was reflected in the English translation by changing the word order, it is quite difficult to reflect the focus in the translation of this verse as well as in that of the intra-Qurʾānic parallels below.

[30] The sense of *fitna* in this verse is difficult to define. Paret translates "Verwirrung" but remarks (*Konkordanz*, 137) that this translation is uncertain. Bell also notes (I, 116, n. 3) that his translation "temptation" is "by no means certain owing to the variation of the meaning of the word *fitna*". According to Ambros (*Concise Dictionary*, 208), "apology" would match the context. Birnstiel ("Selected features", 89, n. 154) translates "discord" (for his suggestion, see also the next footnote). While "apology" and "discord" may indeed fit the context, they do not match the general semantic field of the root. When God is the subject of the verb, the verb is understood as referring to a divine trial; when the subject is human, the basic meaning of the verb is usually related to the semantic field of temptation. My following suggestion is closer to this latter sense: *fitna* in this verse essentially refers to the associators' attempt to evade punishment with their false claims. Since the addressee is God, I presume that the deceit is only (unsuccessfully) attempted.

[31] Cf. Birnstiel, "Selected features", 89, in which Birnstiel translates the *kāna* here as *tāmma*: "Thereafter their discord is no longer, except that they will say: […]". See also ibid, n. 154.

Q 7:5 ***fa-mā kāna daʿwāhum*** *ʾiḏ jāʾahum baʾsunā* ***ʾillā ʾAN QĀLŪ*** *ʾINNĀ KUNNĀ ẒĀLIMĪN*

And when our (God's) might came upon them what they cried was, 'WE WERE WRONG-DOERS.'[32]

Q 3:147 ***wa-mā kāna qawlahum*** ***ʾillā ʾAN QĀLŪ*** *RABBANA ġFIR LANĀ ḌUNŪBANĀ WA-ʾISRĀFANĀ FĪ ʾAMRINĀ WA-ṮABBIT ʾAQDĀMANĀ WA-NṢURNĀ ʿALA L-QAWMI L-KĀFIRĪN*

What they said was, 'OUR LORD, FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND OUR EXTRAVAGANCE IN OUR AFFAIR. MAKE OUR FEET FIRM AND HELP US AGAINST THE PEOPLE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE.'

One question that arises, especially from Q 7:82, 27:56, 29:24 and 29:29, is why one does not simply find *qālū*, as is found in countless other Qurʾānic verses.[33] In Q 6:23 and 45:25, it may suggested that the use of *fitna* and *ḥujja*, respectively, not only informs of the polytheists' response but also labels it as deceit and false claims, respectively, thereby expressing the Qurʾānic repudiation of it. However, all other parallels, in which the neutral *jawāb*, *qawl* and *daʿwā* are found,[34] indicate that there is more to unearth here.

Beside the use of *jawāb*, "answer", Q 7:82, 27:56, 29:24 and 29:29 share a very similar context: a prophet, either Lot or Abraham, brings God's words to his people and reproaches them for their behaviour. These parallel verses then relate what the people's response was. Now, part A in all parallels is negative and syntactically incomplete. It was mentioned above that such *ʾillā* constructions are often translated as affirmative restrictive propositions, and indeed these verses are occasionally translated using "only".[35] However, does it not make little sense to say that this was the people's *only* response?

A better understanding, I submit, would be that the *ʾillā* construction is used to assign focus to the complement of *ʾillā* and mark it as a significant point in the narrative. This dovetails with Birnstiel's remark that the complement of *ʾillā* in

[32] Cf. Q 21:15.

[33] It should be conceded, however, that *qālū* is found in the parallel Q 26:167, perhaps for length considerations.

[34] For the neutrality of *daʿwā*, compare Q 7:5 and 21:15 with Q 10:10, in which the believers in paradise are the ones who cry.

[35] For Q 7:82, for instance, Asad translates "But his people's only answer was this: [...]"; Pickthall: "And the answer of his people was only that they said: [...]"; ʿAlī: "And his people gave no answer but this: they said, [...]"; Arberry: "And the only answer of his people was that they said, [...]"; Jones: "The only answer of his people was to say, [...]"; Bell: "But the only answer of his people was to say: [...]".

these instances is often a "turning point in the people's behaviour that leads to subsequent divine intervention".[36] Although it is difficult to maintain with certainty, the focus assigned to the people's reply might be contrastive, as in the restrictive construction above. Identifying the focus as contrastive would put it in opposition to the expected obedience of a people to their prophet. The usage of the restrictive *ʾillā* construction here may be translated along the lines of "and [±instead of listening] what the Prophet's people said was THIS", THIS being, e.g., "Kill him or burn him!" (Q 29:24). The people's reply is thereby given prominence in the sequence of events in the narrative.

The examples cited above show that, while many cases classified as belonging to the "only" type of *ʾillā* constructions do express exclusiveness, one should be sensitive to the focused part of the sentence as well. In some cases, it would be better to incorporate focus into the understanding (and translation) of the exclusiveness expressed by the verse, and sometimes it would be best to ignore the exclusiveness altogether and interpret the NEG … *ʾillā* construction as a means of putting emphasis on, or assigning focus to, the complement of *ʾillā*.

5.2. "Without"[37]

In some cases, *ʾillā* is used to bind together two events such that any event expressed in part A does not, or will not, happen without the occurrence of that in part B after, alongside or before it.[38] Q 15:11, for instance, conveys that every event of a messenger's coming to a people was followed by the event of the people's mocking him:

Q 15:11 *wa-mā yaʾtīhim min rasūlin* ***ʾillā*** *kānū bihī yastahziʾūn*
And no messenger came to them **without** their mocking him

[36] Birnstiel, "Selected features", 49.

[37] The occurrences of this type of *ʾillā* are the following: Q 4:159, 6:4, 6:59#2, 6:59#3, 7:94, 9:120, 9:121, 10:61 (twice), 11:6, 11:56, 12:37, 15:4, 15:11, 15:21#1, 17:44, 17:58, 18:49, 19:71, 21:2, 21:25#1, 22:52, 25:20, 25:33, 26:5, 26:208, 27:75, 28:59, 34:3, 34:34, 35:11#2, 35:24, 36:30, 36:46, 37:164, 43:7, 43:23, 43:48, 50:18, 51:42, 51:52, 57:22, 58:7 (thrice).

[38] These cases correspond to most examples in Reckendorf, *Syntaktische Verhältnisse*, 721–722, as well as to Birnstiel, "Selected features", 67, ex. 195. See also ibid, n. 114.

Sentences of this type may be converted into affirmative sentences that refer to all/any/every event(s) in part A; thus, Q 15:11 may equally be translated into "Every messenger who came to them was mocked by them".

ʾIllā in these cases follows a negative and mostly syntactically complete part A; however, as in §5.1 above, the message conveyed by part A is incomplete.[39] In most cases of this type, *ʾillā* is followed by an asyndetic clause. Almost all these clauses contain a resumptive pronoun that refers to a constituent in part A. This pronoun is underlined in the additional examples cited below:[40]

> Q 7:94 *wa-mā ʾarsalnā fī qaryatin min nabiyyin* ***ʾillā*** *ʾaḫaḏnā ʾahla<u>hā</u> bi-l-baʾsāʾi wa-ḍ-ḍarrāʾi*
> We (God) have not sent any prophet to a settlement **without** seizing <u>its</u> people with misery and adversity = Every prophet we sent to a settlement was followed by its people being seized with misery and adversity.

> Q 6:4 *wa-mā taʾtīhim min ʾāyatin min ʾāyāti rabbihim* ***ʾillā*** *kānū ʿan<u>hā</u> muʿriḍīn*
> No sign of their Lord's signs comes to them **without** their turning away from <u>it</u> = They turned away from every sign that came to them.

> Q 12:37 *lā yaʾtīkumā ṭaʿāmun turzaqānihī* ***ʾillā*** *nabbaʾtukumā bi-taʾwīli<u>hī</u> qabla ʾan yaʾtiyakumā*
> No food from which you[d] have your sustenance will come to you **without** my having told you <u>its</u> interpretation before it comes to you. = I will[41] tell you[d] the interpretation of any food before it comes to you.[42]

---

[39] This means that I do not concur with Birnstiel's ("Selected features", 90) analysis of *ʾillā* in Q 18:49 *lā yuġādiru ṣaġīratan wa-lā kabīratan ʾillā ʾaḥṣāhā* as expressing an afterthought. Birnstiel translates "It does not leave out anything small, and also not anything great – rather it takes account of it". His analysis would suggest both that part A is syntactically complete and that its message is complete; I, however, maintain that part B is an integral part of the message conveyed by the sentence (see also §8.1 below). According to my understanding, the verse translates "[that] it leaves nothing, small or great, without counting it" (i.e., it counts everything, be it small or great).

[40] In Q 25:33, the anaphoric reference is implicit in the comparative meaning of *ʾaḥsan*, "better". See also Q 51:52, which has no overt resumptive pronoun, but it is clear that the speech in part B is about the messenger mentioned in part A.

[41] Or "I can", as Rubin translates.

[42] This understanding of the plain text may present us with an exegetical difficulty, as no receiving of food is narrated in the Qurʾān (nor in Genesis 40). This may be ascribed to the elliptical style of Qurʾānic narratives – that is, we may simply assume, as is suggested in commentaries (e.g., al-Zamaḫšarī, III, 284), that the prisoners indeed received food afterwards and before each event of receiving food Joseph told them the interpretation, or the traits, of the food that they would receive. An alternative understanding may be that the sequence of events creates a connection between the

Q 25:33 *wa-lā yaʾtūnaka bi-maṯalin* **ʾillā** *jiʾnāka bi-l-ḥaqqi wa-ʾaḥsana tafsīrā*

They will not bring you[s] any similitude, **without** our (God's) bringing you[s] the truth and [something] better explained [than that similitude] = Every similitude they will bring you – we will bring you the truth and something that has a better explanation.

Q 51:41–42 *wa-fī ʿādin ʾiḏ ʾarsalnā ʿalayhimu r-rīḥa l-ʿaqīm. mā taḏaru min šayʾin ʾatat ʿalayhi* **ʾillā** *jaʿalathu ka-r-ramīm*

[There is a sign] too, in ʿĀd, when we sent loose on them the withering wind, which left nothing on which it came **without** making it as if it were decayed matter (i.e., destroyed everything that it came across) = The wind made everything that it came across as decayed matter.

Q 11:6 *wa-mā min dābbatin fi l-ʾarḍi* **ʾillā** *ʿala llāhi rizquhā*

There is no beast on the earth **without** its sustenance depending on God = The sustenance of every beast on earth depends on God.[43]

Q 58:7 *mā yakūnu min najwā ṯalāṯatin* **ʾillā** *huwa rābiʿuhum wa-lā ḫamsatin* **ʾillā** *huwa sādisuhum wa-lā ʾadnā min ḏālika wa-lā ʾakṯara* **ʾillā** *huwa maʿahum ʾayna mā kānū*

There is no private meeting of three men **without** his (God's) being the fourth of them, nor of five without his being the sixth of them, nor less than that nor more without his being with them, wherever they may be

---

food appearing in the prisoners' dreams (v. 36), Joseph's interpretation of their dreams (v. 37–41) and the realisation of the interpretation (hinted at in v. 42). One argument in support of this latter reading is that the word *taʾwīl* in Q 12 refers to the interpretation of accounts (e.g., v. 6 *taʾwīl al-ʾaḥādīṯ*) and dreams/visions (v. 44 *taʾwīl al-ʾaḥlām*/v. 100 *taʾwīl ruʾyāya*). It therefore stands to reason that v. 37 *bi-taʾwīlihī* refers not to the interpretation of real food, but of the food appearing in the prisoners' dreams, which is narrated in v. 36. As for v. 37 *qabla ʾan yaʾtiyakumā*, while it is intuitively read as referring to the food, the grammatical subject of *yaʾtiyakumā* could technically also be *taʾwīlihī*, so that *qabla ʾan yaʾtiyakumā* refers to Joseph's telling the prisoners the interpretation of the foods in their dreams before his interpretation becomes reality (cf. Q 19:61 *maʾtiyy*). This latter understanding – albeit less intuitive than the former – better matches the explicit Qurʾānic narrative. However, one cannot dismiss the use of *turzaqānihī*, "from which you[d] have your sustenance", which points to the food being real and thus supports the former understanding. In any event, this is an exegetical difficulty, not a linguistic one, and as such does not affect our linguistic analysis of Q 12:37.

[43] Birnstiel ("Selected features", 107) connects the patterns *mā/ʾin min … ʾillā …* to envelope focusing observed in Welsh and Coptic. I could not detect any difference between this pattern and the rest of the examples subsumed under the "without" category.

Q 17:58 *wa-ʾin min qaryatin* ***ʾillā*** *naḥnu muhlikūhā qabla yawmi l-qiyāmati ʾaw* [...]
There is no settlement **without** our (God's) destroying it before the Day of Resurrection or [...] = We (God) shall destroy every settlement before the Day of Resurrection.

Q 43:48 *wa-mā nurīhim min ʾāyatin* ***ʾillā*** *hiya ʾakbaru min ʾuḫtihā*
And we (God) did not show them a sign **without** its being greater than the previous one = Every sign we (God) showed them was greater than the previous one.

Q 15:4 *wa-mā ʾahlaknā min qaryatin* ***ʾillā*** *wa-lahā kitābun maʿlūm*
And we (God) have not destroyed any settlement **without** its having a known decree = Every settlement we (God) has destroyed had a known decree.

Q 10:61 *wa-mā takūnu fī šaʾnin wa-mā tatlū minhu min qurʾānin wa-lā taʿmalūna min ʿamalin* ***ʾillā*** *kunnā ʿalaykum šuhūdan ʾiḏ tufīḍūna fīhi wa-mā yaʿzubu ʿan rabbika min miṯqāli ḏarratin fi l-ʾarḍi wa-lā fi s-samāʾi wa-lā ʾaṣġara min ḏālika wa-lā ʾakbara* ***ʾillā*** *fī kitābin mubīn*
You[s] are not engaged in any business nor do you recite any recitation of it, and none of you[p] does any deed, **without** our (God's) being witnesses over you[p] when you[p] are busy in it. Not a grain's weight on earth or in heaven escapes your[s] Lord, nor what is smaller or greater than that, **without** [its being] in a (±clear)[44] record.

Q 6:59 *wa-mā tasquṭu min waraqatin* ***ʾillā*** *yaʿlamuhā wa-lā ḥabbatin fī ẓulumāti l-ʾarḍi wa-lā raṭbin wa-lā yābisin* ***ʾillā*** *fī kitābin mubīn*
No leaf falls **without** his (God's) knowing it, nor is there a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything wet or dry **without** [its being] in a (±clear)[45] record.

In almost all cases of this type, one finds an asyndetic clause complementing *ʾillā* (but see Q 15:4). In almost all cases in which *ʾillā* is followed by a verbal clause, a *faʿala* form occurs, regardless of whether the action that it denotes occurs before, alongside or after the event preceding *ʾillā*, as exemplified by Q 12:37, 10:61#1 and 7:94, respectively. The use of *kānū yafʿalūn* in Q 6:4 and 15:11 is in all likelihood a substitute for *faʿala* on account of the rhyme. Using *faʿala* is rather unsurprising given that *ʾillā* in fact originates in *ʾin lā*, and that *faʿala* forms are expected in *ʾin* conditional sentences. The relative time of occurrence thus ought to be extricated from the context. In this respect, phrases such as Q 17:58 *qabla yawmi l-qiyāmati*,

[44] For a brief discussion of the word *mubīn* in the Qurʾān, see n. 9 above.
[45] See the previous footnote.

"before the Day of Resurrection", should perhaps be considered as disambiguating phrases.[46] The use of a verbless sentence (as in Q 43:48) indicates that the two events are concurrent. The use of the one-term sentence *fī kitābin mubīn* in Q 10:61(#2) and 6:59(#2) seems to express concurrence as well, as in both verses it stands in conjunction with another sentence referring to concurring events.

5.3. Summary

This chapter has described the restrictive usage of *ʾillā* constructions in the Qurʾān. In all cases of restrictive *ʾillā* constructions, the complement of *ʾillā* is an integral part of the sentence. This could be either since it is syntactically necessary for the sentence to be complete or since it is an indispensable part of the message conveyed by the sentence.

The restrictive usage of *ʾillā* constructions has been divided into two sub-types. The first sub-type includes the addition of NEG ... *ʾillā* to a proposition, which mostly expresses exclusiveness. In cases subsumed under this sub-type, the NEG ... *ʾillā* construction is typically translated to English as "only". Rhetorical questions are analogous to this type of *ʾillā*. The NEG ... *ʾillā* construction is also occasionally used to assign focus to the complement of *ʾillā*.

The second sub-type of restrictive *ʾillā* may also be converted into affirmative propositions with a universal determiner (such as "every"). *ʾIllā* in these cases may be translated to English as "without".

[46] And so should, e.g., *qabla ʾan nabraʾahā*, "before we (God) bring it into being", in Q 57:22 *ʾillā fī kitābin qabla ʾan nabraʾahā*, "[...] without [its being] in a record before we (God) bring it into being".

Chapter 6: Exceptive *ʾillā*

6.1. "Except (for)", "apart from", etc.[1]

6.1.1. Introduction: Exceptive constructions

Linguistic literature on exceptives, at least in English, has thus far reached several conclusions regarding the characteristics of exceptive constructions. These conclusions have recently been refined by Iván García Álvarez. In his PhD thesis, submitted in 2009, García Álvarez revises the semantics of exceptive constructions in English based on empirical data. Several of his conclusions seem to apply to other languages as well, including Arabic. Two important principles that he discusses, namely, the (i) Presupposition of Inclusion and the (ii) Polarity Generalisation, are summarised below.

García Álvarez's (i) Presupposition of Inclusion states that "[t]he denotation of the EP-complement must be included in the domain of the generalization expressed by the host of the EP".[2] Let us briefly explain this principle using the following example:

> Q 5:1 *ʾuḥillat lakum bahīmatu l-ʾanʿāmi ʾillā mā yutlā ʿalaykum*
> Permitted to you[p] [as food] is the beast of the herds, except those which are about to be recited to you.

As schematically shown in Figure 4 below, the exception phrase (EP) in this verse is *ʾillā mā yutlā ʿalaykum*, "except those which are about to be recited to you"; the EP-

[1] The occurrences of this type of *ʾillā* are the following: Q 2:83#2, 2:45, 2:143#2, 2:150, 2:246, 2:249 (twice), 2:255#2, 2:255#3, 3:93, 3:112, 4:22, 4:23, 4:43, 4:66, 4:83, 4:90, 4:92#1, 4:114, 4:146, 4:148, 5:1, 5:3, 5:13, 5:34, 6:119, 6:146, 7:83, 9:4, 9:7, 10:98, 11:11, 11:40#1, 11:81, 11:116, 11:119, 12:47, 12:48, 15:18, 15:40, 15:42, 15:59, 15:60, 17:33, 17:34, 17:62, 17:67, 19:87, 21:22, 21:58, 22:30, 22:40, 23:27, 24:5, 24:6, 24:31#1, 25:68, 25:70, 26:77, 26:89, 26:171, 27:11? 27:57, 27:65, 27:87, 28:58, 28:88#2, 29:32, 29:33, 29:46#2, 33:39, 33:52, 33:60, 34:20, 34:23, 36:44, 37:10, 37:135, 37:163, 38:24, 38:65, 38:83, 39:68, 43:27, 43:67, 43:86, 44:42, 53:26, 54:34, 60:4, 69:36, 70:22, 70:30, 72:27, 73:2, 78:38, 88:6, 103:3; 29:14; 22:65; 8:72; 8:16, 23:6; 2:102, 3:41, 6:151, 58:10; 7:188#1?, 10:49?, 12:53?, 87:7? (except/unless); 20:109? (except/only); 2:34?, 4:98?, 7:11?, 12:68?, 15:31?, 17:61?, 18:50?, 19:60?, 20:116?, 37:74?, 37:128?, 37:160?, 38:74? (except/adversative); 14:22? (only/except/adversative)

[2] García Álvarez, "Generality and exception", 127.

complement is *mā yutlā ʿalaykum*, "those which are about to be recited to you";[3] and the host of the EP is *ʾuḥillat lakum bahīmatu l-ʾanʿāmi*, "Permitted to you[p] [as food] is the beast of the herds".[4]

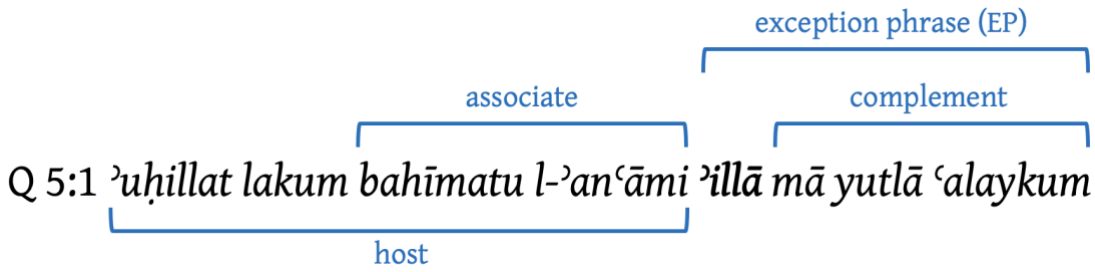

Figure 4: A schematic representation of terms related to exceptive constructions in Q 5:1 (adapted from García Álvarez, "Generality and exception", 2, 30–31)

According to the Presupposition of Inclusion, *mā yutlā ʿalaykum*, "those which are about to be recited to you", must be included in the generalisation expressed by the host, which is *bahīmatu l-ʾanʿāmi*, "the beast of the herds". In other words, the excepted element must be included in the set referred to by the antecedent, or the associate of the EP.

According to García Álvarez's (ii) Polarity Generalisation, "[t]he proposition expressed by the host of an EP and that which the EP gives rise to must have different polarity".[5] This principle relies on the argument persuasively defended by García Álvarez that exceptive constructions conjoin two propositions.[6] In Q 5:1, for instance, the proposition expressed by the host is "Permitted to you [as food] is the beast of the herds". This proposition's polarity is positive. The proposition to which the EP gives rise is "those which are about to be recited to you are not permitted to you", whose polarity is negative. The Polarity Generalisation states that there is always a mismatch between the polarities of the two propositions expressed by exceptive constructions.[7] In Friederike Moltmann's words, "the exceptions have to be exceptions".[8]

[3] Cf. García Álvarez, "Generality and exception", 2.
[4] Cf. García Álvarez, "Generality and exception", 30–31.
[5] García Álvarez, "Generality and exception", 129.
[6] García Álvarez, "Generality and exception", esp. 77–90 (= §2.5) and 129.
[7] García Álvarez, "Generality and exception", esp. 129–138.
[8] Moltmann, "Exception sentences", 225.

While both the Presupposition of Inclusion and the Polarity Generalisation may seem obvious, they are important characteristics of exceptive constructions that will prove crucial for the understanding of *ʾillā* as well as for the differentiation between exceptive and adversative *ʾillā*.

6.1.2. Exceptive *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān

The second most frequent usage of *ʾillā* is as an exceptive particle. The complement of *ʾillā* in these instances is a nominal phrase, a nominal clause or a prepositional phrase. Examples:

Q 3:93 *kullu ṭ-ṭaʿāmi kāna ḥillan li-banī ʾisrāʾīla* ***ʾillā*** *mā ḥarrama ʾisrāʾīlu ʿalā nafsihī*
All food was lawful for the Children of Israel **apart from** that which Israel forbade to himself.

Q 5:1 *ʾuḥillat lakum bahīmatu l-ʾanʿāmi* ***ʾillā*** *mā yutlā ʿalaykum*
Permitted to you[p] [as food] is the beast of the herds, **except** those which are about to be recited to you.

Q 6:151 *wa-lā taqtulu n-nafsa llatī ḥarrama llāhu* ***ʾillā*** *bi-l-ḥaqqi*
And do[p] not kill the person that God has forbidden, **except** by right.

Q 2:249#2 *fa-šaribū minhu* ***ʾillā*** *qalīlan minhum*
And they drank from it, **except for** a few of them.

Q 2:246 *fa-lammā kutiba ʿalayhimu l-qitālu tawallaw* ***ʾillā*** *qalīlan minhum*
yet, when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned their backs, **except** a few of them.

Q 2:150 *li-ʾallā yakūna li-n-nāsi ʿalaykum ḥujjatun* ***ʾillā*** *llaḏīna ẓalamū minhum*[9]
so that the people may not have any argument against you[p] – **except** those of them who do wrong.

[9] As exemplified by this verse, when a preposition precedes the associate of the EP in part A, it mostly does not recur in part B, especially when part B consists of a nominal clause. Thus, we find *li-n-nāsi* in part A, but *allaḏīna* (not *li-llaḏīna*) *ẓalamū minhum* in part B. This is a feature of Qurʾānic Arabic in general and is not necessarily to do with *ʾillā* constructions (cf., e.g., Q 2:4 *yuʾminūna bi-mā ʾunzila ʾilayka wa-mā ʾunzila min qablika*, in which *bi-* is not repeated).

In one verse, exceptive *ʾillā* is used to express subtraction:

Q 29:14 *fa-labiṯa fīhim ʾalfa sanatin* ***ʾillā*** *ḫamsīna ʿāman*
and he tarried amongst them for a thousand but fifty years (i.e., for 950 years).

6.2. "Unless"[10]

6.2.1. A note on notation

In all sub-sections included in §6.2, I will use *iff* for "if and only if". I will also use the following notational conventions:[11] P-clause = the conditional clause (= the *ʾillā* clause); Q-clause = the head clause of the conditional; [+p] and [+q] = affirmative propositions used in the P- and Q-clauses, respectively; [-p] and [-q] = negative propositions used in the P- and Q-clauses, respectively. P and Q, then, may be either positive or negative: P stands for either [+p] or [-p], and Q stands for either [+q] or [-q]. *ʾIllā* itself is not considered part of the proposition.[12] Examples:[13]

(1) Unless you point out the consequences, people will ignore the warning. (*unless [+p], [+q]*)
(2) Unless the body is not discovered for a long time, the medical examiner will see that the man has been tortured. (*unless [-p], [+q]*)
(3) I won't do it unless you help me. (*[-q] unless [+p]*)
(4) I won't do it unless nobody else knows about it. (*[-q] unless [-p]*)

6.2.2. Exceptive *ʾillā ʾan*

In most cases in which *ʾillā* is followed by an *ʾan* clause, *ʾillā ʾan* denotes "except [in the case] that" ≈ "except if" ≈ "unless". This usage is common in legal contexts. Exceptive *ʾillā ʾan* always follows the head clause. While there are Q-clauses containing both affirmative and negative propositions (= either [+q] or [-q]) in the Qurʾān, I could only find P-clauses with affirmative propositions (= [+p]). Affirmative Q-clauses are attested in the Qurʾān only rarely. Examples:

---

[10] The occurrences of this type of *ʾillā* are the following: Q 2:229, 2:237, 2:267, 2:282, 3:28, 3:75, 4:19, 4:92#2, 6:80, 6:128, 6:145, 7:89, 11:107, 11:108, 12:66, 33:6, 33:53, 65:1, 74:56, 76:30, 81:29; 9:110?; 12:53?, 7:188#1?, 10:49?, 87:7? (except/unless).

[11] As presented in Declerck and Reed, "Unless", 207.

[12] In other words, the *-lā* component in *ʾillā* is not considered negation.

[13] The examples are adapted from Declerck and Reed, "Unless", 208.

Q 2:229 *wa-lā yaḥillu lakum ʾan taʾḫuḏū mimmā ʾātaytumūhunna šayʾan* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *yaḫāfā ʾallā yuqīmā ḥudūda llāhi*

It is not lawful for you[mp] to take anything from what you have given them[f] **unless** they[d] fear that they[d] cannot maintain God's bounds. ([-q] *ʾillā ʾan* [+p])

Q 65:1 *lā tuḫrijūhunna min buyūtihinna wa-lā yaḫrujna* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *yaʾtīna bi-fāḥišatin mubayyinatin*

Do[mp] not expel them[f] from their houses, nor should they leave, **unless** they commit some clear act of immorality. ([-q] *ʾillā ʾan* [+p])

Q 2:237 *wa-ʾin ṭallaqtumūhunna min qabli ʾan tamassūhunna wa-qad faraḍtum lahunna farīḍatan fa-niṣfu mā faraḍtum* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *yaʿfūna ʾaw yaʿfuwa llaḏī bi-yadihī ʿuqdatu n-nikāḥi* [...]

If you[p] divorce them[f] before you have touched them but you have already fixed a marriage-portion for them, [you should pay] half of what you have fixed, **unless** they agree to forego it or the one in whose hand is the knot of marriage agrees to forego it. ([+q] *ʾillā ʾan* [+p])

Q 12:66 *wa-qāla lan ʾursilahū maʿakum ḥattā tuʾtūni mawṯiqan mina llāhi la-taʾtunnanī bihī* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *yuḥāṭa bi-kum*

He said, 'I shall not send him with you[p] until you give me an undertaking in God's name that you will bring him back to me **unless** you are overtaken by misfortune.' ([+q] *ʾillā ʾan* [+p])[14]

For the sake of comparison with corrective *ʾillā* below (§7.3), it is worthwhile drawing attention to the implication derived from cases of exceptive *ʾillā* followed by *ʾan*: in "Q *ʾillā ʾan* P", the P-clause expresses an exception to the validity of the Q-clause – that is, under certain circumstances (and normally only these circumstances), which are expressed by the *ʾillā ʾan* clause, the stipulation in the head clause may not, or should not, be followed. According to Q 65:1, for instance, while the normal situation is that believing men should not expel their divorcees from their houses during the waiting period (*ʿidda*), they may do so if (and only if) their divorcees "commit some clear act of immorality".[15]

[14] Although *ʾillā ʾan yuḥāṭa bi-kum* is in the domain of the *lan ... ḥattā* construction, the *ʾillā* clause itself is not directly affected by the negation: *iʾtūni mawṯiqan mina llāhi la-taʾtunnanī bihī ʾillā ʾan yuḥāṭa bi-kum* would be grammatical, even though it would have no negating particle.

[15] Additional conspicuous examples are Q 33:6 and 33:53.

In other words, sentences such as those in Q 2:229, 65:1 and 12:66 cited above express the unique exception: [-q] *ʾillā ʾan* [+p], for instance, is interpreted as *iff* [+p], [+q], or [+q] *iff* [+p]. Thus, the interpretation of Q 2:229 is "it is lawful for you[mp] to [...] *if and only if* they[d] fear that they cannot maintain God's bounds", and Q 65:1 is interpreted as "you should expel them[f] from their houses, or they may leave, *if and only if* they commit some clear act of immorality".[16] Similarly, the construal of Q 12:66 is that Joseph's brothers' perishing is the only circumstance in which their promise to bring back Benjamin to Jacob could be broken.

The unique exception meaning in Q 2:229, 65:1 and 12:66 leads to the conclusion that *ʾillā ʾan* does not simply denote "if ... not" but should rather be rendered into English "unless", which includes the sense of "except if". Cases of [+q] *ʾillā ʾan* [+p] such as that in Q 2:237 above would also be more accurately translated into English "unless". Declerck and Reed remark that there are differences in English between "*unless* P" and "*if ... not* P": the former expresses an exception to the validity of Q, whereas the latter states that [-p] is a condition for Q. In many cases, they continue, "an *unless*-clause will suggest that Q is the normal state of affairs, whereas an *if ... not*-clause does not". To illustrate this, they compare the following pair of sentences:

(5) I like crossword puzzles unless they are very difficult.

(6) I like crossword puzzles if they are not very difficult.[17]

This difference between "*unless* P" and "*if ... not* P" in English corresponds to that between *ʾillā ʾan* and *ʾin lam*. Compare, for instance, Q 2:237, repeated here for convenience, with Q 4:12:

> Q 2:237 *wa-ʾin ṭallaqtumūhunna min qabli ʾan tamassūhunna wa-qad faraḍtum lahunna farīḍatan fa-niṣfu mā faraḍtum* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *yaʿfūna ʾaw yaʿfuwa llaḏī bi-yadihī ʿuqdatu n-nikāḥi* [...] If you[p] divorce them[f] before you have touched them but you have already fixed a marriage-portion for them, [you should pay] half of what you have fixed, **unless** they agree to forego it or the one in whose hand is the knot of marriage agrees to forego it.
>
> Q 4:12 *wa-lakum niṣfu mā taraka ʾazwājukum* ***ʾin lam*** *yakun lahunna waladun*

[16] This matches Azar's analysis of S_1 + *ela im ken* + S_2 in Modern Hebrew – see Azar, 139–141 = §4.

[17] Declerck and Reed, "Unless", 208, n. 10. See also the literature referred to therein. This also dovetails with Dancygier's ("If, if not and unless", 68) analysis of "Q *unless* P", namely, "Q; [(not Q) if P]", to which Declerck and Reed partially subscribe (see Declerck and Reed, "Unless", 208).

To you[p] is half of what your wives leave, **if** they have **no** child.

In Q 2:237, the use of *ʾillā ʾan* P expresses that Q (= paying half of the fixed amount) should be followed, but in case P is true, Q becomes invalid. In Q 4:12, however, having no child (= [-p]) is the condition for receiving half of what one's wife leaves (= Q).

6.2.3. Clause-initial *ʾillā* + jussive

It is worth noting that in five verses *ʾillā*, which, as mentioned above, is etymologically a contraction of *ʾin lā*, appears at the beginning of the sentence, literally denoting "if ... not".[18] Examples:

Q 9:39 ***ʾillā*** *tanfirū yuʿaḏḏibkum ʿaḏāban ʾalīman wa-yastabdil qawman ġayrakum*
If you[p] do not come out [to battle], he (God) will punish you severely and will substitute another people for you.

Q 8:73 *wa-llaḏīna kafarū baʿḍuhum ʾawliyāʾu baʿḍin* ***ʾillā*** *tafʿalūhu takun fitnatun fi l-ʾarḍi wa-fasādun kabīr*
The unbelievers are friends of one another. If you[p] do not do this [i.e., the same], there will be mischief and great corruption in the land.

In the following, I will maintain that, although translating *ʾillā* in four out of these five instances as "unless" may be accurate, all five instances should not be included in the "unless" category.[19]

The first reason to exclude the five verses under discussion from the "unless" category is semantic. Generally, *if*-conditionals carry a pragmatic implicature termed "conditional perfection": as long as it is not blocked by the context, the natural pragmatic reading of a conditional sentence such as "*if* P, Q" is both "*if* P, Q" and "*if not* P, *not* Q".[20] For instance, a sentences such as (7) is normally interpreted as (8):[21]

(7) If the weather is fine, we'll go to the seaside.

---

[18] The verses are Q 8:73, 9:39, 9:40, 11:47 and 12:33.

[19] See also Reckendorf, *Syntaktische Verhältnisse*, 686, n. 1.

[20] See, e.g., Geis and Zwicky, "Invited inferences"; Declerck and Reed, "Unless", 209. This is also termed "denial of the antecedent". See, e.g., Nickerson, *Conditional reasoning*, 28–31.

[21] See Haegeman, "Pragmatic conditionals". The example is taken from Declerck and Reed, "Unless", 209.

(8) If the weather is fine, we'll go to the seaside, but we won't go if the weather isn't fine.

In sentences such as (7), then, "*If* P, Q" tends to be interpreted as "*Iff* P, Q". It should however be borne in mind that this conventional interpretation can be cancelled by the context:

(9) If the weather is fine, we'll go to the seaside. In fact, we'll go to the seaside anyhow, even if it rains.

When the Q-clause expresses an undesirable outcome, the utterance usually receives a conditional perfection interpretation, too:[22]

(10) If you don't pay the rent now, you must leave the flat before the end of the week.[23]

Such sentences are normally interpreted as threats or deterrents. A speaker who wishes to threat or deter an addressee by saying "if you {don't do/do} X, the undesirable Y will happen" pragmatically delivers the message "{do/don't do} X", respectively, as it is understood that the addressee will want to avoid Y.[24] The "do this or else...!" meaning promotes the assumption that there is no other possibility to prevent "else".[25]

> The implicated course of action, then, is that the addressee should do 'not P' because Q will happen *except if* it is averted by 'not P'. (The 'iff' reading – which seems pragmatically highly likely in the case of threats – implies that 'not P' is the only way of averting Q, i.e. that Q will happen in all cases except if 'not P'.) It is thus unsurprising that [-p] threats can easily have *unless* substituted for *if ... not*, since the meaning of the *unless*-clause (paraphrasable by 'Q except if P') coincides with the clear implication of the corresponding *if ... not* clause.[26]

In other words, the pragmatic function of deterrents encourages a conditional perfection interpretation, which, for the purposes of the present discussion, means that in such cases *if ... not* is interchangeable in English with *unless*.

---

[22] See Declerck and Reed, "Unless", 213–214, 217–219.

[23] This example is adapted from Declerck and Reed, "Unless", 210.

[24] Declerck and Reed, "Unless", 218. For deterrents, see also Fillenbaum, "Inducements and deterrents"; Dancygier, "If, if not and unless".

[25] See Dancygier "If, if not and unless", 913; Declerck and Reed, "Unless", 210.

[26] Declerck and Reed, "Unless", 218.

In four of the five verses discussed here, in which the Q-clause expresses an undesirable outcome, *ʾillā* has indeed been occasionally translated as "unless".[27] However, it follows from the discussion above that the meaning of exception is merely an implicature dictated by the context: *ʾillā* primarily means "if ... not";[28] it is interchangeable with "except if" in this context only for pragmatic reasons. For comparison, when the Q-clause is factual – as in Q 9:40 cited below – *ʾillā* is no longer interchangeable with "except if", nor indeed with "unless", as "if ... not" does not yield an "except if" interpretation in pseudo-conditionals:[29]

> Q 9:40 ***ʾillā*** *tanṣurūhu fa-qad naṣarahu llāhu ʾiḏ ʾaḫrajahu llaḏīna kafarū [...]*
> If you do not help him, God has already helped him, when the unbelievers expelled him [...]

To sum up the sematic grounds for excluding the five verses under discussion from the "unless" category, while *ʾillā ʾan* primarily expresses exception ("except if"),[30] *ʾillā* in these five verses essentially denotes "if ... not".

The second reason for not including the five verses discussed in this section under §6.2.2 above is that *ʾillā* in these five verses occurs in a syntactically different environment from that of *ʾillā* subsumed under the "unless" type. The latter is complemented by an *ʾan* clause to form a P-clause that follows its Q-clause; however, the *ʾillā* discussed in this section introduces a P-clause that precedes its Q-clause and is followed by a verb in the jussive form. This syntactical environment points to *ʾillā* functioning as a conditional particle (< *ʾin lā*), introducing the protasis of a conditional (or a pseudo-conditional) sentence, and not as an exceptive particle. Compare Q 11:47 *ʾillā taġfir* with Q 7:23 *ʾin lam taġfir*:[31]

---

[27] See, for instance, Arberry and Asad's translations of Q 8:73, ʿAlī's translation of Q 9:39, Asad, Pickthall and ʿAlī's translations of Q 11:47 and Asad and ʿAlī's translations of Q 12:33. In Q 9:40, *if ... not* is not interchangeable with *unless*, as discussed below.

[28] That is, it expresses a negative condition, conveying that "[t]he nonactualization of the [+p]-situation will trigger the actualization of the Q-situation" (see Declerck and Reed, "Unless").

[29] For pseudo-conditionals, see Peled, *Conditional structures*, 68–72 = §4.1.2.

[30] This meaning of *ʾillā ʾan* may occasionally be blocked by the context, but when it is blocked, *ʾillā* does not denote "if ... not" but is construed as a corrective particle. See §7.3.2 below.

[31] While Birnstiel ("Selected features", 88 and n. 151 therein) mentions some occurrences of "protatic *lā yafʿal*", he does not mention that in all occurrences the negating *lā* is in fact part of the compound *ʾillā*. There is, then, no independent usage of *lā yafʿal* in the Qurʾān. For further research, it is worthy of note that the occurrence of *ʾillā* (or *ʾin lā*) + jussive in extra-Qurʾānic Classical Arabic is rarely attested – see Peled, *Conditional structures*, 85–86. Fischer ("Perioden", 18; *Grammar*, 230 = §452a;

Q 11:47 *wa-**ʾillā** taġfir lī wa-tarḥamnī ʾakun mina l-ḫāsirīn*

If you (God) do not forgive me and do not have mercy on me, I shall be one of the losers.

Q 7:23 *wa-**ʾin lam** taġfir lanā wa-tarḥamnā la-nakūnanna mina l-ḫāsirīn*

If you (God) do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we shall be among the losers.

There is no difference, then, between *ʾillā* in these five verses and any other conditional sentence, neither in terms of syntax nor in terms of semantics. Therefore, the five occurrences of *ʾillā* discussed in this section are not considered under the "unless" category.

6.3. Exceptive *ʾillā* vs *ġayr*

Traditional grammars create a connection between *ʾillā* and *ġayr* as particles expressing exception. This section will briefly focus on the syntax and semantics of *ʾillā* vs *ġayr* in Qurʾānic Arabic.

Unlike *ʾillā*, *ġayr* primarily functions as a constituent negator; both *ġayr* and what it governs function as the governed constituent would if *ġayr* were not used. In Q 4:115, for instance, *ġayra sabīli l-muʾminīna* functions as an object, just like *sabīla l-muʾminīna* would; in Q 4:95, *ġayru ʾuli ḍ-ḍarari* functions as an attribute, as it would in *al-qāʿidūna ʾulu/ḏawu ḍ-ḍarari mina l-muʾminīna*; in Q 5:1, *ġayra muḥilli ṣ-ṣaydi* functions as an adverbial, similar to *muḥilli ṣ-ṣaydi*:

Q 4:115 *wa-man yušāqiqi r-rasūla min baʿdi mā tabayyana lahu l-hudā wa-yattabiʿ **ġayra** sabīli l-muʾminīna nuwallihī mā tawallā wa-nuṣlihī jahannama*

Those who cause a split with the messenger after [God's] guidance has become clear to them and who follow [a way] **that is not** the way of the believers, we (God) shall consign them to what they have turned to and roast them in hell.

Q 4:95 *lā yastawi l-qāʿidūna mina l-muʾminīna **ġayru** ʾuli ḍ-ḍarari wa-l-mujāhidūna fī sabīli llāhi*

Those of the believers who sit still **that are not** those who are suffering some injury are not on an equal footing with those who struggle in God's way.

"Altarabische", 39) considers the usage of conditional *ʾillā* a feature of pre-classical Arabic; but see Ullmann, "Vorklassisches Arabisch", 814.

Q 5:1 *ʾuḥillat lakum bahīmatu l-ʾanʿāmi ʾillā mā yutlā ʿalaykum* ***ġayra*** *muḥilli ṣ-ṣaydi wa-ʾantum ḥurum*

Permitted to you[p] [as food] is the beast of the herds, except those which are about to be recited to you, as long as you do not violate [lit. while **not** violating] the prohibition to hunt[32] when you are in the pilgrim state.

As a constituent negator, *ġayr* is often translated as "other than", and for a good reason. Let us return to Q 4:95 as an example:

Q 4:95 *lā yastawi l-qāʿidūna mina l-muʾminīna* ***ġayru*** *ʾuli ḍ-ḍarari wa-l-mujāhidūna fī sabīli llāhi*

Those of the believers who sit still **{that are not/other than}** those who are suffering some injury are not on an equal footing with those who struggle in God's way.

By negating the sub-set of "those who are suffering some injury", *ġayr* in fact excludes that sub-set from the set referred to by *al-qāʿidūna mina l-muʾminīna*. This is also what exceptive particles such as *ʾillā* do. Moreover, occasionally the exceptive use of *ġayr* is identical to that of *ʾillā*:[33]

Q 30:55 [...] *yuqsimu l-mujrimūna mā labiṯū* ***ġayra*** *sāʿatin* [...]

[...] the sinners will swear that they tarried only an hour.

Q 46:35 [...] *lam yalbaṯū* ***ʾillā*** *sāʿatan min nahārin* [...]

[...] [as if] they had lingered [in the grave] for only an hour of a single day.

Syntactically, however, *ġayr* is not always similar to *ʾillā*. The Qurʾānic data show that, in all its 147 occurrences, *ġayr* is positioned immediately after the associate of the EP, never at the end of the host – unlike *ʾillā* in, e.g., Q 2:150 and 3:93. The scope of *ġayr* is also narrower: it does not refer to the entire sentence, but only to the constituent that it negates. The pair of verses below will illustrate how the two particles, despite occasionally seeming structurally similar, are in fact different:

Q 8:16 *wa-man yuwallihim yawmaʾiḏin duburahū* ***ʾillā*** *mutaḥarrifan li-qitālin ʾaw mutaḥayyizan ʾilā fiʾatin fa-qad bāʾa bi-ġaḍabin mina llāhi*

Those who turn their backs to them on that day – **unless** turning away to fight or withdrawing to [join another] company – are burdened with anger from God.

---

[32] On which see Q 5:95–96.

[33] Recall that the restrictive use of *ʾillā* includes a sentential negator and an exceptive marker, as discussed in §5.1.1 above.

Q 5:3 *fa-mani ḍṭurra fī maḫmaṣatin* ***ġayra*** *mutajānifin li-ʾiṯmin fa-ʾinna llāha ġafūrun raḥīm*
Whoever is compelled [to eat a forbidden food] in a state of hunger, not intending to sin – your[s] Lord is forgiving and compassionate.[34]

Although the resulting semantics is occasionally similar, *ʾillā* is first and foremost an exceptive particle, whereas the exceptive sense of *ġayr* is secondary. In Q 5:3, as in Q 5:1 above, *ġayra mutajānifin* functions as an adverbial of circumstance (traditionally termed *ḥāl*), and accordingly *ġayr* functions as a negator, not as an exceptive particle. The verse literally translates along the lines of "whoever is compelled [to eat a forbidden food] in a state of hunger, while not inclining towards sin – your[s] Lord is forgiving and compassionate". Being compelled, being in a state of hunger and not being inclined towards sin are all part of the conditional clause. There is only one proposition here, not a conjunction of two opposing propositions. In that respect, the literal translation of *ġayra mutajānifin li-ʾiṯmin* is closer to "as long as they do not eat with the intention to sin" than it is to "unless [= except if] intending to sin".

In sum, while *ʾillā* primarily functions as an exceptive particle, *ġayr* primarily functions as a constituent negator. *Ġayr* also is positioned immediately after the negated constituent and its scope is limited to that constituent only, whereas the movement of *ʾillā* is freer and its scope is the entire sentence.

6.4. *ʾIllā* used as a marker of exclusion

6.4.1. Introduction: Exception vs exclusion

García Álvarez distinguishes between two groups of exceptives in English:[35]

Group I: *apart from*, *aside from*, *other than* [markers of exclusion]
Group II: *but*, *except*, *save*, *with the exception of* [core exceptives]

The following is a summary of the parts of García Álvarez's discussion that are relevant to this section, as well as adaptations of his examples for the purposes of this thesis. Compare the following:

[34] For sentences such as *fa-ʾinna llāha ġafūrun raḥīm* functioning as apodoses, see further the discussion on Q 24:5 under §8.3.2 below.
[35] García Álvarez, "Generality and exception", 77–90 = §2.5; see esp. ibid, 85–90.

(11) I don't know about Smith, but every corporate attorney other than Smith wears fancy suits.

(12) # I don't know about Smith, but every corporate attorney but Smith wears fancy suits.

By saying "every corporate attorney but Smith wears fancy suits", the speaker asserts something about Smith. More generally, by using "but", the speaker commits to the truth of some claim about the EP-complement, which in this context results in the infelicity of sentence (12). However, by using "other than", the speaker does not necessarily, and typically does not, commit to any statement regarding the complement. Sentence (11) can be understand as asserting something not about Smith but about every member of the set of corporate attorneys that is not Smith.

It follows that while the markers in group I can be used to express exceptions, they allow certain interpretations that the exceptives in group II do not allow.[36] García Álvarez suggests to term group I "markers of exclusion", since "exclusion is logically weaker than exception". These markers exhibit the properties of restrictive modifiers and are roughly paraphrasable as "distinct from".[37]

The following section will discuss how the concepts presented above may be applied to Qurʾānic Arabic.

6.4.2. *ʾIllā* functioning as a marker of exclusion

In this section, I will argue that in some (rare) instances, understanding *ʾillā* as a marker of exclusion would yield a better interpretation of the verse in which it appears. One such instance is Q 21:22:

> (21) *ʾami ttaḫaḏū ʾālihatan mina l-ʾarḍi hum yunširūn* (22) *law kāna fīhimā ʾālihatun* ***ʾilla*** *llāhu la-fasadatā fa-subḥāna llāhi rabbi l-ʿarši ʿammā yaṣifūn*
>
> (21) Have they taken gods from the earth who raise the dead? (22) Were there in them[d] [i.e., in the heavens and on the earth] [any] gods other than God, they[d] would go to ruin. Glory be to God, the Lord of the throne, above whatever they allege.[38]

[36] For the two interpretations, see García Álvarez, "Generality and exception", 89.

[37] García Álvarez, "Generality and exception", 85–87. See also Moltmann, "Coordination and comparatives", 316–318; Moltmann, "Exception sentences".

[38] For this translation of *yaṣifūn*, see Witztum, "Syriac milieu", 207.

Brockelmann, De Goeje and Reckendorf consider the hypothetical protasis in Q 22:21, like rhetorical questions with a negative bias, as analogous to a negative proposition, thereby classifying the occurrence as belonging to the "only" type.[39] Even though the message of this sentence is that, since the heavens and on the earth are not ruined, there cannot be any god except God in them – or indeed that only God exists in the heavens and on the earth – I believe that the following alternative analysis better captures the semantics of the verse. I will argue that understanding *ʾillā* as functioning similarly to *ġayr* results in the most accurate construal of the verse.

If *ʾillā* functioned here as an exceptive particle, one would expect the *ʾillā* phrase to evoke a proposition with opposite polarity to that of the host (according to the Polarity Generalisation; see §6.1 above). However, Q 21:22 cannot be paraphrased, "Were there gods in them[d], they[d] would go to ruin, but were there God in them[d], they would not go to ruin", for several reasons. First, the broader context addresses the presence of any gods that are not God as objects of worship; therefore, one would expect v. 22 to refute their existence in the heavens and on the earth. In other words, v. 22 *ʾālihatun ʾilla llāhu* refers to a similar, or identical, set of objects in the world as the set referred to by v. 21 *ʾālihatan* – a set that in any event does not include God. Second, the presence of God by itself would not change the implication for the heavens and the earth: the Qurʾān rejects any kind of polytheism, including henotheism; one would thus expect that God's presence in the heavens and on the earth together with (an)other god(s) would still result in the heavens and the earth's going to ruin. Differently put, it is the presence of any other god(s) that would lead to the ruin, regardless of the presence of God himself.

The discussion so far may be summarised as follows: Q 21:22 refutes the existence of any gods that are not God in the heavens and on the earth by entertaining, through a counterfactual conditional sentence, an alternative world in which there are gods that are not God in the heavens and on the earth and asserting that in that imaginary alternative scenario the heavens and the earth would go to ruin.[40] This exact meaning would be captured if the *ʾillā* phrase is understood as "other than

[39] See Brockelmann, *Grundriss*, 649; Wright, II, 336 (footnote †, added by De Goeje); Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 506 = §262.4. For *ʾillā* in rhetorical questions with a negative bias, see §5.1.3 above.

[40] For a summary of the concept of possible alternative worlds in counterfactual thinking, see Nickerson, *Conditional reasoning*, 166–171, and the literature cited therein.

God", or "distinct from God". The sentence would then be literally translated as "Were there in them gods that are not God, they would go to ruin". This indeed implies that the existence of any god(s) distinct from God would result in the heavens and the earth being ruined, regardless of God's presence. Understanding *ʾillā* as a marker of exclusion, then, better captures the semantics of this verse, since it means that the verse does not commit to any truth about God himself, but only addresses the existence of any other alleged god(s).

Another possible *ʾillā* to be considered as a marker of exclusion occurs in Q 53:32. Two plausible translations of this verse will be presented and discussed below. The parts that are different are underlined:

> (31) *wa-li-llāhi mā fi s-samāwāti wa-mā fi l-ʾarḍi li-yajziya llaḏīna ʾasāʾū bi-mā ʿamilū wa-yajziya llaḏīna ʾaḥsanū bi-l-ḥusnā* (32) *allaḏīna yajtanibūna kabāʾira l-ʾiṯmi wa-l-fawāḥiša* ***ʾilla*** *l-lamama ʾinna rabbaka wāsiʿu l-maġfirati huwa ʾaʿlamu bi-kum ʾiḏ ʾanšaʾakum mina l-ʾarḍi wa-ʾiḏ ʾantum ʾajinnatun fī buṭūni ʾummahātikum fa-lā tuzakkū ʾanfusakum huwa ʾaʿlamu bi-mani ttaqā`
>
> (31) To God belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth, for him to requite those who do evil for what they have done, and to requite those who have done good with the fairest [reward]. (32) Those who avoid heinous sins and wrongdoings with the [possible] exception of venial offences – your[s] Lord is embracing in his forgiveness. He knows you[p] very well [from the time] when he raised you from the earth and when you were foetuses in your mothers' bellies. Do not assert yourselves to be pure. He knows very well who fears God.

Or:

> (31) To God belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth, for him to requite those who do evil for what they have done, and to requite those who have done good with the fairest [reward] – (32) those who avoid heinous sins and wrongdoings, with the [possible] exception of venial offences. Your[s] Lord is embracing in his forgiveness. He knows you[p] very well [from the time] when he raised you from the earth and when you were foetuses in your mothers' bellies. Do not assert yourselves to be pure. He knows very well who fears God.

The two translations are almost identical, yet they reflect two different interpretations of the syntax and the semantics of this passage. Both analyses are

discussed in Qurʾān exegeses,[41] and both are plausible. According to the former translation, *allaḏīna yajtanibūna kabāʾira l-ʾiṯmi wa-l-fawāḥiša ʾilla l-lamama* is an independent relative clause functioning as the subject, whose predicate clause is *ʾinna rabbaka wāsiʿu l-maġfirati*.[42] The latter translation reflects the interpretation of *allaḏīna … l-lamama* as an appositive of v. 31 *allaḏīna ʾaḥsanū*, "those who have done good", and of *ʾinna* as introducing a new utterance. Semantically, as will be discussed below, the translations reflect two different hosts.

Before proceeding to the semantics of the exception, one more detail must be addressed, namely, the uncertain sense of the hapax legomenon *lamam*. Secondary sources suggest that it mainly had two meanings: (1) a rare, short visit, brief call or stop (at a place); (2) a slight mental disturbance, confusion, fit of madness. The former sense has led to understanding *ʾilla l-lamama* in this verse as "except sporadically" or "unless it is a one-time sin"; the latter led to the interpretation "except in a state of mental confusion". Both interpretations seem to have converged into the construal of *lamam* as a (3) minor offence, insignificant lapse, pardonable sin.[43] Note that the sense of *lamam* also affects the understanding of *ʾillā*: whereas senses (1) and (2) point to exceptive *ʾillā*, the third entails an adversative understanding of *ʾillā*, since "minor offences" are semantically disparate from "heinous sins and wrongdoings", and thus the Presupposition of Inclusion, which is a requirement in exceptive constructions (see §6.1 above), is not maintained.[44] In any event, a correct analysis of this passage must capture the essential connection between *lamam* and God's forgiveness. Whether it is a one-time serious offence, a serious offence done while in a state of mental confusion or a minor offence, it is not avoiding heinous sins and wrongdoings that would require God's forgiveness, but the (possible) case of *lamam*.

Beginning with the former analysis, according to the Polarity Generalisation (see §6.1 above), one of the main features of *ʾillā* phrases is that the *ʾillā* phrase gives rise to a proposition with an opposite polarity to that of the host. However, *ʾilla l-lamama*

---

[41] See, e.g., al-Rāzī, XXIX, 7.

[42] For such apodoses in the Qurʾān, see the discussion on Q 24:5 under §8.3.2 below.

[43] Al-Ḫalīl, *al-ʿAyn*, VIII, 322; *WKAS*, II.3, 1303b–1307a [*LMM*]; Ambros, *Concise dictionary*, 248 [*LMM*]).

[44] For a more extensive discussion on the differentiation between exceptive and adversative *ʾillā*, see §7.2.1 below. The question of whether cases like this could illustrate how a diachronic change from exceptive to adversative *ʾillā* (see §7.4) may have taken place requires further research.

in Q 53:32 does not give rise to such a proposition: the host, according to this analysis, would be the following:

(13) Those who avoid heinous sins and wrongdoings – your[s] Lord is embracing in his forgiveness.

The evoked proposition would then be "[but] those who commit {one once/one in a state of mental confusion/minor offences} – [towards those] your[s] Lord is not embracing in his forgiveness" – which is not the message that the text conveys. To avoid this, *ʾilla l-lamama* must be analysed as belonging to the same unit as *kabāʾira l-ʾiṯmi wa-l-fawāḥiša*, which translates "Those who avoid heinous sins and wrongdoings but [may] have committed {one once/one in a state of mental confusion/minor offences} – your[s] Lord is embracing in his forgiveness". Q 53:23 *ʾilla l-lamama*, then, according to this analysis, is a different type of *ʾillā*, which is connected to the immediately preceding constituent and does not give rise to a proposition with opposite polarity to that of the host. As a marker of exclusion, the sentence would refer to the sub-set of actions that is the result of deducting the sub-set of cases labelled as *lamam* from the set of actions labelled *kabāʾir al-ʾiṯm wa-l-fawāḥiš* (that is, all cases of heinous sins and wrongdoings that are not *lamam*). Avoiding that sub-set of actions while (possibly) not avoiding *lamam* will be rewarded with God's forgiveness.

The latter analysis invites two different readings of the *ʾillā* phrase, both leading to the same conclusion. According to both readings, the beginning of v. 32 stands in apposition to *allaḏīna ʾaḥsanū*, "those who have done good". This reflects a different understanding of the host, which according to this analysis is the following:

(14) God shall requite those who have done good, those who avoid heinous sins and wrongdoings, with the fairest [reward].

Here again the exception phrase does not adhere to the Polarity Generalisation. Let us first simplify the proposition of the host. Since, according to the analysis above, "those who avoid heinous sins and wrongdoings" stands in apposition to "those who have done good", one of them may be chosen in the simplified host:

(15) God shall requite those who avoid heinous sins and wrongdoings with the fairest [reward].

Now, in keeping with the Polarity Generalisation, the proposition to which the EP *ʾilla l-lamama* would give rise is "but in case of *lamam* God shall not requite them

with the fairest [reward]". This, however, is not the message that the text delivers, as is evident from the following segment, "your[s] Lord is embracing in his forgiveness". The *ʾillā* phrase, then, does not qualify the host. It must instead be connected to the verb *yajtanibūna* and function as a marker of exclusion, as explained above.

According to the second reading, the *ʾillā* phrase is understood as an afterthought:[45]

> (31) To God belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth, for him to requite those who do evil for what they have done, and to requite those who have done good with the fairest [reward], (32) those who avoid heinous sins and wrongdoings. **But not** [necessarily] venial offences – your[s] Lord is embracing in his forgiveness. He knows you[p] very well [from the time] when he raised you from the earth and when you were foetuses in your mothers' bellies. Do not assert yourselves to be pure. He knows very well who fears God.

Since, according to this second reading, the host is the same as (14), *ʾilla l-lamama* must again be semantically connected to "those who avoid heinous sins and wrongdoings" even if it belongs to another syntactical unit, which leads to a similar semantic function of the *ʾillā* phrase.

To sum up the discussion above, the use of *ʾillā* in Q 53:32 is unusual. It does not adhere to the Polarity Generalisation, which is required in exceptive constructions. Three plausible analyses of Q 53:31–32 were discussed above. According to two of them, it functions not as a core exceptive particle, but as a marker of exclusion, belonging to the same syntactical unit as *yajtanibūna kabāʾira l-ʾiṯmi wa-l-fawāḥiša*. According to a third option, it introduces an afterthought. In any event, the mention of God's forgiveness semantically connects *ʾilla l-lamama* to *yajtanibūna kabāʾira l-ʾiṯmi wa-l-fawāḥiša*.

6.5. Summary

This chapter has described the usage of *ʾillā* as an exceptive particle. In this type, part A is syntactically complete, and its message is also complete. As in exceptive

[45] Birnstiel suggests reading *ʾillā* as introducing an afterthought in several verses – see "Selected features", 70, n. 118; 89–93; 113–114. I could not find Q 53:32 among the verses that he discusses, perhaps since there is no negation in this part of the verse.

constructions in other languages, exceptive *ʾillā* requires that its complement be included in the set of items referred to by the generalisation in the host (Presupposition of Inclusion) and that the *ʾillā* phrase give rise to a proposition with opposite polarity to that of the host (Polarity Generalisation).

The exceptive usage of *ʾillā* has been divided into two sub-categories according to the characteristics of the complement of *ʾillā*. When *ʾillā* is followed by a simple nominal phrase, *ʾillā* may be translated to English as "except". When *ʾillā* is followed by a clause introduced by *ʾan*, *ʾillā ʾan* denotes "unless".

The next section of this chapter has included a comparison of exceptive *ʾillā* with *ġayr*. It has shown that, although *ġayr* sometimes yield a meaning similar to *ʾillā*, it is different from *ʾillā* in its primary usage and is more limited than *ʾillā* in its syntactical position and its scope.

The final section has discussed rare occurrences of *ʾillā* in which the Polarity Generalisation requirement is not met. In these instances, *ʾillā* may be analysed as a marker of exclusion.

Chapter 7: Adversative *ʾillā*

7.1. Introduction: Adversative relations

One of the most influential articles on adversative relations, which also initiated serious research on this topic, is Robin Lakoff's "If's, and's and but's: About conjunction", published in 1971. In the section on the connective *but* in this article,[1] Lakoff differentiates between two types of *but*. The first type, which she terms "semantic opposition *but*", is exemplified as follows:

(1) John is tall but Bill is short. (= Lakoff's (57))

(2) John hates ice cream but I like it. (= Lakoff's (58))

Regarding sentences such as these, Lakoff maintains the following:

> There is no relationship, implicit or otherwise, between the two parts of the sentence except that the subjects of the two sentences are directly opposed to each other in a particular property: there is no reason to assume that, since the first part of the sentence is true, the second should be false; no conclusion about the second member of the conjunct is derivable from the first, insofar as we know from the sentence itself.[2]

One of the features of semantic opposition *but* is that it is symmetrical – that is, the order of the sentences can be reversed (viz., "Bill is short but John is tall" for (1)) without any significant change to the meaning.[3]

The second type of *but* has been termed "denial of expectation *but*". An often-cited example of this type of *but* is the following:

(3) John is tall but he's no good at basketball. (= Lakoff's (59))

Here, says Lakoff, there is more than two pairs of antonyms. She suggests that there is a presupposition involved in the first proposition (namely, that if someone is tall, then one would expect him/her to be good at basketball), which is denied in the second one. Another, now famous example of denial of expectation *but* is (4).

(4) John is a Republican, but you can trust Bill. (= Lakoff's (54))[4]

---

[1] See Lakoff, "If's, and's and but's", 131–142.

[2] Lakoff, "If's, and's and but's", 133.

[3] Lakoff, "If's, and's and but's", 135.

Because of the use of *but* here, the hearer is expected to have derived "John cannot be trusted" from the first conjunct.[5]

Another influential article, by Jean-Claude Anscombre and Oswald Ducrot, has focused on a different aspect of adversative connectives and proposed an analysis slightly different from the one presented above.[6] In this contrastive study, which compares French *mais* to its German and Spanish counterparts, the authors differentiate between two types of *mais* in French. The first one, which they label *PA*, corresponds to Spanish ***p**ero* and German ***a**ber*; the second one, which they label *SN*, corresponds to Spanish ***sin**o* and German ***s**onde**rn**.*[7] Since what is said about French *mais* is also (at least generally) true for English *but*, most of the examples below will be given in English, with the two types of *but* labelled but_{PA} and but_{SN}, respectively.

According to Anscombre and Ducrot, "S_1 but_{PA} S_2" (1) presents the proposition in S_1 as a possible argument for a possible conclusion R; (2) presents the proposition in S_2 as an argument against R, or as an argument for not-R; (3) gives a stronger argumentative force in favour of not-R than the force in favour of R. Thus, "S_1 but_{PA} S_2" overall argumentatively gravitates towards not-R.[8] An example is the following:

(5) Es inteligente, pero no trabaja.
Er ist intelligent, aber er arbeitet nicht.
Il est intelligent, $mais_{PA}$ il ne travaille pas.
He is intelligent, but_{PA} he doesn't work.

A conclusion derivable from S_1 ("He is intelligent") could be, e.g., "we should hire him" (= R), whereas from S_2 ("he doesn't work") one concludes the opposite, namely, "we should not hire him" (= not-R). The overall argumentative force is in favour of S_2 (= not-R).[9]

---

[4] See the discussion in Lakoff, "If's, and's and but's", 132.

[5] See Blakemore, "Denial and Contrast", 26.

[6] Anscombre and Ducrot, "Deux mais" (see further below). The differences between Lakoff and Anscombre and Ducrot seem to emanate mainly from differences in approach and from the different focus of the articles. For further discussion on the denial of expectation type of *but* and its corresponding terms in research, see Rudolph, *Contrast*, 136–141 = §4.2.2.

[7] See also, e.g., Lang, *Semantics of coordination*, 252; Horn, *Natural history*, 406–413.

[8] Anscombre and Ducrot, "Deux mais", 28.

[9] Azar, 142.

The argumentative force of S_2 being stronger than that of S_1 is one of the most important features discussed by Anscombre and Ducrot, and it has later been shown that this is a feature of all types of adversative relations.[10] In other words, the aim of the speaker's message is "always expressed in the adversative clause".[11] To demonstrate further the overall argumentative force balancing towards the second proposition, compare the overall positive (6) with the overall negative (7):[12]

(6) Das Haus ist klein, aber hübsch gelegen. The house is small, but$_{PA}$ it is nicely situated.

(7) Das Haus ist hübsch gelegen, aber klein. The house is nicely situated, but$_{PA}$ it is small.

Anscombre and Ducrot's *mais*$_{SN}$, which corresponds to Spanish *sino* and German *sondern*, introduces the correction of a denied assertion in S_1, as exemplified in (8):[13]

(8) Eso no es consciente, sino totalmente automático.
Das ist nicht bewusst, sondern ganz automatisch.
Ce n'est pas conscient, mais$_{SN}$ totalement automatique.
It's not conscious, but$_{SN}$ (rather) totally automatic.[14]

With this type of *but*, the validity of the proposition in S_1 – without the negation (that is, "it is conscious" for (8)) – is blocked, and it is substituted by the proposition in S_2.[15] In languages that have a special conjunction indicating correction, such as German and Spanish, S_2 must be introduced by that conjunction.[16] Additional features related to this type are discussed in §7.3 below.

More than half a century after Lakoff's seminal article, it is now quite established that adversative connectives, in very broad terms, indicate opposition between two entities, or tokens.[17] This opposition manifests itself in a given language in various ways, or functions, depending on the semantic content of the entities as well as on the context.[18] The variety of approaches, methods and languages adopted or examined in these studies has inevitably created a confusing situation in the

[10] See Rudolph, *Contrast*, 313.
[11] Rudolph, *Contrast*, 313.
[12] This example is discussed in more detail in Rudolph, *Contrast*, 146.
[13] Anscombre and Ducrot, "Deux mais", 28.
[14] Anscombre and Ducrot, "Deux mais", 24, 35; Horn, *Natural history*, 407; Azar, 134.
[15] Rudolph, *Contrast*, 143. See also below.
[16] See Rudolph, *Contrast*, 141.
[17] If one is to adopt Izutsu's ("CCC", 662) terminology – see further below.
[18] Rudolph, *Contrast*, 172.

literature in which there are multiple different terms to describe the same functions or relations.[19]

In an elegant, relatively recent attempt to organise the material, Mitsuko N. Izutsu has proposed a classification of adversative relations into three categories:[20] contrast,[21] (direct and indirect) concessive[22] and corrective.[23] The following are examples for each category, respectively:

(9) John is poor, but Tom is rich. (Adapted from Izutsu's (14a))

(10) John$_i$ is poor, but he$_i$ is happy. (Adapted from Izutsu's (12a))

(11) John is not American but British. (Izutsu's (55a))

In English, the contrast meaning is overtly expressed by, e.g., *in/by contrast* and *by comparison*, as in (12). The concessive meaning is explicitly marked by, e.g., *(al)though* and *nevertheless*, as in (13). The corrective meaning is conveyed by the addition of *instead* or *rather*, as in (14).

(12) John is poor; *in contrast*, Tom is rich.

(13) *Although* John$_i$ is poor, he$_i$ is happy. (= Izutsu's (12a))

(14) John is not American but *rather* British.

Izutsu bases her classification on four factors: (1) The mutual exclusivity of different compared items in a shared domain; (2) The number and type of compared items; (3) The involvement of (an) assumption(s); (4) The validity of the segments combined. Her article, based on her PhD thesis, shows that all three categories of adversative relations satisfy the first parameter: in all categories, mutual exclusivity in a shared domain between the compared items is expressed. However, the categories differ with regard to the other parameters.

---

[19] For an extensive survey of research on adversative relations (until the book's publishing date in 1996), see Rudolph, *Contrast*, 128–176 = §4.

[20] The following discussion and examples are all taken from Izutsu, "CCC", unless otherwise stated.

[21] Which corresponds, *inter alia*, to Lakoff's ("If's, and's and but's") "semantic opposition *but*". For corresponding terms in research, see Rudolph, *Contrast*, 172–173 = §4.6.

[22] Which corresponds to Lakoff's ("If's, and's and but's") denial of expectation *but*, as well as to Anscombre and Ducrot's ("Deux mais") description of *mais*$_{PA}$. For more corresponding terms in research, see Rudolph, *Contrast*, 173 = §4.6.

[23] Which corresponds, *inter alia*, to Anscombre and Ducrot's ("Deux mais") description of *mais*$_{SN}$. For more corresponding terms in research, see Rudolph, *Contrast*, 173–174 = §4.6.

The short summary of the main characteristics of the parameters below will assist in distinguishing the three adversative relations from one another as well as in transposing Izutsu's analysis to Qurʾānic Arabic. I will focus on the third and fourth parameters, which are more relevant to *ʾillā*. The first parameter will also prove crucial to the analysis presented in this section (see further below). The second parameter is irrelevant to Qurʾānic Arabic since I could only find in the Qurʾān cases in which there are two compared items.

The fourth parameter has to do with the validity of the segments combined. This is the parameter that separates corrective from contrastive and concessive.[24] In corrective relations, S_1 is rendered invalid and anticipates a valid alternative in what follows the corrective connective. In (11) above, for instance, John's being American is rejected as invalid,[25] and only the proposition in S_2 (John's being British) is asserted as valid. In (9) and (10), however, both S_1 and S_2 are asserted as valid.

The third parameter, which has to do with involvement of (an) assumption(s), sets apart the concessive usage from the other categories. This parameter is related to Lakoff's expectation, or presupposition, and to Anscombre and Ducrot's conclusions. Izutsu divides this category into two sub-types, direct and indirect, labelled D-concessive and I-concessive, respectively. Compare (10) above, repeated here as (15), with (16):

(15) John$_i$ is poor, but he$_i$ is happy.

(16) The car is stylish and spacious, but it is expensive. (= Izutsu's (47a))

The difference is characterised as follows: in D-concessive, such as (15), the assumption evoked from S_1 is the opposite of S_2 ("If he is poor, (then normally) he is not happy"). In I-concessive, however, the assumption evoked from S_1 ("If the car is stylish and spacious, we should buy it") is conflicting not with the proposition in S_2, but with an *assumption* evoked by the proposition in S_2 ("If the car is expensive, we should not buy it"). While D-concessive involves only one assumption, I-concessive involves two conflicting assumptions.[26]

---

[24] This is also the focus of Anscombre and Ducrot, as well as that of the studies of "the proponents of the corrective and non-corrective dichotomy".

[25] That is, the syntactically independent negating particle negates the positive counterpart of the proposition in S_1 ("John is American"), which results in an overall negative proposition in S_1.

[26] Cf. Rudolph, *Contrast*, 385–440 = §8.

Thus far, the corrective and concessive types have been defined. The final category to define is contrast. Izutsu distinguishes this type from the other ones using the second parameter, namely, the number of the compared items: this type, unlike the others, allows to contrast more than two compared items to one another in English. As mentioned above, this distinguishing feature is irrelevant to Qurʾānic Arabic because of lack of data. However, the contrast type may still be detected through additional characteristics that it possesses. According to Izutsu, contrast is a simple opposition between the propositional contents of two symmetrical clauses. Crucially, this opposition requires that the compared items be explicitly different, comparable to each other and mutually exclusive within a shared domain. For instance, in "John is poor, but Tom is rich" (= (9) above), the compared items are "John" and "Tom"; they are explicitly different from each other, are comparable to each other, and are mutually exclusive in the shared domain of "richness", which is the (cognitive) domain abstracted from the semantic contents predicated of them.

The following table, adapted from Izutsu, summarises the discussion above:

Parameter \ Type	Contrast	Concessive		Corrective
		Direct	Indirect	
(1) Mutual exclusivity in a shared domain required?	✓	✓	✓	✓
(2) Number and type of the compared items:				
↳ Number	Two or more	Two	Two	Two
↳ Explicit differentiation required?	✓	✗	✗	✗
(3) Assumption(s) involved?	✗	✓	✓	✗
(4) Validity	All segments valid	All segments valid	All segments valid	Only S_2 valid

Table 1: Semantic values of Izutsu's three types of adversative relations (adapted from Izutsu, "CCC", 671)

Izutsu stresses not only the differences between the categories, but also what they all share: all types of adversative relations require that the "different CIs [= compared items] occupy mutually exclusive regions in a shared domain".[27] It will be shown below that the mutual exclusivity of the compared items is not only a

[27] Izutsu, "CCC", 672.

crucial requirement for adversative relations in general but also an important distinguishing factor of adversative from exceptive *ʾillā*.

7.2. Contrastive *ʾillā*: "But not", "not so", etc.[28]

7.2.1. Differentiating adversative from exceptive *ʾillā*

Before examining examples of adversative *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān, the question of differentiating adversative from exceptive *ʾillā* should be addressed. As Qurʾān translations indicate, this is often a difficult task. In §6.1, the two main features of exceptive constructions were discussed, namely, the Presupposition of Inclusion and the Polarity Generalisation. This section will demonstrate how they improve the understanding of *ʾillā* and how the description of adversative relations discussed in §7.1 above may facilitate distinguishing adversative from exceptive *ʾillā*.

Beginning with the Polarity Generalisation, it was mentioned above that this principle stems from the view that exceptive constructions conjoin two propositions with opposite polarities. This was exemplified by Q 5:1, repeated here for convenience:

> Q 5:1 *ʾuḥillat lakum bahīmatu l-ʾanʿāmi* ***ʾillā*** *mā yutlā ʿalaykum*
> Permitted to you[p] [as food] is the beast of the herds, **except** those which are about to be recited to you.

As explained above, the two propositions are "Permitted to you [as food] is the beast of the herds" and "those which are about to be recited to you are not permitted to you". In other words, exceptive constructions in fact incorporate two adversative propositions. In a language in which the same particle is used as both exceptive and adversative, how can one distinguish between its two functions?

The key feature that sets apart the exceptive from the adversative function is the Presupposition of Inclusion. Recall that according to this principle the EP complement, or, in Q 5:1, "those which are about to be recited to you", must be included in the generalisation expressed by the host, which is "the beast of the

[28] The occurrences of this type of *ʾillā* are the following: Q 2:160?, 3:89?, 4:24, 26:227, 37:40, 84:25, 95:6; 2:34?, 4:98?, 7:11?, 12:68?, 15:31?, 17:61?, 18:50?, 19:60?, 20:116?, 37:74?, 37:128?, 37:160?, 38:74? (except/adversative).

herds". In other words, for an exception to work, the excepted element must be part of the set referred to by the antecedent, or the associate of the EP.[29] Adversative relations do not adhere to this requirement.

The discussion above may be conclude as follows: while inclusiveness is required in exceptive constructions, it is not a requirement for adversative relations. This is a useful key difference between the two functions of *ʾillā*, which will be utilised below to show that *ʾillā* in some cases is undoubtedly adversative. Let us incorporate this key difference into the revised Figure 5:



Figure 5: A revised summary of all types of ʾillā *constructions*

7.2.2. Establishing the use of contrastive *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān

Following the logic presented above, this section will discuss verses in which *ʾillā* cannot be understood as an exceptive particle, but only as an adversative one. The main distinguishing criterion here has to do with the semantic relations between the complement of *ʾillā* (part B) and the antecedent, or associate of the EP, in part A: if there is no semantic overlap between the antecedent and the complement of *ʾillā*, *ʾillā* cannot be understood as an exceptive particle, since the Presupposition of Inclusion is not maintained. Let us examine Q 37:40 and 84:25:

[29] This principle has already been discussed by traditional scholars. In fact, as we will see in §10.1 below, it became the prevailing consideration in the detection of *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ*, "discontinuous exception" in post-Sībawayhi traditional works.

(22) *uḥšuru llaḏīna ẓalamū wa-ʾazwājahum wa-mā kānū yaʿbudūn* [...] (38) *ʾinnakum la-ḏāʾiqu l-ʿaḏābi l-ʾalīm* (39) *wa-mā tujzawna ʾillā mā kuntum taʿmalūn* (40) ***ʾillā*** *ʿibāda llāhi l-muḫlaṣīn* (41) *ʾulāʾika lahum rizqun maʿlūm* (42) *fawākihu* [...]
(22) 'Round up those who have sinned together with their wives and what they used to worship [...] (38) You will indeed taste the painful punishment, (39) and you will not be recompensed for anything other than what you did. (40) **But$_{PA}$ not** the sincere servants of God – (41) they will have a known provision: (42) fruits [...]

(20) *fa-mā lahum lā yuʾminūn* (21) *wa-ʾiḏā quriʾa ʿalayhimu l-qurʾānu lā yasjudūn* (22) *bali llaḏīna kafarū yukaḏḏibūn* (23) *wa-llāhu ʾaʿlamu bi-mā yūʿūn* (24) *fa-bašširhum bi-ʿaḏābin ʾalīm* (25) ***ʾilla*** *llaḏīna ʾāmanū wa-ʿamilu ṣ-ṣāliḥāti lahum ʾajrun ġayru mamnūn.*
(20) What is the matter with them that they do not believe, (21) and that they do not bow down when the recitation is recited to them? (22) No, those who are unbelievers deny [the truth of the recitation]; (23) but God knows well what they hide. (24) So give them the tidings of a painful punishment. (25) **But$_{PA}$ not** those who believe and do good deeds. They will have an unfailing reward.

The compared (sets of) items in both examples above are the believers and the unbelievers. Since these sets of believers and unbelievers on the Day of Judgement are mutually exclusive, *ʾillā* in both examples cannot be interpreted as exceptive; however, *ʾillā* in these instances still conveys that there is a contrast, or an opposition, between the sets.

Section 7.1 has discussed three types of adversative relations: contrast, concessive and corrective. What type of adversative relations is expressed here by *ʾillā*? Its type can only be contrast, as the compared items are explicitly different, comparable to each other and mutually exclusive within a shared domain. The two compared items in this passage are complementary: on the Day of Judgement, each person will be either a believer or an unbeliever and cannot be both at the same time. They are also mutually exclusive in the shared domain, which can be called "eschatological requite": the unbelievers will be punished, whereas the believers will be rewarded. *ʾIllā* cannot be corrective, since both part A and part B are asserted as valid. Neither can *ʾillā* be concessive: it cannot be assumed from the punishment of the unbelievers that the believers will be rewarded. Moreover, since unbelievers and believers are complementaries, if any assumptions are to be derived from the preceding and following parts, the directions of those assumptions would *not* point in opposite directions, as concessive connectives would require, but rather in the

same direction, namely, that the addressees should be believers: the conclusion derivable from S_1 could be, e.g., "being an unbeliever is a bad thing" or indeed "one should not be an unbeliever", and that derivable from S_2 could accordingly be "being a believer is a good thing", or indeed "one should be a believer".

A requirement for the use of adversative *ʾillā*, which is shared by the use of exceptive *ʾillā*, is the completeness of part A. The completeness of the message conveyed in part A is crucial for *ʾillā* to be perceived as adversative. This allows for part B to be perceived as an utterance independent of part A. The opposition between the two parts then allows *ʾillā* to be interpreted as adversative.

And it is not only the *message* of the part preceding adversative *ʾillā* that is complete. Part A in these cases must also be *syntactically* complete. If it is incomplete, *ʾillā* cannot be interpreted as adversative. The completeness of part A as a requirement of adversative *ʾillā* will prove crucial below.

To sum up, *ʾillā* is undoubtedly used as an adversative particle in the Qurʾān. Adversative *ʾillā* may be detected when (1) there is no overlap in meaning between the compared items in part A and part B. Furthermore, a requirement for adversative *ʾillā* is that (2) part A must both be syntactically complete and contain a self-contained message, of which part B is not an integral part. It should be remarked that while Q 37:40 and 84:25 help establish the adversative function of *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān, one must concede that such clear-cut instances are relatively uncommon in the Qurʾān and that most instances are open to interpretation. Furthermore, as will be discussed below, occasionally, although both exceptive and adversative *ʾillā* are possible, the exceptive meaning would yield an understanding that would not dovetail with wider Qurʾānic concepts. In such cases, (3) knowledge of the contents of the Qurʾān may be helpful in distinguishing adversative from exceptive *ʾillā*.

7.2.3. *ʾIllā* is not followed by a clause – does that matter?

In the linguistic literature, adversativity and adversative connectives are often discussed in relation to two conjoined *sentences*. As will be further discussed below, while part B may occasionally be read as a sentence, it is difficult to show that *ʾillā* is undoubtedly followed by a sentence. Rather, it seems, adversative *ʾillā* mostly follows the syntactical rules of exceptive *ʾillā*: it is normally followed not by a sentence, but by a phrase or an equivalent thereof. The comparison with *lākin(na)* in

§7.5 below reinforces this impression: while it is clear that *lākin(na)* introduces a sentence, *ʾillā* normally does not.[30]

Nevertheless, the idea conveyed in part B may be *expressed* as a sentence. This is less problematic for corrective *ʾillā* (discussed in §7.3 below), in whose cases S_2 in many languages is reduced to the constituents substituting the ones in S_1. This means that with corrective *ʾillā*, like many other corrective connectives, part B may be read as a sentence even though it is only a constituent. Contrastive *ʾillā*, however, requires further explanation. Let us return to *ʾillā* in Q 37:40, repeated here in short:

> (38) *ʾinnakum la-ḏāʾiqu l-ʿaḏābi l-ʾalīm* [...] (40) ***ʾillā*** *ʿibāda llāhi l-muḫlaṣīn* (41) *ʾulāʾika lahum rizqun maʿlūm* [...]
>
> (38) You will indeed taste the painful punishment, [...] (40) **But$_{PA}$ not** the sincere servants of God – (41) they will have a known provision: [...]

It has already been established that this *ʾillā* is not exceptive but adversative. Although *ʾillā* is most probably not followed by a sentence, part B – "but$_{PA}$ not X" – may be formulated as a sentence, namely, "but$_{PA}$ the case of X is/will be the opposite", or, for Q 37:40, "but$_{PA}$ the sincere servants of God will not taste a painful punishment". Afterwards, as occurs often in the Qurʾān, the case of the sincere servants of God is elaborated upon: "they will have a known provision: [...]". And since this elaboration occurs often, this argument may be taken one step forward. Compare the following:

(17) The unbelievers will taste a painful punishment, but$_{PA}$ not the believers. They will be rewarded.

(18) The unbelievers will taste a painful punishment, but$_{PA}$ the believers will be rewarded.

In (17), which is a simplification of Q 37:40, *but$_{PA}$ not* is followed by a phrase ("the believers"), which is in turn followed by a clause ("They will be rewarded"). In (18), however, *but$_{PA}$* is followed by a clause. (18) is the typical case of contrast, in which two propositions, formulated as sentences, are put in opposition to one another; in (17), however, the believers are first put in opposition to the unbelievers, and then the opposition (or the second compared item) is elaborated upon – a syntactical structure that further assigns contrastive focus to the believers.

[30] But see §8.4 below.

Although there are syntactical differences, there is little to no semantic difference between (17) and (18); the adversative relations exhibited in them are similar, too. Even though "But$_{PA}$ not X" is enough to create contrast, the complementary proposition often found after the second compared item brings the proposition pair even closer to the typical cases of contrast. To cement this argument, let us examine the use of *lākin* in Q 3:198:[31]

> (196) *lā yaġurrannaka taqallubu llaḏīna kafarū fi l-bilād* (197) *matāʿun qalīlun ṯumma maʾwāhum jahannamu wa-biʾsa l-mihād* (198) ***lākini*** *llaḏīna ttaqaw rabbahum lahum jannātun tajrī min taḥtiha l-ʾanhāru ḫālidīna fīhā* [...]
>
> (196) Let it not delude you[s] that those who do not believe move to and fro in the land (197) – A little while[32] and then their lodging is Hell. How evil is the resting-place. (198) **But$_{PA}$** those who fear their Lord will have gardens, through which rivers flow, in which they will remain for ever [...]

Q 3:198, which uses *lākin*, is very similar to Q 37:40 and 84:25, in which one finds *ʾillā*. The verses share the general context of the Day of Judgement as well as the identity of the compared items – that is, the believers and the unbelievers. However, unlike *ʾillā* in Q 37:40 and 84:25, Q 3:198 *lākin* is followed by a sentence, which makes this case equivalent to (18) above. The fact that contrastive *lākin* appears in a passage similar to one in which *ʾillā* occurs lends further support for the contrastive reading of *ʾillā* in the two verses discussed above.

7.2.4. The order of the compared items

Finally, a brief note on the order of the compared items is to be added. It was mentioned under §7.1 that one of the features of contrastive adversative connectives is that the order of the propositions is reversible without a significant change to the meaning. Although this is technically true for examples of contrastive *ʾillā* above, it is worthy of note that in both of them, the sinners and their punishment appear first, and only then the righteous and the reward that they will receive. Moreover, I could not find a single case in the Qurʾān – neither when *ʾillā* nor when *lākin(na)* is used – in which the sinners and the righteous appear in a reversed order. By contrast, when *wa-* is used, the righteous may appear before the

[31] Cf. also Q 4:162, 9:88 and 39:20. See also §7.5 below.

[32] See Witztum, "Q 4:24 revisited", 19–21.

sinners, as in Q 64:9–10. This observation could be related to the connection between adversative relations and the main aim of the message conveyed by the text in general:

> The propositional content of the adversative clause is not only new information but for the speaker it is the more important information, the original aim of the message. Its position at the end of the sentence gives more emphasis to the adversative content. If we try to put these examples to a test in order to find out which parts of the connection can be spared, the results will show that within a wider context it is the adversative clause that cannot be left out.[33]

From a cross-linguistic perspective, the fact that the righteous always appear in the adversative clause indicates that the righteous are the intended core message.

7.3. Corrective *ʾillā*[34]

7.3.1. Simple construction: "not X, but$_{SN}$ Y"

Qurʾānic *ʾillā* is occasionally used as a corrective particle. This sub-type of adversative *ʾillā* may be translated as "not X, but$_{SN}$ Y" (German: "nicht/kein X, sondern Y").[35] It also has all features of a corrective connective, such as following a negated proposition and conjoining two items (*corrigendum* and *corrigens*; both underlined in the Qurʾānic examples below) that are disparate in meaning. In cases of this sub-type, the phrase(s) following *ʾillā* typically occupy(s) the same syntactical slot as the one(s) preceding *ʾillā*.[36] The syntactical slot is mostly that of the object, but it may also be an adverbial slot (as in Q 20:3, cited below).

Anscombre and Ducrot, Laurence R. Horn and Moshe Azar remark that the negation preceding (corrective) *but$_{SN}$* must be overt:

> German: Das ist {nicht bewusst / # unbewusst}, sondern ganz automatisch.
> French : {Ce n'est pas conscient / # c'est inconscient}, mais$_{SN}$ totalement automatique.
> English: It's {not conscious / # unconscious}, but$_{SN}$ (rather) totally automatic.[37]

---

[33] Rudolph, *Contrast*, 257.

[34] The occurrences of this type of *ʾillā* are the following: Q 2:78#1, 2:235, 4:29, 4:157, 19:62, 20:3, 25:57?, 34:37, 56:26, 57:27, 59:14, 78:25, 92:20? (al-Ṭabarī, II, 158–160 (on Q 2:78); XXIV, 478–480); 42:23?, 44:56?, 72:23?

[35] See also Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 506–507 = §262.5.

[36] That the replaced and correcting items match in function is a characteristic of corrective constructions in general. See Dik, *Studies*, 191–209 (= chapter 9).

[37] Anscombre and Ducrot, "Deux mais", 24, 35; Horn, *Natural history*, 407; Azar, 134.

Similarly, the negating particles *mā* and *lā* are found before corrective *ʾillā*, but *ġayr*, which corresponds to the negative prefix *un-*/*iN-* in English, is not used in the first conjunct.

> Q 19:62 *lā yasmaʿūna fīhā laġwan* ***ʾillā*** *salāman*
> They will hear no idle chatter there, **but$_{SN}$** peace.

> Q 56:25–26 *lā yasmaʿūna fīhā laġwan wa-lā taʾtīmā.* ***ʾillā*** *qīlan salāman salāmā.*
> They hear neither idle chatter there nor imputations, **but$_{SN}$** the saying, 'Peace, peace.'

> Q 78:24–25 *wa-lā yaḏūqūna fīhā bardan wa-lā šarābā.* ***ʾillā*** *ḥamīman wa-ġassāqā.*
> and they will taste neither cool nor drink, **but$_{SN}$** scalding water and pus.

> Q 20:2–4 *mā ʾanzalnā ʿalayka l-qurʾāna li-tašqā.* ***ʾillā*** *tadkiratan li-man yaḫšā. tanzīlan mimman ḫalaqa l-ʾarḍa wa-s-samāwāti l-ʿulā.*
> We have not sent the recitation down to you[s] for you to be wretched, **but$_{SN}$** as a reminder to those who fear, a revelation from him (God) who created the earth and the high heavens.

The following cases may also belong to this category:

> Q 42:23 *qul lā ʾasʾalukum ʿalayhi ʾajran* ***ʾilla*** *l-mawaddata fi l-qurbā*
> Say, 'I do not ask you[p] for any reward for it, **but$_{SN}$** for love concerning kinsmen [...].'

> Q 44:56 *lā yaḏūqūna fīha l-mawta* ***ʾilla*** *l-mawtata l-ʾūlā*
> There they will not taste death, **but$_{SN}$** the first death.

As Azar suggests for Modern Hebrew NEG + S_1 + *ela* + S_2 constructions, following Anscombre and Ducrot's *mais$_{SN}$*, corrective *ʾillā* constructions in fact conjoin two sentences whose common constituents have been deleted from the second sentence.[38] When corrective connectives are used, the second conjunct is typically reduced except the constituents correcting the constituents in the first conjunct that are affected by the negation.[39] I could not find in the Qurʾān any instance of *ʾillā* that did not undergo maximal deletion (cf. corrective *lākin(na)* in §7.5.3 below, which occasionally exhibits a fuller structure).

[38] Azar, 134–136 = §1; Anscombre and Ducrot, "Deux mais", 24–26.
[39] See Rudolph, *Contrast*, 144 and the literature cited therein.

7.3.2. Corrective *ʾillā* + *ʾan* clause

Corrective *ʾillā* may sometimes be followed by an *ʾan* clause:

> Q 4:29 *yā-ʾayyuha llaḏīna ʾāmanū lā taʾkulū ʾamwālakum baynakum bi-l-bāṭili* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *takūna tijāratan ʿan tarāḍin minkum*

It is worthy of note that there are two variant readings of *tijāra* in this verse: *tijāratan*, in the accusative, and *tijāratun*, in the nominative.[40] The accusative case yields a literal translation along the lines of "{[the trading]/it} is trading by mutual consent among you"; the nominative reading may be translated as "there is trading by mutual consent among you".[41] While both readings may be accounted for, the accusative reading requires, or even forces, part A to be interpreted as referring to trading, whereas the nominative reading does not necessarily do the same. The latter may technically also refer to other kinds of "consuming someone's property in vanity", such as robbing, and not necessarily to trading.

Regardless of the case of *tijāra*, understanding this sentence as exceptive – that is, "**unless** {[the trading]/there} be trading by mutual consent among you" – would be absurd, as the prohibition preceding *ʾillā* is apodictic, not casuistic (cf. Q 2:229 and 65:1 discussed in §6.2 above). Translating *ʾillā* as "unless" would mean that, in certain circumstances, a believer may consume another believer's property in vanity, which is in all likelihood not the intended message. *ʾIllā* in this verse is followed not by an exception, but by the correct communal code of conduct:[42]

> O believers, consume not each other's property in vanity, **but**$_{SN}$ let {[the trading]/there} be trading by mutual consent among you^{P}

This example demonstrates the crucial role of knowing the contents of the Qurʾān in determining whether *ʾillā* is exceptive or adversative. While the syntax of Q 4:29

---

[40] See al-Ḫaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, II, 55–56. Sībawayhi has opted for the nominative – see *al-Kitāb*, I, 329. Al-Jalālayn, 279, seem to have read *tijāratun*, in the nominative, as well (*wa-fī qirāʾatin bi-n-naṣbi*).

[41] See, e.g., al-Zamaḫšarī, II, 61. The reference (which is in my view less plausible) to *ʾamwāl* made in some commentaries (e.g., al-Qurṭubī, VI, 249: *ʾillā ʾan takūna l-ʾamwālu ʾamwāla tijāratin*) seems to originate in the need to refer to a feminine singular noun as the grammatical subject of *takūna*. It is more plausible, in my view, to interpret the use of the feminine as an impersonal pronoun.

[42] See also, e.g., al-Māturīdī, III, 139, who compares this *ʾillā* to the corrective *ʾillā* found in Q 56:25–26 (cited in §7.3.1 above); al-Zamaḫšarī, II, 61 (*istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ*); ʾAbū Ḥayyān, III, 241; al-Jalālayn, 279 (*lākin*). The command not to consume others' property in vanity is expressed by Q 2:188 and 9:34 as well.

allows both interpretations – exceptive and adversative – the contents of the Qurʾān allow only an adversative reading.

Another case of corrective *ʾillā* followed by an *ʾan* clause is Q 2:235:

> Q 2:235 *wa-lā junāḥa ʿalaykum fīmā ʿarraḍtum bihī min ḫiṭbati n-nisāʾi ʾaw ʾaknantum fī ʾanfusikum ʿalima llāhu ʾannakum sa-taḏkurūnahunna wa-lākin lā tuwāʿidūhunna sirran* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *taqūlū qawlan maʿrūfan wa-lā taʿzimū ʿuqdata n-nikāḥi ḥattā yabluġa l-kitābu ʾajalahū wa-ʿlamū ʾanna llāha yaʿlamu mā fī ʾanfusikum fa-ḥḏarūhu wa-ʿlamū ʾanna llāha ġafūrun raḥīm*
>
> There is no fault in you[p] concerning the proposal of marriage to women, whether you[p] openly allude to it or keep it concealed in your[p] souls. God knows that you will be mindful of them[f]. But do not make troth with them secretly, **but**$_{SN}$ speak honourable words. And do not resolve on the knot of marriage until the book has reached its term; and know that God knows what is in your souls, so be fearful of him; and know that God is forgiving and clement.

ʾIllā ʾan in this verse, too, may technically have two interpretations, exceptive and adversative. Understanding *ʾillā* as exceptive, which would be translated "**unless** you speak honourable words", would suggest that the Qurʾān permits for a believing man to secretly make marriage arrangements with a believing woman under certain circumstances – that is, if he does so in an honourable manner.[43] Conversely, a corrective construal of *ʾillā*, which is preferable in my view, invalidates the option of making marriage arrangements secretly. According to this interpretation, the verse stipulates that a believing man should make such arrangements honourably, not secretly.[44]

7.3.3. Corrective *ʾillā* + one-term sentence

Corrective *ʾillā* may also be followed by a one-term sentence:[45]

---

[43] This is implied in translations such as the following: "but do not make troth with them secretly without you speak honourable words" (Arberry); "but do not give them a promise in secret unless you speak in a lawful manner" (Shakir); "Do not arrange to meet them in secret, and if you do, speak to them honourably" (Dawood).

[44] My understanding seems to match that of Paret: "Aber verabredet euch (während ihrer Wartezeit) nicht heimlich mit ihnen! Sagt vielmehr nur, was sich geziemt!". See also al-Ṭabarī, IV, 281–283.

[45] One-term sentences are sentences that contain one constituent only, which is typically one of the two essential sentence constituents (the subject or the predicate). Such sentences are not rare in the Qurʾān. See, e.g., Q 10:70 *matāʿun fi d-dunyā*, "[They will have] some enjoyment in this world"; Q 16:117 *matāʿun qalīlun*, "[They will have] a brief enjoyment". They are commonly analysed as having an omitted constituent (e.g., *ḫabar li-mubtadaʾ maḥḏūf* / *ḫabar li-maḥḏūf*, "a predicate of an omitted

Q 4:157 *wa-qawlihim ʾinnā qatalna l-masīḥa ʿīsa bna maryama rasūla llāhi wa-mā qatalūhu wa-mā ṣalabūhu wa-lākin šubbiha lahum wa-ʾinna llaḏīna ḫtalafū fīhi la-fī šakkin minhu mā lahum bihī min ʿilmin* ***ʾilla*** *ttibāʿa ẓ-ẓanni*

And because they said, 'We killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of God' – They did not kill or crucify him, but it was made to seem so to them. Those who disagree about him are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it, **but**$_{SN}$ [they] follow conjecture.[46]

Note that in this verse, too, the first conjunct is presented as invalid and is corrected by the second conjunct. The conjuncts are semantically mutually exclusive – that is, *ʿilm*, "knowledge", does not include *ẓann*, which is interpreted (here)[47] as "guess, conjecture". The contrast between the two concepts is evident from verses such as the following:

Q 53:28 *wa-mā lahum bihī min ʿilmin ʾin yattabiʿūna ʾilla ẓ-ẓanna wa-ʾinna ẓ-ẓanna lā yuġnī mina l-ḥaqqi šayʾā*

They have no knowledge of that. They only follow guesswork, and guesswork is of no avail against the truth.

Q 45:24 *wa-mā lahum bi-ḏālika min ʿilmin ʾin hum ʾillā yaẓunnūn*

They have no knowledge of that. They only guess.

Q 6:148 *qul hal ʿindakum min ʿilmin fa-tuḫrijūhu lanā ʾin tattabiʿūna ʾilla ẓ-ẓanna wa-ʾin ʾantum ʾillā taḫruṣūn*

Say, 'Have your any knowledge that you can produce for us? You only follow guesswork. You only conjecture.'

---

subject"). For examples from Classical Arabic, see Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 353–358 = §§176–177. For al-Farrāʾ's analysis of such sentences, see Kasher, "*Istiʾnāf*", esp. 344–346 and the literature cited in n. 24 therein. Note that Kasher (ibid, 344) defines one-term sentences as "single noun in *rafʿ* [= the nominative]", which is applicable to all of the examples that he cites from al-Farrāʾ's commentary. However, in the examples of one-term sentences following *ʾillā*, the nominal phrase following *ʾillā* takes the accusative.

[46] See also Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 504; al-Ṭabarī, II, 158–160 (on Q 2:78). Translating literally into English is difficult in this case.

[47] Cf. Chapter 5, n. 8 above.

7.4. Restrictive/non-restrictive divide and a diachronic note

It has thus been shown that exceptive *ʾillā* followed by an *ʾan* clause literally denotes "except (in the case) that" ≈ "except if" ≈ "unless" (§6.2.2). Cases of corrective *ʾillā* followed by an *ʾan* clause were also discussed (§7.3.2). The literal meaning of the latter is not as straightforward as that of the former:

> Q 4:29 *lā taʾkulū ʾamwālakum baynakum bi-l-bāṭili* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *takūna tijāratan ʿan tarāḍin minkum*
> Consume[p] not each other's property in vanity, **but**$_{SN}$ let {[the trading]/there} be trading by mutual consent among you.

> Q 2:235 *wa-lākin lā tuwāʿidūhunna sirran* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *taqūlū qawlan maʿrūfan*
> But do[mp] not make troth with them[f] secretly, **but**$_{SN}$ speak honourable words.

Unlike exceptive and corrective *ʾillā*, many cases are attested in the Qurʾān in which restrictive *ʾillā* is immediately followed by a verb or is complemented by an asyndetic clause. Two examples, one of each sub-type of restrictive *ʾillā*, are repeated here for convenience:[48]

> Q 2:78#2 *wa-ʾin hum* ***ʾillā*** *yaẓunnūn*
> They only conjecture. [= only sub-type; §5.1]

> Q 6:4 *wa-mā taʾtīhim min ʾāyatin min ʾāyāti rabbihim* ***ʾillā*** *kānū ʿanhā muʿriḍīn*
> No sign of their Lord's signs comes to them **without** their turning away from it. [= without sub-type; §5.2]

The examples above show that there is a divide between restrictive *ʾillā*, whose clausal complement is asyndetic, and non-restrictive (= exceptive and corrective) *ʾillā*, whose clausal complement is syndetic. Unlike the former, the latter is followed either by a nominal phrase or an equivalent thereof (that is, an *ʾan* clause or an independent relative clause introduced by *man*, *allaḏīna*, etc.), and never by an asyndetic clause. It follows that corrective *ʾillā*, when followed by a clause, adheres to the syntactic rules of exceptive *ʾillā*.

---

[48] Recall that in both restrictive sub-types part B is indispensable: in the "only" sub-type, part B is necessary for the sentence to be syntactically complete; in the "without" sub-type, part B is crucial for the message to be complete (see further §8.1 below). With corrective *ʾillā*, however, the syntactical relations are different: part B is a syntactical unit independent of part A.

It has thus far been shown that exceptive and adversative *ʾillā* are syntactically indistinguishable from each other: when *ʾillā* is complemented by a nominal phrase, distinguishing adversative (= contrastive or corrective) from exceptive *ʾillā* requires semantic considerations; when *ʾillā* is complemented by a clause, corrective *ʾillā*, like exceptive *ʾillā*, is complemented by an *ʾan* clause, and never by an asyndetic clause. This common syntactical behaviour may indicate that exceptive and adversative *ʾillā* share a common origin. That contrastive *ʾillā* – unlike the purely adversative *lākin(na)* – is normally not followed by a clause but by a phrase suggests that it began as an exceptive particle, whose complement was naturally a nominal phrase. That the occurrence of an *ʾan* clause after exceptive *ʾillā* has a straightforward literal translation whereas its following corrective *ʾillā* cannot be literally understood points to a similar conclusion. Exceptive *ʾillā*, I maintain, gained an adversative meaning, and not vice versa. Gaining an adversative function also entails that the now adversative clause introduced by *ʾillā* has undergone insubordination – that is, it shifted from a subordinate to an independent clause. The insubordinated *ʾillā* clause syntactically looks like a subordinate clause but has been reanalysed as a main clause.[49]

7.5. Adversative *ʾillā* vs *lākin(na)*

While there are languages, like Romanian, with special connectives for all three adversative categories (*iar* for contrast, *însă* or *dar* for concessive and *ci* for corrective), in most languages hitherto studied one finds either one connective for all three categories, such as English *but*, or a corrective/non-corrective division, such as German *sondern/aber*. The following summary table is taken from Izutsu, with the addition of broken lines to distinguish more clearly between groups of similar distributional patterns.

[49] For an extensive discussion on insubordination, see Evans, "Insubordination".

	Contrast	Concessive	Corrective
English	*but*	*but*	*but*
French	*mais*	*mais*	*mais*
Spanish	*pero*	*pero*	*sino*
German	*aber*	*aber*	*sondern*
Swedish	*men*	*men*	*utan*
Hebrew	*aval*	*aval*	*ela*
Romanian	*iar*	*însă, dar*	*ci*

Table 2: Distributional patterns of adversative connectives (adapted from Izutsu, "CCC", 655)

Since Arabic's main adversative connective is *lākin(na)*, and *ʾillā* is used as a corrective particle, it is tempting to expect the same corrective/non-corrective divide in Arabic, too. However, §7.2 has demonstrated that *ʾillā* may express in the Qurʾān not only correction but also contrast. This means that *ʾillā* is not a special connective used to express correction only (that is, it does not fully correspond to, e.g., German *sondern*).

In the following sections, through selected examples, I will identify the main differences between *ʾillā* and *lākin(na)* in the Qurʾān. I will briefly show that *lākin(na)*, unlike *ʾillā*, expresses in the Qurʾān all three adversative categories.[50] It will further be shown that corrective *ʾillā* is more economic than corrective *lākin(na)*. Note that this section only contains preliminary results and is not meant to be comprehensive. It is also worthy of note that the examples below contain *lākin*, but concessive and corrective *lākinna* are also attested in the Qurʾān.

7.5.1. Contrastive *lākin*

The first example of contrastive *lākin* in the Qurʾān is Q 3:198, which was discussed in §7.2 above and is repeated here for convenience:

> (196) *lā yaġurrannaka taqallubu llaḏīna kafarū fi l-bilād* (197) *matāʿun qalīlun ṯumma maʾwāhum jahannamu wa-biʾsa l-mihād* (198) ***lākini*** *llaḏīna ttaqaw rabbahum lahum jannātun tajrī min taḥtiha l-ʾanhāru ḫālidīna fīhā* [...]

[50] It should be remarked that Birnstiel ("Selected features", 49) has already addressed the use of *lākin(na)* and *ʾillā* after negation. This section includes verses that Birnstiel does not mention. Because of the similarity between the propositions preceding and following *lākin*, contrastive focus may occasionally be detected, as mentioned by Birnstiel (pp. 42–43 = §2.2.1.1.2).

(196) Let it not delude you[s] that those who do not believe move to and fro in the land (197) – A little while and then their lodging is Jahannam. How evil is the resting-place. (198) **But$_{PA}$** those who fear their Lord will have gardens, through which rivers flow, in which they will remain for ever [...]

Another example is Q 9:88:

(86) *wa-ʾiḏā ʾunzilat sūratun ʾan ʾāminū bi-llāhi wa-jāhidū maʿa rasūlihi staʾḏanaka ʾulu ṭ-ṭawli minhum wa-qālū ḏarnā nakun maʿa l-qāʿidīn* (87) *raḍū bi-ʾan yakūnū maʿa l-ḫawālifi wa-ṭubiʿa ʿalā qulūbihim fa-hum lā yafqahūn* (88) ***lākini*** *r-rasūlu wa-llaḏīna ʾāmanū maʿahū jāhadū bi-ʾamwālihim wa-ʾanfusihim wa-ʾulāʾika lahumu l-ḫayrātu wa-ʾulāʾika humu l-mufliḥūn*
(196) When a sūra is sent down, saying, 'Believe in God and strive with his messenger', the men of wealth among them ask permission [to see] you and say, 'Allow us to be among those who sit at home'. (197) They are content to be with those who stay behind, and a seal is put on their hearts, and so they do not understand. (198) **But$_{PA}$** the messenger and those who believe with him strive with their possessions and their persons. Those are the ones who will have the good things. Those are the ones who will prosper.

7.5.2. Concessive *lākin(na)*

The following are selected examples of concessive *lākin(na)* in the Qurʾān:

Q 2:154 *wa-lā taqūlū li-man yuqtalu fī sabīli llāhi ʾamwātun bal ʾaḥyāʾun* ***wa-lākin*** *lā taš*ʿ*urūn*
Do[p] not say of those who are killed in the way of God, 'dead'. No. They are living, **but$_{PA}$** you do not perceive [that].

Q 7:79 *fa-tawallā ʿanhum wa-qāla yā-qawmi la-qad ʾablaġtukum risālata rabbī wa-naṣaḥtu lakum* ***wa-lākin*** *lā tuḥibbūna n-nāṣiḥīn*
So he turned from them and said, 'O my people, I conveyed to you the message of my Lord and I gave you good advice, **but$_{PA}$** you do not love those who give good advice.'

Q 46:23 *qāla ʾinnama l-ʿilmu ʿinda llāhi wa-ʾuballiġukum mā ʾursiltu bihī* ***wa-lākinnī*** *ʾarākum qawman tajhalūn*
He said, 'Knowledge is only with God. I convey to you[p] that with which I have been sent, **but$_{PA}$** I see that you are a people who are ignorant.'

These examples show that *lākin(na)* is used in the Qurʾān to express concessive adversative relations. Conversely, I could not find any unequivocal examples of concessive *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān.

7.5.3. Corrective *lākin(na)*

Lākin(na) in the verses cited below is equivalent to corrective *ʾillā* (cf. §7.3 above). Note, however, that the use of *lākin(na)* tends to be less economic than that of *ʾillā* – that is, the verb tends to recur after it.[51] In other words, the second conjunct tends to undergo fewer deletions when *lākin(na)* is used in comparison with when corrective *ʾillā* is utilised.

Q 2:225 *lā yuʾāḫiḏukumu llāhu bi-l-laġwi fī ʾaymānikum* ***wa-lākin*** *yuʾāḫiḏukum bi-mā kasabat qulūbukum*
God will not take you[P] to task for making slips in your oaths, **but**$_{SN}$ he will take you to task for what your hearts have garnered.

Q 3:67 *mā kāna ʾibrāhīmu yahūdiyyan wa-lā naṣrāniyyan* ***wa-lākin*** *kāna ḥanīfan musliman*
Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, **but**$_{SN}$ he was a man of pure faith (*ḥanīf*), one who surrendered

Q 4:157 *wa-mā qatalūhu wa-mā ṣalabūhu* ***wa-lākin*** *šubbiha lahum*
They did not kill him nor crucify him, **but**$_{SN}$ it was made to seem so to them

Q 5:6 *mā yurīdu llāhu li-yajʿala ʿalaykum min ḥarajin* ***wa-lākin*** *yurīdu li-yuṭahhirakum wa-li-yutimma niʿmatahū ʿalaykum*
God does not wish to place any difficulty on you,[52] **but**$_{SN}$ he wishes to make you pure and to complete his blessing on you

Q 10:104 *fa-lā ʾaʿbudu llaḏīna taʿbudūna min dūni llāhi* ***wa-lākin*** *ʾaʿbudu llāha llaḏī yatawaffākum*
I do not serve those whom you[P] serve apart from God, **but**$_{SN}$ I serve God, who will take you.

Q 22:37 *lan yanāla llāha luḥūmuhā wa-lā dimāʾuhā* ***wa-lākin*** *yanāluhu t-taqwā minkum*
Their flesh and their blood will not reach God, **but**$_{SN}$ the piety from you reaches him.

---

[51] Birnstiel ("Selected features", 49, n. 81) remarks that "in the pattern *mā kāna... wa-lākin* the copula is not repeated". Considering Q 3:67 (cited below), it would be more accurate to conclude that there is a *tendency* of *kāna* not to recur after *wa-lākin*, although in general the verb does tend to reappear after *wa-lākin*.

[52] Jones (unpublished) has collected instances of *li-* used in the Qurʾān instead of *ʾan*, remarking that, while most occurrences are debatable, this is hardly the case with the verb *ʾarāda*: Q 9:55 (*li-yuʿaḏḏibahum*), 33:33 (*li-yuḏhiba*), 75:5 (*li-yafjura*), 4:26 (*li-yubayyina*), 5:6 (*li-yajʿala*, *li-yuṭahhirakum* and *wa-li-yutimma*) and 2:185 (*wa-li-tukmilū* and *wa-li-tukabbirū*).

Q 22:46 *fa-ʾinnahā lā taʿma l-ʾabṣāru* ***wa-lākin*** *taʿma l-qulūbu llatī fi ṣ-ṣudūr*
It is not the eyes that go blind, **but**$_{SN}$ the hearts that are in the breasts.

However, in some occurrences, the verb in the second conjunct does not recur:

Q 33:40 *mā kāna muḥammadun ʾabā ʾaḥadin min rijālikum* ***wa-lākin*** *rasūla llāhi wa-ḫātama n-nabiyyīna*
Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, **but**$_{SN}$ the messenger of God and the seal of the prophets.

Q 12:111 *mā kāna ḥadīṯan yuftarā* ***wa-lākin*** *taṣdīqa llaḏī bayna yadayhi wa-tafṣīla kulli šayʾin wa-hudan wa-raḥmatan li-qawmin yuʾminūn*
It is not a tale that is invented, **but**$_{SN}$ a confirmation of what [has gone] before it and a setting forth of everything and a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe.

7.5.4. Summary

Let us add these preliminary data from Qurʾānic Arabic to the previous table:

	Contrast	Concessive	Corrective
English	*but*	*but*	*but*
French	*mais*	*mais*	*mais*
Spanish	*pero*	*pero*	*sino*
German	*aber*	*aber*	*sondern*
Swedish	*men*	*men*	*utan*
Hebrew	*aval*	*aval*	*ela*
Romanian	*iar*	*însă, dar*	*ci*
Qurʾānic Arabic	*lākin(na)* *ʾillā*	*lākin(na)*	*lākin(na)* *ʾillā*

Table 3: Izutsu's distributional patterns of adversative connectives with data from Qurʾānic Arabic

Table 3 shows, first and foremost, that *lākin(na)* expresses a wider array of adversative functions than *ʾillā*. Furthermore – perhaps no less importantly – the data from Qurʾānic Arabic seem to point to a different distribution of adversative connectives compared to other languages thus far described in research. This distribution, which may also be connected to the development of adversative *ʾillā* briefly discussed in §7.4, requires further research.

7.6. Summary

This chapter established the function of *ʾillā* as an adversative particle. It has shown that there is mostly no syntactical difference between adversative and exceptive *ʾillā*. Nevertheless, since exceptive constructions and adversative connectives have different characteristics, *ʾillā* can sometimes only be analysed as adversative.

Of the three main adversative types discussed in cross-linguistic research on adversative relations, viz., contrast, concessive and corrective, only contrastive and corrective *ʾillā* are found in the Qurʾān. Each of these usages has been described in detail.

The chapter concluded with a comparison between adversative *ʾillā* and *lākin(na)*, which has illustrated that *lākin(na)*, unlike *ʾillā*, is used to express all three main adversative functions and that constructions with corrective *ʾillā* are mostly more economic, or concise, than constructions in which corrective *lākin(na)* is used.

Chapter 8: Cross-type investigations of *ʾillā* constructions

Chapters 5–7 each classified, examined, and described the features of, one type of *ʾillā*. This chapter complements these three chapters. It investigates characteristics of *ʾillā* that are relevant to more than a single type of *ʾillā* and that are therefore not included in any of the previous three chapters.

8.1. The relationship between informational focus and the type of *ʾillā*

Section 5.1.5 has shown that *ʾillā* is often followed by the focused constituent of the sentence, or the main point intended to be conveyed by the proposition. This section further examines the relationship between *ʾillā* and informational focus.

8.1.1. Complete vs incomplete part A

This sub-section mainly explores the relationship between the completeness of part A, the location of the core message and the focused constituent. Birnstiel has pointed out that in many negative examples *ʾillā* is followed by the "logical predicate", or the most salient piece of information.[1] In this section, this assertion will be investigated in further detail. Consider the following examples:

Q 2:78#2/45:24 *(wa-)ʾin hum* ***ʾillā*** *YAẒUNNŪN*
They only conjecture.

Q 2:9 *yuḫādiʿūna llāha wa-llaḏīna ʾāmanū wa-lā yaḫdaʿūna* ***ʾillā*** *ʾANFUSAHUM*
They try to deceive God and those who believe, but only themselves they deceive.

Q 2:45 *ʾinnahā la-kabīratun* ***ʾillā*** *ʿALA L-ḪĀŠIʿĪN*
It is a grave thing, but not for the humble.

Q 2:143 *wa-ʾin kānat la-kabīratan* ***ʾillā*** *ʿALA LLAḎĪNA HADA LLĀHU*
It was a grave thing, but not for those whom God guided.

Q 15:8 *mā nunazzilu l-malāʾikata* ***ʾillā*** *BI-L-ḤAQQI*
We (God) do not send down the angels but with the truth.

[1] Birnstiel, "Selected features", 183.

Q 16:64 *wa-mā ʾanzalnā ʿalayka l-kitāba* ***ʾillā*** *LI-TUBAYYINA LAHUMU LLAḌI ḪTALAFŪ FĪHI WA-HUDAN WA-RAḤMATAN LI-QAWMIN YUʾMINŪN*

We have not sent down to you the Scripture but so that you may explain to them that about which they differ and as a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe.

Q 15:11 *wa-mā yaʾtīhim min rasūlin* ***ʾillā*** *KĀNŪ BIHĪ YASTAHZIʾŪN*

And no messenger came to them without their mocking him.

The above seven sentences may be divided into three groups based on the characteristics of their part A: (1) in the first two examples, part A is negative and syntactically incomplete; (2) in the next three examples, part A is affirmative (and syntactically complete); and (3) in the remaining three verses, part A is negative and syntactically complete.

The core message conveyed in all seven examples is positioned after *ʾillā*. Q 2:9 conveys that, despite the Jews' efforts, it is *themselves* that they deceive. The sentence in Q 2:78#2/45:24 emphasises the lack of knowledge of some of the Jews – information that appears after *ʾillā*.

The main message delivered by Q 2:45 and 2:143, whose part A is affirmative, is also positioned after *ʾillā*: both verses do not focus on the difficulty of the matter, but rather on the ease for those who truly believe. The same applies to the *ʾillā* constructions in Q 15:8, 16:64 and 15:11, whose part A is negative and syntactically complete. In fact, omitting part B from these last five verses would result in a syntactically complete sentence, but also divest the verse of the very point it is meant to deliver. In other words, although omitting it would not change the syntactical completeness of the sentence in these instances, part B is an integral part of the information conveyed by the sentence and therefore cannot be omitted.[2]

Thus far, examples in which part B is in focus have been presented. While this is always true when part A is syntactically incomplete, part B does not always contain the focused constituent when part A is syntactically complete. Let us examine, for instance, Q 2:246, whose part A is affirmative (and syntactically complete):

[2] More can be said regarding examples of our third group in particular, whose part A is negative and syntactically complete: as shown under §5.1.2 above, omitting the *ʾillā* phrase from such sentences would not only take away the sentence's main point but also reverse the polarity of the original proposition: omitting *ʾillā bi-l-ḥaqqi* from Q 15:8, for instance, would leave us with *mā nunazzilu l-malāʾikata*, "We (God) do not send down the angels", while the verse presupposes the exact opposite, namely, that the angels *are* sent down. We will return to this point in more detail in §8.1.2 below.

Q 2:246 *qāla hal ʿasaytum ʾin kutiba ʿalaykumu l-qitālu ʾallā tuqātilū qālū wa-mā lanā ʾallā nuqātila fī sabīli llāhi wa-qad ʾuḫrijnā min diyārinā wa-ʾabnāʾinā fa-lammā kutiba ʿalayhimu l-qitālu* TAWALLAW ***ʾillā*** *qalīlan minhum*

[...] He said, 'Is it possible that, if fighting is prescribed for you[p], you will not fight?' They said, 'Why should we not fight in the way of God, when we have been expelled from our dwelling and [lost] our children?' Yet, when fighting was prescribed for them, THEY TURNED THEIR BACKS, except a few of them.

The salient new information in this verse is that, although some of the Banū ʾIsrāʾīl had said they would fight, when time came, they did the exact opposite. The focused constituent here is *tawallaw*, "they turned their backs", which is included in part A. Moreover, unlike in §5.1.2 above,[3] if the *ʾillā* phrase were omitted, the polarity of the proposition would not change. The same applies to Q 4:66, whose part A is negative and syntactically complete:

Q 4:66 *wa-law ʾannā katabnā ʿalayhim ʾani qtulū ʾanfusakum ʾawi ḫrujū min diyārikum* MĀ FAʿALŪHU ***ʾillā*** *qalīlun minhum wa-law ʾannahum faʿalū mā yūʿaẓūna bihī la-kāna ḫayran lahum wa-ʾašadda taṯbītā*

If we (God) had prescribed for them: 'Kill one another' or 'Leave your dwellings', THEY WOULD NOT HAVE DONE IT, except a few of them; but had they done what they were admonished to do, it would have been better and more strengthening for them.

Here, too, the most salient constituent is in part A: the context indicates that the salient part of the message delivered in this verse is that of not following God's commandment had it been given. This verse will be further discussed below.

The following table summarises the examples adduced above:

Example(s)	Part A	Focus
Q 2:45 and 2:143	Affirmative and syntactically complete	Part B
Q 2:246	Affirmative and syntactically complete	Part A
Q 15:8, 16:64 and 15:11	Negative and syntactically complete	Part B
Q 4:66	Negative and syntactically complete	Part A
Q 2:9 and 2:78#2/45:24	Negative and syntactically incomplete	Part B

Table 4: A summary of the examples hitherto discussed with regard to their part A and focus

[3] See the previous footnote.

In sentences whose part A is syntactically complete – whether affirmative or negative – part B may or may not contain the focused constituent. When the focused constituent is located in part B, the message in part A is wanting; part B in these cases is therefore an indispensable component of the message conveyed by the verse. Unlike when part A is syntactically complete, when part A is (negative and) syntactically incomplete part B is necessary both syntactically and in terms of IS. This necessity will prove crucial in the discussions below.

The following test, applied above, assists in detecting the focused constituent:

(i) For sentences whose part A is syntactically complete: would the message's main point be lost if the *ʾillā* phrase were omitted? If so, then the focused constituent is in part B.

For sentences whose part A is negative and syntactically complete, this test could also be worded as follows: would omitting part B change the polarity of the proposition in part A (for all cases)?[4] If so, then the constituent in focus is included in part B.

This test may be supported by contextual clues, which will be considered as "test 2" for convenience:

(ii) What is the adjacent sentence, verse or passage about? The constituent in focus is more likely to be related to what the adjacent unit revolves around.

Both tests above could be illustrated using Q 34:20–21 as a Qurʾānic example:

> Q 34:20–21 *wa-la-qad ṣaddaqa ʿalayhim ʾiblīsu ẓannahū* FA-TTABAʿŪHU ***ʾillā*** *farīqan mina l-muʾminīn. wa-mā kāna lahū ʿalayhim min sulṭānin ʾillā li-naʿlama man yuʾminu bi-l-ʾākhirati mimman huwa minhā fī šakkin*
>
> ʾIblīs found his opinion of them true, AND THEY FOLLOWED HIM, **except for** a group of believers. He had power over them [i.e., over those who followed him] only for us (God) to recognise those who believe in the world to come from those who are in doubt about it.

Although the existence of a (small) sub-set of believers who did not follow ʾIblīs may theologically be highly important, the main point of the sentence, I maintain, is that the majority of the people of Sabaʾ did follow him – that is, the focused constituent in this sentence is in part A. If part B were omitted, the main message – that ʾIblīs succeeded in his efforts and gained power over those who followed him – would

[4] That is, this test does not apply to cases that belong to the "unless" category.

remain intact (test 1). *ʿAlayhim* in the next verse also refers to the majority of the people of Sabaʾ – i.e., the subject of the verb in part A – and not to the believing few (test 2). Both tests, then, indicate that the focused constituent is in part A.

Returning to Q 4:66, repeated here for convenience, let us now summarise and develop the above discussion.

> Q 4:66 *wa-law ʾannā katabnā ʿalayhim ʾani qtulū ʾanfusakum ʾawi ḫrujū min diyārikum* MĀ FAʿALŪHU ***ʾillā*** *qalīlun minhum wa-law ʾannahum faʿalū mā yūʿaẓūna bihī la-kāna ḫayran lahum wa-ʾašadda taṯbītā*
>
> If we (God) had prescribed for them: 'Kill one another' or 'Leave your dwellings', THEY WOULD NOT HAVE DONE IT, except a few of them; but had they done what they were admonished to do, it would have been better and more strengthening for them.

If part B (*ʾillā qalīlun minhum*) were omitted, the polarity of the main message would not change, which points to part A including the focused constituent (test 1). The sentence following part B revolves around the subject of *mā faʿalūhu* – that is, the set as a whole and not the excepted few – a further indication that the sentence's focused constituent is in part A (test 2).

Now, the question of the location of the focused constituent in Q 4:66 may prove even more revealing: it could explain the use of the plural verb *faʿalūhu* in part A. Being negative, part A could theoretically be either syntactically complete or incomplete. Using a verb in the singular, viz., *mā faʿalahū ʾillā qalīlun minhum*, would have rendered part A syntactically incomplete, which would thereby force the focused constituent to be in part B: "only a few of them would have done it". However, the intention is for *part A* to include the focused constituent – that is, to refer to the set as a whole and say "they would not have done it (except a few)". Therefore, a negative incomplete part A *necessarily could not* have been used in Q 4:66. For part A to include the focused constituent, it *must* be syntactically complete, which requires the use of a plural verb.[5]

---

[5] Nöldeke (*Zur Grammatik*, 42–43 = §37) remarks that Q 4:66 does not obey the general grammatical rules since the sentence *mā faʿalūhu* is "abgeschlossen". According to the general use, he adds, we should expect either *qalīlan*, as is indeed found in the *maṣāḥif* from Damascus (see, e.g., al-Ḫaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*, II, 101–102), or *faʿalahū* in the singular. I have shown above why *faʿalahū* should in fact not be expected. The fluctuation in the case of the complement of *ʾillā*, which is also apparent in the consonantal text, is curious and should be dealt with systematically in a separate study. For now, Cook ("Stemma", 97) considers the variant *qalīlan* (= S3) as "more or less wrong". Note also ʾUbayy's

Q 4:66 shows how a simple morphological feature, namely, the use of a verb in the plural instead of the singular, may play a crucial role in the detection of the intended message: the use of a verb in the singular (a morphological feature) would have created a syntactically incomplete sentence (a syntactical feature), which would in turn have affected the location of the focused constituent in the sentence (an IS feature) and thereby the conveyed message. It is thanks to the *necessary overlap* between the syntactical incompleteness of part A and the focused constituent being included in part B that the identification of the focused constituent can be substantiated.

Another example is Q 78:38:

> Q 78:38 *yawma yaqūmu r-rūḥu wa-l-malāʾikatu ṣaffan* LĀ YATAKALLAMŪNA *ʾillā man ʾaḏina lahu r-raḥmānu wa-qāla ṣawābā*
> On the day when the spirit and the angels stand in ranks. THEY WILL NOT SPEAK, except those to whom the Merciful has granted permission and who say what is right.

Were the verb in the singular (*lā yatakallamu*), the intuitive reading would be that the original proposition is affirmative (*yatakallamu man ʾaḏina lahu r-raḥmānu wa-qāla ṣawābā*) and the NEG … *ʾillā* construction is added to it to express exclusiveness. This would have translated as follows: "Only those to whom the Merciful has granted permission and who speak aright will speak". The use of a plural verb, however, alters this analysis: now the negation is not part of a NEG … *ʾillā* construction, but it is part of the original proposition (*lā yatakallamūna*), to which the *ʾillā* phrase is added as an exception phrase.

As in Q 4:66, the use of a singular verb in part A – that is, *lā yatakallamu* – would render part A syntactically incomplete and force the focused constituent to be in part B. For part A to contain the focused constituent, a plural verb must be used before *ʾillā*. Beginning from the other end of this argument, the choice to use a plural verb may indicate that the most salient point conveyed by the verse was intended to be that no one shall speak on the Day of Judgement and that the

---

reading *qalīlun* in Q 2:246 and Ibn Masʿūd, ʾUbayy and al-ʾAʿmaš's reading *qalīlun* in Q 2:249 (this latter one was noted by Nöldeke, *Zur Grammatik*, 43). No variant reading is documented for Q 34:20 *farīqan*. Q 4:46 *fa-lā yuʾminūna ʾillā qalīlā* should be excluded, since *qalīlā* is in the rhyming slot (cf. Nöldeke, *Zur Grammatik*, 43; Brockelmann, *Grundriss*, II, 650).

exception, however theologically important, was meant to be packaged as peripheral.

8.1.2. Complete part A: "Except" vs "only"

It has thus far been demonstrated that syntactical incompleteness is necessarily related to the focused constituent following *ʾillā*. This sub-section will examine cases in which part A is syntactically complete. It has been shown that the "only" category (§5.1) includes not only cases in which part A is syntactically incomplete but also cases in which it is syntactically complete but the message conveyed by it is incomplete. It has also been shown that part A is syntactically complete when *ʾillā* is exceptive or adversative, but in these last two categories the message conveyed by part A is complete. How, then, can one determine to which category an instance of syntactically complete part A belongs?

Cases of a syntactically complete part A are indeed usually more difficult to classify. The main two possible categories here are "only" and "except". This sub-section discusses the considerations behind subsuming a given verse under one of these categories. Consider the following two verses:

> Q 6:151 *wa-lā taqtulu n-nafsa llatī ḥarrama llāhu* ***ʾillā*** *bi-l-ḥaqqi*
> And do[P] not kill the person that God has forbidden, **except** by right.

> Q 2:80 *wa-qālū lan tamassana n-nāru* ***ʾillā*** *ʾayyāman maʿdūdatan*
> And they say, 'The Fire will touch us **only** for a few days.'

In both verses, part A is syntactically complete: all syntactically necessary participants – that is, the subject, the verb and the verb's object – are in part A. The adverbial phrase in part B, albeit connected to the verb, is syntactically dispensable: it could technically be omitted from the sentence without rendering it syntactically incomplete. However, there is an important difference between these verses: whereas the core message of Q 6:151 is the command not to kill any person that God has forbidden to kill – that is, it is in part A – the crux of Q 2:80 is not in part A, but in part B. This is evident from the verse following it:

> Q 2:81 *balā man kasaba sayyiʾatan wa-ʾaḥāṭat bihī ḫaṭīʾatuhū fa-ʾulāʾika ʾaṣḥābu n-nāri hum fīhā ḫālidūn*
> No. Those who earn evil and are encompassed by their sin – those are the companions of the Fire; they will remain in it for ever.

According to this verse, contrary to the claims of the set of Jews mentioned in v. 79, they will remain in Hell *forever*. It can be inferred that the core of their argument in v. 80 is that they will remain in hell not for eternity, but *for a few days*. Therefore, *ʾayyāman maʿdūdatan* – albeit syntactically unnecessary – is an indispensable part of the sentence, as it is the very core of the conveyed message.

As discussed under §5.1.2 above, the difference between the two verses presented above can further be shown by omitting the *ʾillā* phrase from the sentence: omitting *ʾillā bi-l-ḥaqqi* from Q 6:151 would not reverse the polarity of the conveyed message. However, omitting *ʾillā ʾayyāman maʿdūdatan* from Q 2:80 (viz. *lan tamassana n-nāru*, "The Fire will not touch us") would change the polarity of the Jews' argument, which in fact presupposes the exact opposite: the sentence *lan tamassana n-nāru ʾillā ʾayyāman maʿdūdatan* presupposes residing in hell. This sentence indicates that those Jews did realise that their deeds would lead them to hell; however, they claimed that they would remain there only for a few days.

In sum, in cases of the "only" type whose part A is syntactically complete the focused constituent follows *ʾillā*. Together with the information from §8.1.1 above, it may be concluded that the focus in all cases of the "only" type, whether part A is syntactically complete or not, is in part B. With exceptive *ʾillā*, however, the focused constituent may either follow or precede *ʾillā*. Differently put, if the focused constituent is in part A, the type of *ʾillā* cannot be "only". Cases such as Q 6:151, then, in which omitting the *ʾillā* phrase would not change the polarity of the proposition, belong to the "except" type of *ʾillā* and should be understood and translated accordingly.

8.2. The position of *ʾillā* phrases in relation to their host

Exceptive *ʾillā* phrases typically – but not always – immediately follow the expression that they qualify. As illustrated in Figure 4 under §6.1 above (repeated below), this expression is termed the host of the exception phrase (EP), and the phrase to which the EP relates within the host is termed the associate of the EP.

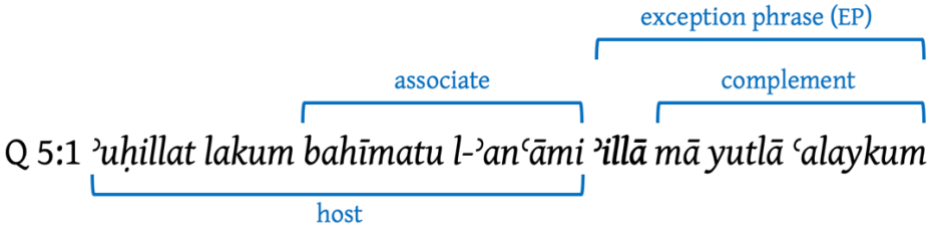

Figure 4 (repeated): A schematic representation of terms related to exceptive constructions in Q 5:1

Thus, in Q 2:150, the host of the EP is *li-ʾallā … ḥujjatun*, the associate of the EP is *li-n-nāsi*, and the EP is *ʾillā llaḏīna ẓalamū minhum*:

> Q 2:150 *li-ʾallā yakūna li-n-nāsi ʿalaykum ḥujjatun* ***ʾillā*** *llaḏīna ẓalamū minhum*
> so that the people may not have any argument against you[p] – **except** those of them who do wrong.

Note that, while the EP is often positioned immediately after its associate, as in Q 5:1, in Q 2:150 it is positioned immediately after its host but not immediately after its associate.

As will be shown below, and in keeping with §7.2.1 above, adversative *ʾillā* is syntactically identical to exceptive *ʾillā* (but see §8.4). Therefore, both exceptive and adversative *ʾillā* will be discussed together below. For the sake of simplification, the term "host" will be used whether *ʾillā* is exceptive or adversative. However, when *ʾillā* is adversative, the term "compared item" (CI) will be used as the equivalent of the associate of the EP (as in §7.1 above).

8.2.1. Identifying the host

Let us first discuss how the host is detected. The host of *ʾillā* may be detected by identifying the proposition given rise to by the EP (as discussed in §6.1 above). This can be achieved by (1) adding "which" or "who" or by (2) identifying the predicate of the EP in the proposition expressed by the EP. For *ʾillā ʾan*, "unless" (≈ "except if"), detecting the host can be done by (1) adding "in which case" or by (2) identifying the apodosis complementing the protasis EP. Examples:

> Q 5:1 *ʾuḥillat lakum bahīmatu l-ʾanʿāmi* ***ʾillā*** *mā yutlā ʿalaykum*
> Permitted to you[p] [as food] is the beast of the herds, **except** those which are about to be recited to you. [which are not permitted to you / but those [of them] which are about to be recited to you are not permitted to you]

> Q 2:150 *li-ʾallā yakūna li-n-nāsi ʿalaykum ḥujjatun* ***ʾillā*** *llaḏīna ẓalamū minhum*
> so that the people may not have any argument against you[p] – **except** those of them who do wrong. [who will have an argument against you]

> Q 2:237 *wa-ʾin ṭallaqtumūhunna min qabli ʾan tamassūhunna wa-qad faraḍtum lahunna farīḍatan fa-niṣfu mā faraḍtum* ***ʾillā*** *ʾan yaʿfūna ʾaw yaʿfuwa llaḏī bi-yadihī ʿuqdatu n-nikāḥi* […]
> If you[p] divorce them[f] before you have touched them but you have already fixed a marriage-portion for them, [you should pay] half of what you have fixed, **unless** they

agree to forego it or the one in whose hand is the knot of marriage agrees to forego it. [in which case you should not pay half of what you have fixed / but if they agree to forego it or the one in whose hand is the knot of marriage agrees to forego it, you should not pay half of what you have fixed]

In Q 5:1, one may add "which are not permitted to you" (= 1), or "but those [of them] which are about to be recited to you are not permitted to you" (= 2) – both of which indicate that the host is "Permitted to you[p] [as food] is the beast of the herds". In Q 2:237, one may add "in which case you should not pay half of what you have fixed" (= 1), or "but if they agree to forego it or the one in whose hand is the knot of marriage agrees to forego it, you should not pay half of what you have fixed" (= 2) – both of which indicate that the host is "[you should pay] half of what you have fixed".

8.2.2. *ʾIllā* phrases following their host

With the means to identify the host of the EP, the position of the *ʾillā* phrase in relation to its host will now be examined in detail. As exemplified by Q 2:237 cited above, the EP immediately follows its host in conditional sentences. In the following additional examples, as in Q 2:237, the host is the apodosis:

Q 17:62 *la-ʾin ʾaḫḫartani ʾilā yawmi l-qiyāmati la-ʾaḥtanikanna durriyyatahū* ***ʾillā*** *qalīlā*
[...] 'If you[s] give me respite to the Day of Resurrection, I shall extirpate his seed **except** a few.' [whom I will not extirpate]

Q 4:92#2 *wa-man qatala muʾminan ḫaṭaʾan fa-taḥrīru raqabatin muʾminatin wa-diyatun musallamatun ʾilā ʾahlihī* ***ʾillā*** *ʾan yaṣṣaddaqū* [...]
Whoever kills a believer by mistake must set free a believing slave and pay blood-money to the victim's family, **unless** they remit it as alms. [in which case the blood-money does not end up in the possession of the victim's family]

8.2.3. *ʾIllā* phrases positioned within their host

So far, only examples in which the EP follows its host have been adduced. The following section will present instances in which the EP is positioned within its host. In such cases, the EP is positioned immediately after its associate. Thus, in Q 8:16 below, the host is the entire sentence, and the exact position of the EP is immediately after the protasis, which is effectively its associate:

Q 8:16 *wa-man yuwallihim yawmaᵓidin duburahū* ***ᵓillā*** *mutaḥarrifan li-qitālin ᵓaw mutaḥayyizan ᵓilā fiᵓatin fa-qad bāᵓa bi-ġaḍabin mina llāhi* [...]
Those who turn their backs to them on that day – **unless** [they turn their backs] turning away to fight or withdrawing to [join another] company – are burdened with anger from God. [in which case they are not burdened with anger from God]

Joseph Witztum has suggested a similar analysis for Q 4:24: according to Q 24:23–25, female slaves are not "God's decree", or ideal marriage partners, for the believers.[6]

Q 4:24 *wa-l-muḥṣanātu*[7] *mina n-nisāᵓi* ***ᵓillā*** *mā malakat ᵓaymānukum kitāba llahi ᶜalaykum* [...]
The chaste ones from among the women – **but not**[8] your[p] female slaves – [are][9] God's decree for you [...] [who are not God's decree for you]

Furthermore, Witztum follows Motzki in understanding this *ᵓillā* as adversative, since there is no overlap between *al-muḥṣināt*,[10] "chaste women", and the female slaves, who are considered unchaste.[11]

To sum up the analysis of Q 4:24, then, the adversative *ᵓillā* phrase is located within its host and puts the CI complementing *ᵓillā*, viz. *mā malakat ᵓaymānukum*, "your[p] female slaves", in contrast with the preceding CI, *al-muḥṣanātu mina n-nisāᵓi*, "chaste women".

It is common to find *ᵓillā* phrases immediately following their associates in lists. This is expected, since it would otherwise not be clear which of the items on the list are qualified by the EP. Consider, e.g., Q 70:22–35 (≈ Q 23:1–10):

(19) *ᵓinna l-ᵓinsāna ḫuliqa halūᶜā* (20) *ᵓiḏā massahu š-šarru jazūᶜā* (21) *wa-ᵓiḏā massahu l-ḫayru manūᶜā* (22) *ᵓilla l-muṣallīn* (23) *allaḏīna hum ᶜalā ṣalātihim dāᵓimūn* (24) *wa-llaḏīna fī ᵓamwālihim ḥaqqun maᶜlūm* (25) *li-s-sāᵓili wa-l-maḥrūm* (26) *wa-llaḏīna yuṣaddiqūna bi-yawmi d-dīn* (27) *wa-llaḏīna hum min ᶜaḏābi rabbihim mušfiqūn* (28) *ᵓinna ᶜaḏāba rabbihim ġayru maᵓmūn* (29) *wa-llaḏīna hum li-furūjihim ḥāfiẓūn* (30) ***ᵓillā*** *ᶜalā ᵓazwājihim ᵓaw mā malakat ᵓaymānuhum fa-ᵓinnahum ġayru malūmīn* (31) *fa-mani btaġā warāᵓa ḏālika fa-ᵓulāᵓika humu l-ᶜādūn* (32) *wa-llaḏīna hum li-ᵓamānātihim wa-ᶜahdihim rāᶜūn* (33) *wa-llaḏīna hum bi-*

[6] Witztum, "Q 4:24 revisited", esp. 1–15. According to Witztum, v. 25 permits marrying female slaves only as a necessity.
[7] As stated in the introduction to the present thesis, the transliteration is made according to the reading of Ḥafṣ from ᶜĀṣim, but see Witztum, "Q 4:24 revisited", 3, n. 5.
[8] This translation is explained below.
[9] For the reading *kitābu* for *kitāba*, see Witztum, "Q 4:24 revisited", 13, n. 40.
[10] For this reading, see Witztum, "Q 4:24 revisited", 3, n. 5.
[11] Witztum, "Q 4:24 revisited", 13–14 nn. 41–42; Motzki, "Wal-muḥṣanātu".

šahādātihim qāʾimūn (34) *wa-llaḏīna hum ʿalā ṣalātihim yuḥāfiẓūn* (35) *ʾulāʾika fī jannātin mukramūn*.

(19) Man was created anxious, (20) fretful when evil touches him, (21) grudging when good touches him. (22) But not those who pray, (23) who pray constantly, (24) and in whose wealth there is a known right (25) for the beggar and the deprived; (26) and who believe in the Day of Judgement (27) and who are afraid of the punishment of their Lord (28) – there is no security from the punishment of their Lord – (29) and who guard their private parts – (30) **except** with their spouses and what their right hands possess, in which case they are not blameworthy, (31) but those who seek more than that are transgressors – (32) and who keep their trusts and their covenant, (33) and who stand by their testimony, (34) and who observe their prayers – (35) these will be honoured in gardens.

The part in vv. 22–34 is in fact one long unit containing a list of virtues. One of them is v. 29 (= Q 23:5) *wa-llaḏīna hum li-furūjihim ḥāfiẓūn*, "and who guard their private parts", which is qualified by v. 30 (= Q 23:6) *ʾillā ʿalā ʾazwājihim ʾaw mā malakat ʾaymānuhum fa-ʾinnahum ġayru malūmīn*, "except [or: unless it is] with their spouses and what their right hands possess, in which case[12] they are not blameworthy". Additional examples:

Q 4:43 *yā-ʾayyuha llaḏīna ʾāmanū lā taqrabu ṣ-ṣalāta wa-ʾantum sukārā ḥattā taʿlamū mā taqūlūna wa-lā junuban* ***ʾillā*** *ʿābirī sabīlin ḥattā taġtasilū*

O you who believe, do not draw near to prayer when you are intoxicated, until you know what you say; nor when you are polluted, **except** [when] traversing a way, until you have washed yourselves. [in which case you may draw near to prayer while polluted]

Q 5:3 *ḥurrimat ʿalaykumu l-maytatu wa-d-damu wa-laḥmu l-ḫinzīri [...] wa-n-naṭīḥatu wa-mā ʾakala s-sabuʿu* ***ʾillā*** *mā ḏakkaytum wa-mā ḏubiḥa ʿala n-nuṣubi [...] ḏālikum fisqun*

Forbidden to you[p] are carrion; blood; the flesh of the pig; [...]; the gored; what has been devoured by beasts of prey – {**unless** you slaughter [it]/**except** for what you slaughter}; whatever has been sacrificed to idols; [...]. That is an abomination for you. [in which case it is not forbidden to you]

[12] For this *fa-*, see §8.3.2 below.

Q 11:40#1 (≈ Q 23:27) *qulna ḥmil fīhā min kulli zawjayni ṯnayni wa-ʾahlaka* ***ʾillā*** *man sabaqa ʿalayhi l-qawlu wa-man ʾāmana*

we (God) said, 'Load into it two of every kind and your family – **except** for those against whom the word has already gone forth – and those who believe.' [whom you should not load into it]

8.2.4. Hosts extending over more than one sentence

The host of *ʾillā* may occasionally be a unit larger than a single sentence. In Q 2:282, its host is an entire passage:

Q 2:282 *yā-ʾayyuha llaḏīna ʾāmanū ʾiḏā tadāyantum bi-daynin ʾilā ʾajalin musamman fa-ktubūhu wa-l-yaktub baynakum kātibun bi-l-ʿadli [...] fa-ʾin kāna llaḏī ʿalayhi l-ḥaqqu safīhan ʾaw ḍaʿīfan ʾaw lā yastaṭīʿu ʾan yumilla huwa fa-l-yumlil waliyyuhū bi-l-ʿadli wa-stašhidū šahīdayni min rijālikum fa-ʾin lā yakūnā rajulayni [...] wa-lā yaʾba š-šuhadāʾu ʾiḏā mā duʿū wa-lā tasʾamū ʾan taktubūhu ṣaġīran ʾaw kabīran ʾilā ʾajalihī ḏālikum ʾaqsaṭu ʿinda llāhi wa-ʾaqwamu li-š-šahādati wa-ʾadnā ʾallā tartābū* ***ʾillā*** *ʾan takūna tijāratan ḥāḍiratan tudīrūnahā baynakum fa-laysa ʿalaykum junāhun ʾallā taktubūhā [...]*

O you[p] who believe, when you contract debts with one another for a fixed term, record it in writing. Let a scribe record it justly in writing between you. [...] If the one who has incurred the debt is a fool or weak or unable to dictate, let his patron dictate justly. Call two of your men to act as witnesses; and if there are not two men, [...] and let not witnesses refuse, whenever they are summoned. Do not be averse to writing it down, big or little, [with] its term. That is more equitable with God and surer for testimony, and more likely to stop you being in doubt. **But** if it is available merchandise that you circulate amongst you, there is no fault for you not to record it. [...]

In this example, after a lengthy and detailed set of stipulations regarding the recording of debt in writing, comes an adversative[13] sentence permitting not to keep a record when there is essentially no debt.

[13] The sentence beginning with *ʾillā ʾan* may seem to function as an exception to the entire preceding passage, its literal translation being along the lines of "[All of this should be done] unless it is available merchandise that you circulate amongst you, in which case there is no fault for you not to record it". However, this so-called exception is in fact a completely different scenario: while the previous passage regulates the handling of *debts* – that is, situations in which there is no immediate return in exchange for the taken goods – the passage following *ʾillā* refers to situations in which there is in fact *no debt*, as the remittal is immediate. *ʾIllā*, then, introduces not an exception but a different case from that dealt with in the previous passage. This is also the preferred interpretation of, e.g., al-Qurṭubī (IV, 457), ʾAbū Ḥayyān (II, 369) and al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī (II, 672–673).

A case in question is the following:

> Q 2:249#1 *fa-lammā faṣala Ṭālūtu bi-l-junūdi qāla ʾinna llāha mubtalīkum bi-naharin fa-man šariba minhu fa-laysa minnī wa-man lam yaṭʿamhu fa-ʾinnahū minnī* ***ʾillā*** *mani ġtarafa ġurfatan bi-yadihī fa-šaribū minhu ʾillā qalīlan minhum* [...]
>
> When Ṭālūt set out with the hosts, he said, 'God will test you by means of a river. Those who drink from it are not of [my party], and those who do not taste it are of [my party]; **excluded are** those who scoop up a little in the hand [i.e., those will also be of my party]'. They (all) drank from it except a few of them. [...]

This passage is reminiscent of Judges 7:5–7; however, there are many differences between the two, and so it is difficult to determine from the Biblical account whether the excluded group in the Qurʾān is of God's party or not.

If scooping up a little in the hand ends up in drinking the scooped water, then it makes little sense for the EP to qualify the latter conditional sentence. There are, then, two possible analyses: the host may either be the first conditional sentence alone (*fa-man šariba minhu fa-laysa minnī*) or extend over both conditional sentences preceding the EP (*fa-man šariba ... fa-ʾinnahū minnī*). While the former option makes more sense in terms of the content, it would make Q 2:249#1 the only case I found in which an EP does not immediately follow its host.[14] The latter option, however, makes Q 2:249#1 more syntactically accountable – as this would not be the only example of a host comprising more than a single sentence – but it means including a sentence that is clearly not qualified by the EP as part of the host.

The prevailing analysis in traditional commentaries prefers the former option: the latter conditional sentence is interpreted as a parenthetical one, positioned in between the excepted element (*al-mustaṯnā*) and the antecedent (*al-mustaṯnā minhu*), and it should be understood as if the former conditional sentence occurred later in the sentence (*wa-ʾaṣluha l-taʾḫīru*).[15] However, since I could not find other examples in which the EP does not immediately follow its host, I incline towards the latter option: both conditional sentences in Q 2:249#1 together form a single unit that is qualified by the immediately following EP.

---

[14] It should nevertheless be noted that commentators do not seem disturbed by the possibility of the host not appearing immediately before the EP – see below.

[15] See, e.g., al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, II, 526–527. The term *ʾaṣl* here refers to the original, or underlying, syntactical construction in the speaker's mind. See, e.g., Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 98–112.

8.2.5. Summary

In this section, the position of the *ʾillā* phrase in relation to its host and associate/preceding CI has been explored. It has been shown that the *ʾillā* phrase either immediately[16] follows its host or is positioned within it; in the latter case, it immediately follows its associate/CI. While the host is usually a single sentence, it may occasionally include a larger unit. In the Qurʾān, the *ʾillā* phrase never precedes its host nor its associate, as is occasionally found in extra-Qurʾānic Arabic (traditionally termed *istiṯnāʾ muqaddam*).[17]

8.3. *Fa-* following *ʾillā* constructions

The discussions in this section are not directly related to *ʾillā* constructions, but rather revolve around the conjunction *fa-* that occasionally follows them. Since I often comment on this *fa-* in the discussions elsewhere throughout this part of the thesis, I found it necessary to elaborate on its usage, as well as on the possible syntactical implications of its presence or absence.

8.3.1. Presence vs absence of *fa-* following part B

In some verses, as in Q 95:6 cited below, a *fa-* is used after the complement of *ʾillā*; in other verses, as in Q 84:25, no *fa-* occurs, as if the text had an imaginary full stop.

> Q 95:6 ***ʾillā*** *llaḏīna ʾāmanū wa-ʿamilu ṣ-ṣāliḥāti* *fa-lahum* *ʾajrun ġayru mamnūn.*
> **But not** those who believe and do good deeds – they will have an unfailing reward.

> Q 84:25 ***ʾillā*** *llaḏīna ʾāmanū wa-ʿamilu ṣ-ṣāliḥāti* *lahum* *ʾajrun ġayru mamnūn.*
> **But not** those who believe and do good deeds – they will have an unfailing reward.

These parallel verses show that the presence or absence of the conjunction *fa-* may indicate no more than a stylistic preference. However, this seemingly minute difference may also have broad implications: while it is clear from the *fa-* in cases such as the former that part B contains a mere equivalent of a phrase (*allaḏīna … ṣ-ṣāliḥāti*), which is in turn followed by a sentence (*fa-lahum … mamnūn*), cases such as the latter may technically be read such that part B contains a left-dislocation

[16] A possible exception is Q 2:249#1, discussed in §8.2.4 above.

[17] See also ʿUḍayma, I.1, 328; cf. Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, I, 324–325 = ch. 195; Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 510–511 = §262.10.

construction (*allaḏīna … mamnūn*) that includes the left-dislocated nominal phrase *allaḏīna ʾāmanū wa-ʿamilu ṣ-ṣāliḥāti*, "those who believe and do good deeds", and the main clause *lahum ʾajrun ġayru mamnūn*, "they will have an unfailing reward".[18] In other words, the absence of *fa-* blurs the line between the complement of *ʾillā* being a phrase and its being a sentence. This point will be mentioned again in §§8.4 and 9.2 below.

8.3.2. *Fa-* used after *ʾillā* constructions (mainly) in legal contexts

Many Qurʾānic stipulations are followed by exceptions introduced by *ʾillā*. In such cases, it is quite common to find a following sentence laying out how to handle exceptional cases. This is expressed using *fa-*:

> Q 2:282 *yā-ʾayyuha llaḏīna ʾāmanū ʾiḏā tadāyantum bi-daynin ʾilā ʾajalin musamman fa-ktubūhu […] ʾillā ʾan takūna tijāratan ḥāḍiratan tudīrūnahā baynakum* ***fa-****laysa ʿalaykum junāhun ʾallā taktubūhā […]*
>
> O you[p] who believe, when you contract debts with one another for a fixed term, record it in writing […]. This will not be the case if it is available merchandise that you circulate amongst you, **in which case** there is no fault for you not to record it. […][19]

> Q 9:3–4 *wa-ʾaḏānun mina llāhi wa-rasūlihī ʾila n-nāsi yawma l-ḥajji l-ʾakbari ʾanna llāha barīʾun mina l-mušrikīna wa-rasūluhū […]. ʾilla lladīna ʿāhadtum mina l-mušrikīna tumma lam yanquṣūkum šayʾan wa-lam yuẓāhirū ʿalaykum ʾaḥadan* ***fa-****ʾatimmū ʾilayhim ʿahdahum ʾilā muddatihim*
>
> And a proclamation from God and his messenger to the people on the day of the Great Pilgrimage that God and his messenger are quit of the polytheists […]. Except those polytheists with whom you[p] have made a covenant and who have then not failed you in anything and have not supported anyone against you – **in that case**, fulfil their covenant to them [to the end of its] term.

As is evident from the above translations, the most straightforward literal translation I could find for this *fa-* is "in which case". It could also occasionally be left untranslated, but it would still be preferable, in my view, to clarify in the

[18] Left-dislocation may be defined as involving a constituent that occurs outside of the left edge of the sentence boundary and has resumption within the sentence (Miller-Naudé and Naudé, "Left dislocation constructions", 617). These constructions are termed in traditional grammatical tradition *jumla ḏāt wajhayn* (see Wright, II, 256 = §§119–120; Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 366–376 = §§182–184).
[19] The translation of Q 2:282 here is more literal than the one in §8.2 above.

translation that the sentence it introduces is connected to the preceding one in a way that reflects the meaning of "in which case". For instance, in Q 9:4 cited above, a dash could suffice. The same *fa-* occurs in Q 2:150:

> Q 2:150 *wa-min ḥayṯu ḫarajta fa-walli wajhaka šaṭra l-masjidi l-ḥarāmi wa-ḥayṯu mā kuntum fa-wallū wujūhakum šaṭrahū li-ʾallā yakūna li-n-nāsi ʿalaykum ḥujjatun ʾilla lladīna ẓalamū minhum* ***fa-****lā taḫšawhum wa-ḫšawnī* [...]
>
> Wherever you[s] come from, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you[p] may be turn your[p] faces towards it, so that the people may not have any argument against you[p], except those of them who do wrong, **in which case** do not fear them, but fear me.

Translating the boldfaced *fa-* as "in which case" connects the following sentence to the EP. Thus, the verse conveys that if someone does have an argument against the believers' turning towards the Sacred Mosque, the believers should not be affected by it – or indeed they should fear God and do as they are told in this verse, and not fear the people arguing against them and return to the old *qibla*.

Another occurrence of this type of *fa-* is found in Q 24:5:

> (4) *wa-llaḏīna yarmūna l-muḥṣanāti ṯumma lam yaʾtū bi-ʾarbaʿati šuhadāʾa fa-jlidūhum ṯamānīna jaldatan wa-lā taqbalū lahum šahādatan ʾabadan wa-ʾulāʾika humu l-fāsiqūn* (5) *ʾilla lladīna tābū min baʿdi dālika wa-ʾaṣlaḥū* ***fa-****ʾinna llāha ġafūrun raḥīm*
>
> (4) Those who accuse chaste women, and then do not bring four witnesses, scourge them eighty lashes, and never accept their testimony [after that] – they are sinners – (5) Except for those who repent afterwards and make amends, **in which case** God is forgiving and compassionate.

My interpretation of this last passage requires further clarification. Although the boldfaced *fa-* clause in Q 24:5 may simply be interpreted as the reason for excluding those who repent and make amends (and accordingly translated "for God is forgiving and compassionate"), it may also be construed as instructing the believers not to scourge those who repent. In general, I would maintain, this final formula, which in Q 24:5 literally refers to God's forgiveness and compassion, should pragmatically be understood as an approval or a rejection of the previously mentioned action or behaviour. It is not uncommon to find in the Qurʾān formulae such as *ʾinna llāha ġafūrun raḥīm* whose pragmatic interpretation is similar. Consider the following:

Q 2:158 *wa-man taṭawwaʿa ḫayran fa-**ʾinna llāha šākirun ʿalīm***
Those who do good voluntarily – God is thankful and knowing.

Q 2:211 *wa-man yubaddil niʿmata llāhi min baʿdi mā jāʾathu fa-**ʾinna llāha šadīdu l-ʿiqāb***
Those who change God's blessing after it has come to them – God is severe in punishment.

Q 16:115 *fa-mani ḍṭurra ġayra bāġin wa-lā ʿādin fa-**ʾinna llāha ġafūrun raḥīm***
Whoever is compelled, neither desiring nor transgressing – your[s] Lord is forgiving and compassionate.[20]

Q 2:226 *li-llaḏīna yuʾlūna min nisāʾihim tarabbuṣu ʾarbaʿati ʾašhurin fa-ʾin fāʾū fa-**ʾinna llāha ġafūrun raḥīm***
For those who forswear their women there is a wait of four months; if they return, God is forgiving and merciful.

These ending formulae simply allude to whether God counts the deeds described in the protasis as positive or negative. This may not only influence one's reward or punishment on the Day of Judgement (as in, e.g., Q 2:211), but also have implications for one's earthly life. The apodosis in Q 2:226, for instance, implies that a believing man may return to his wife up to four months after forswearing her. The same may be maintained concerning Q 24:5: those who accuse chaste women without bringing four witnesses should not be penalised if they repent and make amends.

The following are further examples of *fa-* denoting "in which case". Q 70:30:

(19) *ʾinna l-ʾinsāna ḫuliqa halūʿā* [...] (22) *ʾilla l-muṣallīn* (23) *allaḏīna* [...] (29) *wa-llaḏīna hum li-furūjihim ḥāfiẓūn* (30) *ʾillā ʿala ʾazwājihim ʾaw mā malakat ʾaymānuhum* ***fa-**ʾinnahum ġayru malūmīn* [...]
(19) Man was created anxious, [...] (22) But not those who pray, (23) who [...] (29) and who guard their private parts – (30) except with their spouses and what their right hands possess, **in which case** they are not blameworthy – [...].

Q 2:159–160:

(159) *ʾinna llaḏīna yaktumūna mā ʾanzalnā mina l-bayyināti wa-l-hudā min baʿdi mā bayyannāhu li-n-nāsi fi l-kitābi ʾulāʾika yalʿanuhumu llāhu wa-yalʿanuhumu l-lāʿinūn* (160) *ʾilla lladīna tābū wa-ʾaṣlaḥū wa-bayyanū* ***fa-**ʾulāʾika ʾatūbu ʿalayhim*

[20] Cf. Q 2:173, which has the fuller formula *fa-lā ʾiṯma ʿalayhi* ***ʾinna llāha ġafūrun raḥīm***, "no sin shall be on him; God is forgiving and compassionate", as well as Q 5:3 and 16:115.

(159) Those who hide the clear proofs and the guidance that we have revealed, after we (God) have made it clear to the people in the Scripture – those are cursed by God and by those who curse. (160) <u>But not those who repent and make amends and make [the proofs and guidance] clear</u> – towards those I relent.

Q 19:60:

(58) *ʾulāʾika llaḏīna ʾanʿama llāhu ʿalayhim* [...] (59) *wa-ḫalafa min baʿdihim ḫalfun ʾaḍāʿu ṣ-ṣalāta wa-ttabaʿu š-šahawāti fa-sawfa yulqawna ġayyā* (60) *<u>ʾillā man tāba wa-ʾāmana wa-ʿamila sālihan</u> **fa-**ʾulāʾika yadḫulūna l-jannata wa-lā yuẓlamūna šayʾā.*
(58) These are those whom God blessed [...] (59) However, they have been followed by a posterity who have neglected prayer and have followed their own desires; and those will meet error. (60) <u>But not those who repent and believe and act righteously</u> – these will enter paradise and will not be wronged at all.

A noteworthy case is Q 37:10 (≈ Q 15:16–18):

(6) *ʾinnā zayyanna s-samāʾa d-dunyā bi-zīnatini l-kawākib* (7) *wa-ḥifẓan min kulli šayṭānin mārid* (8) *lā yassammaʿūna ʾila l-malaʾi l-ʾaʿlā wa-yuqḏafūna min kulli jānib* (9) *duḥūran wa-lahum ʿaḏābun wāṣib* (10) *<u>ʾillā man ḫaṭifa l-ḫaṭfata</u> **fa-**ʾatbaʿahū šihābun <u>ṯ</u>āqib.*
(6) We (God) have adorned the nearest heaven with an adornment – the stars – (7) and [we have placed them] as a protection against every rebellious demon. (8) They cannot listen to the highest host. They are pelted from every side, (9) chased away – and theirs is a lasting punishment, (10) <u>and whoever does snatch a fragment</u> is pursued by a piercing shooting star.

According to this passage, the stars fulfil two main functions, namely, ornamenting the sky and hindering the demons in their efforts to listen to the "highest host" (*al-malaʾ al-ʾaʿlā*). There is a "lasting punishment" awaiting those demons who [try yet] do not succeed in eavesdropping. However, the Qurʾān tells us, some of them are able to evade the preventing mechanism and "snatch a fragment". This latter sub-set is dealt with differently: they are pursued by a shooting star.

The literal translation of v. 10 would be along the lines of "<u>except for whoever snatches a fragment</u> – **[who]** is pursued by a piercing shooting star". However, translating it into a simpler sentence, albeit syntactically less accurate, seems preferable here.[21]

[21] My analysis is therefore different from the traditional view that regards part B as a complete sentence – see, e.g., al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, IX, 294; ʿUḍayma, I.1, 333.

An exceptional case related to the *fa-* following an *ʾillā* construction is Q 27:11:

(10) *yā-mūsā lā taḫaf ʾinnī lā yaḫāfu ladayya l-mursalūn* (11) ***ʾillā*** *man ẓalama ṯumma baddala ḥusnan baʿda sūʾin fa-ʾinnī ġafūrun raḥīm*

Jones translates this passage as follows: "O Moses, do not be afraid; messengers are not afraid in my presence, **except for** those who have done wrong and have then turned to good after evil. I am Forgiving and Merciful."

Jones reads *man ẓalama ṯumma baddala ḥusnan baʿda sūʾin* as one syntactical unit. This is also my understanding of the plain text. However, according to this understanding, translating "except" (or "but not") makes little sense: given that God is forgiving and merciful, if a messenger has done wrong and has then replaced evil with good, should not that messenger *not* be afraid? If he should indeed not be afraid, then the sentence is not in keeping with the Polarity Generalisation: Moses should not be afraid, and neither should the messengers who did wrong and then replaced evil with good.

That line of thought suggests that the use of *ʾillā* in this context is odd. I have found no persuasive interpretation of it in traditional commentaries.[22] Perhaps, however, the solution lies not in the usage of *ʾillā*, but in the ending formula that follows it. If *fa-ʾinnī ġafūrun raḥīm*, "I am forgiving and merciful", had not been there, *ʾillā* would have readily been understood as exceptive: the messengers who did wrong and then replaced evil with good – perhaps like Moses himself[23] – should in fact be afraid.

One possible solution is to do with the location of the ending formula: perhaps the formula was positioned at the end of v. 11 on account of the rhyme. If it had instead been placed immediately at the end of v. 10, the understanding of the text would perhaps have been easier: *yā-mūsā lā taḫaf ʾinnī lā yaḫāfu ladayya l-mursalūn fa-ʾinnī ġafūrun raḥīm. ʾillā man ẓalama ṯumma baddala ḥusnan baʿda sūʾin*, "O Moses, do

[22] According to one traditional exegesis by al-Farrāʾ, for instance, *ʾillā* refers to a reconstructed sentence that is understood but does not appear in the text, namely, "messengers are not afraid in my presence [but only others who have done wrong], **except for** those who have done wrong and have then replaced evil with good, in which case I am forgiving and merciful". See al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī*, II, 287. See also, e.g., al-Qurṭubī, XVI, 108–109, who further cites al-Naḥḥās's refutation of this suggestion.

[23] Exegetes indeed provide a list of messengers in their interpretation of this verse, among whom is Moses, who killed a man (Q 28:19). See, e.g., Muqātil, III, 297; al-Qurṭubī, XVI, 109–110.

not be afraid; messengers are not afraid in my presence, for I am forgiving and merciful, except those who have done wrong and have then replaced evil with good" [who should nevertheless be afraid]. According to this option, then, the EP is positioned within its host, as in §8.2.3 above. The difficulty with this analysis, however, is that it makes more sense to connect the use of "forgiving" in the formula to replacing evil with good, whereas this reading disconnects the two from each other. Another difficulty is that God's words, according to this reading, can hardly be interpreted as calming words for Moses.

Another possible option is to understand the *fa-* in *fa-ʾinnī* not only as denoting "in which case" but also as expressing some kind of contrast.[24] The translation would then be "O Moses, do not be afraid; messengers are not afraid in my presence, except those who have done wrong and have then replaced evil with good, **[but even] in that case** I am forgiving and merciful". According to this interpretation, the excepted sub-set of messengers may be afraid, but God will forgive them.

8.4. *ʾIllā* followed by a sentence

In the verses discussed thus far, *ʾillā*, whether exceptive or adversative, was followed by a nominal phrase or an equivalent thereof. In some verses, this nominal phrase clearly stood alone; in other verses, it could technically be either a stand-alone phrase or the subject of a sentence. This latter option, albeit technically possible, is difficult to prove decisively. Yet, both pre-modern and modern scholars have suggested that *ʾillā* is followed by a sentence in several Qurʾānic verses.[25] While most of these verses allow both interpretations outlined above, Q 88:23, I will argue, allows only one interpretation. It is the only unequivocal case that I could find of *ʾillā* followed by a sentence. The analyses in this section, then – if accepted – will show that adversative *ʾillā* is not always syntactically identical to exceptive *ʾillā*, as argued in §7.2.3 above. Let us examine *ʾillā* in Q 88:23:

---

[24] Separate research should be conducted on whether *fa-* in the Qurʾān may indeed express contrast. In the meantime, perhaps the *fa-* in Q 4:23 *fa-ʾin lam takūnū daḫaltum bi-hinna*, "but if you[p] have not consummated the marriage [...]" could be adduced as an example.

[25] For a summary of traditional views regarding this issue, see ʿUḍayma, I.1, 332–334. See also Bergsträsser, *Verneinungs- und Fragepartikeln*, 80. This analysis is also reflected in Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 509 = §262.6. He translates Q 2:34 *fa-sajadū ʾillā ʾiblīsa ʾabā* as "sie fielen nieder, nur I[blīs] wollte nicht". See further §9.2 below.

(21) *fa-ḏakkir ʾinnamā ʾanta muḏakkir* (22) *lasta ʿalayhim bi-muṣayṭir* (23) ***ʾillā*** *man tawallā wa-kafar* (24) *fa-yuʿaḏḏibuhu llāhu l-ʿaḏāba l-ʾakbar*

Jones translates "(21) So remind[s] [them]. You are only [there to] remind. (22) But you are not an overseer over them, (23) **Except** over those who turn away and disbelieve. (24) God will punish them with the most severe punishment." In the following, I will show that translating *ʾillā* as "except" makes little sense and that the only acceptable way of understanding this passage requires to understand what follows *ʾillā* as an entire sentence.

The structure of vv. 23–24 is as follows: *ʾillā* is followed by a *man* clause, which is in turn followed by a sentence introduced by the conjunction *fa-*. This structure syntactically allows both interpretations discussed at the beginning of this section. One of these options, which would lead to a translation similar to that of Jones above, is that v. 23 *ʾillā* is followed by *man tawallā wa-kafar*, and v. 24 is an independent sentence. Similar structures have been discussed in §8.3.2, as exemplified by Q 19:60:

(58) *ʾulāʾika llaḏīna ʾanʿama llāhu ʿalayhim* [...] (59) *wa-ḫalafa min baʿdihim ḫalfun ʾaḍāʿu ṣ-ṣalāta wa-ttabaʿu š-šahawāti fa-sawfa yulqawna ġayyā* (60) ***ʾillā*** *man tāba wa-ʾāmana wa-ʿamila ṣāliḥan fa-ʾulāʾika yadḫulūna l-jannata wa-lā yuẓlamūna šayyā.*

(58) These are those whom God blessed [...] (59) However, they have been followed by a posterity who have neglected prayer and have followed their own desires; and those will meet error. (60) **But not** those who repent and believe and act righteously – these will enter paradise and will not be wronged at all.

While this option is syntactically possible for vv. 23–24, it is blocked by the context. Let us begin analysing the message conveyed in the passage by examining v. 22 *muṣayṭir* (or *musayṭir*). The root *SYṬR* (spelled in the Qurʾān only with *ṣ*) appears in the Qurʾān only twice. Ambros suggests the sense of "ruling s.o., having power over s.o.",[26] which corresponds to traditional glosses such as *musallaṭ*[27] and *malik*.[28] Q 50:45 *wa-mā ʾanta ʿalayhim bi-jabbārin*, "you[s] are not a tyrant over them", is further adduced by some commentators as an intra-Qurʾānic parallel.[29] In the context of vv.

[26] Ambros, *Concise dictionary*, 143 (*SYṬR*).

[27] See, e.g., al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī*, III, 258; al-Ṭabarī, XXIV, 340; al-Qurṭubī, XXII, 253; ʾAbū Ḥayyān, VIII, 459.

[28] Muqātil, IV, 679.

[29] See, e.g., al-Zamaḫšarī, VI, 366; al-Rāzī, XXXI, 160; ʾAbū Ḥayyān, VIII, 459.

21–24, the added nuance of coercion in *jabbār* seems fitting: Muḥammad is there to remind of the Day of Judgement, Hell and paradise (mentioned in vv. 1–16), not to force anyone to believe in them.

The next step is identifying the referent of *-him* in v. 22 *ʿalayhim*, or those whom Muḥammad should warn. Vv. 17–20, which begin with *ʾa-fa-lā yanẓurūna ʾila l-ʾibili kayfa ḫuliqat*, "Do they not consider how camels were created", refer either to all people or to all people who are not currently believers. The referent of the subject of v. 17 *yanẓurūna* is the same as that of *-him* in v. 22 *ʿalayhim*.

Whichever one of the interpretations of *ʿalayhim* is chosen, *ʾillā* cannot be understood as "except" (or "but not"): according to vv. 22–23, Muḥammad's task is only to warn, and he is not a tyrant ruler over them. If *ʾillā* is exceptive, then, in keeping with the Polarity Generalisation, one would expect a proposition of opposite polarity to be understood from the exception, viz., "but you are a tyrant ruler over those who turn away and commit belief". The following discussion will show that, although suggestions to understand this verse in a similar fashion are found in commentaries, these suggestions are unpersuasive.

Commentaries on Q 88:21–24 provide more than one possible analysis of the passage. According to one interpretation, cited by al-Māturīdī, *ʾillā* is exceptive and the host is *lasta ʿalayhim bi-muṣayṭir*. According to this explanation, *muṣayṭir* denotes that Muḥammad is not granted permission to fight the unbelievers, seize them and have them pay tribute (*jizya*), but he will do all that against those who turn away from obeying God and do not believe in God as the only god.[30] I struggle to understand the logic behind this exegesis. The mentioning of future fighting and taking *jizya* also seems anachronistic. Furthermore, this interpretation stands in contrast to the punishment that is explicitly mentioned in v. 24 – that is, God's punishment [in the afterlife], which also seems fitting for Muḥammad's lack of power at that point. According to another interpretation, the host is *fa-ḏakkir*.[31] This possibility is also untenable: it would suggest, in keeping with the Polarity Generalisation, that Muḥammad is not there to warn those who turn away and commit unbelief, which would be at odds with several other verses in which the

[30] Cited in, e.g., al-Māturīdī, X, 514.

[31] Cited in, e.g., al-Zamaḫšarī, VI, 366 and al-Ṭabarī, XXIV, 342.

verb *ḏakkara* occurs, according to which those people are, or have been, warned.[32] A more plausible understanding, which also better matches the context, is that Muḥammad should not coerce anyone *including* those who "turn away and commit unbelief". Accordingly, translating "except" here is not possible.

One possible syntactical analysis of vv. 23–24 has so far been discussed. Another option to understand their syntactical structure, as discussed at the beginning of this section, is that the two parts constitute a conditional sentence whose protasis is the *man* clause in v. 23 and whose apodosis is the sentence introduced by the conjunction *fa-* (v. 24). This would also mean that *ʾillā* should be understood as "but":

> (21) So warn[s] [them]. You are only a warner; (22) You[s] are not a (tyrant) ruler over them. (23) But whoever turns away and commits unbelief – (24) God will punish them with the most severe punishment.

This analysis yields an acceptable understanding of the passage: the people are warned that they should believe; no one is forcing them to do so. However, those who commit unbelief will be punished. A similar line of argumentation is found in verses such as Q 18:29, according to which people are given a free choice as to whether to become a believer or not, but a punishment awaits those who choose not to become believers:

> Q 18:29 *wa-quli l-ḥaqqu min rabbikum fa-man šāʾa fa-l-yuʾmin wa-man šāʾa fa-l-yakfur ʾinnā ʾaʿtadnā li-ẓ-ẓālimīna nāran ʾaḥāṭa bi-him surādiquhā*
> Say[s], 'The truth is from your Lord. Let whoever wishes believe and whoever wishes not believe. We have prepared for the wrong-doers a fire, whose pavilion encloses them.'

This syntactical analysis of vv. 23–24 is found in the exegetical literature as well. Many commentators classify this *ʾillā* construction as *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ*, "discontinuous exception", which is explained in this verse as an adversative conjunct.[33] Interestingly, only in the commentary of this verse could I find the following syntactical explanation of *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ* by al-Farrāʾ: *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ* can be distinguished from *istiṯnāʾ muttaṣil* by the felicity of adding *ʾanna* after *ʾillā* (*bi-ḥusni ʾanna fi l-mustaṯnā*). Al-Farrāʾ exemplifies using the following sentence: *qaʿadnā*

[32] See, e.g., Q 18:57, 25:73, 32:22 and 37:13.

[33] See, e.g., al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī*, III, 258–259; al-Zamaḫšarī, VI, 366; al-Qurṭubī, XXII, 254; al-Jalālayn, 2114. For a discussion of *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ*, see §10.1 below.

nataḥaddaṯu wa-nataḏākaru l-ḫayra[34] *ʾillā ʾanna kaṯīran mina n-nāsi lā yarġabu*, "we sat, talking and calling to mind good [memories] with one another, but many people do not wish [to do that]".[35] Although there is no Qurʾānic occurrence of *ʾillā ʾanna* in the sense of "but", unlike extra-Qurʾānic Arabic, al-Farrāʾ's comment indicates that he understood what follows *ʾillā* in Q 88:23–24 as a sentence.[36]

Another possible case of *ʾillā* followed by a sentence is Q 74:39:

> (35) *ʾinnahā la-ʾiḥda l-kubar* (36) *naḏīran li-l-bašar* (37) *li-man šāʾa minkum ʾan yataqaddama ʾaw yataʾaḫḫar* (38) *kullu nafsin bi-mā kasabat rahīnah* (39) ***ʾillā*** *ʾaṣḥāba l-yamīn* (40) *fī jannātin yatasāʾalūn* (41) *ʿani l-mujrimīn* (42) *mā salakakum fī saqar* (43) *qālū* [...]
>
> (35) It is one of the greatest things, (36) a warning to mankind, (37) to whichever one of you wishes to go forward or stay behind. (38) Everyone is pledged for what they have done. (39) ***ʾillā*** the companions of the right – (40) in gardens they will ask one another (41) about the sinners, (42) 'What has brought you into Saqar?' (43) They will answer [...]

The analysis of this passage relies upon the correct understanding of v. 38, or, more accurately, of its referents. One possible analysis would start by assuming that *ʾillā* is exceptive and inferring backwards from v. 39: in keeping with the Polarity Generalisation, what is said about everyone (*kullu nafsin*) in v. 38 will not be applicable to the companions of the right. And indeed, according to some commentators, the unbelievers, who are the complementary sub-set to the companions of the right, will be pledged for their sins, whereas the companions of

[34] This reading seems preferable over *al-ḫabara*, which is found in the printed version.

[35] Al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī*, III, 258–259.

[36] Al-Farrāʾ also remarks on those who analyse *ʾillā* as being *bi-manzilati lākin*, "in the syntactical position of *lākin*", saying that it is in fact a semantic [rather than syntactical] analysis. He explains his claim by showing that (*wa-*)*lākin* can be syntactically used where *ʾillā* cannot: "you can say *mā qāma ʿAbdu llāhi (wa-)lākin zaydun*, 'ʿAbd Allāh did not rise, but Zayd', but you cannot say *mā qāma ʿAbdu llāhi ʾillā Zaydun*". On that, I will note the following: (1) to the best of my knowledge, when equating the usage of one particle with another, one does not suggest that both particles are identical in usage. The fact that *ʾillā* cannot be used in every syntactical environment in which *(wa-)lākin* may be used does not mean that the latter cannot be used in specific contents in which the former is used. (2) As discussed in §7.3.1 above, *ʾillā* may in fact be used in the Qurʾān as a corrective particle, contrary to what al-Farrāʾ argued.

the right, who did not sin, will not be pledged for their evil deeds.[37] This yields the following translation:

> (35) It is one of the greatest things, (36) a warning to mankind, (37) to whichever one of you wishes to go forward or stay behind. (38) Everyone is liable for what they have done. (39) **But not/except** the companions of the right – (40) in gardens they will ask one another (41) about the sinners, (42) 'What has brought you into Saqar?' (43) They will answer [...]

Note that the above interpretation requires that *bi-mā kasabat* refer to *evil* deeds. However, an examination of an intra-Qurʾānic parallel points to a different understanding of this phrase, and accordingly of Q 74:38, too. Let us examine Q 52:11–28, partly cited below:

> (11) *fa-waylun yawmaʾiḏin li-l-mukaḏḏibīn* (12) *allaḏīna hum fī ḫawḍin yalʿabūn* (13) *yawma yudaʿʿūna ʾilā nāri jahannama daʿʿā* [...] (16) *iṣlawhā fa-ṣbirū ʾaw lā taṣbirū sawāʾun ʿalaykum ʾinnamā tujzawna mā kuntum taʿmalūn* (17) *ʾinna l-muttaqīna fī jannātin wa-naʿīm* [...] (19) *kulū wa-šrabū hanīʾan bi-mā kuntum taʿmalūn* [...] (21) *wa-llaḏīna ʾāmanū wa-ttabaʿathum ḏurriyyatuhum bi-ʾīmānin ʾalḥaqnā bihim ḏurriyyatahum wa-mā ʾalatnāhum min ʿamalihim min šayʾin* ***kullu mriʾin bi-mā kasaba rahīn***. (22) *wa-ʾamdadnāhum bi-fākihatin wa-laḥmin* [...]
> (11) Woe on that day to those who deny [the truth], (12) Who play at plunging – (13) on the day when they are thrust into the fire of hell. '[...] (16) Roast[p] in it, bear it patiently or not – it is all the same for you. You are being recompensed for what you have done.' (17) The god-fearing will be in gardens and bliss, [...] (19) 'Eat and drink wholesomely, as a recompense for what you have done.' [...] (21) Those who believe and whose offspring follow them in belief – we (God) shall join their offspring with them, and we shall not deprive them of any of their work. **Every man will be pledged for what he has earned**. (22) We shall provide for them fruit and meat, [...]

The passage from v. 11 through v. 28 may be divided into two parts: vv. 11–16 have to do with the sinners on the Day of Judgement. The verses describe their punishment and end by saying that they are requited for their earthly deeds (v. 16); vv. 17–28 describe the reward that shall be given to the righteous. As part of this latter segment, v. 21 suggests that the righteous' children will join them in paradise if they are also believers. This corresponds well both to the general Qurʾānic

[37] See, e.g., Muqātil, IV, 499 (on Q 74:39); al-Ṭabarī, XXIII, 447 (on Q 74:39); al-Māturīdī, X, 324–325 (on Q 74:39); al-Qurṭubī, XXI, 395 (on Q 74:39).

concept of reward and punishment based on one's own earthly deeds and to more specific verses revolving around people's inability to intercede for anyone else on the Day of Judgement.[38] V. 21 then ends with the saying, "every man will be pledged for what he has earned" – the only parallel to Q 74:38.[39]

The proposition in v. 21, then, seems universally applicable – that is, it implies that the believers' children, whatever their earthly deeds may have been, will be judged and rewarded with entering paradise (only) if they deserve it. It does not concern the sinners only, but rather everyone – sinners and righteous alike. This further dovetails with the root *KSB* in the Qurʾān being very close to *ʿML*, "to do", referring to committing both good and evil deeds.[40]

Accordingly, it may be inferred that Q 74:38 also pertains to both good and evil deeds.[41] Therefore, *ʾillā* cannot be analysed as exceptive, since the Polarity Generalisation is not maintained. The companions of the right are not excluded from the proposition in v. 38; they, too, shall be "pledged for what they have done". And if *ʾillā* is not exceptive and part A is complete both syntactically and in terms of IS, it should be considered as adversative.

If the line of argumentation above is accepted, two additional questions should be considered. First, how should the verse be translated if *ʾillā* is adversative? Second, what function does this adversative *ʾillā* fulfil here?

As discussed in §8.3.1 above, the absence of the conjunction *fa-* after *ʾaṣḥāba l-yamīn* enables the reading of part B (vv. 39–41) as a left-dislocation construction, which, following the analysis above, seems to be the only tenable option: "The companions of the right – [while] in gardens they will ask one another about the sinners". The passage would then be translated as follows:

---

[38] Or for anyone else with whom God is unsatisfied. See esp. Q 20:109 and 21:28.

[39] The root *RHN* occurs in the Qurʾān once more, in Q 2:283, which is irrelevant to this discussion.

[40] Torrey, *Commercial-theological terms*, 27–29 (*KSB*); see also ibid, 46 (*RHN*) and 48. For a recent survey of *kasaba* and *iktasaba* in the Qurʾān, see Sinai, *Key terms*, 603–604 (s.v. "*kasaba*").

[41] V. 38 should be analysed as a transitional verse, connecting the oaths and warnings to mankind with the reward or punishment awaiting them. On the one hand, v. 38 closes the preceding passage, which contains warnings to all mankind (esp. vv. 36–37). In that, it is similar to the closing statement in the parallel Q 52:21. On the other hand, in terms of contents, if being pledged for one's deeds refers to one's reward or punishment, v. 38 is better connected to the following scene (vv. 39–48), in which the companions of the right have entered paradise, and the sinners have been punished. Note that the rhyme of v. 38 is also different from both the preceding and the following passages.

(35) It is one of the greatest things, (36) a warning to mankind, (37) to whichever one of you wishes to go forward or stay behind. (38) Everyone is pledged for what they have accrued. (39) **But** the companions of the right – (40) in gardens they will ask one another (41) about the sinners, (42) 'What has brought you into Saqar?' (43) They will answer [...]

To answer the second question, perhaps *ʾillā* is used here to signal a change in the narrative. If so, it should be seen as connecting not sentences, but passages. It is used to shift the topic from the passage that warns all mankind to that describing the aftermath of that judgement, in which the righteous, who have paid heed to the warning, speak to the sinners, who have overlooked it. This usage of adversative connectives is documented in other languages as well.[42] *ʾIllā* may function in a similar way elsewhere in the Qurʾān, too, but this function is difficult to show decisively and deserves further investigation.[43]

8.5. The influence of rhyme

Since *ʾillā* constructions are occasionally found at the end of verses, they ought to match the end-rhyme and are therefore inevitably affected by it. This section will briefly mention two cases of *ʾillā* constructions affected by rhyme. The first example is the omission of the *min* phrase after *qalīlan* in Q 4:83 and 17:62, cited below:

Q 2:83 *wa-ʾiḏ ʾaḫaḏnā mīṯāqa banī ʾisrāʾīla lā taʿbudūna ʾillā llāha* [...] *ṯumma tawallaytum* ***ʾillā qalīlan minkum*** *wa-ʾantum muʿriḍūn*
And [recall] when we (God) took a covenant from the Children of Israel: 'Serve only God, [...]'. Then you turned away, apart from a few of you, turning aside.

Q 2:246 [...] *fa-lammā kutiba ʿalayhimu l-qitālu tawallaw* ***ʾillā qalīlan minhum*** *wa-llāhu ʿalīmun bi-ẓ-ẓālimīn*
[...] yet, when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned their backs, except a few of them.

Q 2:249 [...] *fa-šaribū minhu* ***ʾillā qalīlan minhum*** *fa-lammā* [...]
[...] And they drank from it, **except for** a few of them. And when [...]

[42] See Rudolf, *Contrast*, 286–293 = §6.2.3; Azar, 145–146.
[43] For now, consider *ʾillā* in Q 70:22.

Q 4:83 [...] *wa-lawlā faḍlu llāhi ʿalaykum wa-raḥmatuhū la-ttabaʿtumu š-šayṭāna* ***ʾillā qalīlā***
Had it not been for God's bounty and mercy to you[p], you would have followed Satan, except for a few [of you].

Q 17:62 *la-ʾin ʾaḫḫartani ʾilā yawmi l-qiyāmati la-ʾaḥtanikanna ḏurriyyatahū* ***ʾillā qalīlā***
[...] 'If you[s] give me respite to the Day of Resurrection, I shall extirpate his seed except a few.'

Comparison with, e.g., Q 2:83, 246 and 249 suggests that *qalīlan minkum* is expected in Q 4:83 and *qalīlan minhum* in Q 17:62.[44] However, as the ending formula must fit the *-ā* rhyme in both Q 4 and 17, the prepositional phrase with *min* has been supressed.

It seems that the end-rhyme may also influence the choice of exceptive particle in the ending formula. Consider the following exceptive constructions, which deal with the unbelievers' "increase in loss" and occur at the end of verses:

Q 35:39 [...] ***wa-lā yazīdu*** *l-kāfirīna kufruhum* ***ʾillā ḫasārā***
The unbelief of the unbelievers only increases them in loss.

Q 17:82 *wa-nunazzilu mina l-qurʾāni mā huwa šifāʾun wa-raḥmatun li-l-muʾminīna* ***wa-lā yazīdu*** *l-ẓālimīna* ***ʾillā ḫasārā***
We send down as part of the recitation that which is a healing and a mercy for the believers, but it increases the wrong-doers only in loss.

Q 71:21 *qāla nūḥun rabbi ʾinnahum ʿaṣawnī wa-ttabaʿū man* ***lam yazidhu*** *māluhū wa-waladuhū* ***ʾillā ḫasārā***
Noah said, 'My Lord, they have rebelled against me and followed him whose wealth and children increase him only in loss.

Q 11:63 [...] ***fa-mā tazīdūnanī ġayra taḫsīr***
You[p] would increase me only in loss.

All formulae contain both the verb *zāda* and the root *ḪSR*. However, unlike Q 35:39, 17:82 and 71:21, in which one finds *ʾillā* followed by a noun in the accusative case (which accordingly end in *-ā*), the end of Q 11:63 reads *ġayra taḫsīr*. The choice of *ġayr* instead of *ʾillā* in this verse's ending formula may well be motivated by the need to maintain the rhyme: *ʾillā* would require the accusative case, and accordingly an *-ā*

[44] *Minhum* referring to *ḏurriyya*, "offspring", is found in Q 57:26.

rhyme, which would not match the consonantal rhyme of the adjacent rhyming words. Thus, a different exceptive particle is substituted that, unlike *ʾillā*, functions as a *nomen regens*, viz. *ġayr*.[45]

8.6. Summary

This chapter has investigated cross-type features of *ʾillā* and *ʾillā* constructions. Section 8.1 has dealt with the relationship between *ʾillā* and informational focus. Having shown in §5.1.5 that restrictive *ʾillā* constructions are occasionally followed by the focused constituent in the sentence and are used to add emphasis, this section has further explored the relationship between the focus and the type of *ʾillā*. It has been own that the focused constituent is always located in part B after *ʾillā* of the "only" type, whereas exceptive *ʾillā* can either be followed or preceded by the focused constituent. This may affect the understanding of the composition, or exact wording, of several Qurʾānic verses.

Section 8.2 has revolved around the position of the *ʾillā* phrase in relation to its host. It has mainly been shown that the *ʾillā* phrase either immediately follows its host or is positioned within it and that when is positioned within the host it immediately follows its associate/CI.

Section 8.3 has described the frequent occurrence of the conjunction *fa-* after *ʾillā* constructions. It has been suggested that this *fa-* should be translated to English

[45] The use of the word *taḫsīr* in this verse is also unusual. Unlike 63 out of the 64 other Qurʾānic occurrences of this root, which appear either in form I or in a nominal form derived from form I, *taḫsīr* is a verbal noun of form II. It seems that all other variants were considered incompatible with the rhyme environment. This is probably another example of the morphological change on account of the rhyme termed by Stewart "cognate substitution" – see Stewart, "Poetic license", esp. 20–23.

More generally, several forms of the root *ḪSR* occur in the Qurʾān in order to describe the loss of the unbelievers, and the apparent primary reason for preferring one over another is the rhyme: in addition to the abovementioned *ḫasār* and *taḫsīr*, the form *ḫusr* occurs in a rhyme environment of *-3CC* (according to A. Neuwirth's types of rhyme patterns; see Neuwirth, *Studien*, 77–90), and the form *ḫusrān* appears as well. The "ordinary" word for "loss" seems to have been this last one, as all the rest occur only at the end of Qurʾānic verses, whereas *ḫusrān* occurs three times in a non-final position. It appears that none of the other variants of this word was considered a good match for the rhyme environment of Q 15:39, 22:11 and 4:119. Therefore, another strategy was applied, namely, the use of the rhyme filler *mubīn* (on which see further Chapter 5, n. 9 above), in which case there was no reason not to use the "ordinary" word that conveys "loss".

as “in which case” and that its absence allows to interpret part B as a left-dislocation construction.

Section 8.4 has described a rare case in which *ʾillā* is unequivocally followed by a sentence. Finally, section 8.5 has discussed examples in which *ʾillā* constructions are influenced by the end-rhyme.

Chapter 9: Qurʾānic case studies related to *ʾillā*

The present chapter revolves around case studies of *ʾillā* constructions in the Qurʾān. For some of the verses discussed in this chapter, I will propose a preferred analysis; for other verses, I will present various possible analyses and weigh them against one another.

9.1. Q 12:68: Jacob's satisfied need and the fate of Joseph's brothers

Both traditional exegetes and modern translators seem to have struggled with the interpretation of Q 12:68:

> (67) *wa-qāla yā-baniyya lā tadẖulū min bābin wāḥidin wa-dẖulū min ʾabwābin mutafarriqatin wa-mā ʾuġnī ʿankum mina llāhi min šayʾin [...]* (68) *wa-lammā daẖalū min ḥayṯu ʾamarahum ʾabūhum mā kāna yuġnī ʿanhum mina llāhi min šayʾin* ***ʾillā*** *ḥājatan fī nafsi yaʿqūba qaḍāhā* [...]

The understanding of the verse depends on three main factors: (1) the type of *ʾillā*; (2) the understanding of *min šayʾin*; (3) the nature of Jacob's satisfied need – that is, the interpretation of *ḥājatan ... qaḍāhā*. Many commentaries suggest that *ʾillā* creates a "discontinuous exception" (*istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ*), interpreting *ʾillā* as *wa-lākin*, "but".[1] This reading, to the best of my understanding, yields the following translation:

> (67) He said, 'My sons, do not enter by one gate; enter by various gates. I cannot avail you against God whatsoever. [...]'. (68) And when they entered as their father had told them, it [indeed] did not avail them against God at all, **but** [there was] a [certain] need in Jacob's soul which he satisfied [...]

This is the most common understanding among translators as well.[2] According to it, *ʾillā* is adversative, (*mā* [...]) *min šayʾin* is understood as "(not [...]) at all", and *ḥājatan*

[1] See, e.g., al-Zamaẖšarī, III, 307; al-Rāzī, XVIII, 180; al-Qurṭubī, XI, 403.

[2] Bell: "When they had entered in the way their father commanded them, it did not avail them against Allah at all; (it was) only a need in the self of Jacob, which he satisfied"; Arberry: "And when they entered after the manner their father commanded them, it availed them nothing against God; but it was a need in Jacob's soul that he so satisfied"; Paret: "Und als sie da hineingingen, wo ihr Vater sie es geheißen hatte (nämlich durch verschiedene Tore), half es ihnen vor Gott nichts. Es (d.h. der Rat, den Jacob seinen Söhnen gab) war nichts als ein inneres Bedürfnis Jacobs, dessen er sich entledigte"; Jones: "And when they entered as their father had told them, it would have availed them nothing against God. It was simply a need in Jacob's soul which he satisfied"; Asad: "But although

refers to Jacob's fear for his children's safety,[3] which was fulfilled (*qaḍāhā*) when indeed nothing happened to them. Thus, part A is complete both syntactically and in terms of IS, and part B is a syntactical unit independent of it.

There might, however, be another possible interpretation of this passage, which analyses the three factors identified above differently:[4]

> (68) And when they entered as their father had told them, nothing availed them against God **except** a need in Jacob's soul, which he [later] satisfied [...]

According to this alternative understanding, *ʾillā* is exceptive, (*mā* [...]) *min sayʾin* is understood as "nothing", and the satisfied need (*ḥājatan*) refers to Jacob's need to meet his son Joseph, which is narrated only later (Q 12:99–100). This interpretation thus regards v. 68 as foreshadowing Jacob's meeting with Joseph. According to it, the thing that kept Joseph's brothers safe was Jacob's need to meet Joseph, which was fulfilled through them later (from Joseph's "trick" to detain Benjamin to his brothers' bringing Jacob with them to Joseph, i.e., vv. 69–100).

9.2. Iblīs's refusal to prostrate himself before Adam

The story of ʾIblīs's refusal to prostrate himself before Adam is recounted in the Qurʾān seven times.[5] According to all verses, (all of) the angels obeyed God's command and bowed down, and ʾIblīs is the only one who refused – information worded in all parallels using an *ʾillā* phrase. Let us, for instance, examine Q 20:116:

> Q 20:116 *wa-ʾiḏ qulnā li-l-malāʾikati sjudū li-ʾādama fa-sajadū* ***ʾillā*** *ʾiblīsa ʾabā*

According to the most common understanding, both traditional and modern, of this verse as well as all its parallels, the final sentence is exceptive: part A (*sajadū*) is affirmative, *ʾillā* is an exceptive particle, and part B only consists of the phrase *ʾiblīsa*. The following clause – which is verbal in all parallels – is perceived as a new

---

they entered [Joseph's city] in the way their father had bidden them, this proved of no avail whatever to them against [the plan of] God[.] [His request] had served only to satisfy Jacob's heartfelt desire [to protect them]".

[3] See, e.g., al-Ṭabarī, XIII, 239–240; al-Māturīdī, VI, 264; ʾAbū Ḥayyān, V, 322–323; al-Zamaḫšarī, III, 307; al-Rāzī, XVIII, 180.

[4] I would like to thank Taher Azzam for this interpretation. Al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī (VI, 523–524) possibly concisely mentions it.

[5] Q 2:34, 38:73–74, 20:116, 7:11, 15:31, 17:61, 18:50.

sentence, as if *ʾiblīsa* is followed by an imaginary full stop. The translation, according to this analysis, is "[Recall] when we (God) said to the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam'. They (all) prostrated themselves, **except** ʾIblīs. He refused".

Section 8.3.1 above discussed that the conjunction *fa-* may occasionally be used after part B. This *fa-* is found in none of the seven parallels under discussion, which opens the possibility of an alternative analysis, according to which *ʾillā* is an adversative particle, and part B is a left-dislocation construction consisting of both the phrase *ʾiblīs* and the verbal clause that follows it.[6] This analysis would yield a different translation, namely, "They (all) prostrated themselves, **but** ʾIblīs refused".[7]

Section 7.2 above has shown that there is normally no syntactical difference between adversative and exceptive *ʾillā* (but see §8.4). Definitively determining which one of the two interpretations above is more accurate is a conundrum. However, the question of the focused constituent seems clearer: it is very likely to be in part B. ʾIblīs's refusal to bow down is one of the main points of the story; disregarding part B would therefore entail losing a key point delivered in the text. Moreover, in six out of the seven parallels (that is, all save Q 2:34), the next segment of the narrative revolves around ʾIblīs. Thus, for instance, in Q 7 and 15, God asks ʾIblīs why he did not obey his command; ʾIblīs replies that he is superior to Adam and is subsequently punished. This shift of topic indicates that the focused constituent in the ʾIblīs parallels is in part B.

It is also to be remarked that translating *ʾillā* by "except" would mean – in keeping with the Presupposition of Inclusion – that the translator considers ʾIblīs to be an angel.[8] A translation that does not necessarily reflect this understanding would be "They prostrated themselves, {**but not/not so**} ʾIblīs. He refused".[9] The syntax itself allows both interpretations.

---

[6] Note that a sentence such as *ʾiblīsu ʾabā*, "ʾIblīs refused", is considered a left-dislocation construction in traditional grammatical thought – see Wright, II, 255 = §119. For a short definition of these constructions, see Chapter 8, n. 18.

[7] This seems to be Reckendorf's (*Arabische Syntax*, 509 = §262.6) understanding: "sie fielen nieder, nur I[blīs] wollte nicht".

[8] For a recent short discussion on the topic, see Sinai, *Key terms*, 454–459 (s.v. "*shayṭān*").

[9] An adversative conjunct (e.g., "but ʾIblīs refused") will similarly not commit to ʾIblīs's being an angel.

9.3. *Mā NQM (min) … ʾillā ʾan …*

The root *NQM* occurs in the Qurʾān 17 times, of which 4 in form I and 13 in form VIII. In form VIII, there are 3 occurrences of *ḏu/ḏi ntiqām*, "vengeful", and 10 verbal forms (that is, either a verb or a participle form), of which 9 appear with an indirect object governed by *min*. All instances of form VIII are associated with God, and thus denote divine vengeance (or punishment).

A noteworthy exceptive construction includes the root *NQM* in form I followed by the preposition *min* (3 out of 4 times) and a clause introduced by the particle *ʾan*. This expression is used in four verses, including in the story of Moses, Pharaoh and the sorcerers in Q 7. According to this story, having seen Moses's snake eating their own snake, Pharaoh's sorcerers prostrate themselves and declare their belief in the god of Moses and Aaron (vv. 120–122). Pharaoh threatens to punish them horribly (vv. 123–124), yet they do not show fear and say that they are to return to God [anyway][10] (v. 125), adding the following:

> Q 7:126 *wa-mā tanqimu minnā* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *ʾāmannā bi-ʾāyāti rabbinā lammā jāʾatnā*

Jones, perhaps following Arberry, translates "You[s] are taking vengeance on us **only because** we have believed in the signs of Our Lord when they came to us". The root *NQM* in form I is indeed used in Arabic as well as in other Semitic languages in this sense, and the context allows such an understanding: the sorcerers decide to forsake Pharaoh's religion, which results in the latter's vengeance on them.[11]

The clause with *ʾan* following *ʾillā* appears in all four parallel verses. Syntactically, if *naqama* is understood as "to take vengeance", then Q 7:126 *minnā* is analysed as the object, and, since "taking vengeance" may take only one object, the clause with *ʾan* cannot be considered an object. Therefore, I suppose, the clause was understood as expressing the reason for the action. This analysis is possible;[12] however, as will be shown below, this meaning of *naqama* does not readily fit other contexts.

---

[10] Cf. Q 26:50, in which we find *lā ḍayra*, "there is no harm" (or "there would be no harm [in that]").

[11] If this is indeed the case, then perhaps form I (not VIII) was utilised so that the distinction between divine and non-divine vengeance is kept through the usage of different verbal forms.

[12] That is, *ʾan* clauses expressing reason are found in the Qurʾān – see Q 40:28 (*ʾan yaqūla*), 60:1 (*ʾan tuʾminū*), 26:51 (*ʾan kunnā*), 80:2 (*ʾan jāʾahu l-ʾaʿmā*). See also n. 19 below. For Q 22:40, see §9.4 below.

A similar usage is found in Q 5:59. The previous two verses (vv. 57–58) tell the believers not to take as friends/allies the People of the Book and the unbelievers that mock the believers' religion or religious rituals. V. 59 then reads as follows:

> Q 5:59 *qul yā-ʾahla l-kitābi hal tanqimūna minnā* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *ʾāmannā bi-llāhi wa-mā ʾunzila ʾilaynā wa-mā ʾunzila min qablu wa-ʾanna ʾakṯarakum fāsiqūn*

Jones, again largely following Arberry, translates "Say, 'O people of the Scripture, do you blame us **for any reason other than** we believe in God and what has been sent down to us and what has been sent down previously and because most of you are reprobates?'". While the context of Q 7:126 may allow for *naqama* to be related to vengeance, the context of Q 5:59 does not. A similar case is Q 9:74:

> Q 9:74 *wa-mā naqamū* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *ʾaġnāhumu llāhu wa-rasūluhū min faḍlihī*

Here, too, *naqamū* seems not to be related to vengeance. Note that there is no prepositional phrase with *min* attached to *naqamū* in this verse, which, I believe, is not a coincidence – a point which will be addressed shortly.

Commentators explain *naqama* as having a similar meaning to those of *kariha* and *ʾankara*, "to dislike, disapprove". Al-Ḫalīl defined this verb as *ʾankara wa-lam yarḍa*, "to disapprove and be dissatisfied (of something)".[13]

This common traditional interpretation seems to fit well both Q 5:59 and Q 9:74. Moreover, it provides a more accurate understanding of the syntactical function of the clause with *ʾan*: while the understanding from modern translations is that the prepositional phrase with *min* functions as the object and the clause with *ʾan* as an adverbial clause expressing the reason for the action, according to this traditional understanding the clause with *ʾan* is the direct object and the prepositional phrase is not syntactically crucial for the sentence to be complete. This latter analysis not only better matches the context but is also preferable given that the prepositional phrase with *min* does not appear in all parallel verses, whereas the clause with *ʾan* always does. The verb seems to require only one direct object – the clause with *ʾan*.

This interpretation of *naqama* is further corroborated by its use in poetry. Some commentators adduce a poetic verse from the Umayyad period in which *naqama*

[13] Al-Ḫalīl, *al-ʿAyn*, V, 181.

appears in an exceptive sentence.[14] A similar usage of *naqama* is also attested in the pre-Islamic period, as it is found in the Dīwān of ʿAdī ibn Zayd al-ʿIbādī [al-Basīṭ]:[15]

wa-ʾiḏ naqamtu mina l-wajnāʾi jiblatahā / ʾiḏ ḫāfa minka waliyyu š-šajwi ʾidbārā
fa-ʾanta tarfaʿuhā jaḏlāna mubtahijan / sahwan wa-tuʿmiluhā ʿarfāʾa miḏkārā
tahdi l-ʾanāma wa-tuʿṭīhim nawāʾibahum / fi d-dīni ʿadlan wa-fi l-ʾiʿṭāʾi ʾiǧzārā

And when I resent the nature of the obstinate she-camel; when the one in need fears that you[s] turn your back [on him],

You urge it (the she-camel) to a quicker pace with ease, joyful and rejoicing, and hasten it, a she-camel strong and powerful as male camels.

You guide the people and provide them with their needs; in the law [you act] justly, and in providing, abundantly.

Although it does not occur in an exceptive construction, the usage of *naqama* in the first of these three poetic verses is very similar to that in the Qurʾānic verses under discussion, both in terms of meaning and in terms of the syntactical function of the two phrases connected to the verb. In fact, the same construction is used twice in the same poetic verse: in the first hemistich with *naqama*, and in the second with *ḫāfa*. Semantically, the complement of the preposition *min* is a participant that has a certain characteristic or that acts in a certain way (in this case *al-wajnāʾ*), and the direct object – here a simple nominal phrase, not a nominal clause – is the disapproved characteristic or behaviour (*jiblatahā*).

Similarly, I contend, Q 5:59 should be translated as "do you resent (± of us) anything other than that we believe in God and [± in] what has been sent down to us and [± in] what has been sent down previously and [that we believe] that most of you are reprobates?"'.[16] For Q 9:74, I would suggest a translation along the lines of "they resented nothing but that God's grace was bestowed upon them", or indeed "the only thing that they resented was that God's grace was bestowed upon them". This is an ironic statement: the Qurʾān accuses the unbelievers and the hypocrites of being ungrateful and showing thanklessness, as is also evident from the two verses following Q 9:74:

---

[14] See, e.g., al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, VI, 87 (on Q 9:74): *mā naqimū* [sic] *min banī ʾumayyata ʾil / lā ʾannahum yaḥlumūna ʾin ġaḍibū*, "the only thing they disliked in Banū ʾUmayya is that they forbear if they get angry" [al-Munsariḥ].

[15] ʿAdī ibn Zayd, *Dīwān*, 52.

[16] Cf. al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, IV, 317 (on Q 5:59): *mā takrahūna min jihatinā ʾilla l-ʾīmāna*.

Q 9:75–76 *wa-minhum man ʿāhada llāha la-ʾin ʾātānā min faḍlihī la-naṣṣaddaqanna wa-la-nakūnanna mina ṣ-ṣāliḥīn. fa-lammā ʾātāhum min faḍlihī baḫilū bihī wa-tawallaw wa-hum muʿriḍūn*

Among them there are those who made a covenant with God: 'If he (God) gives us some of his bounty, we shall make offerings and be among the righteous'. Yet when he gave them some of his bounty, they were stingy with it, and turned away, averse.

If Q 7:126 *tanqimu* is construed in a similar manner, the verse can be translated as "The only thing (± of our doing) that you[s] resent is that we have believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us". However, as mentioned above, it is also possible to translate Q 7:126 *tanqimu* as "take vengeance", since this meaning of the root *NQM* fits the verse's context.

The last parallel verse is Q 85:8. Here are vv. 1–9 of Q 85:

(1) *wa-s-samāʾi ḏāti l-burūj* (2) *wa-l-yawmi l-mawʿūd* (3) *wa-šāhidin wa-mašhūd* (4) *qutila ʾaṣḥābu l-ʾuḫdūd* (5) *an-nāri ḏāti l-waqūd* (6) *ʾiḏ hum ʿalayhā quʿūd* (7) *wa-hum ʿalā mā yafʿalūna bi-l-muʾminīna šuhūd* (8) *wa-mā naqamū minhum ʾillā ʾan yuʾminū bi-llāhi l-ʿazīzi l-ḥamīd* (9) *allaḏī lahū mulku s-samāwāti wa-l-ʾarḍi wa-llāhu ʿalā kulli šayʾin šahīd*

(1) By the heaven that holds the constellations, (2) by the promised day, (3) by what witnesses and what is witnessed, (4) slain shall be the men of the pit (5) – the fire fed with fuel – (6) when they sit over it, (7) and they are witnesses of what they did to the believers. (8) They *naqamū minhum* only that they believe in God, the mighty, the laudable, (9) to whom belongs the kingdom of the heaven and earth, for God is witness over everything.

The context provided by this passage is not as clear as those of the other parallels. It would perhaps be safer to assume that the "men of the pit" resent the believers, rather than that they take vengeance on them. Vengeance is normally a response to an action taken by someone else – in this case the believers – and nothing in the plain text seems to suggest that. A possible translation of v. 8 would then be "They resented (± of them; i.e., of the believers) only that they believe in God, the mighty, the laudable". However, since the context is vague, both options may be valid.[17]

[17] Adam Silverstein ("ʾ*Aṣḥāb al-ʾuḫdūd*", esp. 290, n. 20) cautiously adds the revenge motif to his list of parallels between this passage and the story in the Daniel 3, adding that in Daniel the revenge would seem to refer to the three protagonists, whereas in the Qurʾān they rather appear to be related not to the believers but to the tormentors. The interpretation of *NQM* as expressing resentment is not discussed in his article.

9.4. Q 22:40

One of the instances of *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān that is most challenging to interpret is Q 22:40. This section will discuss two analyses of this verse. Jones translates Q 22:38–40 as follows:

> (38) *ʾinna llāha yudāfiʿu ʿani llaḏīna ʾāmanū ʾinna llāha lā yuḥibbu kulla ḫawwānin kafūr*
> (39) *ʾuḏina li-llaḏīna yuqātalūna bi-ʾannahum ẓulimū wa-ʾinna llāha ʿalā niṣrihim la-qadīr*
> (40) *allaḏīna ʾuḫrijū min diyārihim bi-ġayri ḥaqqin* ***ʾillā ʾan*** *yaqūlū rabbuna llāhu* [...]
> (38) God will defend those who believe. God does not love any ungrateful traitor. (39) Permission is granted to those who fight because they have been wronged – for God is able to help them – (40) Those who have been unjustly expelled from their homes **merely because** they say, 'Our Lord is God.' [...]

Jones's translation, like that of many others, equates *bi-ġayri ḥaqqin* with "unjustly", *ʾan* with "because", and *ʾillā* with "only". "Unjustly" as the translation of *bi-ġayri ḥaqqin* is justifiably common: *bi-ġayri ḥaqqin* in the Qurʾān is the idiomatic opposite of *bi-l-ḥaqqi* in the sense of "according to what is right or just".[18] Translating *ʾan* as "because" is possible if the preposition *bi-* was supressed before *ʾan*, which is a very common phenomenon.[19] However, as discussed in §5.1 above, a restrictive meaning ("only") of *ʾillā* constructions is expressed when part A is negative and incomplete (either syntactically or in terms of IS), whereas part A in Q 22:40 – especially if *bi-ġayri ḥaqqin* is translated as "unjustly" – is affirmative and syntactically complete.

The common exegesis of this verse is that the only reason for expelling the believers was their belief in God alone.[20] Al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī follows al-Zamaḫšarī in suggesting an analysis that results in a similar (but not identical) translation. According to this analysis, *ʾillā* refers to *bi-ġayri ḥaqqin* only. Al-Zamaḫšarī paraphrases as *bi-ġayri mūjib siwa l-tawḥīdi*, "for no reason except believing in God only".[21] This interpretation yields the following translation: "those who have been expelled from their homes **for no reason except** that they say, 'Our Lord is God'". This translation may appear similar to that of Jones, but it reflects a different

[18] Compare, e.g., Q 17:33 and 25:68 (*bi-l-ḥaqqi*) vs Q 3:21, 3:112, 3:181 and 4:155 (*bi-ġayri ḥaqqin*) and Q 2:61 (*bi-ġayri l-ḥaqqi*).

[19] See Wright, II, 193 = §71, rem. g. For other Qurʾānic examples of *ʾan* meaning "because", see n. 12 above.

[20] See, e.g., Muqātil, III, 129; al-Farrāʾ, II, 227; al-Ṭabarī, XVI, 577; al-Jalālayn, 1240.

[21] Al-Zamaḫšarī, *al-Kaššāf*, IV, 199; al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, VIII, 282–283.

understanding of the sentence's syntax: *bi-ġayri ḥaqqin* is not translated "unjustly", which allows *ʾillā* to be connected to *ġayr* as the negator. This corresponds to ʾAbū Ḥayyān's argument that the omission of *bi-ġayri ḥaqqin* without omitting *ʾillā … llāhu* would result in an ungrammatical sentence.[22]

This analysis, however, is not without difficulties. First, restrictive *ʾillā* follows sentential negation (by *mā*, *lā*, etc.), not constituent negation (by *ġayr*). This analysis would then render the use of restrictive *ʾillā* linguistically anomalous. The paraphrases of some exegetes, in which they use sentential negation, indicate that at least some commentators were uncomfortable with the negator being *ġayr*. Muqātil, for instance, paraphrases as follows:

> *lam yuḫrij kuffāru makkata l-muʾminīna min diyārihim ʾillā ʾan yaqūlū rabbuna llāhu*
> The unbelievers of Mecca expelled the believers from their homes only because they said, Our Lord is God.

Al-Farrāʾ paraphrases similarly:

> *lam yuḫrajū ʾillā bi-qawlihim lā ʾilāha ʾilla llāhu*
> They (the believers) were expelled only because of their saying, There is no god but God.

Another difficulty is that *ḥaqq* is normally understood in the Qurʾān as "just reason, good reason", not simply "reason", as in al-Zamaḫšarī's paraphrase (*mūjib*). I could not find any Qurʾānic occurrence of *ḥaqq* in this latter sense.[23] This understanding of *ḥaqq*, and accordingly the translation "**for no good reason except** that they say, 'Our Lord is God'", would imply that being expelled because of one's belief in God only would be deemed just.[24]

One potential resolution to both challenges above, which would support the common understanding thus far discussed, may be found in extra-Qurʾānic Arabic. Arabic papyri dated to shortly after the assumed composition of the Qurʾān provide evidence that *ʾillā* was used to express "only" without preceding negation. Thus, one

[22] ʾAbū Ḥayyān, VI, 346; see also al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, VIII, 282. But see below.

[23] See also Ambros, *Concise dictionary*, 75–76.

[24] A possible solution to this problem, which I could not find in commentaries, might be that the Qurʾānic tone here is sarcastic, expressing that the belief in God of those expelled from their homes is a "just reason" in the eyes of the unbelievers who expelled them, but not in God's view.

finds ثم تلم الا نفسك "then blame only yourself!" in a papyrus dated to 91/710.[25] This indicates that, by the beginning of the 8th century CE, restrictive *ʾillā* without preceding negation was in use. Whether *ʾillā* could have similarly been used to express "only" without preceding negation already at the time of the composition of the Qurʾānic consonantal text is a question that deserves further research.

An alternative reading has been suggested by al-Māturīdī, who seems to have been particularly troubled by the usage of *ʾillā* in Q 22:40.[26] In his first paraphrase of the verse, apart from identifying the agents and patients of the action of expelling, he does not use sentential negation as discussed above, but rather omits *ʾillā* from the sentence:

> *ʾaḫraja l-kuffāru ʾaṣḥāba rasūli llāhi min makkata bi-ġayri ḥaqqin bi-ʾan qālū rabbuna llāhu wa-ʾāmanū bihī wa-waḥḥadūhu*
> The unbelievers expelled the companions of God's messenger from Mecca unjustly, because they said, Our Lord is God, and they believed in him (God) and worshipped only him.

Then, he discusses a different suggestion, according to which *ʾillā ʾan* is understood as "unless", as is indeed found elsewhere in the Qurʾān:[27]

> [...] *ka-ʾannahū qāla ʾuḏina li-llaḏīna ẓulimū wa-ʾuḫrijū min diyārihim bi-ġayri ḥaqqin ʾan yuqātilūhum ʾillā ʾan yaqūlū rabbuna llāhu* [...]
> As if he (= God in the Qurʾān) said, Permission is granted to those who have been wronged and unjustly expelled from their homes to fight them [= the unbelievers], unless they say, 'Our Lord is God'.

There are two main differences between this analysis and the more common one: (1) The subject of *yaqūlū*, according to this alternative analysis, is not the believers, but the unbelievers. (2) The *ʾillā* phrase is not connected to the expulsion, but to the permission to fight.

Although the verb *ʾaḏina*, "to permit", requires three participants, viz., a subject and two objects, it occurs in the Qurʾān with two of the three possible complements

---

[25] See Becker, "Neue Papyri", 247–248 (= I, ll. 9–10); Hopkins, *Studies*, 259 = §324 (note n. 2 therein); See also Blau, *ASP*, III, 598 = §495 and further references cited in both last works.

[26] See al-Māturīdī, VII, 423–424.

[27] See al-Māturīdī, VII, 423–424. The suggestion is claimed to be cited, but I could not find its source. For *ʾillā ʾan* in the sense of "unless", see §6.2.2 above.

at the most. This phenomenon is also known from extra-Qurʾānic Arabic and probably emerges from the obviousness of the identity of the third complement, or from the need to avoid verbosity, repeating the same complement more than once, as in cases such as Q 77:36 *wa-lā yuʾḏanu lahum fa-yaʿtaḏirūn*, "and they will not be given leave to excuse themselves" (lit. "and they will not be given leave [to excuse themselves] so that they excuse themselves"). The reconstruction of the third complement (*bi-l-qitāli*, *bi-qitālihim*, *[bi-]ʾan yuqātilūhum*, etc.)[28] allows to understand *ʾillā ʾan* as "unless" more clearly. The passage, then, may be translated as follows:

> (38) God will defend those who believe. God does not love any ungrateful traitor. (39) Permission [to fight] is granted to those who fight because they have been wronged – God is able to help them – (40) those who have been unjustly expelled from their homes – unless they [the unbelievers] say, 'Our Lord is God.' [...]

Note that this translation delivers a different message from that of the more common reading of this verse, viz., that the believers are permitted to fight the unbelievers unless the latter declare that they believe in God only, in which case the believers are not permitted to fight the unbelievers.

This reading has several advantages: (1) it does not resort to the linguistic anomaly of using *ġayr* as the negator before *ʾillā*; (2) it fits the understanding of *ʾillā ʾan* quite naturally as "unless"; (3) it retains the usual Qurʾānic meaning of *bi-ġayri ḥaqqin* as "unjustly". Note that this reading also allows *bi-ġayri ḥaqqin* to be omitted from the sentence without any influence on the *ʾillā* phrase.[29] However, it also presents one main difficulty: one would expect the unbelievers to be explicitly mentioned if they are the subject of *yaqūlū*. The phrase *kulla ẖawwānin kafūr* in v. 38 may be considered an implicit mention of them, but the reading would be much easier were an explicit mention of them made closer to the *ʾillā* phrase.

[28] The use of *bi-* to express the permitted action occurs in Q 42:21. For the suppression of prepositions before *ʾan*, see Wright, II, 193 = §71, rem. g.

[29] That is, contrary to the analysis of ʾAbū Ḥayyān in n. 22 above.

9.5. Summary

This chapter has analysed selected case studies involving an *ʾillā* construction. In section 9.1, an understanding different from the common one has been proposed for Jacob's satisfied need mentioned in the difficult verse Q 12:68.

Section 9.2 has focused on the analysis of the seven parallels relating ʾIblīs's refusal to bow down before Adam. The section has shown that the verses' structure permits more than a single possible analysis and drew attention to their translation into English.

Section 9.3 has dealt with the understanding of the occurrences of *mā NQM* (*min*) *... ʾillā ʾan ...* in the Qurʾān. Based on intra-Qurʾānic parallels as well as evidence from pre-Islamic poetry, an understanding alternative to the one found in Qurʾān translations was proposed, according to which the root *NQM* means "resentment" and the *ʾan* clause functions as the object of the verb *NQM*.

Finally, section 9.4 explored various analyses of the challenging verse Q 22:40 and opened the possibility of *ʾillā* of the "only" type being used without preceding negation, a feature found in a papyrus dated to the end of the 1st century AH.

Chapter 10: Comments on *ʾillā* in traditional grammatical thought

Any work on the Qurʾān and its language should engage with pre-modern exegetical and grammatical works. The understanding of syntactical constructions – including *ʾillā* constructions – in traditional works is based, at least to some extent, on Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb*. Therefore, it seems appropriate to dedicate a chapter to the latter's view on *ʾillā* constructions and compare it with those of later traditional scholars.

The two sections below are two investigations of the way in which *ʾillā* was analysed by pre-modern scholars. They seek to show the development in grammatical thought of *ʾillā* constructions as reflected by the differences between Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* and later pre-modern grammatical and exegetical works.

10.1. The change in the concept of *inqiṭāʿ* in traditional grammatical thought

As is the case with many other traditional grammatical terms, the terms for the three types of *ʾillā* constructions presented at the beginning of this part of the thesis (*muttaṣil*, *munqaṭiʿ* and *mufarraġ*) were not coined by Sībawayhi, even though the terms *inqiṭāʿ* and *munqaṭiʿ* do appear in his *al-Kitāb* only in relation to exceptive constructions.[1] The present section discusses the most noteworthy of the three types above, namely, the so-called "discontinuous exception" (*istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ*). More precisely, it focuses on the concept of *inqiṭāʿ* and the change it underwent after Sībawayhi's time. It will be shown that Sībawayhi's perception of *inqiṭāʿ* is primarily syntactical, whereas in post-Sībawayhi grammatical thought *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ* (as opposed to *muttaṣil*) is thought of mainly, if not solely, in semantic terms.

Let us begin by reviewing two chapters from Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb*. The first one is chapter 189, partly cited here:

> [...] *mā marartu bi-ʾaḥadin ʾillā zaydan wa-mā ʾatānī ʾaḥadun ʾillā zaydan wa-ʿalā hāḏā mā raʾaytu ʾaḥadan ʾillā zaydan fa-tanṣubu zaydan ʿalā ġayri raʾaytu wa-ḏālika ʾannaka lam tajʿali l-ʾāḫira badalan mina l-ʾawwali wa-lākinnaka jaʿaltahū munqaṭiʿan mimmā ʿamila fi l-ʾawwali*

[1] See Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, I, 318–319 = ch. 189 (cited below). These are the only occurrences of this term in Sībawayhi's work.

wa-d-dalīlu ʿalā ḏālika ʾannahū yajīʾu fī maʿnā wa-lākin zaydan wa-lā ʾaʿnī zaydan wa-ʿamila fīhi mā qablahū ka-mā ʿamila l-ʿišrūna fi d-dirhami ʾiḏā qulta ʿišrūna dirhaman wa-miṯluhū fi l-inqiṭāʿi min ʾawwalihī ʾinna li-fulānin wa-llāhi mālan ʾillā ʾannahū šaqiyyun fa-ʾannahū lā yakūnu ʾabadan ʿalā ʾinna li-fulānin wa-huwa fī mawḍiʿi naṣbin wa-jāʾa ʿalā maʿnā wa-lākinnahū šaqiyyun

[One of the Bedouins whose Arabic is trustworthy says] *mā marartu bi-ʾaḥadin ʾillā zaydan* ("I passed by no one except Zayd") and *mā ʾatānī ʾaḥadun ʾillā zaydan* ("no one came to me except Zayd"), and accordingly *mā raʾaytu ʾaḥadan ʾillā zaydan* ("I saw no one except Zayd"), so that you assign the accusative case to "Zayd" not because of *raʾaytuhū* ("I saw him"). [In such sentences,] you do not [take] the latter [i.e., Zayd, the excepted element] as a substitute of the former [i.e., *ʾaḥad*, the antecedent]; rather, you make it [i.e., the excepted element] disconnected from what operated on the former [i.e., on the antecedent]. The indication thereof is that it [i.e., the exception phrase *ʾillā zaydan*] has the sense of "but not Zayd" and "I do not mean Zayd". What precedes it operates on it as *ʿišrūna* ("twenty") operates on *dirhaman* ("dirham") when you say *ʿišrūna dirhaman* ("twenty dirhams"). A similar example of disconnection (*inqiṭāʿ*) [of an excepted element] from what precedes it is *ʾinna li-fulānin wa-llāhi mālan ʾillā ʾannahū šaqiyyun* ("By God, so-and-so has money, but he is miserable") – *ʾannahū* [in this example] is by no means [operated on] by *ʾinna li-fulānin*. It is in a syntactical slot of the accusative, and it has the sense of *wa-lākinnahū šaqiyyun*, "but he is miserable".[2]

In this chapter, Sībawayhi explains the occurrence of the accusative case after *ʾillā* first and foremost as the result of the discontinuity of the *ʿamal*, or grammatical effect, which is a purely syntactic consideration. The unvarying use of a complement of *ʾillā* in the accusative case is the only difference between the sentences discussed in this chapter and those discussed in chapter 187, in which the case of the complement of *ʾillā* is assigned by an operator preceding *ʾillā:*

(187a) *mā ʾatānī ʾaḥadun ʾillā* ***zaydun***, "no one came to me except Zayd"
(187b) *mā raʾaytu ʾaḥadan ʾillā* ***ʿamran***, "I did not see anyone except ʿAmr"
(187c) *mā marartu bi-ʾaḥadin ʾillā* ***ʿamrin***, "I did not pass by anyone except ʿAmr"

The term "discontinuity" (*inqiṭāʿ*) here means that *ʾillā* "severs" the grammatical effect of the operator (*ʿāmil*) preceding *ʾillā* that would otherwise assign to the complement of *ʾillā* its case, as is illustrated by the examples from chapter 187.[3]

[2] Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, I, 318–319 = ch. 189.
[3] These examples are discussed in greater detail in §10.2.1 below.

Another reason to count Sībawayhi's view as based mainly on syntactical considerations is the analogy to *ʿišrūna dirhaman*. This is Sībawayhi's stock illustration of a principle that Michael G. Carter termed "the *tanwīn-naṣb* principle". In short, this term covers instances in which two elements are syntactically separated and logically non-identical (i.e., do not refer to the same entity in the world, as in *huwa ʾaḫūka*, "He is your brother"). In such cases, according to Sībawayhi, the first element grammatically causes the second to take the accusative, which results in a "*tanwīn-naṣb* construction". These constructions can be exemplified by *ʿišrūna dirhaman*, where *ʿišrūna*, non-identical with *dirham* and separated from it by the *nūn*, grammatically causes it to take the accusative (hence *dirhaman*), and *lī miṯluhū rajulan*, where *miṯl*, non-identical with *rajul* and separate from it by the pronominal suffix *-hū*, assigns the accusative case to it (hence *rajulan*).[4] Similarly, Sībawayhi tells us, the excepted element after *ʾillā* in the instances discussed in chapter 189 is invariably assigned the accusative case: the utterance preceding *ʾillā* is separate from, and not logically identical with, the excepted element.[5]

The second noteworthy chapter of Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* is chapter 193 (= I, 322), cited in part below:

---

[4] See Carter, "Twenty dirhams". Almog Kasher ("*Tanwīn-naṣb*") refines Carter's analysis of Sībawayhi's "*tanwīn-naṣb* principle" by dividing it into two sub-classes, the second one (§3; pp. 48–49) not including separation, but only non-identity. The division into two sub-classes, it seems to me, is the result of the concept of separation being understood as the use of an *explicit* separator, such as *-hū* in *miṯluhū* or *-na* in *ʿišrūna*. Defining separation slightly differently could perhaps simplify the description of the principle. It appears to me that separation exists whether there is an explicit separating element or not as long as the syntactical constituents do not (and sometimes cannot) syntactically function as a single unit (unlike, e.g., in the case of annexation). Thus, in, e.g., *huwa khalfaka* and *huwa ʾaḫūka*, the separation is reflected by the constituents' forming a sentence together; in, e.g., (*lī*) *miṯluhū rajulan* (where Sībawayhi identifies the operator of *rajulan* as *miṯluhū*; see *al-Kitāb*, I, 257–258 = ch. 143; Kasher, "*Tanwīn-naṣb*", 44ff.) and *ʾanta r-rajulu ʿilman* (where Sībawayhi identifies the operator of *ʿilman* as *al-rajulu*; see *al-Kitāb*, I, 235–236 = ch. 128; Kasher, "*Tanwīn-naṣb*", 48), there is separation between *miṯluhū* and *rajulan* as well as between *al-rajulu* and *ʿilman*, as in both cases they do not belong to the same syntactical unit. In (*lī*) *miṯluhū rajulan*, the separation can be described as explicit, since there is an explicit morpheme that separates *miṯl* from *rajulan*; in *ʾanta r-rajulu ʿilman*, there is still separation, although there is no explicit separating morpheme.

[5] Semantics do play a certain role, too, in assigning the accusative case, but from the comparison of *huwa ḫalfaka* with *huwa ʾaḫūka* it seems evident that it is the separation that allows the grammatical effect, while the semantics determine which case is assigned, viz., nominative in case of identity and accusative in case of non-identity. See further below.

hāḏā bābun lā yakūnu l-mustaṯnā fīhi ʾillā naṣban li-ʾannahū muḫrajun mimmā ʾadḫalta fīhi ġayrahū fa-ʿamila fīhi mā qablahū ka-mā ʿamila l-ʿišrūna fi d-dirhami ḥīna qulta ʿišrūna dirhaman [...] wa-ḏālika qawluka ʾatāni l-qawmu ʾillā ʾabāka wa-marartu bi-l-qawmi ʾillā ʾabāka wa-l-qawmu fīhā ʾillā ʾabāka wa-ntaṣaba l-ʾabu ʾiḏ lam yakun dāḫilan fīmā daḫala fīhi mā qablahū wa-lam yakun ṣifatan wa-kāna l-ʿāmilu fīhi mā qablahū mina l-kalāmi ka-mā ʾanna d-dirhama laysa bi-ṣifatin li-l-ʿišrīna wa-lā maḥmūlin ʿalā mā ḥumilat ʿalayhi wa-ʿamila fīhā [...]

This is a chapter in which the excepted element only takes the accusative, since it is excluded from that in which you include what is not it [= from the antecedent in an affirmative part A],[6] and what precedes it [= part A] operates on it as *ʿišrūna* ("twenty") operates on *dirham* ("dirham") when you say *ʿišrūna dirhaman* ("twenty dirhams") [...]. This is [for instance] when you say *ʾatāni l-qawmu ʾillā ʾabāka* ("the people came to me, except your father"), *marartu bi-l-qawmi ʾillā ʾabāka* ("I passed by the people, except your father") and *al-qawmu fīhā ʾillā ʾabāka* ("The people are in it, except your father"). "Father" takes the accusative because it is not included in that in which what precedes it is included and it is not an attribute. The operator affecting it is the utterance preceding it – like [in *ʿišrūna dirhaman* ("twenty dirhams")], *dirham* is not an attribute to *ʿišrūna*, and it is not affected[7] by what affects it and operates on it [= on *ʿišrūna*]. [...][8]

Although neither the term *inqiṭāʿ* nor *lākin* are mentioned, the analogy to *ʿišrūna dirhaman* suggests that there is separation between parts A and B and that part A operates on part B.[9] As in chapter 189 above, it may be concluded that Sībawayhi

---

[6] In Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, I, 326–327 = ch. 199 (*hāḏā bābu ġayr*), Sībawayhi explains the noun that follows *ʾillā* as *al-ismu llaḏī yakūnu dāḫilan fīmā yaḫruju minhu ġayruhū wa-ḫārijan mimmā yadḫulu fīhi ġayruhū*, "the noun that is included in that from which the rest is excluded and excluded from that in which the rest is included". The former is subsequently exemplified by the affirmative *ʾatāni l-qawmu ġayra zaydin*, "the people came to me except Zayd", and the latter by the negative *mā ʾatānī ġayru/ġayra zaydin*, "no one came to me except Zayd". Following the logic of ch. 193, the opposite seems to be correct: in sentences such as the affirmative *ʾatāni l-qawmu ġayra zaydin*, "the people came to me except Zayd", Zayd is the only one who did not come, i.e., Zayd is the one *excluded* from the action in which the rest is *included*, and vice versa in the negative *mā ʾatānī ġayru/ġayra zaydin*, "no one came to me except Zayd". The correct version is found in two mss. (C and H), as is indicated in the apparatus, ll. 19 and 20.

[7] Carter ("Twenty dirhams", 491, n. 15) suggests understanding *maḥmūl ʿalā-* as "syntactically correlated with-". The result is the same: *dirham* would remain in the accusative regardless of the syntactical function of *ʿišrūna*/*ʿišrīna*.

[8] Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, I, 322 = ch. 193. This is the second of the two *wajh*s mentioned in the introductory chapter 186 (= I, 315).

[9] It is evident from Sībawayhi's words that there is a connection between (1) the term *inqiṭāʿ*, (2) the analogy to *ʿišrūna dirhaman* and (3) *wa-lākin(na)* as the *taqdīr*. In chapter 189 (= I, 318–319), Sībawayhi mentions the term *inqiṭāʿ* alongside both the analogy to *ʿišrūna dirhaman* and *wa-lākin*; in chapter 193

explains the grammatical case of the phrase following *ʾillā* primarily on grounds of syntax, not semantics.

However, it is possible to infer from Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* that the concept of discontinuity (*inqiṭāʿ*) may also be related, at least to a certain extent, to semantics. More accurately, the reason for the syntactical disconnection (*inqiṭāʿ*) may be based on semantic considerations. Namely, since the excepted element does not belong to the same species, or class, as the antecedent. In chapter 190 (= I, 319–320), in which Sībawayhi contrasts the Ḥijāzī dialect to the one of Banū Tamīm in relation to the grammatical case of the excepted element, he states that when the excepted element does not belong to the same species as the antecedent (*al-ʾāḫir laysa min nawʿ al-ʾawwal*), the Ḥijāzīs allocate the accusative to the phrase following *ʾillā*, regardless of the grammatical case of the antecedent (e.g., *mā fīhā ʾaḥadun ʾillā ḥimāran*, "there is no one [= no human being] in it but a donkey").[10] To them, allocating the same grammatical case to both the antecedent and the excepted element would make it seem as if they belonged to the same species. This feature has later been termed *istiṯnāʾ min ġayr al-ʾawwal*, or *istiṯnāʾ min ġayr al-jins*. Unlike the Ḥijāzīs, Sībawayhi continues, the Banū Tamīm allocate to the excepted element the same grammatical case as that of the antecedent in such cases (e.g., *lā ʾaḥada fīhā ʾillā ḥimārun*, "there is no one in it but a donkey").[11]

With the analysis of *inqiṭāʿ* in Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* in mind, the works of later scholars will now be examined, which will later be compared to that of Sībawayhi. In a brief article, Carter schematises the usage of *ʾillā* constructions in Classical Arabic from the perspective of traditional grammarians.[12] He does not elaborate on the identity of the grammarians that he reviewed, but the terminology mentioned in the article suggests that they operated after Sībawayhi's time. Moreover, as will be shown below, the article does not describe Sībawayhi's concept of *inqiṭāʿ*.

(= I, 322), only the analogy to *ʿišrūna dirhaman* is mentioned; and in chapter 190 (= I, 319–320; elaborated on below), both the analogy to *ʿišrūna dirhaman* and *wa-lākin* are mentioned.

[10] All examples cited in chapter 190 include a negative part A, in which case the grammatical case of the excepted element matches that of the antecedent. Examples of affirmative part A are discussed only later, in chapter 193 (I, 322).

[11] Note that these dialectal differences, which are based on semantics, are separate from the *inqiṭāʿ* discussed in chapters 187 and 193, which is based on the syntactical considerations.

[12] Carter, "Exceptive sentences".

According to Carter, *ʾillā* constructions may be defined using three criteria: (i) whether the part preceding *ʾillā* is positive or negative; (ii) whether the sentence preceding *ʾillā* is complete or incomplete; (iii) whether the excepted element is heterogeneous or homogeneous with the antecedent – that is, whether they belong to the same class or are disparate in nature. Out of eight theoretical constructions, says Carter, only four occur in practice:[13]

(1) positive, complete, homogenous; e.g., *qāma l-qawmu ʾillā zaydan*, "the people rose except Zayd" (*istiṯnāʾ muttaṣil*)

(5) negative, complete, homogenous; e.g., *mā qāma l-qawmu ʾillā zaydun*, "the people did not rise except Zayd" (*istiṯnāʾ muttaṣil*)

(6) negative, complete, heterogenous; e.g., *mā fi d-dāri ʾaḥadun ʾillā ḥimāran*, "there is not in the house anyone except a donkey" (*istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ*)

(7) negative, incomplete, (homogenous)[14]; e.g., *mā qāma ʾillā zaydun*, "there did not rise except Zayd" (*istiṯnāʾ mufarraġ*)

When compared with what has been shown above, Carter's schematised summary reflects a different understanding of *inqiṭāʿ* vs *ittiṣāl* in [post-Sībawayhi] traditional works: distinguishing between the two is no longer primarily based on syntactical considerations, but on semantic factors. Of Carter's four possible constructions, the only one whose part A is affirmative – that is, construction no. 1 – is termed *istiṯnāʾ muttaṣil*, "continuous exception", based on the homogeneity between the excepted element and the antecedent. However, according to chapter 193 (= I, 322) of Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb*, such exceptive constructions rather exhibit *discontinuity*.

The point of departure of later pre-modern scholars, then, seems to differ from that of Sībawayhi. So much so that al-Zarkašī defines *istiṯnāʾ muttaṣil* and *munqaṭiʿ* solely according to the semantics of the excepted element and the antecedent:

---

[13] The construction numbers below are the ones used in Carter's article. It should be remarked that, if ʾIblīs were proven to be a creature fundamentally different from the angels, the seven ʾIblīs parallels recounting his refusal to bow down before Adam discussed in §9.2 above would match none of Carter's four possible constructions; Carter's construction no. 2 (viz., positive, complete, heterogeneous; e.g., *qāmū ʾillā ḥimāran*, "they rose, but a donkey did not") would then need to be added as a fifth possibility. Such constructions are indeed discussed by commentators as a legitimate exceptive construction in Classical Arabic – see, e.g., al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, I, 274 (on Q 2:34).

[14] Carter (p. 70, n. 1 and p. 71) remarks that in this kind of exception, since there is no antecedent, the distinction between the excepted element and the antecedent is in fact neutralised; hence the brackets.

wa-yanqasimu ʾilā muttaṣilin wa-huwa mā kāna l-mustaṯnā min jinsi l-mustaṯnā minhu naḥwa jāʾa l-qawmu ʾillā zaydan wa-ʾilā munqaṭiʿin wa-huwa mā kāna min ġayri jinsihī

It is divided into *muttaṣil*, in which the excepted element is of the same species as the antecedent, as in *jāʾa l-qawmu ʾillā zaydan*, "the people came, except for Zayd",[15] and *munqaṭiʿ*, in which (the excepted element) is not of (the antecedent's) species.[16]

Further evidence for post-Sībawayhi scholars' point of departure is found in discussions on whether a certain *ʾillā* construction is continuous (*muttaṣil*) or discontinuous (*munqaṭiʿ*).[17] Consider, for instance, Q 74:38–39:[18]

(38) *kullu nafsin bi-mā kasabat rahīnah* (39) ***ʾillā*** *ʾaṣḥāba l-yamīn* (40) *fī jannātin yatasāʾalūn* (41) *ʿani l-mujrimīn* [...]

(38) Everyone is pledged for what they have earned. (39) ***ʾillā*** the companions of the right – (40) in gardens they will ask one another (41) about the sinners [...]

Some traditional analyses of this passage are based on the interpretation of *ʾaṣḥāb al-yamīn*: if, as some suggest, the phrase alludes to the angels or the Muslims' children, the exception is discontinuous; if, as others argue, the phrase refers to the righteous Muslims (*al-muslimūn al-muḫliṣūn*), the exception is continuous.[19] Again, the continuity or discontinuity is determined by semantic considerations, not by syntactic ones. In line with chapter 193 of his *al-Kitāb*, Sībawayhi, I assume, would create an analogy between the construction in Q 74:38–39, whose part A is affirmative, and *ʿišrūna dirhaman* and determine that the passage exhibits discontinuity.

The fusion of syntax and semantics after Sībawayhi's time may further be illustrated by the confusion of the terms *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ* and *istiṯnāʾ min ġayr al-jins*. As illustrated by al-Zarkašī's definition of *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ* above, these two terms, which seem disparate in Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb*,[20] are later used, at least by some pre-modern scholars, interchangeably. Another example is Q 3:41 *ʾāyatuka ʾallā tukallima*

---

[15] Note, again, that this sentence would exhibit *inqiṭāʿ* in Sībawayhi's view.

[16] Al-Zarkašī, *al-Burhān*, IV, 209.

[17] Many discussions in traditional works are summarised in ʿUḍayma, I.1, 242–377. For *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ* and *muttaṣil*, see ibid, 328–361.

[18] For a discussion on this passage, as well as a possible alternative (understanding and) translation, see §8.4 above.

[19] See ʿUḍayma, I.1, 339 (no. 6), and the references therein.

[20] See n. 11 above.

n-nāsa ṯalāṯata ʾayyāmin ʾillā ramzan, "Your[s] sign will be that you will not be able speak to the people for three days except by gesture". ʾAbū Ḥayyān identifies this as an instance of *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ*, but his reasoning, viz., since "gesturing may not be subsumed under speaking" (*al-ramz lā yadḫulu taḥta l-taklīm*), suggests that he understood it as an instance of what Sībawayhi would classify as *istiṯnāʾ min ġayr al-jins*.[21]

In sum, what is considered *inqiṭāʿ* in Sībawayhi's terms is different from what was later analysed as *inqiṭāʿ*. For reasons that should be investigated separately, while Sībawayhi based his analysis of *inqiṭāʿ* primarily on the syntax, later scholars classified a given *ʾillā* construction as *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ* based on the semantic relations between the antecedent and the excepted element.

10.2. *ʾIllā* functioning as an attribute

The analysis of *ʾillā* as functioning like *ġayr*, or as an attribute, is occasionally found in pre-modern scholarly works. However, a comparison to Sībawayhi's view on the matter reveals differences between Sībawayhi and post-Sībawayhi grammatical thought.

10.2.1. Sībawayhi's view

In his *al-Kitāb* (I, 327 = ch. 199), Sībawayhi states that, in every syntactical slot in which it is permissible to use *ʾillā* for exception, it is also permissible to use *ġayr* (*wa-kullu mawḍiʿin jāza fīhi l-istiṯnāʾu bi-ʾillā jāza bi-ġayr*). However, as will be shown in this section, the opposite appears not to be true. Otherwise, Sībawayhi would not have dedicated a chapter to *mā yakūnu fīhi ʾillā wa-mā baʿdahū waṣfan bi-manzilati miṯl wa-ġayr*, "[cases] in which *ʾillā* and what follows it function as an attribute, as do *miṯl* and *ġayr*" (*al-Kitāb*, I, 322–323 = ch. 194).[22] The chapter begins as follows:

> *wa-ḏālika qawluka law kāna maʿanā rajulun ʾillā zaydun la-ġulibnā wa-d-dalīlu ʿalā ʾannahū wasfun ʾannaka law qulta law kāna maʿanā ʾillā zaydun la-halaknā wa-ʾanta turīdu l-istiṯnāʾa la-kunta qad ʾaḥalta wa-naẓīru ḏālika qawluhū [...] law kāna fīhimā ʾālihatun ʾilla llāhu la-fasadatā* [...]

[21] ʾAbū Ḥayyān, II, 472.

[22] To connect this to the discussion in §6.4.1, we may equal the use of *ʾillā* as an attribute to its use as a marker of exclusion.

> [...] this is (for instance) when you say *law kāna maʿanā rajulun ʾillā zaydun la-ġulibnā* ("If there had been with us a man other than Zayd, we would have been defeated"). The evidence that it [i.e., *ʾillā zaydun*] is an attribute is that if you said *law kāna maʿanā ʾillā zaydun la-halaknā* intending [to express] exception, your [sentence] would be ungrammatical.[23] The like of this is [the Qurʾānic verse] *law kāna fīhimā ʾālihatun ʾilla llāhu la-fasadatā* ("Were there in them[d] [i.e., in the heavens and the earth] [any] gods other than God, they[d] would go to ruin"; Q 21:22). [...][24]

The reasoning behind analysing *ʾillā zaydun* as an attribute (*waṣf*, *ṣifa*) requires clarification. My explanation will start from the introductory chapter 186 (I, 315) in Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb*, continue through chapters 187 (I, 315) and 189 (I, 318), and end in chapter 193 (I, 322), which immediately precedes chapter 194. Afterwards, I will show that pre-modern scholars who operated later than Sībawayhi did not follow his line of reasoning.

In ch. 186 (I, 315), Sībawayhi introduces two types of *ʾillā*. For now, only the first one will be examined.[25] In this first type, Sībawayhi explains, the addition of *ʾillā* to the sentence does not change the syntactical behaviour (or case) of the noun following it, or indeed has no grammatical effect on it, just as *lā* does not grammatically affect the noun it precedes. Examples are

(186a) *mā ʾatānī ʾillā* ***zaydun***, "no one came to me except Zayd"
(186b) *mā laqītu ʾillā* ***zaydan***, "I did not meet anyone except Zayd"
(186c) *mā marartu ʾillā* ***bi-zaydin***, "I did not pass by anyone except Zayd"

The noun following *ʾillā* is grammatically identical to that without *ʾillā* (viz., *mā ʾatānī zaydun*, *mā laqītu zaydan* and *mā marartu bi-zaydin*, respectively). It is also grammatically affected by the operator (*ʿāmil*) that would have operated on it had *ʾillā* not existed in the sentence – that is, e.g., *ʾatānī* in 186a is the operator that allocates the nominative case to Zayd (hence *zaydun*) just as if the sentence was *mā ʾatānī zaydun*.

At the beginning of ch. 187 (I, 315), Sībawayhi discusses sentences such as the following:

---

[23] For *muḥāl* as "ungrammatical", see Noy, "The term *muḥāl*".
[24] Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, I, 322–323.
[25] The second type is when *ʾillā* is followed by an affirmative sentence – see further below (ch. 193).

(187a) *mā ʾatānī* ***ʾaḥadun*** *ʾillā* ***zaydun***, "no one came to me except Zayd"

(187b) *mā raʾaytu* ***ʾaḥadan*** *ʾillā* ***ʿamran***, "I did not see anyone except ʿAmr"

(187c) *mā marartu* ***bi-ʾaḥadin*** *ʾillā* ***ʿamrin***, "I did not pass by anyone except ʿAmr"

In these sentences, *zayd* functions as the *badal*, "appositive", of *ʾaḥad*.[26] These sentences, Sībawayhi says, are like sentences 186a, 186b and 186c, respectively. It is also similar to *zayd* being analysed as *badal*, an appositive, [of *rajul*] in *marartu bi-rajulin zaydin*, "I passed by a man, Zayd", since it is like saying *marartu bi-zaydin*, "I passed by Zayd". As will be explicitly stated in ch. 193 below, the method for detecting the appositive here is omitting the first occurrence – in this case, the antecedent – from the sentence and checking whether it is still grammatical. In any event, *ʾillā* once again has no grammatical effect in such cases, and since the antecedent and the noun following *ʾillā* are assigned the same grammatical case the latter can be analysed as an appositive.

It has thus far been shown that Sībawayhi's reasoning behind analysing the noun following *ʾillā* as an appositive. To confirm the interpretation presented above, a case in which he analyses it as *not* being an appositive will now be examined. In ch. 189, Sībawayhi discusses sentences such as the following:

(189a) *mā ʾatānī ʾaḥadun ʾillā* ***zaydan***, "no one came to me except Zayd"

(189b) *mā raʾaytu ʾaḥadan ʾillā* ***zaydan***, "I did not see anyone except Zayd"

(189c) *mā marartu bi-ʾaḥadin ʾillā* ***zaydan***, "I did not pass by anyone except Zayd"

Sībawayhi does not repeat the methods discussed above to explain why *zaydan* is not an appositive. However, following the logic above, omitting *ʾaḥad* from these sentences would indeed result in an ungrammatical sentence (bearing in mind that the accusative case of *zaydan* in sentence 189b is not allocated by *raʾaytu*, as Sībawayhi explicitly indicates).[27]

In ch. 193 (I, 322), having thus far dealt only with cases of *ʾillā* followed by negation, Sībawayhi focuses on cases of affirmative sentences followed by *ʾillā*:

(193a) *ʾatāni l-qawmu ʾillā* ***ʾabāka***, "The people came to me, {except your father/but your father did not}"

---

[26] Not *bi-ʾaḥadin*, for reasons explained in ch. 188 = I, 317.

[27] Sībawayhi's view of the reason behind the accusative is elaborated upon under §10.1, in which Sībawayhi's chapter 189 is discussed in more detail.

(193b) *marartu bi-l-qawmi ʾillā* ***ʾabāka***, "I passed by the people, {except/but not} by your father"

(193c) *al-qawmu fīhā ʾillā* ***ʾabāka***, "The people are in it, {except your father/but your father is not}"

The explanation of the accusative case of *ʾabāka*, "your father", in these sentences is twofold: (1) it is excluded from what the people are included in – that is, *ʾillā* is exceptive; (2) it is not an attribute – a point which will be discussed below. Sībawayhi further explains that *ʾabāka* cannot function as an appositive, since saying *ʾatāni ʾillā ʾabāka* would be ungrammatical (*muḥāl*). The method for detecting the appositive here is similar to that in ch. 187, namely, omitting the antecedent and checking whether a grammatical sentence remains.

Before returning to ch. 194, I should add a brief remark regarding the second point above: although Sībawayhi does explicitly explain what he deems an attribute in the context of *ʾillā* constructions, I believe that he explicitly mentions *ʾabāka* not being an attribute (*ṣifa*) because the antecedent and the excepted element do not agree in grammatical case, which is an essential characteristic of an attribute. That *ʾabāka* is not an attribute is important for his next chapter, which will now be discussed.

In ch. 194, Sībawayhi discusses examples such as the following:

(194a) *law kāna maʿanā rajulun ʾillā zaydun la-ġulibnā*, "If there had been with us a man other than Zayd, we would have been defeated"

Unlike the examples adduced in ch. 193, here *rajulun* and *zaydun* do share the same grammatical case. However, it is impossible to analyse *zaydun* as an appositive, since, following the same logic as in the above, omitting *rajulun* would result – as Sībawayhi reports – in an ungrammatical sentence.[28] Furthermore, it may be inferred from chapter 193 that in a "correct" (affirmative)[29] exceptive sentence *zaydan* should be expected, not *zaydun*. The only remaining option is that of *ʾillā zaydun* functioning as an attribute (*waṣf*), which is possible because both *rajulun* and

[28] The addition of *wa-ʾanta turīdu l-istiṯnāʾa* is important: Sībawayhi is aware of the fact that *law kāna maʿanā ġayru zaydin la-ġulibnā/la-halaknā* would be grammatical, just as would *ʾatānī ġayru zaydin* (cf. I, 327 = ch. 199). However, while the sense of the sentence with *ġayr* would effectively express exception, using *ʾillā* in both of these constructions would be ungrammatical – see ibid.

[29] It is for this reason, I believe, that *rajulun* is used here, and not *ʾaḥadun*. The use of *ʾaḥad* in affirmative sentences is ungrammatical.

zaydun have the same grammatical case. The fact that this is the only remaining option might prove relevant to the discussion below.

10.2.2. Q 21:22 and Q 24:6: Sībawayhi vs later scholars

Two frequently adduced Qurʾānic examples in the context of *ʾillā* functioning as an attribute are the following:

> Q 21:22 *law kāna fīhimā ʾālihatun* ***ʾilla*** *llāhu la-fasadatā*
> Were there in them[d] [i.e., in the heavens and on the earth] [any] gods **other than** God, they[d] would go to ruin.

> Q 24:6 *wa-llaḏīna yarmūna ʾazwājahum wa-lam yakun lahum šuhadāʾu* ***ʾillā*** *ʾanfusuhum fa-...*
> And those who accuse their wives having no witnesses **except** themselves, [...].

Although the latter verse is mentioned in Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb*,[30] he analyses only *ʾilla llāhu* in the former verse as an attribute.[31] I believe that this is not a coincidence: just as in sentence (194a) in §10.2.1 above, Q 21:22 contains an affirmative sentence, and the noun following *ʾillā* is in the nominative. Exceptive *ʾillā* should in such cases be followed by an accusative noun (that is, *ʾilla lāha*). The only option, then, is to analyse *ʾilla llāhu* as an attribute.

In the works of scholars who operated after Sībawayhi's time, one also finds "*ʾillā* in the sense of *ġayr*" (*ʾillā bi-maʿnā ġayr*).[32] Post-Sībawayhi traditional scholars further argue that, when *ʾillā* functions like *ġayr*, the noun preceding *ʾillā* is indefinite.[33] This does not seem to have been Sībawayhi's line of thought: I could not find any explicit mention of the state of definiteness of the noun preceding *ʾillā* in *al-Kitāb*. Furthermore, from chapter 187 (I, 315–316), in which Q 24:6 is mentioned, it

---

[30] *Al-Kitāb*, I, 315–316 = ch. 187. See further below.

[31] *Al-Kitāb*, I, 322–323 = ch. 194.

[32] Note that Sībawayhi does not discuss *ʾillā* in the *sense* of *ġayr*, but rather in a *syntactical position* (*manzila*) similar to that of *ġayr*. For Ibn Hišām's explanation of the sentences *law kāna maʿanā rajulun ʾillā zaydun la-ġulibnā* (= sentence 194a above) as well as Q 21:22 – which heavily relies on semantics – see Gully, *Grammar and semantics*, 153–155.

[33] See, e.g., al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, VIII, 142–144 (on Q 21:22) and 384 (on Q 24:6) (*ṣifa li-l-nakira*). See also the discussion in Gully, *Grammar and semantics*, 153–155. Wright (II, 341 = §186b, rem. a) further remarks that the preceding noun is usually indefinite plural (or the like, as in the case of *taʿrīf al-jins*). The question of *ʿumūm*, "generality", should be examined in a separate study.

may be inferred that Sībawayhi analysed *ʾanfusuhum* as an appositive, not an attribute, even though *šuhadāʾu* is indefinite.[34]

The discussion above lends further support for my argument in §10.2.1: apart from his focus on syntax, as opposed to the later shift to semantics, Sībawayhi's analysis of *ʾillā* and its complement as an attribute is the result of a necessity or a last resort. Perhaps unlike later scholars,[35] when another interpretative option is possible, such as the option of an appositive in Q 24:6, Sībawayhi opts for it. This topic, however, deserves further, more detailed investigation.

10.3. Summary

This chapter has focused on the way in which the analysis *ʾillā* in traditional grammatical thought was changed. Section 10.1 has concentrated on the difference between Sībawayhi's view of *inqiṭāʿ*, which is based primarily on the syntax, and what was later analysed as *istiṯnāʾ munqaṭiʿ*, which is heavily reliant on the semantic relations between the antecedent and the excepted element.

Section 10.2 has explored the analysis of *ʾillā* as functioning similarly to *ġayr*. Here I argued that Sībawayhi considered this type of *ʾillā* when there was no other possible option, whereas Qurʾān scholars who operated after him proposed it for several verses, not necessarily following Sībawayhi's line of thought.

[34] It should, however, be conceded that while Sībawayhi's words in ch. 187 (I, 315–316) indicate that he analysed Q 24:6 *ʾanfusuhum* as *badal*, in ch. 194 (= I, 323) he permits Zayd in sentences such as (187a) *mā ʾatānī ʾaḥadun ʾillā zaydun*, "no one came to me {except/other than} Zayd", to be either *badal* or *ṣifa*. The question of the state of definiteness, in any event, is not mentioned at all in neither of the chapters.

[35] This may be inferred from the analysis of *ʾillā* and its complement as an attribute in several other verses – see ʿUḍayma, I.1, 246–251.

Conclusions

With over 650 occurrences, *ʾillā* is one of the most important particles in the Qurʾān. It is often extensively dealt with in Qurʾān commentaries and is not infrequently translated inaccurately. Part II has provided a detailed analysis of its usage in the Qurʾān.

Chapter 5 discussed the restrictive usage of *ʾillā*. This is the most common use of *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān. In such cases, *ʾillā* is preceded by negation, which is not an original part of the proposition in part A.[1] The NEG … *ʾillā* construction is added to the proposition to express exclusiveness. Rhetorical questions are analogous to this type of *ʾillā*. Sentences featuring restrictive *ʾillā* constructions may usually – but not always – be converted into affirmative propositions with "only" in English. The NEG … *ʾillā* construction is also occasionally used to assign focus to the complement of *ʾillā*. Cases of the "without" sub-type of restrictive *ʾillā* may also be converted into affirmative propositions with a universal determiner (such as "every"). In all cases of restrictive *ʾillā* constructions, the complement of *ʾillā* is an integral part of the sentence. This could be either since it is syntactically necessary for the sentence to be complete or since it is an indispensable part of the message conveyed by the sentence.

Chapter 6 concentrated on *ʾillā* as an exceptive particle. In this type, part A is syntactically complete, and its message is also complete. As in exceptive constructions in other languages, exceptive *ʾillā* requires that its complement be included in the set of items referred to by the generalisation in the host (Presupposition of Inclusion) and that the *ʾillā* phrase give rise to a proposition with opposite polarity to that of the host (Polarity Generalisation). When exceptive *ʾillā* is followed by a clause introduced by *ʾan*, *ʾillā ʾan* denotes "unless". A comparison of exceptive *ʾillā* to *ġayr* has shown that *ġayr*, as a marker of exclusion, normally allows more interpretation options than *ʾillā*. The former is positioned immediately after the constituent that it qualifies, and its scope is limited to that constituent only, whereas the movement of *ʾillā* is freer and its scope is the entire host. Cases of *ʾillā* functioning as a marker of exclusion, like *ġayr*, can also be found in the Qurʾān, albeit rarely.

[1] One possible exception is Q 22:40 – see §9.4.

Chapter 7 revolved around adversative *ʾillā*. It was shown that although syntactically adversative *ʾillā* is mostly identical to exceptive *ʾillā*, *ʾillā* can sometimes only be analysed as adversative. Of the three main adversative types discussed in cross-linguistic research on adversative relations, only contrastive and corrective *ʾillā* are found in the Qurʾān. When an *ʾan* clause follows corrective *ʾillā*, that *ʾan* clause is understood as an independent sentence following but_{SN} (equivalent to German *sondern*). A comparison of adversative *ʾillā* with *lākin(na)* demonstrated that *lākin(na)* is used to express all three main adversative functions and that there are syntactical differences between the conjuncts connected by *lākin(na)* and those connected by *ʾillā*. The preliminary Qurʾānic data on *lākin(na)* vs *ʾillā* also point to a different distribution of adversative connectives than the distributions thus far described in cross-linguistic research.

Two important factors were taken into consideration in the detection of, and the differentiation between, the three types of *ʾillā* above: (1) whether part A is syntactically complete and the information conveyed by it is complete; (2) whether the Presupposition of Inclusion is maintained. The former factor differentiates restrictive *ʾillā* constructions from the non-restrictive types of *ʾillā*: only when *ʾillā* is restrictive does one find an incomplete part A. Restrictive *ʾillā* is also the only type of *ʾillā* that may be complemented by an asyndetic clause. The latter factor distinguishes exceptive from adversative *ʾillā*: the Polarity Generalisation entails that a proposition that includes an exception phrase in fact incorporates two adversative propositions; however, if the Presupposition of Inclusion requirement is not met, *ʾillā* cannot be understood as exceptive and thus must be analysed as adversative.

Chapter 8 included various investigations that are not related to any single type of *ʾillā*. The sections revolved around the relationship between *ʾillā* and informational focus (§8.1), the position of the *ʾillā* phrase in relation to its host (§8.2), the *fa-* frequently found after *ʾillā* constructions (§8.3), a rare case in which *ʾillā* can be decisively shown to be followed by a sentence (§8.4) and examples in which the rhyme influences *ʾillā* constructions (§8.5).

Chapter 9 focused on case studies involving an *ʾillā* construction: *ʾillā* in Q 12:68 (§9.1), the intra-Qurʾānic parallels recounting ʾIblīs's refusal to prostrate himself before Adam (§9.2), the occurrences of *mā NQM* (*min*) ... *ʾillā ʾan* ... (§9.3) and Q 22:40 (§9.4).

Finally, Chapter 10 gathered comments related to the developments and changes in the analysis of *ʾillā* in pre-modern scholarly works, especially as reflected by the differences between Sībawayhi's analysis of *ʾillā* in *al-Kitāb* and the analysis found in post-Sībawayhi grammatical and exegetical works.

Concluding remarks

This thesis has presented a systematic description of the usage of two particles, viz., *nafs* and *ʾillā*, in the Qurʾān, seeking to contribute to a future grammar of Qurʾānic Arabic. Previous research has shown that the inventory of linguistic features in the Qurʾān is different from that which is found in extra-Qurʾānic Classical Arabic.[1] This thesis has shown that there is more to discover regarding Qurʾānic grammar through a systematic and comprehensive work. The following are concluding remarks on what can be learned from the analyses of *nafs* and *ʾillā* as well as questions for future research.

The most immediate contribution of this thesis is to the improvement of the translation of the Qurʾān. As illustrated throughout the thesis,[2] both *nafs* and *ʾillā* were not infrequently misunderstood by translators. The various discussions of *nafs* and *ʾillā* and the comprehensive classification of the occurrences into types and sub-types in this thesis should assist translators in improving their translations of the Qurʾān.

The thesis also contributes to the understanding of the nature of Qurʾānic Arabic. The differences detected in it between Qurʾānic and extra-Qurʾānic Arabic may be divided into two main groups. The first group contains features that exist in extra-Qurʾānic Classical Arabic but cannot be found in the Qurʾān. The syntactical variety of *ʾillā* constructions in the Qurʾān, however wide, is not as wide as that which occurs in extra-Qurʾānic Classical Arabic. I could not find, for instance, any Qurʾānic occurrence of *ʾillā* used in the context of a surprising event;[3] nor could I find cases in

[1] For example, in Fischer's summary of Qurʾānic morphological and syntactical features that he considered pre-classical (Fischer, "Altarabische", 38–40). None of these are related to *nafs*; as for *ʾillā*, Fischer only mentions its function of introducing a protasis in a conditional sentence (a usage discussed in §6.2.3 above).

[2] Examples of different translations for the same occurrence of *nafs* or *ʾillā* and discussions that have direct implications on translation are included mainly in the overview section of Part I, in §§2.4, 5.1.5, 7.2, 7.3, 8.1, 8.3 and 8.4 and in Chapter 9.

[3] On which see Reckendorf, *Syntaktische Verhältnisse*, 725; Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 509–510 = §262.8; e.g., *lam yajid ʾillā rajulan qad ʾaḫaḏa bi-mankibihī*, "he [suddenly] felt that a man grabbed his shoulder", as well as structures such as *mā huwa ʾillā …*, and *mā rāʿahū ʾillā …*.

which the EP precedes the associate of the EP.[4] Occasionally, while Qurʾānic Arabic utilises a certain means of expression, extra-Qurʾānic Classical Arabic primarily has a different usage that is absent from the Qurʾān. For example, unlike in extra-Qurʾānic Classical Arabic, there are no occurrences of *wa-qad* clauses following *ʾillā* in the Qurʾān;[5] instead, a *faʿala* form is utilised in Qurʾānic Arabic.

The second group of differences includes features that occur in Qurʾānic Arabic but are not documented in extra-Qurʾānic Classical Arabic. The question of whether they can be found outside the Qurʾān remains, for now, open. A notable representative of this group is the reciprocal use of *ʾanfus*, which is mentioned in current grammars of Classical Arabic only with examples from the Qurʾān. The usage of contrastive *ʾillā* may also be included here.[6] As these features cannot easily be distinguished from other, more common usages fulfilling the same function, Qurʾānic Arabic exhibits some redundancy. Reciprocal *ʾanfus* is used alongside the reciprocal construction with *baʿḍ*, and contrastive and corrective relations are expressed by *ʾillā* as well as *lākin(na)*.

How can these differences be accounted for? One could argue that features belonging to the first group, such as the *ʾillā* used to express surprise in extra-Qurʾānic Classical Arabic as well as in modern dialects, did not occur in the Qurʾān simply because it is a corpus limited in, e.g., size or generic conventions. This is perhaps the simplest explanation, and it could plausibly account for many of the differences; however, such an argument does not account for the second group of differences, which one would then expect to find outside the Qurʾān, too. Explaining away the limited inventory of Qurʾānic features as mere coincidental, then, cannot be the entire picture. Another possible explanation is developmental changes in the language; for instance, *ʾillā* does not occur in the Qurʾān in the context of a

---

[4] On which see, e.g., Wright, II, 337–338 = §186aɣ; e.g., *fa-mā liya ʾillā ʾāla ʾaḥmada šīʿatun wa-mā liya ʾillā mašʿaba l-ḥaqqi mašʿabū*, "I have no helpers but the family of ʾAḥmad (Muḥammad), and I have no way but the way of truth" [al-Ṭawīl] (from al-Kumayt ibn Zayd al-ʾAsadī, *Dīwān*, 517).

[5] These would have belonged to the "without" category (§5.2); e.g., *ʾinnahū lam yabqa hāhunā dihqānun ʾillā wa-qad bāyaʿa t-turka*, "there is no *dihqān* left that did not pledge his allegiance to the Turks" = all *dihqān*s pledged their allegiance to the Turks (example taken from Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 508 = §262.6).

[6] Reckendorf's (*Arabische Syntax*, 509 = §262.6) mentioning of Q 2:34 (*fa-sajadū ʾillā ʾiblīsa ʾabā*, "sie fielen nieder, nur I[blīs] wollte nicht") as adversative *ʾillā* has been discussed in §9.2. *ʾIllā* in both this Qurʾānic example and the example he adduces from Huḏalī poetry can equally be read as exceptive.

surprising event since it developed at a later stage. Given that surprising events tend to draw more attention than other events in a narrative, one may speculate that this usage of *ʾillā* could have emerged from its being followed by the focused constituent. However, more evidence is needed to substantiate such an argument.

As for the second group of features, provided that they cannot be found in extra-Qurʾānic Arabic, two main explanations are possible. A more linear model of the history of Arabic would add them to the "pre-classical" features that the Qurʾān exhibits; Van Putten's model, by contrast, would possibly explain them as initially belonging to the *ʿArabiyya* but not surviving the negotiation process leading to the later standardised Classical Arabic. Using corrective *ʾillā* followed by *ʾan* (see §§7.3.2 and 7.4) as an example, it may be that both *ʾillā* and *wa-lākin* were genuinely used as corrective and contrastive particles, and at later stage the latter fully took over as an adversative particle while the former was reserved only for exceptive constructions, a process that could have happened either naturally or as a result of a conscious negotiation process that shaped Classical Arabic in its standardised form.

The thesis leaves multiple questions open as well as several leads for further investigation. Most questions pertaining to the relationships between the Qurʾān and each of the other Arabic corpora have been discussed above. Other questions are related to linguistic distinctions within the Qurʾānic corpus itself: Can reciprocal *ʾanfus* be distinguished from other strategies of expressing reciprocity? Is there any difference between corrective *ʾillā* and corrective *lākin(na)*? It might also be interesting to inquire further into the similarity between exceptive and adversative *ʾillā*. The discussion in §7.4 points to adversative *ʾillā* originating in exceptive *ʾillā*; however, further evidence should be gathered to corroborate or refute this preliminary conclusion. Perhaps examples such as Q 53:32 (discussed under §6.4.2) and Q 2:282 (discussed under §8.2.4; see esp. n. 13), in which the semantics seems to block an otherwise ordinary exceptive *ʾillā*, could serve as evidence, but more work on the matter is required.

Another set of questions concerns Qurʾānic Arabic in comparison with the linguistic situation portrayed by early grammarians such as Sībawayhi. While I could not find a reciprocal use of *ʾanfus* described by Sībawayhi, I could find in his *al-Kitāb* a range of *ʾillā* constructions that the Qurʾān does not contain. This corresponds well to Van Putten's argument that the Qurʾān "has a highly consistent

use of only a *subset* of the linguistic features considered to be *ʿarabiyyah*".[7] However, it remains to be seen whether his conclusions about the phonology and morphology of the Qurʾān can also, at least to a certain extent, be applied to its syntax.[8] More generally, a continuation of Van Putten's work that systematically examines syntactical features that are both detectable from the Qurʾānic consonantal text and identifiable with the dialectal usage of certain Arab tribes is in order.

With regard to *ʾillā* in traditional grammatical thought, the development in the concept of *inqiṭāʿ* discussed in §10.1 also deserves further exploration. More particularly, it would be worth inquiring when and, if possible, where or by whom this change took place.

This thesis did not deal with the usage of *ʾillā* for rhetorical effect. However, the information provided in it regarding the relationship between *ʾillā* and focus could be of use when exploring the rhetorical function(s) of *ʾillā*.

Finally, the type of work conducted in this thesis should be continued. The analyses of *nafs* and *ʾillā* join other indications to show that a grammar of the Arabic found in the Qurʾān alone, when compared with extra-Qurʾānic Arabic, may prove promising for improving the description of the history of Arabic. They allow the researcher to assemble a greater number of fine pieces of evidence into what will eventually become a more coherent picture, even though each of these pieces on its own might seem insignificant. It was shown in §9.4, for instance, that Q 22:40 is a possible case of *ʾillā* expressing "only" without preceding negation. This feature is not mentioned in Sībawayhi's description of the usage of *ʾillā* but is found in papyri from soon after the assumed composition of the Qurʾān, which might be used as evidence for a situation of diglossia: a substandard feature in an otherwise high register. Can other such features be found in the Qurʾānic text? What other clues can be detected from a similar analysis of other linguistic features of Qurʾānic Arabic? The more discrepancies are gathered, the less tenable it becomes to

[7] Van Putten, *QA*, 4. Recall that Van Putten defines the *ʿarabiyya* as "any form of Arabic that the grammarians deem fit to describe" (*QA*, 3–4).

[8] Certain features labelled by Sībawayhi as Ḥijāzī have been mentioned in the thesis, such as what was later termed *istiṯnāʾ min ġayr al-ʾawwal*, in which the complement of *ʾillā* is assigned the accusative by the Ḥijāzīs but the same grammatical case as the antecedent by the Banū Tamīm. This feature, however, cannot be detected from Qurʾānic consonantal text.

consider them as coincidental and the higher the chances are to refine the portrayal of the history of the Arabic language.

References

Encyclopaedias and Journals

EQ = Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān. Ed. J. D. McAuliffe. Leiden, 2001–2006.
EI[1] *= Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Ed. M. Th. Houtsma et al. First Edition (1913–1936).
EI[2] *= Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Ed. P. Bearman et al. New Edition (first published online in 2012).
EI[3] *= Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*. Ed. K. Fleet et al.
JIQSA = Journal of the international Qur'anic studies association
MW = The Muslim World
ZAL = Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik
ZDMG = Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

Abdel Haleem (translation) — M. A. S. Abdel Haleem. *The Qur'an: English translation and parallel Arabic text*. Oxford, 2010.

ʾAbū Ḥayyān — Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ʾAbū Ḥayyān al-ʾAndalusī. *Tafsīr al-baḥr al-muḥīṭ*. Ed. ʿĀdil ʾAḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd and ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿawwiḍ. 8 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1993.

ʿAdī ibn Zayd, *Dīwān* — ʿAdī ibn Zayd al-ʿIbādī. *Dīwān ʿAdī ibn Zayd al-ʿIbādī*. Ed. Muḥammad Jabbār al-Muʿaybid. Bagdad, 1965.

Afsaruddin, "ʿĀʾisha" — A. Afsaruddin. "ʿĀʾisha bt. Abī Bakr". *EI*[3].

ʿAlī (translation) — A. Y. ʿAlī. *The meaning of the holy Qurʾān: new edition with Qur'anic text (Arabic), revised translation, commentary and newly compiled comprehensive index*[10]. Beltsville, MD, 1999.

Ambros, *Concise dictionary* — A. A. Ambros. *A concise dictionary of Koranic Arabic*. With the collaboration of S. Procházka. Wiesbaden, 2004.

Ambros, "*lākin* und *lākinna*" — A. A. Ambros. "*lākin* und *lākinna* im Koran". *ZAL* 17 (1987): 21–30.

Anscombre and Ducrot, "Deux mais" — J. C. Anscombre and O. Ducrot. "Deux *mais* en français?" *Lingua* 43 (1977): 23–40.

Arberry (translation) — A. J. Arberry. *The Koran Interpreted*. London, 1955.

Asad (translation) — *The Message of the Qurʾān*. Translated and explained by M. Asad. Gibraltar, 1984.

Azar — M. Azar. "'*Aval*, '*ela* and '*ela šè-* in Modern Hebrew". *Lěšonénu* 45.2 (1980): 133–148.

Baalbaki, *Legacy* — R. Baalbaki. *The legacy of the* Kitāb*: Sībawayhi's analytical methods within the context of the Arabic grammatical theory*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008.

Bar-Asher Siegal, *NP-strategy* — E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal. *The NP-strategy for expressing reciprocity: Typology, history, syntax and semantics*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2020.

Al-Bayḍāwī — ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar al-Bayḍāwī. *ʾAnwār al-tanzīl wa-ʾasrār al-taʾwīl*. Ed. Muḥammad al-Marʿašlī. 5 vols. Beirut: Dār ʾIḥyāʾ al-Turāṯ al-ʿArabī, 1996.

Becker, "Neue Papyri" — C. H. Becker. "Neue arabische Papyri des Aphroditofundes". *Der Islam* 2 (1911): 245–268.

Bell — R. Bell. *The Qurʾān: Translated, with a critical re-arrangement of the Surahs*. Edinburgh, 1937.

Bergsträsser, *Verneinungs- und Fragepartikeln* — G. Bergsträsser. *Verneinungs- und Fragepartikeln und Verwandtes im Ḳurʾān: Ein Beitrag zur Grammatik des Arabischen*. Leipzig, 1914.

Birnstiel, "Selected features" — D. Birnstiel. "Selected Features of Arabic Syntax in the Qurʾān". PhD thesis. Cambridge, 2010.

Blachère, *Introduction* — R. Blachère. *Introduction au Coran*[2]. Paris, 1959.

Blachère, "Note" — R. Blachère. "Note sur le substantif *nafs* « souffle vital », « âme », dans le Coran". *Semitica* 1 (1948): 69–77.

Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Grammaire* — R. Blachère and M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes. *Grammaire de l'arabe classique*. Paris, 1975.

Blakemore, "Denial and Contrast" — D. Blakemore. "Denial and contrast: A relevance theoretic analysis of *but*". *Linguistics and philosophy* 12.1 (1989): 1–23.

Blau, *ASP* — J. Blau. *A grammar of Christian Arabic: Based mainly on South-Palestinian texts from the first millennium*. Louvain, 1966–1967.

Blau, "Diglossia" — J. Blau. "The beginnings of the Arabic diglossia". *Afroasiatic linguistics* 4 (1977): 175–202.

Blau, *Emergence* — J. Blau. *The emergence and linguistic background of Judeao-Arabic: A study of the origins of Neo-Arabic and Middle Arabic*[3]. Jerusalem, 1999.

Bravmann, *Spiritual background* — M. M. Bravmann. *The spiritual background of early Islam: Studies in ancient Arab concepts*. Leiden, 1972.

Brockelmann, *Grundriss* — C. Brockelmann. *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen*. Berlin, 1913.

Calverley, "Doctrines" — E. E. Calverley. "Doctrines of the soul (*nafs* and *rūḥ*) in Islam". *MW* 33.4 (1943): 254–264 (a revised edition of ibid. "*Nafs*". *EI*[1]).

Carter, "Exceptive sentences" — M. G. Carter. "A note on Classical Arabic exceptive sentences". *Journal of Semitic studies* 20.1 (1975): 69–72.

Carter, "Twenty Dirhams" — M. G. Carter. "'Twenty Dirhams' in the *Kitāb* of Sībawaihi". *Bulletin of the school of oriental and African studies* 35.3 (1972): 485–496.

Cook, "Stemma" — M. Cook. "The Stemma of the Regional Codices of the Koran". *Graeco-Arabica* 9–10 (2004): 89–104.

Dalrymple and Nikolaeva, *Objects and information structure* — M. Dalrymple and I. Nikolaeva. *Objects and information structure*. Cambridge, 2011.

Dalrymple et al., "Reciprocal expressions" — M. Dalrymple et al. "Reciprocal expressions and the concept of reciprocity". *Linguistics and philosophy* 21.2 (1998): 159–210.

Dancygier, "If, if not and unless" — B. Dancygier. "If, if not and unless". In *Proceedings of the fourteenth international congress of linguistics*. Vol. 1. Ed. W. Bahner et al. Berlin, 1987, pp. 912–915.

Dawood (translation) — *The Koran*. Translated with notes by N. J. Dawood. London, 1990.

Declerck and Reed, "Unless" — R. Declerck and S. Reed. "The semantics and pragmatics of *unless*".

English language and linguistics 4.2 (2000): 205–241.

Dik, *Studies* — S. C. Dik. *Studies in functional grammar*. London and New York, 1980.

Evans, "Insubordination" — N. Evans. "Insubordination and its uses". In *Finiteness: Theoretical and empirical foundations*. Ed. I. Nikolaeva. Oxford, 2007, pp. 366–431.

Evans et al., "Introduction" — N. Evans et al. "Introduction: Reciprocals and semantic typology". In *Reciprocals and semantic typology*. Ed. N. Evans et al. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2011, pp. 1–28.

Evans et al., *Reciprocals* — N. Evans et al., ed. *Reciprocals and semantic typology*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2011.

Al-Fārisī, *al-Ḥujja* — Al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd al-Ġaffār Al-Fārisī. *Al-Ḥujja fī ʿilal al-qirāʾāt al-sabʿ*. Ed. ʿĀdil ʾAḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd et al. 4 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2007.

Al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī* — Yaḥyā ibn Ziyād al-Farrāʾ. *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*. Ed. ʾAḥmad Yūsuf al-Najātī et al. 3 vols. Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1983.

Ferguson, "Koine" — C. A. Ferguson. "The Arabic Koine". *Language* 35.4 (1959): 616–630.

Fillenbaum, "Inducements and deterrents" — S. Fillenbaum. "The use of conditionals in inducements and deterrents". In *On conditionals*. Ed. E. C. Traugott et al. Cambridge, 1986, pp. 179–195.

Fischer, "Altarabische" — W. Fischer. "Das Altarabische in islamischer Überlieferung: Das Klassische Arabisch". In *Grundriss der arabischen Philologie*. Vol. 1. Ed. W. Fischer. Wiesbaden, 1982, pp. 37–50.

Fischer, "Classical Arabic" — W. Fischer. "Classical Arabic". In *The Semitic languages*. Ed. R. Hetzron. London and New York, 1997, pp. 187–219.

Fischer, *Grammar* — W. Fischer. *A grammar of classical Arabic*. Trans. J. Rodgers. New Haven and London, 2002[3]. [= Fischer, *Grammatik*]

Fischer, *Grammatik* — W. Fischer. *Grammatik des klassischen Arabisch*. Wiesbaden, 1972. [= Fischer, *Grammar*]

Fischer, *Grundriss* — W. Fischer. *Grundriss der arabischen Philologie*. Vol. 1: Sprachwissenschaft. Ed. W. Fischer. Vol. 2: Literaturwissenschaft. Ed. H. Gätje. Vol. 3: Supplement. Ed. W. Fischer. Wiesbaden, 1982.

Fischer et al., "Neuarabische" — W. Fischer. "Das Neuarabische und seine Dialekte". In *Grundriss der arabischen Philologie*. Vol. 1. Ed. W. Fischer. Wiesbaden, 1982, pp. 83–141.

Fischer, "Perioden" — W. Fischer. "Die Perioden des klassischen Arabisch". *Abr-Nahrain* 12 (1971–1972): 15–18.

Fleisch, *Introduction* — H. Fleisch. *Introduction à l'étude des langues sémitiques*. Paris, 1947.

Fleischer, *Kleinere Schriften* — H. L. Fleischer. *Kleinere Schriften*. 2 Bände. Leipzig, 1885.

Fück, *Arabiya* — J. Fück. *Arabiya: Untersuchungen zur arabischen Sprach- und Stilgeschichte*. Berlin, 1950.

García Álvarez, "Generality and exception" — I. García Álvarez. "Generality and exception: A study in the semantics of exceptives". PhD thesis. Stanford, CA, 2009.

Geis and Zwicky, "Invited inferences" — M. L. Geis and A. M. Zwicky. "On invited inferences". *Linguistic inquiry* 2 (1971): 561–566.

Geniušienė, "Properties" — E. Geniušienė. "Some typologically relevant properties of reciprocal markers and arrangement of the subsequent chapters". In *Reciprocal constructions*. Ed. V. P. Nedjalkov. With the assistance of E. Geniušienė and Z. Guentchéva. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2007, pp. 435–451.

Geniušienė, *Typology* — E. Geniušienė. *The typology of reflexives*. Berlin, New York and Amsterdam, 1987.

Geyer, "Review" — R. Geyer. Review of Vollers, *Volkssprache*. *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* 177 (1909): 10–56.

Griffith, "Holy spirit" — S. H. Griffith. "Holy spirit". *EQ*, II, 442–444.

Gully, *Grammar and semantics* — A. Gully. *Grammar and semantics in medieval Arabic: A study of Ibn-Hisham's 'Mughni l-labib'*. Abingdon and New York, 1995.

Haegeman, "Pragmatic conditionals" — L. Haegeman. "Pragmatic conditionals in English". *Folia Linguistica* 18 (1984): 485–502.

Al-Ḫalīl, *al-ʿAyn* — Al-Ḫalīl ibn ʾAḥmad al-Farāhīdī. *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*. Ed. Mahdī al-Maḫzūmī and ʾIbrāhīm al-Sāmarrāʾī. 8 vols. n.p., n.d.

Haspelmath, "Further remarks" — M. Haspelmath. "Further remarks on reciprocal constructions". In *Reciprocal constructions*. Ed. V. P. Nedjalkov. With the assistance of E. Geniušienė and Z. Guentchéva. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2007, pp. 2087–2115.

Al-Ḫaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt* — ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Ḫaṭīb. *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt*. 11 vols. Damascus: Dār Saʿd al-Dīn, 2002.

Hawting, "Oaths" — G. R. Hawting. "Oaths". *EQ*, III, 561–566.

Heine and Miyashita, "Intersection" — B. Heine and H. Miyashita. "The intersection between reflexives and reciprocals: A grammaticalization perspective". In *Reciprocals and reflexives: Theoretical and typological explorations*. Ed. E. König and V. Gast. Berlin and New York, 2008, pp. 169–223.

Holes, *Modern Arabic* — C. Holes. *Modern Arabic: Structures, functions, and varieties*. Washington, DC, 2004.

Homerin, "Soul" — Th. E. Homerin. "Soul". *EQ*, V, 80–84.

Hopkins, "Diglossia" — S. Hopkins. "On diglossia in pre-classical Arabic". In *Arabische Welt: Grammatik, Dichtung und Dialekte. Beiträge einer Tagung in Erlangen zu Ehren von Wolfdietrich Fischer*. Ed. Sh. Talay and H. Bobzin. Wiesbaden, 2010, pp. 237–256.

Hopkins, *Studies* — S. Hopkins. *Studies in the grammar of early Arabic: Based upon papyri datable to before 300 A.H./912 A.D.* Oxford, 1984.

Horn, *Natural history* — L. R. Horn. *A natural history of negation*. Chicago, IL, 1989.

Horn, "Exclusive company" — L. R. Horn. "Exclusive company: Only and the dynamics of vertical inference". *Journal of semantics* 13 (1996): 1–40.

(Pseudo) Ibn ʿAbbās — Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Fīrūzābādī. *Tanwīr al-miqbās min tafsīr Ibn ʿAbbās*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1992.

Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihī, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd* — ʾAḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Rabbihī al-ʾAndalusī. *Al-ʿIqd al-farīd*. Ed. Mufīd Qumayḥa. 9 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1983.

Ibn ʾAbī Ḥātim — ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ʾAbī Ḥātim al-Rāzī. *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*. Ed. ʾAsʿad al-Ṭayyib. 10 vols. Mecca and Riyadh: Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafā al-Bāzz, 1997.

Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, *al-ʾInṣāf* — Ibn al-ʾAnbārī. *Al-ʾInṣāf fī masāʾil al-ḫilāf bayna l-baṣriyyīna wa-l-kūfiyyīna*. Ed. Jawda Mabrūk Muḥammad Mabrūk. Cairo: Maktabat al-Ḫānjī, 2002.

Ibn Kaṯīr — ʾIsmāʿīl ibn ʿUmar ibn Kaṯīr. *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*. Ed. Sāmī ibn Muḥammad al-Salāma. 8 vols. Riyadh: Dār Ṭayyiba, 1999.

Ibn Yaʿīš — *Ibn Jaʿîś Commentar zu Zamachśarî's Mufaṣṣal*. Ed. G. Jahn. 2 vols. Leipzig, 1882–1886.

Izutsu, "CCC" — M. N. Izutsu. "Contrast, concessive, and corrective: Toward a comprehensive study of opposition relations". *Journal of pragmatics* 40 (2008): 646–675.

Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān* — ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ. *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*. Ed. Muḥammad Hārūn. 8 vols. Masr al-Jadidah: Maktabat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-ʾAwlādihī, 1965.

Al-Jalālayn — Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī. *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-karīm al-mašhūr bi-Tafsīr al-Jalālayni*. Ed. Faḫr al-Dīn Qabāwa. Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān, 2008.

Al-Jallad, *Psalm fragment* — A. Al-Jallad. *The Damascus psalm fragment: Middle Arabic and the legacy of Old Ḥigāzī*. Chicago, IL, 2020.

Al-Jallad, "*Sūrat al-baqárah*" — A. Al-Jallad. "Was it *sūrat al-baqárah*? Evidence for antepenultimate stress in the Quranic consonantal text and its relevance for صلوه type nouns". *ZDMG* 167 (2017): 81–90.

Jones (translation) — *The Qurʾān*. Translated into English by A. Jones. Exeter, 2007.

Jones (unpublished) — A. Jones. "Quranic *arāda li-*". Unpublished typescript.

Kasher, "*Istiʾnāf*" — A. Kasher. "The term and concept of *istiʾnāf* in al-Farrāʾ's Qurʾānic commentary and the early development of Arabic grammatical tradition". *Ancient near eastern studies* 51 (2014): 341–352.

Kasher, "*Tanwīn-naṣb*" — A. Kasher. "Sībawayhi's *tanwin-nasb* principle revisited". *ZAL* 51 (2009): 42–50.

Kinberg, "Ambiguous" — L. Kinberg. "Ambiguous". *EQ*, I, 70–77.

König and Gast, *Reciprocals and reflexives* — E. König and V. Gast, eds. R*eciprocals and reflexives: Theoretical and typological explorations*. Berlin and New York, 2008.

König and Gast, "Reciprocity and reflexivity" — E. König and V. Gast. "Reciprocity and reflexivity – description, typology and theory". In *Reciprocals and reflexives: Theoretical and typological explorations*. Ed. E. König and V. Gast. Berlin and New York, 2008, pp. 1–31.

Knysh, *Sufism* — A. Knysh. *Sufism: A new history of Islamic mysticism*. Princeton and Oxford, 2017.

Al-Kumayt ibn Zayd, *Dīwān* — Al-Kumayt ibn Zayd al-ʾAsadī. *Dīwān al-Kumayt ibn Zayd al-ʾAsadī*. Ed. Muḥammad Nabīl Ṭarīfī. Beirut, 2000.

Lakoff, "If's, and's and but's" — R. Lakoff. "If's, and's and but's: About conjunction". In *Studies in linguistic semantics*. Ed. C. J. Fillmore and D. T. Langendoen. New York, 1971, pp. 114–149.

Lambrecht, *Information structure* — K. Lambrecht. *Information structure and sentence form: Topic, focus and the mental representations of discourse referents*. Cambridge, 1994.

Lane — E. W. Lane. *An Arabic-English lexicon*. London and Edinburgh, 1863–1893.

Lang, *Semantics of coordination* — E. Lang. *The semantics of coordination*. Amsterdam, 1984.

Leemhuis, *D and H stems* — F. Leemhuis. *The D and H stems in Koranic Arabic: A comparative study of the function and meaning of the faʿʿala and ʾafʿala forms in Koranic usage*. Leiden, 1977.

Leemhuis, "Readings" — F. Leemhuis. "Readings of the Qurʾān". *EQ*, IV, 353–363.

Larcher, "Le dit et l'écrit" — P. Larcher. "Le Coran: le dit et l'écrit". In *Oralité & écriture dans la Bible & le Coran*. Ed. Ph. Cassuto and P. Larcher. Aix-en-Provence, 2014, pp. 53–67.

Larcher, "Rime cachée" — P. Larcher. "Une «rime cachée» dans Cor 23, 12–14? Histoire du texte et histoire de la langue". *Arabica* 68 (2021): 36–50.

Maslova, "Reflexive encoding" — E. Maslova. "Reflexive encoding of reciprocity: Cross-linguistic and language-internal variation". In *Reciprocals and reflexives: Theoretical and typological explorations*. Ed. E. König and V. Gast. Berlin and New York, 2008, pp. 225–257.

Majid et al., "Semantics" — A. Majid et al. "The semantics of reciprocal constructions across languages: An extensional approach". In *Reciprocals and semantic typology*. Ed. N. Evans et al. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2011, pp. 29–59.

Al-Māturīdī — Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Māturīdī. *Taʾwīlāt ʾahl al-sunna: Tafsīr al-Māturīdī*. Ed. Majdī Bāsallūm. 10 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2005.

Al-Māwardī — ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Māwardī. *Al-Nukat wa-l-ʿuyūn: Tafsīr al-Māwardī*. Ed. Al-Sayyid ibn ʿAbd al-Maqṣūd ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm. 6 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, n.d.

Miller-Naudé and Naudé, "Left dislocation constructions" — C. L. Miller-Naudé and J. A. Naudé. "Differentiating left dislocation constructions in Biblical Hebrew". In *New perspectives in Biblical and rabbinic Hebrew*. Ed. A. D. Hornkohl and G. Khan. Cambridge, 2021, pp. 617–640.

Miquel, "*Ḥattā*" — A. Miquel. "La particule *ḥattä* dans le Coran". *Bulletin d'études orientales* 21 (1968): 411–436.

Mir, "Joseph" — M. Mir. "The Qur'anic story of Joseph: Plot, themes, and characters". *MW* 76.1 (1986): 1–15.

Moltmann, "Exception sentences" — F. Moltmann. "Exception sentences and polyadic quantification". *Linguistics and philosophy* 18.3 (1995): 223–280.

Moltmann, "Coordination and comparatives" — F. Moltmann. "Coordination and comparatives". PhD thesis. Boston, MA, 1992.

Motzki, "Wal-muḥṣanātu" — H. Motzki. "Wal-muḥsanātu mina n-nisāʾi illā mā malakat aimānukum (Koran 4:24) und die koranische Sexualethik". *Der Islam* 63.2 (1986): 192–218.

Muqātil — Muqātil ibn Sulaymān. *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*. Ed. ʿAbd Allāh Maḥmūd Šaḥāta. 5 vols. Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Taʾrīḫ al-ʿArabī, 2002.

Al-Naḥḥās, *ʾIʿrāb* — ʾAḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Naḥḥās. *ʾIʿrāb al-Qurʾān*. Ed. Ḫālid al-ʿAlī. Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 2008.

Al-Nasafī — ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʾAḥmad al-Nasafī. *Madārik al-tanzīl wa-ḥaqāʾiq al-taʾwīl*. Ed. Yūsuf ʿAlī Bidaywī. 3 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kalim al-Ṭayyib, 1998.

Nedjalkov, "Overview" — V. P. Nedjalkov. "Overview of the research: Definitions of terms, framework, and related issues". In *Reciprocal constructions*. Ed. V. P. Nedjalkov. With the assistance of E. Geniušienė and Z. Guentchéva. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2007, pp. 3–114.

Nedjalkov, *Reciprocal constructions* — V. P. Nedjalkov, ed. *Reciprocal constructions*. With the assistance of E. Geniušienė and Z. Guentchéva. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2007.

Nedjalkov and Geniušienė, "Questionnaire" — V. P. Nedjalkov and E. Geniušienė. "Questionnaire on reciprocals". In *Reciprocal constructions*. Ed. V. P. Nedjalkov. With the assistance of E. Geniušienė and Z. Guentchéva. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2007, pp. 379–434.

Nedjar, *Grammaire fonctionnelle* — B. Nedjar. *Grammaire fonctionnelle de l'arabe du Coran*. 4 vols. Karlsruhe, 1988.

Neuwirth, *Studien* — A. Neuwirth. *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren*[2]. Berlin and New York, 2007.

Nickerson, *Conditional reasoning* — R. S. Nickerson. *Conditional reasoning: The unruly syntactics, semantics, thematics, and pragmatics of "*If*"*. Oxford and New York, 2015.

Nöldeke, *Zur Grammatik* — Th. Nöldeke. *Zur Grammatik des classischen Arabisch*. Wien, 1897.

Nöldeke, "Zur Sprache" — Th. Nöldeke. "Zur Sprache des Korāns: I. Der Korān und die ʿArabīja; II. Stilistische und syntaktische Eigentümlichkeiten der Sprache des Korāns; III. Willkürlich und mißverständlich gebrauchte Fremdwörter im Korān". In *Neue Beiträge zur Semitischen Sprachwissenschaft*. Ed. Th. Nöldeke. Strassburg, 1910, 1–30.

Noy, "The term *muḥāl*" — A. S. Noy. "Don't be absurd: The term *muḥāl* in Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*". In *The foundations of Arabic linguistics: Sībawayhi and early Arabic grammatical theory*. Ed. A. E. Marogy and M. G. Carter. Leiden and Boston, 2012, pp. 27–58.

Owens, *Linguistic history* — J. Owens. *A linguistic history of Arabic*. Oxford and New York, 2006.

Paret (translation) — R. Paret. *Der Koran: Übersetzung*. Stuttgart, 1979.

Paret, *Kommentar*	R. Paret. *Der Koran: Kommentar und Konkordanz*. Stuttgart, 1977.
Pedersen, *Eid*	J. Pedersen. *Der Eid bei den Semiten in seinem Verhältnis zu verwandten Erscheinungen sowie die Stellung des Eides im Islam*. Strassburg, 1914.
Peled, *Conditional structures*	Y. Peled. *Conditional structures in Classical Arabic*. Wiesbaden, 1992.
Pickthall (translation)	*The meaning of the glorious Koran*. An explanatory translation by M. Pickall. London, 1930.
Al-Qurṭubī	Muḥammad ibn ʾAḥmad al-Qurṭubī. *Al-Jāmiʿ li-ʾaḥkām al-Qurʾān wa-l-mubayyin li-mā taḍammanahū mina l-sunna wa-ʾāy al-furqān*. Ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī. 24 vols. Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 2006.
Rabin, *AWA*	Ch. Rabin. *Ancient West Arabian*. London, 1951.
Rabin, "Beginnings"	Ch. Rabin. "The beginnings of Classical Arabic". *Studia Islamica* 4 (1955): 19–37.
Rabin et al., "*ʿArabiyya*"	Ch. Rabin et al. "*ʿArabiyya*". *EI*^{2}.
Rahman, *Major Themes*	F. Rahman. *Major themes of the Qurʾān*. Minneapolis, Minn., 1994.
Al-Rāzī	Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. *Al-Tafsīr al-kabīr ʾaw Mafātīḥ al-ġayb*. Ed. unmentioned. 32 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981.
Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*	H. Reckendorf. *Arabische Syntax*. Heidelberg, 1921.
Reckendorf, *Paronomasie*	H. Reckendorf. *Über Paronomasie in den semitischen Sprachen*. Giessen, 1909.
Reckendorf, *Syntaktische Verhältnisse*	H. Reckendorf. *Die syntaktischen Verhältnisse des Arabischen*. 2 vols. Leiden, 1895–1898.
Reuschel, *Aspekt und Tempus*	W. Reuschel. *Aspekt und Tempus in der Sprache des Korans*. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, New York, Paris and Wien, 1996.
Reynolds, "Doublets"	G. S. Reynolds. "The Qur'ānic doublets: A preliminary inquiry". *JIQSA* 5 (2020): 5–39.
Rubin (translation)	U. Rubin. *The Qurʾan: Hebrew translation*^{2}. Tel Aviv, 2016 [Hebrew].
Rudolph, *Contrast*	E. Rudolph. *Contrast: Adversative and concessive relations and their expressions in English, German, Spanish, Portuguese on sentence and text level*. Berlin and New York, 1996.
Sadock, "Queclaratives"	J. Sadock. "Queclaratives". *Chicago linguistics society* 7 (1971): 223–231.
Al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī	Al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī ʾAḥmad ibn Yūsuf. *Al-Durr al-maṣūn fī ʿulūm al-kitāb al-maknūn*. Ed. ʾAḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḫarrāṭ. 11 vols. Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1986.
Schleifer, "Banu 'l-Ḥārith b. Kaʿb"	J. Schleifer. "Banu 'l-Ḥārith b. Kaʿb". *EI*^{2}.
Schmucker, "*Mubāhala*"	W. Schmucker. "*Mubāhala*". *EI*^{2}.
Seidensticker, *Herz*	T. Seidensticker. *Altarabisch ‚Herz' und sein Wortfeld*. Wiesbaden, 1992.
Sells, "Spirit"	M. Sells. "Spirit". *EQ*, V, 114–117.
Shakir (translation)	M. H. Shakir. *The Holy Qur'an*. Elmhurst, New York, 1991.

Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*	Sibawaihi. *Le Livre de Sîbawaihi : Traité de grammaire arabe. Texte arabe publié par Hartwig Derenbourg*. 2 tomes. Paris, 1881–1889.
Silverstein, "*ʾAṣḥāb al-ʾuḫdūd*"	A. Silverstein. "Who are the *Aṣḥāb al-Ukhdūd*? Q 85:4–10 in near eastern context". *Der Islam* 96.2 (2019): 281–323.
Sinai, *Key terms*	N. Sinai. *Key terms of the Qur'an: A critical dictionary*. Princeton and Oxford, 2023.
Speyer, *Biblischen Erzählungen*	H. Speyer. *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*. Darmstadt, 1961.
Stewart, "*Mubīn*"	D. J. Stewart. "*Mubīn* and Its Cognates in the Qurʾān". *JIQSA* (2023): 1–42.
Stewart, "Poetic license"	D. J. Stewart. "Poetic license in the Qur'an: Ibn al-Ṣāʾigh al-Ḥanafī's *Iḥkām al-rāy fī aḥkām al-āy*". *Journal of Qur'anic studies* 11.1 (2009): 1–56.
Stewart, "Rhymed prose"	D. J. Stewart. "Rhymed prose". *EQ*, IV, 476–484.
Stewart, "*Sajʿ*"	D. J. Stewart. "*Sajʿ* in the Qurʾān: Prosody and structure". *Journal of Arabic literature* 21 (1990): 101–139.
Stewart, "Theory"	D. J. Stewart. "Wansbrough, Bultmann, and the theory of variant traditions in the Qurʾān". In *Qurʾānic studies today*. Ed. A. Neuwirth and M. Sells. London, 2016, pp. 17–51.
Al-Ṭabarī	Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī. *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl ʾāy al-Qurʾān*. Ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī. 26 vol. Cairo: Dār Hajr, 2001.
Talmon, "Grammar and the Qurʾān"	R. Talmon. "Grammar and the Qurʾān". *EQ*, II, 345–369.
Talmon, "*Mafʿūl muṭlaq*"	R. Talmon. "The syntactic category *mafʿūl muṭlaq*: A study in Qur'ānic syntax". In *Arabic grammar and linguistics*. Ed. Y. Suleiman. London and New York, 1999, pp. 107–129.
Torrey, *Commercial-theological terms*	C. C. Torrey. *The commercial-theological terms in the Koran*. Leyden, 1892.
ʿUḍayma	Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḫāliq ʿUḍayma. *Dirāsāt li-ʾuslūb al-Qurʾān al-karīm*. Cairo, 1972–1981.
Ullmann, "Vorklassisches Arabisch"	M. Ullmann. "Vorklassisches Arabisch". In *Studi in onore di Francesco Gabrieli nel suo ottantesimo compleanno*. Ed. R. Tirani. 2 vols. Rome, 1984, II, pp. 807–818.
Vallduví and Engdahl, "Information packaging"	E. Vallduví and E. Engdahl. "The linguistic realization of information packaging". *Linguistics* 34 (1996): 459–519.
Van Ess, *Gedankenwelt*	J. van Ess. *Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī*. Bonn, 1961.
Van Putten, "Dissimilation"	M. van Putten. "Dissimilation of *ē* to *ā* in the Quranic consonantal text". *Journal of the international Qur'anic studies association* 6 (2021): 87–105.
Van Putten, "Feminine ending"	M. van Putten. "The feminine ending *-at* as a diptote in the Qurʾānic consonantal text and its implications for Proto-Arabic and Proto-Semitic". *Arabica* 64 (2017): 695–705.
Van Putten, "Hamza"	M. van Putten. "Hamzah in the Quranic consonantal text".

Orientalia 87 (2018): 93–120.

Van Putten, "Phonetics" M. van Putten. "Inferring the phonetics of Quranic Arabic from the Quranic consonantal text". *International journal of Arabic linguistics* 5 (2019): 1–19.

Van Putten, *QA* M. van Putten. *Quranic Arabic: From its Hijazi origins to its classical reading traditions*. Leiden and Boston, 2022.

Van Putten, "Triphthongs" M. van Putten. "The development of the triphthongs in Quranic and Classical Arabic". *Arabian epigraphic notes* 3 (2017): 47–74.

Van Putten and Stokes, "Case" M. van Putten and P. W. Stokes. "Case in the Qurʾānic consonantal text". *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 108 (2018): 143–179.

Versteegh, *Pidginization* K. Versteegh. *Pidginization and creolization: The case of Arabic*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1984.

Versteegh, "Pidginization revisited" K. Versteegh. "Pidginization and creolization revisited: The case of Arabic". In *Approaches to Arabic dialects*. Ed. M. Haak et al. Leiden, 2003, pp. 343–357.

Vollers, *Volkssprache* K. Vollers. *Volkssprache und Schriftsprache im alten Arabien*. Strassburg, 1906.

Von Fintel, "Exceptive constructions" K. von Fintel. "Exceptive constructions". *Natural language semantics* 1 (1993): 123–148.

Von Fintel and Iatridou, "Anatomy" K. von Fintel and S. Iatridou. "Anatomy of a modal construction". *Linguistic inquiry* 38.3 (2007): 445–483.

Al-Wāḥidī ʿAlī ibn ʾAḥmad al-Wāḥidī al-Naysābūrī. *Al-Wasīṭ fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-majīd*. Ed. ʿĀdil ʾAḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd et al. 4 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1994.

Wansbrough, *Quranic studies* J. Wansbrough. *Quranic studies: Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation*. Oxford, 1977.

Wehr, "Zur Funktion" H. Wehr. "Zur Funktion arabischer Negationen". *ZDMG* 103 (1953): 27–39.

Witztum, "Q 4:24 revisited" J. Witztum. "Q 4:24 revisited". *Islamic law and society* 16.1 (2009): 1–33.

Witztum, "Syriac milieu" J. Witztum. "The Syriac milieu of the Quran: The recasting of Biblical narratives". PhD thesis. Princeton, NJ, 2011.

Witztum, "Thrice upon a time" J. Witztum. "Thrice upon a time: Abraham's guests and the study of intra-Quranic parallels". In *The Quran's reformation of Judaism and Christianity: Return to the origins*. Ed. Holger Zellentin. London, 2019, pp. 277–302.

Witztum, "Variant traditions" J. Witztum. "Variant traditions, relative chronology, and the study of intra-Quranic parallels". In *Islamic cultures, Islamic contexts: Essays in honor of Professor Patricia Crone*. Ed. B. Sadeghi et al. Leiden and Boston, 2015, pp. 1–50.

WKAS *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache*. Unter Mitwirkung der Akademien der Wissenschaften in Götingen, Heidelberg und München und der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz. herausgegeben durch die Deutsche

Morgenländische Gesellschaft, begründet von J. Kraemer und H. Gätje, in Verbindung mit A. Spitaler, bearbeitet von M. Ullmann. Wiesbaden, 1957–2009.

Wright — W. Wright. *A grammar of the Arabic language*[3]. Translated from the German of Caspari and edited with numerous additions and corrections by W. Wright. Cambridge, 1896–1898.

Zahniser, "*Tawaffā*" — A. H. M. Zahniser. "The forms of *tawaffā* in the Qurʾān: A contribution to Christian–Muslim dialogue". *MW* 79 (1989): 14–24.

Al-Zajjāj — ʾIbrāhīm ibn al-Sarī al-Zajjāj. *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān wa-ʾiʿrābuhū*. Ed. ʿAbd al-Jalīl ʿAbduh Šalabī. 5 vols. Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1988.

Al-Zamaḫšarī — Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Zamaḫšarī. *Al-Kaššāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq ġawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa-ʿuyūn al-ʾaqāwīl fī wujūh al-taʾwīl*. Ed. ʿĀdil ʾAḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd and ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿawwiḍ. 6 vols. Riyadh: Maktabat ʿUbaykān, 1998.

Al-Zarkašī — Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Zarkašī. *Al-Burhān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*. Ed. Muḥammad al-Marʿašlī et al. 4 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1990.