

Coloured dots and the question of regional origins in early Qur'ans: Part I

During the first centuries of Islam, the written notation of the Qur'an underwent a gradual amplification.¹ After an early stage represented by the 'Hijazi' tradition, red dots were introduced into 'Kufic' Qur'ans to mark short vowels.² This system was soon expanded by assigning more functions to the red dots, sometimes supplemented by yellow, green and blue dots; and by creating new orthographic signs. These devices were used in different ways by different vocalisers. Few textual sources dealing with this subject survive. By far the most consequential is *al-Muḥkam fī naqṭ al-maṣāḥif* (lit. 'The Precise on the Vocalisation of Qur'ans') by Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd al-Dānī (371-444/982-1053). Following a line of work initiated by Yasin Dutton, the present study will confront the assertions of the *Muḥkam* with a sample of key manuscripts in an attempt to gain insights into the regional origins of early Qur'ans. Al-Dānī's shorter treatise on the subject, the *Kitāb al-naqṭ* ('Book of Vocalisation'), will also be considered where relevant.³

Since early Qur'ans entered the field of modern historical science some two centuries ago, their study has been hampered by two major obstacles: chronology and provenance. As the manuscripts were repeatedly unbound and dispersed over the centuries, their opening and closing pages have been lost, and with them the colophons and legal deeds (*waqfiyyāt*) that may have contained contextual information. Only a handful of *waqfiyyāt* survive, and no colophons at all, among the hundreds of thousands of early Qur'anic folios from the first three centuries of Islam. In recent years, advances have been made in our understanding of the chronological development of early Qur'anic calligraphy.⁴ Coloured dots, as will soon become apparent, might provide some insights into the issue of provenance.

¹ I wish to express my gratitude to the Leverhulme Trust for supporting this research. I also thank Elaine Wright (Chester Beatty Library), Annie Vernay-Nouri (Bibliothèque Nationale de France) and Nahla Nassar (Nasser D. Khalili Collection) for facilitating access to their respective collections; and Shaykh Ziad Taktak (Taalbaya, Lebanon), for generously offering his time to try and solve some issues about Qur'anic readings. Any shortcomings naturally remain my own.

² The names 'Hijazi' and 'Kufic' are both misnomers insofar as they suggest a link with the Hijaz and Kufa respectively, whereas the scripts they designate had a much broader geographical spread. They will nevertheless be used here because they are widely accepted terms, and for want of more suitable alternatives.

³ Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd al-Dānī, *Al-muḥkam fī naqṭ al-maṣāḥif*, ed. 'Izzat Ḥasan, 1st ed (Damascus: Wizārat al-thaqāfa wa'l-irshād al-qawmī, 1960); Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd al-Dānī, *Al-muḥkam fī rasm maṣāḥif al-amṣār, ma' kitāb al-naqṭ*, ed. Otto Pretzl (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2009), 132–153. This edition of the *Muḥkam* was reissued in Damascus in 1986; a further edition was published by Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyya (Beirut) in 2004 (not consulted). The main other source on vocalisation is a section of Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān. The old codices: the Kitāb al-maṣāḥif of Ibn Abī Dāwūd*, ed. Arthur Jeffery (Leiden: Brill, 1937), 141–150. Regional habits are not discussed in this work.

⁴ E.g. François Déroche, "New Evidence About Umayyad Book Hands," in *Essays in Honour of Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid* (London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2002), 611–642; François Déroche, "Colonnes, vases et rinceaux sur quelques

The notation systems studied here reflect more or less complex rules of grammar and recitation. In order not to overburden the text, readers are referred to the general introduction to this subject published in English by Muhammad Surty, and to more specialised texts for points of detail.⁵ One particular term, *naqṭ* (lit. ‘dotting’), was used by al-Dānī and his contemporaries to refer to Qur’anic vocalisation and its trappings. The cognate terms *naqqaṭa* and *nāqiṭ* (pl. *nuqqāṭ*) will therefore be translated respectively as ‘to vocalise’ and ‘vocaliser,’ while *ḥarakāt* will be given as ‘vowels.’ When needed, *hamza* will be noted more fully than in common transliteration, and *tanwīn* will be indicated with uppercase letters. Arabic plurals have generally been used, e.g. *alifāt*, *hamzāt*, *ṣilāt*, and so on.

The following abbreviations have been employed:

BNF: Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris)

Cambridge: Cambridge University Library (Cambridge, England)

CBL: Chester Beatty Library (Dublin)

Freer: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.)

Khalili: Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (London and Geneva)

Met: Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York)

NLR: National Library of Russia (Saint Petersburg)

TIEM: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi (Istanbul)

The main reference work consulted for Qur’anic readings is ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Khaṭīb’s *Mu‘jam al-qirā’āt*.⁶

Al-Dānī on the regional habits of vocalisers

Al-Dānī was an Andalusī scholar of the Qur’an and religious sciences. A brief autobiographical account of his life and travels was recorded by his student Abū

enluminures d’époque Omeyyade,” *Comptes Rendus des Séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* (2004): 227–264; Alain George, “Calligraphy, Colour and Light in the Blue Qur’an,” *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 11, no. 1 (2009): 81–89; Alain George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy* (London: Saqi, 2010); François Déroche, *Qur’ans of the Umayyads. A First Overview* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

⁵ Muhammad Ibrahim Surty, *A Course in the Science of Reciting the Qur’ān*, 2nd ed. (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2000). Cf. also Yasin Dutton, “Red Dots, Green Dots, Yellow Dots and Blue: Some Reflections on the Vocalisation of Early Qur’anic Manuscripts. Part I,” *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 1, no. 1 (1999), 121–122. For a detailed discussion, see al-Suyūṭī, *Al-itqān fī ‘ulūm al-qur’ān* (many editions), esp. ch. 28–33.

⁶ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Muḥammad al-Khaṭīb, *Mu‘jam al-qirā’āt* (Damascus: Dār sa‘d al-dīn li’l-ṭibā’a wa’l-nashr wa’l-tawzī’, 2002). I thank Frederik Leemhuis for this reference. An earlier work widely used in previous studies is Aḥmad Mukhtār ‘Umar and ‘Abd al-‘Āl Sālim Makram, *Mu‘jam al-qirā’āt al-qur’āniyya, ma’ muqaddima fī al-qirā’āt wa ashhar al-qurrā’* (Kuwait: Jāmi‘at al-kuwayt, 1982–1985).

Dāwūd Sūlaymān ibn Najāḥ (Valencian, 413-496/1023-1103) and repeated by several later writers.⁷ Born and educated at Cordoba (Qurṭuba), al-Dānī set out in 397/1007 for a journey to the central Muslim lands, spending four months in Qayrawan and a year in Cairo before heading to Mecca for the *ḥajj*. On his way back he stopped in Cairo and Qayrawan again before reaching Spain in 399/1009. In each of these cities, he learned about *fiqh* and Qur'anic readings from local authorities. About Cairo (Miṣr), he notably writes: 'There I read the Qur'an, wrote *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, *qirā'āt* and other things under a number of Egyptians, Baghdadis, Syrians and others.'⁸ He thus appears to have acquired firsthand knowledge of reading systems used in different regions of the Islamic world. Several of his biographers, including Ibn Bashkuwāl (Cordoban, wr. 534/1139), also state that he was a proficient calligrapher.⁹ This seems confirmed by passing remarks made by al-Dānī himself in his writings, as when he notes about *lām-alif* in the *Kitāb al-naqt*:

Whoever has mastered the art of calligraphy (*ṣinā'at al-khaṭṭ*) among scribes past or present (*min al-kuttāb al-qudamā' wa ghayrihim*) will begin by tracing the left side, before the right; only those who ignore the art of tracing (*ṣinā'at al-rasm*) will proceed differently. This is the same principle (*manzila*) as when one begins by tracing the *alif* before the *mīm* in *mā* and similar forms involving two letters.¹⁰

Due to political turmoil in Cordoba, four years after his return, al-Dānī departed for Zaragoza (Saraqusta), where he remained seven years. He then stayed in Mallorca (Mayurqa) for eight years before settling down in Denia (al-Dānya), the town on the eastern coast of al-Andalus after which he was eventually named. Al-Dānī's renown, especially in the field of *qirā'āt*, endured long after his death, both in his region and

⁷ The fullest version appears in Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Irshād al-arīb ilā ma'rifat al-adīb (Dictionary of Learned Men)*, ed. D. S. Margoliouth (Leiden, 1907-1931), v. 5, 36–37. It is also given in more or less shortened form by different authors, e.g. Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-nihāya fī ṭabaqāt al-qurrā'*, ed. Gotthelf Bergsträsser (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmīyya, 2006), v. 1, 447 (no. 2091); Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Al-ṣila fī tārikh al-'imam al-andalus*, ed. 'Izzat Al-'Aṭṭār al-Ḥusaynī (Cairo: Maktabat al-khanjī, 1955), v. 2, 386 (No. 876). About Sūlaymān ibn Najāḥ, see Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-nihāya*, v. 1, 287 (no. 1392).

⁸ Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Irshād*, v. 5, 37. In this account, al-Dānī provides the names of two of his teachers at Mecca: Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Bukhārī and Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Firās. Ibn Bashkuwāl lists additional names of his teachers in Cairo and Qayrawan, but without citing a source; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila*, v. 2, 385 (No. 876). On his biography, see also the editor's introduction to Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 5–10; M. Ben Cheneb, art. 'al-Dānī' (EI1); M.A. Fesharaki and S. Saeedpoor, art. 'Abū 'Amr al-Dānī,' in Wilferd Madelung, Farhad Daftary, and Kazem Musavi Bojnurdi, eds., *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (Leiden: Brill/Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2008).

⁹ Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila*, v. 2, 386 (No. 876); Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-nihāya*, v. 1, 448 (no. 2091); Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 11 (editor's introduction).

¹⁰ Dānī, *Naqt*, 152.

in the central Islamic lands.¹¹ He was the author of numerous works on the Qur'anic sciences, of which a few are extant, including the *Kitāb al-naqt* and *al-Muḥkam fī naqt al-maṣāḥif*, respectively edited by Otto Pretzl and 'Izzat Ḥasan.

Just over a decade ago, Yasin Dutton highlighted some key passages from the *Muḥkam* and confronted them with a sample of twenty-one early Qur'an fragments from the Bodleian Library in Oxford.¹² His observations showed that distinct but internally coherent systems were applied in different manuscripts, and that some of these could be matched with al-Dānī's observations. In the present article, I will take this line investigation one step further by enlarging the sample to key manuscripts from other collections and by focusing on the question of regional origins.¹³ The latter is not specifically treated by al-Dānī, who is primarily concerned with issues of grammar and recitation. But he does provide scattered indications that can allow us to build a picture of the regional habits of vocalisers, albeit incomplete.

1. The Umayyad period

The oldest vocalisation system, writes al-Dānī, involved red dots placed above, below or on the line to mark *fatha*, *kasra* or *ḍamma* respectively – a convention which remained at the basis of later Kufic vocalisation. He cites traditions that ascribe its invention to different authors of the late first to early second/late seventh to early eighth century: Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī (d. 69/689), Yaḥyā ibn Ya'mur (or Ya'mar, d. before 90/710 or in 129/747) and Naṣr ibn 'Aṣim al-Laythī (d. 90/710).¹⁴ The same men were often credited with the establishment of Arabic grammatical science (*naḥw*)

¹¹ For example, his work was widely drawn upon by Ibn al-Jazarī (751-833/1350-1429), a prominent later authority on the subject who lived between Syria, Anatolia and Iran, and who in his biographical notice called him the 'teacher of teachers and master of masters' (*ustādh al-ustādhīn wa shaykh al-mashāyikh*); Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-nihāya*, v. 1, 9, 447.

¹² Dutton, "Red Dots (I)"; Yasin Dutton, "Red Dots, Green Dots, Yellow Dots and Blue: Some Reflections on the Vocalisation of Early Qur'anic Manuscripts. Part II," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* II, no. 1 (2000): 1–24.

¹³ The potential of vocalisation as an indicator of regional origins has been highlighted by Sheila Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 120–124.

¹⁴ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 4–7. Cf. also Dānī, *Naqt*, 132–133; Gotthelf Bergsträsser and Otto Pretzl, *Geschichte des Qorāns von Theodor Nöldeke. III: Die Geschichte des Korantexts*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Dieterichsche Buchhandlung, 1938), 261–262; Nabia Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script and Its Qur'anic Development* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 39; Omar Hamdan, "The Second Masahif Project: a Step Towards the Canonization of the Qur'anic Text," in *The Qur'an in Context. Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'anic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 808–809 (where some confusion appears to arise between the vocalisation and diacritics). The earliest sources cited in these studies, both of them by Abbott, are Ibn Durayd (ca. 223-321/837-933) and Ibn Qutayba (213-276/828-889); but their respective passages about Yaḥyā ibn Ya'mur and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī are general biographical notices, without a mention of vocalisation; Ibn Durayd, *Kitāb al-ishtiqāq = Abu Bekr Muḥammad ben el-Ḥasan ibn Doreid's Genealogisch-etymologisches Handbuch*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Göttingen: Dietrichsche Buchhandlung, 1854), 163; Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif = Ibn Coteiba's Handbuch der Geschichte*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1850), 225. See also al-Ḥasan ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Sīrāfī, *Akhbār al-naḥwīyyīn al-baṣrīyyīn*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mun'im Khafājī and Muḥammad Zaynī Tāhā (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-bābī al-ḥalabī wa-awlāduh, 1955), 12.

by writers of the third/ninth century onwards.¹⁵ The historicity of both sets of assertions remains elusive as far as individual names are concerned; but with regard to Qur'anic notation, it is possible to derive some related evidence from extant manuscripts. For our present purposes, a few preliminary observations will be attempted.

The earliest Qur'ans were written in the family of scripts called 'Hijazi' in modern scholarship. Recent studies have shown that the bulk of these manuscripts must date to the first/seventh to early eighth century, and that they were probably written far beyond the Hijaz.¹⁶ Vocalisation is absent from Hijazi Qur'ans, with rare exceptions, such as BNF Arabe 6140a and Cambridge Add. 1125.¹⁷ These two fragments, which are probably from the same manuscript, have red dots for the vowels, *tanwīn* and *hamza*; yet it is difficult to ascertain whether this layer of notation is original. The theoretical possibility of later additions is highlighted by instances of re-inking, additions and corrections observed in other Hijazi manuscripts, which show that they were used well beyond the time of their production.¹⁸

Writing about a slightly later period, al-Dānī notes:

I have seen (*waṣala ilayya*) an old mosque Qur'an (*muṣḥaf jāmi' 'atīq*) written at the beginning of the caliphate of Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik in the year 110 – the date was written at the end where it said: 'This was written by Mughīra ibn Mīnā in *rajab* of the year 110 [October–November 728].' The vowels, *hamzāt*, *tanwīn* and *tashdīd* were all marked by red dots, as we have related was the practice of early vocalisers of the people of the Mashriq.¹⁹

¹⁵ Rafael Talmon, "Who Was the First Arab Grammarian?," *Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik* 15 (1985): 128–145; Rafael Talmon, "Schacht's Theory in the Light of Recent Discoveries Concerning the Origins of Arabic Grammar," *Studia Islamica* no. 65 (1987): 40–46; Sīrāfi, *Akhbār*, 10–22.

¹⁶ François Déroche, *La transmission écrite du Coran dans les débuts de l'Islam. Le codex Parisino-petropolitanus* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 152–159; George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, chap. 1; Behnam Sadeghi and Uwe Bergmann, "The Codex of a Companion of the Prophet and the Qur'an of the Prophet," *Arabica* 57, no. 4 (2010): 343–436; Alain George, "Le palimpseste Lewis-Mingana de Cambridge, témoin ancien de l'histoire du Coran," *Comptes-Rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* (March 2011): 377–429; Behnam Sadeghi and Mohsen Goudarzi, "Ṣan'ā' I and the Origins of the Qur'ān," *Der Islam* 87, no. 1–2 (2012): 1–129; Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, chap. 1–2.

¹⁷ For BNF Arabe 6140a, see François Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran. Aux origines de la calligraphie coranique*, Catalogue des manuscrits arabes Deuxième partie: manuscrits musulmans. Tome I, 1 (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1983), 61 (Cat. 6); for Cambridge Add. 1125, <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01125> (accessed 29/09/2012). Two mutually related fragments in the style classified by Déroche as Hijazi IV (BNF Arabe 334c; Khalili KFQ59, KFQ61) are also vocalised with red dots, but these manuscripts probably date to the second/eighth century; François Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition. Qur'ans of the 8th to 10th Centuries A.D.* (London: The Nour Foundation, 1992), 32–33 (No. 3).

¹⁸ This process is best documented in the so-called 'Codex Parisino-Petropolitanus'; see Déroche, *La transmission écrite du Coran*, 45–50.

¹⁹ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 87. Translation after Dutton, "Red Dots (I)," 119–120.

The mention of an ‘old mosque Qur’an’ brings to mind a corpus of monumental manuscripts, most of them in style C.Ia, reflecting official Umayyad patronage and probably intended for use in major mosques.²⁰ Al-Dānī appears to be citing a final colophon, which is worthy of notice since the earliest extant Qur’an colophons date to the fourth/tenth century. This makes Mughīra ibn Mīnā the earliest calligrapher – and the only Umayyad calligrapher – whose name is known (albeit indirectly) from an actual manuscript; he remains otherwise unknown. As regards the vocalisation however, it is impossible to assert whether the red dots that al-Dānī saw were original.

A Qur’an fragment belonging to same period might bring us into more certain grounds: the so-called ‘Umayyad codex of Fustat,’ a name coined by Déroche on the basis of its city of discovery. This manuscript was probably produced during the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik (685-705); its leaves are now scattered between St Petersburg (NLR Marcel 11, 13 and 15, collectively referred to as ‘Marcel 13’ hereafter) and Paris (BNF Arabe 330c).²¹ Here *abjad* letter numerals written in gold and outlined in black mark every fifth verse: their content, shape and layout suggest that they are original.²² I was able to study the vocalisation of Arabe 330c at close quarters. In two areas of overlap (ff. 13r, 16v), the *abjad* letter covers the red dot: note, on f. 16v (l. 15), the way its red hue reappears underneath the gold that has flaked off (Figure 1).²³ This implies that the vocalisation was executed after the text and before the illuminated letters, probably as part of the original manuscript. In other words, red dots appear to have been used to mark vowels, *tanwīn* and *hamza* in this Qur’an of the late first/late seventh to early eighth century: the basis of the system might therefore have existed by this early date in the Umayyad period. This hypothesis, being based on limited observations, remains to be assessed against the whole of the Fustat codex and other Umayyad Qur’ans.

Figure 1. Detail of BNF Arabe 330c, f. 16v, l. 15.

²⁰ George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 74–89; Déroche, *Qur’ans of the Umayyads*, chap. 4.

²¹ Déroche, “Colonnes, vases et rinceaux”; George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 75–78 (with further references). Other Qur’ans featuring the same script type, recently labelled O.I by Déroche, are known; see Déroche, *Qur’ans of the Umayyads*, chap. 3, where the name ‘Umayyad codex of Fustat’ was first coined. Cf. also Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Koran (fragment), leaf no. 17, under <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.amed/ascs.295> (accessed 17/07/2012); and the fragments from the National Museum in Damascus published by Paolo Radiciotti and Ariana D’Ottone, “I frammenti della Qubbat al-khazna di Damasco: a proposito di una scoperta sottovalutata,” *Nea Rhome* 5 (2008), Fig. 1–2.

²² Déroche, “Colonnes, vases et rinceaux,” 240–242; George, “Calligraphy, Colour and Light,” 92–93. The whole of Arabe 330 can be consulted on Gallica, gallica.bnf.fr (accessed 29/09/2012).

²³ See also f. 13r, l. 7 (available on Gallica).

In Arabe 330c and Marcel 13, *ṣila* is occasionally indicated by red horizontal strokes placed just below the middle of the shaft of *alif* (e.g. Arabe 330c, f. 12r, l. 7): these appear to be in the same ink as the red vocalisation, with which they may be contemporaneous.²⁴ Most diacritics, as well the occasional small black *alif* signalling a *ḥarf zā'id* in Marcel 13, are later additions made in a darker ink than the text.²⁵ The original diacritics are relatively sparse, and tend towards the form of a thickened dash, sometimes almost circular. *Qāf* was noted by placing a dot below the letter, a convention different from those of later Qur'ans, both Mashriqi and Maghribi, and also known from other Qur'ans of the same period.²⁶

One might adduce as early textual evidence two reports from the *Muṣannaḥ* of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī (126-211/744-827). This compilation of religious traditions (*akhbār*) contains opinions for or against the vocalisation of Qur'ans ascribed to Ibrāhīm (al-Nakha'ī, *ca.* 50-96/670-717), al-Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī, *ca.* 21-110/642-728) and Ibn Sīrīn (*ca.* 34-110/654-728).²⁷ The chains of transmission (*asānīd*) lead back three generations from the time of the writer. Their very inclusion implies that the introduction of Qur'anic vocalisation no longer belonged to recent memory by the days of 'Abd al-Razzāq and his teachers, Sufyān al-Thawrī (97-161/715-777) and 'Abd Allāh ibn Kathīr, a transmitter of Shu'ba (*ca.* 82-160/702-776): had this been the case, they could not have diffused this information credibly in the eyes of their contemporaries. One must thus look beyond their lifespan for the source of this notation, which again leads back to the Umayyad era. The dates of Ibrāhīm, al-Ḥasan and Ibn Sīrīn would point to a time earlier than 110/728, and probably not after the reign of al-Walīd (86-96/705-715). Thus this early textual source corroborates the evidence of Arabe 330c with regard to chronology, although the content of the traditions need not be accepted word for word: two slightly contradicting opinions are reported, for example, on the authority of Ibn Sīrīn. These limited observations would deserve to be expanded into a more comprehensive study. As they stand, they suffice

²⁴ In his catalogue of this collection, Déroche remarked that these strokes were 'added,' without further elaboration; Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran (I, 1)*, 144 (Cat. 268).

²⁵ Déroche, "Colonnes, vases et rinceaux," 238. In Arabe 330c, the later addition of diacritics, of tails for final *mīm* and the re-inking of faded parts of the text are particularly clear in places, e.g. f. 14v; cf. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran (I, 1)*, 145 (No. 268).

²⁶ Déroche, "Colonnes, vases et rinceaux," 238, n. 36; François Déroche, *Islamic Codicology. An Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script*, trans. Deke Dusinberre and David Radzinowicz (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2005), 220–221.

²⁷ 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī, *Al-muṣannaḥ*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A'zamī (Beirut: Al-majlis al-'ilmī, 1970-1972), v. 4, 322 (no. 7941), 323–324 (no. 7948). The expression *al-naqt bi'l-'arabīyya* used in these *akhbār* specifically refers to vocalisation.

to raise the hypothesis that Qur'anic vocalisation had been established by the late first/early eighth century.

Turning to the question of regional origins, it is difficult to assert where this codification took place. As shown by previous studies, the verse count, codex variants and decoration of Marcel 13 and Arabe 330c point to a production in Greater Syria (*bilād al-shām*).²⁸ By contrast, the persons listed by al-Dānī as possible inventors of the red dots were all active in Iraq. This attribution becomes explicit when al-Dānī marks his approval of the following statement by Abū Ḥātim Sahl ibn Muḥammad (al-Sijistānī, Basran, d. 255/869):

Vocalisation is [a creation] of the people of Basra; all others took it from them, even the people of Madina. The latter used to have a different vocalisation which they abandoned for the vocalisation of the people of Basra.²⁹

Given the lack of Umayyad manuscripts attributable to regions other than Greater Syria, it is difficult to evaluate the merits of this claim. Coin issues from Wasit, the Umayyad capital of Iraq from the late first/early eighth century onwards, do provide related evidence: they show that, in the numismatic realm, this city was at the forefront of the reform of Arabic script between 85/704 and 90/709, under the governorship of al-Ḥajjāj (75-95/694-714). Textual sources, including an early testimony from Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/796) recorded by Ibn Zabāla (wr. ca. 199/814), also indicate that the same al-Ḥajjāj sent large Qur'ans, presumably commissioned in Iraq, to major cities of the empire.³⁰

Other writers portray al-Ḥajjāj as the driving force behind the orthographic improvements devised by the above Basrans.³¹ This assertion is in itself not implausible given the historical context, yet its value is undermined by the number of

²⁸ Déroche, "Colonnes, vases et rinceaux," 260; George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 78.

²⁹ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 7.

³⁰ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā bi-akḥbār dār al-muṣṭafā*, ed. Qāsim al-Sāmarrā'ī (London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2001), v. 2, 457; George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 71–74, 86, 91; George, "Calligraphy, Colour and Light," 98, 100.

³¹ Hamdan, "The Second Masahif Project," 796–809; Bergsträsser and Pretzl, *Geschichte*, 262; Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script*, 39.

authors credited with the new system.³² What is more, these texts assert that the diacritical signs were invented as part of the same process, erroneously since dated inscriptions and papyri, together with the Hijazi corpus, make it clear that these already existed at least half a century earlier.³³ Finally, the sources for this tradition are late. The earliest known writer to attribute the foundation of Arabic grammar to Abū al-Aswad is Ibn Sallām al-Jumāhī (ca. 139-231/756-845), but his statement is about grammatical theory and syntax, not vocalisation.³⁴ Al-Jāhīz (ca. 160-255/777-869) is cited by several later authors as having written in his *Kitāb al-amṣār wa ‘ajīb al-buldān* that Naṣr ibn ‘Aṣīm was the first to vocalise Qur’ans, and that he was called ‘Naṣr al-Ḥurūf’ (Naṣr of the letters/variants).³⁵ If authentic (which remains to be confirmed), this would be the earliest such assertion to have emerged so far, dating to a time when literature about ‘the first to ...’ (*awā’il*) was beginning to develop in earnest.³⁶ It would also represent an early stage in a process of amplification and harmonisation of this historical narrative that continued into the fourth/tenth century and beyond. This process of ‘growing backward,’ as Rafael Talmon called it, has been documented for the birth of Arabic grammatical science, where part of its rationale was to establish the pre-eminence of the Iraqi school.³⁷ A similar bias towards Iraq may also have been at play with regard to the origins of Qur’anic vocalisation.

In sum, while the names traditionally cited with regard to early vocalisation cannot be completely discarded, the sources are not reliable enough to accept them as historical information. And while the vocalisation system using red dots may conceivably have first emerged in Iraq, the extant material and textual evidence is too limited to confirm or reject this hypothesis; the manuscript record suggests Syria as another possibility.

³² Omar Hamdan (ibid.) has argued for the historicity of this account by adducing the idea of a committee formed by al-Ḥajjāj. Ibn Abī Dāwūd does cite a tradition according to which al-Ḥajjāj gathered *ḥuffāz* and *qurrā’* in order to have them count the number of letters in the Qur’an and create divisions of the text; Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, 119–120. But the extension of this idea to the vocalisation remains speculative, even if one chose to take the sources at face value. For a source-critical approach to these texts and to the process of ‘growing backward’ in historical writing, see Talmon, “Schacht’s Theory,” 40–46.

³³ Hamdan, “The Second Masahif Project,” 800, 807–808. On diacritics in earlier documents and Qur’ans, see George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 29, 51; Déroche, *La transmission écrite du Coran*, 43–45, 120.

³⁴ Muḥammad ibn Sallām al-Jumāhī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu‘arā’*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Madanī, 1974), v. 1, 12; Talmon, “Who Was the First Arab Grammarian?,” 131.

³⁵ ‘Abd al-Haqq ibn Ghālib ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *Al-muḥarrar al-wajīz fī tafsīr al-kitāb al-‘azīz*, ed. A. Muḥammad (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmīyya, 1993), v. 1, 50; Muḥammad ibn Bahādur al-Zarkashī, *Al-burhān fī ‘ulūm al-qur’ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, n.d.), v. 1, 251. Charles Pellat mentions a manuscript of al-Jāhīz’s work, British Library Or. 1129, which I was unable to consult; Charles Pellat, *The Life and Works of Jāhīz* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), 22 (n. 39).

³⁶ On *awā’il*, cf. Albrecht Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-Critical Study* (in Collaboration with Lawrence Conrad (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 1994), 104–108; William Faizi McCants, *Founding Gods, Inventing Nations. Conquest and Culture Myths from Antiquity to Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 70–83.

³⁷ See Talmon, “Schacht’s Theory,” where the phrase is coined on p. 45.

The presumed link with al-Ḥajjāj is even more uncertain. All that can presently be stated with reasonable confidence is that red dots were introduced into Qur'ans in the Umayyad period, possibly between the reigns of 'Abd al-Malik and al-Walīd, and that al-Ḥajjāj was involved in a process of calligraphic reform instigated during those reigns.

Beyond this starting point, al-Dānī reveals precious little of his views on the historical development of notations systems; these, he dispenses in fragments scattered throughout a work focussed on grammatical and notational matters. In order to retrace his logic, we will proceed with a summary of his main assertions about Madina and the Maghrib, then Iraq and the Mashriq, before confronting them with surviving manuscripts.

2. Madina and the Maghrib

Al-Dānī saw the Madinan system as having acquired a distinctive character at an early date:

The vocalisers of the people of Madina, both in early times and now, solely use red and yellow for vocalising their Qur'ans (*fī naqt maṣāḥifihim*). Red is used for the vowels, *sukūn*, *tashdīd* and *takhfīf*, and yellow is used specifically for *hamzāt*.³⁸

The contrasting functions assigned to red seem to imply the existence of several signs in this colour. This is confirmed by the following citation ascribed to Qālūn (Madinan, d. 220/835):

In the Qur'ans of the people of Madina, *mukhaffaf* letters carry a red circle (*dāra*), as do *musakkan* letters... Letters dotted in yellow are *hamūza*.³⁹

³⁸ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 19; Dutton, "Red Dots (I)," 117. Cf. also Dānī, *Naqt*, 134; Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 148, 8. In the latter reference, the term *nabrāt* is used as a synonym for *hamza*; on this term, cf. Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863), v. 8, 2757.

³⁹ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 19–20. Cf. also Ibid., 195. Qālūn is cited in the *Muḥkam* through the *isnād* 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Isā al-Madanī > Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Munīr > Aḥmad ibn 'Umar al-Jīzī (in one case, the second transmitter is replaced by Muḥammad ibn al-Aṣbagh). In this passage, Dutton interpreted the expression *ḥarf musakkan* as 'consonants that are not to be pronounced at all';

Elsewhere, al-Dānī notes that red circles were also used for letters omitted in pronunciation (*al-ḥarf al-sāqiṭ min al-lafẓ*, generally known as *ḥarf zā'id*).⁴⁰ He explains that the people of Madina chose to note *hamza* as a yellow dot ‘in order to distinguish it from the *ḥarakāt*,’ since unlike them, it is a letter; Iraqi vocalisers, by contrast, simply used red for both purposes.⁴¹ He mentions the reproved practice of marking vocalisation in black, and more generally in the same ink as the text.⁴² The underlying logic was to keep the core of the written text, the *rasm* as recorded in the earliest Qur’ans, distinct from later orthographic layers. Al-Dānī also cites a passage in the *Kitāb al-naqṭ* of Ibn Mujāhid (Iraqi, d. 324/936) stating that readers comprehend shapes more quickly than colours, which implies a cognitive rationale for introducing different shapes in notation.⁴³

The people of Madina, al-Dānī notes, mark consecutive *hamzāt* as two yellow dots, even though they were pronounced as a single *hamza* in their recitation.⁴⁴ He quotes Qālūn again as saying:

In the Qur’ans of the people of Madina, *mushaddad* letters carry a *dāl*, and this *dāl* opens upwards (*wa fathat al-dāl fawq*)... For *kasr*, [it was placed] below the letter.⁴⁵

This case was noted with *dāl*, explains al-Dānī, as the last letter of the word *shadīd*; following a comparable convention, the first letter of the same word (*shīn*) marked *shadda* in the Mashriq. He adds that the notation of *shadda* through *dāl* was used by Madinan vocalisers ‘old and new’ (*min salafīhim wa khalafīhim*).⁴⁶

The Madinan notation system, writes al-Dānī, was adopted by ‘the majority (‘*āmma*) of the people of the Maghrib, be they Andalusī or other.’ He himself had observed

Dutton, “Red Dots (I),” 118. However the usage of al-Dānī, here and in other passages, as well as that of classical dictionaries shows that this adjective designates a letter with *sukūn*; for examples of the latter, see the definitions of the words *bakh* and *hinh*, respectively in al-Fīrūzābādī, *Al-qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, 4 vols. (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1371 [1952]), v. 1, 265; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, 15 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1955-1956), v. 2, 432.

⁴⁰ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 86.

⁴¹ Ibid., 147.

⁴² Ibid., 19. Cf. also Dānī, *Naqṭ*, 132.

⁴³ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 23.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 8, 117–118.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 50.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

this in Qur'ans from the days of al-Ghāzī ibn Qays (Cordoban, d. 199/812), 'the companion of Nāfi' ibn Abī Nu'aym [Madinan, d. 169/785] and transmitter of Mālik ibn Anas [Madinan, d. 179/796].'⁴⁷ Since al-Ghāzī trained under these two Madinans, it is plausible that he also learned the notation system of their city, although al-Dānī does not explicitly credit him with its introduction to the West.

In other parts of the *Muḥkam*, he describes various habits of 'the people of our land' (*ahl baladinā*), which could designate either al-Andalus or the broader Maghrib. While the former may have been thought to be al-Dānī's natural horizon, both terms seem to be used as equivalents in the text, as for example in the inclusion of Andalusis amongst the people of the Maghrib in the above citation. Thus it seems that his comments might be applicable to the Maghrib as a whole, including Spain, North Africa and presumably Sicily, without ruling out further differentiations. Iraq is, likewise, linked to the Mashriq in al-Dānī's descriptions, but the area encompassed is more difficult to circumscribe: judging from general usage in texts of the period, it certainly also included Iran and the eastern Islamic lands, possibly along with Syria, and perhaps Egypt.

In order to illustrate the early vocalisation system of his region, al-Dānī observes:

I have seen a Qur'an written and vocalised by Ḥakīm [Ḥukaym?] ibn 'Imrān al-Nāqī, the vocaliser of the people of al-Andalus, which he had written in the year 227 [842 A.D.]. The vowels were indicated by red dots, the *hamzāt* by yellow [dots], and initial *alifāt al-waṣl* [*mubtada'*, i.e. after a pause in recitation] by green [dots]. *Ṣilāt*, *sukūn* and *tashdīd* were marked in a thin red pen (*bi-qalam daqīq bi'l-ḥumra*), in the way that we have related about the vocalisers of our land. The *ṣila* was above the *alif* if preceded by a *fatha*, below it if preceded by a *kasra*, and along its middle if preceded by a *ḍamma*. *Alifs* omitted in the *rasm* (*al-alifāt al-maḥdhūfāt min al-rasm*) were included in an abbreviated form (*ikhtiṣār*) in red. There was a small circle in red for unpronounced letters (*ḥurūf zawā'id*) and *mukhaffaf* letters, as in 'anā la'awḍa'ū [Q. 9:47], 'a fa'in mitta [Q.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 8. Cf. also Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-nihāya*, v. 2, 3 (no. 2534); Bergsträsser and Pretzl, *Geschichte*, 175.

21:34], *'ul[ā] 'ika* and *'a-man huwa q[ā]nit^{um}* [Q. 39:9], as we have shown about the people of Madina, and as became the custom of the people of our land.⁴⁸

This description brings together an array of evidence not otherwise extant in the record: a set of notational features combined with a date, scribe name and indication of regional origin. The words that introduce the historical information (*katabahu wa naqqatahu...*) suggest that al-Dānī might again be paraphrasing a colophon. The calligraphy and vocalisation of the (lost) Qur'an of 842 thus appear to have been executed by the same Ḥakīm (or Ḥukaym) ibn 'Imrān, although one cannot rule out that he was overseeing a collaborative enterprise. In other manuscripts, these two tasks – calligraphy and vocalisation – may conceivably have been carried out by one or several persons, depending on local usages and skills.

Al-Dānī's numerous references to *nuqqāṭ* and *ahl al-naqṭ* (vocalisers) does bring to mind a specialised task performed after the text had been written by the scribe. Indeed, a *khavar* cited by Ibn Abī Dāwūd (845-929) attributes the following opinion about Qur'anic manuscripts to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī: 'I see no problem with their sale and purchase, and with their vocalisation for a pay.'⁴⁹ Regardless of the historicity of this assertion with regard to the late first/early eighth century, it implies that vocalisation could be carried out as a separate task at the time of composition, in the late third to early fourth/late ninth to early tenth century.

One might logically expect this task to have been primarily carried out by religious scholars, given the advanced knowledge of the Qur'an, grammar and recitation it required. Al-Dānī himself was a Qur'an scholar and calligrapher with evident practical and theoretical knowledge of vocalisation. His forebear Ḥakīm ibn 'Imrān is also identified elsewhere in the *Muḥkam* as a student (*ṣāḥib*, lit. 'companion') of al-Ghāzī ibn Qays, which implies a religious training.⁵⁰ Given the limited evidence at

⁴⁸ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 87. Translation after Dutton, "Red Dots (I)," 119, with minor modifications. The name of the scribe is erroneously printed as Ḥakam in the Arabic text, see the corrigenda in Dānī, *Muḥkam*, last page (unnumbered). For an explanation of the above cases of *hurūf zawā'id*, see Dutton, "Red Dots (I)," 136 (n. 45). *'A-man huwa qānit^{um}*, with *takhfīf* on the *mīm*, is the reading of Ibn Kathīr, Nāfi', Hamza and others; the standard reading today, that of Ḥafṣ 'an 'Āṣim, is *'amman huwa qānit^{um}*; see Khaṭīb, *Mu'jam*, v. 8, 141–142. As a side note, a variant reading of *'a fa'in mitta* is *'a fa'in muttu*; *ibid.*, v. 6, 17.

⁴⁹ Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, 143.

⁵⁰ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 9.

our disposal, one should not exclude the possibility that people from other social grounds were sometimes involved in this activity.

The mention of al-Ghāzī as a teacher of Ḥakīm reinforces the presumption that the former played a part in the transmission of the Madinan vocalisation system to al-Andalus. Al-Dānī's observation of the notation used in this particular Qur'an does confirm the presence of several features ascribed to Madinan conventions, namely the red and yellow dots, the notation of *sukūn* and *shadda* in a thin red pen, and the red circles for *khaṭf* and *hurūf zawā'id*. But there are also differences that could reflect a distinct Maghribi evolution: the green dots for *alif al-waṣl*; the unspecified signs made with a thin red pen for *ṣila*; and the notation of *alif maḥdhūfa* in red.

Other passages provide further elaboration on these points. *Shadda* would have been noted as a *dāl* in the Maghrib, both in al-Dānī's days and earlier, like in Madina.⁵¹ Al-Dānī also writes: '*Sukūn* is marked by the majority of the people of our land, old and new, as a stroke (*jarra*) above the *musakkan* letter, be it a *hamza* or another letter'; he draws a contrast with the Madinan convention of marking this case and *takhfif* 'as a small circle above the letter.'⁵² The latter Madinan convention appears to have also existed in the Maghrib, at least initially:

Early vocalisers of the people of Madina and the people of our land used a small red circle for letters noted in writing [but] omitted in pronunciation (*hurūf zawā'id*); and for *mukhaṭṭaf* letters, whether accepted or not, indicating when this was so and giving the correct recitation.⁵³

This is indeed the convention observed by al-Dānī in the Qur'an of 842. In the *Kitāb al-naqt*, he also states that it was used for these two functions by vocalisers (*ahl al-naqt*) 'old and new,' following the precedent of the people of Madina – which seems to imply its continued relevance in his time.⁵⁴ As a side note, he relates its form to zero as a placeholder in mathematics:

⁵¹ Ibid., 50.

⁵² Ibid., 51. Cf. also ibid., 86.

⁵³ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 189.

⁵⁴ Dānī, *Naqt*, 150.

This same circle is the small zero (*ṣifr*) which arithmeticians (*ahl al-ḥisāb*) use for the absent digit in calculus (*al-ʿadad al-maʿdūm fī ḥisāb al-ghubār*) to indicate its absence, which is like the absence of the *ḥurūf zawāʿid* from pronunciation, the absence of *tashdīd* from the *ḥurūf mukhaffafa*, and the absence of *ḥaraka* from the *ḥurūf musakkana*.⁵⁵

The stroke (*jarra*) cited above for *sukūn* might also have been used for *takhfīf*, since he remarks in the *Muḥkam* that the latter was indicated by a stroke ‘like a horizontal *alif*’ (*alif mabṭūḥa*). This form, he explains, stood for the initial *khāʾ* of ‘*khaṭīf*’, abbreviated to its lower part for practical purposes; elsewhere, the *fatha* of modern vocalisation is also described as an *alif mabṭūḥa*, which gives an idea of its form.⁵⁶ The convention would have originated with Sībawayhi (d. ca. 180/796) and his pupils, who noted *khaṭīf* with the full letter *khāʾ*.⁵⁷

Having defined *ṣila* as the sign used to mark *alif al-waṣl*, al-Dānī remarks:

The vocalisers of the people of our land, old and new (*qadīm^{an} wa ḥadīth^{an}*), mark it with a stroke like the one for *sukūn*... But should it be marked through a small circle, this is also correct, since the circle stands for *sukūn* and for unpronounced letters (*al-ḥarf al-sāqīṭ min al-laḥẓ*) among the people and vocalisers of Madina.⁵⁸

He notes the Maghribi usage of adding a dot in green or dark blue (*biʾl-khaḍrāʾ aw al-lāzaward*) to *alif al-waṣl*, so that if a reader pauses after the previous word, they may know how to pronounce the glottal stop.⁵⁹ This clarifies why, in the Qurʾan of 842, *alif al-waṣl* was noted by both a green dot and a *ṣila* sign in a thin red pen.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Cf. also Paul Kunitzsch, “The Transmission of Hindu-Arabic Numerals Reconsidered,” in *The Enterprise of Science in Islam. New Perspectives*, ed. J.P. Hogendijk and Abdelhamid Sabra (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 4–10.

⁵⁶ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 7.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 51–52.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 86.

⁵⁹ Ibid.; Dānī, *Naqt*, 145.

In sum, two conventions, using either a small red circle or a horizontal red stroke, appear to have existed for *sukūn*, *ṣila*, *takhfīf* and *hurūf zawā'id*. In the *Kitāb al-Naqt*, al-Dānī also notes:

The habit of the people of our land, old and new, is to add medial *alif* omitted from the *rasm* (*al-alifāt al-mutawassiṭāt al-maḥdhūfāt min al-rasm*) in red, as in *al-[ā]lamīn*, *al-f[ā]siqīn*, *al-ṣ[ā]liḥāt*, *s[ā]m[ā]wāt*, *h[ā]ʾulāʾ*, *y[ā]ʾādam* and such like.⁶⁰

In the case of consecutive *hamzāt*, al-Dānī observes in the *Muḥkam* that the Madinan convention of marking two yellow dots was followed in ‘the old Qur’ans of the people of our land.’⁶¹ However in his day, their notation had acquired greater complexity, and al-Dānī devotes two entire chapters to its different cases, marked through various combinations of yellow and red dots.⁶² In addition:

The vocalisers of our land, old and new, have the habit of marking the *hurūf al-madd waʾl-līn al-thalātha*, *alif*, *yāʾ* and *wāw*, with an elongated stroke in red (*maṭṭa biʾl-ḥamrāʾ*).⁶³

He is referring here to the *alif*, *wāw* and *yāʾ* with *sukūn* preceded by a *ḥaraka* of the same sound, and to which elongation (*madd*) may thus be applied in recitation. In the *Kitāb al-naqt*, he also associates this red elongated stroke with *madd* and notes that if the letter in question is omitted in the text (*maḥdhūfa*), it should be drawn in red with a *madd* sign added above it.⁶⁴ Finally in the *Muḥkam*, al-Dānī notes that the Madinans, and after them the Maghribis, added the ending *-ū* to plural endings with *mīm* (*ḍammū mīmāt al-jamʿ*, e.g. *ʾalayhumū*) – something he says he had observed, amongst other features, in Maghribi Qur’ans from the time of al-Ghāzī.⁶⁵

To recapitulate, al-Dānī saw the Madinan and Maghribi systems as closely related, but the latter acquired distinguishing features at an early stage, and it eventually grew

⁶⁰ Ibid., 147.

⁶¹ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 117.

⁶² Ibid., 93–118.

⁶³ Ibid., 54.

⁶⁴ Dānī, *Naqt*, 138. On the *hurūf al-madd waʾl-līn*, see H. Fleisch, art. ‘Hurūf al-hidjāʾ’ (EI2).

⁶⁵ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 8. Qālūn is cited with regard to the Madinans.

in complexity. The essential features shared by both notation systems were the use of red dots for vowels and *tanwīn*, of yellow dots for *hamza*, and of other signs written in a thin red pen for further orthographic functions (see the summary in Table 1).

3. *Iraq and the Mashriq*

By contrast, al-Dānī portrays the conventions that prevailed in Iraq as essentially a continuation of the Umayyad period:

The vocalisers of the people of Iraq only use red for vowels and other things, and for *hamzāt*, and in this way their Qur'ans can be recognised and distinguished from others.⁶⁶

Thus al-Dānī would have inferred from seeing vocalisation and orthography done solely in red in a given Qur'an that it was Iraqi, or at least as following the conventions of 'the people of Iraq.' Another statement corroborates the same idea, while adding an important allusion to chronology: 'Most *nuqqāt* of the people of Iraq, old and new, do not note *sukūn*, *tashdīd* or *madd* in Qur'ans.'⁶⁷ This implies that the same system would have remained dominant unto his day. Vocalisers in Iraq and the Mashriq would thus have placed less emphasis on written notation – and presumably more on teaching and memorisation.

This strand in vocalisation, while fundamentally based on red dots, appears to have sometimes featured additional characteristics, which are not presented as systematic. The people of the Mashriq, he writes, note the *ṣila* of *alif al-waṣl* as an inverted *dāl* placed above the *alif* regardless of the inflection, instead of the Maghribi red strokes and green or blue dots.⁶⁸ He mentions that the same sign was used for *zawā'id* 'in books,' which presumably means secular books, without specifying whether this feature was specific to the Mashriq and whether it appeared in Qur'ans there.⁶⁹ Al-Dānī notes a single feature of the diacritics:

⁶⁶ Ibid., 20; translation after Dutton, "Red Dots (I)," 118. Cf. also Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 147.

⁶⁷ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 56. Cf. also Dānī, *Naqt*, 137.

⁶⁸ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 86.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

The people of the Mashriq mark *fā* ' with one [diacritical sign] above it, and *qāf* with two above. The people of the Maghrib mark *fā* ' with one [diacritical sign] below it, and *qāf* with one above.⁷⁰

Citing Ibn al-Munādī (Baghdadi, 256-336/869-947), he also notes some cases in which the *hamza maftūḥa* is followed by *alif* (i.e. *madd* may be applied to the latter): the people of Basra note two dots, one for the *hamza* and the other for the *fathā*, following the school (*madhhab*) of al-Khalīl [ibn Aḥmad] 'and others'; whereas the people of Kufa note a single dot on the crown (*yāfūkh*) of the *alif*, to its left.⁷¹ The Kufan usage seems to have been more widespread since al-Dānī describes it elsewhere as a convention of the Iraqis:

Most vocalisers of Iraq differ from the people of Madina and others in that they place *hamza maftūḥa* at the beginning of a word and followed by an *alif* in pronunciation after this *alif*, as in 'āmana, 'ādam and 'āzara.⁷²

For our purposes, this case may simply be described as *hamza* followed by *madd*. One might infer that *hamza* preceded by *madd* was noted in the same manner, since the remark is about the lack of distinction between these two cases. The more logical convention, asserts al-Dānī, was that of his own region: to place a (yellow) dot before or after the *alif* to reflect the position of *hamza*.⁷³

The picture of Iraqi/Mashriqi conventions provided by al-Dānī is far from monolithic: while it does highlight a dominant usage, it also indicates variations initiated by different authorities, as well as some complete departures from the norm. The number of (now lost) books on *naqṭ* by Iraqi authors of the second/eighth to fourth/tenth centuries quoted in the *Muḥkam* points to the absence of an overarching system. One disputed usage of some schools (*tawā'if*) in Kufa and Basra would have been to note variants (*ḥurūf shawādh*) with green dots.⁷⁴ Some even recorded the accepted reading in green and the *shādh* in red, which is 'confusion and deviation' (*takhlīṭ wa taghyīr*).

⁷⁰ Ibid., 37. Cf. François Déroche, *Le livre manuscrit arabe. Préludes à une histoire* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 2004), 81.

⁷¹ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 222. Elsewhere, Ibn al-Munādī is cited as the author of a book on vocalisation, which could be the source of this quotation; see below, note 76.

⁷² Ibid., 128 (my emphasis).

⁷³ Ibid. Variations on this case and their notation in the Maghrib are discussed in the previous pages.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 20.

Most ‘*ulamā*’ were against this usage, asserts al-Dānī, citing the reproval of Aḥmad ibn Jubayr al-Anṭākī (also ‘al-Kūfī,’ d. 258/872). The citation is based on an *isnād* rather than a written source; if correct, it would indicate that the latter practice was in existence by the second half of the third/ninth century. Another usage that plunged al-Dānī (and presumably others) into particular dismay was the notation of several readings in one manuscript:

More reprovéd and dreadful than this [i.e. the notation of *shawādh*] is the habit of some readers to gather different readings and variants (*jam* ‘*qirā’āt shattā wa ḥurūf mukhtalifa*) in the same Qur’an, and to use for each reading or variant a colour other than black, such as red, green, yellow, dark blue (*al-lāzaward*), while signalling this at the beginning of the manuscript.⁷⁵

Nonetheless, this does appear to have been accepted by some scholars. Thus the *Kitāb al-naqt* of Ibn al-Munādī is cited as saying:

If what is read is vocalised in two layers (‘*alā wihayn*) or more, lay down on a leaf not affixed to the Qur’an (*ruq‘a ghayr mulṣaqa bi’l-muṣḥaf*) the names of the colours and of the readers, so that whoever reads it may know about this. Let the hues be clear and bright.⁷⁶

While the practice must therefore have been known in Baghdad, it is not associated with a specific region in the text.

On the authority of Abū al-‘Abbās Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Mubarrad (Basran, 210-285/826-898) and Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Kaysān (Baghdadi, d. ca. 299/912), both of whom are cited by al-Nadīm as authors of treatises on orthographic notation,⁷⁷ al-Dānī mentions a different orthographic system attributed to al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (Basran, d. between 160 and 175/776 and 791). Based on miniature letters, notably

⁷⁵ Ibid. Cf. also Dutton, “Red Dots (I),” 118; Dānī, *Naqt*, 134.

⁷⁶ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 21–22. On Ibn al-Munādī, see Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), v. 1, 44; Claude Gilliot, “Kontinuität und Wandel in der „klassischen“ islamischen Koranauslegung (II./VII.–XII./XIX. Jh.),” *Der Islam* 85, no. 1 (2009): 28 (n. 164).

⁷⁷ Al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. Riḍā Tajaddud (Tehran: Maṭba‘at Dānishgāh, 1971), 65 (al-Mubarrad, *Kitāb al-khaṭṭ wa’l hijā’*), 89 (Ibn Kaysān, *Kitāb al-hijā’*).

alif, *wāw* and *yā*’ for vowels, *shīn* for *shadīd* and *khā*’ for *khafīf*, it would have been applied to ‘books’ (*al-kutub*), i.e. works other than the Qur’an.⁷⁸ This assertion is largely accurate, since these signs are solely attested in secular documents for the third/ninth century onwards,⁷⁹ although the case studies below will show that they had begun to be introduced in Qur’ans by al-Dānī’s lifetime.

When considered in its entirety, al-Dānī’s text stands out by its consistency. The author is conveying through his occasional remarks glimpses of a coherent conception that is essentially devoid of internal contradictions, and clearly backed by practical experience. One rare exception occurs at the end of a passage describing the conventions of Madina and the Maghrib, including their yellow dots, where al-Dānī writes: ‘And I saw this in the rest of Iraqi and Syrian Qur’ans (*wa ka-dhālika ra’aytu dhālika fī sār al-maṣāḥif al-irāqīyya wa’l-shāmīyya*)’.⁸⁰ This sentence runs against the assertion repeated throughout the book that red dots alone were used in Iraq. It cannot be satisfactorily accounted for, except either as an error or as a reference to an uncommon usage of these regions: it will therefore be left aside for our present purposes.

From the foregoing discussion, it is possible to draw a comparative table of regional conventions as seen by al-Dānī (Table 1). The level of detail in his discussion of al-Andalus and the Maghrib makes it possible, for several features, to distinguish an earlier phase around the days of al-Ghāzī (first half of the third/ninth century) from a later phase nearer al-Dānī’s lifetime (fourth-fifth/tenth-eleventh century). In cases where the difference is unspecified, we will assume, as a working hypothesis, that the system remained unchanged between these two periods.

Iraq and the Mashriq	Madina	Al-Andalus and the Maghrib	Al-Andalus and the Maghrib
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⁷⁸ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 7, 22.

⁷⁹ E.g. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 145–147; George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, Fig. 68 (both 252/866); Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, *Al-kitāb al-‘arabī al-makḥṭūṭ ilā al-qarn al-‘āshir al-hijrī. Vol. 1 (al-namādhij)* (Cairo: Ma’had al-makḥṭūṭāt al-‘arabīyya, 1960), Pl. 15, 16 (respectively 279/892 and 280/893); Bernhard Moritz, *Arabic Palaeography. A Collection of Arabic Texts from the First Century of the Hidjra till the Year 1000*, Publications of the Khedivial Library (Cairo, 1905), Pl. 119, 120 (both 311/923), 121 (351/962). The *khā*’ for *khafīf* must have been rarely encountered in secular manuscripts, as it is mainly of interest for formal recitation.

⁸⁰ Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 8.

			(early)	(later)
<i>Fathā, ḍamma, kasra</i>	Red dot	Red dot	Red dot	Red dot
<i>Tanwīn</i>	Two red dots	Two red dots	Two red dots	Two red dots
<i>Hamza</i>	Red dot	Yellow dot	Yellow dot	Yellow dot
Two consecutive <i>hamzāt</i>	–	Two yellow dots	Two yellow dots	Combinations of yellow and red dots
<i>Hamza followed by madd</i>	One dot after and above the <i>alif</i> (Kufa/Iraq) / One dot for <i>hamza</i> and another for <i>fathā</i> (Basra)	One dot before the <i>alif</i>	–	–
<i>Ḥurūf al-madd</i>	Not marked	–	Elongated stroke in red	Elongated stroke in red
<i>Alif maḥdhūfa</i>	–	–	<i>Alif</i> or its abbreviated form in thin red line	<i>Alif</i> or its abbreviated form in thin red line
<i>Alif al-waṣl / ṣila</i>	Small inverted <i>dāl</i> above <i>alif</i>	Small red circle	Red stroke and green dot / Small red circle	Red stroke and green or blue dot / Small red circle
<i>Variants / shawādh</i>	Not marked / green dots in some schools	–	–	–
<i>Shadda</i>	Not marked / small <i>shīn</i>	Small <i>dāl</i> in red	Small <i>dāl</i>	Small <i>dāl</i>
<i>Ḥurūf</i>	–	Small red	Small red circle	Small red circle

<i>zawā'id</i>		circle		
<i>Takhfīf</i>	Not marked/Marked as a small <i>khā'</i>	Small red circle	Small red circle	Small red circle / Thin horizontal stroke
<i>Sukūn</i>	Not marked	Small red circle above the letter	Stroke above the letter	Stroke above the letter
<i>Fā'</i>	Diacritic above letter	—	[Unspecified]	Diacritic below letter
<i>Qāf</i>	Two diacritics above letter	—	[Unspecified]	Diacritic above letter

4. Other regional habits

As a result of al-Dānī's focus on the Maghrib, Madina and Iraq, virtually no information is provided about other parts of the Islamic world. He cites Ibn Ashta (al-Iṣfahānī, the author of a lost *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, d. 360/971) to the effect that the people of Sanaa place the dot in front of (*quddām*, i.e. after) the *wāw*, which is written in black (i.e. as part of the *rasm*), in *l-yasū'ū* (Q. 17:7). This usage is contrasted with the convention (not ascribed to a particular region) of placing this dot before the letter (*fī qafā al-wāw*), based on an analogy with the grammatical form *l-yasū'ū*, in which the 'ayn takes the place of the *hamza*.⁸¹ He also notes:

Ibn Ashta said: I saw in the *muṣḥaf* of Ismā'īl al-Qusṭī, the imam of the Meccans [*ca.* 100-170 or 190/719-787 or 806], with the *ḍamma* above the letter and the *fatha* in front of the letter, in opposition to what is usually done.⁸²

⁸¹ Ibid., 235. For the different readings of this phrase, see Khaṭīb, *Mu'jam*, v. 5, 16–19.

⁸² Dānī, *Muḥkam*, 8–9. Cf. Mustafā Shah, "Exploring the Genesis of Early Arabic Linguistic Thought: Qur'anic Readers and Grammarians of the Baṣran Tradition (Part II)," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 5, no. 2 (2003), 1–47, 13. On Ismā'īl al-Qusṭī, see Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-nihāya*, v. 1, 150–151 (no. 771); Shah, "Exploring the Genesis (Part II)," 20, 21.

This may have been a legacy of systems predating the standard known from early Qurʾans: it echoes al-Dānī's mention, noted above, of an unspecified earlier Madinan convention that was superseded by the red dots ascribed to Basra.

From theory to praxis: the manuscripts

When turning to the manuscript evidence, one is faced with a methodological difficulty highlighted many years ago by Gotthelf Bergsträsser and Otto Pretzl:⁸³ coloured dots may sometimes have been added to 'modernise' an earlier manuscript, a possibility already raised above for Arabe 6140a. In some Qurʾans, this is brought to mind by the contrast of execution between script and vocalisation, although one cannot rule out that a less skilful vocaliser was sometimes associated with a proficient calligrapher. But the same may be true even of manuscripts in which no visual discrepancy is apparent. However, this need not be the end of the matter.

On one level, knowing that a given manuscript was probably vocalised in a certain region represents a valuable piece of information, even if its place of production remains uncertain. Certain combinations of script and vocalisation may eventually add up to a significant pattern across manuscripts. What is more, a recent scientific study of seventeen Qurʾans of the 8th to 15th centuries has shown that all but two used the same pigments for the orthography and illumination.⁸⁴ Since the sample is small in size yet broad in scope, this result cannot be taken as conclusive, but it does suggest that vocalisation may often have been applied as the manuscripts were produced.

It is possible to assess this feature in individual cases through close observation with the naked eye of overlaps between the vocalisation and illumination. If the former is covered by the latter (and was thus applied before it), and provided the illumination is original, then one might infer that the vocalisation is also original (a method already exemplified in the above discussion of Arabe 330c). In some manuscripts, the appearance of the same hues – sometimes even the same dots – in the illumination and vocalisation can provide further evidence about contemporaneous stages of production. The reverse case, where the vocalisation goes over the illumination, can

⁸³ Bergsträsser and Pretzl, *Geschichte*, 272.

⁸⁴ Report by Bernard Guineau, in Déroche, *Islamic Codicology*, 125. The two exceptions are not named in the text, making it difficult to assess the pattern among the four manuscripts of the eighth to ninth centuries included in the sample.

provide an indication of a later date, but only if the illumination is not original: otherwise, one cannot rule out that the red dots were added shortly after it, as part of the same process. Nor is it possible to make a pronouncement about the numerous early Qur'ans that are devoid of illumination.

In what follows, several of the rare Qur'ans carrying evidence of date and provenance will be analysed; wherever possible, this will be preceded by an assessment of the relationship between their vocalisation and illumination. While these manuscripts represent an essential starting point when seeking to establish basic parameters, others will also be considered, especially insofar as they can be placed within larger series.

1. Iraq, Iran and Greater Syria

The Qur'an of Amājūr (Greater Syria, in or shortly before 262/876)

The two extant *waqfiyyāt* of this manuscript were drawn up a month apart in 262/876 in Šūr (Tyre) at the request of Amājūr, the Abbasid governor of Greater Syria (r. 870-878), who ruled from Damascus.⁸⁵ This implies that new volumes were endowed as they were being completed, hence that the manuscript was produced in or shortly before 876, most probably in Greater Syria. The manuscript is written in style D.I, the classical phase of the Kufic tradition. It does not have single verse markers, though tenth-verse marker have been included; no sura headings have been published, which presently precludes a study of potential overlaps with the vocalisation. At any rate, since the manuscript was endowed in Šūr and rediscovered at the turn of the 20th century at the Great Mosque of Damascus, it is likely to have remained in Greater Syria during the whole period of its use: the vocalisation, whether it dates from the third/ninth or fourth/tenth century, almost certainly reflects conventions from this region.

Figure 2. Folio from the Qur'an of Amājūr (Q. 3:81). Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS. Add. 1116, f. 27r. Page dimensions ca. 12.5 x 19.5 cm.

Figure 3. Folio from the Qur'an of Amājūr (Q. 3:65). Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS. Add. 1116, f. 5r. Page dimensions ca. 12.5 x 19.5 cm.

⁸⁵ François Déroche, "The Qur'ān of Amājūr," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 5 (1990-1991): 59-66.

Extant parts of the manuscripts are currently scattered between Istanbul (TIEM), Cambridge University Library, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and other collections.⁸⁶ In addition to published images, the seventy-four pages from Cambridge Add. 1116 have recently been made available online as part of the Cambridge Digital Library project.⁸⁷ Throughout the manuscript one can observe:

- Red dots alone for vocalisation, *hamza* and *tanwīn*;
- A red dot to the right of *alif* for *hamza*, and to its left for *hamza* followed by *madd* (Figure 2, l. 1, *ʾātaytukum*) or preceded by *madd* (Figure 2, l. 3, *jāʾakum*);
- The absence of vocalisation for *alif al-waṣl*, which serves to distinguish it from initial *hamza* (Figure 3, l. 2, *unzilat al-tawrāt*, recited *unzilati-l-tawrāt*);
- A diacritical dash above the letter for *fāʾ* (I was unable to observe a *qāf* with diacritics, as these signs are very sparsely included);⁸⁸
- The use of green for the occasional notation of variants: green dots for vowels, green dashes for diacritics and in at least one place, a green vertical stroke for *alif maḥdhūfa* (see below).

The Qurʾān of Amājūr, in sum, follows the pattern ascribed by al-Dānī to Iraq and the Mashriq in almost every detail, with one nuance: *alif al-waṣl* is indicated simply by omitting the red dot, rather than by a small inverted *dāl*. The sporadic addition of green signs for variant readings echoes his observations about the habits of some Basran and Kufan schools; al-Dānī's citation of al-Anṭākī had precisely suggested that this practise was at least as old as the second half of the third/ninth century. The following variants, in green, can be noted in the Cambridge folios (the list may not be exhaustive; names of readers associated with a given variant in the *qirāʾāt* literature are provided for reference):

⁸⁶ Ibid., 65 (n. 7); Alain George, "The Geometry of the Qurʾān of Amājūr: A Preliminary Study of Proportion in Early Islamic Calligraphy," *Muqarnas* XX (2003): 3; Seracettin Şahin, ed., *The 1400th Anniversary of the Qurʾān* ([Istanbul?]: Antik A.Ş. Cultural Publications, 2010), 152–155 (Cat. 5–7).

⁸⁷ See <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01116> (accessed 14/09/2012).

⁸⁸ For *fāʾ*, see George, "The Geometry of the Qurʾān of Amājūr," Fig. 1, left, l. 2; Cambridge Digital Library, Image 70 (f. 34v), l. 3.

- ❖ f. 5r (Cambridge Digital Library, image 11): Q. 3:65, *al- 'injīl* (red, associated with all readers except al-Ḥasan)/*al- 'anjīl* (green, reading ascribed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī);⁸⁹
- ❖ f. 14r (image 29): Q. 3:73, *'an yu 'tā* (red, most readers)/ *ān yu 'tā* (green, Ibn Kathīr, Mujāhid);⁹⁰
- ❖ f. 21v (image 44): Q. 3:78, *li-taḥsibūh* (red, most readers)/ *li-taḥsabūh* (green, Ibn 'Āmir, 'Āṣim, Ḥamza, Abū Ja'far, al-Ḥasan, al-Muṭawwi'ī);⁹¹
- ❖ f. 24v (image 50): Q. 3:79, *tu 'allimūn* (green, 'Āṣim, Ḥamza, al-Kisā'ī, Ibn 'Āmir, Khalaf, al-A'mash); no red vocalisation has been included for the reading that was considered standard (*ta 'lamūn* and *ta 'allamūn* are recorded as alternatives in the literature);⁹²
- ❖ f. 25v (image 52): Q. 3: 80, *lā ya 'murukum* (red, Ibn Kathīr, Nāfi', Abū 'Amr, Abū Ja'far, al-Kisā'ī, 'Āṣim) / *lā ya 'murakum* (green, Ibn 'Āmir, Ḥafṣ, Ḥamza, Ḥammād, Yahyā, 'Āṣim);⁹³
- ❖ f. 27r (image 55, Figure 2): Q. 3:81, *lamā* (red, most readers, including Ḥafṣ 'an 'Āṣim), *limā* (green, al-Ḥasan, Ḥamza, al-A'shā, Yahyā ibn Wathāb, Hubayra 'an Ḥafṣ 'an 'Āṣim);
- ❖ f. 27r (image 55, Figure 2): Q. 3:81, *ātaytukum* (red, most readers)/ *ātaynākum* (green, Nāfi', Abū Ja'far, al-A'raj, al-Ḥasan); a green diacritical dash and a green vertical stroke have been added for *ātaynākum*;
- ❖ f. 27r (image 55, Figure 2): Q. 3:81, *jā 'akum* (red with *madd* on the *alif*, most readers)/*jī 'akum* (green, not recorded in the literature, where only *imāla* is mentioned for this word);
- ❖ f. 28r (image 57): Q. 3: 81, *'ā qarartum (?)* (red) / *'a 'aqartum (?)* (green); it is difficult to determine exactly which readings are intended here; several variants are recorded in the literature, involving the softening or elision of the second *hamza* and/or the inclusion of an *alif* between the two *hamzāt*;⁹⁴
- ❖ f. 30r (image 61): Q. 3:83, *yabghūn* (red diacritical dashes, Abū 'Amr, Ḥafṣ, 'Āṣim, 'Abbās, Ya'qūb, Sahl, al-Yazīdī, al-Ḥasan) / *tabghūn* (green diacritical dashes, all other readers);

⁸⁹ Khaṭīb, *Mu'jam*, v. 1, 513.

⁹⁰ Ibid., v. 1, 519–520.

⁹¹ Ibid., v. 1, 528.

⁹² Ibid., v. 1, 529–530.

⁹³ Ibid., v. 1, 531. Both readings are attributed to 'Āṣim by different sources. A third reading, *lā ya 'murkum*, is attributed by some sources to Abū 'Amr (who is also cited as having read *lā ya 'murukum*) and to Abū Shu'ayb al-Sūsī (ibid.).

⁹⁴ For all references to Q. 3:81, see ibid., v. 1, 534–537.

- ❖ f. 31r (image 63): Q. 3:83, *wa karh^{an}* (red, most readers)/*wa kurh^{an}* (green, al-A‘mash);
- ❖ f. 31r (image 63): Q. 3:83, *wa ‘ilayhu* (red, not recorded in the literature)/ *wa ‘ilayhi* (green, standard reading);
- ❖ f. 31r (image 63): Q. 3:83, *turja ‘ūn* (red dots and dashes, most readers)/*yarji ‘ūn* (green dots and dashes, Ya‘qūb);⁹⁵
- ❖ f. 35v (image 72): Q. 3:86, *jā‘ahum* (red with *madd* on the *alif*, most readers)/*jī‘ahum* (green, not mentioned in the literature, where only *imāla* is recorded for this word);⁹⁶
- ❖ f. 36v (image 74): Q. 3:87, *‘alayhim* (green, standard reading)/no red dot;⁹⁷

Thus most of these variants feature in the *qirā‘āt* literature, which started developing in the third/ninth century, if not earlier, and associated different variants with readers of the second to early third/eighth to early ninth century and their pupils.⁹⁸ In the Qur’an of Amājūr, or at least the Cambridge fragment, the readings noted in either red or green do not fit consistently into the categories established in the *qirā‘āt* literature: they do not lead back to the name of the same one or even two readers. Indeed a few of the variants observed here (ff. 27r, 31r, 35v) do not appear at all in the literature, yet they must have been read in this period. This could reflect attitudes exemplified by Ibn Qutayba (213-276/828-889) and, several decades later, Ibn Miqsam (d. 354/965), who endorsed any reading as long as it was based on the ‘Uthmanic *rasm* and grammatically sound. Ibn Miqsam and another prominent Qur’an reader, Ibn Shannabūdh, were tried and forced to recant in 322/934 and 323/935 respectively, at the instigation of Ibn Mujāhid.⁹⁹ Until that period however, a broad spectrum of readings and approaches had existed, just as a multifaceted movement towards the systematisation of variants was gaining traction.¹⁰⁰

The Qur’an of ‘Abd al-Mun‘im (possibly Greater Syria, before 298/911).

⁹⁵ For all references to Q. 3:83, see *ibid.*, v. 1, 538–539.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, v. 1, 542.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Cf. Frederik Leemhuis, art. ‘Readings of the Qur’ān’ (EQ); Mustafa Shah, “The Early Arabic Grammarians’ Contributions to the Collection and Authentication of Qur’anic Readings: The Prelude to Ibn Mujāhid’s Kitāb Al-Sab‘a,” *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 6, no. 1 (2004), 72–102; Christopher Melchert, “The Relation of the Ten Readings to One Another,” *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 10, no. 2 (2008), 73–87.

⁹⁹ Shah, “The Early Arabic Grammarians’ Contributions,” 78–85; Christopher Melchert, “Ibn Mujāhid and the Establishment of the Seven Qur’anic Readings,” *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000), 20.

¹⁰⁰ Shah, “The Early Arabic Grammarians’ Contributions,” 88–93.

This Qur'an written in style D.I was made a *waqf* at the Great Mosque of Damascus in Dhū al-Qa'da 298/July 911 by 'Abd al-Mun'im ibn Aḥmad (Figure 4).¹⁰¹ Its production must have occurred in the preceding months, years or decades. The *waqfiyyāt* make Greater Syria a plausible region of origin, but others remain equally conceivable: the manuscript therefore cannot stand as a primary piece of evidence about provenance, but will be analysed for supplementary information. The illumination clearly runs over the red dot on CBL Is. 1421, f. 2a, which suggests that the latter are original, although further observations along the same lines would be desirable.¹⁰² In the manuscript, one can notice:

- Red dots for vowels, *hamza* and *tanwīn*;
- A red dot to the right of *alif* for *hamza*, and to its left for *hamza* preceded or followed by *madd* (‘*āmanū*, Figure 4, l. 1; ‘*ātū*, f. 2a); this notation of *hamza* is not solely used for initial *alif*, but can also occur at the end of a word (*shuhadā*’, f. 1b);
- A red dot to the left of *alif* can also indicate *madd* without *hamza* (Figure 4, l. 8, ‘*ibrāhīm*);
- *Alif al-waṣl* is not vocalised, which serves to distinguish it from initial *hamza* (Figure 4, l. 2, wa ‘*asjudū wa ‘a ‘budūh*, recited *wa-ṣjudū wa- ‘budūh*);
- The diacritical sign for *fā*’ is above the letter; *qāf* is marked by two diacritics above the letter (Figure 4, l. 5, *fī*, *ḥaqq*); these signs appear to be original, although their hue fluctuates differently from that of the adjoining letter strokes, which suggests their insertion may have been a discrete task completed after the calligraphy itself.

The manuscript is thus entirely consistent with al-Dānī’s observations about Iraq and the Mashriq, with the same minor nuances as in the Qur'an of Amājūr. Variants do not appear in the three leaves that make up Is. 1421, though this pattern remains to be confirmed against a larger sample of leaves from this manuscript.

¹⁰¹ David James, *Qur'āns and Bindings from the Chester Beatty Library. A Facsimile Exhibition* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1980), 20 (No. 7). Cf. also François Déroche, “Collections de manuscrits anciens du Coran à Istanbul: Rapport préliminaire,” in *Etudes médiévales et patrimoine turc*, ed. Janine Sourdel-Thomine (Paris, 1983), 147–149.

¹⁰² This is the only overlap between vocalisation and illumination observable in Is. 1421, as this fragment consists of only three folios. The space left in the layout for the illumination bands shows that this layer of the manuscript is original. The gold of the verse markers appears to be the same as for the larger illuminations, and it is outlined in the same dark brown that again appears to match the ink of the text and larger illuminations, which makes it likely that these verse markers are original.

Figure 4. Folio from the Qur'an of 'Abd al-Mun'im (Q. 22:77-78). Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Is. 1421, f. 1a. Page dimensions 21 x 32 cm.

The Khayqānī Qur'an

This Qur'an written in an early version of the New Style (CBL Is. 1417) contains a text in its closing page stating that one Abū al-Qāsim al-Khayqānī stating in Persian and Arabic that he corrected the text in 292/905.¹⁰³ These statements have been used for several decades as a *terminus ante quem* for its production and as a basis to suggest an origin in the eastern Islamic world.¹⁰⁴ However, close observation of the manuscript casts some doubt on the authenticity of these historical texts: their ink is different from that of the Qur'anic text, and appears closer to that of its re-inkings; they contain obvious Arabic grammatical errors, which are all the more suspicious since they are meant to emanate from the corrector of the manuscript; and some features of their script, notably the curved ending of *rā'*, only find parallels in later periods. These texts may have been added to empty pages at the end of their respective volumes long after the manuscript was written. Until this matter has been settled, it seems preferable not to rely on this manuscript for indications of chronology or provenance. Its Qur'anic text, which can still be ascribed to the 10th century, displays the above uses of red dots, including for *hamza* and *hamza* with *madd*, as well as additional orthographic signs.

The Qur'an of Ibn Shādhān (361/972)

This manuscript was copied by 'Alī ibn Shādhān al-Bayyī' in 361/972. It is a fine example of the New Style, an angular aesthetic of the Arabic script that gradually superseded Kufic in the fourth/tenth century, and remained in use well into the sixth/twelfth century. Its largest preserved section is CBL Is. 1434 (170 folios); about 16 additional folios, including the colophon, are at Istanbul University Library (Ms. A6758).¹⁰⁵ The same Ibn Shādhān was also the copyist of an extant copy of al-Sīrāfī's *Akhbār al-naḥwīyyīn al-baṣrīyyīn* completed in *jumādā I* 376/August-September 987 (Istanbul, Süleymaniyye Library, Shāhid 'Alī Pasha No. 1842). In its colophon, his

¹⁰³ Is. 1417d, f. 46b. Two further texts in the name of al-Khayqānī appear in others volume from the same manuscript (Is. 1417a, f. 47b; Is. 1417b, f. 46a).

¹⁰⁴ Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Illuminated. A Handlist of the Korans in the Chester Beatty Library* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, 1967), xviii, 10 (Nos. 23–26); James, *Qur'āns and Bindings*, 26 (No. 12); François Déroche, "Les manuscrits arabes datés du III^e/IX^e siècle," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 55–57 (1987-1989): 349 (No. 36); Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, 134; Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 147–148; George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 119.

¹⁰⁵ James, *Qur'āns and Bindings*, 27–28 (Nos. 13–14); Esthelle Whelan, "Writing the Word of God: Some Early Qur'an Manuscripts and their Milieux, Part I," *Ars Orientalis* XX (1990): 134–135 (n. 97); Elaine Wright, *Islam, Faith, Art, Culture: Manuscripts of the Chester Beatty Library* (London: Scala, 2009), 105 (Fig. 68).

nisba is given as al-Rāzī, which implies that he or his family was from Rayy, in Iran.¹⁰⁶

‘Alī was identified by Fritz Krenkow with a traditionist of the same name listed by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (773-852/1372-1449), but mistakenly since the latter had Abū Badr al-Sakūnī (d. 204/820) as his teacher and his pupils had passed away by the early fourth/tenth century.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, ‘Alī ibn Shādhān may have been related to Abū Bakr ibn Shādhān al-Rāzī (d. 376/987), who lived in Nishapur and frequented Sufi circles.¹⁰⁸ But the names provided for ‘Alī in the colophons do not provide enough genealogical information to substantiate this possibility. Krenkow noted Arabic grammatical mistakes in ‘Alī’s copy of the *Akhbār al-naḥwīyyīn al-baṣrīyyīn*, which suggests that this was not his native language.¹⁰⁹ Thus an origin in the eastern Islamic world appears as likely, even though the evidence is not sufficient to make a firm attribution.

The opening page of CBL Is. 1434 (f. 1a; Figure 5) carries a small sheet attached by a modern paper frame to the recto of the opening illumination (f. 1b). Although its borders are concealed by this frame, it appears to be a cropped flying leaf, which may previously have been pasted to this page or to the binding. It reads:

*Bismillāh. H[ā]dhā al-muṣḥaf manqūṭ bi-qirā’at ‘abd allāh bin kathīr
‘alā mā rawāh ibn abī bazza ‘anhu wa bi-qirā’at abī ‘amr bin al-‘alā’
‘alā mā rawāh al-yazīdī. Fa mā kāna fīhi mimmā ikhtalafā fīhi min madd
aw hamz aw ziyādat ḥarf aw isqāṭihi aw tashdīd aw ikhtilāf fī al-raḥ’ aw
al-naṣb aw al-jarr aw ghayr dhālik, mu‘allam^{an} ‘alayhi al-ṣuḥra, fa li-ibn
khatīr khāṣṣat^{an}. Wa mā kāna mu‘allam^{an} ‘alayhi bi’l-fustuqī fa li-ibn
‘amr khaṣṣat^{an}. Wa mā kāna mimmā ittafaqa ‘alayh manqūṭ bi’l-ḥumra.*

¹⁰⁶ Abū Sa‘īd al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Sīrāfī, *Akhbār al-naḥwīyyīn al-baṣrīyyīn* = *Biographies des grammairiens de l’école de Basra*, ed. Fritz Krenkow (Beirut/Paris: Imprimerie Catholique/Geuthner, 1936), III, 8–9, 109 and Pls.; Sīrāfī, *Akhbār*, 81; Munajjid, *Al-kitāb al-‘arabī al-makhṭūṭ*, Pl. 22; Ayman Fu‘ād Sayyid, *Al-kitāb al-‘arabī al-makhṭūṭ wa- ‘ilm al-makhṭūṭāt* (Cairo: Al-dār al-miṣrīyya al-lubnānīyya, 1997), v. 2, 571 and Pl. 66; Frances C. Edwards, “A study of ‘Eastern Kufic’ calligraphy,” Unpublished Master’s Thesis, University of Michigan, 1981, 58–59. I thank Christiane Gruber for helping me consult the latter reference.

¹⁰⁷ For Krenkow’s identification, see al-Sīrāfī, *Biographies*, IV (French), 8 (Arabic). For the pupils of this Ibn Shādhān, see Whelan, “Writing the Word,” 135 (n. 97); for al-Sakūnī, Ibn Sa‘īd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad Umar (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2001), v. 9, 335. Cf. also S. M. Stern, “[Review of] İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Arapça Yazmalar Kataloğu, V. 1, 1951,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 16, no. 2 (1954): 398.

¹⁰⁸ Laury Silvers, *A Soaring Minaret. Abu Bakr al-Wasiti and the Rise of Baghdadi Sufism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010), 36.

¹⁰⁹ See Krenkow’s remarks in al-Sīrāfī, *Biographies*, 8–9 (Arabic), and his annotated corrections in the edited text.

Wa mā kāna min madd aw hamz aw tashdīd {mu‘allam^{an}}¹¹⁰ ‘alayhi bi’l-zinjār.

Abū ‘amr idhā khatama al-sūra wa akhadha fī qirā’at ukhrā lā yaqra’ bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm ka-qawlahu al-ḍallīn alif lām mīm dhālika fa-unṣurnā ‘alā al-qawm al-kāfirīn alif lām mīm allāh wa ittaqū allāh la ‘allakum tufliḥūn yā ayyuhā al-nās, kadhālika ilā ākhir al-qur’ān. Wa ibn kathīr yaḥsil bayn al-suwar bi-bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm.

In the name of God. This Qur’an is vocalised according to the reading of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Kathīr in the transmission of Ibn Abī Bazza; and according to the reading of Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’ in the transmission of al-Yazīdī. As to what they differ about in terms of *madd*, *hamz*, the addition of a letter or its omission, *tashdīd*, *rafʿ*, *naṣb* and *jarr*, or anything else, what is indicated in yellow is specific to Ibn Kathīr, and what is indicated in pistachio green (*al-fustuqī*) is specific to Abū ‘Amr. What they both agree on is vocalised in red, with *madd*, *hamza*, *tashdīd* {indicated} in verdigris (*al-zinjār*).¹¹¹

Abū ‘Amr, when he reached the end of a sura and went on to read another, would not recite *Bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*, as in *al-ḍallīn – alif lām mīm dhālika* [Q. 1:7-2:1]; *fa-unṣurnā ‘alā al-qawm al-kāfirīn – alif lām mīm allāh* [Q. 2:286-3:1-2]; *wa ittaqū allāh la ‘allakum tufliḥūn – yā ayyuhā al-nās* [Q. 3:200-4:1]; and so on until the end of the Qur’an. Ibn Kathīr used to mark the division between suras with *Bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*.

To summarise, this note suggests that the general vocalisation should appear in red and in verdigris (i.e. light green) for *madd*, *hamza*, and *tashdīd*. Readings specific to Ibn Kathīr (ca. 45-120/645-738), in the transmission of his pupil Ibn Abī Bazza (sometimes given as Bazzī, d. ca. 124/742), should appear in yellow, and readings specific to Abū ‘Amr (d. 154/770), in the transmission of al-Yazīdī (d. 202/817), in a

¹¹⁰ This word is damaged in the original document.

¹¹¹ The word *zinjār* is of Persian derivation but was used in other parts of the Islamic world, for instance Ibn Bādīs’s early fifth/early eleventh-century treatise on inks and bookmaking, composed in North Africa; Martin Levey, *Mediaeval Arabic Bookmaking and its Relation to Early Chemistry and Pharmacology* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1962), 21, n. 150.

distinct ‘pistachio green.’ There follows the interesting mention that the *basmala* was not recited when reading consecutive suras in the reading of Abū ‘Amr.

Figure 5. Opening sheet attached to the Qur’an of Ibn Shādhān. Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Is. 1434, f. 1a. Total page dimensions 26 x 17.8 cm.

This text about vocalisation was written in black ink in a hand that occurs again in the margins of the same volume, this time in green and occasionally yellow, to repeat phrases from the adjoining Qur’anic calligraphy (e.g. ff. 34b, 43a, 96b); as well as in the last page of ‘Alī’s copy of the *Akhbār al-naḥwīyyīn al-baṣrīyyīn*, in a note just above the monumental calligraphy stating that the text was ‘checked, corrected and collated with the help of God’ (Figure 6).¹¹² This increases the likelihood that both interventions happened at the time of copy, and that ‘Alī ibn Shādhān teamed with the same corrector for both manuscripts. The alternative, namely that the same person came to own two manuscripts by this calligrapher at a later point in time, then decided to vocalise one and correct and collate the other, seems improbable. Indeed, the corrector’s bookhand bears a close affinity with other specimens dated to the late fourth/tenth century.¹¹³

A further layer of notation in yet another hand can be discerned: tiny words giving indications about grammar, such as *khabar*, *maṣdar*, *sharṭ* and *istifhām*, added above relevant words from the main text in minute yellow script; the hand appears to be the same as in some marginal *juz*’ markers written in red. Judging by the shape of its initial *jīm* and its *rā*’, this hand may be later than those of ‘Alī and the anonymous vocaliser.

Figure 6. Closing page of the Ibn Shādhān’s copy of the *Akhbār al-naḥwīyyīn al-baṣrīyyīn*. Istanbul, Süleymaniyye Library, Shāhid ‘Alī Pasha No. 1842. Dimensions unknown.

Returning to the Qur’anic vocalisation, one can observe that:

- Red dots mark vocalisation, *tanwīn* and most cases of *hamza*;
- A red dot is placed to the right of initial *alif* for *hamza*;

¹¹² *Qūbila wa ṣuḥḥiha wa ‘ūrida bi-‘awn allāh*. Annotations by the same hand probably appear in other parts of the manuscript, but only two other pages, including the title page, have been published.

¹¹³ Georges Vajda, *Album de paléographie arabe* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1958), Pl. 18 (BNF Arabe 6017, dated 382/993); Munajjid, *Al-kitāb al-‘arabī al-makḥḥūt*, Pl. 20 (Istanbul, Köprülü Library, No. 948, dated 370/980).

Alif al-waṣl is not vocalised, which serves to distinguish it from initial *hamza* (

- Figure 7, ll. 1-2, *humu al-khāsirūn*, recited *humu-l-khāsirūn*);

A horizontal green stroke above medial or final *alif* marks *madd* (

- Figure 7, l. 1, *ʿulāʾika*; l. 6, *al-samāʾ*; l. 8, *al-malāʾika*; l. 10, *al-dimāʾ*);
- A vertical green stroke marks *madd* for initial *alif*; it is sometimes combined with a red dot to indicate the position of *hamza* (Figure 8, l. 1, *li-ʾādam*);

The same vertical green stroke above letters other than *alif* denotes *alif maḥdhūfa* (

- Figure 7, l. 6, *sam[ā]wāt*);

Hamza is marked, for cases other than initial *alif*, by the modern sign based on *ʿayn*, in green (

- Figure 7, l. 1, *ʿulāʾika*; l. 7, *shayʾ*; l. 8, *al-malāʾika*);
- *Shadda* is noted by a green *shīn*;
- A small blue circle at the end of a word appears to indicate cases of *waqf* (the sign recalls a modern *sukūn*; in these cases the letter should indeed be pronounced with *sukūn*);
- A small green inflection indicates *sukūn*;

The word *huwa* (He) regularly carries a yellow dot and an inflection in light green (

- Figure 7, beginning of l. 7); the former indicates the standard reading *huwa*, and the latter the reading *hwa* (with a *sukūn* on the *hāʾ*) associated, among others, with Abū ʿAmr and al-Yazīdī;¹¹⁴
- Two oblique strokes placed respectively above and below the letter, one in yellow and the other in light green correspond to cases of *imāla*, which was widely applied by Abū ʿAmr (Figure 8, l. 2, *al-kāfirīn*, recited *al-kēfirīn*);¹¹⁵ the green stroke presumably indicates his reading and the yellow stroke that of Ibn Kathīr, without *imāla*;

A vertical yellow stroke often appears below the final *hāʾ* of words ending with *y-h*, e.g. *fīhi*, *nabīhi*, *yadayhi*, *ʾilayhi* (

¹¹⁴ Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam*, v. 1, 72; v. 2, 381. The reading *hwa* is also ascribed to Nāfiʿ, al-Kisāʾī, Qālūn, Abū Jaʿfar and al-Ḥasan.

¹¹⁵ For examples of *imāla* in the reading of Abū ʿAmr, see *ibid.*, v. 1, 56, 442, 451.

- Figure 7, l. 4); these reflect a reading specific to Ibn Kathīr in which a *yā*’ is added at the end of the word, e.g. *fīhī*,¹¹⁶
- In some phrases, light green and yellow dots indicate variant readings, e.g. in *fa-talaqqā ’ādāmu min rabbihi kalimātⁱⁿ* (Q. 2:37; Figure 8, l. 10), the standard reading is indicated in green and the reading of Ibn Kathīr (*fa-talaqqā ’ādama min rabbihi kalimāt^{mn}*) in yellow,¹¹⁷

A yellow dot marks cases of *mīm sākina* (

- Figure 7, ll. 3-4, *yumītukum thumma yuhyīkum*); these may have been instances of *waqf* emphasized by Ibn Kathīr, though I was unable to confirm this;
- In *Al-sufahā*’ *’a-lā* (Q. 2:13; f. 4a, l. 7), there is an oblique green stroke above the initial *alif* of *’a-lā*; its function is probably related to the two consecutive *hamzāt* in this phrase, since several readings are recorded for this phrase, with all but one having transmissions on the authority of Abū ‘Amr;¹¹⁸
- *Fā*’ is marked by one diacritic above the letter, and *qāf* by two diacritics above the letter.

The vocalisation, in sum, corresponds to the explanations provided in the opening sheet, notably with regard to the readings of Abū ‘Amr and Ibn Kathīr, as well as to the two green hues used for variants and general vocalisation respectively. The blue circles are the only elements omitted in this text, either because they were deemed unimportant or because they are a later addition. At a basic level, this notation also matches al-Dānī’s assertions about the Mashriq, with its red dots for the vowels, *hamza* and *tanwīn*, and its diacritics; but a range of additional signs have been introduced for *madd*, *alif maḥdhūfa*, *shadda*, *sukūn*, certain cases of *hamza*, and variants.

Figure 7. Folio from the Qur’an of Ibn Shādhān (Q. 2:27-30). Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Is. 1434, f. 6b. Page dimensions 26 x 17.8 cm.

Figure 8. Folio from the Qur’an of Ibn Shādhān (Q. 2:34-37). Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Is. 1434, f. 7b. Page dimensions 26 x 17.8 cm.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., v. 1, 28.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., v. 1, 85.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., v. 1, 45–47.

The Isfahan Qur'an (Isfahan, 383/993)

This manuscript was completed in Isfahan in Ramadan 383/October-November 993 by Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaṣīn, also in the New Style.¹¹⁹ Having been unable to study it in person, I have based my observations on published reproductions of the following fragments: TIEM 453-456; Khalili KFQ50; Met, Rogers Fund, 40.164.5 (unnumbered folios, labelled Met1, Met2 and Met3 below); Freer F1937.34; Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 51.37.7.¹²⁰ The sura markers consist of rectangular illumination bands in gold with red and green. They are probably original: a dedicated space has been left for them, most evidently in several folios where the last words of the preceding sura were centered on the line so that the illumination rectangle could be articulated around these words. Furthermore, the illuminated titles feature a distinctive medial *‘ayn/ghayn* in the form of a knot with two loops that also occurs in the calligraphy of the main text (as in Figure 9, *maghlūb^{um}*).¹²¹

Figure 9. Detail of folio from the Isfahan Qur'an (Q. 54:10-11). New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 40.164.5.

Figure 10. Folio from the Isfahan Qur'an (Q. 54:5-9). New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 40.164.5. Page dimensions 24 x 35.1 cm.

Figure 11. Folio from the Isfahan Qur'an (Q. 54:1-5). London and Geneva, Nasser D. Khalili Collection, KFQ90 (verso). Page dimensions 23.9 x 33.8 cm.

The verse separators were executed before these sura markers, since the latter cover the former in cases of overlap.¹²² At least one red dot is partially covered with gold specks from a specks from a verse separator (

Figure 9); in the Freer folio, the blue frame of the sura illumination again runs over one red dot and is interrupted to avoid covering another. This suggests that the red

¹¹⁹ François Déroche, "Les origines de la calligraphie islamique/ the Origins of Islamic Calligraphy," in *Textes sacrés et profanes/Sacred and Secular Texts: Catalogue of an exhibition at the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire* (Geneva, 1988), 24, 28; Şahin, *The 1400th Anniversary*, 197.

¹²⁰ For TIEM and Khalili, see respectively Şahin, *The 1400th Anniversary*, 196–197 (Cat. 35); Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, 154–155 (No. 83). For the Met fragments, <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/140006978>; for the Freer fragment, <http://www.asia.si.edu/collections/singleObject.cfm?ObjectNumber=F1937.34> (accessed 10/10/2012); for the Minneapolis fragment, <http://collections.artsmia.org/index.php?page=detail&id=1212> (accessed 04/07/2014).

¹²¹ François Déroche and Altmüt von Gladiss, *Der Prachtkoran im Museum für islamische Kunst. Buchkunst zur Ehre Allāhs* (Berlin: Museum für Islamische Kunst, 1999), 110 (text: left, ll. 3,4; illumination, right, l. 2); Şahin, *The 1400th Anniversary*, 196 (Cat. 35; text: l. 2; illumination: l. 4).

¹²² E.g. Freer folio (see note 120); Şahin, *The 1400th Anniversary*, 197 (Cat. 35); Déroche and Gladiss, *Der Prachtkoran*, 110 (right).

layer of vocalisation preceded the illumination, and is therefore original. In places, the blue vocalisation is overrun by the red vocalisation and by specks of gold from verse markers, which suggests that it is also original.¹²³ I was unable, from the available sample, to observe comparable overlaps for the green layer of notation. However the signs that appear in green, red and/or blue have exactly the same shapes, whilst each colour fulfils a distinct function (see below).¹²⁴ Thus all three layers of notation are probably contemporaneous, hence original – a conclusion also supported by the appearance of the same colours in the verse markers, marginal ornaments and sura markers. The vocalisation can be outlined as follows:

- Red dots are used for vowels, *tanwīn* and most *hamzāt*;
- A red dot is placed to the upper right of *alif* for *hamza* with *fatha* (e.g. Figure 10, l. 2, *ʿabṣāruhum*; same page, l. 3, *ka-ʿannahum*; Figure 11, l. 3, *ʾahwāʾahum*, first *hamza*; same line, *ʾamrⁱⁿ*); below the *alif* for *hamza* with *kasra* (Figure 10, ll. 2, 3, *ʾilā*); to its left for *hamza* followed by *madd* (Figure 11, l. 3, *ʾāyātⁱⁿ*; Figure 12, end of line, *ʾāla lūṭ*), or preceded by *madd* (Figure 11, l. 3, *ʾahwāʾahum*, second *hamza*; same image, l. 4, *jāʾahum*, *min al-anbāʾ*);
- *Alif al-waṣl* is not vocalised, which serves to distinguish it from initial *hamza*;
- *Ṣila* is marked by a green horizontal stroke that cuts across the initial *alif* and *lām* (e.g. Figure 10, l. 2, *min al-ajdāth*; Figure 11, l. 4, *min al-anbāʾ*);
- *Hamza* is sometimes marked, for cases other than initial *alif*, with the modern sign based on the phonetically related letter *ʿayn*, in blue (Figure 10, l. 2, *shayʾ*);
- *Shadda* is marked by the modern sign derived from *shīn*, in blue, alongside the red dot that indicates the vowel;
- A green sign in the shape of a *shīn* marks *idghām*; one example ([*al-ḥadīthi*] *taʾjabūn*, Q. 53:59, Khalili KFQ90 recto) involves *idghām* between *thāʾ* and *tāʾ*, which is not standard but was applied to this phrase in the readings of Abū ʿAmr and Yaʿqūb;¹²⁵

¹²³ See Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, 154 (No. 83, recto, beginning of l. 2); <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/140006978?img=5> (end of l. 1, *yassarnā*, Q. 54:32; beginning of l. 4, *najjaynāhum*, Q. 54:34).

¹²⁴ See below. This contradicts Déroche's assumption that the vocalisation was noted in two stages because some signs appear in two colours; Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, 155.

¹²⁵ Image: *ibid.*, 154 (Cat. 83, recto, beginning of l. 1). Variant: Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam*, v. 9, 208.

- Green is otherwise used to indicate variants (see below);

A small *khā* in blue denotes *khafīf* (

- Figure 9, *fa-fataḥnā*; same page, l. 4, *wa-ḥamalnāhu*);¹²⁶
- A small inflection in red indicates *sukūn* (Figure 11, l. 4, *laqad*);

A small blue circle denotes *waqf* (

- Figure 9, *fa-antaṣir*; Figure 10, l. 1, '*anhum*'; Figure 11, l. 3, '*ahwā'ahum*'); this includes instances in which *sukūn* should replace the final vowel or *tanwīn* of a word if the reader marks a pause (Figure 10, l. 4, '*asir*^[un]'; Figure 11, l. 3, '*mustaqirr*^[un]);
- *Fā* is marked by one diacritic above the letter, and *qāf* by two diacritics above the letter.

Variants:

- At the beginning of Q. 54:7 (Figure 10, l. 2), red and green signs are used to note two different readings of the same word: *khushsha*^{an} (red vowels, *ṣila* and *shadda*; reading of Nāfi', Āṣim, Ibn 'Āmir, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Muḥayṣin and others) and *khāshi*^{an} (green vowels, medial *alif*, and *khā* for *khafīf* above the *shīn*; Abū 'Amr, Ḥamza, al-Kisā'ī, Ya'qūb, Khalaf and others);¹²⁷ note that in order to apply this convention, the *shadda* in this word has been noted in red, as opposed to blue in the rest of the manuscript;
- The word *al-qur'ān* is written with a green dot and red *dāl* above the *rā*; the red *dāl* corresponds to the standard reading with *hamza sākina*, and the green dot the reading *al-qurān* (Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Muḥayṣin), where the *hamza* is replaced by *alif*;¹²⁸
- The word *al-mu'minīn* is written with a red dot and a green *dāl* above the *wāw*; the former reflects the standard reading with *hamza*, the latter the reading *al-mūminīn*, with a *wāw sākina* (Ḥamza, Abū Ja'far, Abū 'Amr, al-Azraq, Warsh and al-Iṣfahānī);¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Not visible on the above image; see <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/140006978?img=1> (accessed 10/10/2012).

¹²⁷ Khaṭīb, *Mu'jam*, v. 9, 218–219.

¹²⁸ Images: Freer folio (see note 120), l. 3; <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/140006978?img=5>, l. 1 (accessed 10/10/2012). Variant: Ibid., v. 9, 234.

¹²⁹ TIEM, unknown folio number. Image: Ṣahin, *The 1400th Anniversary*, 197 (lower image), l. 2. Variant: Khaṭīb, *Mu'jam*, v. 1, 310; v. 9, 141.

- The *hā'* of the word *huwa* carries both a red dot for the *ḍamma* of the standard reading *huwa* and a green *sukūn* inflection for the variant reading *hwa* (only one relevant occurrence of this word could be observed);¹³⁰
- The phrase *'inna allāha huwa* (Q. 51:58) has a green *sukūn* inflection on the *hā'* of the first word and a green *shadda* on the *hā'* of the second word; this corresponds to the reading *'inna allāh-huwa* (with *idghām*; Abū 'Amr, Ya' qūb);¹³¹
- Likewise in *'illā 'āla lūṭ* (Q. 54:34; Figure 12), there is a red dot on the first *lām* to indicate the standard reading with *fatha*; as well as a green *sukūn* inflection on the same letter, which together with the green *shadda* on the second *lām* indicates *idghām* (*'illā 'āl-lūṭ*; reading of Abū 'Amr, Ya' qūb).¹³²

Figure 12. Detail of folio from the Isfahan Qur'an (Q. 54:34). New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 40.164.5.

All these variants, with the exception of *al-qurān*, reflect the reading of Abū 'Amr, which may have been consistently used in this manuscript, although the study of a larger portion of the text would be necessary to draw a firm conclusion. Once again, the vocalisation follows the pattern attributed by al-Dānī to Iraq and the Mashriq in its most basic features: the red *hamzāt*, diacritics, *madd* (with the nuances noted above), and the *khā'* for *takhfīf* (which al-Dānī associated with al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad and Sībawayhi, rather than Iraq in general). Other layers of notation have been added for *shadda*, *sukūn*, *idghām* and *ṣilāt*, together with occasional variant readings in green. Some of these features reflect the same conventions as in the Qur'an of Ibn Shādhān, although they are noted in different colours (*shadda*, *waqf*, modern *hamza*, *sukūn*); others are distinct (*ṣila*, *idghām*, *takhfīf*).

Summary

The manuscript evidence at our disposal, in sum, suggests that the notation system probably in place by the turn of the first/eighth century in Greater Syria (Arabe 330c) was still used in the second half of the third/late ninth to early tenth century in that

¹³⁰ TIEM 453, f. 259b, l. 3. Image: Şahin, *The 1400th Anniversary*, 197. Variant: see note 114. The same word also appears, amongst published pages, in *'inna allāh-huwa* (note 131 below), but only with a *shadda* for *idghām*.

¹³¹ TIEM, unknown folio number. Image: Ibid., 197 (lower image), l. 4. Variant: Khaṭīb, *Mu'jam*, v. 9, 143.

¹³² Khaṭīb, *Mu'jam*, v. 9, 234.

region (the Qur'an of Amājūr, and possibly of 'Abd al-Mun'im); its amplified version is attested in the eastern Islamic world for the fourth/tenth century (the Isfahan Qur'an, and possibly the Qur'an of Ibn Shādhān). Although no early Qur'ans with explicit ties to Iraq survive, this geographical spread, together with the assertions of al-Dānī, makes it reasonable to assume that the same system was also used there. Green dots were sometimes added for variants, as in the Qur'ān of Amājūr and the Isfahan Qur'an. The growing complexity apparent in notation of the fourth/tenth century suggests that al-Dānī is not presenting the most up-to-date information on the Mashriq, presumably because his acquaintance with that region was less thorough than with the Maghrib.

(Note: Part II of this article will appear in *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 17:2).