

Ibn Qutayba's Understanding
of
Quranic Brevity

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis investigates the relationship between third/ninth century Muslim rhetorical exegesis of the Qurʾān and the emergence of a stylistically based demonstration of the Qurʾān's miraculous inimitability (*iʿjāz al-qurʾān*) in the fourth/tenth century. After first introducing the problem to be discussed, it examines relevant aspects of four interrelated disciplines: *tafsīr*, *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, Arabic literary theory and criticism, as well as Arabic grammar. Then the thesis explores the specific understanding of brevity according to the third/ninth century literary critic and exegete, Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), as found in the chapter of ellipsis and abbreviation (*bāb al-ḥadhf waʾl-ʾikhtiṣār*) in his *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qurʾān* (*The Interpretation of the Difficulties of the Qurʾān*) as a representative example of this relationship. Through this examination of brevity, the thesis argues that the evaluative process involved in the stylistic demonstration of the Qurʾān's inimitability, like the formal discipline of Arabic literary theory and criticism, possesses its technical origins within the philological Quranic studies of formative Muslim exegesis.

RÉSUMÉ

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Cette thèse étudie la relation entre l'exégèse rhétorique musulmane du Qur^ʾān du troisième/neuvième siècle et la naissance d'une démonstration basée sur le style de la miraculeuse inimitabilité du Qur^ʾān (*iʿjāz al-qur^ʾān*) au quatrième/dixième siècle. Après avoir premièrement introduit le problème à être étudié, elle examine les aspects pertinents de quatre disciplines en corrélation: *tafsīr*, *iʿjāz al-qur^ʾān*, théorie et critique littéraires arabes, ainsi que la grammaire arabe. Ensuite la thèse explore la compréhension spécifique de la brièveté selon le critique littéraire et exégète du troisième/neuvième siècle, Ibn Qutayba (m. 276/889), tel que trouvé dans le chapitre sur l'ellipsis et l'abréviation (*bāb al-ḥadhf waʾl-ʾikhtisār*) dans son *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qur^ʾān* (*L'interprétation des difficultés du Qur^ʾān*) en tant qu'exemple représentatif de cette relation. Par cet examen de la brièveté, la thèse démontre que le procédé d'évaluation utilisé dans la démonstration stylistique de l'inimitabilité du Qur^ʾān, comme la discipline formelle de la théorie littéraire et la critique arabes, possède ses origines techniques dans les études philologiques Quranique de l'exégèse formatrice musulmane.

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F.W.M.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BL</i>	G.J.H. van Gelder, <i>Beyond the Line</i> , Leiden, 1982.
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>EI¹</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , Leiden, 1913-36.
<i>EI²</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , New Edition, Leiden, 1954-.
<i>GAL</i>	C. Brockelmann, <i>Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur</i> , Leiden, 1937-.
<i>GAP</i>	Helmut Gätje, ed., <i>Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie</i> , Wiesbaden, 1987.
<i>GAS</i>	Fuat Sezgin, <i>Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums</i> , Leiden, 1967-.
<i>GdQ</i>	Theodor Nöldeke, <i>Geschichte des Qorāns</i> 2 nd ed., Hildesheim, 1970.
<i>IC</i>	<i>Islamic Culture</i>
<i>IJIAS</i>	<i>International Journal of Islamic and Arabic Studies</i>
<i>IQ</i>	<i>Islamic Quarterly</i>
<i>JAL</i>	<i>Journal of Arabic Literature</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
Lane	E.W. Lane, <i>Arabic-English Lexicon</i> , Cambridge, 1984.
<i>MW</i>	<i>Muslim World</i>
<i>QS</i>	John Wansbrough, <i>Quranic Studies</i> , Oxford, 1977.
<i>SALP</i>	Nabia Abbott, <i>Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri</i> , Chicago, 1967-.
<i>SI</i>	<i>Studia Islamica</i>
<i>ZAL</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik</i>

TRANSLITERATIONS

The following table gives the Arabic to English transliteration scheme followed within this thesis. In addition, note should be taken of the following: the *tā' marbūṭa* (ة) is normally omitted unless it occurs within an *ʾiḍāfa* construction and the *ʿayn* (ع) and *hamza* (ء), occurring in the initial position, are omitted in common words but are indicated in less common or technical terms.

ا	-	ā	ز	-	z	ف	-	f
ب	-	b	س	-	s	ق	-	q
ت	-	t	ش	-	sh	ك	-	k
ث	-	th	ص	-	ṣ	ل	-	l
ج	-	j	ض	-	ḍ	م	-	m
ح	-	ḥ	ط	-	ṭ	ن	-	n
خ	-	kh	ظ	-	ẓ	ه	-	h
د	-	d	ع	-	ʿ	و	-	w (ū)
ذ	-	dh	غ	-	gh	ي	-	y (ī)
ر	-	r				ء	-	ʾ

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INTRODUCTION

The Muslim notion of *i'jāz al-qur'ān* holds that the Qur'ān is not only of divine origin but that the text is, in itself, a miracle (*mu'jiza*), and that one aspect of what has come to be called the Qur'ān's inimitability (*i'jāz*) can be seen by examining the text's literary style. Interest in the concept of *i'jāz al-qur'ān* is reflected by the number of publications which discuss it in various ways. Some of these works, such as Muṣṭafā al-Dabbāgh's *Wujūh min al-i'jāz al-qur'ānī*¹ or Murtaḍā Muṭahharī's "Understanding the Uniqueness of the Qur'ān,"² accept the doctrine and intend only to make it more relevant to present-day Muslims. Other publications concentrate on translations or critical editions of works by important authors who wrote about aspects of *i'jāz al-qur'ān*, such as Gustave E. von Grunebaum's *A Tenth-Century Document of Arabic Literary Theory and Criticism*³ which examines the opinions of al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013) or Hellmut Ritter's edition of *Asrār al-balāgha*⁴ by al-Jurjānī (d. 470/1078). Perhaps the most frequent type of studies relating to *i'jāz al-qur'ān* are those on figures of speech, such as Wolhart Heinrich's *The Hand of the Northwind*⁵ or T. Sabbagh's *La Métaphore dans le Coran*,⁶ both examining metaphor. Most of these works, be they translations, editions or studies, tend to concentrate on authors who wrote during or after the fourth/tenth century, the period when surprisingly sophisticated works on *i'jāz al-qur'ān* appear.⁷ Of course, it is

¹Jordan: Maktabat al-Manār, 1985.

²Parts 1-3, *al-Tawhīd*, li (1983), 9-25, lii (1984), 10-29, liii (1984), 20-7.

³Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950.

⁴Istanbul: Government Press, 1954.

⁵Wiesbaden: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1977.

⁶Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1943.

⁷See von Grunebaum, *Tenth-Century Document*, p. xvii. These works include the celebrated *al-Nukat fī i'jāz al-qur'ān* by al-Rummānī (d. 386/996) [In *Thalāth rasā'il fī i'jāz al-qur'ān*. Ed. M. Zaghlūl Salām and M. Khalaf Allāh. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1956, pp. 73-113], al-Khaṭṭābī's (d. 388/998) *Bayān i'jāz al-qur'ān* [In Salām and Khalaf Allāh,

only by focussing on the more sophisticated works within the tradition that one can reveal the complete implications of any particular school of thought or technical terminology. But, more importantly, there is a paucity of earlier sources about *ījāz al-qurʾān* which chronicle the development toward this sophistication.

Not surprisingly, only a few works have attempted to provide a history of the development of *ījāz al-qurʾān*. Recently, Issa J. Boullata⁸ mentioned three such works: Abdul Aleem's "Ijazu'l-Qurʾan [sic],"⁹ Naʿīm al-Ḥimsī's "*Taʾrīkh fikrat ījāz al-qurʾān*,"¹⁰ and ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Khaṭīb's *ījāz al-qurʾān*.¹¹ Each of these works offers a unique survey of the *ījāz* doctrine including each author's own understanding of *ījāz al-qurʾān*¹² and, predictably, lays the greatest emphasis on the works and ideas of authors only as early as the fourth/tenth century.¹³ But, more importantly, each author does attempt to provide a history of the development of the *ījāz* doctrine leading up to the fourth/tenth century which may be characterized as sketchy at best.¹⁴ Again, lack of sources about *ījāz al-qurʾān* prior to the fourth/tenth century presents a problem. Yet, each author, accepting the premise that the Qurʾān reveals an awareness of its own inimitability and seeing that inimitability articulated in the fourth/tenth century, attempts to bridge that gap

op. cit., pp. 19-71], followed by al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), *ījāz al-qurʾān* [Ed. ʿImad al-Dīn Aḥmad Ḥaydar (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiya, 1986)], among others.

⁸"The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qurʾān: *ījāz* and Related Topics." In *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qurʾān*. Ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 142.

⁹Parts 1-2. *IC*, 7 (1933), pp. 64-82, 215-33. The early date of this paper should not give the impression that its ideas are out of currency. Ismail K. Poonawala ("An Ismāʿīlī Treatise on the *ījāz* al-Qurʾān," *JAOS*, 108 (1988), p. 379 n. 2) refers to this paper as "a comprehensive article tracing the early history of the *ījāz*."

¹⁰Parts 1-11. *Majallat al-majmaʿ al-ʿilmī al-arabī*, 27 (1952), 240-63, 418-33, 571-86; 28 (1953), 61-78, 242-56; 29 (1954), 104-14, 239-51, 417-24, 573-9; 30 (1955), 106-13, 299-311.

¹¹2 vol. Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1964.

¹²Aleem, "Ijazu'l-Qurʾan," pp. 64-8; al-Ḥimsī, "*Taʾrīkh*," pt. 2, pp. 418-23; al-Khaṭīb, *ījāz*, vol. 1, pp. 48-69, vol. 2, pp. 9-21, 64-373.

¹³See Aleem, "Ijazu'l-Qurʾan," pp. 73-82, 215-233; al-Ḥimsī, "*Taʾrīkh*," pt. 2, p. 429-pt. 11, p. 306; al-Khaṭīb, *ījāz*, vol. 1, pp. 129-353, vol. 2.

¹⁴See Aleem, "Ijazu'l-Qurʾan," pp. 69-74; al-Ḥimsī, "*Taʾrīkh*," pt. 2, pp. 429-31; al-Khaṭīb, *ījāz*, vol. 1, pp. 129-32.

by speculatively describing the development of the *ʿijāz* concept through the Muʿtazila theological school.¹⁵

There is little evidence to doubt that the Qurʾān did become the immediate focus of attention of a number of theological schools as well as Muslim grammarians and literary critics and theorists who included the text of the Qurʾān in their studies.¹⁶ But it is important to bear in mind that the *ʿijāz* doctrine, notwithstanding its linguistic and literary expression, is not based on literary notions as much as a theological one; and many theological ideas, not only their articulation, take time to develop. The traditional view of the *ʿijāz* doctrine is that the notion of the Qurʾān's inimitability existed from the outset. Various hypotheses were advanced which attempted to substantiate that claim with the concept of the Qurʾān's stylistic inimitability being one of those preserved.¹⁷ But during this formative period which saw the development of *ʿijāz al-qurʾān* literature, works of Arabic grammar and literary criticism which examined stylistics were also being developed and compiled. More importantly, so too were those works which embody the Muslim theological focus on the text of the Qurʾān: works of exegesis (*tafsīr*).

The purpose of *tafsīr* works is to clarify the text of the Qurʾān, while the purpose of *ʿijāz* works is to evaluate the literary style of the text in support of the *ʿijāz* doctrine; and both elucidative *tafsīr* and evaluative *ʿijāz* approaches included the study of Quranic language. Where *tafsīr* saw obscurities or difficulties within the text that required explanation, *ʿijāz* works often saw figurative language that required appreciation. Yet, where we lack early works of *ʿijāz al-qurʾān* that show the growth of the technical

¹⁵Citing Muʿtazila thinkers such as al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869) [Aleem, "Ijazu'l-Qurʾan," p. 72; al-Ḥimṣī, "*Taʾrīkh*," pt. 2, p. 429, pt. 3, p. 581; al-Khaṭīb, *ʿijāz*, vol. 1, pp. 133-49], al-Nazzām (d. 232/846) [Aleem, "Ijazu'l-Qurʾan," p. 72; al-Ḥimṣī, "*Taʾrīkh*," pt. 2, p. 429], and ʿIsā ibn Ṣabīḥ al-Muzdār (d. 226/840) [al-Ḥimṣī, "*Taʾrīkh*," pt. 2, p. 429, pt. 3, p. 579].

¹⁶See Vicente Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics in the Golden Age: Selection of Texts accompanied by a Preliminary Study* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), pp. 9-19, 27-40; G. J. H. van Gelder, *BL*, pp. 5-10, 160-5.

¹⁷For a synopsis of these developments, see Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," pp. 141-7.

demonstration of the Qurʾān's stylistic inimitability, we do possess early works of *tafsīr*.¹⁸ To what extent these early works of exegesis reflect the acceptance of the belief in *ʿijāz al-qurʾān* and the growth of a literature to demonstrate it, or indicate a shift from the simple elucidation of the Quranic text toward the evaluation of Quranic language in support of its stylistic inimitability is the broad focus of this thesis.

The importance of understanding the development of *ʿijāz al-qurʾān* literature, especially whether that literature grew as a reflection of an already existing notion or whether it developed out of the exegetical tradition, can be seen in both literary and religious spheres.

The fact that the revelation of Muḥammad was received in the literary form of a book had a profound effect on Arabic language and literature.¹⁹ The language of the Qurʾān is not always clear but contains many obscure words, phrases, and allusions to past events. Arab lexicographers and philologists were concerned with the preservation of the Quranic text from corruptions introduced by newly converted Muslims,²⁰ but also with the establishment of an exemplar Arabic text upon which to base their definitions of the standards of Arabic speech (*ʿarabiyya*), its proper inflection (*ʿrāb*), and the description of the purest form of the Arabic language (*al-luḡha al-fuṣṣā*).²¹ Clarification

¹⁸Such as Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 150/767), *Tafsīr al-qurʾān* (Ms. Ahmet III 74); al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822), *Maʿānī al-qurʾān* (ed. Aḥmad Yūsuf Najātī. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1955); Abū ʿUbayda (d. 209/824), *Majāz al-qurʾān* (Ed. Fuat Sezgin. Cairo. al-Khanjī, 1954); Abū ʿUbayd (d. 224/838), *Faḍāʾil al-qurʾān* (Ms. Petermann, 449); and, Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qurʾān* (Ed. Aḥmad Ṣāqir. Cairo. Dār al-Turath, 1973).

¹⁹See S.A. Bonebakker, "Aspects of the History of Literary Rhetoric and Poetics in Arabic Literature," *Viator*, 1 (1970), p. 83; *BL*, pp. 1-22, 24; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 9-10, 17-8, 39; M. Khalafallah, "Arabic Literature: Theories of Literary Criticism," In *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, vol. 2, ed. M.M. Sharif (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966), pp. 1013-4, Abdulla el-Tayib, "Pre-Islamic Poetry," In *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, ed. A.F.L. Beeston, et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 33.

²⁰See Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 12; Andrew Rippin, "Lexicographical Texts and the Qurʾān," in id. (ed.), *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qurʾān* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 159-67.

²¹See *BL*, pp. 5-6; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 11-2; Paul Kahle, "The Qurʾān and

of figurative language in the Qurʾān, including anthropomorphic imagery of God, gave cause for the appeal to the traditional authority of pre-Islamic poetry in linguistic matters, including literary style.²² But the major concern of early literary critics was not poetry for its own sake but the Qurʾān. "Aesthetic criticism was a mere by-product of their activity."²³ How and when the Qurʾān achieved its inimitable literary status would affect our understanding of these closely associated disciplines.

But Quranic style cannot be separated from the Qurʾān as revelation. The fact that the Qurʾān's literary style was used in the demonstration of its miraculousness suggests that any change or shift in the way that style was seen had also an effect on the views about the nature of the Qurʾān's inimitability.

While understanding the importance of the *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* doctrine and its literature is straightforward, obtaining a complete understanding of its development to the technical, evaluative literature it became is not. It is true that *iʿjāz* works concentrate specifically on Quranic citations, literary tropes, and the use of technical terminology to link them. But even this would require a comprehensive survey including the opinions of every exegete, literary critic and grammarian about each Quranic expression and every literary figure. It must also be noted that we do not possess all the documents from before the fourth/tenth century that could be relevant to such a survey: it would be a mistake to assume that all the documents required for a complete understanding of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* have been preserved. Yet, I do think that an initial contribution toward at least a better understanding of the development of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* literature, the ideas behind it, and, in particular, the relationship of works of *tafsīr* to the *iʿjāz* tradition can be made.

the 'Arabīya," in *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume* (Budapest, 1948), pp. 163-82.

²²See *BL*, pp. 97-8; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 12-9; John Wansbrough, *QS*, pp. 216, 229-31. As early as the work of Ibn Qutayba, for example, in his *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qurʾān*, we see the citation of poetry exclusively in his clarification of the Qurʾān (see Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 18), while the later work of al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, devotes a substantial portion of this text to the criticism of pre-Islamic poets (see *BL*, p. 6; von Grunebaum, *Tenth-Century Document*, pp. xx-xxi, 1-55).

²³Bonebakker, "Aspects," p. 83. See also, *BL*, pp. 1-14, esp. pp. 5-10.

Among the numerous works authored by Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) on a broad range of topics,²⁴ his *Taʿwīl mushkil al-qurʾān*²⁵ is of some interest regarding the relationship between early works of *tafsīr* and works of *ijāz al-qurʾān*. First, it was written in the century before the appearance of *ijāz* treatises, such as al-Rummānī's *al-Nukat fī ijāz al-qurʾān* or al-Khaṭṭābī's *Bayān ijāz al-qurʾān*. Secondly, the title of this text, *The Interpretation of the Difficulties of the Qurʾān*, as well as its inclusion of clarifications of a number of "difficult" Quranic verses,²⁶ clearly places it within the *tafsīr* tradition. But the format, as well as the major part of the book, is devoted to elements of Quranic style, including substantial chapters on seven particular figures of speech.²⁷ The focus of the *Taʿwīl mushkil al-qurʾān* is Quranic style, a format more consistent with a work of *ijāz al-qurʾān*. But it does not purport to be a work of the interpretation of the excellencies (*faḍāʾil*), eloquence (*balāgha*), or inimitability (*ijāz*) of the Qurʾān, but of its difficulties (*mushkil*). Thus, the *Taʿwīl mushkil al-qurʾān* represents a text that shares features of both a work of *tafsīr* and of *ijāz al-qurʾān*. To what extent it remains an exegetical text which simply employs rhetorical figures to clarify the Qurʾān is of interest. But, of more interest here, to what extent could Ibn Qutayba's understanding of the stylistic elements within the Qurʾān be seen as contributing toward the development of the *ijāz al-qurʾān* literature, or its ideas, before their major articulation in the fourth/tenth

²⁴See Gérard Lecomte, "Ibn Qutayba," *EI*², vol. III, p. 845; Fuat Sezgin, *GAS*, band VIII, pp. 161-5, band IX, pp. 154-8. A fuller discussion of the works of Ibn Qutayba can be found in Ishāq Mūsa Huseini, *The Life and Works of Ibn Qutayba* (Beirut: The American Press, 1950), pp. 47-56, and Gérard Lecomte, *Ibn Qutayba (mort en 276/889): l'homme, son oeuvre, ses idées* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1965), pp. 102-78.

²⁵Ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1973).

²⁶pp. 311-438. There seems to be no apparent order to the selected verses: passages from the second *sūra*, to mention just one example, occur in four different places.

²⁷viz.: the trope (*al-qawl fīʾl-majāz*), pp. 103-35; metaphor (*al-ʾistiʿāra*), pp. 135-84; inversion (*al-maqlūb*), pp. 185-209; ellipsis and abbreviation (*al-ḥadhf waʾl-ʾikhtisār*), pp. 210-31; repetition and pleonasm (*takrār al-kalām waʾl-ziyāda fihī*), pp. 232-55; metonymy and allusion (*al-kināya waʾl-taʾrīd*), pp. 256-74; and, idiom (*mukhālafa ẓāhir al-lafẓ maʿanāhu*), pp. 275-98. A fuller description of the *Taʿwīl mushkil al-qurʾān* and a discussion of its contents can be found in Chapter 2.

century? What role was played by early works of *tafsīr*, particularly Ibn Qutayba's *Taʿwīl mushkil al-qurʾān*, in the development of the *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* doctrine? Some of the answers to such questions lie in examining Ibn Qutayba's understanding of tropical expressions and his method of applying it to the Qurʾān.

Of the seven chapters Ibn Qutayba devoted to the examination of specific figures of speech, the chapter entitled *bāb al-ḥadhf waʾl-ʾikhtisār* is of particular interest because it deals with the concept of "brevity". Like many figures, the various aspects of brevity are often difficult to identify and demarcate. Of course, any phrase or construction can always be augmented in some way and, thus, any phrase may be seen as displaying some feature of brevity. But brevity is of specific interest because a number of its features were used in the demonstration of Quranic *iʿjāz*.

For example, al-Rummānī (d. 386/996), who very much set the tone for the demonstration of Quranic *iʿjāz* in his *al-Nukat fī iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, mentions that the miraculousness of the Qurʾān can be seen in seven ways or aspects (*nukat*) but devotes the bulk of this work to the examination of only one, the Qurʾān's eloquence (*balāgha*), which he further divides into ten components.²⁸ The first element of Quranic *balāgha* to

²⁸al-Rummānī's seven aspects of Quranic *iʿjāz* are: abandoning the imitation [of the Qurʾān] in spite of abundant need and forceful motives (*tark al-muʿāriḍa maʿa tawaffur al-dawāʿi wa shiddat al-ḥāja*), its challenge to everyone (*al-taḥaddī lil-kāffa*), God's deflecting human attempts at imitation (*al-ṣarfa*), its eloquence (*al-balāgha*), its truthful information about future events (*al-ʾakhbār al-ṣādiqa ʿan al-ʾumūr al-mustaqbala*), its breach of custom (*naqq al-ʿāda*), and its analogy to other miracles (*qiyās bi-kull muʿjiza*). His ten constituents of *balāgha* are: concision (*iʿjāz*), pp. 76-80; simile (*tashbīh*), pp. 80-5; metaphor (*istiʿāra*), pp. 85-94; concord (*talāʾum*), pp. 94-7; assonance (*fawāṣil* [sg. *fāṣila*]), pp. 97-9; paronomasia (*tajānus*), pp. 99-100; variation (*taṣrīf*), pp. 101-2; implication (*taḍmīn*), pp. 102-4; hyperbole (*mubālagha*), pp. 104-6; and, clarity (*bayān*), pp. 106-9. Although al-Rummānī mentions all seven figures at the beginning of his text, see p. 75, he leaves a short discussion of six of them to the last section of the work, pp. 109-13, following his more detailed examination of *balāgha*.

For translations of this text, see Awad Muaiwed al-Jemaey, "Al-Rummānī's 'al-Nukat fī Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān': an Annotated Translation with Introduction" (Diss. Indiana University, 1987), pp. 101-94, or an abridged translation in Andrew Rippin and Jan Knappert, ed. and tr., *Textual Sources for the Study of Islam* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 49-59.

be discussed pertains to brevity, namely, that of concision (*ʔijāz*), which, for al-Rummānī, includes aspects of ellipsis (*ḥadhf*) and succinctness (*qīṣar*).²⁹

But the study of Quranic brevity was not limited to works of *ʔijāz al-qurʔān*. Earlier, the third/ninth century literary critic, al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), examined the concept of ellipsis (*ḥadhf*)³⁰ as well as the concept of concision (*ʔijāz*) in relation to its antonyms, pleonasm (*ʔitnāb*) and superfluity (*fuḍūl*).³¹ And, in a way similar to al-Rummānī, he also considers *ʔijāz* to constitute one of the characteristics of the Qurʔān.³² Another, later literary critic, al-ʿAskarī (d. 395/1005), in his most famous work, the *Kitāb al-ṣināʿatayn*,³³ also examines a number of concepts related to brevity. Like al-Rummānī and al-Jāḥiẓ, he considers *ʔijāz* to constitute a part of *balāgha* and he similarly divides *ʔijāz* into ellipsis (*ḥadhf*) and succinctness (*qīṣar*).³⁴ He also examines the relationship between *ʔijāz* and pleonasm (*ʔitnāb*) as well as the related concept of implication

²⁹See pp. 76-80; see also, B.M. Ramli, "Philology, Rhetoric and Literary Criticism in the Study of *ʔijāz* during the 4th century A.H." (Diss. London School of Oriental and African Studies, 1970-1), pp. 197, 203-7. A fuller understanding of al-Rummānī's views on Quranic *ʔijāz* would require looking at his chapter on implication (*taḍmīn*). Within the discipline of literary criticism, *taḍmīn* usually identifies "enjambment" (see *BL*, pp. 20, 47, 123); yet, al-Rummānī considers it to be a kind of concision: "implication, in its entirety, is concise (*al-taḍmīn kulluhu ʔijāz*)", *op. cit.*, p. 103. This understanding of *taḍmīn* is similar to that of al-Jāḥiẓ for whom "it refers, not to enjambment, but to the substitution of the subject by the pronoun implied in the verbal form." (*BL*, p. 52; see also, al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān waʔl-tabyīn*. Ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn [Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Lajnat al-Taʔlīf, 1950], vol. 1, p. 155).

³⁰See his *al-Bayān waʔl-tabyīn*, vol. 1, pp. 276-83. See also, Ramli, "Philology," pp. 81-2.

³¹See his *al-Hayawān*. Ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Maktabat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1938), vol. 1, pp. 19, 72, 76, 90-4. See also, Ramli, "Philology," pp. 78-82.

³²von Grunebaum, *Tenth-Century Document*, p. xvi. al-Jāḥiẓ is also reported to have written a treatise with the title *Risāla fīʔl-balāgha waʔl-ʔijāz*. See Charles Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: Longmans and Co., 1894), p. 710, Ms. 1129, pt. XVI. See also, G.J.H. van Gelder, "Brevity: the Long and the Short of it in Classical Arabic Literary Theory," In *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*. Ed. Rudolf Peters (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), p. 80, n. 14.

³³Ed. Alī al-Bijāwī and Muḥammad ʔIbrāhīm (Cairo: ʿIsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1971).

³⁴See pp. 20, 56-7, 179-81.

(*taḍmīn*).³⁵ But al-ʿAskarī also includes the concepts of abbreviation (*ʾikhtiṣār*) and abridgment (*ʾiqtiḍāb*) in his discussions about brevity as well as adding prolixity (*taṭwīl*) to *ʾiṭnāb* as an antonym of *ʾijāz*.³⁶

Brevity was a matter of concern to literary critics and theorists primarily in relation to the eloquence of Arabic speech. But Arabic grammarians also included aspects of it in a variety of descriptions of Arabic syntax. Sībawayh (d. 177/793), the author of the earliest extant work of Arabic grammar, the *Kitāb Sībawayhi*,³⁷ examined a number of similar elements associated with brevity. Among them are *ʾijāz*, *ḥadhf*, *qīṣar*, *ʾikhtiṣār*, and an examination of *ʾiḍmār* (concealment), especially in relation to *ʾiḍhār* (manifestation), as well as his understanding of the regent (*ʿāmil*).³⁸ Another interesting text which shows grammatical interest in brevity is the *Iʿrāb al-qurʾān*³⁹ attributed to the Basran grammarian al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923). Although the provenance of the book is less than ideal,⁴⁰ it does offer an example of some later, grammatical applications of brevity to the Qurʾān: it lists eighteen different types of brevity, primarily under the designations of

³⁵See pp. 42, 196-200; and, on *taḍmīn*, see note 29, above.

³⁶For al-ʿAskarī's views on *ʾikhtiṣār*, see pp. 179-81; *ʾiqtiḍāb*, pp. 45-6, and; *taṭwīl*, p. 197. See also, Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 125-30; *BL*, pp. 89-97, and; George J. Kanazi, *Studies in the Kitāb aṣ-Ṣināʿatayn of Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989), pp. 107-14. A fuller discussion of brevity in Arabic literary criticism will follow in Chapter 1, below.

³⁷2 vols. Ed. Hartwig Derenbourg (Paris: l'Imprimerie Nationale, 1881). A number of more recent editions of Sībawayh's *Kitāb* are available, such as ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn's edition (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿamma li'l-Kuttāb, 1977), but I prefer to employ the same edition as that used by Gérard Troupeau's *Lexique - Index du Kitāb de Sībawayhi* (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1976).

³⁸Sībawayh's *Kitāb* reveals a less than ideal structure for accessing his notions about the various aspects of brevity. His ideas about *ḥadhf* and *ʿāmil* appear throughout the text. A better understanding of Sībawayh's views of the latter concept may be assisted by referring to Nasr Hamed Abu Zaid, "The Hermeneutic Aspect of Sibawayh's Grammar," *Alif (Journal of Comparative Poetics)*, 8 (1988), pp. 82-117. Some of Sībawayh's views of *ʾijāz* can be seen in the *Kitāb*, vol. 1, pp. 88-90; on *qīṣar*, vol. 2, p. 329; *ʾikhtiṣār*, vol. 1, pp. 85, 88, 91-3, 97, and; *ʾiḍmār*, vol. 1, pp. 30, 57, 79, 97, vol. 2, p. 151.

³⁹3 vols. Ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1982).

⁴⁰See Aḥmad Rātib al-Naffākh, "*Kitāb iʿrāb al-qurʾān* al-mansūb ʾilā al-Zajjāj," *Revue de l'Académie Arabe de Damas*, 48 (1973), pp. 840-63, 49 (1974), pp. 93-112.

ḥadhf and *ʿiḍmār*, and cites specific Quranic verses to which they apply.⁴¹ Another fourth/tenth century book with the same title is the *Iʿrāb al-qurʿān*⁴² of the Cairo linguist al-Naḥḥās (d. 338/950) which also examines many of the grammatical and rhetorical features of the Qurʿān but in a *sūra* by *sūra* analysis which often also explains the subject matter of the verses examined.

In addition, a number of early exegetes did not limit their analysis of the Qurʿān to the clarification of the meaning of each verse but also attempted to explain the way in which the Qurʿān's meaning is expressed. Among such works are the *Maʿānī al-qurʿān*⁴³ of al-Ḥarrāʾī (d. 207/822), the *Majāz al-qurʿān*⁴⁴ of Abū ʿUbayda (d. 209/824), and the *Faḍāʾil al-qurʿān*⁴⁵ of Abū ʿUbayd (d. 224/838). Some but not all of these different interpretations have been preserved in the encyclopaedic *Jāmiʿ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-qurʿān*⁴⁶ of al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923).

The exegetes, grammarians, *iʿjāz al-qurʿān* writers, and literary theorists mentioned above are not part of any intended survey of brevity in early Arabic scholarship but they do demonstrate the interest in Quranic brevity that was shared among the various disciplines. The concern of this thesis, however, is not brevity in general; nor is it simply Ibn Qutayba's understanding of brevity, but of Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity, specifically.

⁴¹See vol. 3, pp. 973-1050. The divisions occur under such headings as ellipsis of the preposition (*ḥadhf ḥarf al-jarr*), see vol. 3, p. 980; or, concealment of the circumstantial expression (*ʿiḍmār al-ḥāl*), see vol. 3, p. 1033. A discussion of brevity in Arabic grammar may be found in Jonathan Owens, *The Foundations of Grammar: An Introduction to Medieval Arabic Grammatical Theory* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamin Publishing, 1988), pp. 186-98, and will be examined in more depth in Chapter 1, below.

⁴²5 vols. n.p.: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-ʿArabiyya, 1985.

⁴³3 vols. Ed. Ahmad Yūsuf Najātī (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1955).

⁴⁴2 vols. Ed. Fuat Sezgin (Cairo: al-Khanjī, 1954).

⁴⁵Ms. Petermann 449. See Wilhelm Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis der Arabischen Handschriften* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1889; rpt. 1980), band 1, p. 175, no. 451. Portions of this text have been edited in Anton Spitaler, "Ein Kapitel aus den *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʿān* von Abū ʿUbaid al-Qāsim ibn Sallām," In *Documenta Islamica Inedita*. Ed. J.W. Fück (Berlin: Akademik Verlag, 1952), pp. 1-24.

⁴⁶30 vols. (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Kubrā al-Amīriyya, 1905-).

The purpose of this study, then, is to examine Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity, as found in his *Ta'wīl mushkil al-qur'ān*. The underlying question involved is the relationship of this text, as a third/ninth century work of exegesis, to the notions and literature that demonstrated the Qur'ān's stylistic inimitability in the following century. To do so, some preliminary studies, including relevant aspects of both *tafsīr* and *ijāz al-qur'ān* literature, as well as works on the related sciences of grammar and literary criticism and theory, will follow in the first chapter. The second chapter will look briefly at the background of Ibn Qutayba and at some of the features of his *Ta'wīl mushkil al-qur'ān*, before concentrating specifically on Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity.

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY STUDIES

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the larger context in which Ibn Qutayba's conception of Quranic brevity may be understood. To that end, it is necessary to examine some relevant features and developments of Quranic *tafsīr*, because Ibn Qutayba's *Taʿwīl mushkil al-qurʾān* is seen as a representative of that genre. It is also necessary to examine Muslim notions about *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, because of its application of a number of figures of speech in the demonstration of the Qurʾān's inimitability. As well, aspects of Arabic literary criticism and theory as well as Arabic grammar should be explored, not only for these sciences' understanding and application of literary figures and the syntactical implications involved in the use of tropical language, but also because of the impact the Qurʾān, as a literary document, had upon them.

It should be noted, however, that while many important developments within each of these disciplines took place in later centuries,⁴⁷ only those aspects which pertain to the overall focus of this thesis, the development of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* works in the fourth/tenth century, will be examined. Because these preliminary studies constitute research, however, I have attempted, where possible, to emphasize and cite the conclusions on any particular point reached by experts in each field, contained in the secondary literature, rather than offer my own interpretations of the available primary material.

⁴⁷Few would dispute the impact, for example, of the *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl* (4 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1947) of al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) on the development of rhetorical exegesis and *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, or the influence of al-Jurjānī (d. 470/1078) on Arabic literary sciences. It should also be remembered, of course, that each of these areas of scholarship remain an ongoing process.

Tafsīr

The traditional Muslim view on the origins of *tafsīr* place it with the Qurʾān itself, Muḥammad, and various Companions.⁴⁸ Other researchers, however, basing their conclusions on literary evidence, have debated the existence and nature of the earliest, namely first/seventh century, *tafsīr*.⁴⁹ But it is sufficient here, merely to establish that there exists substantial evidence to support the fact that written works of *tafsīr* had emerged at the latest by the second/eighth century.⁵⁰

The second/eighth and third/ninth centuries witnessed a proliferation of a variety of types and styles of exegetical works,⁵¹ including those which were based only on the author's own opinion (*tafsīr biʾl-raʾy*) and those which cited earlier traditional authorities

⁴⁸See Isaiah Goldfeld, "The Development of Theory on Qurʾānic Exegesis in Islamic Scholarship," *SI*, 67 (1988), pp. 5-6; R. Jullandri, "Qurʾānic Exegesis and Classical Tafsīr," *IQ*, 12 (1968), pp. 76-7; Andrew Rippin, "Tafsīr," *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), vol. 14, p. 237.

⁴⁹This particular debate revolves around a number of Muslim traditions alleging that the caliph ʿUmar (d. 24/644) punished some individual for interpreting a passage in the Qurʾān. The debate began when Ignaz Goldziher (*Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung* [1920; rpt. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970], pp. 55-7) isolated these reports as evidence of early Muslim opposition to the interpretation of Quranic verses of a historical or eschatological nature. Harris Birkeland (*Old Muslim Opposition against Interpretation of the Koran* [Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1955], esp. p. 42) reassessed the accounts themselves and, believing they contained a number of contradictions, concluded that early opposition to Quranic exegesis never existed. More recently, in 1967, Nabia Abbott (*SALP*, vol. II, pp. 106-13) has agreed with Goldziher that some form of opposition to exegesis had existed in the first/seventh century, but concluded that this was limited only to the interpretation of the so-called "unclear verses" (*mutashābihāt*). See also, Leah Kinberg, "*Muḥkamāt and Mutashābihāt* (Koran 3/7): Implications of a Koranic pair of terms in Medieval Exegesis," *Arabica*, 35 (1988), pp. 142-72; Rippin, "Tafsīr," pp. 237-8.

⁵⁰See, for example, Helmut Gätje, *The Qurʾān and its Exegesis: Selected Texts with Classical and Modern Interpretations*. Ed. and Tr. Alford T. Welch (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), p. 33; Jullandri, "Qurʾānic Exegesis," pp. 76-9; Rippin, "Tafsīr," p. 238; *SALP*, vol. II, pp. 106-13; W. Montgomery Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qurʾān* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), p. 168.

⁵¹For example, M. ʿAbdassattār, "*Wujūh al-Qurʾān: A Branch of Tafsīr Literature*," *Islamic Studies*, 17 (1978), p. 137, lists sixteen different kinds of exegetical sciences.

for their explanations of the Qurʾān (*tafsīr biʾl-maʾthūr*).⁵² It was the latter method which embraced and regulated earlier opinion⁵³ and eventually came to define a true work of classical *tafsīr* which saw its beginnings in the early fourth/tenth century with the compendium *tafsīr, Jāmiʿ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-qurʾān*, of al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923),⁵⁴ after which, few methodological innovations were introduced.⁵⁵ Yet, just as the fourth/tenth century marked the beginning of classical Muslim exegesis, it also marked the end of *tafsīr*'s formative period. As mentioned earlier, a number of different exegetical styles emerged during this period which John Wansbrough has divided into five logical and manageable types:⁵⁶ narrative, legal, textual, rhetorical, and allegorical. But these divisions should be seen as general demarcations of exegetical works, rather than their authors, since the literary activities of the latter can often be found, not only within a number of *tafsīr* styles, but in a variety of disciplines.⁵⁷ Only two of these five divisions, textual and especially rhetorical exegesis, require further exploration here.

The activities of textual exegesis dealt with the lexicon and grammar of the

⁵²See Goldfeld, "Development," p. 6; Jullandri, "Qurʾānic Exegesis," pp. 81-96.

⁵³See Gätje, *The Qurʾān*, p. 33; *SALP*, vol. II, p. 63.

⁵⁴Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Kubrā al-Amīriyya, 1905. See Ahmad von Denffer, *ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān: An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qurʾān* (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1983), p. 137; Gätje, *The Qurʾān*, pp. 32, 34; *QS*, p. 121; Rippin, "Tafsīr," p. 240; Watt, *Bell's Introduction*, p. 168. It should be noted, however, that the division between *tafsīr biʾl-raʾy* and *tafsīr biʾl-maʾthūr* is a less than firm one: even al-Ṭabarī can be seen to offer his own opinion within his *tafsīr* work and, one could suspect, also in the process of selecting his authorities. See Jullandri, "Qurʾānic Exegesis," p. 84, Rippin, "Tafsīr," p. 240.

⁵⁵*QS*, p. 140.

⁵⁶See *QS*, pp. 119-246. For a short summary of these divisions, see Rippin, "Tafsīr," pp. 238-40.

⁵⁷To cite two appropriate examples, Ibn Qutayba, while being known as an exegete, was also an accomplished and influential literary critic, while al-Rummānī, best known for his contributions to *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, was a grammarian by profession. To a certain extent, this multiplicity can be seen with a number of works themselves: a volume on *ʿrāb al-qurʾān*, for example, can be seen as a grammatical work because of its focus on *ʿrāb* (inflection) but also exegetical, as one type of commentary on the Qurʾān. Carried to its extreme, any work which employs Quranic citations to illustrate a point, can be seen as a kind of commentary in reverse, by virtue of the context into which the illustration is inserted.

Qurʾān as well as its variant readings.⁵⁸ Two of the earliest texts of this type are the *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*⁵⁹ of al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822) and the *Faḍāʾil al-qurʾān*⁶⁰ of Abū ʿUbayd (d. 224/838). While the early concern for clarifying Quranic grammar and vocabulary can be seen by the date such studies appeared,⁶¹ the development of both aspects influenced, and was influenced by, the third activity which dealt with the Qurʾān's variant readings. The Qurʾān first existed only as a consonantal text, which was subject to a wide range of grammatical and semantic interpretations.⁶² In time, the canonical text was established in the form of a limited number of accepted variant readings;⁶³ and defining the text, which limited the possible interpretations, is itself exegetical.⁶⁴

The importance of this development can be seen in several ways. First, of course, is that the Qurʾān, as a source for all Muslim sciences, received its explicit limits. Second, it is worth noting here, that the selection of acceptable readings was accomplished by the criteria of grammar,⁶⁵ which demanded of the exegetes the clarification or resolution of any apparent solecism (*lahn*) in the Quranic text. Although textual exegesis employed non-Quranic sources, especially pre-Islamic poetry,⁶⁶ for these

⁵⁸See QS, pp. 202-27.

⁵⁹Ed. Aḥmad Yūsūf Najātī (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1955).

⁶⁰Ms. Petermann, 449. (Wilhelm Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis der Arabischen Handschriften*. Band I [1889; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1980], No. 451).

⁶¹See Gätje, *The Qurʾān*, pp. 33-4; Goldfeld, "Development," pp.19, 27; Jullandri, "Qurʾānic Exegesis," p.76; Rudi Paret, "The Qurʾān-I," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*. Ed. A. F. L. Beeston, et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.213; Watt, *Bell's Introduction* pp. 167-8. For more details on these lexical and grammatical activities see, for example, John Burton, "Linguistic Errors in the Qurʾān," *JSS*, 33 (1988), pp. 181-96; Rippin, "Lexicographical Texts," pp. 158-74.

⁶²QS, p. 207.

⁶³This development, of course, represents the most complex part of the text's history. For somewhat differing accounts of this, see A. Jones, "The Qurʾān-II," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*. Ed. A.F. L. Beeston, et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 235-41, 244-5; QS, pp. 202-7; Alford Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," *El*², vol. V, pp. 406-9.

⁶⁴Watt, *Bell's Introduction*, p. 167.

⁶⁵See Gätje, *The Qurʾān*, p. 29; QS, p. 217; Rippin, "Tafsīr," p. 237.

⁶⁶Gätje, *The Qurʾān*, p. 2; QS, pp. 216, 218.

clarifications, no illustrations carried as much authority as those from the Qurʾān itself, which was considerably enhanced with the Qurʾān's canonicity established, not only as a source but also as a fixed literary work and the definitive document of Classical Arabic.⁶⁷ For textual exegesis, the Qurʾān's own description of its singular linguistic superiority⁶⁸ as well as its acknowledged inclusion of clear (*muḥkam*) and unclear (*mutashābih*) verses,⁶⁹ justified intra-Quranic elucidation, which could be seen as a divinely imposed activity. This type of *tafsīr* led to an elaborated method and technical vocabulary of clarification by analogy (*qiyās*)⁷⁰ which eventually led to the point where repetition within the Qurʾān was seen as an indication of its inimitability.⁷¹ It should also be noted, however, that this method of exegesis depended upon the linguistic unity and self-sufficiency of the Qurʾān.⁷²

Where textual exegesis went as far as grammatical resolutions of solecisms and lexical glosses, such as synonymns, in its interpretation of the Qurʾān, rhetorical exegesis, although sharing a concern for Quranic grammar,⁷³ focussed more specifically on the analysis of the more literary qualities of the text.⁷⁴ The Qurʾān, of course, displays many features of literary style, such as metaphor or simile, which was seen by some as a quality shared with other genres of Arabic literature, and others as an indication of its stylistic uniqueness.⁷⁵ Although explanations of Quranic style alone could be seen as a sufficient

⁶⁷Welch, "al-Qurʾān," p. 419. Further aspects of grammar and Classical Arabic will be discussed in the section on grammar below.

⁶⁸See for example, Q. 10/38, 11/13, 16/105, 17/108, 26/195, 52/33-4.

⁶⁹See Q. 3/7.

⁷⁰QS, 148, 208, 219. Other devices included, for example, *taqdīr* (restoration) and, in the early period, *majāz* (see QS, 168-9), which will be discussed below.

⁷¹Namely, *ʿilm al-wujūh waʾl-nazāʾir fīʾl-qurʾān* (the science of synonyms and [word] parallels in the Qurʾān), generally known as only *ʿilm wujūh al-qurʾān*, which ʿAbdassattār ("Wujūh al-Qurʾān," p. 141), quoting al-Suyūṭī, sees "as one of the miracles of the Qurʾān; because, as mentioned earlier, one word may convey many meanings, even up to forty". See also Kinberg, "Muḥkamāt and Mutashābihāt," p. 146.

⁷²See QS, pp. 156-7, 214-5, 226.

⁷³See al-Jamaʿy, "Al-Rummānī's 'al-Nukat'," pp. 17-8; QS, pp. 227-9.

⁷⁴See QS, pp. 227-46; Rippin, "Tafsīr," p. 239.

⁷⁵See, for example, J.J. Gluck, "Is there Poetry in the Qurʾān?" *Semitics*, 8 (1982), pp.

motive for rhetorical exegesis, its principal cause has usually been seen as a recourse by which anthropomorphic statements about God in the Qurʾān⁷⁶ could be eliminated through imagery and metaphor: thus, theological and doctrinal motives, as well as literary ones, seem to have been involved.⁷⁷ Regardless of the original motives, rhetorical exegesis developed a logical framework, in the form of a technical vocabulary, for the identification and elucidation of any Quranic expression where the meaning was not self-evident:⁷⁸ that is, expressions usually identified as tropes.

An illustration of the understanding of these Quranic phrases in early rhetorical exegesis can be provided by looking at the development of the term *majāz*, beginning with the rhetorical exegetical text, *Majāz al-qurʾān*⁷⁹ of Abū ʿUbayda (d. 209/824). Abū ʿUbayda's understanding of *majāz* has been the subject of a number of studies⁸⁰ and, thus, needs no re-examination here, particularly since they reach similar conclusions.

43-89; Paret, "Qurʾān-I," pp. 196-205; Sabbagh, *La Métaphore*; Watt, *Bell's Introduction*, pp. 69-85; Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," pp. 419-21. These views on Quranic style and its relationship to other Arabic compositions involve, of course, aspects of both *ijāz al-qurʾān* and literary criticism and theory which will both be discussed below.

⁷⁶For example, Q. 42/11.

⁷⁷Gätje, *The Qurʾān*, p. 19; Goldziher, *Die Richtungen*, pp. 110-2; QS, pp. 227-8; B. Reinert, "Madjāz," *EL*², vol. V, p. 1026.

⁷⁸See Gätje, *The Qurʾān*, p. 38; QS, p. 232; Reinert, "Madjāz," p. 1026; John Wansbrough, "A Note on Arabic Rhetoric," in *Lebende Antike: Symposium für Rudolf Sühnel*. Ed. Horst Meller and Hans-Joachim Zimmermann (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1967), p. 55. This technical vocabulary has been seen to parallel closely that used by the literary critics and theorists in their studies which included, of course, profane literature. While this may have been a result of their close inter-disciplinary association or the impact of the Qurʾān on Arabic literary theory, it has led Wansbrough (QS, pp. 232, 236-7) to conclude that rhetorical exegetes had actively sought at least one example of every rhetorical type in scripture as a demonstration of their divine origins and, thus, a feature of the inimitability of Quranic language. Both aspects will be discussed below.

⁷⁹2 vols. Ed. Fuat Sezgin (Cairo: al-Khanjī, 1954).

⁸⁰Namely, Ella Almagor, "The Early Meaning of *Majāz* and the Nature of Abū ʿUbayda's Exegesis," in *Studia Orientalia: Memoriae D.H. Baneth Dedicata* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1979), pp. 307-26; Wolfhart Heinrichs, "On the Genesis of the *Ḥaqīqa-Majāz* Dichotomy," *SI*, 59 (1984), pp. 111-40; John Wansbrough, "*Majāz al-Qurʾān*: Periphrastic Exegesis," *BSOAS*, 33 (1970), pp. 247-66; and included in Reinert, "Madjāz," pp. 1025-8.

Although the term *majāz* eventually came to denote "trope" or "figure of speech",⁸¹ Abū 'Ubayda used the term as being "semantically related to *jāza*, *yajūzu* as meaning 'to be allowable', 'to pass as right, sound, valid'; or 'to be current'."⁸² This has led researchers to conclude that Abū 'Ubayda's treatment of these Quranic passages reveals that he was primarily concerned with demonstrating that these phrases were grammatically and semantically correct and needed only clarification.⁸³ It is interesting to note, however, that while Abū 'Ubayda does not use the term *majāz* in its later sense of trope, he does display an awareness of figurative language in the Qur'ān. But he was aware of them only as rhetorical difficulties that required exegesis and employed a technical vocabulary, including *majāz*, that was sufficient for elucidation but had not yet developed to the level where it could identify Quranic tropes as such. That sophistication appears to have been reached with Ibn Qutayba, who, while still concerned with the clarification and correctness of these Quranic phrases, used *majāz* in its more sophisticated sense: that of "figure of speech".⁸⁴

What can be noted from the early *tafsīr* tradition, not surprisingly, is a preoccupation with the clarification of the Quranic text. Textual exegesis showed a concern for establishing the constituent limits of the text, accomplished with the use of grammatical criteria, and, with the text of the Qur'ān and its readings better established, intra-Quranic clarifications. Rhetorical exegesis was equally concerned with Quranic

⁸¹See, for example, Reinert, "Madjāz," pp. 1025-6.

⁸²Almagor, "Early Meaning," p. 317.

⁸³See Almagor, "Early Meaning," pp. 310, 316-7; Heinrichs, "Genesis," p. 119-32; Reinert, "Madjāz," p. 1026; Wansbrough, "Majāz," pp. 254, 265.

⁸⁴Almagor, "Early Meaning," pp. 312-3; Heinrichs, "Genesis," p. 131; QS, p. 228, Reinert, "Madjāz," p. 1026. Heinrichs (*Hand of the Northwind*, p. 54) isolates the same development from Abū 'Ubayda to Ibn Qutayba with respect to metaphor (*isti'āra*), where Abū 'Ubayda, "in dealing with the peculiar diction of the Koran . . . does not use the term *isti'āra*", which was, parallel to *majāz*, later employed and expanded by Ibn Qutayba. It may also be noted that Abū 'Ubayda's *Majāz* is a *sūra* by *sūra* commentary while Ibn Qutayba's *Ta'wīl*, which devotes chapters to specific figures, devotes one to both *majāz* and *isti'āra*.

grammar, but with an aim, based on the recognition of figurative language in the Qurʾān, towards demonstrating that this Quranic rhetoric was also grammatically and semantically correct. However, it may also be noted that for Abū ʿUbayda, writing in the early third/ninth century, these expressions were treated as correct though less obvious usages of Arabic that required explanation, but not as tropes that invited appreciation.

Iʿjāz al-qurʾān

The notion that the Qurʾān had a unique and profound effect on its first hearers could be mitigated by recalling that it was revealed only in fragments over a period of twenty-three years.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the Qurʾān itself displays an attitude of its own uniqueness by repeating a challenge (*taḥaddī*) for anyone to produce its like.⁸⁶ It seems, however, that some did not view the Qurʾān's uniqueness as self-evident, nor was the Quranic challenge seen as a mere rhetorical invitation, because the challenge to produce the Qurʾān's like was indeed taken up by some, including Jaʿd b. Dirham (d. 105/723), seen as the Qurʾān's first detractor, as well as the famous translator, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 145/762).⁸⁷ The existence of these attempts to imitate the Qurʾān could not be taken lightly since, although the Qurʾān offered the challenge confidently, there was no criteria by which any imitation could be judged except subjective denial. The need to develop some criteria by which the Quranic challenge could be defended and justified was also connected to early Islam's need to establish the unique and miraculous nature of the Qurʾān; thus establishing it as an incontrovertible authority for Muslim doctrine and

⁸⁵See *BL*, p. 97.

⁸⁶See Q. 2/23-4, 10/38, 11/13, 17/88, 52/34.

⁸⁷For further details on these imitations of the Qurʾān, see Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol. 2, pp. 363-5; Gustave E. von Grunebaum, "Iʿjāz," *EL*², vol. III, p. 1019, *Tenth-Century Document*, p. xiv, n. 7; Paret, "Qurʾān-I," pp. 212-3. For more information on the specific involvement of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, see also Ramli, "Philology," pp. 58-61.

law.⁸⁸

During Islam's first centuries a variety of different, but often compound, arguments were forwarded and debated which attempted to demonstrate exactly what constituted the uniqueness of the Qurʾān;⁸⁹ the rationality of these arguments was important, especially for Muʿtazilī theologians who could not accept any doctrine based on *bilā kayf*.⁹⁰ Such arguments included those which focussed on the Qurʾān's contents, such as information about the distant past or future and information about God and the universe; those which looked at the Qurʾān's structure and composition (*naẓm*) and its literary style; and extra-Quranic arguments that saw the uniqueness of the Qurʾān protected by God's averting successful imitation attempts, known as *ṣarfā*.⁹¹

The notion of *ṣarfā* (lit. "turning away", "prevention", "diversion") was one of the earliest arguments and appears to have been connected to the Muʿtazilī idea that the Qurʾān was not eternal. That is, that the Qurʾān, as a creation, may have been "clear Arabic" but not necessarily unique Arabic: consequently, anyone with sufficient competence in the Arabic language could, in principle, successfully imitate the Qurʾān.⁹² The concept of *ṣarfā* held that the miracle of the Qurʾān consisted, not within the Qurʾān itself, but in God's turning the competent away from the attempt to equal it.⁹³ The earliest

⁸⁸See Issa J. Boullata, "Iʿjāz," *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), vol. 7, p. 87; von Grunebaum, "Iʿd̲jāz," p. 1018; M. Khalafallah, "Two Fourth Century A.H. Approaches to the Theory of Iʿjāz," *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria*, 8 (1954), p. 16; QS, p. 77.

⁸⁹von Grunebaum, "Iʿd̲jāz," pp. 1018-9; Richard C. Martin, "The Role of the Basrah Muʿtazilah in formulating the Doctrine of the Apologetic Miracle," *JNES*, 39 (1980), p. 183; Paret, "Qurʾān-I," p. 215; QS, p. 79.

⁹⁰See M.G. Carter, "Linguistic Science and Orthodoxy in Conflict. The Case of al-Rummānī," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften*, Band 1 (1984), pp. 217, 227-8; QS, p. 82.

⁹¹See Boullata, "Iʿjāz," p. 87; *idem.*, "Rhetorical Interpretation," pp. 142, 146-7; von Grunebaum, "Iʿd̲jāz," p. 1019; *idem.*, *Tenth-Century Document*, pp. xiii-xiv; Khalafallah, "Two Fourth Century," p. 16; Ramli, "Philology," pp. 32, 50.

⁹²See Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," pp. 143-4; Martin, "Role of the Basrah," p. 181.

⁹³See Boullata, "Iʿjāz," pp. 87-8; von Grunebaum, "Iʿd̲jāz," p. 1019; Ramli, "Philology," pp. 36-7.

exponent of the *ṣarfa* argument has usually been identified as the Muʿtazilī al-Nazzām (d. 232/846),⁹⁴ while others, finding no direct evidence for this, associate it with al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), a one-time pupil of al-Nazzām, seen either as the creator of the *ṣarfa* argument or as its major advocate who indirectly ascribed it to al-Nazzām.⁹⁵ However, the actual origins of the *ṣarfa* theory may be less crucial as it proved to be generally unpopular. Although it supported the Muʿtazilī idea of the createdness of the Qurʾān, it only supplied a (*bilā kayf*) mechanism, rather than demonstrated an understandable characteristic of the Qurʾān's uniqueness. Indeed, the *ṣarfa* notion that Quranic imitation was possible, although prevented, is a contradiction of the Quranic challenge itself.⁹⁶

Yet, during the third/ninth century, the more formal aspects of the Qurʾān's *iʿjāz* were beginning to be separated, and, although the term *iʿjāz* had not yet been employed, even by al-Jāḥiẓ,⁹⁷ it could not have meant anything more than "incapacitation".⁹⁸ While the notion of *ṣarfa* was not completely dismissed, it never seriously threatened the more popular view, among those in currency, that the Qurʾān's superiority should remain more closely associated with its literary style.⁹⁹

By the fourth/tenth century, the term *iʿjāz* had developed to its full technical meaning of the miraculous inimitability of the Qurʾān,¹⁰⁰ and works which focussed specifically on this topic had emerged. The earliest systematic treatments of *iʿjāz al-*

⁹⁴See, for example, Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p. 141; von Grunebaum, "Iʿd̲jāz," p. 1018; Khalafallah, "Two Fourth Century," p. 17, n. 4.

⁹⁵The literary evidence of the *ṣarfa* argument can be traced as far back as al-Jāḥiẓ; however, whether it can be connected through him to al-Nazzām depends on a better understanding of the differing attitude of al-Jāḥiẓ toward al-Nazzām as well as establishing a relative chronology of al-Jāḥiẓ's literary works, wherein the various statements are made. For a more detailed discussion of these questions, see Ramli, "Philology," pp. 33-44, esp. pp. 37, 43.

⁹⁶See Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," pp. 143-4; Ramli, "Philology," p. 39.

⁹⁷Ramli, "Philology," p. 51.

⁹⁸Boullata, "Iʿjāz," p. 87; *idem.*, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p. 141; von Grunebaum, "Iʿd̲jāz," p. 1018.

⁹⁹See Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p. 142; von Grunebaum, "Iʿd̲jāz," p. 1019.

¹⁰⁰Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p. 141; von Grunebaum, "Iʿd̲jāz," p. 1018.

qurʿān, the *al-Nukat fī iʿjāz al-qurʿān*¹⁰¹ of al-Rummānī (d. 386/996) and the *Bayān iʿjāz al-qurʿān*¹⁰² of al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998), are both short works but ones concerned above all with the Qurʿān's literary uniqueness.¹⁰³ As von Grunebaum puts it, "[i]t was the contribution of the 10th century to insist on the formal or rhetorical uniqueness of the Koran to such an extent that it became part and parcel of the theological argument for the Book's supernatural character."¹⁰⁴ The increasing attention paid to the literary aspects of the Qurʿān and its employment in demonstrating the Qurʿān's *iʿjāz* shared its interest in Quranic style with Arabic literary theory, which included many Quranic elements in its studies,¹⁰⁵ although each discipline approached the text with a somewhat different purpose. Yet, even within the *iʿjāz al-qurʿān* genre, each author, including al-Rummānī and al-Khaṭṭābī, approached the literary style of the Qurʿān, and other matters involving its *iʿjāz*, in a different way.

Al-Khaṭṭābī, a Shāfiʿī scholar, offered the first formal criticism of the *ṣarfa* argument, rejecting it because of its contradictory implication that the Qurʿān could, in theory, be imitated,¹⁰⁶ and also rejected the assertion that Quranic *iʿjāz* could be seen in its ability to foretell future events, because that feature is not common to every Quranic verse.¹⁰⁷ He does, however, accept the rhetorical uniqueness of the Qurʿān as a part of its

¹⁰¹In *Thalāth rasāʾil fī iʿjāz al-qurʿān*. Ed. M. Zaghāl Salām and M. Khalaf Allāh (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1956), pp. 73-113.

¹⁰²In *Thalāth rasāʾil fī iʿjāz al-qurʿān*. Ed. M. Zaghāl Salām and M. Khalaf Allāh (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1956), pp. 19-71.

¹⁰³von Grunebaum, "Iʿjāz," p. 1020. Von Grunebaum (*ibid.*) also mentions an earlier work which contained the term *iʿjāz* in its title, by one Muḥammad b. Yazīd (or Zayd) al-Wāsiṭī (d. 306/918), but which is no longer extant.

¹⁰⁴*Tenth-Century Document*, p. xvii. See also, al-Jemaey, "Al-Rummānī's 'al-Nukat'," p. 21.

¹⁰⁵The association of Arabic literary theory and criticism with the Qurʿān and Quranic sciences will be discussed below.

¹⁰⁶See Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," pp. 143-4; Khalafallah, "Two Fourth Century," p. 13; Ramli, "Philology," p. 256.

¹⁰⁷The flaw which al-Khaṭṭābī isolated was that the challenge contained in Q. 2/23, for example, is to produce only a single *sūra*, without, of course, any specification of its contents; thus, this argument could maintain only a partial *iʿjāz* of the Qurʿān, or, of course, full *iʿjāz* for only part of the Qurʿān. See Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p.

i'jāz. For al-Khaṭṭābī, all speech consists, in varying degrees, of words (*alfāz*) which convey meaning; ideas (*ma'ānī*) which exist in words; and structure (*naẓm*) which arranges both. The uniqueness of the Qur'ān and the reason it cannot be imitated, according to al-Khaṭṭābī, is that the Qur'ān alone, "has the most eloquent wording, conveying the best ideas, presented in the most beautiful structure":¹⁰⁸ representing the humanly unattainable apex of all three.¹⁰⁹

Although al-Khaṭṭābī devotes most of this work on *i'jāz al-qur'ān* to an investigation of Quranic eloquence (*balāgha*), provides examples from the Qur'ān, and specifies those ideas about *i'jāz* that he wishes to refute, his approach to the stylistic uniqueness of the Qur'ān remains loose and could best be described as a psychological rather than a literary one: he does not demonstrate the literary components that reveal the Qur'ān's stylistic inimitability but asserts that the Qur'ān's rhetorical sweetness, beauty and elegance of expression affects its hearer's spirit in a unique way.¹¹⁰

Al-Rummānī, a Mu'tazilī author, approached the topic of *i'jāz al-qur'ān* in a way quite different from that of al-Khaṭṭābī. In fact, al-Khaṭṭābī may have written his *i'jāz* treatise in order to refute a number of the former's ideas.¹¹¹ According to al-Rummānī, the miraculousness of the Qur'ān can be seen in seven different ways or aspects (*nukat*): abandoning the imitation of the Qur'ān in spite of abundant need and forceful motives, its challenge to everyone, God's deflecting human attempts at imitation, its eloquence, its

144; Ramli, "Philology," p. 256.

¹⁰⁸Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p. 144.

¹⁰⁹See *Bayān*, pp. 24-9. See also, Khalafallah, "Two Fourth Century," pp. 14, 16; Ramli, "Philology," p. 255. The concept of *naẓm* would receive a fuller treatment by al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), in his comparison of Quranic *sūras* and Arabic poetry, and in the fifth/eleventh century, by al-Jurjānī (d. 470/1078) in his approach to *i'jāz al-qur'ān* and Arabic literary theory. See Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p. 146; Khalafallah, "Two Fourth Century," p. 18, n. 10.

¹¹⁰See Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p. 144; von Grunebaum, *Tenth-Century Document*, p. xvii; Khalafallah, "Two Fourth Century," pp. 13-5; Ramli, "Philology," pp. 277, 509.

¹¹¹See al-Jemaey, "Al-Rummānī's 'al-Nukat'," p. 92.

truthful information about future events, its breach of literary custom, and its analogy to other miracles.¹¹² It may be noted here that al-Rummānī, unlike al-Khaṭṭābī, accepts both the notion of *ṣarfā* and the Qurʾān's prophecies as constituents of its *iʿjāz*. Of these seven aspects of Quranic *iʿjāz*, al-Rummānī devotes most of his work to only one, the Qurʾān's eloquence (*balāgha*), which he divides into ten specific figures, providing each with a definition and Quranic examples which show each in its highest literary form:¹¹³ concision (*ʿijāz*), simile (*tashbīh*), metaphor (*istiʿāra*), concord (*talāʾum*), assonance (*fawāṣil*), paranomasia (*tajānus*), variation (*taṣrīf*), implication (*taḍmīn*), hyperbole (*mubālagha*), and clarity (*bayān*).

It was al-Rummānī, and especially his understanding of the Qurʾān's style, that advanced the arguments in support of the miraculous inimitability of the Qurʾān from a variety of assertions, including al-Khaṭṭābī's views about Quranic style, to the inclusion of a demonstrable proof of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*: the Qurʾān's *balāgha*, which, for al-Rummānī, consists of a number of identified figures of speech. It is this development that von Grunebaum speaks of when he notes "the contribution of the 10th century to insist on the formal or rhetorical uniqueness of the Koran to such an extent that it became part and parcel of the theological argument for the Book's supernatural character."¹¹⁴ Al-Rummānī's contribution had an important and wide influence; his work served as a model for later writers on *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* as well as later works of Arabic literary theory and criticism.¹¹⁵ Although al-Rummānī obviously felt it still necessary to provide and argue for proofs of the Qurʾān's inimitability, the proof which he provided contributed largely to the mature formulation of that doctrine;¹¹⁶ and, while al-Rummānī's work did not end the

¹¹²*al-Nukat*, pp. 75, 109-13. See also, Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p. 143; al-Jemaey, "Al-Rummānī's 'al-Nukat'," pp. 103-4.

¹¹³See *al-Nukat*, pp. 76-109. See also, al-Jemaey, "Al-Rummānī's 'al-Nukat'," pp. 92-3; Khalafallah, "Two Fourth Century," p. 16.

¹¹⁴*Tenth-Century Document*, p. xvii.

¹¹⁵al-Jemaey, "Al-Rummānī's 'al-Nukat'," p. 94; Khalafallah, "Two Fourth Century," p. 18; Martin, "Role of the Basrah," pp. 187-8.

¹¹⁶See Carter, "Linguistic Science," p. 217; von Grunebaum, "Iʿdjāz," p. 1018; al-

debate about the nature of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, later works reveal few significant deviations.¹¹⁷

Among the later works, for example, is the *Iʿjāz al-qurʾān*¹¹⁸ of al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), where a broader and less precise understanding of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* is offered,¹¹⁹ perhaps because it expresses the views of a non-specialist rather than a specialist.¹²⁰ Although al-Bāqillānī accepts the rhetorical uniqueness of the Qurʾān and endeavors to demonstrate its rhetorical superiority over all other forms of Arabic literature,¹²¹ he sees the rhetorical inimitability of the Qurʾān as an enhancement of its *iʿjāz* rather than a necessary argument for it.¹²² His overall approach to *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* shows an uneasiness toward putting any aspect of it on an empirical basis, holding that such properties can be acquired, while the elements of the Qurʾān's inimitability cannot.¹²³ It should be noted, however, that although al-Rummānī's views of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* depend largely, but not exclusively, on an empirical demonstration of the Qurʾān's stylistic inimitability, he too included six other, non-empirical, arguments. However, al-Bāqillānī does offer a full exploration of Quranic style and when he mentions that some experts hold that eloquence is of ten types, it is al-Rummānī's divisions that he lists.¹²⁴

Another non-specialist and a contemporary of al-Bāqillānī, the Muʿtazilī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025), contrasted the views of al-Bāqillānī and continued the trend of al-Rummānī by insisting on the stylistic superiority of the Qurʾān as a fundamental part of

Jemaey, "Al-Rummānī's 'al-Nukat'," p. 21; Paret, "Qurʾān-I," p. 205; QS, p. 80.

¹¹⁷von Grunebaum, "Iʿdjāz," p. 1018.

¹¹⁸Ed. ʿImād al-Dīn Aḥmad Ḥaydar (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiya, 1986).

¹¹⁹See von Grunebaum, *Tenth-Century Document*, pp. xx, xxi; QS, p. 232; Ramli, "Philology," p. 510.

¹²⁰See von Grunebaum, *Tenth-Century Document*, p. xx; Ramli, "Philology," p. 280.

¹²¹Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p. 145; von Grunebaum, *Tenth-Century Document*, p. xx.

¹²²Boullata, "Iʿjāz," p. 88, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p. 145; von Grunebaum, "Iʿdjāz," p. 1019.

¹²³See Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p. 145; Ramli, "Philology," p. 371.

¹²⁴See *Iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, p. 268. The direct influence of al-Rummānī, here, is obvious, although al-Bāqillānī does not acknowledge him by name. See al-Jemaey, "Al-Rummānī's 'al-Nukat'," p. 94; Ramli, "Philology," p. 360.

its *iʿjāz*. For ʿAbd al-Jabbār, the contents of the Qurʾān remain important but it is the Qurʾān's eloquence (*faṣāḥa*) that elevates that meaning to its highest, inimitable level.¹²⁵ Still later, another Muʿtazilī, al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), in his *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl*,¹²⁶ gave the rhetorical element of Quranic *iʿjāz* its fullest systematization and application in rhetorical exegesis.¹²⁷

What can be noted about early Muslim views on *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, then, was an initial sense of respect for the literary revelation of Muḥammad which eventually led, especially during the third/ninth century, to a variety of assertions that attempted to establish the exact nature of the Qurʾān's inimitability in both content and form. In the fourth/tenth century, however, al-Rummānī, while accepting a number of previous assertions, focussed primarily on the form of the Qurʾān and presented an important demonstration of the Qurʾān's stylistic eloquence as a major part of its *iʿjāz*. Although later writers presented different views about the nature and components of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, which was never resolved, the stylistic or rhetorical character of the Qurʾān remained a principal feature of subsequent discussions about its miraculous inimitability.¹²⁸

Literary Criticism and Theory

There is no reason to doubt that the Qurʾān entered a society that already possessed both a literary tradition and an associated tradition of serious reflections upon it.¹²⁹ Even during the earliest period of Islam, the highest form of this literature, pre-

¹²⁵See Boullata, "Iʿjāz," p. 88, "Rhetorical Interpretation," pp. 145-6; Ramli, "Philology," pp. 280-1, 460-505.

¹²⁶Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1947.

¹²⁷See Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," pp. 146-7; Gätje, *The Qurʾān*, pp. 35-6; Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Literary Theory: The Problem of its Efficiency," in *Arabic Poetry: Theory and Development*. Ed. G.E. von Grunebaum (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973), pp. 30-1.

¹²⁸See Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," pp. 147-54; Gätje, *The Qurʾān*, pp. 42-3; von Grunebaum, "Iʿjāz," pp. 1019-20; QS, p. 79.

¹²⁹The only related issue in this regard would be the question of the actual authenticity

Islamic poetry, was viewed as both the historical archive of the Arabs and the consummate example of Arabic literature.¹³⁰

But the origins of Arabic literary theory (*ʿilm al-balāgha*)¹³¹ and its application in literary criticism, as actual disciplines, did not develop organically from the existence of pre-Islamic literature but from the rise of Islam.¹³² The view that the Qurʾān was both seen as, and acknowledged itself to be,¹³³ a document of Arabic literature certainly played a crucial role in the development of Arabic literary sciences and, indeed, led to a sacred interest in all matters of Arabic language and literature.¹³⁴ Yet, the arrival of the Qurʾān did not solicit a direct and immediate formal appreciation of its literary qualities simply because the Arabic literary sciences had not yet developed. Arabic literary theory and criticism, in fact, did not reach a mature stage of development until about the fourth/tenth century with the compilation and systemization of earlier material.¹³⁵ The

of pre-Islamic poetry, traditionally seen as being pre-Islamic but, as far as can be determined, was recorded only as early as the third/ninth century. Thus, the authenticity of that literature has been called into serious question and characterized as a complete fabrication by both Ṭahā Ḥusayn (*Fī al-shiʿr al-jāhili* [Cairo: Maṭbaʿa Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1926]) and D.S. Margoliouth ("The Origins of Arabic Poetry," *JRAS*, 1925, pp. 417-49). It should be noted, however, that these criticisms focus on the authenticity of the poetry recorded and not on the existence of Arabic poetry before the rise of Islam. For a short discussion of this issue, see J.T. Monroe, "Oral Composition and Pre-Islamic Poetry," *JAL*, 3 (1972), pp. 1-53, esp. pp. 1-7, 43.

¹³⁰See *BL*, p. 1; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 20-6; *SALP*, vol. III, p. 123. Although a variety of other literary forms existed, such as love songs, dirges, histories, wisdom literature, genealogies, tales, proverbs and legends, it was only the highest and most sophisticated form of Arabic literature, poetry, which received almost exclusive attention.

¹³¹See G.E. von Grunebaum, "Balāgha," *EP*², vol. II, pp. 981-3; M. Khalafallah, "Badīʿ," *EP*², vol. I, pp. 857-8; B. Reinert, "al-Maʿānī waʾl-Bayān," *EP*², vol. V, pp. 898-902.

¹³²*BL*, p. 165; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 9, 20; Khalafallah, "Arabic Literature," pp. 1031-2.

¹³³See, for example, Q. 16/103, 26/105.

¹³⁴See *BL*, p. 5; Bonebakker, "Aspects," p. 83; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 17, 39; G.E. von Grunebaum, "Arabic Literary Criticism in the 10th Century A.D.," *JAOS*, 61 (1941), p. 51; Khalafallah, "Arabic Literature," p. 1031.

¹³⁵*BL*, p. 1; Bonebakker, "Aspects," p. 84; von Grunebaum, "Arabic Literary," p. 51; Heinrichs, "Literary Theory," p. 30. Van Gelder (*BL*, p. 2) does mention the existence of a few earlier works devoted to literary criticism, not theory, such as the *Fuḥūlat al-shuʿarāʾ* of al-Aṣmaʿī (d. ca. 216/831), which are very seminal, containing only "brief and

relatively late emergence of Arabic literary theory, in comparison with other Islamic disciplines, was a result, not simply of its close association with other disciplines, but rather because it was a direct outcome of other sciences.¹³⁶ These other disciplines, including grammar, exegesis, and *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, are, on the one hand, equally difficult to isolate as independent sciences in the early centuries of Islam,¹³⁷ but, on the other hand, displayed a primary concern, not with Arabic language and literature generally, but with the Qurʾān specifically.

It was these disciplines, concerned with the Qurʾān, that were the first to study Arabic poetry, but not in the sense of poetics, studying the literature for its own sake, but as philology, which sought a traditional authority in linguistic matters and found it, of course, in pre-Islamic poetry.¹³⁸ The initial work of these various disciplines on Arabic poetry would affect the nature and style of Arabic literary theory and criticism when they emerged as distinct sciences. Although such developments cannot be explored here, they include the remaining divergent approach to both theoretical and critical issues within poetics, reflecting their diverse origins:¹³⁹ the Qurʾān would not merely be included in their studies of Arabic literature but would remain the initial source in the formation and definition of linguistic concepts,¹⁴⁰ and the focus within poetics, not on the poem as a

rather arbitrary judgements on early poets."

¹³⁶See *BL*, p. 5; Bonebakker, "Aspects," pp. 82-3; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 1; von Grunebaum, "Arabic Literary," pp. 51-2; Heinrichs, "Literary Theory," pp. 30-2; M. Khalafallah, "Qurʾānic Studies as an Important Factor in the Development of Arabic Literary Criticism," *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria*, 6 (1952), pp. 2-4; *SALP*, vol. III, pp. 145, 153-5.

¹³⁷See above, n. 57.

¹³⁸See *BL*, pp. 2, 165; Bonebakker, "Aspects," pp. 82-4; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 19; *QS*, pp. 97, 149, 216-7; Reinert, *Madjāz*, p. 1026; el-Tayib, "Pre-Islamic Poetry," p. 33. This development also further explains the late date of recording pre-Islamic poetry and, because of the varied interests and viewpoints of the scholars concerned, the possibility of fabrications in the compilation process. See above, n. 128.

¹³⁹Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 17; Heinrichs, "Literary Theory," p. 30.

¹⁴⁰*BL*, p. 5; S.A. Bonebakker, "Poets and Critics in the Third Century A.H.," in *Logic in Classical Islamic Culture*. Ed. G.E. von Grunebaum (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1970), p. 100; Khalafallah, "Qurʾānic Studies," p. 2; Lothar Kopf, "Religious Influences on Medieval Arabic Philology," *SI*, 5 (1956), pp. 34-6. Indeed, Kopf (*ibid.*) mentions a

whole but, similar to the needs of philology, on the single line as a distinct unit of meaning.¹⁴¹ Until the fourth/tenth century, poetry served primarily the philological needs of the Qurʾān scholars: "[a]esthetic criticism was a mere byproduct of their activity."¹⁴²

The early examination and use of poetry in works of grammar and textual exegesis, where the emphasis was on constructing grammatical rules, preserving the text of the Qurʾān from corruptions, and establishing the text's proper or acceptable readings, can easily be seen in their *passim* use of a single or a few lines of poetry to illustrate and justify any specific point,¹⁴³ where a poetic commentary in reverse can be detected. This particular source and method was also employed in rhetorical exegesis to illustrate the correctness of particular linguistic usages in the Qurʾān,¹⁴⁴ and, in addition to later works of Arabic literary theory and criticism which obviously included this literature in their studies,¹⁴⁵ poetry was employed by those who wished to demonstrate the literary inimitability of the Qurʾān.¹⁴⁶

Of particular interest here, however, is not merely the employment of poetry in

number of stories about some early philologists who were careful to avoid relating their studies on the Qurʾān in any way to poetry and others who viewed any study of profane literature as a sin to be expiated.

¹⁴¹BL, pp. 14-6; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 51-4; van Gelder, "Brevity," pp. 78-88, esp. p. 79; Heinrichs, "Literary Theory," pp. 35-6.

¹⁴²Bonebakker, "Aspects," p. 83. See also Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 17. Another question involving the traditional authority of pre-Islamic poetry and its ability to display the various literary figures, and a further, more internal impetus behind the construction of an Arabic literary theory, was the *badīʿ* challenge or challenge of the "new style." It became a controversy with the poet Abū Tammām (d. 231/846) who used the "new" figures profusely. But Ibn al-Muʿtazz (d. 296/908) in his *Kitāb al-badīʿ* (Ed. Ignatius Kratchkovsky [London: Luzac and Co., 1935]) demonstrated, by citing numerous examples from the Qurʾān and pre-Islamic poetry, that the apparently new figures were in fact pre-Islamic in origin and known to poets and critics but, notably, not to philologists. See Khalafallah, "Badīʿ," pp. 857-8.

¹⁴³See, for example, Sibawayh, *Kitāb*; al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*; Abū ʿUbayd, *Faḍāʾil al-qurʾān*.

¹⁴⁴See, for example, Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-qurʾān*.

¹⁴⁵See, for example, al-ʿAskarī, *Kitāb al-ṣināʿatayn*; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shiʿr waʾl-shuʿarāʾ wa qīl ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*. Ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1904).

¹⁴⁶See, for example, al-Rummānī, *al-Nukat*; al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz al-qurʾān*; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*.

works of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* but that the demonstration of the Qurʾān's inimitability in terms of its eloquence (*balāgha*) was one of the formative elements of later Arabic literary theory.¹⁴⁷ However, because the arguments for the inimitability of the Qurʾān, including those that emphasized its eloquence as a proof of its *iʿjāz*, antedated the independent development of Arabic literary theory, an understanding of Arabic, and particularly poetic, eloquence that was completely external to *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* arguments did not exist and, thus, is not applicable to an understanding of the origins of the stylistic inimitability argument. What did exist, and is therefore applicable however, were the general, although formative,¹⁴⁸ conceptions of eloquence as understood by earlier writers, including those that applied it toward a demonstration of the Qurʾān's stylistic inimitability. Some of these views of eloquence, of course, were integral parts of the demonstration of the Qurʾān's stylistic *iʿjāz*, but many of them also contributed to the resulting nature of later Arabic literary theory, and thus, helped to define the comparative literary characteristics of both Arabic poetry and the Qurʾān.

Al-Jāhiz, for example, who offered one of the earliest arguments in favour of the inimitability of the Qurʾān in the early third/ninth century, was himself a prose writer, collector and literary critic.¹⁴⁹ Among his numerous works is the *al-Ḥayawān*, a well known anthology of stories based on animal topics, which contains some of al-Jāhiz's views on Arabic literature.¹⁵⁰ More important though, is his *al-Bayān waʾl-tabyīn* where

¹⁴⁷See *BL*, pp. 5, 97-100, 160-1; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 12-9; von Grunebaum, "Arabic Literary," p. 51, "Balāgha," p. 981; Heinrichs, "Literary Theory," pp. 30-2; Khalafallah, "Arabic Literature," pp. 1031-2.

¹⁴⁸It is not possible to determine any precise understanding of eloquence in the early centuries of Islam since early Muslim writers did not clearly differentiate linguistic from literary concepts and the technical terms involved, such as *balāgha* (eloquence) and *naḥw* (grammar), of course, possessed their own developmental history. This issue will be discussed in the section on grammar, below. For further information, see R. Baalbaki, "The Relation between *Naḥw* and *Balāgha*: A Comparative Study of the Methods of Sibawayhī [*sic.*] and Jurjānī," *ZAL*, 11 (1983), pp. 7-23, esp. pp. 7-9; *BL*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁹See *BL*, p. 38; Ch. Pellat, "al-Djāhiz," *EP*², vol. II, p. 385.

¹⁵⁰*BL*, pp. 38, 41; Pellat, "al-Djāhiz," p. 386.

al-Jāḥiẓ initiates a more formal discussion of the various ways of expressing things and, thus, presented the first work of Arabic stylistics.¹⁵¹ Because of the pioneering character of al-Jāḥiẓ's efforts, it is not surprising to see his views of Arabic style, in comparison with later works, as rather vague and imprecise. Generally, he sees *balāgha* as the aim of rhetoric which is simply the avoidance of clumsy and grammatically incorrect speech, and defines *bayān* as anything that reveals the sense and brings out the inner meaning in a way that facilitates understanding.¹⁵² He mentions that more attention should be paid to literary form (*lafẓ*) than to content (*ma'nā*), because the latter is common knowledge while the former reveals a work's literary eloquence,¹⁵³ and he equates the structure of the Qur'ān with that of poetry, having each verse (*āya*) in a chapter (*sūra*) of the collected Qur'ān correspond to a line (*bayt*) of a poem (*qaṣīda*) in a collected *dīwān*.¹⁵⁴ Many of these views, however, are based only on general impressions of Arabic literature rather than specific, identifiable features. Although he compared the relative merits of pre-Islamic and modern poetry, his concept of *badī'* is general,¹⁵⁵ and in none of his works does he define, for example, the common rhetorical term for metaphor (*isti'āra*).¹⁵⁶ It is also interesting to note that, although he did not employ the term *i'jāz* in relation to the Qur'ān, he did speak of the *mu'jiz* of the metre as something destroyed in translating the wisdom of the Arabs (*ḥikmat al-ʿarab*) to another tongue.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹See Yusuf Abū al-ʿAddus, "Rhetorical Criticism in al-Jāḥiẓ's *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn* and *al-Ḥayawān*," *IC*, 61 (1987), p. 59; *BL*, pp. 38-40; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 15; von Grunebaum, "Balāgha," p. 982; Kanazi, *Studies*, p. 38.

¹⁵²See Abū al-ʿAddus, "Rhetorical Criticism," pp. 60-3, 65.

¹⁵³Kanazi, *Studies*, p. 39; Martin, "Role of the Basrah," pp. 180-1. Al-Jāḥiẓ may also have looked at the concept of *nazm*, but his views on this are not extant. See, for example, Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," p. 146.

¹⁵⁴See *BL*, p. 39.

¹⁵⁵See Bonebakker, "Poets and Critics," p. 82; Khalafallah, "Badī'," p. 857.

¹⁵⁶See Heinrichs, *Hand of the Northwind*, p. 26; but compare von Grunebaum, *Tenth-Century Document*, p. xvi and Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Isti'ārah and Badī' and their Terminological Relationship in early Arabic Literary Criticism," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch - Islamischen Wissenschaften*, 1 (1984), p. 195.

¹⁵⁷von Grunebaum, *Tenth-Century Document*, pp. xvi-xvii.

The major criticism of al-Jāḥiẓ's views is that they are contained in a disordered and random mass of digressions.¹⁵⁸ But this seems to have been a deliberate attempt to offer his views in a lively and entertaining text rather than in a dry treatise. Nevertheless, although al-Jāḥiẓ's views about Arabic literature do not amount to a systematic theory, they do represent an accurate reflection of the prevalent, but rather unsophisticated, views of his time.¹⁵⁹

By the latter part of the third/ninth century, however, the science of Arabic literary theory had developed substantially toward its maturity. Of the three eventual subdivisions of the science of eloquence (*ʿilm al-balāgha*),¹⁶⁰ the poet and critic, Ibn al-Muʿtazz (d. 296/908), in his *Kitāb al-badīʿ*, contributed largely to the systematic treatment of figures of speech or embellishments (*ʿilm al-badīʿ*) and examined some of the formal characteristics of literary expression by dividing literary figures into eighteen specific categories, including, for example, metaphor (*istiʿāra*) and paranomasia (*tajnīs*).¹⁶¹ The underlying motive for this systematization of poetry, in which he used numerous Quranic illustrations, mentioned above,¹⁶² was an explanation of the relative literary characteristics of pre-Islamic and modern poetry; Ibn al-Muʿtazz attempted to demonstrate that the so-called modern figures were, in fact, a stylistic continuation of pre-Islamic poetry. It should be noted, however, that his demonstration involved a number of specific and identifiable figures of speech.

¹⁵⁸See, for example, *BL*, pp. 38-9; Pellat, "al-Djāḥiẓ," p. 387; Ramli, "Philology," pp. 41-2.

¹⁵⁹Abū al-ʿAddus, "Rhetorical Criticism," p. 59; *BL*, pp. 5, 41; Khalafallah, "Arabic Literature," p. 1034.

¹⁶⁰Namely, the rather confusing and overlapping sciences of meaning (*ʿilm al-maʿānī*), expression (*ʿilm al-bayān*), and figures (*ʿilm al-badīʿ*). See von Grunebaum, "Balāgha," pp. 981-3; Khalafallah, "Badīʿ," pp. 857-8; Reinert, "al-Maʿānī waʾl-Bayān," pp. 898-902.

¹⁶¹See von Grunebaum, "Balāgha," p. 981; Heinrichs, "Istiʿārah and Badīʿ," pp. 189-209; Khalafallah, "Badīʿ," p. 857. See also S.A. Bonebakker, "Reflections on the *Kitāb al-Badīʿ* of Ibn al-Muʿtazz," in *Atti del Terzo Congresso di Studi Arabi e Islamici* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1967), pp. 191-209.

¹⁶²See above, n. 141.

Also during the late third/ninth century, Ibn Qutayba, in his *al-Shi'r wa'l-shu'arā'*, responded to the same question of relative poetic merit by urging readers of poetry to form independent judgements of the poem concerned, without asking if it was pre-Islamic or modern.¹⁶³ For Ibn Qutayba, the eloquence of a poem resided in the balance between its form (*lafz*) and its content (*ma'nā*), which he divided into four graded relationships.¹⁶⁴ However, although Ibn Qutayba, in his *Ta'wīl mushkil al-qur'ān*, demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of rhetorical figures,¹⁶⁵ he does not apply it directly toward a theory of Arabic literature; his *al-Shi'r wa'l-shu'arā'* offers an anthology of Arabic poetry without much theoretical content on poetic style and eloquence.¹⁶⁶ Yet he does make the assertion that the eloquence of profane Arabic literature not only demonstrated the superiority of Arabic above all other languages,¹⁶⁷ but must be understood in order to recognize the eloquence of the Qur'ān.¹⁶⁸ Because of this acknowledged primary interest in Quranic eloquence, Ibn Qutayba did not focus on poetic eloquence in a literary way, studying it for its own value, but in a more impersonal and philological way, as a tool for an understanding of Quranic rather than poetic eloquence.¹⁶⁹

Following Ibn Qutayba, in the fourth/tenth century, views about eloquence, whether Quranic or poetic, do not become completely separate, of course, but general

¹⁶³See Bonebakker, "Poets and Critics," pp. 85-7; Khalafallah, "Arabic Literature," p. 1034.

¹⁶⁴Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 47; Kanazi, *Studies*, p. 41.

¹⁶⁵See von Grunebaum, "Balāgha," pp. 981-2; and above, pp. 6, 18.

¹⁶⁶See BL, p. 45; Lecomte, "Ibn Qutayba," p. 846.

¹⁶⁷Almagor, "Early Meaning," pp. 312-3; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 16; Heinrichs, *Hand of the Northwind*, p. 31. This aspect of the Arabic language had further ramifications in addition to the linguistic sphere, during the third/ninth century, especially for the movement known as the Shu'ūbiyya who felt that Arabic language, literature, and culture should not have any particular primacy in Islam. See Dionisius Agius, "The Shu'ūbiyya [sic.] Movement and its Literary Manifestations," *IQ*, 24 (1980), pp. 76-88. A discussion of the early attitudes toward the Arabic language (*al-ʿarabiyya*) will follow in the section on grammar, below.

¹⁶⁸See, for example, Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 16; QS, pp. 231-2.

¹⁶⁹See BL, p. 46; Bonebakker, "Poets and Critics," p. 86; Lecomte, *Ibn Qutayba*, pp. 417-8.

Arabic literary theory, as an independent science, does reach a greater degree of maturity. It is not surprising, however, to see that the views on eloquence that showed a preference for understanding the literary style of the Qurʾān, like Ibn Qutayba's, developed and expanded into a separate genre of works that focussed specifically on the Qurʾān's literary style in support of its inimitability. Nor is it surprising to see, at the same time, an increased and specific interest in profane Arabic literature that was, and continued to be, such an important philological tool in the understanding of Quranic eloquence and, thus, a literature that deserved appreciation in its own right.

The understanding of the Qurʾān's eloquence by the fourth/tenth century writers, al-Rummānī and al-Khaṭṭābī, has been noted above.¹⁷⁰ Al-Rummānī's technical demonstration of the constituent elements of Quranic eloquence, in his *al-Nukat fī iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, served as an important and influential model for later writers in this, and related fields;¹⁷¹ while al-Khaṭṭābī's views about the overall psychological effect of the Qurʾān's style as a demonstration of its inimitable eloquence, in his *al-Bayān iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, was preserved in Arabic literary theory in al-Jurjānī's *Asrār al-balāgha*, where the psychological roots of the aesthetic effect was given its most systematic treatment.¹⁷²

In the particular field of poetics, Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī (d. 395/1005), a contemporary of al-Rummānī and al-Khaṭṭābī, offered in his *Kitāb al-ṣināʿatayn*, the first systematic treatment of Arabic rhetoric and, with the synthesis of a number of earlier concepts and methods, established an approach to the analysis of poetic eloquence.¹⁷³ Al-ʿAskarī's synthesis assumed a number of technical terms and definitions, Quranic and profane literary examples, and even the theories of earlier writers; mainly from al-Jāḥiẓ,

¹⁷⁰See above, pp. 22-4.

¹⁷¹See *BL*, pp. 96-7, 106-7; Heinrichs, "Literary Theory," pp. 30-1; al-Jemaey, "Al-Rummānī's 'al-Nukat'," pp. 95-7; Kanazi, *Studies*, p. 56; Khalafallah, "Two Fourth Century," p. 18.

¹⁷²See von Grunebaum, "Balāgha," p. 982.

¹⁷³Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 125; Khalafallah, "Arabic Literature," p. 1036.

Ibn Qutayba, Ibn al-Muʿtazz and al-Rummānī.¹⁷⁴ With al-ʿAskarī, *balāgha* had become the science of rhetoric,¹⁷⁵ the individual line of a poem was a more important unit than the poem as a whole,¹⁷⁶ and form (*lafẓ*) was more important than content (*maʿnā*) in terms of poetic eloquence.¹⁷⁷ However, even though al-ʿAskarī initiated the systematic study and analysis of profane Arabic literature and the nature of its own eloquence, it should be noted that of the four stated reasons for understanding poetic *balāgha*, and thus writing the *Kitāb al-ṣināʿatayn*, the first reason given by al-ʿAskarī was that it was required in order to understand the inimitability (*iʿjāz*) of the Qurʾān.¹⁷⁸

After al-ʿAskarī, Arabic literary theory and criticism developed further in technical sophistication and systematization with such theorists as Qudāma b. Jaʿfar (d. 337/968), al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078), al-Sakkākī (d. 626/1229), and al-Qazwīnī (d. 739/1338), to mention only a few.¹⁷⁹ Yet, while many of these later developments are important for the history of Arabic literary theory and criticism, from al-ʿAskarī's acknowledgement that the understanding of general Arabic eloquence is important for the understanding of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, it is clear that by that time the demonstration of the Qurʾān's miraculous inimitability in terms of its eloquence had become a Muslim dogma.

Because of this particular development, however, one aspect of later Arabic literary theory requires some attention. Because Quranic studies and the initial arguments for its stylistic *iʿjāz* preceded the systematization of Arabic literary theory, literary theory inherited the same terms and methods of Quranic studies, which "may help us to understand why the doctrine of tropes and figures was the earliest aspect of *balāgha* to

¹⁷⁴See Kanazi, *Studies*, pp. 37-66. See also, *BL*, pp. 90, 96; Bonebakker, "*Istiʿārah and Badīʿ*," p. 249; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 14; von Grunebaum, *Tenth-Century Document*, p. xix; Khalafallah, "Arabic Literature," p. 1036.

¹⁷⁵See Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 126-7.

¹⁷⁶See *BL*, p. 90.

¹⁷⁷See Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 127-9.

¹⁷⁸See, for example, *BL*, p. 6; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 125-6; Kanazi, *Studies*, p. 36.

¹⁷⁹For short descriptions of these developments, see von Grunebaum, "*Balāgha*," pp. 981-3; Khalafallah, "*Badīʿ*," pp. 857-8; Reinert, "*al-Maʿānī wa'l-Bayān*," pp. 898-902.

attract systematic investigation."¹⁸⁰ But while the use of poetry to illustrate particular figures of speech in the Qurʾān proved helpful in the demonstration of its stylistic inimitability, the same degree of eloquence demonstrated in the Qurʾān with a poetic example extended equally to the unit of poetry adduced to illustrate it. Yet, despite the Qurʾān's strong assertions that it is not poetry,¹⁸¹ much of it is poetic and some of it even formally so,¹⁸² and the technical use of poetic examples to demonstrate the Qurʾān's stylistic inimitability connected the eloquence of the Qurʾān and poetry in a very precise way. The use of poetic examples to illustrate the Qurʾān's stylistic inimitability appeared to equate the two as stylistically similar: notwithstanding the difference of genre, every poetic example used to illustrate any Quranic figure made the two passages that shared the figure at least stylistically and technically alike.¹⁸³ With the doctrine of the stylistic *ʿijāz al-qurʾān* in place, demonstrated with poetic examples, the solution to this problem rested with Arabic literary theory and its characterization of poetry. Because parallels existed between Quranic and poetic form, it is not surprising to see that the solution focussed on content; and, with the fundamental belief in the truthful content of the Qurʾān, poetry was differentiated as being rhetorically eloquent, but truthfully insincere.¹⁸⁴ It is interesting to note, from this, that the demonstration of the Qurʾān's inimitability in terms of its literary form eventually led to its uniqueness dependent on its content.

What may be noted about the formative period of Arabic literary theory and criticism was that, as formal sciences, they did not originate directly from the existence of literature and the informal reflections upon it before the rise of Islam. The major impetus

¹⁸⁰von Grunebaum, "Balāgha," p. 982. See also, Heinrichs, "Literary Theory," pp. 30-2; Khalafallah, "Arabic Literature," p. 1033; QS, p. 232; John Wansbrough, "Arabic Rhetoric and Qurʾānic Exegesis," *BSOAS*, 31 (1968), p. 469.

¹⁸¹See, for example, Q. 36/69, 69/41-2.

¹⁸²See Gluck, "Is there Poetry?" pp. 43-89; Paret, "Qurʾān-I," pp. 196-205; QS, p. 227.

¹⁸³Cf. Q. 2/23, 10/38, 11/13. See above, pp. 19-21.

¹⁸⁴See Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 27-40; QS, pp. 236-7.

for the more formal study of poetry was, in fact, the fulfillment of the philological needs of Qurʾān scholars, including grammarians, Qurʾān readers and exegetes, who collected and used poetry to clarify the text of the Qurʾān, and *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* writers, including those who stressed the Qurʾān's aesthetic effect as well as those who employed poetry to demonstrate the Qurʾān's stylistic inimitability. It was the philological groundwork of these Qurʾān sciences that eventually led, in the fourth/tenth century, to the formal and separate study and systematization of poetry, for its own literary value, in Arabic literary theory and criticism. The Quranic and philological roots of Arabic literary theory and criticism, in fact, determined much of the resulting nature of the Arabic literary sciences when they emerged, including the linguistic and literary primacy of the Qurʾān, even to the extent that recognition of the Qurʾān's stylistic *iʿjāz* was a primary reason for the study of profane Arabic literature, the predominant concern for the single line of poetry as an independent unit of form and content, and the parallel development and identification of tropical expressions as an indicator of literary eloquence. Indeed, the tropical parallels between the demonstrated eloquence of the Qurʾān and that of poetry appeared sufficiently similar to require the characterization of poetry as meaningfully void in comparison with the Qurʾān.

Grammar

The Qurʾān, in its final form, asserts that it is understandable to an Arab audience: it is "an Arabic Qurʾān"¹⁸⁵ given in "clear Arabic"¹⁸⁶ through "a messenger from among themselves."¹⁸⁷ But, as noted earlier,¹⁸⁸ traditional Muslim accounts maintain that this clear Arabic Qurʾān was initially revealed over a period of twenty-three years, at first

¹⁸⁵Q. 12/2. See also, Q. 13/37, 41/44, 42/7, 43/2.

¹⁸⁶Q. 26/195. See also, Q. 15/1, 16/103, 46/12.

¹⁸⁷Q. 3/164. See also, Q. 43/32.

¹⁸⁸See above, pp. 14-6.

recorded only as a consonantal text which was not collected as a fixed document until the reign of the third caliph, ʿUthmān (d. 35/655),¹⁸⁹ and had its vocalization recorded later in the form of a number of variant readings (*qirāʾat*),¹⁹⁰ which may have reflected dialectical differences.¹⁹¹ The establishment of the canonical text and the acceptable readings of the Qurʾān was, of course, an important factor in stabilizing the Qurʾān as an authoritative source of legal, liturgical and theological principles; and, with the expansion of Islam and its inclusion of a number of non-Arab client converts (*mawālī*), the need to protect the Qurʾān from textual corruptions represented an additional motivation.¹⁹²

This led to an early interest in the language of the Qurʾān and, although the proliferating number of acceptable readings were traced back to traditional authorities,¹⁹³ accounts for the use of correct language, namely grammar (*naḥw*), as a standard employed in their selection.¹⁹⁴ Although a variety of grammatical elements were

¹⁸⁹See, for example, Jones, "Qurʾān-II," pp. 235-41; Watt, *Bell's Introduction*, pp. 40-7; Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," pp. 404-6. For substantially different interpretations of these collection accounts, see John Burton, *The Collection of the Qurʾān* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 160-89, 225-40; QS, pp. 44-6, 202-7.

¹⁹⁰See, for example, Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol. II, pp. 221-3; Arthur Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qurʾān* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1937), pp. 1-17; Jones, "Qurʾān-II," pp. 244-5; C. Rabin, et. al., "ʿArabiyya," *EL*², vol. I, p. 565; Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," pp. 406-9.

¹⁹¹See R. Baalbaki, "The Treatment of *Qirāʾat* by the Second and Third Century Grammarians," *ZAL*, 15 (1985), pp. 11, 14; R. Paret, "Ḳirāʾa," *EL*², vol. V, p. 128; QS, p. 205.

¹⁹²See Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 9-10; Ilse Lichtenstädter, "Naḥw," *EL*¹, vol. VI, p. 837; Ramli, "Philology," p. 14.

¹⁹³See Paret, "Ḳirāʾa," p. 127; QS, p. 217; Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," p. 408. The initial establishment of the canonical texts of the Qurʾān, although a number of variant texts remained, was done with a text that consisted of consonants alone (*scriptio defectiva*). Gradually, these texts received full pointing and vowelling (*scriptio plena*) resulting in a number of different readings which were restricted to seven acceptable ones by Abū Bakr Mujaḥid (d. 324/936). Eventually, three more, then an additional four, were added, but the seven regained their authority in the fifth/eleventh century. At present, there are only two predominant readings, the Ḥafṣ ʿan ʿAṣim and the Warsh ʿan Nāfiʿ. To complicate matters further, in addition to these eventual fourteen readings, a number of uncanonical deviant readings (*shawādh*) remained influential in the elucidation of the Qurʾān and linguistic problems. For more information on these developments, see Paret, "Ḳirāʾa," pp. 127-8; Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," pp. 408-9.

¹⁹⁴See Gätje, *The Qurʾān*, p. 29; Jones, "Qurʾān-II," p. 242; QS, p. 217; Ramli,

involved, such as conjugation, syntax and punctuation, early grammarians emphasized the study of the correct and full inflection of nominal case endings and verbal moods (*iʿrāb*).¹⁹⁵

However, it should be noted that these linguistic developments were a part of the Qurʾān text's complex history and evolved only gradually over a period of three centuries,¹⁹⁶ which was, of course, the formative period of associated linguistic, literary and Quranic sciences, including that of grammar (*ʿilm al-naḥw*). The gradual development of grammar during these centuries permitted, not only the presentation of a number of rival grammatical theories, but also a variety of disputes involving particular methods and sources employed in the systematization of grammatical rules and their application to the text of the Qurʾān.¹⁹⁷ But the Arabic linguistic science of grammar was also developing at the same time, and in association with other, equally formative Islamic disciplines, such as literary theory and exegesis, which possessed a number of common features and interests.¹⁹⁸ For example, Muslim scholars of this period made no clear distinction between linguistic and literary concepts;¹⁹⁹ in fact, the more formal definitions of the sciences of grammar and rhetoric were not fully accomplished until the fifth/eleventh century with al-Jurjānī.²⁰⁰ As well, the development of grammatical concepts, especially those that were directly relevant to the text of the Qurʾān, were never independent from the influence of religious and doctrinal attitudes.²⁰¹ In general terms,

"Philology," p. 14; Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," p. 409.

¹⁹⁵See Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 9-11; Nazih Y. Daher, "Al-Jurjānī's 'Regents' and Today's Linguistic Analysis," *IJIAS*, 4 (1987), p. 60; H. Fleisch, "Iʿrāb," *EL*², vol. III, p. 1248; Watt, *Bell's Introduction*, pp. 83-5.

¹⁹⁶Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," p. 408.

¹⁹⁷See Baalbaki, "Treatment," p. 16; Goldziher, *Die Richtungen*, pp. 47-9; Kopf, "Religious Influences," pp. 37-8, 46; Owens, *Foundations*, p. 8; Paret, "Ḳirāʾa," p. 127.

¹⁹⁸Baalbaki, "Relation," p. 7, "Treatment," p. 13; *SALP*, vol. III, p. 27.

¹⁹⁹See *BL*, p. 11; Owens, *Foundations*, p. 17.

²⁰⁰See Baalbaki, "Relation," pp. 7-10, 23; Owens, *Foundations*, p. 17.

²⁰¹See Kopf, "Religious Influences," pp. 33-4, 46; Paret, "Qurʾān-I," p. 213; *QS*, p. 208.

I the correct recitation of the Qurʾān was considered, by itself, to be an act of piety;²⁰² and, on a more specific level related to Quranic exegesis, the influence of doctrinal commitments on grammatical matters may be noted in that the application of the "correct" inflection (*iʿrāb*) to any Quranic statement presupposes that the statement's meaning was already known.²⁰³

However, despite the importance of establishing the grammatical foundations of the Qurʾān and its relationship to the Arabic language in general, it is important to remember that throughout these first centuries of Islam, a number of the Qurʾān's linguistic features had not yet been established or defined. Indeed, it was those requirements that led to the rather long and complex developments of Arabic and Quranic grammatical studies. Thus, it is important to note that the Qurʾān, until its complete linguistic stabilization, could not, itself, function as an authoritative text in Arabic linguistic matters.²⁰⁴ As already noted, the various philological needs of Muslim scholars, including the linguistic needs of the grammarians, were fulfilled by the collection, redaction and study of primarily pre-Islamic literature, especially poetry, which, by its widespread use, was viewed as an authority in linguistic and literary matters.²⁰⁵ But for the early grammarians, it was not this literature alone but the Bedouins of Arabia, as both the possessors and transmitters of ancient and current poetry, that served as an important source in the resolution of linguistic questions, including those that dealt with the text of the Qurʾān.²⁰⁶ The poetry of the Bedouins provided respected examples of correct Arabic morphology and syntax, but equally important is the fact that this literature was transmitted orally.²⁰⁷ Even in everyday speech, urban Arabic speakers

²⁰²See Gätje, *The Qurʾān*, p. 5; Paret, "Kīrāʾa," p. 127.

²⁰³QS, p. 109.

²⁰⁴Kopf, "Religious Influences," p. 47.

²⁰⁵See above, pp. 15, 26-7.

²⁰⁶See Baalbaki, "Treatment," p. 11; Joshua Blau, "The Role of the Bedouins as Arbiters in Linguistic Questions and the *Masʾala az-Zunburiyya* [sic.]," *JSS*, 8 (1963), p. 42; Fleisch, "Iʿrāb," p. 1250; Rabin, "ʿArabiyya," p. 565; *SALP*, vol. III, p. 154.

²⁰⁷See Monroe, "Oral Composition," pp. 10-32; el-Tayib, "Pre-Islamic Poetry," pp. 27-

did not fully inflect their language while the desert Bedouins did: that is, they vocalized noun case endings.²⁰⁸ In fact, even this difference between urban and desert dialects may have given the Bedouin usage the appearance of an elevated form of Arabic.²⁰⁹ However, the language of Bedouin poetry was not the same as the everyday speech of the tribes: it was a special, elevated, literary dialect of Arabic, used for their poetry and shared by each of the Bedouin tribes,²¹⁰ seen as the highest form of Arabic speech and identified as Arabic "poetical *koiné*."²¹¹ Thus, while *al-lughā al-ʿarabiyya* can mean the Arabic language in all its forms, *al-ʿarabiyya* developed, in a technical sense, to denote the "pure Arabic" of the elevated literary language common to the poetry of the Bedouins.²¹² This elevated language of the Bedouins, once modified by the grammarians' later understanding of the linguistic features of the Qurʾān, would constitute a part of the particular language identified as Classical Arabic.²¹³

Some of the results of this activity dealing with the Arabic literature and usage of the Bedouins, largely motivated by the linguistic study of the Qurʾān, included the limitation of the number of acceptable readings,²¹⁴ the early appearance of descriptive grammars of Arabic generally, such as the *Kitāb* of Sībawayh (d. 177/793), or of the Qurʾān specifically, such as the *Maʿānī al-qurʾān* of al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822), which both include poetic and Quranic citations, and, later, more detailed grammatical works, such as those of al-Naḥḥās (d. 338/950) or al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923) dealing with Quranic accidence, entitled *Iʿrāb al-qurʾān*. In fact, the importance of linguistic studies in the early centuries of Islam led to the existence of two rival schools of grammar at Kūfa and Baṣra in the late

30; A.S. Tritton, "Shiʿr," *EI*¹, vol. VII, p. 374; Rabin, "ʿArabiyya," p. 565.

²⁰⁸Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 11; Fleisch, "Iʿrāb," p. 1249.

²⁰⁹Blau, "Role," pp. 46-7.

²¹⁰Blau, "Role," pp. 43, 51; Rabin, "ʿArabiyya," p. 565.

²¹¹Rabin, "ʿArabiyya," p. 565.

²¹²See Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 1-12; Blau, "Role," p. 45.

²¹³See Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 10-11; Rabin, "ʿArabiyya," pp. 564-7.

²¹⁴See above, n. 193.

second/eighth or early third/ninth century,²¹⁵ or, according to one authority, to the fabrication of the existence of the two schools by grammarians of the fourth/tenth century in order to create traditional support for their own linguistic views.²¹⁶ Although the debate surrounding the existence of these two schools of grammar is interesting from an historical point of view, linguistically, the evidence that does exist appears to show that their differences, in any event, were not very great.²¹⁷

What is more important here, however, is the resulting linguistic relationship between the language of the Qurʾān and other forms of the Arabic language. Although the literature and usage of the Bedouins provided a valuable source of linguistic information for the establishment of the Qurʾān's linguistic features and the formation of Arabic grammatical theories, it should be noted that the literary products of the Bedouins was profane Arabic and their ancient poetry, even pagan. In addition, the everyday speech of Arabic speakers, including the Bedouins, reflected different tribal dialects; a situation that included Muḥammad, "a messenger from among themselves" who uttered the Qurʾān, who spoke the urban Arabic dialect of his own Quraysh tribe. The only dialect seen as common to all tribes, of course, was that employed in poetry, the poetical

²¹⁵See Lichtenstadter, "Naḥw," p. 837.

²¹⁶There are a number of interpretations involving the historical reality of these grammatical schools. Currently, the most extreme views involve C.H.M. Versteegh (*Greek Elements in Arabic Linguistic Thinking* [E.J. Brill, 1977], pp. 107-12) who accepts the early existence of the two schools on the basis of references to Kūfa and Baṣra by the third/ninth century linguists. M.G. Carter ("Ṣarf et Khilāf: Contribution à l'Histoire de la Grammaire Arabe," *Arabica*, 20 [1973], pp. 292-304) opposes this view and argues that the two schools were an invention of fourth/tenth century grammarians attempting to establish polemically an orthodox linguistic theory. It should be noted, however, that much of this discussion is more relevant to the later third/ninth and early fourth/tenth centuries than earlier. Sībawayh, for example, makes no such references and al-Farra', who does speak of the Kufans, with whom he is identified, mentioned them only in reference to matters of *qirā'āt* rather than linguistic theory. For more detailed discussions of this debate, see R. Baalbaki, "Arab Grammatical Controversies and the Extant Sources of the Second and Third Centuries A.H.," in *Studia Arabica et Islamica: Festschrift for Iḥsān 'Abbās on his Sixtieth Birthday* (Ed. Wadād al-Qādī (Benur American University of Beirut, 1981), pp. 1-26, Owens, *Foundations*, pp. 8-13.

²¹⁷Owens, *Foundations*, p. 9.

koiné. But the Qurʾān, as the revealed word of God, could not be linguistically identified with the elevated Arabic speech of Bedouin poetry, a point that it repeatedly asserts.²¹⁸ Nor could it be seen as an example of any other dialect of "clear Arabic", simply because all other dialects were viewed as inferior to the poetical *koiné* of Bedouin poetry.

The use of Bedouin literature and vocalization as an authoritative source for the explanation of Arabic and Quranic grammar led to an interesting problem for the early Muslim grammarians. As grammarians, they had determined that the purest form of Arabic was to be found in Bedouin poetry.²¹⁹ But as Muslims, they could not identify the Qurʾān as poetry, yet neither could they view the Qurʾān as being anything less than the most correct Arabic speech.²²⁰ The Qurʾān could not be linguistically differentiated from poetry by identifying it with any dialect of Arabic, since the various dialects were considered to be inferior to the poetical *ʿarabiyya* of the Bedouins;²²¹ nor could grammarians admit to the application of any differentiating linguistic feature upon the Qurʾān, such as an *iʿrāb* other than that of the purest form of Arabic,²²² since that would deny the efficacy of the Qurʾān's claim to be "Arabic, pure and clear" as well as

²¹⁸See above, pp. 35-6. This view of the language of the Qurʾān has been challenged by a number of Western scholars who independently concluded that it was not the spoken dialect of Muḥammad's Quraysh tribe, as traditionally held (which will be discussed below), but, in fact, was identical to this poetical *koiné* of the Bedouins. For a brief summary of this point, see Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," p. 419.

²¹⁹See Baalbaki, "Treatment," p. 14; Blau, "Role," p. 42.

²²⁰Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," p. 419.

²²¹See Watt, *Bell's Introduction*, pp. 83-4; Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," p. 419.

²²²The most extreme version of this possibility was put forward by Karl Vollers (*Volkssprache und Schriftsprache im Alten Arabien* [1906; rpt. Amsterdam: APA-Oriental Press, 1981], pp. 165-75), who argues that some of the various readings of the Qurʾān represented the urban colloquial dialect of Muḥammad, while others represented a textual revision of the Qurʾān in order to bring it into harmony with the language of the Bedouins which, together, Vollers uses to support his view that the original Qurʾān possessed no *iʿrāb*. This theory, however, has received little support, except by Paul Kahle ("The Qurʾān," pp. 163-82) who isolates a saying of al-Farrāʾ that speaks of rewards for anyone who recited the Qurʾān with *iʿrāb* as support for Vollers' idea that the Qurʾān had been recited, at least by some, without *iʿrāb*. For a brief synopsis of this debate, see Rabin, "ʿArabiyya," pp. 565-6.

acknowledge an alteration of the language of the Qurʾān after its revelation.²²³

The solution to this problem was found by equating the language of the Qurʾān quite precisely with the language of Muḥammad's Quraysh tribe, but viewing that dialect of Arabic as having developed, during the centuries before Muḥammad and the Qurʾān, into a special type of Arabic dialect. During those centuries, the Quraysh were exposed to the various Arabic dialects of the different tribes that came to Mecca on pilgrimage. This exposure allowed the Quraysh, like the poetical *koiné* of the Bedouins, to select and retain only the best linguistic features from each of these tribal dialects, while also being able to reject any grammatical inaccuracies each tribal dialect possessed. Thus, in the centuries before Muḥammad, the dialect of the Quraysh had become superior to all others because it was seen as an amelioration of only the best linguistic elements, but none of the inaccuracies, of all other Arabic dialects.²²⁴ It was in this language, the most correct and clear Arabic speech, that the Qurʾān was uttered. Although this view does little to explain the different acceptable readings of the Qurʾān, it has been adopted as the traditional view of the language of the Qurʾān.²²⁵

This attitude of the early Muslim grammarians toward the Arabic language, its dialects, and the language of the Qurʾān established the Qurʾān as an authoritative and error-free document of the best Arabic.²²⁶ However, it is important to note that this understanding applied itself to a description of the language into which the Qurʾān was received and not toward a description of the specific language of the Qurʾān alone. But given this understanding of Arabic and the language of the Qurʾān, it is not surprising to see that its ramifications were of a more linguistic as well as literary nature rather than

²²³See Kahle, "Arabic Readers," pp. 70-1, "The Qurʾān," p. 181; Rabin, "ʿArabiyya," pp. 565-6.

²²⁴See Kahle, "Arabic Readers," pp. 70-1; Rabin, "ʿArabiyya," pp. 565-6; Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," p. 419.

²²⁵Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," p. 419.

²²⁶See Burton, "Linguistic Errors," p. 181; von Grunebaum, "Iʿd̲j̲āz," p. 1019; Kopf, "Religious Influences," pp. 33, 48-9; QS, p. 221, 224.

Quranic, even though some may appear to be specifically Quranic but, as noted, actually apply to the language used by the Quraysh tribe before its reception, with the Qurʾān representing the model of that language.

One of the more interesting outcomes of this attitude was that the language of the Qurʾān was not seen as a unique scriptural language, but as a language that shared in the normal linguistic and literary potential of Arabic,²²⁷ which, before the identification of various figures of speech, was seen as containing numerous idioms.²²⁸ But with the Qurʾān being seen as the exemplary model of that most correct language and the later identification of tropes, it is not surprising to see that the Muslim scholars actively sought out, in the language of the Qurʾān, at least one example of every known figure of speech,²²⁹ as well as the employment of these Quranic figures, by Ibn al-Muʿtazz, in demonstrating that the allegedly new figures of speech (*badīʿ*) were, in fact, already established elements of a rhetorically stable language.²³⁰ Thus, the Arabic language, with its remarkable capacity for idioms or figures of speech, was seen as a language superior to all others, something asserted, for example, by both Abū ʿUbayda and Ibn Qutayba.²³¹

It may also be noted that the asserted superiority of the Arabic language and the Qurʾān as the authoritative model of the best of that language centred on the linguistic form of the Qurʾān, rather than on its contents, which had a linguistic, cultural, economic and religious impact. This particularly Arabic nature of the Qurʾān presented little difficulty for Arabic-speaking Muslims; indeed, it provided an added element to their literary and cultural pride. But for non-Arab Muslims, it represented not only a cultural problem, it placed a linguistic barrier between themselves and the Quranic word of God.

²²⁷QS, pp. 236-7.

²²⁸See Heinrichs, "Genesis," p. 129; QS, p. 231.

²²⁹See QS, p. 232.

²³⁰See Heinrichs, "Literary Theory," p. 68; and above, n. 142.

²³¹See Almagor, "Early Meaning," pp. 312-3; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, p. 16; Heinrichs, "Genesis," p. 129, *Hand of the Northwind*, p. 31; QS, pp. 81, 219, 231; and above, p. 33.

One of the historical results of this situation was the ostensibly literary movement of non-Arab Muslims in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries, known as the *Shu'ūbiyya*, who denied that the Arabs possessed any distinct or superior abilities of speech or rhetoric and argued for the preeminence of the Qur'ān's content rather than its Arabic linguistic and literary form.²³²

Notwithstanding this opposition, it must be noted that the early Muslim grammarians' study of the Arabic language, especially in relation to the language of the Qur'ān, laid the linguistic foundations of the Arabic language and the Qur'ān that would later allow for their rhetorical exploration: it provided the purity and euphony (*faṣāḥa*) of the Arabic language upon which its eloquence (*balāgha*) depends.²³³ But, importantly, this was accomplished by demonstrating the linguistic superiority of the Arabic language, with the Qur'ān representing a model of it, and not by demonstrating the Qur'ān's linguistic distinctness from it.²³⁴

Summary

It is very apparent from this discussion that the second/eighth and especially the third/ninth centuries were a period of enormous intellectual activity. Although some of this activity surrounded the Arabic linguistic and literary heritage inherited by Islam, much of it was motivated by the arrival of the Qur'ān. This yielded not only a religious or doctrinal element to the methods and theories of each of these sciences, it also gave each discipline, in its study of a particular aspect of the Qur'ān, a common interest and a number of interdisciplinary relationships that would never be severed. Many important developments in each of these sciences took place, of course, in later centuries but their

²³²See Abū al-ʿAddus, "Rhetorical Criticism," p. 59; Agius, "The *Shu'ūbiyya*," pp. 76-88, esp. pp. 80-4.

²³³See von Grunebaum, "Balāgha," p. 981.

²³⁴QS, p. 237.

theoretical foundations were established during these centuries.

Textual exegetes as well as grammarians took part in the establishment of the canonical text of the Qurʾān and determining the acceptability of its various readings. They also began the investigation and systematization of Arabic grammar with a special focus on the language of the Qurʾān as the exemplary model of the language and its usage. Where textual exegetes and grammarians clarified and harmonized regular Quranic usage, later rhetorical exegetes focussed on the more irregular Arabic expressions in the Qurʾān. In the early third/ninth century, these expressions were defended as being grammatically correct expressions but sufficiently divergent ones to require further clarification. By the later third/ninth century, however, many of these Quranic phrases were no longer defended simply as syntactic irregularities but were more positively identified as regular tropes.

The linguistic investigation of the Qurʾān by the Muslim grammarians and exegetes as well as the exploration and elucidation of the rhetorical elements of both the Qurʾān and the Arabic language were quite naturally associated with the systematic examination of the Qurʾān as a literary as well as a religious document. This initiated the formal study and development of Arabic literary theory and its associated application in literary criticism. Although this eventually led to the independent systematic description and appreciation of Arabic poetry for its own merits, the origins of Arabic literary theory were closely associated with the philological needs of scholars who studied and used poetry as an explanatory tool in their commentaries on the Qurʾān. The frequent employment of poetic examples to clarify and justify the acceptability of Arabic grammatical and especially figurative usage in the Qurʾān yielded a very close association between Quranic and Arabic poetic usage. The resulting figurative parallels between the Qurʾān and Arabic poetry led toward a more formal differentiating characterization of Arabic poetry by the literary theorists. Yet, such a definition did not resolve the question as to whether such tropical expressions were unique to the Qurʾān or whether they were

unique to the Arabic language with the Qurʾān representing a model of it.

During these same formative centuries, a number of Muslim scholars from the various developing sciences were also engaged in attempts to identify or demonstrate the exact nature of the Qurʾān's miraculous inimitability. Early attempts at this task could be characterized either as simple assertions or as mechanisms, rather than demonstrations, that maintained a reliance on an attitude of *bilā kayf*, while a more rational and thus more demonstrable approach to this discussion seems to have been one of the contributions made by the various Muʿtazilī authors. Afterward, in the fourth/tenth century, when each of these interrelated disciplines reached a more mature level of independence, the demonstration of the Qurʾān's inimitability in terms of its literary style emerged. After the fourth/tenth century, the appreciation of the Qurʾān's figures of speech remained an influential and widely accepted part of the arguments in support of *icjāz al-qurʾān*. But just before the fourth/tenth century and the emergence of the demonstration of the Qurʾān's stylistic inimitability, Ibn Qutayba wrote his text on the interpretation of the difficulties of the Qurʾān.

CHAPTER II

IBN QUTAYBA AND QURANIC BREVITY

It would not seem completely appropriate to examine the views of Ibn Qutayba about any particular literary or Quranic concept, such as Quranic brevity, without noting at least a few salient details about the man himself, his various works, and his place and influence in early Islamic scholarship.

Similarly, Ibn Qutayba's views on Quranic brevity do not appear in the form of an isolated monograph but as a part of the larger context of his *Ta'wīl mushkil al-qur'ān* which contains his observations on a number of topics. Accordingly, the beginning of this chapter seems a proper place to make a few brief remarks about Ibn Qutayba and his works in general as well as some features of the *Ta'wīl mushkil al-qur'ān* before looking specifically at Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity.

In examining Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity as well as its relationship to, or effect upon, the understanding of Quranic brevity by other writers, including Arabic literary theorists, grammarians, exegetes and writers of *i'jāz al-qur'ān* works, it is necessary to look specifically at Ibn Qutayba's treatment of Quranic brevity as found in the chapter of ellipsis and abbreviation (*bāb al-ḥadhf wa'l-ikhtisār*) in his *Ta'wīl mushkil al-qur'ān*. An equally important part of this exposition, however, will be the necessary comparison of Ibn Qutayba's understanding of the various Quranic expressions he adduces in this chapter with the views of a number of selected authors that are representative of the disciplines discussed above in the preliminary studies. Among these authors who wrote their works before Ibn Qutayba are the grammarian Sībawayh (d. 177/793), the textual exegete al-Farrā' (d. 207/822), and the rhetorical exegete Abū

‘Ubayda (d. 209/824). The selected authors who studied the Qurʾān after Ibn Qutayba include the exegete al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), the literary critic and theorist al-ʿAskarī (d. 395/1005) and, of course, the author of a stylistically based demonstration of *ijāz al-qurʾān*, al-Rummānī (d. 386/996). It will then be possible to summarize Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these particular Quranic figures of speech in the context of the disciplines discussed in the preliminary studies of Chapter One. Applying those findings to the main question discussed in the Introduction, involving the relationship of the *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qurʾān*, as a third/ninth century exegetical text, and its impact on the origins of the stylistically based demonstrations of *ijāz al-qurʾān* works will then follow in the Conclusion. Because I am primarily interested in Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity only insofar as it relates to these questions, my emphasis will be on a descriptive comparison of Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity to these disciplines rather than a prescriptive critique of that understanding.

Ibn Qutayba

Many of the more important aspects of Ibn Qutayba and his works are contained in a substantial number of Arabic bio-bibliographical works, such as the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm (d. ca. 380/990) and the *Waṣāyāt al-ʿaʿyān* of Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), to mention only two.²³⁵ As well, many specific aspects of Ibn Qutayba's thought have been the subject of numerous studies,²³⁶ while a more general survey of Ibn Qutayba and his works are contained in Gérard LeComte's concise article in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.²³⁷ He is the subject of two monographs: the first, Ishāq Mūsa Ḥuseini's *The Life*

²³⁵For a list of these various works and their citations of Ibn Qutayba, see *GAL*, suppl. I, pp. 184-7; and the bibliography at the end of Gérard LeComte, "Ibn Qutayba," *El²*, vol. III, p. 847.

²³⁶Again, see the bibliography in LeComte, "Ibn Qutayba," p. 847.

²³⁷"Ibn Qutayba," vol. III, pp. 844-7.

and *Works of Ibn Qutayba*,²³⁸ and the second, again by Gérard LeComte, *Ibn Qutayba (mort en 276/889): l'homme, son oeuvre, ses idées*.²³⁹ From these various sources it is possible to distill a brief sketch of the life and works of Ibn Qutayba.

He was born Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Muslim Ibn Qutayba al-Dīnawarī²⁴⁰ at Kūfa in 213/828 to a family of second or third generation of Arabized Iranians from Khurāsān. Like many early Muslim writers, very little is known about his childhood, adolescence, education or career. It seems that he studied under men generally known for their theological, philological and traditionist attachment to the *Sunna*, including the Sunnī theologian and disciple of Ibn Ḥanbal, Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Rāhawayh al-Ḥanzalī (d. ca. 237/851); the Sunnī philologist and traditionist, Abū Ḥātim Sahl b. Muḥammad al-Sijistānī (d. ca. 250/864); and the leading philologist in Iraq at the time, al-ʿAbbās b. al-Faraj al-Riyāshī (d. 257/871), who, interestingly, was also a transmitter of the works of the grammarian al-Aṣṭaṣī and of Abū ʿUbayda.²⁴¹

Ibn Qutayba himself admits that in his early life he was tempted by the quasi-rationalist ideologies that were prevalent at the time but, although he never provides a systematic definition of his eventual methodology, he soon came to despise the intellectual or rational approach and held steadfast to the Qurʾān and the *Sunna* as the two fundamental foundations of doctrine. Yet, many of the ideas of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, who had attempted to produce some imitations of the Qurʾān, were known to Ibn Qutayba and, although he rarely acknowledges him, he seemed to have known the works of the Muʿtazilite al-Jāḥiẓ very well. It is interesting too, that Ibn Qutayba also made extensive use of the Torah as well as the Gospels. In philological studies, he seemed to maintain a middle ground between the two alleged schools of grammatical studies, seen as an

²³⁸Beirut: The American Press, 1950.

²³⁹Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1965.

²⁴⁰Some biographers add "al-Kūfī", as a reference to his birthplace and "al-Marwazī", perhaps an ethnic name of his father. See LeComte, "Ibn Qutayba," p. 844.

²⁴¹See LeComte, "Ibn Qutayba," p. 844. See also, Huseini, *Life and Works*, pp. 15-39; LeComte, *Ibn Qutayba*, pp. 45-74.

advocate of the more orthodox, Baṣran views while also subscribing to the teachings of al-Kisāʾī and al-Farrāʾ, both seen as belonging to the less orthodox Kufan school. In addition, Ibn Qutayba demonstrates his willingness to depart from traditional methods in his approach to poetry. It has already been noted that while he accepts the value of ancient poetry, his suggested individualistic method of establishing the relative merits of ancient and modern poems again reveals his acceptance and talent for synthesis, if not innovation.

In combination, Ibn Qutayba's attitudes and output gave him the reputation of being the greatest writer of Arabic prose since Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and al-Jāḥiẓ. His synthesis of earlier ideas from a variety of sources and approaches, together with his orthodox support of the Qurʾān and the *Sunna* as the primary doctrinal foundations, made Ibn Qutayba an important and influential representative of the *Ahl al-Sunna* of the third/ninth century and someone whose works could lend literary support to the ʿAbbāsīd revival of Sunnism.

Ibn Qutayba's own attachment to Sunnī orthodoxy seems to have been propitious to his career. With the accession of al-Mutawakkil (d. 247/861) to the ʿAbbāsīd caliphate, the new government set out to suppress Muʿtazilī and other ideologies which had been supported by its predecessors and re-institute Sunnism. The Sunnī political, cultural and religious views of Ibn Qutayba, contained in such works as his manual for secretaries, the *Kitāb ʿadab al-kātib*, seemed to have been in agreement with the views of the new government and caused its favourable notice of Ibn Qutayba by 232/846. The vizier Abū al-Ḥasan ʿUbayd Allāh b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān (d. 263/877) became his patron and, through him, Ibn Qutayba was appointed *Qāḍī* of Dīnawar in 236/851, a position he retained until 256/870 or 257/871.

After his retirement as *Qāḍī*, Ibn Qutayba remained in Baghdad and dedicated himself to the teaching of his works which were transmitted to Egypt by Ibn Qutayba's son and chief disciple, Aḥmad, and his son, ʿAbd al-Wāḥid, and then to the West through

the work of Abū ʿAlī al-Qālī, while many of Ibn Qutayba's works were transmitted directly to al-Andalus by Qāsim b. Aṣḡagh who had come to Baghdad to study in 247/887. In the East, Ibn Qutayba's works were spread by a number of disciples, including Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. Durustawayh and Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Ayyūb al-Ṣāʿigh as well as ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sukkarī, whose name is a constant feature of many *isnāds* of Ibn Qutayba's works. Ibn Qutayba maintained this teaching until his death in 276/889.

The authentic works of Ibn Qutayba, the majority of which have been published, reflect his wide interests.²⁴² In addition to his manual for secretaries, the *ʿAdab al-kātib*, mentioned above, he also wrote a work of astronomy and meteorology, the *Kitāb al-anwāʿ*; some legal works, such as the *Kitāb al-ashriba*, a *fatwā* on drinks, and the *Kitāb al-maysir waʿl-qidāḥ*, a study of games of chance; and works of cultural history, including the *Kitāb al-maʿārif*, and, in the anti-Shuʿūbiyya tradition, the *Kitāb al-ʿarab*. He composed a number of works about literature for which he is most famous, including the *Kitāb maʿānī al-shiʿr*, on the themes of poems; an anthology of poetry, the *Kitāb al-shiʿr waʿl-shuʿarāʿ*; and a compendium of *adab* works, the *Kitāb ʿuyūn al-akḥbār*; works of theology, including the *Kitāb al-masāʾil waʿl-ajwiba*, the *Kitāb taʾwīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, and the *Kitāb al-ikhtilāf fiʿl-lafẓ waʿl-radd ʿalā al-Jahmiyya waʿl-Mushabbiha*, which is a refutation of some of the ideas and practices of the Mushabbiha, Jahmiyya and Muʿtazila; as well as an incomplete philological commentary on *ḥadīth*, the *Kitāb gharīb al-ḥadīth*. In addition to these works, Ibn Qutayba wrote a number of works on the Qurʾān, such as the *Kitāb iṣlāḥ al-ghalaṭ fi gharīb al-ḥadīth li-Abī ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām*, which is a separate part of his *Kitāb gharīb al-ḥadīth*, where Ibn Qutayba corrects a number of exegetical errors he considers to have been made by Abū ʿUbayd; the *Kitāb tafsīr gharīb*

²⁴²For a short list and description of the authentic, spurious, and attributed works of Ibn Qutayba, see LeComte, "Ibn Qutayba," p. 845. A fuller description may be found in Huseini, *Life and Works*, pp. 47-56, with the most detailed examination being found in LeComte, *Ibn Qutayba*, pp. 85-178.

al-qurʾān, a philological commentary on the Qurʾān; and, of course, his examination of the difficulties of the Qurʾān, his *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qurʾān*.

The *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qurʾān*

The *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qurʾān* begins with a short introduction (pp. 3-11) in which Ibn Qutayba asserts, with an interesting series of numerous Quranic and some poetic citations, that the Qurʾān is not only the book "wherein there is no crookedness",²⁴³ but that it was revealed in a straight (*qayyim*), precise (*mufaṣṣal*), as well as eloquent and penetrating (*bayyin*) way.²⁴⁴ Although Ibn Qutayba does not use the term *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* in the introduction and mentions the Qurʾān's miracle of composition (*muʿjiz al-taʾlīf*) only once,²⁴⁵ he frequently speaks of these features of the Qurʾān as parts of its wondrous or miraculous aspects (*ʿajāʾib*, sing. *ʿajība*), which are either overlooked or ignored by some²⁴⁶ or, because of their ambiguity, appear obscure to others.²⁴⁷ Thus, many of the rhetorical elements of the Qurʾān represent difficulties for some, but for Ibn Qutayba, these features represent the depth of eloquence of the Qurʾān's exhortation (*ʿablaghuhu fīʾl-mawʿiẓa*).²⁴⁸

The next chapter of the book (pp. 12-23) is equally introductory but introduces Ibn Qutayba's solution to the problems mentioned in the first section. It discusses briefly some of the features of the eloquence of the Arabic language, including a number of figures of speech which are discussed later in the *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qurʾān*. It should be noted that Ibn Qutayba introduces these figures of speech by stating that they represent one of the modes (*ṭuruq*, sing. *ṭarīqa*) by which the superiority of the Arabic language

²⁴³Q. 18/1. See *Taʾwīl*, p. 3.

²⁴⁴*Taʾwīl*, p. 3.

²⁴⁵Ibid.

²⁴⁶Ibid.

²⁴⁷Ibid., p. 10.

²⁴⁸Ibid., p. 11.

over all others may be seen.²⁴⁹ This chapter also provides some discussion of inflection, the extent or range of the trope, and also mentions the reason for writing the *Ta'wīl mushkil al-qur'ān*: to provide an illustrative study of these rhetorical difficulties.²⁵⁰

These two introductory chapters are followed by a polemical section (pp. 24-32) in which some of the criticisms of the Qur'ān are examined (*al-ḥikāya 'an al-ṭā'inīn*), followed by four chapters each of which deals with a specific criticism, including the Qur'ān's variant readings (*wujūh al-qirā'āt*, pp. 33-49), its alleged solecisms (*mā 'uddu'īya 'alā al-qur'ān min al-laḥn*, pp. 50-64), contradiction and disagreement (*al-tanāquḍ wa'l-ikhtilāf*, pp. 65-85), and the unclear verses (*al-mutashābih*, pp. 86-102).

The next seven chapters deal with specific figures of speech: the trope (*al-qawl fī'l-majāz*, pp. 103-35), the metaphor (*al-'isti'āra*, pp. 135-84), inversion (*al-maqlūb*, pp. 185-209), ellipsis and abbreviation (*al-ḥadhf wa'l-'ikhtisār*, pp. 210-31), repetition and pleonasm (*takrār al-kalām wa'l-ziyāda fīhi*, pp. 232-55) metonymy and allusion (*al-kināya wa'l-ta'rīḍ*, pp. 256-74), and idiom (*mukhālafa ṣāḥir al-lafẓ ma'nāhu*, pp. 275-98).

After these chapters on specific figures of speech there follows a chapter on the interpretation of the mysterious letters of the Qur'ān (*ta'wīl al-ḥurūf 'allatī 'idda'ā 'alā al-qur'ān bihā al-'istiḥāla wa fasād al-naẓm*, pp. 299-310). The next section of the *Ta'wīl mushkil al-qur'ān* consists of fifty short chapters which deal with some of the problematic verses of the Qur'ān (pp. 311-438), where the verses are grouped according to their *sūra* but in a rather random and duplicated way,²⁵¹ followed by three more grammatical sections, including a section on Quranic homonyms (*al-lafẓ al-wāḥid lil-ma'ānī*, pp. 439-515), which devotes a few pages to the various meanings of some forty-five Quranic words, a section on the explanation of thirty-two particles of meaning including

²⁴⁹Ibid., p. 20. See also, Almagor, "Early Meaning," p. 312.

²⁵⁰*Ta'wīl*, p. 23.

²⁵¹For example, verses from the second *sūra*, *al-baqara*, could be found in any of the seventh, twenty-second, twenty-sixth, or forty-ninth chapters of this section, each of which bears the title *al-baqara*.

indeclinable ones (*tafsīr ḥurūf al-maʿānī wa mā shākalahā min al-ʾaḥwāl ʾallatī lā tataṣarrafu*, pp. 516-63), followed by the last section which lists sixteen sets of interchangeable particles (*dukhūl baʿd ḥurūf al-ṣifāt makān baʿd*, pp. 565-578).

Quranic brevity

Ibn Qutayba's views on Quranic brevity in the *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qurʾān* are contained in the chapter on ellipsis and abbreviation.²⁵² This chapter can be divided into ten sections each of which deals with a particular type of Quranic brevity. But, although Ibn Qutayba does not draw attention to it explicitly, his selection of Quranic citations within many of these divisions often reveal his awareness of further, more subtle, differences. Nowhere in the chapter or in any of its divisions does Ibn Qutayba offer any explicit definition of the figures of speech associated with brevity except to state the particular type of brevity involved in each of the sections after which he immediately adduces Quranic examples.

* * * * *

Thus, without any preamble, the chapter begins with the first section of the ten types of Quranic brevity as understood by Ibn Qutayba, and it deals with what he terms "the ellipsis of the annexed while the annexing stands in its place and accepts the verb."²⁵³

Following this heading, Ibn Qutayba immediately cites Quranic examples beginning with the ellipsis in Q. 12/82 where he simply supplies the ellipted term of the

²⁵² *Bāb al-ḥadhf waʾl-ʾikhtisār. Taʾwīl*, pp. 210-31.

²⁵³ *ʾan taḥdhifa al-muḍāf wa tuqīma al-muḍāf ʾilayhi muqāmahu wa tajʿala al-fiʿl lahu. Taʾwīl*, pp. 210-2. The two terms of the Arabic possessive construct (*ʾiḍāfa*); namely *al-muḍāf* and *al-muḍāf ʾilayhi*, could be translated respectively as "possessed" and "possessor" as they are by Owens (*Foundations*, p. 34), but I have used "annexed" and "annexing" simply because that follows the more accessible authority of W. Wright (*A Grammar of the Arabic Language* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967], vol. II, p. 198).

construct which is the more appropriate and obvious object of the verb: "like the saying of The Most High, 'and ask the town where we have been', that is, ask its *people* [*ʾahl*]." ²⁵⁴ Similarly, Ibn Qutayba also cites the equally simple ellipsis in Q. 47/13, again supplying the ellipted term of the construct which, here, is the more syntactically correct subject of the verb: "and His saying, 'from your town which drove you out', that is, its *people* [*ʾahl*] drove you out." ²⁵⁵ It is interesting to note, however, that although both Q. 12/82 and Q. 47/13 are obvious examples of ellipsis, Ibn Qutayba cites the same expression in Q. 12/82 as an example of metaphor (*ʾistiʿāra*). ²⁵⁶

It is interesting that Ibn Qutayba also cites Q. 2/93 in this section on ellipsis of the annexed term: "' . . . and they drank into their hearts [of] the calf', that is, its *love* [*ḥubb*]." ²⁵⁷ Although this expression seems to be a better candidate for metaphor than Q. 12/82, it does not appear in that section of the *Taʾwīl* and Ibn Qutayba's treatment of it in this section seems to indicate that he thought its meaning could more easily be clarified by inserting a term in the construct; thus, apparently requiring that it be identified as an example of this type of ellipsis.

Ibn Qutayba also cites what appears to be a simple ellipsis in Q. 2/197, but it should be noted that he has considered it to be an example of ellipsis of an annexed term in order to supply a more appropriate term for a modifier: "'[as for] the pilgrimage, the

²⁵⁴*Taʾwīl*, p. 210. I have translated Quranic passages, rather than quote from existing translations, in order to emphasize more clearly the grammatical points or literary figures discussed by Ibn Qutayba. I have not provided the Arabic text of the Qurʾān, however, since it is readily accessible to the reader elsewhere, but where poetry has been cited, I have given both the Arabic and a translation. Quranic citations follow the versification of the Egyptian edition, while paragraphing, punctuation and emphasis of particular terms are my own.

²⁵⁵*Taʾwīl*, p. 210.

²⁵⁶See *Taʾwīl*, p. 170. See also, *QS*, p. 229. It may be noted too that Q. 12/82 also appears in the section on inversion (*maqlūb*) in the *Taʾwīl* (p. 203) but only as a clarification of a citation of al-Farrāʾ where Ibn Qutayba still treats Q. 12/82 as an example, not of inversion, but of ellipsis (*ḥadhf*).

²⁵⁷*Taʾwīl*, p. 210.

months are known', that is, the *period* [*waqt*] of the pilgrimage."²⁵⁸

Following his treatment of Q. 2/197, which dealt with a modifier, Ibn Qutayba then cites another Quranic example which he views as involving a modifier although here, at Q. 17/75, the modifying term is seen as the ellipted annexed term that seems more appropriate for the context of the narrative as it is for the verb involved: "like His saying, 'then We should have made you taste an equal portion of life and an equal portion of death', that is, an equal portion of the *suffering* [*ʿadhāb*] of life and an equal portion of the *suffering* [*ʿadhāb*] of death."²⁵⁹

Ibn Qutayba also adduces Q. 22/40 which appears to deal with the meaning of a less understood word, "prayers (*ṣalawāt*),"²⁶⁰ but it is nevertheless clarified by the insertion of an ellipted, annexed term: "and His saying, praise Him, 'to pull down monasteries and churches and prayers and mosques'. The prayers were not pulled down but, rather, He meant the *houses* [*buyūt*] of prayers."²⁶¹ Ibn Qutayba, for the first time, justifies his interpretation by mentioning that "the commentators [*al-mufasssīrūn*] said 'monasteries belong to the Sabians, churches to the Christians, "*prayers*" are the synagogues [*kanāʾīs*] of the Jews, and mosques belong to the Muslims."²⁶²

The last two Quranic passages that Ibn Qutayba cites as examples of the ellipsis of the annexed term are quite interesting. The first of these is Q. 34/33 where it may be seen that although Ibn Qutayba does supply an annexing, rather than annexed, attached pronoun "your (*-kum*)" to the term "plotting (*makr*)," notice should be taken of his insertion of the preposition "*fī*," translated as "during," in his treatment of this phrase:

²⁵⁸Ibid.

²⁵⁹Ibid.

²⁶⁰For the translation of *ṣalawāt* as "prayers," see Lane, vol. II, p. 1721; Wehr, *Dictionary*, p. 612. It is interesting to note here that A. Yusuf Ali (*The Holy Qurʾān* [London: The Islamic Foundation, 1975], loc. cit.) glosses *ṣalawāt* as "synagogues," while A. J. Arberry (*The Koran Interpreted* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964], loc. cit.) offers "oratories."

²⁶¹*Taʾwīl*, p. 210.

²⁶²Ibid.

"and His saying, 'rather, it was plotting of the night and the day [*bal makru al-layli wa'l-nahāri*]', that is, your plotting *during* the night and the day [*makrukum fī al-layli wa'l-nahāri*]." ²⁶³ In this context, the term "*fī*" has been inserted as an ellipted annexed term because it is not functioning merely as a preposition but as a circumstantial particle of time (*ʿism al-ẓarf*): ²⁶⁴ yielding both its meaning of "during" as well as its treatment as an ellipted annexed term.

The last Quranic expression that Ibn Qutayba cites as an example of the ellipsis of the annexed term is Q. 9/19 which deals with the comparison of an infinitive noun and a substantive noun, which Ibn Qutayba first clarifies by supplying a substantive as an annexed term to resolve the comparison: "and His saying, 'do you make the watering of the pilgrims and the maintenance of the sacred mosque equal to those who believe in God?', that is, do you make the *one entrusted* [*ṣāhib*] with the watering of the pilgrims and the maintenance of the sacred mosque equal to those who believe in God?" ²⁶⁵ In order to justify this interpretation, Ibn Qutayba also cites Q. 2/177: "as He [also] said, 'but the righteous are [those] who believe in God'." ²⁶⁶ In addition, Ibn Qutayba adduces four different lines of poetry from three different poets each of which displays a different nuance of usage, but all show the type of ellipsis discussed in this section. Among them, for example, is a line from al-Hudhalī: ²⁶⁷

يَمْشِي بَيْنَنَا حَانُوتُ خَمْرٍ مِنْ الْخُرْسِ الصَّرَاصِرَةِ الْقِطَاطِ

²⁶³Ibid.

²⁶⁴See Owens, *Foundations*, pp. 131-2; Wright, *Grammar*, vol. I, pp. 125-6, and esp. vol. II, p. 200.

²⁶⁵*Taʿwīl*, p. 211.

²⁶⁶Ibid.

²⁶⁷Ibid. See also, al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 187; al-Hudhalīyūn, *Dīwān al-Hudhalīyīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Qawmiyya, 1965), vol. II, p. 21. The last three nouns, *al-khurs*, *al-ṣarāṣira*, and *al-qīṭāṭ*, each represents a less than complimentary characterization of foreigners. See Bernhard Lewin, *A Vocabulary of Hudailian Poems* (Göteborg: Kungl. Vetenskaps-och Vitterhets-Samhället, 1978), pp. 107, 236, and 355 respectively. The other poets mentioned include Abū Dhūʿayb (d. 28/649) and Kuthayr (d. 105/723).

*He walks among us, the tavern of wine,
Among the mutes, the Nabatheans, the crisp-haired*

Ibn Qutayba explains this line, saying that al-Hudhalī "meant *the owner* [ṣāhib] of the tavern of wine but *the tavern of wine* [ḥānūt khamr] stands in its place."²⁶⁸

Following his explanation of Q. 9/19, Ibn Qutayba ends this section of Quranic brevity by citing a simpler Quranic example of an annexed term, which deals with a collective plural, and an anonymous line of poetry which displays the same phenomenon. The Quranic passage is Q. 96/17 for which Ibn Qutayba provides the annexed term: "like [the poetry], the saying of The Most High, 'so let him call his council', that is, its *people* [ʾahl]."²⁶⁹ He then ends this section by adducing a line of poetry by Dhū'l-Rumma, although Ibn Qutayba does not acknowledge him, that displays the same usage as Q. 96/17:²⁷⁰

لَهُمْ مَجْلِسٌ صُحُبُ السَّبَالِ أَذَلَّةٌ سَوَاسِيَةٌ أَحْرَارُهَا وَعَبِيدُهَا

*They have a gathering with humble red beards
Its free-born and its slaves alike*

Ibn Qutayba does not provide any explanation of this line, but allows the reader to understand that the members of the gathering, not the gathering itself, possess the red beards.

It is clear from Ibn Qutayba's treatment of this type of Quranic brevity that, although he shows an interest in the minimal semantic clarification of the selected phrases, the type of examples cited as well as the heading under which they are adduced make it equally clear that his primary concern was the precise rhetorical identification and

²⁶⁸ *Taʾwīl*, p. 211.

²⁶⁹ *Taʾwīl*, p. 212.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 210. This line of poetry is also adduced by al-ʿAskarī, in the part of his section on brevity that bears the same sub-heading as this section of the *Taʾwīl*, where al-ʿAskarī does provide the ellipted term: "that is, *the people* [ʾahl] of the gathering." See *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 187.

clarification, of a particular syntactic unit: the ellipsis (*ḥadhf*) of the annexed term (*al-muḍāf*). This particular style or motivation of clarification is quite similar to the periphrastic, syntactic exegesis, known as restoration (*taqdīr*),²⁷¹ of the textual exegetes and grammarians who eventually postulated two types of ellipsis: contextual and structural.²⁷² The Quranic examples adduced in this section are applicable to the contextual ellipsis of the grammarians and textual exegetes but, although Ibn Qutayba's identification of this phenomena was nothing new, his understanding of it appears to be both more thorough and more precise than its understanding by the grammarian Sībawayh (d. 177/793) or the textual exegete al-Farrā' (d. 207/822). Among these selected Quranic citations, Sībawayh offers an examination of only Q. 12/82 and 34/33. On Q. 12/82 he does offer the same clarification as Ibn Qutayba, although he identifies it as an example of ellipsis (*ḥadhf*) at one point but of concision and abbreviation (*al-ʾiḥzāz waʾl-ʾikhtisār*) at another.²⁷³ Sībawayh also identifies Q. 34/33 as an example of concision and abbreviation and clarifies it in the same way as Ibn Qutayba at one point but gives it only a periphrastic explanation, rather than a simple reconstruction, at another.²⁷⁴ Al-Farrā' examines most of the Quranic expressions adduced here by Ibn Qutayba and, while his clarifications and identifications of ellipsis are the same as Ibn

²⁷¹See Owens, *Foundations*, p. 187; QS, pp. 219-26; Wansbrough, "*Majāz al-Qurʾān*," p. 254.

²⁷²Contextual ellipsis involves the ellipsis of a term that is required, or more usually simply more appropriate, for the meaning of the phrase in its given context: a good example is Q. 34/33, "plotting (during) the night and the day," where the insertion of an ellipted term has no real effect on the grammatical status of the other terms in the expression. Without denying that a term involved in contextual ellipsis possesses its own syntactic status within the phrase, structural ellipsis, which is more complicated, involves the ellipsis of a term that does affect the grammatical status of other terms in the expression, such as the resulting change of the term "the town" from the accusative to the genitive case in Q. 12/82, "ask (the people of) the town." For a more detailed account, including examples, see Owens, *Foundations*, pp. 186-8.

²⁷³Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, vol. II, pp. 24; and vol. I, p. 88, respectively. See also, van Gelder, "Brevity," p. 83.

²⁷⁴Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, vol. I, p. 88; and vol. I, p. 75, respectively.

I Qutayba for Q. 12/82, 47/13, 2/93, and 22/40,²⁷⁵ he offers only periphrastic explanations, without any rhetorical designation, of Q. 2/197 or 9/19.²⁷⁶ It is interesting to note here as well that although al-Farrā' does not identify the expression in Q. 34/33 as an example of ellipsis, his clarification of the phrase involves the insertion of the preposition "bi", rather than Ibn Qutayba's "fi".²⁷⁷

Although Ibn Qutayba's clarifications of these Quranic expressions are similar to those that are examined by the rhetorical exegete Abū 'Ubayda (d. 209/824), their rhetorical identification of the expressions differ. Abū 'Ubayda considers the term in Q. 12/82 to have been ellipted at one point, but abbreviated at another,²⁷⁸ while he sees the terms involved in Q. 2/93 and 17/75 as being abbreviated,²⁷⁹ offering no examination of the other expressions adduced by Ibn Qutayba. It is interesting to note too, that although Abū 'Ubayda does not treat Q. 9/19, involving the comparison of an infinitive and a substantive noun, like Ibn Qutayba, he does supply a different noun in the comparison in Q. 2/177, the phrase Ibn Qutayba cited in relation to Q. 9/19.²⁸⁰ However, it may also be noted that for each of these clarifications, save one, Abū 'Ubayda employs the term "majāz."²⁸¹

Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these Quranic phrases differs even more markedly in comparison to their interpretation offered by the later exegete al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923). Even though a number of the explanations cited by al-Ṭabarī include the clarifying

²⁷⁵al-Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, vol. I, p. 61; vol. III, p. 59; vol. I, p. 61; and vol. II, p. 227, respectively.

²⁷⁶Ibid., vol. I, pp. 119-20; and vol. I, p. 427, respectively.

²⁷⁷Ibid., vol. II, p. 363.

²⁷⁸Abū 'Ubayda, *Majāz al-qur'ān*, vol. I, pp. 8, 47. See also, van Gelder, "Brevity," p. 83; Wansbrough, "Majāz al-Qur'ān," p. 248.

²⁷⁹Abū 'Ubayda, *Majāz al-qur'ān*, vol. I, pp. 47, 386, respectively.

²⁸⁰Abū 'Ubayda's reconstruction involves the substitution of the substantive "pious (*al-bār*)" for the Qur'ān's infinitive "piety (*al-birr*). See Abū 'Ubayda, *Majāz al-qur'ān*, vol. I, p. 65; Wansbrough, "Majāz al-Qur'ān," p. 252.

²⁸¹See above, pp. 17-8. The exception is his clarification of Q. 17/75 in *Majāz al-qur'ān*, vol. I, p. 386.

insertion of the same term as that given by Ibn Qutayba, and others, al-Ṭabarī's collected interpretations are almost exclusively concerned only with the semantics of each of the expressions rather than their rhetorical or grammatical implications.²⁸² This demonstrates not only the difference between grammatical exegesis (*taqdīr*) and semantic exegesis (*tafsīr*), the exclusive focus on semantics also demonstrates its difference as classical, rather than formative, *tafsīr*.²⁸³ This disciplinary differentiation, of course, is associated with the independent maturation of the various sciences in the fourth/tenth century, the same period in which stylistic *i'jāz al-qur'ān* works appear. Thus, both the date of al-Ṭabarī's work and its different, semantic, emphasis excludes it as an immediately relevant source in a discussion of both Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity as well as the origins of stylistic *i'jāz al-qur'ān* arguments.

The situation is substantially different with respect to later, fourth/tenth century, Arabic literary theory. This science, of course, was equally concerned with the stylistic elements of both Arabic poetry as well as the Qur'ān. But, more importantly, even a cursory comparison between this type of brevity as given by Ibn Qutayba and that offered by the literary theorist al-ʿAskarī (d. 395/1005) reveals not only similarities but a clear connection. The first part of the fifth chapter of al-ʿAskarī's *Kitāb al-ṣināʿatayn* is devoted to brevity where al-ʿAskarī, unlike Ibn Qutayba, offers some preliminary discussion about his conception of brevity including his mention that ellipsis (*ḥadhf*) and succinctness (*qīṣar*) constitute his broadest term for brevity, concision (*i'jāz*).²⁸⁴

However, al-ʿAskarī's treatment of the Quranic expressions cited by Ibn Qutayba follow

²⁸²The continued citation of al-Ṭabarī's interpretations of the various Quranic phrases adduced by Ibn Qutayba would therefore be of no value to this discussion. In order to illustrate this point, however, the reader may wish to examine the treatments of these phrases in al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*: thus, for his discussion of Q. 2/93, see vol. I, p. 335; for Q. 2/197, see vol. II, pp. 150-2; for Q. 9/19, see vol. X, pp. 67-8; for Q. 12/82, see vol. XIII, p. 35; for Q. 17/75, see vol. XV, p. 89; for Q. 22/40, see vol. XVII, pp. 124-6; for Q. 34/33, see vol. XXII, p. 67; and for Q. 47/13, see vol. XXVI, pp. 30-1.

²⁸³See above, pp. 13-4.

²⁸⁴al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 179. See also, Kanazi, *Studies*, pp. 107-9.

their treatment in the *Taʿwīl* almost verbatim; including the same heading, and thus rhetorical identification, as well as the poetry adduced by al-ʿAskarī also being found in this section of the *Taʿwīl*.²⁸⁵ The only substantial difference is that al-ʿAskarī adduces fewer Quranic examples than Ibn Qutayba.

Any similarity between Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these particular phrases and al-Rummānī (d. 386/996) in his work that demonstrates the stylistic inimitability of the Qurʾān, his *al-Nukat fī iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, is not as apparent. Similar to al-ʿAskarī, al-Rummānī sees ellipsis (*ḥadhf*) and succinctness (*qīṣar*)²⁸⁶ as the two constituents of concision (*iʿjāz*).²⁸⁷ However, of the various Quranic examples cited by Ibn Qutayba in this section, al-Rummānī adduces only Q. 12/82 and 9/19. It is important to note, however, that while al-Rummānī's treatment of Q. 12/82 is contained in the *al-Nukat*'s section on Quranic concision, he offers it only as an example of concision without any effort to clarify its meaning.²⁸⁸ It is equally interesting to note that al-Rummānī adduces the expression in Q. 9/19, not in the *al-Nukat*'s section on concision, but in the section on simile (*tashbīh*), where he again offers no clarification of its meaning but mentions only that the phrase is an excellent way of glorifying faith.²⁸⁹

Insofar as these particular Quranic expressions are concerned, it may be noted that Ibn Qutayba's understanding of this type of Quranic brevity is both more thorough and more precise than that of either Sībawayh or al-Farrāʿ. His treatment of the expressions also appears to be more advanced than their treatment by the rhetorical exegete Abū ʿUbayda, not only because of Abū ʿUbayda's indecision about the classification of Q.

²⁸⁵al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 187.

²⁸⁶The editors of al-Rummānī's *al-Nukat* have pointed this term as *qaṣr*. Although Hans Wehr (*A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. Ed. J. Milton Cowan [Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1979], p. 899) does not gloss this term, but the more usual *qīṣar*, as succinctness, Lane (vol. II, p. 2533) cites both *qaṣr* and *qīṣar* as succinctness, shortness, etc.

²⁸⁷al-Rummānī, *al-Nukat*, p. 76.

²⁸⁸Ibid.

²⁸⁹Ibid., p. 85.

12/82 as either ellipped or abbreviated, but also because of Ibn Qutayba's collection of these various Quranic expressions as examples of a particular, identifiable type of figure of speech rather than Abū 'Ubayda's assertion of their acceptability with his locution of *majāz*. This stylistic advancement by Ibn Qutayba is supported further by noting that the understanding of this type of brevity by the fourth/tenth century literary theorist al-ʿAskarī is derived, without amelioration, directly from Ibn Qutayba. It may also be noted that Ibn Qutayba's treatment of these passages, notwithstanding their rhetorical identification, remains primarily concerned with their clarification. This, together with al-Rummānī's different treatment of both Q. 12/82 and 9/19, also demonstrates little connection between Ibn Qutayba's clarification of these expressions and al-Rummānī's employment of them as indications of the Qurʾān's stylistic inimitability.²⁹⁰

* * * * *

The second section of the *Taʾwīl*'s chapter on Quranic brevity is a brief section in which Ibn Qutayba examines expressions where "[one] verb governs two things and is appropriate for one of them while the appropriate verb for the other is concealed."²⁹¹

The first Quranic example that Ibn Qutayba cites in this section involves a number of phrases in Q. 56/17-22 where he first quotes the complete verbal clause in Q. 56/17-8 which contains a verb, subject, object, as well as a prepositional phrase, but omits the intervening adjectival phrase in Q. 56/19²⁹² which, although he does not view it as

²⁹⁰The only qualifying point to this degree of development involves Ibn Qutayba's inclusion under metaphor (*ʿistiʿāra*) of Q. 12/82 (see *Taʾwīl*, p. 170). Wansbrough (QS, p. 229) sees this as evidence of some indecision about the construction with which I tentatively agree. On the one hand, Wansbrough elsewhere ("*Majāz al-Qurʾān*," p. 254, n. 9) notes the substitutional similarity between an ellipsis associated with the permutative and the metaphorical aspect of synecdoche. On the other hand, if Ibn Qutayba had seen it as such, it seems logical that he would have also adduced the similar expression in Q. 47/13 under metaphor as well. The fact that he did not could simply mean that he was not comprehensive in his selections, or was, as Wansbrough sees it, indecisive.

²⁹¹*ʾan tūqīʿa al-fiʿl ʿalā shayʾayn wa huwa li-ʾaḥadihima wa tuḍmira li-l-ākhar fiʿlahu. Taʾwīl*, pp. 212-4.

²⁹²That is, "no headache will they receive from them, nor will they become intoxicated."

germane to his point, he does see it as sufficiently intervening to prevent the dependent noun phrases in Q. 56/20-2 from belonging to the prepositional phrase in Q. 56/19 but not from the possibility of their being governed, inappropriately, by the verb in Q. 56/17. Thus, after first quoting Q. 56/17-8, Ibn Qutayba quotes Q. 56/20-2, after which he points out the possible confusion involving the verb and supplies the concealed (*tuḍmira*) verb for the noun phrases in Q. 56/20-2: "like His saying, praise Him, 'eternal youths will walk among them with cups and pitchers and a goblet from a spring'. Then He said, 'and fruits from which they may choose, and the meat of birds from which they may desire and wide-eyed nymphs'. But the fruits and the meat and the wide-eyed nymphs did not walk among them, but rather, He meant, and *they offered* [*yuṭṭawna*] the meat of birds."²⁹³

The second and last Quranic expression that Ibn Qutayba cites as an example of one verb governing two things, being appropriate for one of them while the other verb is concealed, is the less complex example of Q. 10/71 where Ibn Qutayba provides the verb he considers to be concealed and cites an interesting authority on the difference: "and [like Q. 56/17-22] is His saying, 'then agree on your plan and your partners', that is, and *call* [*ʿudʿū*] your partners, as it is in the codex of Abd Allāh."²⁹⁴

Ibn Qutayba ends this section by quoting and supplying the concealed verb in each of four separate lines of poetry. Among them is this anonymous line:²⁹⁵

²⁹³*Taʿwīl*, pp. 212-3. The subject of the supplied verb is, of course, the eternal youths. It may also be noted here that Ibn Qutayba makes no mention of a possible ellipsis in the last phrase in Q. 56/18, "a goblet from a spring [*kāʾs min maʿīn*]," but the idea that a goblet was *filled* from a spring is conveyed in the translation, for example, of A. Yusuf Ali (*The Holy Qurʾān*, loc. cit.).

²⁹⁴*Taʿwīl*, p. 213. The reference is to Abd Allāh Ibn Masʿūd (d. ca. 33/653), but this difference is not listed by Jeffery (*Materials*, pp. 46, 135) either in the primary codex of Ibn Masʿūd or in any of the secondary codices based on it, but the difference is, however, listed in the codex of ʿUbayy b. Kaʿb (d. ca. 18/639). See also, *GdQ*, vol. 3, p. 86. It may be noted here as well that Sībawayh, in his discussion of Q. 56/21-2, mentioned above, cites a different nunation offered in the reading of ʿUbayy b. Kaʿb. See Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, vol. I, p. 38; Jeffery, *Materials*, p. 168.

²⁹⁵*Taʿwīl*, p. 213. See also, al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 187.

تَرَاهُ كَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْدَعُ أَنْفَهُ وَعَيْنَيْهِ إِنَّ مَوْلَاهُ ثَابَ لَهُ وَفَرُّ

[Upon looking at him,] you'll see him as if God had cut off his nose
And his eyes, if he received abundance from his Lord

Ibn Qutayba then explains that it means "cut off his nose and *gouged out* [yafqa'a] his eyes."²⁹⁶

It may be noted from Ibn Qutayba's treatment of this particular type of Quranic expression that he has clearly identified them as examples of zeugma, and, by considering the second verb as being concealed, allows for their clarification with the insertion of the concealed verb which in turn explains their inclusion in the *Ta'wīl*'s chapter dealing with Quranic brevity. This understanding of these Quranic phrases, however, appears to be a more expansive version of an earlier point of view. Although Sibawayh does not mention the construction in Q. 10/71 and offers only a discussion of different phrase nutation (*tanwīn*) between the phrases in Q. 56/21 and 56/22,²⁹⁷ he clearly does not treat any of these expressions as examples of zeugma. Al-Farrā', on the other hand, even though he does not treat Q. 56/17-22 as zeugma,²⁹⁸ his treatment of Q. 10/71 is very similar to Ibn Qutayba's treatment of it in the *Ta'wīl*. Al-Farrā''s treatment of Q. 10/71 reveals that he supplies the same verb for the expression as well as identifying it as concealed. In addition, he similarly cites the codex of Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd and adduces the same poetry to illustrate the usage in Q. 10/71 as that found in Ibn Qutayba's explanation of the same verse.²⁹⁹ Abū 'Ubayda only examines some of the phrases in Q. 56/17-22 but does not treat any of those phrases as an example of zeugma and, thus, supplies no concealed term.³⁰⁰

The similarity between al-Farrā' and Ibn Qutayba could also be extended to

²⁹⁶*Ta'wīl*, p. 213.

²⁹⁷Sibawayh, *Kitāb*, vol. I, pp. 38, 73.

²⁹⁸al-Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-qur'ān*, vol. III, pp. 122-3.

²⁹⁹*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 473.

³⁰⁰Abū 'Ubayda, *Majāz al-qur'ān*, vol. II, p. 249.

include al-ʿAskarī, who does not treat Q. 56/17-22 in the same way as Ibn Qutayba³⁰¹ but his treatment of Q. 10/71, including the view that a second verb is concealed, the poetry quoted to illustrate a similar usage in Arabic poetry, as well as mentioning the difference in the codex of Ibn Masʿūd is identical to that found in al-Farrāʾ's *Maʿānī al-qurʾān* and Ibn Qutayba's *Taʾwīl*.³⁰² In fact, al-ʿAskarī cites Q. 10/71 as a Quranic example, exactly like Ibn Qutayba, of a phrase where "[one] verb governs two things and is appropriate for one of them while the appropriate verb for the other is concealed."³⁰³ Any similarity between Ibn Qutayba and others, however, stops with al-Rummānī whose short *al-Nukat* makes no mention of any of these Quranic expressions.

Ibn Qutayba's understanding of this particular figure of speech, or the Quranic examples of it, does appear to be more developed than the views of the grammarian Sibawayh. But whether Ibn Qutayba demonstrates any improvement upon the views of al-Farrāʾ, however, depends on the status of Q. 56/17-22 which was adduced as an example of zeugma by Ibn Qutayba but not by al-Farrāʾ. The deciding factor here, regardless of the actual rhetorical status of Q. 56/17-22, is that al-ʿAskarī decided not to include it. But neither al-ʿAskarī nor Ibn Qutayba state that his Quranic citations are a comprehensive selection of the type of expressions he examined. Nevertheless, al-ʿAskarī's understanding of Quranic zeugma is no more advanced than its presentation in Ibn Qutayba's *Taʾwīl*. Ibn Qutayba's understanding of this particular figure of speech demonstrates, like section one above, a striking similarity between his own views on the citation and clarification of this particular trope in the Qurʾān and its treatment by the literary theorist al-ʿAskarī. Even more pronounced than in section one, however, is the lack of any link between Ibn Qutayba's views on this type of Quranic brevity and al-

³⁰¹al-ʿAskarī examines only the adjectival phrase in Q. 56/19, which was omitted by Ibn Qutayba, but does mention that this expression is an example of succinctness (*qīṣar*). See al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 182.

³⁰²al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 187.

³⁰³Ibid.

Rummānī's views on Quranic brevity as an indication of its stylistic inimitability.

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The third type of Quranic brevity for which Ibn Qutayba devotes a section deals with "the use of a conditional phrase which should have an apodosis but in which the apodosis is omitted for abbreviation because the hearer is cognizant of it."³⁰⁴ Although Ibn Qutayba cites four Quranic examples within this section, he implicitly divides them into two types.

The first type of these is the omission of the apodosis (*jawāb*) in a conditional sentence for which Ibn Qutayba gives two Quranic examples. However, even here, Ibn Qutayba again implicitly gives an example of two different types of conditional phrases. The first of these is Q. 13/31 which represents an example of an open or likely condition where the protasis (*shart*) is introduced by the conjugation "if there were (*law ʿanna*)",³⁰⁵ which Ibn Qutayba first quotes, then supplies the omitted apodosis using the standard syntactic particle "*la*" as its introduction: "like His saying, praise Him, 'if there were a Qurʾān by which the mountains would be moved or the earth would be torn apart or the dead would be made to speak. Rather, the matter is with God entirely'. He meant, *it would be by this Qurʾān*, but it was omitted."³⁰⁶ The second example of omitting an apodosis in a conditional sentence cited by Ibn Qutayba is Q. 24/20 which is a closed or unlikely condition where the protasis is introduced by the conjugation "if it were not (*law lā*)",³⁰⁷ where, after quoting the example from the Qurʾān, Ibn Qutayba again supplies the omitted apodosis with the introductory particle "*la*": "and like [Q. 13/31], His saying, 'if it were not for the grace and mercy of God toward you and that God is most merciful and compassionate.' He meant, He would punish you, but it was omitted."³⁰⁸ To illustrate

³⁰⁴*ʿan yaʿtiya biʾl-kalām mabniyyan ʿalā ʿanna lahu jawāb fa-yaḥdhifa al-jawāb ʾikhṭisār li-ʿilmi al-mukhāṭab bihi. Taʾwīl*, pp. 214-6.

³⁰⁵See Wright, *Grammar*, vol. II, pp. 6-9, 348-9.

³⁰⁶*Taʾwīl*, p. 214. See also, Wright, *Grammar*, vol. II, p. 8.

³⁰⁷See Wright, *Grammar*, vol. II, pp. 6-7.

³⁰⁸*Taʾwīl*, p. 214. See also, Wright, *Grammar*, vol. II, p. 7.

this type of ellipsis, Ibn Qutayba then quotes an unacknowledged line of poetry from ʿImruʿl-Qays (fl. 6th c. CE) which, however, contains only a general conditional phrase, thus, more accurately classified only as a supposition:³⁰⁹

فَأَقْسِمُ لَوْ شِئْتُ أَنَا رَسُولُهُ سِوَاكَ وَلَكِنْ لَمْ نَجِدْ لَكَ مَدْفَعًا

*I swear that if anyone other than you had come to us as a messenger
But we found no cause for rejection*

Ibn Qutayba then supplies the omitted apodosis: "that is, we would have rejected him [*la-radadnāhu*]."³¹⁰

In the second type of Quranic expression Ibn Qutayba cites in this section dealing with simple comparative expressions where the second correlative phrase has been omitted, he gives some explanation of the expression then supplies the omitted phrase but, like the two Quranic citations above, this is done more for grammatical reasons than for semantic ones. The first example is Q. 3/113: "God, the Mighty and Glorious, said, 'not all of them are alike. Some of the People of the Book are an upright community, reciting the signs of God all night long and prostrating themselves'. He mentioned one community but did not mention another after it: [the term] 'equal' [*sawāʾ*] is used for equalization between two or more things."³¹¹ The second example is an expression in Q. 39/9 which, itself, does not contain the second correlative phrase although, as Ibn Qutayba points out, the semantic sense of the missing phrase is eventually supplied later in the verse: "and He said, 'is he obedient [who] worships all night long, prostrating and standing?' But He did not mention the opposite of this because, in His saying, 'Say: "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" [Q. 39/9]', is an indication of what He

³⁰⁹ *Taʾwīl*, p. 215. See also, al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 188; ʿImruʿl-Qays, *Dīwān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1958), p. 130; al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, p. 63.

³¹⁰ *Taʾwīl*, p. 215.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

meant."³¹²

Ibn Qutayba then illustrates this type of expression and ends this section by quoting two separate lines of poetry for which he supplies the omitted phrase, including, for example, this line from Abū Dhuʿayb:³¹³

عَمَيْتُ إِلَيْهَا الْقَلْبَ إِنِّي لِأَمْرِهِ سَمِيعٌ فَمَا أُدْرِي أُرْشِدُ طَلَابَهَا

*For her I disobeyed the heart to whose command
I listen, and I know not if seeking her is wise*

Ibn Qutayba then explains that "he meant, was it wise *or misguided*, but it was omitted."³¹⁴

It may be noted that Ibn Qutayba's treatment of the first two Quranic examples in this section, the conditional sentences in Q. 13/31 and 24/20, seem to represent a strict interpretation of the conditional particles involved as syntactically requiring an apodosis, rather than simply representing rhetorical questions in a conditional form.³¹⁵ Thus, while Ibn Qutayba could have followed Abū ʿUbayda's treatment of Q. 13/31 by simply explaining the existing Quranic phrase and noting that an apodosis is not required,³¹⁶ he chose instead to follow al-Farrāʾ more closely. Al-Farrāʾ, however, does not examine the expression in Q. 24/20 but in his examination of the similar expression in Q. 24/10, he supplies an apodosis quite similar to the one Ibn Qutayba supplies for Q. 24/20, also noting that an apodosis in such a construction is often left out (*taraka*).³¹⁷ It is interesting to note as well that in al-Farrāʾ's treatment of Q. 13/3', he does clarify the expression in

³¹²Ibid. It may be noted that this omitted correlative phrase is supplied in the translation of Yusuf Alī (*The Holy Qurʾān*, loc. cit.).

³¹³*Taʾwīl*, p. 215. See also, al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. I, p. 230; al-Hudhalīyūn, *Dīwān*, vol. I, p. 71.

³¹⁴*Taʾwīl*, p. 216.

³¹⁵See M. M. Bravmann, *Studies in Arabic and General Syntax* (Paris: Institute Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1953), p. 18, n. 1; Wright, *Grammar*, vol. II, pp. 8-9.

³¹⁶Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. I, p. 331.

³¹⁷al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, p. 247.

the same way as Ibn Qutayba, supplying the same apodosis, and he adduces the same line of poetry as Ibn Qutayba to illustrate its usage. But, unlike Ibn Qutayba, al-Farrāʾ also explains that "the Arabs omit [*taḥdhifu*] the apodosis, when it is known, for the sake of concision [*ʾijāz*],"³¹⁸ a term Ibn Qutayba does not employ. This similarity between al-Farrāʾ and Ibn Qutayba continues in their treatments of the comparative phrase in Q. 3/113. While Abū ʿUbayda offers some interpretation of the first phrase, he does not supply an apodosis like Ibn Qutayba.³¹⁹ Al-Farrāʾ, on the other hand, treats Q. 3/113 in the same way as Ibn Qutayba and cites the same line of poetry to illustrate the usage.³²⁰ This similarity between al-Farrāʾ and Ibn Qutayba ends, however, in their understanding of the expression in Q. 39/9. Abū ʿUbayda does not examine it, while al-Farrāʾ examines only the identity of those mentioned without supplying a second correlative phrase like Ibn Qutayba.³²¹

Ibn Qutayba's views on these four Quranic expressions and those of al-ʿAskarī is much closer. The four Quranic statements, their treatment, the lines of illustrative poetry, as well as the heading under which they are adduced are almost identical in Ibn Qutayba's *Taʾwīl* and al-ʿAskarī's *Ṣināʿatayn*, differing only in al-ʿAskarī's deletion of the line of poetry from Abū Dhuʾayb.³²² It is also interesting to note that of these four Quranic expressions, al-Rummānī cites only Q. 13/31 in the *al-Nukat*'s section on Quranic concision, where he, like Ibn Qutayba, supplies the same homiletically obvious apodosis: that if the phrase continued, "it would be this Qurʾān."³²³

* * * * *

Ibn Qutayba's fourth type of Quranic brevity is contained in a section that includes a variety of kinds of ellipsis which Ibn Qutayba terms, simply, "the ellipsis of a word or

³¹⁸Ibid., vol. II, pp. 63-4.

³¹⁹Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. I, pp. 101-2.

³²⁰al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. I, pp. 230-1.

³²¹Ibid., vol. II, p. 416.

³²²al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 188.

³²³al-Rummānī, *al-Nukat*, p. 76.

two."³²⁴

The first three examples that Ibn Qutayba cites here are Quranic expressions of dialogue which contain no reference to the appropriate hearer or speaker that Ibn Qutayba supplies when the narrative shifts. The first example is Q. 3/106: "like His saying, 'and as for those whose faces become black, do you not believe?', the meaning is: then it will be said to them [*fa-yuqālū iahum*], 'do you not believe?'.³²⁵ The second example is Q. 32/12: "and His saying, 'and if you could see the guilty lower their heads before their Lord, Our Lord, we have seen and heard'. The meaning is: *they will say* [*yaqūlūna*], 'Our Lord, we have seen'.³²⁶ The third example which Ibn Qutayba cites is Q. 2/127: " 'when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House, Our Lord, accept [this] from us.' The meaning is, they will say [*yaqūlāni*], 'Our Lord, accept [this] from us'.³²⁷

The remainder of this section, like its heading, represents a collection of Quranic expressions that appear to be simple examples of the ellipsis of a word or two. The next example of Q. 17/23, however, could have also been adduced in section two, above, because Ibn Qutayba clarifies it with the insertion of a second verb which is more appropriate for the second noun phrase: "God, the Mighty and Glorious, said, 'your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and of parents, charity', that is, *and take care* [*wa waṣṣā*] of parents."³²⁸ Ibn Qutayba then cites a line of poetry from al-Namir b. Tawlab (d. ca. 23/644) which illustrates the ellipsis of a verb:³²⁹

فَلَنْ الْمَنِيَّةَ مَنْ يَخْشَاهَا فَسَوْفَ تُصَادِفُهُ أَيُّنَمَا

*As for fate, whoever fears it
It will find him wherever*

³²⁴*ḥadhf al-kilama wa'l-kilamatayn. Ta'wīl*, pp. 216-8

³²⁵*Ta'wīl*, p. 216.

³²⁶*Ibid.*

³²⁷*Ibid.*

³²⁸*Ta'wīl*, p. 217.

³²⁹*Ibid.* See also, al-^cAskarī, *Ṣinā'atayn*, p. 189.

Ibn Qutayba then explains that "he meant, wherever *he goes* [*dhahaba*]." ³³⁰ The next example is an expression in Q. 14/18 where Ibn Qutayba simply clarifies the location of an adjective and its associated noun: "God, the Mighty and Glorious, said, 'like ashes blown hard by the wind on a violent day', He meant, on a day of *violent wind* [*ʿāṣif al-rīḥ*], but it was omitted because He mentioned the wind beforehand which indicated it." ³³¹ Ibn Qutayba then cites an expression in Q. 29/22 where he identifies an ellipted pronoun which he then supplies for circumstantial clarity: "the Most High said, 'you will not be able in earth or in heaven'. He meant, and *whoever* [*man*] is in heaven will not be able." ³³² The next examples cited by Ibn Qutayba consists of two expressions in Q. 27/12, the first dealing with the ellipsis of an otiose specification, and the second with the ellipsis of a verb which Ibn Qutayba supplies for strict grammatical reasons rather than for semantic ones: "the Most High said, 'Put your hand in your breast. It will come out white, without injury, of nine signs to Pharaoh and his people'. He meant, of the nine signs is *this sign* [*hādhihi al-ʾāya*], that is, among them. Then He said, 'to Pharaoh', but he did not say *sent* [*mursal*] or *dispatched* [*mabʿūth*] because that is well known." ³³³ Following this, Ibn Qutayba cites Q. 7/73 as another example of this type of ellipsis of a verb: "and like it, 'and to Thamūd, Ṣāliḥ reached them', that is, *We sent* [*ʾarsalnā*]." ³³⁴ Presumably to illustrate this type of ellipsis of a verb, Ibn Qutayba then cites a line of anonymous poetry: ³³⁵

رَأَتْنِي بِجَبَلَيْهَا فَصَدَّتْ مَخَافَةً فِي الْجَبَلِ رَوْعَاءُ الْفُؤَادِ فَرُوقُ

*She saw me with her reins and turned away fearful
In the reins is the fear of the heart*

³³⁰ *Taʾwīl*, p. 217.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ *Taʾwīl*, p. 218.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

Ibn Qutayba then supplies another verb: "he meant *approaching* [*muqbil*] with her reins."³³⁶ Similarly, Ibn Qutayba then adduces an expression in Q. 17/7 which he first treats as an example of an ellipted verb, which he supplies, then explains the reason for its ellipsis: "the Mighty and Glorious said, 'so when the second warning came to disfigure your faces', He meant, *We sent* [*ba'athnā*] it to disfigure your faces, but He omitted it because it was mentioned before: 'and when the first warning came, *We sent* Our servants against you [Q. 17/5]'. The first mention of the two is sufficient."³³⁷ Ibn Qutayba then ends this section by citing Q. 50/17 as an equally simple example of one phrase modifying two others without the repetition of the former phrase: "like that is His saying, 'a companion on the right and on the left', the first mention is sufficient for both."³³⁸

Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these eleven Quranic phrases is quite interesting in that he views all of them as examples of the relatively simple identification of the ellipsis of a word or two which could serve more appropriately as a prefatory division to his first section on Quranic brevity, dealing with the ellipsis of a particular term. More interesting, however, is that the Quranic expressions adduced by Ibn Qutayba under this heading are, in fact, not stylistically homogeneous. Of course, this pertains to Ibn Qutayba's innovation of putting various Quranic expressions under headings of a particular type of usage and, thus, while it is still possible to compare his views about the particular expressions involved to previous authors, it would be difficult to determine if they also saw these various phrases as equivalent. For example, the first three Quranic expressions Ibn Qutayba cites in this section, Q. 3/106, 32/12, and 2/127, are each treated as examples of apostrophe. Ibn Qutayba's isolation of apostrophe in these expressions appears to be at least more comprehensive than Sibawayh, who does not examine Q.

³³⁶Ibid.

³³⁷Ibid.

³³⁸Ibid.

3/106 nor 2/127, and does not isolate the apostrophe in Q. 32/12.³³⁹ Similarly, Ibn Qutayba's treatment seems more comprehensive than that of al-Farrāʿ, who does offer the same treatment for apostrophe as Ibn Qutayba but only for Q. 3/106 and 2/127,³⁴⁰ and Abū ʿUbayda, who does treat Q. 3/106 in a way similar to al-Farrāʿ and Ibn Qutayba, but does not do so for Q. 32/12 or 2/127.³⁴¹ Following these three examples of apostrophe, however, Ibn Qutayba's fourth example from the Qurʾān in this section, Q. 17/23, is treated as an example of zeugma and, as such, should have been more appropriately adduced in the second section which deals with this type of expression exclusively. Even though al-Farrāʿ clarifies this expression in Q. 17/23 in the same way as Ibn Qutayba, it is impossible to determine if al-Farrāʿ viewed the kind of expression in Q. 17/23 as similar to those in Q. 3/106, 32/12, and 2/127.³⁴² The remaining Quranic citations in this section are less intriguing primarily because they involve only the explanation of phrases which syntactically, as Ibn Qutayba identifies them, merely display the ellipsis of a word or two. In addition, where earlier authors have examined the same expressions as Ibn Qutayba, their explanations resemble his quite closely.³⁴³

To a large extent, al-ʿAskarī follows Ibn Qutayba's views about these particular Quranic expressions. Although al-ʿAskarī includes only four of the eleven verses cited by Ibn Qutayba, it is interesting to note that he does include one of the apostrophe phrases, Q. 3/106, the zeugma in Q. 17/23, and two of the simpler examples of the ellipsis of a word or two in Q. 14/18 and 29/22, all of which he treats in the same way as Ibn Qutayba

³³⁹Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, vol. I, p. 71.

³⁴⁰al-Farrāʿ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. I, p. 228; and vol. I, p. 78, respectively.

³⁴¹Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. I, p. 100. Abū ʿUbayda does examine some of the expressions in Q. 2/127 but without treating it as apostrophe. See *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. I, pp. 54-5.

³⁴²al-Farrāʿ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, p. 120.

³⁴³Sībawayh does not examine any of these Quranic expressions. For al-Farrāʿ's views on Q. 14/18, 29/22, 27/12, 7/73, 17/7, and 50/17, see *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, pp. 72-3, vol. II, p. 315; vol. II, p. 287; vol. I, pp. 383-4; vol. II, p. 117; and vol. III, p. 77, respectively, while Abū ʿUbayda gives his views of Q. 14/18 only. See *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. I, p. 338.

In addition, al-ʿAskarī also includes them under the same heading as Ibn Qutayba, and employs the same lines of poetry in connection with these verses as those employed by Ibn Qutayba.³⁴⁴ Al-Rummānī, on the other hand, includes none of these Quranic phrases in the *al-Nukat*'s section on Quranic concision, although he does include the expression in Q. 14/82 in the section on simile, for which he identifies no ellipted term of course, but mentions only that this type of expression employs something which can be perceived to bring out the sense of something which cannot.³⁴⁵

* * * * *

In the fifth section of Quranic brevity in the *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qurʾān*'s chapter of ellipsis and abbreviation Ibn Qutayba cites Quranic example where "the phrase is ambiguous by being obscure because of abbreviation and concealment."³⁴⁶ This section is, however, much more exegetical than rhetorical or syntactic. Although Ibn Qutayba views the expressions cited here as examples of abbreviation (*ʾikhtisār*) or concealment (*ʾidmār*), most examples adduced are treated in terms of the concealed meaning of the expression rather than in terms of its concealed parts. Yet, because his clarifications often take the form of inserted explanatory phrases, Ibn Qutayba has located this paraphrastic exegesis in the chapter on brevity.³⁴⁷

For example, Ibn Qutayba's first Quranic citation in this section, Q. 35/8, does not deal with a rhetorical omission but with an exhortatory related insertion: "like His saying, 'so what of him who believes in the harm of his work so that he looks upon it as good? For God leads astray whom He wishes and guides whom He wishes, so do not let your soul seek them sighing'. The meaning is, so what of him who believes in the harm of his work so that he looks upon it as good? *Your soul has sought it sighing* [*dhahabat nafsuka*

³⁴⁴al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, pp. 188-9.

³⁴⁵al-Rummānī, *al-Nukat*, p. 82.

³⁴⁶yus..kīlu al-kalām wa yaghmuḍu biʾl-ʾikhtisār waʾl-ʾidmār. *Taʾwīl*, pp. 218-23.

³⁴⁷A number of Ibn Qutayba's explanations in this section involve idiomatic expressions from Arabic sayings or poetry; yet, of the fifteen Quranic citations adduced here, none of them appears in the *Taʾwīl*'s section on idiom.

ḥasira ʿalayhi], so do not let your soul seek them sighing, for God leads astray whom He wishes and guides whom He wishes."³⁴⁸

Although Ibn Qutayba's second example of an expression in Q. 27/10-11 focusses on the syntactic influence of the exceptive particle "except (*ʿillā*)",³⁴⁹ he devotes an extraordinary amount of space to a discussion, like Q. 35/8, of the concealed or ambiguous meaning of the expression: "like His saying, praise Him, 'Indeed, those sent do not fear in My presence except [he] who has done wrong then replaced good after evil, for I am much forgiving and merciful'. The 'except [*ʿillā*]' does not apply to those sent, but rather, to a notion concealed in the phrase, as if He had said, those sent do not fear in My presence, *rather, others are fearful* [*bal ḡhayruhum al-khāʾif*] except [he] who has done wrong then repented, since he does not fear."³⁵⁰ Ibn Qutayba's subsequent analysis of the meaning of this expression begins with his quoting an opinion of al-Farrāʾ,³⁵¹ which he then amplifies with his own interpretation based upon earlier parts of the narrative in which Q. 27/10-11 is situated: "this is the saying of al-Farrāʾ, who continues, 'because the Arabs only omit from the phrase what has [already] been indicated in it or what is obvious'. But it is not obvious in this phrase, although this interpretation gives an indication of its inner meaning [*bāṭin*]. This is [my] opinion, but God knows best, that when Moses, peace be upon him, feared the snake, turned away and did not follow, God, the Mighty and Glorious, said, 'Moses, do not fear. Indeed, those sent do not fear in My presence [Q. 27/10]'. But He knew that Moses sensed another fear, from his sins as a man, which struck him so he would be finished. So He said, 'except [he] who has done wrong then replaced good after evil [Q. 27/11]', that is, [with] repentance and remorse. Then, because he feared, 'I am much forgiving and merciful [Q. 27/11]' "³⁵² Ibn Qutayba

³⁴⁸*Taʾwīl*, p. 219.

³⁴⁹See Wright, *Grammar*, vol. II, pp. 335-41.

³⁵⁰*Taʾwīl*, p. 219.

³⁵¹See al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, p. 287.

³⁵²*Taʾwīl*, pp. 219-20.

continues this semantic discussion by noting more opinions which, while still dealing with interpretations of the exceptive particle in Q. 27/10, is nevertheless adduced within this chapter on brevity and involves additional comparisons to the interpretation involving the same particle in Q. 2/150 and Q. 8/5: "Some of the grammarians [*al-naḥwīyīn*] hold: 'except [he] who has done wrong [*ʿillā man ḡalama*]' means, and *not* [he] who has done wrong [*wa lā man ḡalama*], like His saying, 'so that there will be no argument against you by the people except among them who do wrong [*ʿillā ʿalladhīna ḡalamūʿ minhum*, Q. 2/150]'. In accordance with this opinion is the interpretation regarding 'except [*ʿillā*]'.

Like His saying in the *sūra* of The Spoils, after a description of the believers, 'just as your Lord ordered you out of your house in truth [Q. 8/5]'. This narrative did not compare the believers with him whom God removed but the phrase yields the meaning in the interpretation of the *sūra* and its topic; namely, that the Prophet, God bless him, saw on the day of [the battle of] Badr, the pettiness of the Muslims and the repugnance of many of them at the time of the battle [regarding the division of spoils]. So he gave each man among them what he had obtained and gave to everyone who had fought and [to relatives of those who had] been killed so much and to whomever had carried out the enterprise so much. But the people disliked that, so they disputed, differed and argued with the Prophet, God bless him, and quarreled with him. So God, praise Him, revealed, 'They asked you about the spoils. Say, "The spoils are for God and His messenger [Q. 8/1]". 'He grants them to whom He wishes,' so fear God and make amends amongst yourselves [Q. 8/1]', that is, divide them amongst yourselves equally, 'and obey God and His messenger [Q. 8/1]', then a description of the believers [i.e.: Q. 8/2-4], then He said, 'just as your Lord ordered you out of your house in truth, even though a party of the believers disliked it [Q. 8/5]'. He means that their dislike toward you after the expulsion, as if He had said, this is one of their dislikes just as your Lord ordered you *and them* [*wa*

ʿiyyāhum] but *they* [hum] disliked it."³⁵³

It is clear that Ibn Qutayba's discussion above deals with the theologically related question of the identity of those mentioned after the apparently obscuring exceptive particle but he still views this as a particular and acceptable type of usage since he continues to say that "some of the sayings of the Arabs and their poetry belong to this",³⁵⁴ and adduces three separate lines of poetry as well as a proverb, each of which contains an obscure reference and thus, like the heading of this section, an ambiguous phrase, although none of them contains the particle "except (ʿillā)." Among these citations, for example, is this anonymous line of poetry:³⁵⁵

فَلَا تَدْفِنُونِي إِنْ دَفَنِي مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ خَامِرِي أُمُّ عَامِرٍ

*Do not bury me. Indeed my burial is forbidden
To you, but hide yourself ʿUmm ʿĀmir [viz. the hyena]*

Ibn Qutayba then clarifies this line by inserting an explanatory phrase: "he means, do not bury me but *leave me to the one to whom, when it is hunted* {daʿūnī li-latī yuqāla lahā ʿidhā šīdat}, one says, 'hide yourself ʿUmm ʿĀmir,' meaning, the hyena, in order to eat me."³⁵⁶

Ibn Qutayba's last series of Quranic citations in this section still deal with an ambiguous reference within each phrase but his concern seems to be more semantic and exegetical, like his next example of Q. 7/32. and, although he clarifies the remaining Quranic expressions syntactically with the insertion of a preposition, a pronoun, or a combination of both, his concern still appears to be semantic. For example, following the poetry, he cites an expression in Q. 7/32 where he simply explains the apparent

³⁵³Taʿwīl, pp. 220-1.

³⁵⁴Taʿwīl, p. 221.

³⁵⁵Ibid. See also, al-ʿAskarī, *Šināʿatayn*, p. 189.

³⁵⁶Taʿwīl, p. 221. The term "ʿUmm ʿĀmir" is a synonym for the hyena (ḡabuḡ). See Lane, vol. I, p. 808.

ambiguity: "and like it is His saying, praise Him, 'Say, "They are for those who believe in the life of the world sincerely and in the day of resurrection", ' that is, they are for those who believe, meaning in the world, collectively, and in the hereafter, sincerely."³⁵⁷ He then clarifies Q. 3/175 with the insertion of a preposition: "and [...] His saying, 'Only that one, Satan, frightens his helpers', that is, he frightens *with* [bi] his helpers."³⁵⁸ Ibn Qutayba then compares the type of statement in Q. 3/175 with similar expressions in Q. 18/2 and Q. 20/108, respectively: "just as He said, praise Him, 'in order to warn severe injury from Him', that is, in order to warn *you of* [-kum bi] a severe injury; and like it, 'On that day they will follow the caller without deviation for him [lahu]', that is, without deviation *by them from him* [lahum 'anhu]."³⁵⁹ The next two verses cited by Ibn Qutayba deal with the apparent ambiguity of pronouns in the expressions as seen by his treatment of two phrases in Q. 51/57, for which he also provides a rationale for his clarifications: "His saying, 'I do not require sustenance from them', that is, I do not require *them to sustain their souls* ['an yarzuqū 'anfusahum], [and], 'nor do I require that they nourish', that is, nor do I require that they nourish *any one of My creation* ['aḥad min khalqī]. The basis of this is that men are the servants of God and His dependents, and whoever nourishes the dependents of a man and sustains them is like sustaining and nourishing Him, but their sustenance belongs to Him."³⁶⁰ The last Quranic expression in this section is Q. 27/25 for which Ibn Qutayba simply supplies a clarification: "and like [Q. 51/57] is His saying, praise Him, 'that they do not worship God, Who brings out that which is hidden', He meant, *O you* [yā hā'ulā'i] do not worship God."³⁶¹

It is perhaps interesting to note that Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these particular Quranic expressions differs from both Sībawayh and Abū 'Ubayda but does

³⁵⁷ *Ta'wīl*, p. 222.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁰ *Ta'wīl*, p. 223.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

follow the views of al-Farrāʾ quite closely. Sibawayh offers an examination of only two of these expressions and in neither phrase does he identify the same type of ambiguity identified by Ibn Qutayba.³⁶² Although Abū ʿUbayda examines three of these expressions, each examination indicates a difference in comparison to Ibn Qutayba. His treatment of Q. 35/8 makes no mention of the same type of ambiguity isolated by Ibn Qutayba³⁶³ but his treatment of Q. 2/150, adduced by Ibn Qutayba in the explanation of the ambiguity involving the exceptive particle in Q. 27/10-11, is treated in the same way,³⁶⁴ although he does not display a similar understanding of Q. 27/10-11 itself. The only other expression among those in this section that Abū ʿUbayda examines is Q. 27/25. Even though he does not explicitly identify this expression as an example of abbreviation or concealment, he does clarify it in a way similar to Ibn Qutayba's, and the same hemistich of poetry from al-ʿAjjāj that Abū ʿUbayda quotes in his explanation of Q. 27/25 also appears in Ibn Qutayba's examination of the same expression.³⁶⁵ Al-Farrāʾ, on the other hand, offers the same understanding and treatment as Ibn Qutayba for Q. 35/8, 7/32, 3/175, 18/2, 20/108, 51/57, and 27/25,³⁶⁶ as well as similarly adducing Q. 2/150 in his clarification of Q. 27/10-11 and Q. 18/2 for Q. 3/175.³⁶⁷ It has already been noted, however, that Ibn Qutayba disagrees with al-Farrāʾ's explanation of Q. 27/10-11 which can yield some information about Ibn Qutayba's understanding of the technical terms involved. Ibn Qutayba notes that al-Farrāʾ considered this expression to represent an example of ellipsis (*ḥadhf*) on the basis that such an ellipsis is allowed as long as the

³⁶²The only similar expressions examined by Sibawayh are Q. 7/32 and 27/25. See Sibawayh, *Kitāb*, vol. I, p. 224; and vol. II, p. 170, respectively.

³⁶³Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. II, p. 152.

³⁶⁴Ibid., vol. I, p. 60.

³⁶⁵See *Taʾwīl*, p. 223; Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. II, pp. 93-4.

³⁶⁶al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, pp. 366-7; vol. I, p. 376; vol. I, p. 248; vol. I, p. 248; vol. II, p. 192; vol. III, pp. 89-90; and vol. II, p. 290, respectively. The only remaining citation is Q. 8/5 but al-Farrāʾ does not examine the same expression as Ibn Qutayba. See al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. I, p. 403.

³⁶⁷See al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, p. 287; vol. I, p. 248, respectively.

ellipted item is somehow indicated elsewhere in the expression or is obvious, a requirement of ellipsis retained by the classical grammarians.³⁶⁸ But Ibn Qutayba, in his examination of Q. 27/10-11, mentions that he does not consider this requirement to have been met and, accordingly, seems to consider this expression in Q. 27/10-11 to represent an example of abbreviation (*ʾikhtisār*) or concealment (*ʾidmār*) rather than ellipsis (*ḥadhf*). Except for this difference of opinion and Ibn Qutayba's more frequent use of technical identifications of these expressions, Ibn Qutayba's views about these expressions do follow those of al-Farrāʾ quite closely.

The difference between Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these Quranic expressions and their technical identification is more interesting in comparison to al-ʿAskarī. It has been noted that the first four sections on Quranic brevity in Ibn Qutayba's *Taʾwīl* have been followed closely by al-ʿAskarī in his *Ṣināʿatayn*. Although al-ʿAskarī often deletes a number of the Quranic examples adduced by Ibn Qutayba, his citation of the remainder in the same order as Ibn Qutayba, their treatment, as well as his employment of identical lines of poetry to illustrate the same usage, all collected under identical headings to those found in the *Taʾwīl* are the same. As for this section, however, al-ʿAskarī does not adduce any of these Quranic phrases anywhere in the *Ṣināʿatayn*'s section on brevity, nor does he mention this particular type of brevity. Yet, al-ʿAskarī does cite one of the poetic examples that Ibn Qutayba cites within this section, but obviously to illustrate a different point. This involves the anonymous line of poetry, about ʿUmm ʿĀmir, that Ibn Qutayba employs in this section following his lengthy discussion about Q. 27/10-11 as an ambiguous expression due to abbreviation or concealment, but which al-ʿAskarī adduces as a similar type of expression as Q. 29/22, considered by both Ibn Qutayba and al-ʿAskarī as an example of the ellipsis of a word or two.³⁶⁹ Except for this one point, al-ʿAskarī simply omits this section of the *Taʾwīl*'s chapter on brevity from his own section

³⁶⁸See Owens, *Foundations*, p. 186.

³⁶⁹*Taʾwīl*, p. 222; al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 189.

on brevity in his *Ṣināʿatayn*. A comparison between Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these Quranic phrases and al-Rummānī's reveals simply that the latter mentions none of these expressions anywhere in his *al-Nukat*.

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Although Ibn Qutayba cites abbreviation and concealment as reasons for the ambiguity of phrases in the fifth section above, it is in this sixth section that he first adduces Quranic expressions which he identifies as a particular type of abbreviation rather than ellipsis: "under abbreviation is the oath without a complement when an indication of the complement is in the following phrase."³⁷⁰

Ibn Qutayba first adduces two Quranic examples of oaths where both examples have the required complement of the oath contained in a phrase more removed from the oath than its syntactically expected position immediately following the oath phrase.³⁷¹ The first example is Q. 50/1-3 where the oath occurs in Q. 50/1 while its complement does not occur until Q. 50/3: "Qaf. By the glorious Qurʾān, but they marvel that a warner came to them from among themselves and the unbelievers said, 'This is an amazing thing What, when we are dead (we will be resurrected)?'."³⁷² Ibn Qutayba then cites and clarifies the complement in Q. 50/3: "then they said, 'that is a distant return', that is, it will not happen."³⁷³ The second example deals with a series of oaths in Q. 79/1-5 each of which lacks a complement that Ibn Qutayba supplies on the basis of a reference to the abbreviated complement in Q. 79/6 as well as a response to it in Q. 79/11: "and in this manner is the saying of the Mighty and Glorious, 'By the intense fighters, by the lively spirits, by the floating swimmers, the preceding leaders and the commanding rulers'. Then He said, 'on the day when the shock trembles'. The complement was not mentioned

³⁷⁰*wa min al-ʾikhtiṣār al-qasam bilā jawāb ʾidha kāna fī al-kalām baʿdahu ma yadullu ʿalā al-jawāb. Taʾwīl*, pp. 223-4.

³⁷¹See Wright, *Grammar*, vol. I, p. 279, vol. II, pp. 175-6.

³⁷²*Taʾwīl*, p. 224.

³⁷³*Ibid.*

each time because the hearer is aware of it since an indication of it is contained in what follows in the phrase, as if He had said, By the fighters, and so on and so forth, *you will surely arise* [*la-tub^uuthunna*], so they said, 'What, when we are rotting bones (we will be resurrected)?'.³⁷⁴

Ibn Qutayba then cites only the complement of an oath phrase in Q. 13/14 for which he supplies a clarifying insertion for the complement: "under abbreviation is His saying, 'unless it is like the stretching of his hands for water to reach his mouth', He meant, like the stretching of his hands for water *to collect it* [*li-yaqbiḍa 'alayhi*] to reach his mouth."³⁷⁵ Ibn Qutayba justifies this clarification by citing a line of poetry from Dābi³ (d. ca. 30/650):³⁷⁶

فإني وإياكم وشوقاً إليكم كقابض ماءٍ لم تسقهُ أَنَامِلُهُ

*Indeed, you and I, with my desire for you
Are like the holder of water whose fingers cannot carry it*

He then goes on to say that "the Arabs say about someone who pursues something he cannot obtain, he is like the holder of water."³⁷⁷

Ibn Qutayba's treatment of these expressions, especially his identification of them as examples of abbreviation (*ʾikhtisār*) rather than ellipsis (*ḥadhf*), yields some information about his understanding of these two terms. In the previous sections, Ibn Qutayba has identified certain expressions as examples of ellipsis where the concept or meaning of the deleted expression, but not the expression itself, is recoverable either from the context or is "obvious [*zāhir*]" to the reader: this understanding is implicit in his treatment of the expressions he considers to be ellipted above, but more explicit in his

³⁷⁴Ibid.

³⁷⁵Ibid.

³⁷⁶Ibid. See also, Abū 'Ubayda, *Majāz al-qur'ān*, vol. I, p. 327; al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 190.

³⁷⁷*Taʾwīl*, p. 224.

disagreement with al-Farrā's identification of ellipsis, rather than abbreviation or concealment, in Q. 27/10-11 in section four, above.³⁷⁸ However, Ibn Qutayba's identification of these Quranic expressions as examples of abbreviation displays a closer connection between the context in which the expression exists and the concept of the deleted phrase, if not, as in these three examples, the phrase itself; that is, as he says in the heading of this section, "an indication of the complement is in the following phrase "³⁷⁹ Thus, he cites Q. 50/3 as the complement of the oath phrase in Q. 50/1, simply clarifies the complement in Q. 13/14, and sees a number of identical complements to have been deleted in Q. 79/1-5, appearing only in Q. 79/6, to eliminate redundancy.

It is difficult to determine if Ibn Qutayba's views about these expressions follow the views of any earlier authors. Sibawayh does not examine any of these expressions in his *Kitāb* but, while both al-Farrā' and Abū 'Ubayda do examine all of these expressions and clarify them in ways similar to Ibn Qutayba, neither of them identifies any of these phrases as examples of abbreviation or any other particular type of expression.³⁸⁰ It may be noted too, that the line of poetry from Ḍābi' that Ibn Qutayba cites in relation to Q. 13/14 also appears in Abū 'Ubayda's examination of the same verse.³⁸¹

The similarity between Ibn Qutayba and al-ʿAskarī is again much closer regarding their understanding of these particular expressions. Although al-ʿAskarī reduces the heading introducing these expressions to read only "the oath without a compliment [*al-qasam bilā jawāb*],"³⁸² and deletes Q. 79/1-6 from this section, his citation and treatment

³⁷⁸See above, pp. 78, 81-2.

³⁷⁹*Taʿwīl*, p. 223.

³⁸⁰For al-Farrā's views on Q. 50/1-3, 79/1-6, and 13/14, see *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. III, pp. 75-6; vol. III, pp. 230-1; and vol. II, p. 61, respectively. For Abū 'Ubayda's examination of the same phrases, see *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. II, p. 222; vol. II, p. 284; and Vol. I, p. 327, respectively. Some doubt as to al-Farrā's similar clarification of the oath in Q. 50/1 and its complement in Q. 50/3 can be eliminated by noting that al-Farrā' adduces Q. 50/1 in his explanation of Q. 50/3, rather than Abū 'Ubayda's and Ibn Qutayba's citation of Q. 50/3 in their explanations of Q. 50/1.

³⁸¹See *Taʿwīl*, p. 224; Abū 'Ubayda, *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. I, p. 327.

³⁸²al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 189.

of the other Quranic phrases as well as the line of poetry he quotes following his examination of Q. 13/14 are the same in his *Ṣināʿatayn* as they are in Ibn Qutayba's *Taʿwīl*,³⁸³ except for two points. First, al-ʿAskarī nowhere identifies any of these expressions as examples of abbreviation, like Ibn Qutayba; but, second, he does identify the expression in Q. 13/14, even though he explains it in the same manner as Ibn Qutayba, as an example of ellipsis.³⁸⁴ It may be recalled, however, that although Ibn Qutayba's treatment of Q. 13/14 deals with the explanation of a complement alone, rather than the other examples of abbreviated complements for oaths, he still explicitly considers this phrase to be an example of abbreviation.³⁸⁵ Thus, even though a comparison between Ibn Qutayba's and al-ʿAskarī's understanding of these expressions reveals a *prima facie* similarity as far as specific Quranic phrases are concerned, their technical understanding of this type of expression actually appears to be quite different. Unfortunately, neither author is sufficiently expansive to allow pursuit of this question. Al-Rummānī, as well, examines two of these three expressions but he cites only the oath phrase in Q. 50/1-2 in the *al-Nukat*'s section on assonance (*fawāṣil*), noting only this expression's alliteration of the letters bāʾ and dāl;³⁸⁶ and Q. 13/14 as an example of simile, which he explains, like others including Ibn Qutayba, as conveying the notion of someone who cannot obtain his goal.³⁸⁷

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The seventh section deals with "omitting 'not' from the phrase while the meaning asserts it."³⁸⁸ Each example adduced by Ibn Qutayba reflects "a curious idiom of the

³⁸³Ibid., pp. 189-90.

³⁸⁴Ibid., p. 190.

³⁸⁵See *Taʿwīl*, p. 224; and above, p. 84.

³⁸⁶al-Rummānī, *al-Nukat*, p. 98. See also, al-Jamaʿy, "al-Rummānī's 'al-Nukat'," p. 159, n. 308.

³⁸⁷al-Rummānī, *al-Nukat*, pp. 82-3. It would be difficult to compare this understanding of Q. 13/14 as an example of simile with Ibn Qutayba, regardless of how obvious it appears, since the *Taʿwīl* has no section on simile, nor does Ibn Qutayba adduce this expression elsewhere in the *Taʿwīl*.

³⁸⁸ʿan taḥdīfā "lā" min al-kalām waʾl-maʿnī ʾithbātuhā. *Taʿwīl*, p. 225.

language, whereby an oath or execration seems to be regarded as a virtual negation, [where] the negative particle may be omitted in denial by oath and, on the contrary, be inserted in affirmation."³⁸⁹ In light of this, it is not surprising to see Ibn Qutayba's first Quranic example as well as the poetry involve oaths. His first example is the oath in Q. 12/85: "like His saying, praise Him, 'By God, you will stop remembering Joseph', that is, you will *not* [*lā*] stop remembering Joseph."³⁹⁰ Ibn Qutayba then mentions that this particle is "often omitted with the oath [*al-yamīn*],"³⁹¹ and, without supplying the omitted particle, cites two separate lines of poetry to illustrate this usage, including this line from Imru' al-Qays:³⁹²

فَقُلْتُ يَمِينَ اللَّهِ أَبْرَحُ قَاعِدًا وَلَوْ ضَرَبُوا رَأْسِي لَدَيْكَ وَأَوْصَالِي

*And I said, "By God, I will [not] depart from staying put
Even though they strike off my head and my limbs before you"*

The section ends with a series of Quranic examples in which Ibn Qutayba simply identifies and supplies an omitted negation, beginning with Q. 4/176: "His saying, 'God makes clear to you that you stray', that is, so that you do *not* [*liʿallā*] stray."³⁹³ This is followed by Q. 35/41: "and, 'God holds the heavens and the earth, that they disappear', that is, so that they do *not* [*liʿallā*] disappear."³⁹⁴ The last citation in this section is Q. 49/2: "and His saying, 'like the loudness of some of you toward others, that your works come to nothing', that is, will *not* [*lā*] come to nothing."³⁹⁵

The acceptance of this idiomatic deletion of the negative particle examined by Ibn Qutayba in this section, especially when the affirmative sense of the phrase is

³⁸⁹Wright, *Grammar*, vol. II, p. 305.

³⁹⁰*Taʿwīl*, p. 225.

³⁹¹*Ibid.*

³⁹²*Ibid.* See also, al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 190; al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, p. 54.

³⁹³*Taʿwīl*, p. 225.

³⁹⁴*Ibid.*

³⁹⁵*Ibid.*

unacceptable,³⁹⁶ seems to have been widely accepted in that many grammarians apparently did not explore such deletions fully.³⁹⁷ Yet, when such expressions are examined, there is little disagreement about the opposite meaning of the phrase. As examples of both attitudes, Sibawayh does not examine any of these expressions in his *Kitāb*, while al-Farrāʿ offers the same clarification as Ibn Qutayba for Q. 12/85, including the citation of the same line of poetry following this verse, as well as Q. 4/176 and 49/2.³⁹⁸ The only difference between al-Farrāʿ and Ibn Qutayba is that the former considers the negative particle in Q. 12/85 to have been concealed and accepts either "liʿallā" or "lā" for Q. 4/176.³⁹⁹ Abū ʿUbayda, however, examines only the expression in Q. 12/85 and, without identifying it as any particular type of expression, offers the same restoration as al-Farrāʿ and Ibn Qutayba.⁴⁰⁰

A comparison between Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these Quranic expressions and al-ʿAskarī's is again quite interesting. Although al-ʿAskarī follows Ibn Qutayba's citation and explanation of Q. 4/176 and 49/2 exactly and adduces the same line of poetry that Ibn Qutayba quotes in this section, al-ʿAskarī deletes Q. 12/85 and 35/41 from this section of the *Ṣināʿatayn*, resulting in his citation of the poetry after his explanation of Q. 49/2, as well as supplying the deleted negative particle for the poetry, which Ibn Qutayba apparently left to the reader.⁴⁰¹ Somewhat more interesting, perhaps, is al-ʿAskarī's introduction of a new term in the heading under which these expressions are adduced: although, like Ibn Qutayba, he views these expressions as examples of ellipsis, he says that "under ellipsis is the *removal* [*ʿisqāʿ*] of 'not' from the phrase."⁴⁰² It should be noted

³⁹⁶See Wright, *Grammar*, vol. II, p. 305.

³⁹⁷J. Robson, "Some Uses of لا and لا in the Qurʾān," *JSS*, 4 (1959), p. 141

³⁹⁸al-Farrāʿ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, p. 54; vol. I, p. 297; and vol. III, p. 70, respectively.

³⁹⁹Ibid., vol. II, p. 54; vol. I, p. 297, respectively.

⁴⁰⁰Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. I, p. 316.

⁴⁰¹al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 190.

⁴⁰²Ibid. The emphasis is mine. I have glossed the term "*ʿisqāʿ*" as "removal", which does agree with the sense of the term (see Lane, vol. I, p. 1381; Wehr, *Dictionary*, p.

here though, that al-ʿAskarī does not use the term "removal [ʿisqāʿ]" in any technical, categorical way. No comparison between Ibn Qutayba and al-Rummānī can be made except to note that al-Rummānī adduces none of these Quranic or poetic expressions in his *al-Nukat*.

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The eighth section also looks at examples of abbreviation of a certain type: "under abbreviation is concealment because of a term not being mentioned."⁴⁰³

This section begins with a series of seven Quranic phrases which each contain an ambiguous reference usually in the form of a referential pronoun, although the terms supplied by Ibn Qutayba can usually be obtained from the context in which each phrase exists. The first example is Q. 38/32: "like the saying of the Mighty and Glorious, 'until it was hidden by the veil', meaning *the sun* [*al-shams*], but He did not mention it before that."⁴⁰⁴ The next example is from Q. 35/45: "and His saying, 'if God were to punish people by their iniquity, He would not leave one animal on its surface', He means, on *the earth* [*al-ʿarḍ*]."⁴⁰⁵ The third example is from Q. 100/4: "and He said, 'and they raised the dust by it', meaning, *by the valley* [*biʾl-wādī*]."⁴⁰⁶ The next example is from Q. 28/10: "and He said, 'she was about to disclose him', that is, *Moses, that he was her son* [*Mūsā ʿannahu ʿibnuhā*]."⁴⁰⁷ The fifth example is from Q. 91/3: "and He said, 'By the day, it shows its glory', meaning, *the world or the earth* [*al-dunyā ʿaw al-ʿarḍ*]."⁴⁰⁸ The next example is from Q. 91/15: "and like that is His saying, 'and He does not fear its

484), but, more importantly, simply to differentiate it from other terms, even though "ʿisqāʿ", like "ḥadhf", "ʿijāz", "ʿikhtisār", etc., can each mean "ellipsis". See Pierre Cachia, *The Monitor: A Dictionary of Arabic Grammatical Terms* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1973), p. 42 (Arabic section).

⁴⁰³ *wa min al-ʿikhtisār ʿan tuḍmira li-ghayr madhkūr. Taʿwīl*, pp. 226-8.

⁴⁰⁴ *Taʿwīl*, p. 226.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

consequences', that is, the consequences of this action."⁴⁰⁹ The last Quranic example in this series is Q. 97/1: "and He said, 'Indeed, We revealed it during the night of power', meaning, the Qurʾān, alluding to the beginning of the *sūra*."⁴¹⁰ Following these Quranic examples, Ibn Qutayba cites five different lines of poetry that demonstrate the same type of ambiguous reference. The first of these lines is from a poem by Ḥumayd ibn Thawr (fl. 1st/7th cent.):⁴¹¹

وَصَهْبَاءُ مِنْهَا كَالسَّفِينَةِ نَضَجَتْ بِهِ الْحَمْلَ حَتَّى زَادَ شَهْرًا عَدِيدُهَا

*The red of them, like ships, being so overdue in pregnancy
That the months of gestation are increased by one*

Following this line, Ibn Qutayba mentions that "he meant, the red of the camels."⁴¹²

After the various poetic citations, Ibn Qutayba adduces one more Quranic example from Q. 55, a *sūra* marked by its thematic and structural duality, where Ibn Qutayba first quotes the phrase containing the abbreviated reference in Q. 55/13, notes the earlier mention of the first referent in Q. 55/3 and identifies the second referent as occurring in Q. 55/15; "God, the Mighty and Glorious, said in an early *sūra*, 'The Merciful', 'Then which of the blessings of your Lord will you both deny?'. He only mentioned mankind before that, then He addressed the jinn with him, mentioning them afterward: He said, 'and He created the jinn from smoke without fire'."⁴¹³ Ibn Qutayba then ends this section by adducing two lines of poetry to illustrate this type of usage, which again displays his ability to adduce very appropriate poetic examples. The poetry is from al-Muthaqqib al-ʿAbdī (d. ca. 590 CE):⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁹Ibid.

⁴¹⁰Ibid. The title of Q. 97 is "Power (*Qadr*)," usually considered to mean "Night of Power." See, for example, Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qurʾān*, p. 1765.

⁴¹¹*Taʾwīl*, p. 226.

⁴¹²Ibid.

⁴¹³*Taʾwīl*, p. 228.

⁴¹⁴Ibid. See also, al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 191.

فَمَا أَدْرِي إِذَا يَمُمْتُ أَرْضًا أُرِيدُ الْخَيْرَ : أَيُّهُمَا يَلِينِي ؟

أَلْخَيْرُ الَّذِي أَنَا أَبْتَغِيهِ ؟ أَمْ الشَّرُّ الَّذِي هُوَ يَبْتَغِينِي ؟

*I do not know when I turn toward a land
Seeking blessings: Which of the two will be my lot?*

*Will it be the blessings that I seek?
Or will it be evil that seeks me?*

Ibn Qutayba then notes here that the poet "alluded to 'evil', linking it by allusion [*kināya*] with 'blessings' before it [viz. evil] was mentioned, then mentioning it afterward."⁴¹⁵

Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these Quranic expressions and his identification of them as examples of a particular type of abbreviation again demonstrates his understanding of a concept or term which he considers to be an example of abbreviation as being more contextually linked to, or recoverable from, something in the phrase itself, in contrast to his understanding of ellipsis where an ellipited term does not possess such an explicit connection to something in the phrase itself, except for the context's dictation of an appropriate term. Ibn Qutayba's treatment of each of these Quranic phrases involves the clarification of an existing pronoun, except his first example, Q. 38/32, which involves the implied subject of the verb. No comparison can be made between Ibn Qutayba's views about these particular Quranic expressions and those of Sībawayh because the latter offers no examination of these particular expressions in his *Kitāb*. But a comparison between the views of Ibn Qutayba and those of al-Farrāʿ reveals some interesting parallels as well as differences. First, it may be noted that for each of these expressions, al-Farrāʿ supplies the same terms as Ibn Qutayba, although his similar explanations are somewhat more prosaic, for Q. 38/32, 100/4, 28/10, 91/15, 97/1, and 55/13.⁴¹⁶ Of particular interest is that, although al-Farrāʿ treats Q. 38/32 and 97/1 in a

⁴¹⁵Ibid.

⁴¹⁶al-Farrāʿ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. III, p. 285; vol. III, p. 285; vol. II, p. 303; vol. III, pp. 269-70; vol. III, p. 285; and vol. III, p. 114, respectively. The apparent contradiction

way quite similar to Ibn Qutayba, he does not do so at the expected place in his commentary on these expressions in the respective *sūras*; rather, these are adduced and clarified as similar types of expressions in his examination of Q. 100/4.⁴¹⁷ While this use of other Quranic expressions for the explanation of other verses is simply another example of the grammarians' and textual exegetes' intra-Quranic clarification by analogy (*qiyās*),⁴¹⁸ it seems rather strange that al-Farrāʿ does not employ this analogy in both directions: for example, al-Farrāʿ does supply clarifying terms for the pronouns in both Q. 97/1 and 100/4, but his treatment of both expressions appears in his comments on *sūra* 100, while neither Q. 100/4, nor Q. 97/1 itself, appears at the beginning of his commentary of *sūra* 97.⁴¹⁹ Notwithstanding al-Farrāʿ' s recognition of the similarity between most of these Quranic expressions, it should also be noted that his recognition of their similarities is not reflected in any explicit typological way; even though his clarification of each of these expressions is quite similar to their treatment by Ibn Qutayba, al-Farrāʿ does not identify this similarity as a type of abbreviation, like Ibn Qutayba, or as any other type of technical category. Thus, while Ibn Qutayba's understanding of each of these individual Quranic expressions appears to follow largely

between the expected corresponding order of these Quranic verses and their examination in al-Farrāʿ' s serial commentary, such as the citation of Q. vol. III, p. 285 for Q. 38/32, 100/4, and 97/1, will be discussed momentarily. The only differences between al-Farrāʿ and Ibn Qutayba with respect to the terms supplied for these Quranic expressions, however, involve the expression in Q. 35/45, for which al-Farrāʿ offers no examination, and Q. 91/3, for which al-Farrāʿ supplies the term "duskiness [*al-ḡulma*]" instead of Ibn Qutayba's "world or earth [*al-dunyā ʿaw al-ʿarḍ*]." See *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. III, p. 266

⁴¹⁷This commentative lacunae of Q. 38/32 and 97/1 can be seen in al-Farrāʿ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, p. 405 and vol. III, p. 280, respectively, while their examination, along with Q. 100/4, appears in vol. III, p. 285.

⁴¹⁸See above, p. 16. This practice, of course, was no innovation on the part of al-Farrāʿ and I am not aware of any early Arabic grammatical work which examines the *Qurʾān* and does not employ such intra-Quranic analogies. Thus, its employment is ostensibly *passim*. But by way of citing another example, it may be mentioned that Sibawayh offers the mutual clarification of Q. 2/177 and 34/33, both adduced by Ibn Qutayba in his first section on Quranic brevity, at the same location. See Sibawayh, *Kitāb*, vol. I, p. 88.

⁴¹⁹See al-Farrāʿ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān* vol. III, pp. 280, 285

those of al-Farrāʾ, Ibn Qutayba's identification of them as examples of abbreviation does not appear in al-Farrāʾ's *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*. The difference between Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these expressions and that of Abū ʿUbayda is more pronounced. Abū ʿUbayda does supply the same terms in his clarifications of the pronoun in Q. 35/45, the implied subject of the verb in Q. 38/32 and identifies it, like Ibn Qutayba, as concealed, and employs the collective term, "mankind and jinn [*al-thaqalān*]," in his similar explanation of Q. 55/13.⁴²⁰ In addition, unlike Ibn Qutayba but similar to al-Farrāʾ, Abū ʿUbayda offers only clarifications of these phrases without identifying them as any particular types of expressions. As well, except for his examination of a different term in Q. 100/4,⁴²¹ Abū ʿUbayda offers no examination of Ibn Qutayba's other examples of this type of abbreviation in Q. 28/10, 91/3, 91/15, and 97/1. One further comparison may be noted between some of the comments of al-Farrāʾ and Abū ʿUbayda and Ibn Qutayba's understanding of abbreviation as being associated with an existing term in the phrase. Given this understanding of abbreviation, it is not surprising to see Ibn Qutayba employ the term "allusion (*kināya*)" in his explanation of the poetry of Muthaqqib al-ʿAbdī, following his examination of Q. 55/13 in this section,⁴²² although Ibn Qutayba lists none of these Quranic examples in the *Taʾwīl*'s section on metonymy and allusion (*al-kināya waʾl-taʿrīḍ*).⁴²³ But the term "allusion (*kināya*)" also appears in al-Farrāʾ's comments on Q. 91/3 and in Abū ʿUbayda's comments on Q. 35/45.⁴²⁴ That al-Farrāʾ and Abū ʿUbayda also use the term "allusion (*kināya*)" in their explanations of two of these particular Quranic expressions does appear to indicate one point of agreement with Ibn Qutayba's views about these expressions as examples of abbreviation as he seems to understand it.

⁴²⁰Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. II, p. 156; vol. II, p. 182; and vol. II, p. 243, respectively.

⁴²¹Ibid., vol. II, p. 307.

⁴²²See *Taʾwīl*, p. 228; and above, p. 91.

⁴²³*Taʾwīl*, pp. 256-74.

⁴²⁴Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. II, p. 156; al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. III, p. 226.

But, of course, such usages of the term by al-Farrāʿ and Abū ʿUbayda are too isolated to consider this similarity as precursory to Ibn Qutayba's understanding of abbreviation.

Yet, such a similarity of understanding may be of some relevance when Ibn Qutayba's views about the Quranic and poetic expressions in this section are compared to the stylistic identification of the same Quranic phrases by al-ʿAskarī. Al-ʿAskarī also examines Q. 35/45 and 91/3 as well as Q. 38/32, 100/4, 91/15 and 55/13 in the same order and in the same way as Ibn Qutayba and he adduces a line of poetry from Labid (l. ca. 41/661) also cited by Ibn Qutayba in relation to these Quranic phrases in the *Taʿwīl*.⁴²⁵ Thus, much of Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these Quranic expressions appears to have been adopted by al-ʿAskarī except for the deletion of Q. 28/10, 97/1, and 55/13 as well as the deletion in the *Ṣināʿatayn* of most of the poetry adduced by Ibn Qutayba in the *Taʿwīl*. But a more notable difference between Ibn Qutayba and al-ʿAskarī appears in the heading, and thus the technical understanding, under which al-ʿAskarī adduces those Quranic citations that also appear in this section of the *Taʿwīl*. Unlike Ibn Qutayba's heading of "under abbreviation [*ʾikhtisār*] is concealment because a term not being mentioned," al-ʿAskarī includes these various expressions under the heading of "under ellipsis [*ḥadhf*] is concealment [because of a term] not being mentioned,"⁴²⁶ and at no point in relation to these expressions does he employ the terms "abbreviation (*ʾikhtisār*)" or "allusion (*kināya*)." Thus, while Ibn Qutayba's clarification of these expressions as well as his consideration of each of them as representing a similar type of expression, which also follows the views of al-Farrāʿ, was retained by al-ʿAskarī, Ibn Qutayba's technical identification of these expressions as a particular type of abbreviation (*ʾikhtisār*) was not. This particular technical contrast seems to indicate a substantial difference between Ibn Qutayba's understanding of ellipsis and abbreviation as

⁴²⁵al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, pp. 190-1. For the same line of poetry, see also, *Taʿwīl*, p. 227.

⁴²⁶*wa min al-ḥadhf ʾan tu mira ghair madhkūr. Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 190.

the major divisions of Quranic brevity and al-^cAskarī's understanding of ellipsis and succinctness as the two major constituents of concision.⁴²⁷ Al-Rummānī's position on this difference are not available: although he also divides concision into ellipsis and succinctness like al-^cAskarī, he adduces none of these expressions in his *al-Nukat*.

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The ninth section of this chapter is also a relatively short one which deals with "the ellipsis of qualificative clauses."⁴²⁸

Ibn Qutayba cites four examples of this type of ellipsis from the Qur^ʿān and each of the phrases he views as ellipted contain a pronoun in a prepositional phrase with the first two Quranic examples being adverbial. The first example is from Q. 83/3: "like God's saying, 'when they repay them or sell them, they give less than due', that is, they repay *to them* [*lahum*] or sell *to them* [*lahum*]."⁴²⁹ The second example is from Q. 7/155: "and His saying, 'Moses chose his people, seventy men, that is, he chose *from them* [*minhum*]."⁴³⁰ To demonstrate this type of usage in Arabic poetry, Ibn Qutayba then cites a hemistich from a poem by al-^cAjjāj (d. 97/715):⁴³¹

تَحْتَ الَّذِي اخْتَارَ لَهُ اللَّهُ الشَّجَرَ

Under that which God chose for him, the trees

Ibn Qutayba then explains that the sense is that "He chose for him *among* [*min*] the

⁴²⁷See above, pp. 7-8.

⁴²⁸*hadhf al-ṣifāt. Taʿwīl*, pp. 228-30. The terms *ṣifāt* (sing. *ṣifa*) and *ṣilāt* (sing. *ṣila*) usually refer to relative clauses which qualify indefinite and definite antecedent nouns respectively and necessarily contain a referential pronoun. But the term "*ṣifa*" is also used to denote a qualificative clause which may still contain a pronoun but one which is the subject of the clause itself rather than a reference to the antecedent noun phrase. See Owens, *Foundations*, p. 158; Wright, *Grammar*, vol. II, pp. 283-4.

⁴²⁹*Taʿwīl*, p. 228.

⁴³⁰*Taʿwīl*, p. 229.

⁴³¹*Ibid.* See also, Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-qurʿān*, vol. I, p. 229; al-^cAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 191; al-Farrāʿ, *Maʿānī al-qurʿān*, vol. I, p. 395.

trees."⁴³² This poetic example is followed by another example from the Qurʾān, in Q 22/41, which, like the first two, is adverbial: "like His saying, 'those whom, if We provide them on the earth', that is, We provide *for them* [*lahum*]."⁴³³ This is followed by a quotation of an Arabic saying which demonstrates a similar type of usage which Ibn Qutayba explains by providing a similar qualificative clause, as well as two examples from poetry which he does not explain, before citing and explaining the ellipsis of an adjectival qualificative phrase in Q. 17/34. "and the saying of the Mighty and Glorious, 'Behold the contract, he is answerable', that is, answerable *for it* [*ʿanhu*]."⁴³⁴ The section ends with Ibn Qutayba's quotation of a part of Abū ʿUbayda's interpretation of this phrase in Q. 17/34 where Ibn Qutayba identifies and supplies the same ellipsed term in the interpretation of Abū ʿUbayda as he does for the phrase in Q. 17/34.⁴³⁵

Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these particular Quranic expressions does not differ substantially from the views of some earlier authors, notably al-Farrāʾ and Abū ʿUbayda, but his technical identification of these expressions as representing a particular type of ellipsis does. Among these four Quranic expressions, Sibawayh offers an examination of only Q. 7/155 but, although he notes some of the difficulties involving the expression's verb, he does not isolate the same difficulty as Ibn Qutayba, and thus does not offer a similar reconstruction, nor does he identify this phrase as representing any type of ellipsis.⁴³⁶ Al-Farrāʾ, on the other hand, presents no analysis of Q. 22/41 or 17/34, but does treat the expression in Q. 7/155 in the same way as Ibn Qutayba, including the citation of the same hemistich of poetry from al-ʿAjjāj.⁴³⁷ Al-Farrāʾ's understanding of Q. 83/3, however, agrees with Ibn Qutayba's semantic understanding of the phrase although

⁴³²Ibid.

⁴³³Ibid.

⁴³⁴*Taʾwīl*, p. 230.

⁴³⁵Ibid. See also, Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-qurʾān*, vol. I, p. 389.

⁴³⁶Sibawayh, *Kitāb*, vol. I, p. 12.

⁴³⁷al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. I, p. 395.

al-Farrā' does not clarify it with the same reconstruction employed by Ibn Qutayba.⁴³⁸ More notable is that al-Farrā' does not identify either of these Quranic phrases as representing any particular type of expression, including that of ellipsis. This lack of any stylistic identification of these verses is shared by Abū 'Ubayda who examines three of these four Quranic expressions. Abū 'Ubayda's treatment of Q. 83/3 is the same as that offered by Ibn Qutayba,⁴³⁹ as is his treatment of Q. 7/155, including, like al-Farrā' and Ibn Qutayba, the inclusion of the same poetic example from the poetry of al-'Ajjāj.⁴⁴⁰ The difference between Abū 'Ubayda and Ibn Qutayba regarding Q. 17/34 has already been noted above where Ibn Qutayba reconstructs the interpretation of Abū 'Ubayda in the same way and with the same term that he employs in his reconstruction of the expression in Q. 17/34 itself: that is, with the insertion of "for [*an*]." ⁴⁴¹ Yet, like al-Farrā', Abū 'Ubayda's examination of these Quranic expressions does not include any type of stylistic identification.

A comparison between Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these particular Quranic phrases and that of al-'Askarī, like some of Ibn Qutayba's previous types of Quranic brevity, is quite interesting. On the one hand, al-'Askarī simply deletes Q. 83/3, 22/41, and 17/34 from the *Ṣinā'atayn*'s section on brevity, leaving only an analysis of Q. 7/155. Yet, although al-'Askarī treats Q. 7/155 in a manner identical to Abū 'Ubayda, and thus similar to Ibn Qutayba, and, like al-Farrā', Abū 'Ubayda and Ibn Qutayba before him, cites the same poetic example from al-'Ajjāj in association with Q. 7/155, it is the location of al-'Askarī's treatment of Q. 7/155 that is of interest. In the *Ṣinā'atayn*, the analysis of Q. 7/155 does not follow any treatment of Q. 83/3, as it does in the *Ta'wīl*, obviously because al-'Askarī has deleted this expression from the *Ṣinā'atayn*'s section on

⁴³⁸Ibid, vol. III, pp. 245-6.

⁴³⁹Abū 'Ubayda, *Maṣāz al-qur'ān*, vol. II, p. 289.

⁴⁴⁰Ibid, vol. I, p. 229. The only difference is the minor matter of Abū 'Ubayda's reconstruction of the expression as "Moses chose *from* [*min*] his people," rather than Ibn Qutayba's more explanatory "that is, he chose *from them* [*minhum*]."

⁴⁴¹See above, p. 96, and n. 435.

brevity; but, unlike the pattern established in relation to Ibn Qutayba's previous sections, neither is it adduced under any type of heading similar to that under which these Quranic expressions are collected by Ibn Qutayba. In fact, al-^cAskarī explicitly links the expression in Q. 7/155 as being "similar [*ḍarbi*]" to the expression in Q. 91/3⁴⁴² which was identified by both Ibn Qutayba and al-^cAskarī as representing an example of "concealment because of a term not being mentioned" which was classified as a type of abbreviation (*ʾikhtisār*) by Ibn Qutayba but as a type of ellipsis (*ḥadhf*) by al-^cAskarī.⁴⁴³ Thus, al-^cAskarī's treatment of Q. 7/155 reveals not only his apparent rejection of Ibn Qutayba's classification of "the ellipsis of qualificative clauses", although they agree in the wider classification of Q. 7/155 as some type of ellipsis, but also provides a further specific example of al-^cAskarī's difference of opinion in his classification of "the concealment of a term" as representing a type of ellipsis, rather than Ibn Qutayba's classification of it as a type of abbreviation. A further example of al-^cAskarī's typological abridgement of the Quranic expressions adduced by Ibn Qutayba in the eighth and ninth sections of Quranic brevity may be noted. It may be recalled that Ibn Qutayba's treatment of Q. 55/13 and that expression's accompanying citation of two lines of poetry from Muthaqqib al-^cAbdī were adduced by Ibn Qutayba in his eighth section of Quranic brevity, dealing with abbreviation due to concealment because of a term not being mentioned.⁴⁴⁴ Al-^cAskarī also examines Q. 55/13 in the same way as Ibn Qutayba as well as similarly illustrating its usage with the same poetry of Muthaqqib al-^cAbdī, but in the *Ṣināʿatayn* this appears after al-^cAskarī's analysis of Q. 7/155,⁴⁴⁵ which again displays al-^cAskarī's different attitude in regard to these two types of Quranic brevity as understood by Ibn Qutayba. Any comparison with al-Rummānī in this regard is, predictably, a much simpler matter in that al-Rummānī adduces none of these expressions in his *al-Nukat fi*

⁴⁴²al-^cAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 191.

⁴⁴³See above, p. 95.

⁴⁴⁴See *Taʾwīl*, p. 228, and above, p. 91.

⁴⁴⁵al-^cAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 191.

ʿajāz al-qurʾān.

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The tenth and last section of the *Taʾwīl mushkīl al-qurʾān*'s chapter of ellipsis and abbreviation does not begin with a heading similar to the other sections in this chapter; yet, Ibn Qutayba's treatment of the Quranic phrases adduced here is sufficiently different from that in section nine to consider them a separate category. The most obvious difference is Ibn Qutayba's classification of each Quranic phrase adduced here as representing an example of abbreviation (*ʾikhtisār*). The first example cited is a phrase in Q. 4/44 in which Ibn Qutayba sees an abbreviated adverb which he both supplies and explains: "under abbreviation is His saying, 'Have you not looked at those who were given a portion of the book? They purchase error and want to lose the way'. He meant, they purchase error with right guidance [*biʾl-hudā*], but He omitted [*ḥadhafa*] 'right guidance'. That is, they exchanged one for the other."⁴⁴⁶ Ibn Qutayba justifies this explanation by citing Q. 2/16: "like it, 'they are those who purchase error with right guidance."⁴⁴⁷ The type of brevity involved in the second Quranic example of a phrase in Q. 37/78 or 37/108⁴⁴⁸ is equally straightforward: "under abbreviation is His saying, 'and We leave to him [viz. Abraham] in future times', that is, We leave to him *good mention* [*dhikr ḥasan*] in future times, as if He had said, We leave a good commendation of him but He omitted [*ḥadhafa*] 'the good commendation' because the hearer knows what He

⁴⁴⁶*Taʾwīl*, p. 230.

⁴⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁸This particular expression is identical in both Q. 37/78 and 37/108. The editor of Ibn Qutayba's *Taʾwīl* has identified it only as Q. 37/108 (see *Taʾwīl*, p. 230, n. 5) while the editors of al-ʿAskari's *Ṣināʿatayn* have identified it as only Q. 37/78 (see *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 191, n. 7). The difference may not be important unless such citations are employed in comparing opinions about the particular expression involved, since al-Farrāʾ, for example, offers no examination of this expression at Q. 37/108 (see *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, pp. 390-1) but, quite logically for a serial commentary, does examine it at its earlier occurrence at Q. 37/78 (see *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, pp. 387-8). Al-Farrāʾ's opinions on this expression will be discussed below.

meant."⁴⁴⁹ Although the third Quranic example cited here is not treated as a simple case of an abbreviated phrase, it is clear from Ibn Qutayba's explanation of the expression in Q. 4/166, which includes a reference to Q. 4/163, and is treated as a case of an abbreviated qualifier: "under abbreviation is His saying, 'But God testifies with what He revealed to you. He sent it with His knowledge'. As for why He sent it to you, 'We inspired you just as We inspired Noah and the prophets after him'. The polytheists said, 'We do not testify to you with this, so who testifies to you with it?'. So He left a mention of their people and thus sent, 'But God testifies with what He sent to you'. Because of this, He said 'but [*lakin*]', yet He said it after the negation of one thing thus imposing that thing upon them."⁴⁵⁰ Ibn Qutayba's treatment of the next Quranic example from Q. 5/31 involves his identifying and supplying an abbreviated qualifying clause that clarifies the following statement in the same verse: "under abbreviation is His saying, 'then God sent a raven to search for in the earth'. He meant, God sent a raven to search *the soil for a dead raven in order to bury him* [*al-turāb 'alā ghurāb mayit li-yuwāriyahu*]' to show him how to bury the shame of his brother'."⁴⁵¹ This last section and this chapter ends with Ibn Qutayba's explanation of an apparently abbreviated phrase in the second sentence in Q. 5/52 which is explained by reference to the preceding statement: "belonging to this [i.e. abbreviation] is His saying, 'So look at those who in their hearts is illness. They run about in them', that is, in *their illness* [*maradātihim*]."⁴⁵²

Straightforward as Ibn Qutayba's treatment of these particular Quranic expressions appear to be, it may be noted that, in comparison to the other selected authors, his identification of these phrases as being examples of abbreviation is unique. In comparison to the earlier selected authors too, Ibn Qutayba's isolation of the particular difficulty he sees within each of these Quranic phrases, and thus his reconstruction of

⁴⁴⁹*Taʾwīl*, p. 230.

⁴⁵⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 230-1.

⁴⁵¹*Taʾwīl*, p. 231.

⁴⁵²*Ibid.*

them, also appears to be quite novel. Neither Sībawayh nor Abū ʿUbayda, for example, offers an examination of any of the five Quranic expressions adduced here by Ibn Qutayba. Al-Farrāʾ, as well, offers no examination of Q. 4/44, 4/166, 5/31, or 5/52, but does examine the expression in Q. 37/78⁴⁵³ which he treats in the same way as Ibn Qutayba except that al-Farrāʾ does not identify the phrase as representing any particular type of expression.⁴⁵⁴

The situation differs, however, when Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these Quranic expressions is compared with those of al-ʿAskarī. Although al-ʿAskarī deletes any examination of Q. 4/166 from the *Ṣināʿatayn*'s section on brevity, he does, like Ibn Qutayba, collect the other four Quranic expressions together and explains each of them in the same way as Ibn Qutayba,⁴⁵⁵ except that al-ʿAskarī does not cite Q. 2/16 in his explanation of Q. 4/44 and changes one particular adjective in his explanation of Q. 5/31, saying that God sent a raven to search the soil for "another raven [*ghurāb ʾākhar*]" rather than Ibn Qutayba's "dead raven [*ghurāb mayit*]." ⁴⁵⁶ A more important difference between Ibn Qutayba and al-ʿAskarī is apparent however. Even though al-ʿAskarī collects and treats these expressions in the same way as Ibn Qutayba, he collects them under the equally simple but contrasting heading of "under ellipsis [*min al-ḥadhf*]," rather than Ibn Qutayba's introduction of them as being "under abbreviation [*min al-ʾikhtisār*]." ⁴⁵⁷ Thus, as in each of Ibn Qutayba's classifications of examples of abbreviation, as in sections five, six, and eight above, al-ʿAskarī here again treats them in much the same way but classifies them as examples of ellipsis. Although al-ʿAskarī's general divisions of brevity, seen to disagree with Ibn Qutayba's, is shared by al-Rummānī, it cannot be determined if the classification of these particular Quranic expressions is also shared since al-Rummānī

⁴⁵³See above, n. 448.

⁴⁵⁴al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-qurʾān*, vol. II, pp. 387-8.

⁴⁵⁵al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, pp. 191-2. Notice should be taken that the *Ṣināʿatayn* cites Q. 37/78 for the expression that also appears in Q. 37/108. See above, n. 448.

⁴⁵⁶Cf. *Taʾwīl*, p. 231 and al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 192.

⁴⁵⁷al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 191.

does not cite any of these Quranic verses in the section on concision or at any other location in his *al-Nukat fi i'jāz al-qur'ān*, his work intended to demonstrate the stylistic inimitability of the Qur'ān.

Summary

Summarizing the various aspects of Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity in more abstract terms depends upon an analysis of his use of Quranic and poetic examples in association with a number of terms and classifications since he provides little in the way of precise definitions or theoretical discussions.⁴⁵⁸ It is initially apparent however, as the title of this chapter suggests, that the major constituents of his conception of brevity includes the two primary divisions of ellipsis (*ḥadhf*), whether this involves the ellipsis of annexed terms in section one or negative particles in section seven for example, and abbreviation (*ʾikhtisār*), such as the abbreviation of oath complements in section six or miscellaneous terms in section ten; a binary division of brevity that remains accurate even though Ibn Qutayba also mentions concealment (*ʾidmār*) alongside abbreviation as a cause of ambiguity in section five, as the only cause of ambiguity in section two, and importantly, as a part of abbreviation in section eight. It may also be noted that Ibn Qutayba is quite obviously concerned with the semantic clarification of the expressions adduced but that this clarification manifests itself in a syntactic way: this is apparent both in his syntactically oriented divisions of this chapter and his almost constant concern with

⁴⁵⁸Nowhere in this chapter on brevity, or elsewhere in the *Taʾwīl*, does he offer any real definitions regarding his understanding of brevity except for what can be extracted from the various headings within it which are, of course, quite helpful but remain only more precisely identified examples rather than abstract definitions. Similarly, although he does include some infrequent discussion, such as his mention of some earlier views concerning the interpretation of Q. 22/40 in section one (see above, p. 58), his disagreement with the views of al-Farrāʾ concerning Q. 27/10-11 in section five (see above, p. 78), or his correction of Abū ʿUbayda's interpretation of Q. 17/34 in section nine (see above, p. 97), such discussions are limited primarily only to aspects concerning these specific verses and are often not applicable to other examples.

matters of appropriate agreement and governance within each specific verse.⁴⁵⁹ This said, it is equally important to remember that Ibn Qutayba does respect the existing Quranic language of each examined expression: his interest is not with the correction but with the clarification of Quranic difficulties.⁴⁶⁰

The manner in which Ibn Qutayba resolves such difficulties concerning Quranic brevity, as mentioned, involves his understanding of ellipsis, abbreviation, and concealment. For Ibn Qutayba, ellipsis can be identified as the omission of a term or phrase that he views as being required for the grammatical construction of each expression to reflect more completely his understanding of it. His isolation of this semantic-syntactic variance, of course, explains both his identification of ellipsis in the Qurʾān as well as the nature of the difficulty involved, while his treatment of grammatically reconstructing each expression reveals that the selection of each clarifying phrase is suggested only by his background in Arabic syntax. This understanding of ellipsis is quite evident in the treatment of each of the examples of the ellipsis of the term "not (*lā* or *liʾallā*)" in section seven as well as all of the examples of the ellipsis of the annexed term in section one,⁴⁶¹ except for his treatment of the term "prayers (*ṣalawāt*)" in

⁴⁵⁹This attitude is most apparent in his treatment of those expressions for which he simply supplies a term in order to align what the expression says with what he thinks the expression means, but is equally valid in his treatment of those expressions for which he amplifies the meaning of an existing term within the expression. Evidence of this attitude is *passim* but not universal within this chapter but instead of citing the numerous examples that support it, it would be less difficult to point out those treatments that digress from this concern and are identified as more exegetical in sections five, eight, and nine. See above, pp. 77-81, 90-1, and 96-7, respectively.

⁴⁶⁰Again, this attitude is displayed indirectly in his treatment of the various Quranic expressions examined and, of course, within the title of the *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qurʾān*, but is addressed more directly by Ibn Qutayba himself in the introduction of the *Taʾwīl* as well as its section that deals with allegations of Quranic solecisms. See, for example, *Taʾwīl*, pp. 3, 10-1, 50-64; and above pp. 54-5.

⁴⁶¹The examples in section seven for which Ibn Qutayba inserts a negative particle include, of course, Q. 12/85, 4/176, 35/41, and 49/2 (see above, pp. 87-8), while the more evident examples in section one include his insertion of an appropriate subject in Q. 12/82 and 47/13, an appropriate object in Q. 2/93, 2/197, 17/75, and 96/17, and a circumstantial particle in Q. 34/33 (see above, pp. 56-60).

Q. 22/40 and the infinitive-substantive comparison in Q. 9/19 where the ellipsis is simply not as obvious, or the inserted term is not as syntactically expected, as is the case for the other Quranic examples in this section.⁴⁶² But this does not detract from their candidacy as examples of ellipsis, it only makes that identification less clear. This particular situation is equally applicable to all the examples adduced in section nine, dealing with the ellipsis of qualificative clauses,⁴⁶³ simply because a qualificative clause does not possess as prominent a syntactic function as the other grammatical units that Ibn Qutayba identifies as ellipsed, such as an object or subject of a verb. But again, this does not exclude them from being identified and treated as examples of ellipsis, nor does it dictate any modification of Ibn Qutayba's understanding of ellipsis given above.

Identifying the same characteristics of ellipsis in the only remaining section classified as such, section four, dealing with the ellipsis of a word or two, is more difficult because of the dissimilarity of the expressions adduced here as well as the similarity of some of them in comparison with Quranic expressions adduced in other section that do not deal with ellipsis. First, however, it may be noted that the three examples of apostrophe in Q. 2/127, 3/106, and 32/12, the inserted verb in Q. 7/73, the inserted pronoun in Q. 29/22, as well as the zeugma in Q. 17/23, notwithstanding their heterogeneity, still display the more apparent characteristics of ellipsis described above.⁴⁶⁴ But the remaining examples in this section, Q. 14/18, 17/7, and 50/17, are

⁴⁶²For Ibn Qutayba's treatment of Q. 22/40 and 9/19, see above, pp. 58, 59, respectively. Unlike other Quranic examples in this section, both these expressions could be clarified in more ways than with the insertion of an annexed term, such as the replacement of a term, which renders the syntactic function of the term supplied much less evident. Yet, that Ibn Qutayba chose to clarify them with the insertion of an annexed term is, of course, quite valid in that this syntactic insertion does align what the expression says with what he thinks it means. That Ibn Qutayba chose this particular method of clarification may indeed be another example of his belief in the correctness of existing Quranic language.

⁴⁶³See above, pp. 96-7.

⁴⁶⁴For Ibn Qutayba's treatment of these various examples of ellipsis in section four, see above, pp. 72-4. The diversity of the Quranic expressions adduced in this section make it quite interesting in ways not immediately relevant to the present discussion. For

somewhat different. Although each of these expressions can be viewed as examples of ellipsis and, of course, they are treated as such, it may be noted that the identity or selection of the ellipsed term is not dictated by a knowledge of syntax alone, as in his other examples of ellipsis, but also by an existing expression in the text itself: Ibn Qutayba notes that the adjective in question in Q. 14/18 "was omitted because He mentioned the wind beforehand which indicated it;" for Q. 17/7, he similarly says that "He omitted it because it was mentioned before [in Q. 17/5];" and for the expression "a companion on the right and on the left" in Q. 50/17, he says that the first mention [of a companion] is sufficient for both [phrases]."⁴⁶⁵ Thus, Ibn Qutayba's clarification of these particular expressions consists of repetitions, rather than insertions of a term from a knowledge of its syntactic function.

It would be premature to use Ibn Qutayba's clarification of these verses to modify the definition of his understanding of Quranic ellipsis, however, when it is noted that his treatment of these three examples of ellipsis is very similar to his treatment of the omission of a second correlative phrase in Q. 3/113 and 39/9, which are adduced in section three, not as examples of ellipsis, but as examples of abbreviation. But whether this reveals some confusion on the part of Ibn Qutayba or dictates a modification of the definition of his concept of ellipsis depends upon determining his understanding of his second constituent of Quranic brevity, abbreviation.

Ibn Qutayba's own differentiation of abbreviation from ellipsis is most apparent in the heading of the first section of this chapter to deal exclusively with abbreviation,

example, it may be admitted that the three examples of apostrophe could have constituted a section of their own, while the zeugma in Q. 17/23, in fact, should have been more logically included in section two which deals exclusively with this type of expression (discussed below), leaving the remaining examples to constitute a miscellaneous collection of the ellipsis of a word or two. In hindsight, this seems to reveal some confusion about these expressions and may also indicate the level of stylistic sophistication reached by the late third/ninth century. That Ibn Qutayba may well have been aware of such difficulties, however, might be reflected in his use of a very broad heading under which these diverse Quranic expressions are collected.

⁴⁶⁵See above, pp. 74-5.

section three, where he identifies abbreviation as the reason behind the omission of a term or phrase, and also identifies the awareness of that phrase as the reason behind the abbreviation.⁴⁶⁶ This latter aspect is important in differentiating abbreviation from ellipsis in that Ibn Qutayba's clarifications of ellipsis involve the insertion of a term or phrase that is required for its syntactic function while his clarifications of abbreviation involve the insertion of a term or phrase that is required for its semantic function. Thus, according to Ibn Qutayba, clarification of ellipsis requires a syntactic insertion while abbreviation requires a semantic amplification. Noteworthy too is that this amplification is often accomplished by a reference to a phrase within the text but outside the actual expression examined. This understanding of abbreviation is certainly evident in the first two Quranic examples in section three, Q. 13/31 and 24/20, where Ibn Qutayba supplies a phrase for its semantic, indeed homiletic, function rather than a syntactic one.⁴⁶⁷ The remaining two examples in this section, Q. 3/113 and 39/9, which were mentioned above as quite similar to a number of examples of ellipsis, present a more complex situation. First, like his treatment of ellipsis, Ibn Qutayba does note that the syntax of each of these expressions does not fully express his understanding of it; but second, it may also be noted that he does not insert any term in order to resolve this variance, as would be done for ellipsis, but only explains the reason behind each of these abbreviations.⁴⁶⁸ His treatment of these two expressions, as well as the other examples of abbreviation in this section, demonstrate that he is concerned with the difficulty of a semantic contraction

⁴⁶⁶That is, "the use of a conditional phrase which should have an apodosis but in which the apodosis is omitted for abbreviation because the hearer is cognizant of it." See above, p. 69. It may be noted that Ibn Qutayba uses the term "omit (*yaḥdhifu*)" both in the heading of this section and in some of his explanations of the phrases adduced in this section as well as section ten (see above, for example, pp. 69, 100), but in each case, it is employed in a mechanical way rather than as a term of classification.

⁴⁶⁷See above, pp. 69-70.

⁴⁶⁸For Ibn Qutayba's treatment of these two expressions, see above, pp. 70-1; and for their comparison with similar expressions identified as examples of ellipsis, see above, pp. 104-5.

within each example, rather than a syntactic omission as in ellipsis.⁴⁶⁹ This semantic function of clarifying phrases employed in cases of abbreviation, in contrast with the syntactic function of clarifying phrases in examples of ellipsis, is quite evident in the two remaining sections that deal exclusively with examples of abbreviation, sections six and ten. Regardless of the particular type of expression involved, for every example in these sections, the clarifying phrase employed amplifies the semantic content of the expression, rather than amplifies the syntax of the expression to reflect its semantic content according to Ibn Qutayba, and are thus classified as examples of abbreviation.⁴⁷⁰

Isolating similar examples of abbreviation in section five, which also deals with abbreviation, is somewhat more difficult since Ibn Qutayba mentions both abbreviation as well as concealment as the cause of ambiguity in the expressions collected here, but he does not identify specific expressions as examples of either phenomenon. Among the various Quranic examples adduced in this section, only four of them, Q. 35/8, 3/175, 18/2, and 20/108, are treated as clear examples of abbreviation with the insertion of a semantically amplifying term or phrase.⁴⁷¹ However, the remaining Quranic examples in section five, Q. 27/10-11, 7/32, 51/57, 27/25, as well as Q. 2/150 used to clarify Q. 27/10-11, are not treated merely as examples of abbreviation with a semantic amplification of each expression, but with a semantic amplification, or more precisely, an explication of a term that exists within each expression.⁴⁷² Noting that the clarification of these

⁴⁶⁹With this information, it is possible to reevaluate Ibn Qutayba's classification of the similar expressions of Q. 14/18, 17/7, and 50/17, identified as examples of ellipsis in section four, and Q. 3/113 and 39/9, identified as examples of abbreviation in section three. Noting that Q. 3/113 and 39/9 are treated for semantic contraction while Q. 14/18, 17/7, and 50/17 are syntactically adjusted to reflect the meaning of each expression without adding to them semantically, Ibn Qutayba's classification of three of these as ellipsis and the other two as abbreviation does agree with the described understanding of these classifications.

⁴⁷⁰See above, pp. 84-5 and 100-1, respectively.

⁴⁷¹See above, pp. 77-8, 81.

⁴⁷²For Q. 27/10-11, the existing term is the pronoun "who (*man*)," following the exceptive particle; for Q. 7/32, the terms "those who believe (*'āmanūn*)" and "sincerely (*khālīṣatan*)"; for Q. 51/57, "they nourish (*ṣ-ṣ'imūn*)"; for Q. 27/25, "they worship

expressions involves the explicit mention of a term or phrase that is only implicitly referred to within the expression, especially in light of the etymological and functional connection between the terms "concealment (*ʿiḍmār*)" and "pronoun (*ḍamīr*)", seems to be sufficient evidence to consider these particular expressions as being those viewed by Ibn Qutayba as examples of concealment.

This understanding of concealment is quite evident in section eight, which deals with this type of expression exclusively. For each Quranic example in this section, Ibn Qutayba supplies an explicit phrase for an implicit reference to it that exists within each expression: six of these, Q. 35/45, 100/4, 28/10, 91/3, 91/15, and 97/1, involve the clarification of a pronoun, while the remaining example, Q. 38/32, involves his explicit mention of the subject implied by the existing verb.⁴⁷³ It may also be noted from the heading of section eight that Ibn Qutayba identifies concealment as being a part of abbreviation.⁴⁷⁴ This is not surprising since his treatment of examples of concealment, involving the semantic amplification of something implied within each expression necessarily amplifies the semantic content of each expression as a whole, a consistent characteristic of his treatment for all examples of abbreviation.

The connection made by Ibn Qutayba between concealment and a verb, in his clarification of Q. 38/32 in section eight, is even more evident in section two, the only remaining section to deal with concealment and the last section of this chapter on brevity to be analyzed. But while the concealment in Q. 38/32 involves the implied subject of the existing verb, both Quranic examples in section two, Q. 56/17-22 and 10/71, involve the concealment of an appropriate verb being implied by an existing noun phrase.⁴⁷⁵ Even though Ibn Qutayba clearly identifies these expressions as examples of concealment, it

(*yasudūn*)"; and for Q. 2/150, it is the relative pronoun "those who (*ʿalladhina*)."⁴⁷³ See above, pp. 78-81.

⁴⁷³See above, pp. 90-2.

⁴⁷⁴That is, "under abbreviation is concealment because of a term not being mentioned." See above, p. 90.

⁴⁷⁵See above, pp. 65-6.

may be noted that his clarification of these expressions does not involve the semantic explication of a term or phrase within each expression, but an insertion of a term he sees as being implied by a phrase within each expression. Thus, his conception of concealment includes not only the explicit sense implied within a term, such as a pronoun, but also the alternative concealment or inference of the various members of a simple verbal expression, such as a subject being implied by a verb or a verb being implied by an object. This does not, however, change his understanding of concealment as requiring a semantic explication of a particular term or phrase within each expression in order to clarify its ambiguity.

Based upon this analysis then, it can be stated that for Ibn Qutayba, Quranic brevity consists of the two major divisions of ellipsis and abbreviation, with concealment representing a particular type of abbreviation. Ellipsis is the omission of a term or phrase in an expression that is considered necessary for the syntax of the expression to reflect the expression's considered semantic content; abbreviation is the omission of a term or phrase in an expression that is considered necessary for the complete considered semantic content of the expression to be reflected; while concealment is the implicit reference to an explicit term or phrase that, as a type of abbreviation, is considered necessary for the complete considered semantic content of the expression to be reflected.

It may be admitted, of course, that this particular understanding of ellipsis, abbreviation, and concealment does not appear particularly unusual. It may also be noted, recalling each section's comparison with other selected authors, that Ibn Qutayba's application of each of these particular terms to specific Quranic expressions does not appear very novel either. The grammarian Sībawayh, the textual exegete al-Farrāʿ, and the rhetorical exegete Abū ʿUbayda certainly use each of these terms and, in many instances, apply the same specific term to the same Quranic expression as Ibn Qutayba

with few substantive disagreements.⁴⁷⁶ Particularly interesting in this regard, however, is that Ibn Qutayba's collective treatment of these Quranic expressions shows the greatest degree of similarity with al-Farrā': of the approximately fifty-five Quranic expressions examined by Ibn Qutayba in this chapter, Sibawayh examines only six, Abū 'Ubayda looks at twenty-five, while al-Farrā' examines forty-three of the fifty-five expressions. It is not surprising that Ibn Qutayba's examination of these expressions would be most dissimilar to that offered by Sibawayh, given both the early date of his *Kitāb* and the fact that it represents a descriptive grammar of the Arabic language that includes Quranic usage rather than an exegesis of the Qur'ān or its stylistic elements. But recalling that al-Farrā' offers only a grammatical exegesis of the Qur'ān while Abū 'Ubayda, noted in his use of the term "*majāz*," concentrates on the more grammatically irregular usages in the Qur'ān, which was developed even further by Ibn Qutayba's tropical understanding of *majāz*,⁴⁷⁷ it would seem reasonable to expect Ibn Qutayba's treatment of Quranic brevity to reveal a greater degree of similarity with Abū 'Ubayda rather than al-Farrā'.⁴⁷⁸ That such a progression from al-Farrā' to Abū 'Ubayda to Ibn Qutayba should, in fact, not be expected will be discussed below.

Another possible misconception, concerning Ibn Qutayba's apparently more complete or thorough isolation of examples of Quranic brevity, should also be corrected

⁴⁷⁶There are, of course, numerous instances where each of these earlier authors simply offers no examination of an expression adduced by Ibn Qutayba and the comparisons involved in each particular section of this chapter reveal some degree of disagreement. Some of the more obvious examples, however, include Ibn Qutayba's explicit corrections of al-Farrā's understanding of Q. 27/10-11 and Abū 'Ubayda's interpretation of Q. 17/31. See above, pp. 78, and 97, respectively.

⁴⁷⁷See, for example, Almagor, "Early Meaning," p. 312, QS, pp. 168-9, and above, pp. 14-5, 17-8.

⁴⁷⁸Such a similarity cannot be explained completely with the observation that Ibn Qutayba's understanding of ellipsis, like al-Farrā's approach as a textual exegete, involves the syntactic restoration (*taqdīr*) of many Quranic examples, since Abū 'Ubayda also employs the same type of reconstruction in many of the same Quranic expressions examined. It is the difference in the overall scope that still reveals Ibn Qutayba's analysis to be closer to al-Farrā', with his explanation of Quranic language, rather than Abū 'Ubayda, with his concentration on irregular usages in the Qur'ān, that remains

On the one hand, there are indeed relatively few instances where any of the earlier authors examine all of the expressions adduced by Ibn Qutayba in each section;⁴⁷⁹ but on the other hand, this study has examined only those examples cited by Ibn Qutayba. Whether Ibn Qutayba's identification of brevity in the Qurʾān is, in fact, more comprehensive than any of the earlier authors depends upon a more thorough analysis of their understanding of Quranic brevity, something beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus, even in light of these two apparent irregularities, Ibn Qutayba's association of specific technical terms with specific Quranic expressions seems to be quite similar to those offered by earlier authors.

Even with such general similarities involving particular terms and many specific Quranic verses, however, some notable differences between Ibn Qutayba's approach to the topic of Quranic brevity and those of earlier authors do exist. First, it may be noted that Ibn Qutayba employs a more precise application, and thus understanding, of the technical terminology involved. Although Sībawayh, al-Farrāʿ, and Abū ʿUbayda employ the terms "*ḥadhf*" and "*ʾikhtisār*" regularly, al-Farrāʿ and Abū ʿUbayda also use the term "*ʾiḍmār*," and both Sībawayh and al-Farrāʿ, unlike Ibn Qutayba, also use the term "*ʾījāz*,"⁴⁸⁰ it must be admitted that these terms are the technical limit of their various identifications. Indeed, wherever employed, Sībawayh never differentiates *ʾījāz* from *ʾikhtisār*.⁴⁸¹ This differs quite substantially from Ibn Qutayba's isolation of four particular types of *ḥadhf* and six types of *ʾikhtisār*, including two discernible types of *ʾiḍmār*, through which he demonstrates his understanding of Quranic brevity.

⁴⁷⁹This excludes Sībawayh altogether but includes al-Farrāʿ for sections three, five, six, and seven, and Abū ʿUbayda for section six as well. See above, pp. 71-2, 82, 86, and 89.

⁴⁸⁰Each of these authors' employment of "*ḥadhf*" and "*ʾikhtisār*" is, of course, quite *passim* in each appropriate section; al-Farrāʿ' s use of "*ʾiḍmār*" appears only in the second section concerning Q. 10/71 (see above, p. 67) and Abū ʿUbayda's use of it appears only in section eight concerning Q. 38/32 (see above, p. 94); Sībawayh's and al-Farrāʿ' s use of "*ʾījāz*" appears in sections one and four, respectively (see above, pp. 61, 73).

⁴⁸¹See above, for example, pp. 61-2.

But the most important difference between the earlier authors and Ibn Qutayba involves the overall manner in which he associates this technical vocabulary with Quranic verses. Sībawayh employs these terms in order to describe and explain certain aspects of the grammar of the Arabic language that include Quranic usages, al-Farrāʿ employs these terms for a more specialized grammatical exegesis of Quranic language, while Abū ʿUbayda employs them in order to clarify the more irregular usages of Quranic language. In each case, clarification of the Qurʾān or its linguistic usage is predominant. However, even though Ibn Qutayba usually explains his considered meaning of each Quranic expression cited, it should be noted that he does not actually employ these various technical terms in order to clarify the Quranic expressions adduced, but in fact, he employs the adduced Quranic expressions in order to clarify the technical terms. This difference is evident in the structural predominance of technical headings within this chapter, rather than any Quranic order, the manner in which he adduces various Quranic expressions under each of these headings, and, when introducing Quranic examples, his use of the illustrative locution "like His saying (*kaqawlihī*)."⁴⁸² It is Ibn Qutayba's conscious formulation and delineation of these particular modes of expression and their elaboration with Quranic and poetic examples, rather than the reverse, that reveals Ibn Qutayba's understanding of these terms associated with brevity as constituting figures of speech.⁴⁸³

On a simply technical level, this figurative understanding of brevity parallels the more abstract development of *majāz* from Abū ʿUbayda's "permissible construction" to Ibn Qutayba's more sophisticated figurative understanding of it, while at the same time,

⁴⁸²This particular expression, and a number of variants of it, appear throughout this chapter but it is noteworthy that this particular locution appears before each of the initial Quranic examples cited in each of the first nine sections (see above, pp. 58, 66, 69, 73, 77, 84, 88, 90, and 96) while in section ten he employs the more direct but equally telling expression, "under abbreviation is His saying (*min al-ʾikhtisār qawluhu*)."⁴⁸³ See above, p. 100.

⁴⁸³See also, Almagor, "Early Meaning," pp. 312-3; *BL*, p. 98; Heinrichs, "Genesis," p. 131; *QS*, p. 228.

this new tropical approach to Quranic language, analogous to al-Farrāʾ's grammatical approach to it, rather than Abū ʿUbayda's concentration on particularly irregular Quranic constructions, explains the relative proximity of Ibn Qutayba's analysis to that of al-Farrāʾ in the frequency of their respective applications.⁴⁸⁴ On a more general level, within the context of the preliminary studies above, Ibn Qutayba's examination of Quranic brevity also reveals some concerns relative to these various disciplines. His concern for the grammatical structure of each expression is certainly evident, although this is perhaps more obvious in his treatment of ellipsis but is equally applicable to examples of abbreviation, and his identification of brevity-related figures of speech in the Qurʾān necessarily precludes such expressions from being seen as possible solecisms, a more technical affirmation of Quranic language.⁴⁸⁵ His examination of tropical usage as well as his application of that to lines of poetry, in addition to the Qurʾān, may reveal a degree of common concern with Arabic literary theory and criticism, especially visible in the amount of Ibn Qutayba's views on brevity adopted by al-ʿAskarī, but perhaps this demonstrates more precisely that discipline's origins in Quranic philological studies. Many particular literary concepts, as opposed to grammatical or linguistic ones, would not be differentiated until later centuries, while the simultaneous examination of both Quranic and poetic expressions is a feature common to many works of the formative period, regardless of under which particular genre such works are classified.⁴⁸⁶ It is particularly obvious, of course, that Ibn Qutayba is concerned with the clarification of certain aspects of the Qurʾān. He usually offers his interpretation of each Quranic expression cited and, through his identification of brevity-related figures in the Qurʾān,

⁴⁸⁴For the different approaches to the language of the Qurʾān by al-Farrāʾ and Abū ʿUbayda, see above, pp. 14-6, 17-8.

⁴⁸⁵Such concerns, of course, were particularly common to both Arabic grammarians and textual exegetes. See above, pp. 14-6, 40-4.

⁴⁸⁶The differentiation of linguistic and literary concepts is never particularly straightforward but did take a major step in the fifth/eleventh century with al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078) but was, therefore, quite obscured in the earlier centuries of Islam. See above, pp. 27-9, 39-40.

certainly attempts to explain that particular difficulty of Quranic style. It is not coincidental, however, that this connection between figurative language, including brevity, and the Qurʾān would become a major component of al-Rummānī's demonstration of *ijāz al-qurʾān*.⁴⁸⁷

However, such general observations are not particularly illuminating and say more about the *Taʾwīl mushkil al-qurʾān* as a representative text of formative *tafsīr* than about Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity and its relationship to, or effect upon, the various Quranic sciences. Determining that depends upon answering two more important questions. The first is whether Ibn Qutayba views these particular figures of speech as representing a feature peculiar to the Arabic language, with the Qurʾān representing a respected example of it, or as a feature peculiar to the Qurʾān alone. The second question, regardless of where he sees the capacity for tropes to reside, is whether he considers these figures of speech as usages that require clarification or that require appreciation.

It is worth recalling here that early grammarians and textual exegetes, in their efforts to stabilize and clarify the language of the Qurʾān, appealed to the traditional authority of the Bedouin *ʿarabiyya* in linguistic matters and identified the language of the Qurʾān as representative of Muḥammad's Quraysh dialect.⁴⁸⁸ Early grammatical studies of the Qurʾān dealt with the elucidation of elements of the Arabic language. Early literary theory and criticism, of course, cannot be distinguished from linguistic studies but, although the later formal discipline of literary theory and criticism received its original impetus from the existence of the Qurʾān, it was influenced by the development of the stylistic *ijāz al-qurʾān* doctrine to focus also on the formal characteristics of Arabic poetry that differentiated poetic from Quranic eloquence.⁴⁸⁹ Later Arabic literary theory

⁴⁸⁷See above, pp. 1-11.

⁴⁸⁸See, for example, Baalbaki, "Treatment," pp. 14-6; Rabin, "ʿArabiyya," pp. 565-6; Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān," p. 419; QS, pp. 236-7; and above, pp. 40-5.

⁴⁸⁹See, for example, BL, pp. 97-100; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 27-54; and above, pp. 33-6.

and criticism examined poetry in order to appreciate the qualities of the most elevated profane genre of the Arabic language, poetry. Formative *tafsīr*, on the other hand, regardless of the particular sub-genre, was concerned primarily with the Qurʾān;⁴⁹⁰ whether it examined the grammatical or the more rhetorical aspects of the text, early *tafsīr* focussed on those elements in order to clarify the Qurʾān specifically. With the emergence of the stylistic demonstration of *ʿijāz al-qurʾān* in the fourth/tenth century the fourth combination appears: like *tafsīr*, it focussed on the Qurʾān specifically, and its literary style in particular, but not in an attempt to clarify the text but to appreciate the figures of speech in the Qurʾān as a demonstration of its miraculous inimitability.⁴⁹¹

Similar to stylistic *ʿijāz al-qurʾān*, Ibn Qutayba, in his examination of brevity in the *Taʾwīl*, also examines figures of speech in the Qurʾān. But whether he views these figures as representative of the eloquence of the Arabic language or are unique in the Qurʾān is addressed only by circumstantial evidence. On the one hand, he certainly reveals his interest in the Qurʾān with his composition of the *Taʾwīl*, of course, as well as his *Kitāb tafsīr gharīb al-qurʾān*.⁴⁹² On the other hand, he also examines many of these aspects in Arabic profane literature in a number of other works,⁴⁹³ and, interestingly, he also wrote an anti-Shuʿūbiyya treatise, the *Kitāb al-ʿarab*.⁴⁹⁴ In the *Taʾwīl*, he does mention that the Qurʾān was revealed in an eloquent way and considers its composition a miracle but he does not say that this miraculous characteristic can be seen by examining its figures of speech or that the Qurʾān is stylistically unique.⁴⁹⁵ In addition, within the

⁴⁹⁰See for example, Gätje, *The Qurʾān*, pp. 30-4; QS, pp. 202-27; and above, pp. 14-8.

⁴⁹¹See, for example, Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," pp. 143-7; von Grunebaum, "ʿIʿḍjāz," pp. 1018-20; Khalafallah, "Two Fourth Century," pp. 13-6; and above, pp. 21-5.

⁴⁹²See above, pp. 53-4.

⁴⁹³That is, the *Kitāb maʿānī al-shiʿr* on the themes of poetry, the poetic anthology of the *Kitāb al-shiʿr waʾl-shuʿarāʾ*, and a collection of *adab* works in his *Kitāb ʿuyūn al-akhbār*. See above, p. 53.

⁴⁹⁴See Abū al-ʿAddus, "Rhetorical Criticism," p. 59; Agius, "The Shuʿūbiyya," pp. 76-88; and above, pp. 33, 53, and n. 167.

⁴⁹⁵See *Taʾwīl*, p. 3; and above, p. 54. For a number of quotes from the *Taʾwīl* in support of this, see Almagor, "Early Meaning," pp. 312-3. Indeed, Ibn Qutayba, much

Taʿwīl's chapter on brevity, he never makes any distinction, including an evaluative one, between Quranic and poetic figures of speech, citing and clarifying examples from both equally. Still, it must also be noted that the major focus of the *Taʿwīl*, quite evident in its chapter on brevity, is not on the examination of general figures of speech wherever they occur but specifically of those figures in the Qurʾān that constitute difficulties. Thus, while Ibn Qutayba gives no specific indication that he views the existence of these figures in the Qurʾān, as opposed to its content or general composition for example, as a characteristic that renders the Qurʾān unique, he does piously consider the Qurʾān to be a miracle and worthy of literary attention.

Determining whether Ibn Qutayba considers these figures of speech as something involving clarification or appreciation could be introduced by reviewing another relevant conclusion. John Wansbrough, commenting on the *Taʿwīl* generally and *majāz* specifically, of which ellipsis and abbreviation are a part,⁴⁹⁶ asserts that "Ibn Qutayba's monograph on the style of scripture exhibits the transitional employment of *majāz* from an interpretational device to an aesthetic category."⁴⁹⁷ Insofar as his treatment of brevity is concerned, it is true that he does not employ these figures of speech merely as a particular type of ambiguity that permits Quranic interpretation. Even though he usually offers his understanding of each Quranic expression cited, as he does for poetic examples too, that is a secondary demonstration of his understanding of the particular figures of speech involved. Because his primary concern is with the explanation of these tropes, rather than their employment to clarify the Qurʾān, his analysis of Quranic brevity does reveal a shift from its employment as an interpretational device. But I am not convinced that this shift in his treatment of brevity is necessarily toward an aesthetic category. The

like those who adopted the early *ṣarfa* argument in support of the Quranic *taḥaddī* (challenge), notes the capacity for eloquence by others. See *Taʿwīl*, p. 12; cf. Boullata, "Rhetorical Interpretation," pp. 143-4; QS, p. 81; and above, pp. 19-20.

⁴⁹⁶See Almagor, "Early Meaning," p. 312; Heinrichs, "Genesis," p. 111; Reinert, "Madjāz," pp. 1025-6; and above, pp. 17-8.

⁴⁹⁷QS, p. 228.

term "aesthetic" pertains to appreciation and the phrase "aesthetic category" denotes the aspect that invites such appreciation. Certainly, later Arabic literary theory and criticism would come to appreciate brevity as an aesthetic category in various forms of Arabic literature while later stylistic demonstrations of *i'jāz al-qur'ān* would appreciate it to the extent that it was seen as an indication of the Qur'ān's stylistic inimitability. However, although Ibn Qutayba's treatment of brevity is an analysis of a category that would be appreciated in Arabic profane literature as well as the Qur'ān, his analysis of it in the *Ta'wīl* indicates only that he views it as a stylistic category that acknowledges a different form of speech, but not as an aesthetic category that acknowledges a better form of speech. Thus, Ibn Qutayba's treatment of Quranic brevity represents an analysis of a stylistic category that, itself, requires clarification, not appreciation, in order to resolve this particular figurative difficulty in the Qur'ān; that is, a figuratively-focussed type of formative *tafsīr*'s rhetorical exegesis. Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity consists of the recognizable Arabic figures of speech of ellipsis and abbreviation in the Qur'ān that are seen, within the *Ta'wīl mushkil al-qur'ān*, as stylistic difficulties that require elucidation.

CONCLUSION

Although both Ibn Qutayba and al-Rummānī examine Quranic brevity, the relationship between Ibn Qutayba's stylistic elucidation of these figures of speech in the Qur'ān and al-Rummānī's evaluation of them as a demonstration of the Qur'ān's stylistic inimitability seems, at first, somewhat tenuous. Ibn Qutayba discusses brevity in terms of ellipsis (*ḥadhf*) and abbreviation (*'ikhtisār*) while al-Rummānī sees ellipsis (*ḥadhf*) and succinctness (*qīṣar*) as elements of the broader classification of concision (*'ījāz*), terms for which he, unlike Ibn Qutayba, provides definitions.⁴⁹⁸ In addition, within the *al-Nukat*'s section on brevity, al-Rummānī cites no poetic examples but restricts himself to the analysis of Quranic expressions alone.⁴⁹⁹ Among the Quranic expressions adduced by Ibn Qutayba and al-Rummānī, too, there are few similarities. Of the approximately fifty-five Quranic examples of brevity cited by Ibn Qutayba, al-Rummānī cites only six of them in his *al-Nukat*. However, even among these six, al-Rummānī cites three of them as examples of simile (*tashbīh*), one as an example of assonance (*fawāṣil*), and only two of them, Q. 12/82 and 13/31, as examples of Quranic brevity.⁵⁰⁰

The similarity between Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity and that of al-ʿAskarī, however, has already been noted to be much closer. Although al-ʿAskarī, like

⁴⁹⁸See al-Rummānī, *al-Nukat*, p. 76; and above, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁹⁹This is not to say that he precludes poetry from the entire *al-Nukat*. For example, in the section on concord (*talāʾum*), he provides poetic examples of bad concord and good concord but immediately adds that Quranic concord is of the highest order. See *al-Nukat*, p. 95.

⁵⁰⁰For al-Rummānī's treatment of Q. 12/82 and 13/31, see his *al-Nukat*, p. 76, and above, pp. 64, and 72, respectively. The expressions he cites as examples of simile include Q. 14/82, 13/14, and 9/19. See *al-Nukat*, pp. 82, 82-3, 85; and above, pp. 77, 87, and 64, respectively. The example adduced as assonance is Q. 50/1-2. See *al-Nukat*, p. 98; and above, p. 87.

al-Rummānī, sees ellipsis and succinctness as the two constituents of concision,⁵⁰¹ a substantial part of Ibn Qutayba's analysis of brevity in his *Taʿwīl* is reproduced by al-ʿAskarī in his *Ṣināʿatayn*'s chapter on brevity, but not without amelioration. Without repeating the specific comparisons discussed in each section above, it should be noted that of all the examples of brevity cited by Ibn Qutayba, whether as examples of ellipsis or of abbreviation, that are retained by al-ʿAskarī, he subsumes them under ellipsis alone. This is quite evident in al-ʿAskarī's citation of all these expressions within the section of the *Ṣināʿatayn*'s chapter on brevity that deals with examples of ellipsis exclusively,⁵⁰² but is also apparent in al-ʿAskarī's explicit exchange of the term "ellipsis (*ḥadhf*)" for Ibn Qutayba's "abbreviation (*ʾikhtisār*)" in the latter's identification, for example, of the figures of speech examined in sections eight and ten.⁵⁰³ Thus, while al-ʿAskarī uses a great deal of Ibn Qutayba's material on brevity, that constitutes only the bulk of al-ʿAskarī's classification of ellipsis which is combined with other material on succinctness. Another more general but important difference should also be noted. While Ibn Qutayba isolates and clarifies these figures of speech in order to elucidate stylistic, figurative difficulties in the Qurʾān, al-ʿAskarī, who explains brevity-related figures of speech in the

⁵⁰¹See al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 179.

⁵⁰²The *Ṣināʿatayn*'s chapter on concision (pp. 179-90) is divided into the introductory section (pp. 179-81), followed by the section on succinctness (pp. 181-7), after which the section on ellipsis follows (pp. 187-90) under which many of the same examples adduced by Ibn Qutayba appear. No Quranic citations appear in the introductory section and none of Ibn Qutayba's examples are seen in the section on succinctness except Q. 56/19 (see *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 182) which, it may be recalled, was viewed by Ibn Qutayba only as a sufficiently intervening phrase to create some ambiguity involving verbal governance and not as an example of brevity. See above, pp. 65-6.

⁵⁰³For example, the *Taʿwīl*'s eighth section has the heading "under abbreviation is concealment ..." while the *Ṣināʿatayn* retains the same heading for the same examples except that it reads "under ellipsis is concealment ...". Cf. *Taʿwīl*, p. 226; *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 190, and see above, p. 95. For an example of the same exchange of terms involving the classification of individual expressions and the heading in section ten, see above, pp. 99, and 102, respectively. The only instance of al-ʿAskarī's retention of the term "abbreviation" is in a heading similar to that in the *Taʿwīl*'s third section where it is noted as a reason for the ellipsis of the apodosis. See *Taʿwīl*, p. 214; *Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 188; and above, p. 69.

same way as Ibn Qutayba by citing and explaining Quranic and poetic examples to illustrate each identified figure of speech, also notes that such a study is helpful, not only for the evaluation of literary works, but also for understanding the arguments that support *ijāz al-qurʾān*.⁵⁰⁴ On the one hand, al-ʿAskarī's employment of a method in his examination of brevity that is quite similar and often identical to Ibn Qutayba's provides a good example of their methodological similarities as well as the Quranic philological origins of the formal discipline of Arabic literary theory and criticism. But this methodological similarity should be contrasted against the purpose for which such a method is employed. Ibn Qutayba employs it in order to clarify the figurative difficulties in the Qurʾān while al-ʿAskarī employs it in order to appreciate and evaluate Arabic literature including its application in understanding the figurative aspects of *ijāz al-qurʾān*.

It would be tempting, here, to conclude that it is a short step from al-ʿAskarī's evaluation and appreciation of Arabic literature, including the Qurʾān, to al-Rummānī's evaluation of Quranic literature especially as a demonstration of its stylistic inimitability: they were, in fact, contemporaries, both concern themselves with eloquence, share a common technical vocabulary in their description of brevity, and both acknowledge their interest in the stylistic inimitability of the Qurʾān. There are, however, two points that argue against such a development. First, the fact that al-ʿAskarī and al-Rummānī were contemporaries does allow the possibility that the former could have influenced the latter or that a degree of mutual influence was possible. However, the literary evidence discounts both these possibilities and indicated more specifically that al-ʿAskarī was influenced by the views of al-Rummānī, not the reverse.⁵⁰⁵ Al-ʿAskarī's own statement

⁵⁰⁴*Ṣināʿatayn*, p. 2. See also, *BL*, pp. 6, 96; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, pp. 125-6, Kanazi, *Studies*, p. 36. Whether this particular attitude and the nomenclature employed for brevity, shared by al-ʿAskarī and al-Rummānī, are connected is beyond the scope of this thesis.

⁵⁰⁵See, for example, *BL*, pp. 96-7; al-Jemaey, "Al-Rummānī's 'al-Nukat'," p. 94; Kanazi, *Studies*, pp. 50-5, esp. pp. 54-5.

that his study of eloquence is helpful to, but not an exposition of, a known argument for stylistic *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* may be a tacit acknowledgement of this. Second, it should be recalled that al-ʿAskarī and al-Rummānī, notwithstanding their shared interest in the evaluation of Arabic figures of speech, represent different disciplines and have different aims. Al-ʿAskarī, as a literary theorist and critic, employs Quranic and poetic examples in order to explain Arabic eloquence. But al-Rummānī, concerned specifically with *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, was not interested only in understanding Arabic or even Quranic eloquence as an aim, like al-ʿAskarī, but in employing eloquence as an instrument to demonstrate the stylistic inimitability of the Qurʾān. Where al-ʿAskarī's *Ṣināʿatayn* combines poetic and Quranic figures of speech in order to understand Arabic eloquence, something "helpful" to understanding the arguments in support of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, al-Rummānī's *al-Nukat* represents the argument itself, which combined eloquence with the theological dogma of the Qurʾān's miraculous inimitability.

What al-Rummānī, in the fourth/tenth century, inherited, was a variety of assertions of the Qurʾān's inimitability, many of which he retained.⁵⁰⁶ But what earlier *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* writers did not possess, and what al-Rummānī contributed to the doctrine, was a more logical and formal way in which to demonstrate it, rather than merely assert it.⁵⁰⁷ The logical instrument was, of course, Arabic eloquence and al-Rummānī's application of it in his demonstration of the Qurʾān's inimitability represents a philological approach to the dogma of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*. The analysis of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* within the systematic framework of Arabic eloquence shifted the discussion of the doctrine from a series of defensive assertions toward a more positive demonstration by presenting the doctrine in rational, literary terms, something particularly attractive to Muʿtazila authors, including al-Rummānī. It is rather interesting that both the evaluative philological demonstration of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* by al-Rummānī and the emergence of the

⁵⁰⁶See *al-Nukat*, pp. 109-13; and above, n. 28.

⁵⁰⁷See above, p. 24.

formal evaluative discipline of Arabic literary theory and criticism appeared in the fourth/tenth century. It is equally interesting that both these activities are dependent upon viewing the Qurʾān, not only as a document of revelation, but as a document of Arabic literature, but which permitted its evaluation in terms of Arabic eloquence; and Arabic eloquence consists largely of figures of speech. The evaluation of Quranic figures of speech, regardless of the primary aim of that evaluation, has its origins in the Quranic philological discipline that first identified figures of speech in the Qurʾān. Once the existence of figurative language had been isolated in the Qurʾān in the third/ninth century, it permitted the Qurʾān to be interpreted in any literary way. Al-Rummānī's contribution to the doctrine of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* was to view the Qurʾān as a literary document and evaluate the various figures of speech seen within it as a rational demonstration of its inimitability. But Ibn Qutayba's earlier contribution, seen in his understanding of Quranic brevity, was the prerequisite isolation of these figures of speech within the Qurʾān. Ibn Qutayba, in his rhetorical clarification of the Qurʾān, identified the figurative objects that for some represented difficulties and for others, indicators of the miraculous.

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