

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PROPHETIC ELOQUENCE AS LINGUISTIC PRECEDENT:  
THE PHILOLOGY OF ḤADĪTH FROM SĪBWAYHI TO AL-FARRĀ'

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BY  
TYNAN KELLY

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PROPHETIC ELOQUENCE AS LINGUISTIC PRECEDENT:  
ARABIC AND THE PHILOLOGY OF ḤADĪTH IN THE 2<sup>ND</sup>/8<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

ABSTRACT

Despite a near-universal acknowledgement of the Prophet Muḥammad's supreme eloquence in the Islamic tradition, *ḥadīth* (his recorded speech and deeds) is largely absent from the earliest discussions of Arabic grammar. The standard explanation for this absence, forwarded by the 8th/14th century grammarian Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāḩī, is that early grammarians were concerned about *ḥadīth*'s linguistic integrity since it was transmitted non-verbatim, often by non-Arabs. In this dissertation, I show that this explanation is insufficient and anachronistic; it back projects critical considerations of *ḥadīth* transmission that crystallized centuries after the earliest works on Arabic grammar were written. I offer an alternative thesis: that *ḥadīth*'s association with urban scholars kept it out of discussions of Arabic grammar in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, which revolved around the natural speech of semi-nomadic Arab tribes. To support this, I first show that concerns expressed about the philology of *ḥadīth* transmission applied equally to poetry and the recitations (*qirā'āt*) of the Qur'ān. I then show that the primary goal of Arabic philologists at the time was to record the speech of those semi-nomadic Arabs whose language had not been corrupted by contact with non-Arabs because they believed their speech best exemplified the linguistic environment of the Qur'ān's revelation. Finally, I show that the process of legitimation, based on contact with other scholars and the nature of data collection, differed in the fields of Arabic philology and *ḥadīth* transmission/Islamic jurisprudence to such an extent that one could not readily accept the data of the other based on the other's terms alone. Further, we find that concerns about linguistic fidelity in oral transmission were not as significant as they

were in later centuries, that the linguistic reality of this transmitted material was more variable than previously assumed, and that there was a concerted effort beginning at the end of the 2nd/8th century to legitimate the Arabic of the Prophet and put it to use in exegetical and legal contexts.

To my mother and father.

You taught me to love my mind and myself.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the mid-2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, the historian and biographer Ibn Ishāq (d. 151/767) recorded<sup>1</sup> the following *ḥadīth* (statement or action) of the Prophet Muḥammad: “I am the clearest speaker from among you (*anā a ‘rabukum*); I am from the Quraysh and was breastfed by the Banū Sa‘d ibn Bakr.” The phrase “*a ‘rabukum*” has multiple interpretations; it could refer to clear speech and/or carry ethnic connotations. It is etymologically related to ‘*arab*, which during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century primarily referred to the semi-nomadic inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula and some of its surrounding regions, those simply called the “*‘arab*.” It also signifies “clear speech” in general, which was considered an intrinsic trait of the ‘*arab* in the first centuries of Islamic history. By the mid-2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, the verb *a ‘raba* had taken on the meaning in the field of Arabic grammar of “to add case endings.” It is difficult to determine what this statement would have meant to the Prophet’s Arabic speaking audience in the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century. Its meaning in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century is much clearer: The Prophet was an eloquent speaker of ‘*Arabiyyah*, the Arabic of the semi-nomadic tribes of the Peninsula and lower Mesopotamia. This is supported by the

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Ibn Hishām’s (d. 218/833) recension of Ibn Ishāq’s work; Ibn Hishām, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Malik, *al-Sīrah al-nabawiyyah*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, and ‘Abd al-Ḥafīz al-Shiblī (Cairo: Maktabat wa-Maṭba‘at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-Awladuhu bi-Miṣr, 1375 A.H. [1955]), 1:167. قال ابن إسحاق: وكان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول لأصحابه: أنا أعرابكم، أنا قرشي، واسترضعت في بني سعد بن بكر.

emergence of variations in the following centuries that replaced “*a‘rab*” with “*aḥṣah*” (most eloquent).<sup>2</sup>

Today, it is taken for granted in many circles that the Prophet’s speech represents an eloquence in Arabic second only to the Qur’ān. There are collections of *ḥadīths* devoted to his eloquence<sup>3</sup> and modern works on Arabic grammar and eloquence prominently feature *ḥadīth*.<sup>4</sup> For all intents and purposes, from a modern Muslim perspective the quality of the speech of the Prophet Muḥammad—on a phonetic, morphological, syntactical, rhetorical, and allegorical level—is unquestionable. It is a perspective as linguistically prescriptive as linguistic prescriptivism gets. But if there is one thing modern linguistics has taught us, it’s that linguistic prescriptivism is not a good way to describe language. Leaving aside aesthetic, literary, and even legal considerations implicit in the *ḥadīth* quoted above, in order to answer the question if the *ḥadīth* corpus represents the Arabic spoken by the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina circa 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century we would need to consult the earliest attested speech of the *‘arab*, which is found in a handful of philological works from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. But here we have a problem: in a surprisingly large (for the time) corpus of linguistic data we find very little *ḥadīth* cited for anything other than lexicographical purposes. It does not seem, then, that 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century philologists were interested in demonstrating that the Prophet was a “clearer/more eloquent speaker” (i.e., *a‘rab*, *aḥṣah*) than his peers.

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<sup>2</sup> For a review of variants over the centuries, see Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Majīd ‘Abbās al-Shā‘ir, ‘Ḥadīth rasūl Allāh: anā aḥṣah al-‘arab bayda annī min Qurays’ sanaduhu wa-riwāyatuhu wa-ra’y al-‘ulamā’ fihi,” *Majallat al-lughah al-‘arabiyyah qa ādābihā* vol. 1, no. 18 (2013): 157–74.

<sup>3</sup> A modern classic: Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq al-Rāfi‘ī, *I’jāz al-Qur’ān wa-l-balāghah al-nabawiyyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1973).

<sup>4</sup> ‘Alī al-Jārim and Muṣṭafā Amīn, *al-Balāghah al-wāḍiḥah* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 2010), *passim*. (n.b., first printed in 1931, still a standard textbook on Arabic rhetoric for high school and college).

This contradiction inherent in the fact that the Prophet was considered supremely eloquent, yet his speech was not regularly cited by philologists has attracted the attention of many scholars. It was first commented upon in the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century by the philologist and historian Ibn al-Dā'ī (d. 680/1282) and his student Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalūsī<sup>5</sup> (d. 745/1344), who alleged unequivocally that none of the early scholars studying the grammar of 'Arabiyyah cited *ḥadīth*. The reason for this, according to these two, is that these scholars were concerned that the oral transmission of *ḥadīth*, often by Persians, had corrupted its linguistic content; it thus no longer attested to the 'Arabiyyah of the Prophet or his linguistic milieu. But this reasoning was soon recognized as problematic, and a variety of rejoinders have been advanced in the centuries since. Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, no one claimed that early scholars cited *ḥadīth* for grammatical purposes. Rather, some of those arguing against Abū Ḥayyān claimed that the citation of *ḥadīth* later became permissible after the corpus had been authenticated; others argued that *ḥadīth* of high rhetorical or unique linguistic quality were more likely to have been transmitted verbatim and could thus be quoted. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars began discovering unattributed *ḥadīths* in early grammar works like Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*<sup>6</sup> and newly rediscovered works like Farrā's *Ma'ānī l-Qur'ān*.<sup>7</sup> Some pointed out that poetry and the *qirā'āt* (variant readings/recitations of the Qur'ān) were transmitted by Persians as well, predominantly orally and often non-verbatim. Indeed, while the meter of the former and the (mostly) fixed consonantal script of the latter ensured a fair amount of fidelity in transmission, the reality was that the extent of variation and the prevalence of forgery at the time made establishing a poetic or Qur'ānic urtext extremely

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<sup>5</sup> Not to be confused with Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī; going forward, Abū Ḥayyān will refer to the 8<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century Andalusian grammarian unless otherwise noted.

<sup>6</sup> 'Amr ibn 'Uthmān Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, ed. Muḥammad Kāzīm. Bakkā' (Beirut: Dār al-Bashīr, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Yaḥyā ibn Ziyād Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, ed. Aḥmad Yūsuf Najātī and Muḥammad 'Alī Najjār, al-Ṭab'ah 2., 3 vols. vols. ([al-Qāhirah]: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-'Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1966).

difficult. In this dissertation, I will follow this line of criticism while advancing a counter-thesis of my own: that concerns about the fidelity of transmission are back-projections and represent *ḥadīth* criticism at a later and more developed stage—rather, it was *ḥadīth*'s association with urban scholarship and lack of association with the *ʿarab* that limited its linguistic value in the eyes of grammarians.

In this dissertation, I will advance my counter-thesis in three chapters, after an introduction to the problem at hand: in Chapter II, I will compare the transmission of *ḥadīth*, Arabic poetry, and the *qirāʾāt*. Using descriptions of the linguistic corruption that occurred in *ḥadīth* transmission described in Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's *al-Kifāyah fī ʿilm al-riwāyah* (The Sufficient [Guide] to Transmission), I will show that the linguistic corruption associated with *ḥadīth* was also widespread in the transmission of poetry and the *qirāʾāt*, demonstrating that concerns about linguistic corruption alone were not sufficient to have excluded only *ḥadīth* from the corpus of attestable *ʿArabiyyah*. Special effort will be placed on addressing the attitudes of 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century scholars towards this linguistic integrity of this material, showing that (contrary to the expectation of Abū Ḥayyān's thesis that philologists would avoid material of questionable transmission) grammatically significant differences in transmissions set off some of the most important grammatical debates. In the Chapter III, I demonstrate that the primary concern of philologists was to align the rules they derived from the speech of the *ʿarab* with the material they cited—i.e., poetry, the *qirāʾāt*, proverbs, *ḥadīth* etc., what is commonly referred to in classical Arabic linguistics as *shawāhid* (sing. *shāhid*, lit. “witness,” functionally, “proof”). While philologists' preoccupation with the speech of the *ʿarab* has been addressed by modern scholarship, I go further to show that they exerted significant effort to reconcile the speech of the *ʿarab* with this material, which represented *ʿArabiyyah* without counting as natural speech. The

meter of poetry alters languages natural state, and the *qirā'āt* and *ḥadīth* are ascribed to urban scholars, yet all are shown to align with the standards of *'Arabiyyah*. In Chapter IV, I show that the acquisition of knowledge differed fundamentally for *ḥadīth* scholars and philologists, to the extent that the acquisition of *ḥadīth* did not fit the pattern of legitimation familiar to philology even if its contents could be aligned with *'Arabiyyah*. I further show that Islamic law and *ḥadīth* criticism in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century had not yet absorbed the advancements made in the field of philology and thus did not possess the tools needed to legitimate their scholarship (and the material they studied, i.e., *ḥadīth*) on linguistic grounds. Finally, I examine *ḥadīths* that appeared in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century whose contents address the language of the Qur'ān or the Arabic language in general, marking the beginning of *ḥadīth*'s entry into the world of philology.

The problem addressed by this dissertation requires an interdisciplinary answer; we are dealing with Arabic linguistics and Islamic law, multiple scholarly traditions at the same time. As such, there are certain critical considerations that must be accounted for. Furthermore, as we are working in a historically remote period, our historiographical approach must be articulated as well. In the remainder of the introduction, I shall set forth my critical approach to the problem of *ḥadīth*'s absence from early works of Arabic grammar.

Concerning the linguistic content of this dissertation, a few points must be noted. First, we are dealing with the earliest extant stages of the study of Arabic grammar. The grammar of formal Arabic (*fuṣḥā*) today or even a thousand years ago is far more standardized and homogenous than it was during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. As such, there always lurks the danger of back projecting the crystallized ideas of later grammarians on this time. To be sure, the works of 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century scholars like Sībawayhi belong to the same tradition as 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century scholars like Ibn al-Dā'ī and Abū Ḥayyān. However, these later scholars were working after centuries of

debate had largely crystallized the field. The idea that there were defined schools associated with Kufa and Basra (and, later, Baghdad) that went back to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century was accepted as truth by these scholars. Some modern scholars have argued the early existence of these schools to be fiction,<sup>8</sup> while others have argued that some differences described by later sources can be found in early sources.<sup>9</sup> Whether or not there was a Kufan and Basran school in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, it was certainly not as developed as later scholars would have it. So, when describing the positions of 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century scholars using the framework of the Arabic linguistic tradition, we will avoid comparing them to how they are portrayed in later sources if this portrayal is not reflected in an extant work from that period.

Another area that requires care is the projection of modern linguistic concepts on the Arabic linguistic tradition. Scholars from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century absolutely studied language in ways that are familiar to us today. Khalīl ibn Ahmad's (d. 175/791) classification of phonetics is incredibly accurate by today's standards; Sībawayhi showed marked interest in speaker intent in a way that echoes the modern study of pragmatics; Abū Zakariyyā al-Farrā' (d. 207/822) describes rules of sound change that are right at home in historical linguistics. But these scholars only touched on certain aspects of the modern study; the overuse of terminology taken from modern linguistics runs the danger of suggesting a linguistic more developed than would have been possible at the time. To avoid this pitfall, in this dissertation I will make a concerted effort to use the original Arabic terminology (with explanations) as often as possible and draw comparisons to modern linguistics only when it further illuminates their use in the extant

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<sup>8</sup> This is Weil's position in his introduction to Anbārī's *Inṣāf*; Abū Barakāt 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Anbārī, *Die Grammatischen Streitfragen Des Basrer Und Kufer*, ed. Gotthold Weil (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1913).

<sup>9</sup> Ramzi Baalbaki, "Arab Grammatical Controversies and the Extant Sources of the Second and Third Centuries A.H.," ed. Wadād al-Qāḍī, *Studia Arabica et Islamica: Festschrift for Iḥsān 'Abbās on His Sixtieth Birthday*, n.d., 1–26.

sources. To give a simple example, the Arabic word that best corresponds to “noun” is “*ism*.” However, adjectives in Arabic are also considered “*isms*” (the word for adjective, “*ṣifah*,” is a type of *ism*) and the Arabic linguistic tradition treats adjectives differently than English grammar. So, when referring to a noun or adjective we must be clear that this is not a classification native to the Arabic tradition but rather a way to make the linguistic material comprehensible to modern readers (particularly those with little or no knowledge of Arabic). For the sake of clarity going forward, a review of a few terms is warranted:

- 1) Linguistics, grammar, philology: While there is marked overlap between these terms, they are used for distinct purposes. “Linguistics” retains its modern signification, meaning the formal study of language (morphology, phonetics, syntax, pragmatics, etc.). When we speak of “scholars of Arabic linguistics,” we refer to scholars who study topics familiar to modern linguistics (not necessarily with methods familiar to modern linguistics, as mentioned above). Our use of “grammar” is somewhat unique; in modern usage, it generally covers morphology and syntax. However, there is a case to be made that it should include phonetics as well.<sup>10</sup> This meaning we intend, as it is an effective way to separate the study of Arabic lexicography (which has always featured *ḥadīth*) from other linguistic topics (which have not). Finally, by philology, we mean the historical-linguistic study of texts. By philologists, we mean all scholars preoccupied with the study of *‘Arabiyyah*, be it from a linguistic, rhetorical, or even literary perspective (though, it should be mentioned, the literary criticism of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century was primarily concerned with authenticating poetry).

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<sup>10</sup> Sam Hellmuth and Ian Cushing, “Grammar and Phonology,” in *The Oxford Handbook of English Grammar*, ed. Bas Aarts, Jill Bowie, and Gergana Popova (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 504–22.

- 2) Arabs, *‘arab*, Arabic, and *‘Arabiyyah*: It is essential that we differentiate between the formal Arabic (*fuṣḥā*) that has served as Islam’s lingua franca for over a thousand years and the varieties of Arabic studied by 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century philologists. The former is, generally speaking, the language of the Arabs—today, calling someone Arab is mostly determined by if they speak Arabic. 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century philologists called the language they studied *‘Arabiyyah*; it was the language of a generally agreed upon group of *‘arab*. When we use Arabic, we are referring the language with its vast history and innumerable varieties spoken by the very culturally and ethnically diverse “group” of people called Arabs. When we use *‘Arabiyyah*, we refer specifically to the language studied by philologists in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century attributed to a defined body of *‘arab*.
- 3) *Shawāhid*, linguistic material, linguistic corpus: These terms, on the other hand, are largely synonymous. *Shawāhid*, the plural of *shāhid*, is the Arabic term for “attestable citation,” at least in philological contexts (generally, it means proof or citation). This refers to lines of poetry, verses from the Qur’ān, *ḥadīth*, proverbs and direct quotations of the speech of the *‘arab*. In a very real sense, this comprised a generally agreed upon corpus that served as the foundation upon which standardized Arabic was formed.
- 4) *Faṣāḥah*: This term is usually translated as eloquence—i.e., “exercising the power of fluent, forcible, and appropriate expression”—and I have translated it as such in this dissertation. However, a clarification is warranted at this juncture as the meaning of *faṣāḥah* is not diachronically consistent and other Arabic words have been translated as eloquent as well. There is significant overlap between *faṣīḥ* and *balīgh* (also translated as eloquent) in that both signify effective and admirable speech. Both the famous 8<sup>th</sup> century lexicographer and Khalīl ibn Aḥmad and Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711/1311) present them as

such.<sup>11</sup> However, *balīgh* (or *balāghah*) is not used by early philologists and its rhetorical connotations are later—*balāghah* was first used to signify the study of rhetoric centuries later. *Faṣīḥ*, on the other hand, is widely used in early works of Arabic philology and is particularly associated with the ‘*arab*. Khalīl, for example, equates a ‘*rab* with *afṣaḥ*, both signifying “eloquence.” Throughout this dissertation, the word eloquence will refer to *faṣīḥ* as it was understood in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century—which is to say it was the effective and natural production of clear speech but not intrinsically rhetorical (i.e., literal, non-figurative, and straightforward speech is described as *faṣīḥ* if it clearly represents the object of description using accurate ‘*Arabiyyah*). This is an important theme in this dissertation, as *faṣāḥah* was a prerequisite for citable speech among philologists.

The concept of language ideology from modern linguistics and anthropology figures prominently, if not always explicitly, in this dissertation. The idea is simple: an awareness among a given population of what language should be has a real effect on the structure of language. The idea was originally proposed by Michael Silverstein as part of his program of metapragmatics in the 70’s and 80’s. Since then, it has been used to analyze features of languages from around world, from honorifics in Javanese and Zulu to praxis in U.S. law schools. Yasir Suleiman has written broadly about the role of ideology in the Arabic linguistic tradition with some success too.<sup>12</sup> He has noted how ideologies related to genealogy (i.e., tribal pedigree), ‘*arab* wisdom and cultural values, and the linguistic supremacy of the Qur’ān contributed to a remarkably homogenized language. However, Yāsir’s focus is on later centuries,

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<sup>11</sup> Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, *Kitāb Al-‘Ayn*, ed. Maḥdī al-Makhzūmī and Ibrāhīm Al-Samirā’ī (Beirut: Dār wa Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1986), 8:269; Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Mukarrim Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1414), 2:544.

<sup>12</sup> Yasir Suleiman, *Arabic in the Fray: Language Ideology and Cultural Politics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century onwards and the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> centuries in particular; he accepts as authentic some texts this dissertation regards with serious suspicion. Additionally, Yāsir accepts Abū Ḥayyān’s explanation for the absence of *ḥadīth*.<sup>13</sup> His study is grounded in the later tradition from which this dissertation seeks to detach itself. Thus, while building on his observations regarding the standardization of Arabic, we will restrict our investigation to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. This dissertation is largely a philological investigation of philologists; however, the efforts of these philologists will be consistently contextualized within the ideological framework identified by Suleiman.

Finally, there is an objection to our approach that must be anticipated and addressed: this dissertation seeks to explain an absence rather than an event. It is more difficult to explain why philologists did not cite *ḥadīth* for grammatical purposes than it is to explain why jurists cited *ḥadīth* for legal purposes. Our argument requires counterfactuals (i.e., if philologists rejected *ḥadīth* on such a such principle, then we would expect to see such and such except we do not) in order to fully explore the plausibility of Abū Ḥayyān’s thesis. So as not to limit our approach to negative evidence, we will expend a great amount of effort on the positive, which is to say we will focus on what legitimating factors we find in the study of Arabic linguistics and *ḥadīth* to reveal any overlap between the two. Our argument is based on the exposition of this methodological incongruity and not simply on the absence of *ḥadīth* from the study of philology or philology from the study of *ḥadīth*.

The problem this dissertation addresses is not simply a matter of *ḥadīth* citation in philological discussions. It speaks to the nature of transmission and scholarship at large in the

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<sup>13</sup> Yasir Suleiman, “Ideology, Grammar-Making, and the Standardization of Arabic,” in *In the Shadow of Arabic: The Centrality of Language to Arabic Culture*, ed. Bilal Orfali (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2011).

Islamic world during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Most reports of scholarly activities from that time were recorded a century or more later; extant works are few and far between. Consequentially, our picture of scholarly activity from the time has been significantly colored by the perspectives of later scholars, who wielded the well-developed apparatus of *ḥadīth* criticism<sup>14</sup> in their analysis of the past. Our reevaluation speaks to a different scholarly reality in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, one where the texts scholars studied—be they historical, religious, legal, or literary—were less fixed than previously assumed. It more clearly defines the nature of specialization at the time; while we may describe many great scholars as polymaths, the scope of polymathy differs greatly from era to era—for example, the philologist Khalīl ibn Aḥmad’s polymathy pales in comparison to Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī’s (d. 911/1505). Most of all, it better frames the rise of *ḥadīth* in Arabic and Islamic scholarship that began in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. So let us proceed in our attempt to, if still incomplete, picture of Arabic and Islamic scholarship in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>14</sup> By this I mean the *ḥadīth* manuals, biographical dictionaries, and works of *jarḥ wa-ta’dīl* (impugning and justifying [*ḥadīth* transmitters]) that emerged during the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> and the following centuries such as Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *al-Jarḥ qa al-ta’dīl* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1952); Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāyah fī ‘ilm al-riwāyah* (Hyderabad: Dā’irat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmāniyyah, 1357); Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-rāwī fī sharḥ taqrīb al-Nawāwī*, ed. Abū Qutaybah Al-Fārayābī (Beirut: Maktabat al-Kawthar, 1410); ‘Uthman ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Sallāh, *Ma’rifat anwā’ ‘ulūm al-ḥadīth (Muqaddimat Ibn al-Sallāh)*, ed. Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥusnī ‘Atar (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1986); Abū I-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb* (Hyderabad: Dā’irat al-Ma‘ārif al-Nizāmiyyah, 1326).

## CHAPTER I

### THE PHILOLOGY OF ORAL TRANSMISSION

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter shows that the linguistic standards of transmission in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century were not as rigid as depicted by later scholars. While we have no comprehensive contemporary view on the matter, we can infer scholars' attitudes- towards transmission from extant works either from that period or distilled from later works. Fortunately, these sources provide a consistent portrait of transmission at the time: scholars were aware of linguistic corruption due to oral transmission yet proceeded according to the needs of their discipline. *Ḥadīth* transmitters were able to ignore such issues as long as functionality persisted. Philologists were more concerned with how the 'arab rendered certain phrases and lines of poetry than they were with confirming the provenance of such ostensibly ancient material. It is natural, then, that variations of the same material proliferated at the time; linguistic corruption was rampant in *ḥadīth* as well as poetry, history, the *qirā'āt* etc. In the following pages, I will explore the nature of this corruption and show that *ḥadīth* was not naturally more "corruptible" than other material, particularly to an extent that would justify its complete omission from linguistic discussions. Furthermore, I will

show that scholars from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century onwards were aware of the effects of oral transmission on the linguistic composition of the transmitted material, *ḥadīth* and otherwise. This will demonstrate that Abū Ḥayyān's thesis, which posits scholars were more concerned with the linguistic aspects of *ḥadīth* transmission than other material, is untenable and requires reevaluation.

## 2. Source Material of 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Century Philology

According to the standards of linguistic attestation in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>1</sup> the speech of the Prophet Muḥammad should figure prominently in Arabic grammar. At this time, the speech of the desert-dwelling 'arab was the focus of study of Arabic linguistics. For Arabic grammarians, the "arab" were those desert-dwelling tribes whose language was considered attestable because it had not been corrupted by contact with speakers of impure Arabic or a foreign language (e.g., Persian or Aramaic).<sup>2</sup> Those whose speech grammarians deemed most authentic speech were not those with the most political or martial power. True, the Quraysh were considered *to have been* the most eloquent of the Arabs by most scholars from the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>3</sup> However, the transformation of Mecca and Medina into the cosmopolitan capitals of the Islamic world in the centuries after the Prophet's death meant that their inhabitants were no longer reliable linguistic informants; the *sunnah* of the Prophet may have been

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<sup>1</sup> As preserved by scholars after the 4th century. See Khadījah al-Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif al-nuḥāt min al-iḥtijāj bi-l-ḥadīth al-sharīf* (Baghdad: Manshūrāt Wazārat al-Thaqāfah wa-l-a'lām, 1981), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūfī, *al-Iqtirāḥ fī uṣūl al-naḥw*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥakīm 'Aṭīyah and 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭīyah (Damascus: Dār al-Bayrūtī, 1427), 47 أما كلام العرب فيحتج منه بما ثبت عن الفصحاء الموثوق بعربيتهم; Abū l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad Ibn Fāris, *al-Ṣāḥibī fī fiqh al-lughah*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo: Maṭba'at 'Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1977), 26.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Fāris, *Ṣāḥibī*, 28f; Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūfī, *al-Muzhir fī 'ulūm al-lughah wa-anwā'ihā* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1998), 1:166.

preserved, but his *lisān* had not.<sup>4</sup> Instead, good, attestable Arabic was taken from the likes of Thaḳīf, Tamīm, Qays, and Hudhayl, all nomadic inhabitants of the desert.<sup>5</sup> Their poetry and prose were freely quoted and served as the foundation upon which the first standardized Arabic was built, what was come to be just called ‘*Arabiyyah*’.

The Qur’ān, equally attested in works on Arabic grammar, was understood to have been revealed in the pure ‘*Arabiyyah*’ of the eloquent tribes from the Prophet’s time.<sup>6</sup> Muslim scholars have long debated whether the Qur’ān’s ‘*Arabiyyah*’ transcended or was of the same ilk of that spoken by its audience. But most agreed that the Qur’ān was delivered in a language that was understood by the ‘*arab*’, albeit with superior form and style.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the speech of the ‘*arab*’ provided the necessary hermeneutic to better understand the Qur’ān on the linguistic level. Later philologists commonly argued that the appearance of Arabic grammar as a distinct discipline was a response to corruption of the Arabic of the Qur’ān by non-native speakers.<sup>8</sup> Though the tales surrounding the origin of Arabic grammar are likely apocryphal, the discipline’s debt to the Qur’ān and its exegesis is well-established.<sup>9</sup> As the discipline developed, it endeavored to

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., *Muzhir*, 1:212. ولا من حاضرة الحجاز لأن الذين نقلوا اللغة صادفهم حين ابتدئوا ينقلون لغة العرب قد خالطوا غيرهم من الأمم، وفسدت السننهم.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad ibn Ahmad Azhari, *Tahdhīb al-lughah*, ed. Muhammad ‘Ali al-Najjar and ‘Abd Allah Idris (Cairo: Dār al-Misriyyah li-l-Ta’līf wa al-Tarjamah, 1975), 1:7; Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, 1:211; Ramzī. Baalbakkī, *The Legacy of the Kitāb: Sibawayhi’s Analytical Methods within the Context of the Arabic Grammatical Theory*, Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics, (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 28.

<sup>6</sup> Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-lughah*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Awaḍ Mur‘ab (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth, 2001), 1:3-5; Ibn Fāris, *Ṣāḥibī*, 41–47.

<sup>7</sup> E.g., Ma‘mar ibn al-Muthannā Abū ‘Ubaydah, *Majāz al-Qur’ān*, ed. Fuat Sezgin (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1381 A.H.), 1:8.

<sup>8</sup> Kees Versteegh, *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 2–3; cf. Rafael Talmon, “Who Was the First Arab Grammarian? A New Approach to an Old Problem,” *Zeitschrift Für Arabische Linguistik*, no. 15 (1985): 128–45.

<sup>9</sup> C. H. M. Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur’anic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993); cf. Andrew Rippin, “Miscellen: Studying Early Tafsīr Texts,” *Der Islam* 72, no. 2 (1995): 310–46.

contextualize the linguistic structure of the Qur'ān according to the *qirā'āt*,<sup>10</sup> the vocal and dialectal variations that lay within and behind the text,<sup>11</sup> and the traditions and habits of the Arabs and Muslims.

By the mid-2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, several *ḥadīth* were circulating in which Muḥammad proclaimed to his followers that he was “the most eloquent (*afṣaḥ*) of the ‘*arab*,”<sup>12</sup> or even said to have stated “I am the clearest speaker (*a ‘rab*) among you.”<sup>13</sup> These statements drew the attention of both jurists and philologists (and many who both!). Its implications were clear: his speech was rhetorically and grammatically faultless and should be emulated much like the rest of his *sunnah*. With a few words, the Prophet’s own statement tasked scholars with explaining what it was that separated the speech of the Prophet from that of his contemporaries. Starting in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, scholars in all disciplines went out of their way to acknowledge the supreme eloquence of the Prophet Muḥammad. But it was not until the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century that works devoted to the linguistic superiority of the Prophet emerged, such as al-Sharīf al-Raḍī’s (d. 406/1016) *al-Majāzāt al-nabawiyyah* (Figurative Speech of the Prophet)<sup>14</sup> and Abū l-Baqā’ al-‘Ukbarī’s (d. 616/1219) *I‘rāb al-ḥadīth al-nabawī* (Grammatical Analysis of Prophetic *Ḥadīth*);<sup>15</sup> Mubarrad, it should also be noted, devoted the first chapter to his *adab* collection to

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<sup>10</sup> Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 5–7.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Abduh al-Rājīhī, *al-Lahajāt al-‘arabiyyah fī al-qirā’āt al-Qur’āniyyah* (Alexandria: Dār al-Ma‘rifah al-Jāmi‘iyyah, 1996), 73–94.

<sup>12</sup> Shā‘ir, “Ḥadīth al-rasūl,” 157–74.

<sup>13</sup> Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa-l-nihāyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1982), 2:277; Muḥammad Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Atā (Bayrut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1990), 1:91.

<sup>14</sup> Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *al-Majāzāt al-nabawiyyah*, ed. Karīm Sayyid Muḥammad Maḥmūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2007).

<sup>15</sup> Abū l-Baqā’ ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Ḥusayn al-‘Ukbarī, *I‘rāb al-ḥadīth al-nabawī*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh Nabḥān (Damascus: Maṭbū‘āt Majma‘ al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah, 1986).

*ḥadīth* of the Prophet and his companions.<sup>16</sup> Prior, discussions of the Prophet's speech primarily treated its place in the history of Arabic.<sup>17</sup> Various theories were put forward, some arguing that Muḥammad had resurrected an ancient form of Arabic first spoken by Isma'īl, whereas others pulled the Prophet's speech into the folklore of Arab ethnogenesis arguing that he belonged to a long line of autochthonous Arabs (*'arab 'āribah*) who preserved the pure Arabic language.<sup>18</sup> At any rate, it was agreed that the Arabic spoken by the Prophet was a level beyond the other varieties of his time. From this, it should follow that any speech attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad is attestable material for the standardization of the Arabic language.

Yet, by no account does frequency of *ḥadīth* citations in grammatical contexts reflect this attitude. Muḥammad's speech belongs taxonomically to the varieties of attestable Arabic, but poetry and the speech of anonymous Arab informants were a far more common source for grammatic proofs during the early stages of Arabic grammar. It is important to note at this point that Muḥammad's speech played a significant role in establishing the lexicon of the Arabic language and was used to clarify the meaning of words in both the Qur'ān and in poetry. But what should have been a grammatical paragon was only infrequently encountered in the context of grammar. For example, in al-Khalīl ibn al-Aḥmad's dictionary, the *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, there are 428 *ḥadīth* cited<sup>19</sup> whereas in Sībawayhi's (d. 180/796) work on grammar, the *Kitāb*, there are only around a dozen.<sup>20</sup> Khalīl was Sībawayhi's teacher, and both originated from Basra; the only

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<sup>16</sup> Muḥammad ibn Yazīd Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil fī l-lughah wa-l-adab*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1417), 1:7f.

<sup>17</sup> Suyūfī, *Muzhir*, 1:209 ff.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:28-34.

<sup>19</sup> Ramzi Baalbaki, *The Arabic Lexicographical Tradition: From the 2nd/8th to the 12th/18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 72.

<sup>20</sup> Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif*, 50–78.

difference between the two works, and it is a large difference, is that one is a work of lexicography and the other a work of grammar. So, why was the Prophet’s speech employed regularly in lexicography but scarcely in grammar during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century? This discrepancy caught the attention of scholars long before the modern era.

### 3. Scholarship on *Ḥadīth* Citation in Grammar Since the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> Century

The first to openly address the paucity of *ḥadīth* citations in classical works of grammar were Andalusian scholars Ibn al-Ḍā’i‘ al-Ishbīlī (d. 680/1281) and his student Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāḥī (d. 654/1344).<sup>21</sup> The former’s conclusion that “the first Imams [of grammar], like Sībawayhi and others, [had foregone] the citation of *ḥadīth* to establish linguistic [norms]”<sup>22</sup> was too absolute. There are instances of *ḥadīth* citation in Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb* and the works of his contemporaries.<sup>23</sup> But these are very few and far between and are often not identified as *ḥadīth*.<sup>24</sup> Ibn al-Ḍā’i‘ and Abū Ḥayyān took up the topic of *ḥadīth* citation in response to Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274), who they said broke from tradition by citing *ḥadīth* frequently to demonstrate the rules of Arabic grammar. These two scholars argued that Ibn Mālik was wrong for using *ḥadīth* in this manner as it did not qualify as attestable Arabic. The process of transmission had altered it to the point that one could no longer say that it was a reliable representation of the Prophet’s speech, linguistically speaking. Transmitters allowed the transmission of its semantic equivalent

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 15f.; Maḥmūd Fajjāl, *Irtikāz al-fikr al-naḥwī ‘alā l-ḥadīth wa-l-athar fī Kitāb Sībawayhi* (al-Riyād: M. Fajjāl, 1430), 76f.

<sup>22</sup> Fajjāl, *Irtikāz*, 45. ترك الأئمة—كسبيويه وغيره—الاستشهاد على إثبات اللغة بالحديث

<sup>23</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār ‘Alwān Nāyilah, *al-Shawāhid wa-l-istishhād fī l-naḥw* (Baghdad: Maṭba‘ah Zahrah, 1976), 322–33; Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif*, 42–86.

<sup>24</sup> Fajjāl, *Irtikāz*, 89–92; Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif*, 78.

(*ma' nā*), which is to say that the word order, case endings, and even whole words were altered as the Prophet's speech was passed along. Abū Ḥayyān states his thesis thus:

You know that [the Prophet], peace upon him, did not speak the exact words [of the above examples]. It cannot be said with certainty that he even said some of them, since it is possible that he used a different word for some of these words as well as others and the transmitters used a synonym instead of his exact wording, as the meaning [of his speech and not the wording] was what was sought. This was particularly so because of the prevalence of audition and the absence of correcting and setting down the speech with writing, and the reliance on memory. And another thing, a lot of grammatical errors befell what was transmitted of *ḥadīth* because many transmitters were non-Arabs and rather learned Arabic through the study of the artifice of grammar. They often spoke grammatical errors without knowing, and thus non-eloquent Arabic occurred in their speech and transmissions.

فتعلم يقينًا أنه صلى الله عليه وسلم لم يلفظ بجميع هذه  
الألفاظ، بل لا يجزم بأنه قال بعضها إذ يحتمل أنه قال لفظًا  
مرادفًا لهذه الألفاظ وغيرها، فأنت الرواة بالمرادف ولم تأت  
بلفظه، إذ المعنى هو المطلوب، ولا سيما مع تقادم السماع،  
وعدم ضبطها بالكتابة، والاتكال على الحفظ... الأمر الثاني:  
أنه وقع اللحن كثيرًا فيما روى من الحديث، لأن كثيرًا من  
الرواة كانوا غير عرب بالطبع، ويتعلمون لسان العرب  
بصناعة النحو، فوقع اللحن في كلامهم وهم لا يعلمون، وقد  
وقع في كلامهم ورواياتهم غير الفصيح من لسان العرب.<sup>25</sup>

The main issue for Abū Ḥayyān is that the linguistic integrity of *ḥadīth* had been altered by *al-riwāyah bi-l-ma' nā*. The term literally means “transmission of to the meaning.” It is usually put in opposition of *al-riwāyah bi-l-laḥẓ*, which translates to “transmission of the utterance/word,” or more idiomatically “verbatim transmission.” Simply put, the former is concerned with preserving the semantics of a *ḥadīth* whereas the latter is a word-for-word transmission. According to Abū Ḥayyān, early grammarians were concerned that non-verbatim transmission resulted in the corruption of the original syntax of the Prophet's speech. Thus, the syntax of *ḥadīth* that circulated during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century did not reflect the linguistic customs of the Prophet and his contemporaries but rather a more “modern” usage; which is to say, it did not

<sup>25</sup> ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn ‘Umar Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-adab wa-lubb lubāb lisān al-‘arab*, ed. ‘Abd al-Sallām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1997), 11.

fit the criteria for attestation for grammatical purposes.<sup>26</sup> It follows *ex hypothesi* that *ḥadīth* could still be attested for lexicographical purposes as changes in syntax do not affect the meaning of individual lexemes; the criteria for lexicographical attestation is therefore unaffected. This logic, upon initial reflection, seems to make sense. Scholars who have addressed the issue of *ḥadīth* citation by Arabic grammarians have accepted that non-verbatim transmission affected syntax but left individual lexemes largely untouched.<sup>27</sup> However, the current study will show that this is not the case; there is ample evidence of morphological and phonological change in the transmission of *ḥadīth*, the *qirā'āt*, and poetry, which should have (but didn't) disqualify this material from citation for lexical purposes.

A second reason for early Arabic grammarians' purported reluctance to cite *ḥadīth* is that many transmitters of *ḥadīth* were not native speakers of 'Arabiyyah.<sup>28</sup> They were thus not trustworthy informants whose knowledge and use of Arabic reflected the linguistic conditions in which the Qur'ān was revealed. This compounds the issue of non-verbatim transmission, as not only did it make the change of syntax more likely, but it was seen to be a source of inconsistency in inflection (*i'rāb*).<sup>29</sup> Correct language, for grammarians, could only be acquired naturally or through extensive study; thus the speech of native Arabs and examples given by learned linguists could be accepted, but poetry written by Persians or after the late Umayyad period was not.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Baghdādī, *Khizānat*, 12.

<sup>27</sup> For review of modern scholarship on the issue, see Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif* 5–12; Baalbaki, *Legacy*; Arik Sadan, "Sībawayhi's and Later Grammarians' Usage of Ḥadīth as a Grammatical Tool," in *The Foundations of Arabic Linguistics II*, vol. 83, Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 171–83.

<sup>28</sup> Baghdādī, *Khizānat*, 11.

<sup>29</sup> Baghdādī, *Khizānat*, 13; Suyūfī, *Tadrīb*, 531f.

<sup>30</sup> Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 40–41.

Though this a cornerstone of Abū Ḥayyān's thesis, modern scholars have not accepted it as readily as the *al-riwāyah bi-l-ma'nā* problem.<sup>31</sup>

Upon further consideration, the thesis needs serious revision. The rejection of only *ḥadīth* implies conversely that the integrity of other material (e.g., pre-Islamic poetry, the Qur'ān, the proverbs and directly recorded speech of the 'arab) was not felt to have been affected by transmission and the influence of non-Arabs; but this was certainly not the case. Additionally, the reasoning behind Abū Ḥayyān's thesis is derived from the well-developed apparatus of *ḥadīth* criticism; but the same method used to impugn the transmission of some *ḥadīth* was also used to ensure the validity of others; if scholars of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century had the tools to identify problematic transmitters, then they likewise should have been able to find exemplary transmitters. The transmitter Ḥammād ibn Salamah (d. 167/783), for example, was said to have mastered *'Arabiyyah*; reports from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century and later works on *ḥadīth* transmission indicate that scholars at the time (such as al-Shāfi'ī)<sup>32</sup> were aware of the problems of non-verbatim transmission in *ḥadīth* scholarship. Why then, would the presence of non-literal transmission have led to a total embargo on *ḥadīth* in grammatical discussions when there were still transmitters who were knowledgeable in *'Arabiyyah* and transmitted verbatim? Abū Ḥayyān's thesis, as it turns out, only makes sense when applied partially (i.e., the *jarḥ* but not the *ta'dīl*).

There were scholars who responded to these assertions of Ibn al-Dā'ī and Abū Ḥayyān. Some argued that *ḥadīth* could be cited for grammatical purposes under the right circumstances. Their reasoning, like Abū Ḥayyān's, was derived from the application of a form of *ḥadīth*

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<sup>31</sup> E.g., *ibid.*, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāyah*, 170.

criticism that was more mature than that available during the early period. Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā al-Shāṭibī (d. 790/1388) permitted the citation of *ḥadīth* for the purpose of proving rules of grammar in cases where there was demonstrable attention to word-for-word, verbatim transmission. Those that exhibited a high rhetorical quality, according to Shāṭibī, were more likely to have been faithfully transmitted. However, he followed mostly Abū Ḥayyān’s argumentation in that most of the *ḥadīth* corpus was off-limits due to non-verbatim transmission.<sup>33</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī followed al-Shāṭibī, stating that it is permissible to cite only those *ḥadīth* for which it could be proven that “the Prophet spoke it in the form it was transmitted (*al-laḥẓ al-marwī*), and that is quite rare.”<sup>34</sup>

Al-Badr al-Damāmīmī (d. 828/1247) argued that the main contention of those who opposed the citation of *ḥadīth*—that it had not been preserved in writing—was fundamentally untrue; since *ḥadīth* had been written down before the corruption of Arabic had begun, it could thus be cited for grammatical purposes.<sup>35</sup> Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Maghribī (d. 1170/1757) too argued in favor of citation on the basis that the trust in *mutawātir* (widespread with many variegated *isnāds*) *ḥadīths* ensured that they indeed represented the literal speech of the Prophet; that differences in opinion among the *ḥadīth* transmitters regarding non-verbatim transmission speaks against a total embargo among the grammarians.<sup>36</sup>

For these later scholars, the question of the permissibility of citing *ḥadīth* to establish the rules of Arabic grammar was still relevant. Because they were chronologically and oftentimes

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<sup>33</sup> Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif*, 25–26.

<sup>34</sup> Suyūṭī, *Iqtirāḥ*, 52; Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif*, 26.

<sup>35</sup> Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif*, 23.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

geographically removed from the age of attestation, they could only consult material preserved from the past. The *ḥadīth* corpus was a vast and underutilized source. They could harness the product of centuries of *ḥadīth* criticism, which both supported both the contention that much of the corpus may have been adulterated and the contention that since *ḥadīth* had become so widespread and well-preserved that its citation should be allowed. Both positions are anachronistic when applied to the early period; to argue that the early grammarians did not cite *ḥadīth* for the reasons cited by Abū Ḥayyān assumes that the critical apparatus of *ḥadīth* criticism was operative in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century—yet works of transmitter criticism did not emerge until the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. In all, none of these scholars denied that early grammarians did not cite *ḥadīth* (though Abū l-Ṭayyib did point out that they never explicitly stated why they didn't). True resistance to the idea that early grammarians were reluctant to cite *ḥadīth* did not emerge until the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 4. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Scholarship on the Problem

There has been a lively response among scholars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to Abū Ḥayyān's thesis that early grammarians did not cite *ḥadīth* because of the philological problems of transmission. Many have generally accepted this position, though those who have did not thoroughly investigate the matter.<sup>37</sup> Other scholars have criticized Abū Ḥayyān's position on the grounds that *ḥadīth* was cited in the early period, albeit infrequently and usually without

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<sup>37</sup> Shawqī Ḍayf, *al-Madāris al-naḥwiyyah* (Miṣr: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1968), 80; Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 34–35; Sadan, "Sībawayhi's and Later Grammarians' Usage of Ḥadīṯs as a Grammatical Tool," 172–73.

attribution.<sup>38</sup> And some have attempted to refute Abū Ḥayyān’s position by comparing issues of transmitting poetry in the early period to the issues of transmitting *ḥadīth*.<sup>39</sup>

As for the first group, they have added little to the conversation. This is not because of a fault in the scholarship—Shawqī Ḍayf and Ramzi Baalbaki’s studies are invaluable contributions to the study of Arabic grammar—but rather because the comprehensive nature of their studies permitted them to address the issue of *ḥadīth* citation only in passing.<sup>40</sup> The second group, those who questioned the contention that Arab grammarians rejected *ḥadīth* in its entirety, have collected an impressive amount of data proving the contrary, though not enough to raise the status of *ḥadīth* in early works of Arabic grammar.

#### 4.1. Did Early Grammarians Cite Ḥadīth?

Khadijah al-Ḥadīthī was the first to conduct an extensive survey of *ḥadīth* in works of Arabic grammar. In *Mawqif al-nuḥāt min al-iḥtijāj bi-l-ḥadīth al-sharīf* (The Position of the Grammarians Regarding the Citation of *Ḥadīth*), Ḥadīthī collates and compares citations of *ḥadīths* in the works of two-dozen classical scholars: six who did not cite *ḥadīth* frequently, chronologically bookended by Sībawayhi and Ibn al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181), and eight who did, from Suhaylī (d. 581/1185) to Abū Ḥayyān (yes, actually cited *ḥadīth* himself!). Ḥadīthī’s chronological division is significant; her data shows that Suhaylī was the first grammarian to use *ḥadīth* to establish and support rules of grammar with marked frequency.<sup>41</sup> Those who came

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<sup>38</sup> Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif*, 6–12; Fajjāl, *Irtikāz*, 11–16.

<sup>39</sup> Nāyilah, *Shawāhid*, 290–337.

<sup>40</sup> Ḍayf treated the history early Arabic grammar in its entirety and Baalbaki produced a comprehensive overview of the Sībawayhi’s methodology in the *Kitāb*.

<sup>41</sup> Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif*, 191–92.

before Suhaylī, Ḥadīthī notes, permitted the citation of *ḥadīth* for grammatical purposes, but did so infrequently.<sup>42</sup> She mentions only a dozen *ḥadīths* in Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* and the *Ma'ānī l-Qur'ān* of Abū Zakariyyā al-Farrā'.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, this was sufficient to show that, contrary to Abū Ḥayyān's contentions, *ḥadīth* was cited by early grammarians to establish rules of grammar, albeit not very often.

Ḥadīthī also reviews the debates of later grammarians on the permissibility of *ḥadīth* citation. She outlines the three schools of thought on the subject: 1) those who forbid it—e.g. Ibn al-Dā'ī and Abū Ḥayyān; 2) those who generally permitted it—e.g. Badr al-Dīn al-Damāmīnī (d. 828/1424); 3) and those who took the middle position—e.g. al-Shāṭibī (d. 790/1388) and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī.<sup>44</sup> Ḥadīthī argues that since *ḥadīth* transmitters tended to correct grammatical errors (resulting in a remarkably grammatical corpus), later grammarians felt comfortable citing *ḥadīth* to prove rules of grammar.<sup>45</sup>

*Mawqif al-nuḥāt* is the standard by which subsequent works on *ḥadīth* citation in Arabic work have been measured; Ḥadīthī's evidence is straightforward, and her conclusions clearly proceed from her data. However, the work, though authoritative, is not exhaustive and several issues require further investigation. To begin, Ḥadīthī could not review every extant work of Arabic grammar; such a task is too much for any individual scholar, even with the indexes and digital search tools available today. Additionally, many more works have been edited and published since *Mawqif al-nuḥāt* was published in 1981. Ḥadīthī could not provide the full

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 180–81.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 50–86.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 367ff.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 397–98.

picture of *ḥadīth* citation in Arabic philology but rather a snapshot focused on a specific function—establishing rules of syntax, declension, and morphology. Going forward, scholarship (including this dissertation) will inevitably consult more works and unearth more citations and, as we do so, a fuller picture will emerge. This cannot be the product of a single work or scholar but will emerge only through the combined efforts of many. What is presently possible and required is for us to contextualize the data as we collect it. Ḥadīthī managed to present paradigm changing data but did not place it in the context of the larger development of Islamic and Arabic scholarship or even, as is the purpose of this chapter, in the context of 2<sup>nd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century transmission.

Maḥmūd Fajjāl has devoted the most effort to addressing the issue of *ḥadīth* citation in early Arabic grammar. In *al-Ḥadīth al-nabawī fī l-naḥw al-‘arabī* (Prophetic Ḥadīth in Arabic Grammar), Fajjāl reviews the positions of grammarians regarding the citation of *ḥadīth* as well as the positions of *ḥadīth* scholars on the role of Arabic grammar in their discipline, arguing both felt *ḥadīth*, if correctly transmitted, would preserve the grammatical integrity and ingenuity of the Prophet’s speech if properly transmitted.<sup>46</sup> According to Fajjāl, these scholars were aware of the problems of *ḥadīth* transmission outlined by Abū Ḥayyān and endeavored to purge the corpus of the ill effects of poor transmission.<sup>47</sup> However, Fajjāl argues that it was only after canonization of the corpus and the spread of *ḥadīth* criticism that grammarians were more willing to cite the Prophet’s speech.<sup>48</sup> Early grammarians, he argues, cited few *ḥadīth* because they were not trained in the field of *ḥadīth* transmission and criticism whereas later grammarians,

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<sup>46</sup> Maḥmūd Fajjāl, *al-Ḥadīth al-nabawī fī al-naḥw al-‘arabī: dirāsah mustafīdah li-zāhirat al-istishhād bi-al-ḥadīth fī al-naḥw al-‘arabī* (Riyad: Aḍwā’ al-Salaf, 1997), 47–48, 59–61.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 59–61.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

on the other hand, were trained in this field and thus were able to cite *ḥadīth* with confidence in its provenance.<sup>49</sup> In his survey of the commentaries on the *Alfiyyah*, a scholastic grammar by Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274), he identifies a large number of *ḥadīth* citations that function to establish and elucidate rules of Arabic grammar.<sup>50</sup> Though Fajjāl, like Ḥadīthī, correctly identifies this shift as occurring around the time of Ibn Mālik and Suhaylī, the reasons he provides for this shift are not convincing; *ḥadīth* has always been cited by scholars who were not trained in *ḥadīth* criticism, grammarians and non-grammarians alike. Additionally, the biographical material relates that many early grammarians studied with prominent *ḥadīth* scholars (e.g., Sībawayhi and Ḥammād ibn Salamah) and many chains of transmission of *ḥadīth* include early grammarians (e.g., Khalīl ibn Aḥmad).<sup>51</sup> The latter point Fajjāl acknowledges in a later work, *Irtikāz al-fikr al-naḥwī ‘alā l-ḥadīth wa-l-athar fī Kitāb Sībawayhi* (The Focus of Grammatical Thought on *Ḥadīth* and Traditions [of the Prophet’s companions and followers] in Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*), in which he reassesses the prevailing opinion regarding *ḥadīth* in classical works of Arabic grammar.

In *Irtikāz al-fikr al-naḥwī*, Fajjāl shifts from the second group (who argue that *ḥadīth* was cited by grammarians, but infrequently and perhaps with reservation) to the third group who see no grounds for Abū Ḥayyān’s position. In this work, Fajjāl argues that *ḥadīth* was far more common in the classical Arabic grammatical tradition than previously assumed. He points out that early grammarians, such as Khalīl ibn Aḥmad and Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’, can be found in many *isnāds* in the most authoritative collections of *ḥadīth*, indicating their participation in the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 125–26.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 127–36.

<sup>51</sup> Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb*, 537.

collection, transmission and evaluation of *ḥadīth* during the period.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, he notes that, according to biographical reports, Sībawayhi's interest in grammar was sparked by embarrassing grammatical mistakes he made while studying *ḥadīth* with Ḥammād ibn Salamah.<sup>53</sup> This, Fajjāl argues, is sufficient evidence that grammarians were versed in the field of *ḥadīth*. With this, he correctly abandons his previous contention that ignorance of *ḥadīth* criticism was cause of grammarians' reluctance to cite *ḥadīth*. Rather, he argues that later grammarians were influenced by Sībawayhi's style of citation, which often failed to ascribe speech to its source (be it poetry, the speech of the 'arab, or *ḥadīth*) and were thus not accustomed to citing *ḥadīth* and attributing it to the Prophet.<sup>54</sup> Abū Ḥayyān, according to Fajjāl, was compelled to explain the apparent absence of *ḥadīth* in early works on Arabic grammar because the matter had only just begun to be debated during their lifetime.<sup>55</sup> As such, Fajjāl rejects the idea that problems with the transmission of *ḥadīth* lay behind its absence in works of Arabic grammar. Rather, the problem for Fajjāl is lack of attribution in early works. That is to say, the lack of ascription to the Prophet gave the impression that *ḥadīth* was absent in early works of Arabic grammar; this perceived absence led later grammarians who followed to either not attribute *ḥadīth* to the Prophet or to forego their citation entirely.<sup>56</sup>

Attribution is a problem throughout Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*, the first comprehensive work on Arabic grammar and the earliest authentic extant source. None of the *ḥadīth* quoted in part or in

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<sup>52</sup> Fajjāl, *Irtikāz*, 106–10.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 27–29.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 54ff., 92.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 75–76.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 92ff.

full are attributed to the Prophet; instead, they are often characterized as the speech of the Arabs (*qawl al-‘arab*), or even as “something you may say” (*ka-qawlika*).<sup>57</sup> Fajjāl asserts that this problem of attribution warrants a reconsideration of not only the role of *ḥadīth* in the *Kitāb*, but of what material may be considered *ḥadīth* or adjacent to *ḥadīth*. In *Irtikāz al-fikr al-naḥwī*, Fajjāl argues that *ḥadīth* and the vocabulary associated with its narration and transmission are found throughout the *Kitāb*; he puts forward 137 examples that (he claims) demonstrate Sībawayhi’s knowledge of and reliance upon *ḥadīth* that belie the impression given by Sībawayhi’s lack of attribution.

However, the connection between the vast majority of Fajjāl’s citations from the *Kitāb* and the *ḥadīth* corpus is tenuous at best. Many of the examples are common idiomatic phrases (e.g., *qa ‘ada qurfuṣā’*, to sit in a squatting position/cross-legged)<sup>58</sup> and cannot be exclusively traced back to the Prophet’s speech. Many examples are single words that, though common in the transmission of *ḥadīth* (e.g., *za ‘ama*)<sup>59</sup>, are so common that they cannot be decisively used to establish a direct link between disciplines of grammar and *ḥadīth* transmission. And many are religious formula (e.g., *lā ilāha illā llāh*)<sup>60</sup> that, though their origins can arguably be traced back to the Prophet, were in such wide usage that we cannot ensure that Sībawayhi regarded them as a *ḥadīth*. Thus, despite much effort, Fajjāl only succeeds in identifying a handful of new *ḥadīths* in the *Kitāb*.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 59–67.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 273.

Though Fajjāl correctly points out that grammarians of Sībawayhi's generation were familiar with *ḥadīth*, he does not explore what this familiarity entailed. First, at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> the collection and arrangement of the *ḥadīth* corpus was in its initial stages. At that time, some material that was later included in the corpus was not widely accepted as *ḥadīth*.<sup>61</sup> It is possible that material cited by Fajjāl in the *Kitāb* that was later identified as *ḥadīth* was not necessarily widely attributed to the Prophet during Sībawayhi's lifetime.

Second, Fajjāl accepts much of the biographical literature at face-value. Sībawayhi is said to have turned his attention to Arabic grammar after incorrectly accusing the transmitter Ḥammād ibn Salamah of making a grammatical mistake in the transmission of a *ḥadīth*; Ḥammād corrected Sībawayhi, who was quite embarrassed and resolved not to engage *ḥadīth* until he had mastered Arabic grammar. Sībawayhi's biography is a muddled matter and single reports such as these are hard to verify. Even the climax of his career, the famed *mas'alat al-zunbūriyyah*, is thought to be a literary device,<sup>62</sup> though one would presume an event of such scholarly and social importance would have been preserved in the collective record of the history of Arabic grammar. Yet, Fajjāl shows no such critical attitude when he adduces the report of Ḥammād and Sībawayhi. It is received as definitive proof, an insight into Sībawayhi's biography and inner life that sheds light on the motivations behind his methodology. Admittedly, this report cannot be shown to be inauthentic. And, admittedly, it meshes exceedingly well with the rest of the grammarian's biography and his output. Nevertheless, it is not sufficient to support the contention that Sībawayhi's reluctance to attribute *ḥadīth* to the Prophet and extra care in his

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 27–29.

<sup>62</sup> M. G. Carter, *Sībawayhi* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 13–15.

selection of his citations was based in his biography. That is, we do not find a definite “echo” across all reports, but only scattered references.

Fajjāl’s assertion that Sībawayhi took extra care with his citation material is not borne out by the reports. As noted by contemporary and later grammarians, Sībawayhi’s (non-Qur’ānic) citations are riddled with errors.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, one of the transmitters of the *Kitāb*, Abū ‘Umar Ṣāliḥ al-Jarmī (d. 225/840), stated that he had to add the names of most of the poets to the hundreds of lines of unattributed poetry, indicating that Sībawayhi was either unaware or cared not to record this information.<sup>64</sup> Lack of attribution of poetry is evident in the manuscript tradition as well.<sup>65</sup> Suffice to say, Sībawayhi was not careful or methodological in many of his citations, which contrasts with the impressive methodology of his grammatical system.

Thus, Fajjāl’s claims (or anyone’s for that matter) about the status of *ḥadīth* in the *Kitāb* are far from conclusive. There is no definitive proof that Sībawayhi knowingly engaged the speech of the Prophet while purposefully hiding his engagement. Yet, there is something to be said about the large amount of material—those 137 often tenuous examples—alluding to a connection to the developing *ḥadīth* corpus and the nascent discipline of *ḥadīth* criticism. Whether or not Sībawayhi directly imported examples of the Prophet speech and its associated lexicon, their presence indicates contact between the burgeoning disciplines of *ḥadīth* transmission and criticism and Arabic philology. This is not surprising, considering modern research on Arabic philology’s roots in other disciplines.

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<sup>63</sup> Khālid ‘Abd al-Karīm Jum‘ah, *Shawāhid al-shi‘r fī Kitāb Sībawayhi* (Cairo: al-Dār al-Sharqīyah, 1989), 310ff.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>65</sup> Geneviève Humbert, *Les voies de la transmission du Kitāb de Sībawayhi* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 53–54.

Makhzūmī has argued that scholars of the Kufan school cited *ḥadīth* more frequently than those of the Basran school.<sup>66</sup> It is hard to confirm this assertion as there are very few extant works by early Kufan grammarians compared to Basrans. Those that are extant do have more citations compared to similar works by Basrans—e.g., the *Ma ‘ānī l-Qur’ān* (Semantics of the Qur’ān) by the Kufan Abū Zakariyyā al-Farrā’ (d. 207 or 215/822 or 830) has over 40 whereas the *Ma ‘ānī l-Qur’ān*<sup>67</sup> of the Basran al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ (d. 215/830) has only 4.<sup>68</sup> This assertion is plausible, though not yet proven. One reason given for this difference is that the Basran school was grounded in a rational methodology, inspired by the translation of Greek logic and the rise of the Mu‘tazilah, whereas the Kufans were traditionalists;<sup>69</sup> the latter were more inclined to transmit and cite *ḥadīth* whereas the antipathy of some of the former towards *ḥadīth* (in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, that is) is well documented. This is a plausible, though somewhat essentialized, interpretation of the data. However, the problem is that none of the early grammarians made any statements that would explain this difference between the schools, not to mention the problem of establishing what constituted and differentiated the Kufan and Basran schools during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. There were certainly differences associated with geography; Makhzūmī in his work *Madrasat al-Kūfah* (The Kufan School) points to the city of Basra’s association with Mu‘tazilism and Kufa’s important role in the transmission of legal material.<sup>70</sup>

But there was also overlap, as evinced by ‘Alī ibn Ḥamzah al-Kisā’ī (d. 189/805) and Farrā’’s

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<sup>66</sup> Mahdī al-Makhzūmī, *Madrasat al-Kūfah wa-manhajuhā fī dirāsāt al-lughah wa-l-naḥw* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlādūh, 1958), 348.

<sup>67</sup> Sa‘īd ibn Mas‘adah Al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ, *Ma ‘ānī l-Qur’ān*, ed. ‘Abd al-Amīr Muḥammad al-Ward (Beirut: ‘Alām al-Kutub, 1985).

<sup>68</sup> According to my count of the former (discussed in Chapter II of this dissertation) and the editors index for the latter: Akhfash, *Ma ‘ānī*, 750.

<sup>69</sup> Makhzūmī, *Madrasat al-Kūfah*, 65f.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

travels to Basra and study with Khalīl and Akhfash respectively.<sup>71</sup> Further exploration of the nascent Islamic legal and theological disciplines' relation to grammar at the time, employing both a geographical and chronological lens, is required if we are to say why there was such a difference, not to mention the need for an exhaustive analysis of the extant material and biographical references to see if this difference is an illusion resulting from the limited availability of the material or an actual representation of 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century scholarship.

#### 4.2. Was Non-Verbatim Transmission Only a Problem for *Ḥadīth*?

The most promising response to the *al-riwāyah bi-l-ma'nā* problem of Abū Ḥayyān's thesis is that which asks if the linguistic corruption perceptible in the transmission of *ḥadīth* are found in other material cited by grammarians. Was there linguistic corruption in the transmission of poetry or the *qirā'āt*? To be sure, poetry's use of meter prevented the wholesale reconfiguration of a given line. The same can be said of the Qur'ān with respect to the 'Uthmānic script. Yet, there were still significant and often contentious debates about grammatical variations in both. When compared with poetry and the *qirā'āt*, the level of grammatical variation due to transmission in *ḥadīth* is hardly objectionable. This point has been observed by several scholars who have recently addressed the topic.

Maḥmūd Fajjāl, in the aforementioned *Irtikāz al-fikr al-naḥwī*, makes this argument in a short chapter entitled "*Mā qīla fī l-ḥadīth qīla mithluhu fī l-shi'r*" (What is said of *ḥadīth* has likewise been said of poetry). His argument is primarily predicated upon the observation that there are many recensions of single lines of poetry, which Fajjāl sees as evidence of non-verbatim transmission in poetry.<sup>72</sup> Fajjāl adduces several lines of poetry from the *Kitāb* that do

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>72</sup> Fajjāl, *Irtikāz*, 141.

not conform more popular versions.<sup>73</sup> This comparison is interesting and we will pursue it further, but Fajjāl neither explores the attitudes of Sībawayhi’s contemporaries to variations in the transmission of poetry nor compares said attitude to their attitude towards the transmission of *ḥadīth*. His argument appears to be rather based on a value judgement, wherein *ḥadīth* is (according to Fajjāl’s estimation) a better source for Arabic grammar than poetry.<sup>74</sup> Certainly, Fajjāl is on to something when he argues that Abū Ḥayyān’s thesis applies to poetry as well, but he does not sufficiently show that Sībawayhi’s contemporaries expressed concern about the transmission of poetry in a way that matched the later evaluation of *ḥadīth* transmission.

‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Nāyilah offers perhaps the most comprehensive response to Abū Ḥayyān’s thesis. In his book *al-Shawāhid wa-l-istishhād* (Proofs and Attestation), he devotes an entire chapter to refuting the idea that *ḥadīth* transmission was anymore linguistically unstable than the transmission of other material. Responding to Abū Ḥayyān’s point that non-verbatim transmission was prevalent during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Nāyilah is quick to point out that there was a contentious debate on the issue and scholars who were later regarded to be the most trustworthy—e.g., Shu‘bah (d. 160/777), Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) etc.—were opposed to the practice.<sup>75</sup> He further argues that religion motivated *ḥadīth* transmitters to more accurately transmit *ḥadīth* than poetry was transmitted.<sup>76</sup> Responding to the contention that *ḥadīth* transmitters were often non-Arabs, Nāyilah responds that many were Arabs, that non-Arab transmitters were often renowned for their Arabic eloquence, and that many transmitters of

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 152–54.

<sup>74</sup> Fajjāl, *al-Ḥadīth al-nabawī*; Fajjāl, *Irtikāz*, 146–47. Fajjāl argues poetry only had lexical (*lafẓī*) and not aesthetic (*ma‘nawī*) value due to its frequent moral and artistic shortcomings.

<sup>75</sup> Nāyilah, *Shawāhid*, 315.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 313.

poetry were non-Arabs.<sup>77</sup> Finally, Nāylah counters the contention that *ḥadīth* during the time of Sībawayhi were replete with solecism by arguing that the most important *ḥadīth* transmitters were noted for their eloquence in the biographical literature. He acknowledges that solecism did occur in the transmission of *ḥadīth*, as evinced by later accounts about the debate of its permissibility in Ibn Ṣallāḥ's *Muqaddimah* (Introduction [to the Science of Ḥadīth]) and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādāī's *al-Kifāyah fī 'ilm al-riwāyah* (Sufficient [Study] in the Science of Transmission).<sup>78</sup> But he points out that Ibn Ṣallāḥ adduces a number of early transmitters' statements that anyone who seeks knowledge (*ṭalaba l-'ilm*, e.g., of *ḥadīth*) should study *naḥw* and *lughah*, grammar and lexicography.<sup>79</sup>

Nāylah's two main points are worth consideration: there is plenty of evidence that there were concerns about the integrity of *ḥadīth* transmission in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century and that these concerns also applied to the transmission of poetry at the time. However, his evidence comes largely from later sources, the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century at the earliest. And while he has certainly setup a solid framework with which we can criticize Abū Ḥayyān's thesis, it must be supplemented by a diachronic examination of the reports about transmission in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, the results of which should be corroborated with evidence from extant texts from that time such as (but not limited to) Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*, Khalīl's *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, and Farrā's *Ma 'ānī l-Qur 'ān* as well as al-Akhfash's work by the same title. This is the task of the coming section on the philology of *ḥadīth* transmission, which builds largely on Nāylah's observations.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 317.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 319.

Mustafa Shah offers the beginnings of such an approach in his entry in the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, “Ḥadīth, language of.”<sup>80</sup> Shah questions Abū Ḥayyān’s thesis in much the same way as Nāyḥ, citing the limited use of *ḥadīth* by Sībawayhi and his contemporaries and the silence on the issue. He argues that “the inference made by Abū Ḥayyān and others that the early grammarians discarded the traditions as a source of citation on the basis of the mode of their transmission is not ultimately borne out by the early grammatical sources.”<sup>81</sup> He dismisses the contention that *ḥadīth* was not used because “reliable written text of the *ḥadīth*, since the systematic collecting process did not begin until some decades after [Sībawayhi’s] death.”<sup>82</sup> Because it overlooks “the nature of the transmission of knowledge within the early Islamic tradition and the interplay which defined oral and written modes of dissemination that were already in vogue in the era when the Kitāb was composed.”<sup>83</sup> He also dismisses the idea put forward by Ḥadīthī<sup>84</sup> that Sībawayhi had “a profusion of sources from which he could draw for the purposes of citation,” since “The compass of sources used by grammarians and philologists had been largely circumscribed by his predecessors and he was mostly adhering to their established sources.”<sup>85</sup> Shah’s statements, though intriguing, are brief and do not explore the sources (as would be expected from an encyclopedia entry). They are also limited to Sībawayhi’s

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<sup>80</sup> Mustafa A. Shah, “Ḥadīth, Language of,” in: *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, Managing Editors Online Edition: Lutz Edzard, Rudolf de Jong.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 8–9.

<sup>83</sup> Shah, “Ḥadīth, Language of.”

<sup>84</sup> Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif*, 173–74.

<sup>85</sup> Shah, “Ḥadīth, Language of.”

*Kitāb* and do not consider the larger place of *ḥadīth* within 2<sup>nd</sup> century philology. However, in Shah’s brief review of the issue is an overture to the efforts of this dissertation.

The research covered over the past few pages justifies taking a stance against the Abū Ḥayyān thesis: grammarians of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century did cite *ḥadīth* to some extent, criticisms that could be levelled at the transmission of *ḥadīth* could also be levelled at other material frequently cited by grammarians (namely poetry and *qirā’āt*), and the discrepancy in frequency of citation between *ḥadīth* and other material is likely attributable to the scholarly practices of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century rather than concerns about transmission. In the following pages, we shall thoroughly examine each of these issues to paint a more accurate picture of the place of *ḥadīth* in 2<sup>nd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century Arabic philology.

#### 5. Philological Issues of Transmission in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Century

The nature of transmission in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century was different than that of the early 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. The former, it can generally be said, encompasses the *taṣnīf* (recording/classifying) movement and, the latter, the beginnings of the *jam’* ([critical] collection) movement. In the *taṣnīf* era, the task of scholars was to collect and organize, e.g., Mālik’s *Muwatta’* is an organized collection of *ḥadīth* (among other things) just as Muqātil’s *tafsīr* is an organized collection of interpretations of the Qur’ān. The *jam’* movement can be described as a critical expansion of the *taṣnīf* era in that it continued its collection but at a much larger scale (thanks to the proliferation of books) and the process of sorting data became a way to evaluate its function and/or authenticity; e.g., Bukhārī’s (d. 256/870) *al-Jāmi’ al-ṣaḥīḥ* (Collection of Authentic [*Ḥadīth*]) collected based on authenticity and sorted based on function just as Ṭabarī’s (d. 310/923) *Jāmi’ al-bayān ‘an ta’wīl āy al-Qur’ān* (Collection of Statements on the Interpretation of the Qur’ān) is a critical collection of exegetical opinions and interpretations. If transmission in

the *taṣnīf* era is to be understood using sources from the *jam* ' era, then a few more words on the topic are warranted.

### 5.1. The *Taṣnīf* and *Jam* ' Eras

*Taṣnīf*, from the verb *ṣannaḥa* (to arrange, classify), refers to the process of collecting and organizing material. Tales abound of the travels in search of knowledge (*riḥlāt fī talab al- 'ilm*) of religious scholars such as Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778), 'Āmir al-Sha 'bī (d. 100/723), Shāfi 'ī (d. 204/820) and Mālik ibn Anas. Philologists and Qur' ān reciters, such as Abū ' Amr ibn al- 'Alā' (d. 154/770) and 'Alī ibn Ḥamzah al-Kisā'ī, are reported to have travelled to the desert to live with the Arabs and record their speech. These scholars are reported to have prepared written records of the knowledge they acquired, albeit not in a form intended for publication or widespread distribution.<sup>86</sup> Writing in this context was primarily served as aide memoires and lecture notes. These writings are described in later sources as genre-specific collections, the *muṣannafs* of *ḥadīth* transmitters and notebooks of the speech of the Arabs of the philologists. Only a handful of these works, such as the *Muṣannaḥ* of 'Abd al-Razzāq and the *Tafsīr* of Sufyān al-Thawrī, are extant; other works, such as the *Kitāb Fa 'altu wa-af 'altu* of al-Aṣma 'ī, have been reconstructed from quotations in later works, though it is always questionable whether such works ever existed as independent writings or are rather lecture notes compiled by a scholar's students.

*Jam* ' (lit. "to collect") refers to the process of collecting and collating material, then putting it down in writing—that is, recording for posterity rather than for lectures or personal use. The *jam* ' movement began in earnest at the turn of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. Paper had made its

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<sup>86</sup> Gregor Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 78–79.

way into Islamic culture after Chinese papermakers had been captured in the Battle of Talas in 751, and the rise in availability of writing material corresponded to a rise in writing and (more importantly) publishing books.<sup>87</sup> The first books intended for publication and distribution in scholarly circles, such as Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* and Ibn Ishāq's (d. 150/767) *Maghāzī*, appeared in the latter half of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, and writing as a means of presenting and transmitting knowledge proliferated in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. At this time, the preliminary collection of material of the *taṣnīf* movement was greatly expanded and expounded upon. What this meant is that in addition to a greater amount of material being collected in writing—e.g., larger collections of *ḥadīth* sourced from scholars all over the Islamic world—the material itself became the subject of interpretation, spawning genres of hermeneutics (e.g., *nāsikh wa-mansūkh* (abrogating and abrogated verses), *gharīb al-Qur'ān/ḥadīth* (rare words in *ḥadīth* and the Qur'ān) and heuristics (e.g., *ilm al-rijāl* (biographical criticism), *dhawq al-shi'r* (poetry criticism)). The primary task of these genre was to explain the state of Arabic and Islam's cultural and literary inheritance in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century and how it had been transmitted and preserved for 200 years. There had always been a need and desire to study and comment upon the Qur'ān and the Prophet's speech and actions, not to mention the expansive Arabic literary corpus of poetry, orations, and *akhbār*. But it was only with the spread of writing that there emerged discreet but mutually interdependent disciplines of Islamic and Arabic scholarship that could serve scripture and tradition in a methodologically curated manner. This was the essence of the *jam'* movement: the evaluation and expansion of the collection and organization of material in accordance with the developing critical methodologies of Islamic and Arabic scholarship.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 99f. While paper was not unknown to the Islamic world before this date, and though the story of the Chinese papermakers being captured may be apocryphal, there does seem to be a proliferation of writing that started with the 'Abbāsids.

There is no clear-cut temporal division between the *taṣnīf* and *jamʿ* movements. They are separated, if you wish to use the term, by a transition that had no clear beginning (if reports of the writing of pre-Islamic poetry, the Qurʾān, and even some of the Prophet’s speech are to be believed),<sup>88</sup> and no tangible end—the study of *ḥadīth* even today is on occasion conducted orally, with students taking their place in the *isnād*.<sup>89</sup> We find *muṣannaḥāt* published throughout the *jamʿ* era; Arab-Islamic scholarship was produced oral written symbiosis throughout its history. Neither period could lay exclusive claim to the practice of oral transmission, writing, collection and record keeping.

Yet this distinction serves as purpose: it is a heuristic device employed to detangle our sources. The problem of *ḥadīth* citation by grammarians ostensibly begins during the *taṣnīf* movement, yet the bulk of the accounts of the scholarly activity from this time are found within sources from the *jamʿ* movement. In their application of the methodology of their time (i.e., *uṣūl/ʿulūm*), scholars of the *jamʿ* movement tended to project practices familiar to them upon the earlier *taṣnīf* movement. In an example pertinent to our task, works on *ḥadīth* transmission dating from the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century arrange reports of the scholarly practice of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century to depict the practice of *ḥadīth* transmission criticism that had emerged later during the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> centuries (this will be discussed shortly). These anachronisms need to be considered when reconstructing the scholarly environment of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century; the modern scholarship on the topic above has not done so.

## 5.2. Sources on the Philology of Ḥadīth Transmission in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Century

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 16–29.

<sup>89</sup> Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad’s Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, Foundations of Islam (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 4–5.

The most comprehensive treatise on *ḥadīth* transmission of reasonable temporal proximity to the period in question is al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's (d. 463/1071) *al-Kifāyah fī 'ilm al-riwāyah* (What is Sufficient for the Science of Transmission). Ibn al-Salāḥ's (d. 643/1245) *Muqaddimah* (Introduction [to the Sciences of *Ḥadīth*]) and al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's (d. 544/1149) *al-Ilmā' ilā ma'rifat uṣūl al-riwāyah wa-taqyīd al-samā'* (Lighting the way to knowledge of the principles of transmission and defining audition)<sup>90</sup> are later works that, though largely building upon Baghdādī's efforts, contain significant new material. These works, usually in the sections on the permissibility of writing (*kitāb/kitābah*) and performance (*adā'*) of *ḥadīth*, offer a collection of reports on linguistic corruption in *ḥadīth* transmission, in which you find, *inter alia*, concerns about *ḥadīth* being altered by metathesis (*qalb, ibdāl*), incorrect case-endings (*i'rāb*), addition and subtraction of words or phrases (*ziyādah wa-naqṣan*), and conflicting wording (*mukhālafāt al-alfāz*).

Descriptions of these issues are found in reports, ranging from the actual *ḥadīth* attributed to the Prophet that address the need for those who preserved his speech to maintain its linguistic integrity, to reports of the sayings and practices of major figures from the *taṣnīf* movement and earlier, to the opinions and practices of Baghdādī himself. It is not always clear when Baghdādī is describing a practice of the past, an aspect of *ḥadīth* transmission that dates to the time of the Prophet, or a contemporary practice intended to counter and compensate for damage done to the *ḥadīth* corpus in the past. Furthermore, there was ample motivation for later *ḥadīth* transmitters and critics to portray their forebearers as faultless speakers of Arabic; such portrayals instilled greater trust in the material whose preservation is attributed to them. While such motivations in themselves do not prove forgery, they do prohibit us from taking later reports of early

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<sup>90</sup> al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ ibn Mūsā, *al-Ilmā' ilā ma'rifat uṣūl al-riwāyah wa-taqyīd al-samā'* (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1970).

transmitters and critics at face value. Our sources for the standards of early transmission are, unfortunately, likely anachronistic in some places and false in others.

Determining if scholars of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century were aware of the philological issues of transmission described by sources from the late 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century onwards requires corroboration. The clearest example that would confirm the later accounts is if this issue is addressed in a work from the late 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> or early 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century (these are the earliest works available). That would be like finding in the works of Shāfi‘ī instruction to his students to be on the lookout for metathesis in the *ḥadīth* they cite, or Khalīl ibn Aḥmad explaining the occurrence of metathesis in a variant line of poetry—we do not find this in Shāfi‘ī’s works but we do with Khalīl.<sup>91</sup> As would be expected, lexicographical works from the time discuss philological issues, even of *ḥadīth*, more often than *ḥadīth* collections or jurisprudential texts. More often, in such works we find Arabic or even language as a conceptually discussed in general terms. Thus, we find Shāfi‘ī in his *Risālah* speaking generally of the need for a legal scholar to understand Arabic as practiced by the Arabs,<sup>92</sup> and even dismissing *al-riwāyah bi-l-mā‘nā*.<sup>93</sup> However, he proffers no discussion of the philological nuances of transmission.

The process of reconciling reports from the *jam‘* era with works from the *taṣnīf* era is destined to produce uneven results. The extant sources from the period under consideration do not give us a complete picture of scholarship from that time. What we get instead is a general picture of the ethos of transmission, an echo of what likely was. This verisimilitude will suffice.

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<sup>91</sup> Khalīl, *‘Ayn*, 1:147.

<sup>92</sup> Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī, *The Epistle on Legal Theory: Muḥammad Ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī*, trans. Joseph E. Lowry (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 35.

<sup>93</sup> Shāfi‘ī, *Epistle*, 269.

Our goal is not to show that there were (or were not clear) expressed concerns about the philological fidelity of *ḥadīth* transmission (there were). Rather, the task at hand is to establish that poetry and the *qirā'āt* suffered from similar philological issues in their transmission. If there were sufficient defects in the linguistic integrity of poetry and the *qirā'āt* to engender a lively debate among grammarians, then why did they not entertain a similar debate about *ḥadīth*. Such a debate would have addressed these concerns rather than dismiss *ḥadīth* in its entirety, and this emerges in our comparative reading of the biographical sources and 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century works.

## CHAPTER II

### COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY OF *ḤADĪTH* TRANSMISSION

#### 1. Introduction

To show that grammarians were unlikely to have dismissed *ḥadīth* outright solely due to concerns about transmission, I will compare variations found in *ḥadīth* to those found in poetry and the *qirā'āt*. I will further examine the attitudes of grammarians (and philologists in general) towards these variations. What we find is that transmission corrupted all material, that grammarians were aware of this corruption, and that variations in transmission served as the basis for many important debates in the development of Arabic grammar. While the importance of transmission criticism may have been growing in the field of *ḥadīth*, it was not operative to anywhere near the same degree in philology at large, particularly grammar.

There is no doubt that poetic meter and the 'Uthmānic script rendered Arabic poetry and the *qirā'āt* more stable than the free prose of *ḥadīth* in terms of word order—or historical reports (*akhbār*), or orations (*khuṭab*) for that matter. There are significantly fewer variations for the average line of poetry or verse of the Qur'ān than for the average *ḥadīth*. Phonological and morphological variation is a different matter; the extent of these variations in *ḥadīth* is comparable to what we find in the transmission of poetry and the *qirā'āt*. What needs to be asked is how scholars responded to these variations; did they lead to the dismissal of linguistic evidence, were they widely and unquestioningly accepted, or were they debated? A close examination of

such variations, quoted in early works of philology, shows that philologists were comfortable with variation—furthermore, these variations spawned some of the more interesting and contentious debates on the nature and function of ‘*Arabiyyah*. Indeed, if we apply concerns expressed about *ḥadīth* transmission to poetry and the *qirā’āt*, we find that their syntactic stability was not essential to philological discussions.

## 2. Philological Problems of Transmission According to the *Kifāyah*

There are several sections in Baghdādī’s *Kifāyah* that treat the philology of *ḥadīth* transmission. They are not a comprehensive treatment of all the linguistic variation that resulted from transmission; but, at times, they do present opinions on the topic ostensibly dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century and earlier. The *Kifāyah* is primarily a collection of *ḥadīth* and *āthār* but Baghdādī opens the chapters with a discussion of the various positions on the topic and often discloses his own. Concerning non-verbatim translation, Baghdādī is clear in that it is permissible on in the following circumstances: by someone knowledgeable of proper speech (*mawāqī’ al-khiṭāb wa-ma’ānī l-alfāz*, “places of speech and meaning of words”); only when the meaning of the *ḥadīth* is obvious (*ma’nāhu zhāhir*), which mostly refers to replacing a word with a synonym; and that the transmitter understand the original usage of Arabic words (i.e., their usage during the time of the Prophet).<sup>1</sup> Baghdādī cites *ḥadīth* where the Prophet allows for non-verbatim transmission if its function is preserved (e.g., *idh lam tuḥarrimū ḥalālan wa-lā tuḥillū ḥarāman*, “if you don’t forbid the permissible and don’t permit the forbidden”) or semantically equivalent (e.g., *idhā aṣāba aḥadukumu l-ma’nā fa-l-yūḥaddith*, “If one of you gets the meaning then let him relate it”).<sup>2</sup> He cites opinions of some of the Prophet’s companions (‘Ā’ishah, Ibn

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāyah*, 198–99. باب ذكر الحجة في إجازة رواية الحديث على المعنى.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

‘Abbās, Abū l-Dardā, Anas ibn Mālik) and the successors (*tābi ‘ūn*: Ibn Sīrīn, ‘Amr ibn Dīnār, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sha‘bī) that, generally speaking, accept non-verbatim transmission as unavoidable (and thus permissible) but still prefer verbatim transmission. Baghdādī does not defend those scholars who mandated verbatim transmission as he does those who do not. He gives accounts of the philological concerns associated with transmission, as if to warn his reader of what to expect when evaluating *ḥadīth*. These accounts date from the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> centuries and give us a general picture of the various positions on the philology of *ḥadīth* transmission—this is the picture with which we will compare the transmission of poetry and the *qirā’āt*.

Sections in the *Kifāyah* leading up to the section of philology treat some of the circumstances that led to error: writing down a *ḥadīth* while listening to it;<sup>3</sup> incorrectly memorizing or transcribing a *ḥadīth* due to a teacher’s elision of certain letters;<sup>4</sup> on the permissibility of seeking clarification of a word from someone other than the transmitter,<sup>5</sup> and studying with someone known to mix and muddle *ḥadīth*.<sup>6</sup> The bulk of the reports from these sections relate sayings and practices of scholars from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries, figures such as Qatādah ibn Di‘āmah (d. 118/736), Ḥanzalah al-Sadūsī (d. ca. early 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century), ‘Aṭā’ ibn al-Sā’ib (d. 136/754), Shāfi‘ī (d. 204/820), Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī (d. 285/898). Baghdādī does not offer any metacommentary in these sections, but rather lets the reports speak for themselves or, at times, merely states that “scholars differ in the correctness of

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 66: باب ما جاء في سماع من كان ينسخ وقت القراءة.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 68: باب ما جاء فيمن سمع حديثاً فخفى عليه في وقت السماع حرف منه لإدغام المحدث إياه ما حكمه.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 70: باب ما جاء في استفهام الكلمة والشيء من غير الراوي كالمستملي ونحوه.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 135: باب ما جاء في ترك السماع ممن اختلط وتغير.

that [practice].”<sup>7</sup> Thus, we are given the impression that the above-mentioned issues were, at a minimum, seen to have been a problem for transmission since the beginning of the *taṣnīf* movement through the apex of the *jam* ‘ movement.

The student-teacher relationship known in *ḥadīth* criticism does not have a direct analogue in the transmission of poetry; a poet’s transmitter (*rāwī*), it should be noted, was often part of the creative process and contributed to the final form of the poem. It would be inappropriate to transpose the concerns expressed in the *Kifāyah* in their entirety to the transmission of poetry. However, there are a few remarks offered by early scholars of poetry that provide some parallels. Though seemingly obvious, it is worth mentioning that scholars felt poetry must be heard and not transmitted through writing. For example, in Ibn Sallām’s (d. 232/845) description of 2<sup>nd</sup> century transmission and criticism of poetry uses a set terminology for describing how poetry was delivered: *qawl* (act of speech) and its variants, *inshād* (to chant, sing, vocalize), and *sam* ‘ (to hear).<sup>8</sup> The same terms are found throughout Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*<sup>9</sup> and Farrā’ ’s *Ma ‘ānī l-Qur ‘ān*,<sup>10</sup> as well as the later biographical literature. This is not to say that poetry was exclusively transmitted orally. As will be seen below, the transmission of poetry is marked by philological errors resulting from issues of script. In any case, the pertinent point is that the transmission of poetry required an articulate and correct delivery so that it may be correctly reproduced, and that this standard applied to *ḥadīth* as well at least since the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 66: اختلف أهل العلم في صحة ذلك.

<sup>8</sup> Muḥammad Ibn Sallām al-Jumāhī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu ‘arā*’, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Shākir (Cairo: Maṭba ‘at al-Madanī, 1974), 22f. and *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 35.

<sup>10</sup> Farrā’ , *Ma ‘ānī*, e.g., 1:153 (سمعت بعض العرب) 2:76 (ومثله قول الشاعر), 2:64 (وأنشد عنه بيت امرئ القيس).

century, though the *terminus a quo* likely extends before Ibn Ḥanbal as he is nowhere marked as the progenitor of such attitudes.

As for the permissibility of transmission through writing among the grammarians, there are many reports about books and lessons being transmitted in writing under the guidance of a teacher, *viz.* Kisā'ī studying Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* under Akhfash.<sup>11</sup> While this story may be apocryphal, reports of the practice are widespread, and it is also evident in the manuscript tradition. As for grammarians transmitting from a written work without consulting a teacher, Suyūfī offers a few examples from extant and non-extant works by Abū 'Ubaydah (d. 209/824), Tha'lab (d. 291/904), and Abū 'Alī al-Qālī (d. 356/967), but we don't have direct evidence from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century on the practice.<sup>12</sup> Schoeler argues that the *ḥadīth* transmitter Zuhri (d. 124/741) distributed his writing without overseeing the copying process.<sup>13</sup> However, without contemporary confirmation, we can't be sure of the extent of this practice in either the field of *ḥadīth* transmission or grammar before the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century.

### 2.1. *al-Riwāyah bi-l-mā'nā* in Baghdādī's *Kifāyah*<sup>14</sup>

According to Baghdādī, there are various opinions regarding the permissibility of non-verbatim transmission. There are those who do not permit it, and Baghdādī adduces the statement of Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 114/733) that Ibn 'Umar (d. 73/693) transmitted the Prophet's speech verbatim, without addition or deletion,<sup>15</sup> as well as statements to by the

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<sup>11</sup> Makhzūmī, *Madrasat Al-Kūfah*, 107.

<sup>12</sup> Suyūfī, *Muzhir*, 1:131ff.

<sup>13</sup> Gregor. Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, trans. James E. Montgomery and Uwe. Vagelpohl (London: Routledge, 2006), 123–24.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāyah*, 171ff.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

companions ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644), Abū Imāmah (d. 86/705) and the Prophet himself to the same effect<sup>16</sup> to serve as the foundation of those who opposed non-verbatim transmission. Baghdādī also provides accounts of 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century scholars’ opinions on the matter. In the camp that permits non-verbatim transmission, we find al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778), and Sha‘bī (d. 100/723) and many others. It appears that, while Baghdādī found evidence that transmission was originally word-for-word, by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century most regarded non-verbatim transmission as permissible.<sup>17</sup> Within this larger category of opposition, Baghdādī places a series of subcategories of non-verbatim transmission, and these subcategories will serve as the basis for our comparative philological analysis of transmission in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. The order of this section will follow that of the section on the delivery/performance of *ḥadīth* (*adā’ al-ḥadīth*) from Baghdādī’s *Kifāyah*. Each subsection will treat a specific philological issue in the following manner:

- 1) We will first establish Baghdādī’s perspective, determining if the section depicts the activity of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century or later development.
- 2) Consult works of philology *fiqh* and *ḥadīth* from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and early 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries to determine if the concerns portrayed in the *Kifāyah* are reflected in works from our period (there are, it should be said outright, very few detailed references to philology in such works, though there are general discussion of the relationship between ‘*Arabiyyah* and the *ḥadīth* corpus).
- 3) Consult works of grammar from the early period (2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century) to see if the concern expressed in the *Kifāyah* was expressed about poetry and the *qirā’āt*.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 198.

- 4) Finally, consult the biographical and *majālis* literature to compare to our findings in the primary sources.

## 2.2. Replacing One Lexeme with Another

Ostensibly, in permissible non-verbatim transmission a lexeme would be replaced only by a synonym of a no more restricted (*muqayyad*) meaning than the original. In practice, this was not always the case. Baghdādī provides two versions of a *ḥadīth* as transmitted by ‘Ubayd ibn ‘Umayr (d. 73/692) and Ibn ‘Umar with the latter accusing the former of lying for replacing the word *‘ā’irah* (sheep that cannot decide which flock to follow) with *rābiḍah* (a sheep at rest) in the *ḥadīth* “*Mathahlu al-munāfiqi mathalu al-shāti al-‘ā’irati bayna al-ghanamayn* (the hypocrite is like a sheep who can’t decide between two flocks).”<sup>18</sup> The difference between the two readings is of no significant legal, theological, or dogmatic significance; in fact, after this first report, Baghdādī adduces another where Ibn ‘Umar and ‘Ubayd ibn ‘Umayr compare their versions of this *ḥadīth* (with both diverging from Ibn ‘Umar’s version in the previous report) and conclude the variation is permissible since it “doesn’t make the prohibited permitted and the permitted prohibited.”<sup>19</sup> Baghdādī, not wanting the reader to take this as a license to freely substitute one word for another, uses a statement of ‘Ā’ishah’s (d. 58/678) to stress the importance of recognizing when a word has restricted (*muqayyad*, i.e., specific as opposed to general) meaning; but this is his own opinion, not that of an earlier scholar.<sup>20</sup> In fact, all of the evidence in this section adduced by Baghdādī, with the exception of a statement attributed to Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 114/733), is taken from the Prophet and his companions. None of these

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 173: إذا لم تجعل الحرام حلالا والحلال حراما.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 174.

statements, aside from Baghdādī's, prohibits the substitution of one word for another but rather address an individual instance. The evidence is clearer, if not explicit, in *ḥadīth* collections from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Mālik's *Muwatta'*<sup>21</sup> and Ibn Wahb's *Jāmi'*<sup>22</sup> for example, contain many examples of multiple *ḥadīths* that differ by only one or two words. But neither author comments on these differences or offers any critical approach to dealing with such a difference.

As for the Qur'ān, the dominance of the 'Uthmānic codex, with its fixed consonantal skeleton, made the replacement of words in the Qur'ān more difficult. But it was not unheard of, particularly with the non-canonical codices of Ubayy, Ibn Mas'ūd, and Ibn 'Abbās. Farrā' in his *Ma'ānī l-Qur'ān* cites passages from these codices that differ from the 'Uthmānic script at the level of whole words; it does not seem that Farrā' sanctioned their liturgical use, but he does grant them linguistic and exegetical value.<sup>23</sup> These codices were studied for centuries afterwards, showing up in a wide array of works, from Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*<sup>24</sup> to Ibn Jinnī's (d. 392/1002) *Muḥtasib*;<sup>25</sup> to give an example of the often intrusive nature of some of these readings, Ibn Jinnī cites Surat al-Baqarah: 127 (*wa-idh yarfa'u Ibrāhīmu al-qawā'ida min al-bayt wa-Ismā'īlu rabbanā*, "When Abraham raised the foundations of the house [of God] with Ishmael [they cried out] Our Lord!...") in Ibn Mas'ūd's *Muḥḥaf* (by way of Ibn Mujāhid and Ibn 'Abbās), with the non-'Uthmānic "yaqūlāni" ("the two said" inserted between "Ismā'īl" (Ishmael) and "rabbanā"

<sup>21</sup> Mālik ibn Anas, *Muwatta'*, ed. Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1985), 1:10, 183.

<sup>22</sup> Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh Ibn Wahb, *al-Jāmi'*, ed. Rif'at Fawzī 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and 'Alī 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ Mazīd (Cairo: Dār al-Wafā', 2005), 276.

<sup>23</sup> Anṣārī, *Abū Zakarīyā al-Farrā'*, 293.

<sup>24</sup> Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl al-Qur'ān (Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī)* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1955), 19:141, 20:221, 21:308, 500, 22:553, etc.

<sup>25</sup> Abū l-Faṭḥ 'Uthmān Ibn Jinnī, *al-Muḥtasib fī tabyīn wujūh shawādhidh al-qirā'āt wa-l-īdāh 'anhā* (Cairo: Wizārat al-Awqāf al-Majlis al-'Alā li-l-Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyyah, 1990), 1:108, 113, 2:15.

(our lord). Questions aside of whether this represents the original text of the Qur’ān (to the extent that one wishes to speak of one original text prior to the emergence of the ‘Uthmānic codex), this change of the verse at the level of an entire lexeme serves an obvious exegetical purpose vis-à-vis the ‘Uthmānic codex, where *rabbānā* can only be identified as speech based on context.<sup>26</sup> This variation, also cited in Farrā’ ’s *Ma ‘ānī*,<sup>27</sup> dates this variation back to the turn of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. There are many such variations to be found throughout Farrā’ ’s *Ma ‘ānī*; they are often as simple as exchanging one demonstrative for another (*dhālikum*→*hādhā*);<sup>28</sup> sometimes they are exegetical insertions like that seen above; and sometimes verbs are replaced wholesale (e.g., *tabayyanū*→*tathabbatū*, this example, it should be noted, is possibly *taṣhīf*, a difference due to similarities in the script).<sup>29</sup> However, though Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb* does feature *qirā ‘āt* that deviate from the ‘Uthmānic *rasm*,<sup>30</sup> I have found no instances where the deviation occurs at the level of the lexeme. Additionally, as with Farrā’ , the ‘Uthmānic *rasm* serves as the default for Sībawayhi’s Qur’ān citations, intimating its liturgical supremacy. Nevertheless, Qur’ānic verses featuring major deviations from the *rasm* at the level of the lexeme are found throughout Farrā’ ’s *Ma ‘ānī*. While Farrā’ was certainly an innovator he was not an iconoclast, and this speaks to his comfort with some instability of the Qur’ānic text at the level of the lexeme, if only for non-liturgical linguistic issues.

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<sup>26</sup> “*Rabbānā*,” being in the accusative, is understood as the object of a vocative (*munādā*).

<sup>27</sup> Farrā’ , *Ma ‘ānī*, 1:79.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:11.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:283 see also 1: 31, 53, 75, 124.

<sup>30</sup> E.g., Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 3:13. (إنن→إذا).

Poetry—far, far, far more than the *qirā'āt*—abounds with lexical variation. Evidence of this variation can be found in most commentaries (*sharḥ*, pl. *shurūḥ*), ancient or modern, which usually provide multiple recensions of the same line. These commentaries, ancient or modern, usually gloss over issues of transmission; this, of course, makes it difficult to produce a diachronic map of poetry transmission based on collections (*dawāwīn*, sing. *dīwān*) and commentaries alone. However, works of philology that record these various transmissions, when read against one another, provide a clearer picture of how acceptable (and expected) lexical variation was in the transmission of poetry in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. To be sure, we are comparing works from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century to works from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century and onwards. But it is important to bear in mind that these later authors often studied directly under the great philologists of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century and their students. At the very least, these sources provide a picture once removed of early attitudes towards poetry transmission in the philological community if not exact statement and positions.

Philological debates on lexical variation in poetry is well recorded from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Generally, it has been observed that scholars associated with the Basran school were reluctant to cite many of the lines of poetry cited by the Kufans.<sup>31</sup> While there are no explicit statements to this effect in the early sources, the later biographical accounts (which inclined towards the Basran school) did not hesitate to impugn Kufans' citations.<sup>32</sup> There are a few dozen lines of poetry found in in two or more works of philology from the late 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Many have slight lexical differences, either in terms of morphology or even entirely new lexemes of no etymological relation to what they've replaced. While neither Sībawayhi nor his

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<sup>31</sup> Nāyḷah, *al-Shawāhid*, 88–89.

<sup>32</sup> Nadā Sha'lān Mūḥān, *Shawāhid Sībawayh al-shi'rīyah fī juhūd al-naḥwīyīn* (Amman: Dār Dijlah, 2011), 93.

contemporaries comment on the lexical or grammatical implications of such variations, in the centuries after Sībawayhi's death a number of books were written that analyzed and criticized poetry citations in the *Kitāb*.<sup>33</sup> The purpose of such works was, first, to explain the grammatical point Sībawayhi attached to these lines of poetry and, second, to analyze and criticize Sībawayhi's conclusion. One of the most common strategies employed by these later philologists in their criticism of Sībawayhi was transmission analysis; they argue that many of Sībawayhi's errors were due his citation of poorly transmitted poetry.<sup>34</sup> There are many examples of lexical variation in poetry, and the reader is encouraged to explore the literature on the matter.<sup>35</sup> But for the sake of expediency, we will review an illustrative example: a single hemistich and its accompanying commentaries to shed light on this issue.

There is some, though not an overwhelming amount, of overlap in Sībawayhi and his contemporaries. Later generations made far more extensive use of Sībawayhi's poetic citations than his contemporaries.<sup>36</sup> Many of these lines are the same in both the *Kitāb* and other extant works from that time; many are not. To begin, of particular interest is a line Sībawayhi heard (or one of his teacher's heard) from a member of the Madhḥij tribe that is also cited by Farrā' and Akhḥash in their *Ma'ānīs*. They cite this line in support of the *lā al-nāfiyah* (negative particle of prohibition) putting its subject (i.e., ism) in the accusative (i.e., *manṣūb*) but do not attribute the

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<sup>33</sup> E.g., Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Naḥḥās, *Sharḥ abyāt Sībawayhi*, ed. Zuhayr Ghāzī Zāhid (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Naḥḍah al-'Arabiyyah, 1986); and Abū Sa'īd al-Ḥasan ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Sirāfī, *Sharḥ abyāt Sībawayhi*, ed. Muḥammad 'Alī al-Riḥ Hāshim (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, 1974).

<sup>34</sup> Mūḥān, *Shawāhid Sībawayh*, 119.

<sup>35</sup> Nāyilah, *Shawāhid*, 29–120, especially 48–65 and 90–95; Jum'ah, *Shawāhid al-shi'r*, 305–88; Mūḥān, *Shawāhid Sībawayh*, passim.

<sup>36</sup> Nāyilah, *Shawāhid*, 90–92.

line to its poet;<sup>37</sup> they have that in common. However, the first hemistich of the line differs noticeably between the two:

<i>Kitāb Sībawayhi</i>	هذا لعمركم الصغار بعينه لا أم لي إن كان ذاك ولا أب <sup>38</sup>	This is, by your life, the humble one himself. I have no mother, if it is as such, and no father
<i>Ma ‘ānī l-Qur’ān</i> by Akhfash	ذاكم وجدكم الصغار بأسره لا أم لي إن كان ذاك ولا أب <sup>39</sup>	That, by your luck, <sup>40</sup> is the humble one himself. I have no mother, if it is as such, and no father
<i>Ma ‘ānī l-Qur’ān</i> by Farrā’	ذاكم وجدكم الصغار بعينه لا أم لي إن كان ذاك ولا أب <sup>41</sup>	That, by your luck, is the humble one himself. I have no mother, if it is as such, and no father

It is worth considering the implications of Farrā’ having studied Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*, as widely stated in the later biographical literature. On report states that Farrā’ studied the *Kitāb* with Kisā’ī and another that a copy of the *Kitāb* (later purchased by Jāḥiz) was found under

<sup>37</sup> Sīrāfī, on the other hand, attributes it to al-Rizāfah al-Bāhili; al-Sīrāfī, *Sharḥ abyāt Sībawayhi*, 1:159.

<sup>38</sup> Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb.*, 2:292.

<sup>39</sup> Akhfash, *Ma ‘ānī*, 1:26.

<sup>40</sup> Ibn ‘Aqīl suggests both luck and grandfather as options: ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn ‘Aqīl, *Sharḥ Ibn ‘Aqīl ‘alā Alfīyyat Ibn Mālik*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd and Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mālik (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīthah, [1964]), 1:401.

<sup>41</sup> Farrā’, *Ma ‘ānī*, 1:121.

Farrā'’s mattress.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, overlap in citations, such as the line above, too raises the possibility that Farrā' was familiar with Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*. If this is the case, we would have to ask if Farrā' consciously chose his version due to some fault he saw in Sībawayhi’s or if this was simply the version with which he was more familiar (the differences between the two versions do not affect the grammatical import of the line). On the other hand, it is possible that the overlap in citations between the two was a product of the prominence of these citations in philological circles; in such a case, though we may say Farrā' and Sībawayhi’s citation of this line are connected in that they were both participating in the same discussion, we cannot say for certain that Farrā'’s inclusion of this line is a direct response to Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*. In either case, the fact pertinent to our task remains true: two near-contemporaneous scholars cited versions of a line of poetry that differ at the level of the lexeme for the same grammatical issue. And then there is Akhfash’s version; he was a student of Sībawayhi, and he cites the line for the same grammatical issue while coming to the same grammatical conclusion as his teacher, yet still quotes a different version of the line.

There are two lexemes that differ between the two lines: first, *dhākum* (Farrā') vs. *hādhā* (Sībawayhi), both of which are demonstratives; and *wa-jaddukum* (Farrā') vs. *la-‘amrukum* (Sībawayhi), both of which are interjected oaths. The debate regarding the attribution of this line continued for centuries as well. Sīrafī stated that Ru’bah ibn al-‘Ajjāj was known to recite it but did not attribute it to the *rājiz* (poet specializing in the meter of *rajaz*).<sup>43</sup> Much later, Ibn ‘Aqīl (d.

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<sup>42</sup> ‘Abd al-Wāhid al-Ḥalabī Abū Ṭayyib al-Lughawī, *Marātib al-naḥwiyyīn*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Maktabat Nahḍah Miṣr wa-Maṭba‘atuhā, 1955), 87; Abū al-‘Abbās Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān wa-anbā’ abnā’ al-Zamān*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1994), 3:463.

<sup>43</sup> al-Sīrafī, *Sharḥ abyāt Sībawayhi*, 1:159.

769/1367) reviewed previous attributions: Abū Riyāsh (fl. 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>44</sup> attributed it to Hammām ibn Murrah (fl. 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century);<sup>45</sup> Ibn al-A‘rābī (d. 231/845), who attributed it to a member of the ‘Abd Manāf tribe (against Sībawayhi’s attribution to a member of the Madhḥij); and al-Ḥātimī (d. 388/998), who attributed it to Ibn Aḥmar (fl. 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century); and Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967), who attributed it to Ḍamrah ibn Ḍamrah (fl. 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century C.E.); and an anonymous philologist who claimed that the line was “very old poetry” (*min al-shi‘r al-qadīm jiddan*), i.e., deep in the pre-Islamic era. While each attribution on its own is of limited value, taken together they deliver a clear message: throughout the history of Arabic philology there were great differences on the origin of some of the most important lines of poetry, those with which philologists grappled for generations. Origin here is not inconsequential; it was always important that a line of poetry be attributed to the right kind of ‘*arab*, and there were always dialectal implications when attributing a line to a certain tribe (differences in demonstratives as seen above, for example, being one such implication). Yet there is a remarkable amount of comfort among philologists concerning this instability. Additionally, we find this line treating the same grammatical issue of the Qur’ān as found in Akhfash’s and Farrā’’s *Ma‘ānīs* in important exegetical works such as Nahass’s *I‘rāb al-Qur’ān*,<sup>46</sup> Tha‘labī’s *tafsīr*,<sup>47</sup> and Qurṭubī’s (d. 671) *tafsīr*.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1993), 1:181.

<sup>45</sup> Brother of Jassās who murdered Kulayb, the first death of the Basūs war (late 5<sup>th</sup>-early 6<sup>th</sup> century C.E.).

<sup>46</sup> Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Naḥḥās, *I‘rāb al-Qur’ān*, ed. Ibrāhīm ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Khalīl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2009), 4:289.

<sup>47</sup> Abū Ishāq Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Tha‘labī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān ‘an tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, ed. Abū Muḥammad Ibn ‘Āshūr and Nazīr al-Sā‘idī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 2002), 2:104.

<sup>48</sup> Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li-aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, ed. Aḥmad al-Bardūnī and Ibrāhīm Aṭfīsh (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1964), 2:409.

Such variations in transmission were quite noticeable. Later grammarians combed through Sībawayhi's citations of poetry, noting when his citation deviated from more commonly accepted versions; in some instances, particularly those where a particle was involved, the criticism levelled at Sībawayhi extended beyond mere interpretation of the line of poetry and reached the level of accusing him of a grammatical mistake. As an example, compare these three transmissions:

<i>Kitāb Sībawayhi</i>	<p>وبلدةٍ ليس بها أنيسٌ<sup>49</sup></p>	<p>And [how many] a land with not a single person</p>
<i>Ma 'ānī l-Qur 'ān</i> by Farrā'	<p>وبلد ليس به أنيس</p> <p>إلا اليعافير وإلا العيس<sup>50</sup></p> <p>and</p> <p>وبلدة ليس بها أنيس</p> <p>إلا اليعافير وإلا العيس<sup>51</sup></p> <p>And</p> <p>يا ليتني وأنت يا لميس</p> <p>ببلد ليس به أنيس<sup>52</sup></p>	<p>And a land without a single person</p> <p>Only the gazelles and beige camels</p> <p>And</p> <p>Were that you and I, oh Lamīs, in a land without a single person</p>
<i>Majālis Tha 'lab</i>	<p>ويا ليتني وأنت يا لميس</p> <p>في بلد ليس به أنيس<sup>53</sup></p>	<p>Were that you and I, oh Lamīs, in a land without a single person</p>

<sup>49</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 1:263.

<sup>50</sup> Farrā', *Ma 'ānī*, 1:288, 479, 2:15.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:273.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:311.

<i>Muqtaḍab</i> by Mubarrad	وبلد ليس به أنيس <sup>54</sup>	And [how many] a land with not a single person
<i>Sharḥ abyāt Sībawayhi</i>	بسابسًا ليس بها أنيس	...a wasteland without a single person
	إلا اليعافير وإلا العيس <sup>55</sup>	Only gazelles and beige camels

These three lines share a hemistich that is, on its own, semantically equal: roughly, a desolate place without another human being. Sībawayhi and Sīrafī’s recensions differ on one lexeme (*balḍatin* vs. *basābisan*) whereas Tha‘lab’s recension inserts the preposition *fī* (“in”) and features an altered morphology (*balḍatin* vs. *balāḍin*). In the *Kitāb*, the hemistich is isolated and used to support the elision of *rubba* (“how many”), which causes *balḍah* to be in the genitive; after citing this hemistich, Sībawayhi comments that he could not find a use of *rubba* among the Arabs that carried an apodosis. Tha‘lab’s version does not serve this function; the “*fī*” replace the ostensibly elided *rubba* and it is rather the previous hemistich that Tha‘lab cites to make a grammatical point (whether the second *ism inna* can be *marfū‘* and/or *manṣūb*) makes it semantically unlikely. One could imagine that a Basran who accepts Sībawayhi’s judgement would respond by laying the blame at Tha‘lab’s feet for accepting an aberrant transmission. But there were scholars within the Basran tradition who responded to Sībawayhi’s contention that

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<sup>53</sup> Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā Tha‘lab, *Majālis Tha‘lab*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (al-Qāhirah, J.M.‘A: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1980), 316.

<sup>54</sup> Abū l-‘Abbās Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Mubarrad, *al-Muqtaḍab*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Khāliq ‘Uḏaymah (Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, n.d.), 2:319, 347.

<sup>55</sup> al-Sīrāfī, *Sharḥ abyāt Sībawayhi*, 2:136.

*rubba* had no apodosis by pointing to the very next line in which the apodosis was contained.<sup>56</sup> There is a lot of disagreement regarding the proper attribution of this line. Sīrāfi offers that it may belong to Jirān al-‘Awd al-Numayrī (fl. 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century); the line quoted by Sīrāfi is found in his *dīwān*.<sup>57</sup> The version cited by Tha‘lab (who does not attribute it to anyone) is found in Ru‘bah ibn al-‘Ajjāj’s (d. 145/762) *dīwān*. Certainly, they could all be correct and what we see here is a form of intertextuality between the work of various poets. But Farrā’ cites different forms of the hemistich cited by Sībawayhi with a consistent second hemistich, indicating a common origin for all. Mubarrad cites a different version of the hemistich than Sībawayhi but while addressing the same grammatical issue (elision of *rubba*). For whatever intertextuality there was on the side of poetry, there is considerable lax attitude displayed by these scholars towards establishing a standard form for this line—what ostensibly would have been expected for the verbatim transmission of *ḥadīth*.

It also can be argued that these variations are due to the poet delivering a single line in a variety of ways; this argument is plausible and has been forwarded. But it must be remembered that the same argument has been made about variations in *ḥadīth* transmissions. Let us compare what we have seen regarding attitudes towards replacing one word with another in *ḥadīth* and poetry. There is no evidence in the extant texts of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century that either *ḥadīth* scholars or grammarians were addressing the grammatical or lexical implications of replacing one lexeme with another. The biographical reports raise the possibility that this was addressed. However, such reports do not go into much detail and cannot be used to confirm that grammarians

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<sup>56</sup> Jum‘ah, *Shawāhid al-shi‘r*, 369.

<sup>57</sup> Jirād al-‘Awd, *Dīwān Jirād al-‘Awd al-Numayrī* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Azharīyah lil-Turāth, 1992), 52.

addressed the issue in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, there appears to have been a lively diachronic debate that began early in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century.

### 2.3. Fronting or Postponing One Word over Another<sup>58</sup>

Baghdādī does not quote the Prophet, his companions, the successors, or any later scholars on the permissibility of rearranging word order (i.e., *taqdīm wa-ta'khīr*) in *ḥadīth* transmission.<sup>59</sup> There are some general statements about allowing the rewording of *ḥadīth* attributed to the Prophet and his companions; but nothing that resembles an awareness of the grammatical impact of changes in word order.<sup>60</sup> Rather, the apparent goal of this section is to show that such variations occurred during the process; there is no clear judgement in favor or condemnation of the practice, though the lack of condemnation intimates acceptance to some degree. And, like in the previous section on lexical variation, I have not been able to find an example of earlier works of *fiqh* and *ḥadīth* criticism addressing this issue; it seems likely that Baghdādī was the first to take it up. However, there are examples in poetry and the *qirā'āt* of alteration in word order. This may at first seem surprising, as meter and the 'Uthmānic *rasm* contribute to the syntactical stability of this material. Granted, changes in word order were far rarer in poetry and the *qirā'āt* due to this stability (n.b., this is the only category mentioned in Baghdādī's *Kifāyah* where this applies). Nevertheless, there are differences to be found, and these differences had a bearing on grammatical discussions from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

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<sup>58</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāyah*, 175: باب ذكر الرواية عن من لم يجز تقديم كلمة على كلمة.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 175–76.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 198–210.

As for the *qirā'āt*, it must be stated that the 'Uthmānic *rasm* was successful at preserving word order—while short and long vowels, certain letters, and case endings could not be fully represented by the *rasm*, the fixed script prohibited wholesale movement of words. But, once again, it must be remembered that in 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century philological discussions of the Qur'ān, the non-'Uthmānic codices were highly operative. We saw as much in the previous discussion on lexical variation. And we have examples, too, of grammarians from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century onwards citing variants of Qur'ānic verses with non-'Uthmānic syntax. The best examples are found in Farrā'’s *Ma'ānī*; Farrā' is remarkably neutral with regards to these variations, though, as stated in the previous section, he does not lend them liturgical legitimacy. Consider the following example:

His saying: “When [regret] falls in their hands”  
 Some say *usqīṭa*, [which is] a dialect, but *suqīṭa* more common and good. “They say: If you did not show us mercy, [oh] Lord,” where [Lord] is in the accusative because it is a supplication. Some read it “...*rabbunā*,” [i.e., in the nominative]. But I prefer the accusative because 'Abd Allāh [Ibn Mas'ūd's] codex reads, “[Oh] Lord, did you not show us mercy?”

وقوله: (وَلَمَّا سَقَطَ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ) من الندامة. ويُقال: أسقط لغة.  
 و(سُقِطَ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ) أكثر وأجود. (قالوا لئن لم ترحمنا ربنا)  
 نصب بالدعاء (لئن لم ترحمنا ربنا) ويقرأ (لئن لم يرحمنا  
 ربنا) والنصب أحب إلي لأنها في مصحف عبد الله (قالوا  
 ربنا لئن لم ترحمنا).<sup>61</sup>

In this example, the lexeme “*rabbānā*” is fronted in Ibn Mas'ūd's codex, at least according to Farrā'. Far from questioning the permissibility of such a reading, Farrā' states outright that it guides his reading of the 'Uthmānic codex. This was not the most obvious or ever preferred reading; semantically speaking, the accusative is possible if *rabbānā* is read as a

<sup>61</sup> Farrā', *Ma'ānī*, 1:393.

supplication (*du'ā*) and *rabbunā* is possible if it is read as the subject of the verb “*yarḥamnā*” (bonus phonemic variation here: Ibn Mas‘ūd’s version has the verb in the second person, which makes supplication more fitting). In a later treatment of the variations in this verse, Ṭabarī cites the accusative and nominative readings alongside Ibn Mas‘ūd’s version as well, though he does not attribute it to the companion. but states that his preference is for the nominative because the word order does not support the accusative.<sup>62</sup> This is clear evidence of an ongoing debate about the grammatical utility of non-‘Uthmānic variants. Where Farrā’ sees support for a liturgical reading, Ṭabarī does not—and it should be noted that the latter does not use this as an opportunity to declaim the value of such variants, but rather offers a neutral statement regarding its correctness: “As for the reading which reflects that of which we have spoken ‘The say: [Oh] Lord, if you did not show us mercy,’ we cannot speak to its correctness regarding that aspect which must be conceded [i.e., his previous statement on syntax].”<sup>63</sup>

And another, more striking example of Farrā’’s use of non-‘Uthmānic readings:

And his statement: “They were more deserving of it and worthy of it”  
I saw it in the codex of al-Ḥārith ibn Suwayd al-Tamīmī, one of ‘Abd Allāh [Ibn Mas‘ūd’s] companions, as “They were more worthy of it and more deserving.” This is fronting and delaying [the word]. His codex was buried in the days of

وقوله: كانوا أحقَّ بها وأهلها  
ورأيتها في مصحف الحارث بن سويد التيمي من أصحاب  
عبد الله، «وكانوا أهلها وأحقَّ بها» وهو تقديم وتأخير، وكان  
مصحفه دفن أيام الحجاج.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 13:119-20. وبالرفع في قوله: «وكانوا أهلها وأحقَّ بها» وهو تقديم وتأخير، وكان مصحفه دفن أيام الحجاج.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 13:120. وبالرفع في قوله: «وكانوا أهلها وأحقَّ بها» وهو تقديم وتأخير، وكان مصحفه دفن أيام الحجاج.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī*, 3:68.

Ḥajjāj.

This is the only comment Farrā' offers on the variation, and this is quite striking. The variation has absolutely no bearing on the meaning of the verse, its syntax, grammar, or anything else of linguistic or exegetical value. Farrā' here is rather displaying an interest in the variation for its own sake and for the history that lies behind its disappearance. While there are other examples of non-'Uthmānic syntax among the *qirā'āt*,<sup>65</sup> they are admittedly few; they are sometimes attributed to the codices of individual companions and sometimes to the codices of the *amṣār*. However, the insertion or deletion of a word in is widespread among the various codices.<sup>66</sup> This can be as simple as an inserted/deleted preposition,<sup>67</sup> or pronoun,<sup>68</sup> or a more substantial word of exegetical value.<sup>69</sup> Despite the early dominance of the 'Uthmānic *rasm*, references to and investigations of the differing syntax of the non-canonical codices persisted, even until the present.<sup>70</sup>

Changes in word order due to transmission in *ḥadīth* and the *qirā'āt*, according to the evidence proffered by Baghdādī and this study, are minor. While there are some examples of slight changes in word order in some poetry variations, they are rare;<sup>71</sup> more often, the whole line

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<sup>65</sup> Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣāḥif*, 255.

<sup>66</sup> Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣāḥif*, 238ff. and, frankly, *passim*. There are a lot.

<sup>67</sup> E.g., Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, 1:372 لَوِ جَعَلْتَ الدَّعْوَى مَرْفُوعَةً (وَأَنْ) فِي مَوْضِعِ نَصَبٍ كَانَ صَوَابًا كَمَا قَالَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُولُوا الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُولُوا. The reading of “*bi-an*” is from Ibn Mas'ūd's codex.

<sup>68</sup> Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣāḥif*, 255

<sup>69</sup> John E. Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2004), 138, 226 While Wansbrough's conclusions on the relationship between the *qirā'āt* and the canonization of the Qur'ānic text are specious, he successfully demonstrates their exegetical value.

<sup>70</sup> I've found examples in Muḥyā l-Dīn Darwīsh's *I'rāb al-Qur'ān* (published 1402), fill this in later.

<sup>71</sup> If, for example, we peruse Ibn al-Anbārī's commentary on the *Mu'allaqāt*, we find many variations but not at the level of slight change in syntax that might have resulted from imprecise transmission. I have found no examples from Sibawayhi's *Kitāb* or Farrā''s *Ma'ānī l-Qur'ān* that shows this was an issue.

of poetry must be reworked. It is important that we differentiate between slight changes in word order, which intimate problems in transmission, and the wholesale reworking of a line, which is the product of forgery, the reordering of lines in the poem, or some other critical endeavor. To be sure, perusing a later poetic commentary (e.g., Ibn al-Anbārī’s commentary on the *Mu‘allaqāt*)<sup>72</sup> yields some significant variations; but these variations are too complex to be the product of imprecise transmission. Indeed, I have not been able to find examples of minor variations in word-order in poetry in early works of Arabic grammar (i.e., Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*, Khalīl’s *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*, Farrā’ and Akhfash’s *Ma‘ānī l-Qur‘ān*). Indeed, meter is a reliable guarantor of word order—and this exception needs to be acknowledged. It is worth noting, however, that of the nominative and accusative cases in Arabic are not necessarily dependent on word order (the genitive, on the other hand, is mostly dependent on word order though it too can appear unexpectedly when certain words/particles are omitted).<sup>73</sup> Sībawayhi himself is content with justifying various uses of *taqdīm* and *ta’khīr* with simple ascription to “‘*arab*” or positing it as something “you may say” (*mithla qawlika*). He does this far more than he cites examples from the Qur‘ān or poetry.<sup>74</sup> Given that the *ḥadīth* he does cite are in some instances affected by *taqdīm* and *ta’khīr*,<sup>75</sup> it seems that this aspect of *ḥadīth* transmission did not have excluded it from early works of grammar any more than its occurrence in poetry or the *qirā‘āt*—

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<sup>72</sup> The first major variation (*muharāqatun* → *in safahtuhā*) occurs on the 6<sup>th</sup> line of the first poem (Imru’ al-Qays’s *mu‘allaqah*), Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim Ibn-al-Anbārī and ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, *Sharḥ al-qaṣā‘id al-Sab‘ al-Ṭiwāl al-Jāhiliyyāt* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1993), 25. See also Nasser’s study of variations in several poems in the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, Shady Nasser, *The Transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qur‘ān* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 209f.

<sup>73</sup> E.g., Sībawayhi on the omission of *rubba*, discussed above.

<sup>74</sup> Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 207f. Baalbaki correctly notes that *tamthīl* is a type of evidence distinct from *shawāhid* and that the later are usually cited in support of the former.

<sup>75</sup> Fajjāl, *Irtikāz*, 519–20.

that is occurs more frequently with *ḥadīth* matters little when the alteration of word order is treated as a common occurrence in Arabic speech in general.

#### 2.4. Sound Change in *Ḥadīth* Transmission (*qalb, ibdāl, taqdīm al-ḥarf wa-ta'khīruhu*)<sup>76</sup>

By sound change we mean changes generally changes in a word at the level of one or two letters, often indicative of dialectal differences and usually a natural sound change; that is, the modern linguistic term.<sup>77</sup> However, our use of this term does not imply that grammarians of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century understood sound change as a historical process with set rules (as we do today), but rather simply a natural process 'Arabiyyah as a language. There are several terms used by early Arabic philologists that fall within: *qalb* (lit. “flipping, turning over”), *ibdāl* (lit. “substitution”) and *taqdīm al-ḥarf wa-ta'khīruhu* (lit. “moving up or pushing back a letter”). There are sometimes slight differences between these terms and some overlap with modern subcategories of sound change (e.g., metathesis, elision, assimilation, etc.), but they need not be explicated here; they are often treated together and follow the same rules of sound change. These terms are used in the heading of the chapter in the *Kifāyah* on this topic, but Baghdādī does not apply them in his presentation of the *ḥadīth* affected in such a way. Rather, the examples he gives feature four ways in which the internal structure of a word may change: the insertion or deletion of a letter (e.g. *يَنْبِذُ* → *يَبْتَذِبُ*),<sup>78</sup> the switching of one letter for another (e.g. *الذي* → *التي*),<sup>79</sup> the fronting of a letter before another (e.g. *وعشاء* → *وعشاء*),<sup>80</sup> and the pronunciation of emphatic

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<sup>76</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāyah*, 177–81.

<sup>77</sup> Linguistics dictionary

<sup>78</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāyah*, 178.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

letters (*ḥurūf mufakkkhamah*) as non-emphatics and vice-versa (e.g. تطبع → تتبع).<sup>81</sup> Baghdādī cites no earlier scholars on this matter but rather performs the analysis himself on *ḥadīth* taken from the Prophet and his companions; we are given no information on what scholars from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century scholars thought on the matter. While discussions of these morphological- issues appear to be absent from works of *fiqh* and *ḥadīth* criticism from the early period, the genre of *gharīb al-ḥadīth* (rare lexical usage in *ḥadīth*) addresses them head on. There is no need to provide an exhaustive account of this phenomenon here.<sup>82</sup> Rather, a few examples will suffice:

Abū Ubayd said: Abū Hurayrah said he entered upon ‘Uthmān, may God have mercy on him, while he was besieged and said to him: *tāb am-darb*. So ‘Uthmān commanded him to put down his weapon. Aṣma’ī said: He meant *tāb al-darb*, which means that fighting had become permissible and pleasant. This is the dialect of the people of Yemen. Or he said: the language of Ḥimyar, and he recited [this line of poetry] for me:  
That friend and one who’d reproach me  
Struck me from behind with an arrow (*bim-sahm*)  
and a stone (*am-salimah*).  
He wants [to say] *bi-l-sahm wa-l-salimah*.  
*Salimah* is the singular and [the plural] is *silām*.  
Also from [Ḥimyar, Yemen?] is the *ḥadīth marfū’*: *laysa min im-birr am-ṣiyām fī m-safar*. He wants [to say]: *laysa min al-birr al-ṣiyām fī l-safar*. Some people transmit it as such with the *lām*.

وَقَالَ أَبُو عبيد: فِي حَدِيثِ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّهُ دَخَلَ عَلَى  
عُثْمَانَ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ مَحْصُورٌ فَقَالَ لَهُ: طَابَ  
امضرب. قَالَ فَأَمَرَهُ عُثْمَانُ أَنْ يَلْقِيَ سِلَاحَهُ. قَالَ  
الْأَصْمَعِيُّ: أَرَادَ: طَابَ الضَّرْبُ يَعْنِي أَنَّهُ قَدْ حُلَّ  
الْقِتَالِ وَطَابَ. قَالَ: وَهَذِهِ لُغَةٌ أَهْلِ الْيَمَنِ أَوْ قَالَ: لُغَةٌ  
حَمِيرٍ وَأَنْشَدَنِي:  
ذَٰكَ خَلِيلِي وَذُو يُعَاتِبَنِي ... يَرْمِي وَرَائِي بِأَمْسَهُمْ  
وَأَمْسَلِمَةٌ  
يُرِيدُ: بِالسَّهْمِ وَالسَّلْمَةِ وَالسَّلَامِ. وَمِنْهُ الْحَدِيثُ  
الْمَرْفُوعُ: لَيْسَ مِنْ أَمِيرِ امصِيَامِ فِي امسَفَرِ يُرِيدُ: لَيْسَ مِنْ  
الْبِرِّ الصِّيَامِ فِي السَّفَرِ وَبَعْضُهُمْ يَرْوِيهِ هَكَذَا بِإِظْهَارِ  
اللامات.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>82</sup> An exhaustive account can be found in Abū al-Sa‘ūd Aḥmad Fakhrānī, *al-Lahajāt al-‘Arabīyah fī riwāyāt gharīb al-ḥadīth wa-al-athar: dirāsāt ṣawtīyah wa-ṣarfīyah wa-naḥwīyah* (Dammām: Maktabat al-Mutanabbī, 2007), 61–94.

<sup>83</sup> Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn al-Sallām, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, ed. Ḥusayn Muḥammad Muḥammad Sharaf (Cairo: al-Hī’ah al-‘Āmmah li-Shu‘ūn al-Maṭābi‘ al-Amīriyyah), 2:216.

This *ḥadīth* has received much attention, for both its dialectal quality and its implications for the practice of transmission: some have argued that the Prophet spoke in the Yemeni/Ḥimiyari dialect when he addressed a group from the Yemeni Ash‘ar tribe, others argue that it was due to the influence of Yemeni transmitters.<sup>84</sup> Whatever may be the case, here Abū ‘Ubayd acknowledges what he sees as a philological irregularity and offers an alternative. Furthermore, he quotes Aṣma‘ī’s explanation of the *ḥadīth*; Aṣma‘ī was his teacher and thus there is a reasonable indication that the prominent philologist discussed *ḥadīth*, at least those with peculiar linguistic content. Consider another passage from Abū ‘Ubayd’s *Gharīb al-ḥadīth* (Strange Lexical Usages in Ḥadīth):

Abū ‘Ubayd said: In the *ḥadīth* of ‘Abd Allāh [ibn ‘Abbās]: There is no *ghalat* (nulling a financial contract) in Islam. Which means “There is no *ghalaṭ*,” for the Arabs say: “A man nullifies (*ghalata*) his account and errors (*ghalaṭa*) in his speech (*manṭiq*).” So *ghalaṭ* applies to one’s speech and *ghalat* to one’s account. Some people make them out to be two dialects, but I think the first interpretation is better because there are other *ḥadīth* that use this word: [*isnād*...] that [the Prophet] did not allow the nullification [of an account] (*ghalat*). And [*isnād*] voiding is not permissible. Indeed, an explanation [of this word] would be if one were to say: I bought this piece of clothing from you for a hundred. But then you found out he bought it for less than that. He says: It’s not possible to return to the original sum and nullify the rest, and so on with similar matters among the *mu‘āmalāt*.

وَقَالَ أَبُو عُبَيْدٍ: فِي حَدِيثِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ لَا غَلَتَ فِي  
 الْإِسْلَامِ. قَوْلُهُ: لَا غَلَتَ مَعْنَاهُ لَا غَلَطَ وَالْعَرَبُ تَقُولُ: قَدْ غَلَتَ  
 الرَّجُلُ فِي حِسَابِهِ وَغَلَطَ فِي مَنْطِقِهِ فَالغَلَطُ فِي الْمَنْطِقِ وَالغَلَتَ  
 فِي الْحِسَابِ وَبَعْضُ النَّاسِ يَجْعَلُهُمَا لِعَيْنِ وَالتَّفْسِيرُ الْأَوَّلُ  
 أَجُودُ عِنْدِي لِأَنَّ فِيهِ غَيْرَ حَدِيثٍ عَلَى هَذَا اللَّفْظِ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَاهُ  
 يَزِيدُ بْنُ هَارُونَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامُ بْنُ حَسَانَ عَنْ ابْنِ سَبْرِينَ  
 عَنْ شُرَيْحٍ: أَنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُجِيزُ الْغَلَتَ. قَالَ وَحَدَّثَنَا هُشَيْمٌ عَنْ  
 مُغْبِرَةَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: لَا يَجُوزُ التَّغْلُتُ. وَإِنَّمَا تَأْوِيلُ هَذَا  
 كَالرَّجُلِ يَقُولُ: اشْتَرَيْتَ مِنْكَ هَذَا الثَّوبَ بِمِائَةٍ ثُمَّ تَجَدَّهُ قَدْ  
 اشْتَرَاهُ بِأَقَلِّ مِنْ ذَلِكَ يَقُولُ: فَلَا يَجُوزُ ذَلِكَ يُرَدُّ إِلَى الْحَقِّ  
 وَيُنْتَرَكُ الْغَلَتُ فِي هَذَا وَمَا أَشْبَهَهُ فِي الْمُعَامَلَاتِ كُلِّهَا.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāyah*, 183.

<sup>85</sup> Abū ‘Ubayd, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, 5:131.

Though Abū ‘Ubayd does not attribute the difference between *ghalat* and *ghalaṭ* to sound change, he does cite an opposing interpretation that does. Specifically, this interpretation sees the difference between the letters *tā*’ and the *ṭā*’ as one of dialect—the usual explanation among classical Muslim scholars for dialectal variations in *ḥadīth* is that the Prophet spoke to his audience in their dialect. However, like with the previous example, transmission is accepted as a possibility. Of interest too is the reference to a matter of *fiqh* (i.e., the place of *ghalat* among the *mu‘āmalāt*). This is a clear example of the philological pressure exerted on Islamic law and the dogmatic pressure exerted on philology; minor differences, even morphological or phonological, had an impact on how legal matters in *ḥadīth* were both interpreted and interacted with one another. Note that Abū ‘Ubayd cites another *ḥadīth* (as opposed to poetry or the Qur’ān, both of which contained far less legal material than *ḥadīth*) to explain the meaning of the word; this intimates a belief that the *ḥadīth* corpus could be linguistically explicated through self-reference.<sup>86</sup>

Sound changes are exceedingly common in poetry as well;<sup>87</sup> for the most part, it does not affect meter and the recitation of poetry is easily affected by dialectal variations.<sup>88</sup> Discussions of sound change are primarily found in lexical works. In *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*, Khalīl provides entry headings for lexical variants that have undergone sound change followed by a reference to the

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<sup>86</sup> Fakhrānī, *Lahajāt*. Fakhrānī’s work contains dozens more examples of sound change and analysis of their various transmissions (*passim*).

<sup>87</sup> Shady Nasser, *The Second Canonization of the Qur’ān (324/936): Ibn Mujāhid and the Founding of the Seven Readings* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 223. Metathesis (*‘ibdāl*) accounts for a little over a third of all variants Nasser found in his statistical analysis of variants in several of the Mufaḍḍaliyyāt.

<sup>88</sup> Jum‘ah, *Shawāhid al-shi‘r*, 389–90.

original lexeme, *saq* → *ṣaq*,<sup>89</sup> *maḍd* → *ḍamd*<sup>90</sup> and so on.<sup>91</sup> The first example (*saq* → *ṣaq*) is illustrative of Khalīl’s treatment of sound change and his use of poetry in such a context. Khalīl quotes one line of poetry for this entry, one that employs the letter *ṣād* instead of the *sīn* in the word *ṣaq* ‘*ā*’ (a bird with green wings and a white head) but follows this citation with a quick and direct assurance to his reader that if a *ṣād* is followed by a *qāf* it can be pronounced as a *sīn*. To be sure, Khalīl mentions a few exceptions where derivatives of the root *ṣ-q-* ‘ cannot be pronounced with a *sīn*; but there is no accounting for such exceptions, no recourse to a line of poetry or its variants, and no mention of transmission influencing pronunciation. Rather, Khalīl presents this as a natural process of language, not something that needs to be corrected but merely accounted for since it falls within the rules of Arabic pronunciation.

Farrā’, a generation after Khalīl, clearly cites transmission as a source (if not the original cause) for sound change in variants in poetry. For example, he states for one line of poetry that *ta`tham* is also transmitted as *taytham* (*wa-yurwā ayḍan taytham lughatan*, “It is transmitted as *taytham* as well, [which is] a dialect”).<sup>92</sup> The latter version is what is found in the *Kitāb*, though Sībawayhi makes no mention of variants.<sup>93</sup> Both Farrā’ and Sībawayhi cite this line for the same reason (the elision of “who/whom” from exceptive sentences),<sup>94</sup> which is not related to the issue of sound change. While Khalīl has nothing to say on the difference between the two, the change

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<sup>89</sup> Khalīl, *‘Ayn*, 1:129, 131.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 7:24.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:308, 2:281, 3:322, 387, 4:148, 178 etc. Khalīl identifies words that display sound change with the phrase “*lughah fihi*.”

<sup>92</sup> Farrā’, *Ma`ānī*, 1:271.

<sup>93</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 2:345, 365.

<sup>94</sup> I.e., حذف المستثنى فيه.

follows a phonological rule described by both Sībawayhi<sup>95</sup> and Farrā'.<sup>96</sup> Yet with a few scattered exceptions, poetry does not figure prominently in their discussions of sound change.<sup>97</sup> This is not because poetry had no value in demonstrating sound change; for example, “weak letters” (*hurūf mu'tallah*, i.e., semi-vowels) are subject to sound changes that can impact meter and *i'rāb*. In contrast, Sībawayhi references lines and poetry and the role of meter in his discussion of the pronunciation of the *hamzah*.<sup>98</sup> However, while Sībawayhi presents the *hamzah* as a shibboleth of sorts, his conception of the phonetics of 'Arabiyyah is general, i.e., divided into permissible alternate pronunciations (e.g., *ṣād*→*zāy*; *shin*→*jīm*) or impermissible (e.g., *jīm*→*shīn*; *bā*'→*fā*').<sup>99</sup> This conception does not require the specificity that a close reading of poetry variants would provide. To be sure, Farrā' quotes variants but does not describe any as more original or authentic. Rather, the impression we get from these citations is that philologists were keenly aware of poetry variants featuring sound change but, at least in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century, were not troubled by their existence.

Sound change is a significant feature of the *qirā'āt*; both in the canonical readings and as well as the “aberrant” (*shādhah*) ones. Shady Nasser has done significant work in this area, including a statistical analysis that found sound change to be the fifth most common type of variation in the seven canonical *qirā'āt*.<sup>100</sup> That sound change was a significant feature of the

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<sup>95</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 4:390.

<sup>96</sup> Farrā', *Ma'ānī*, 2:150.

<sup>97</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 4:330-98. The bulk of these pages treat numerous instances of metathesis (i.e., *qalb*, *ibdāl*) but feature less than a dozen poetry citations—most of these instances of metathesis affect semi-vowels (*hurūf mu'tallah*), whose change can affect meter.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:541-56. He cites six lines of poetry in this section.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:432.

<sup>100</sup> Nasser, *Second Canonization*, 223.

*qirā'āt* is not in question. Rather, what matters is how grammarians from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century onwards responded to this feature. One may expect a range of depth in the responses to this issue, if only due to the association of the Kufans with a higher propensity than the Basrans for citing *qirā'āt*. And there indeed are a range of responses to be found; however, these responses differ primarily regarding the extent to which a scholar is disposed to use the *qirā'āt*. No philologists consider sound changes in the *qirā'āt* as inherently impermissible; they must, however, adhere to sound change as it fits into one's broader grammatical theory of 'Arabiyyah (as with Sībawayhi and Mubarrad)<sup>101</sup> or correspond to an attested usage known to the scholar (as with Farrā').<sup>102</sup> Take the following example from Farrā's *Ma'ānī*:

As for his statement: “and [the earth's] *fūm*,” lentils, and onions...”  
*Fūm* is an old dialect [word for both] wheat and bread, as mentioned. Someone said:  
 I heard the 'arab [who speak] this dialect say: “*fawwama*” for us, only with gemination [of the *wāw*], by which they mean “bake.” In the *qirā'ah* of 'Abd Allāh [ibn Mas'ūd]: “and [the earth's] *thūm* (garlic)” with a *thā'*, as if he were most concerned with being correct [in terms of the original pronunciation?] because [garlic] is with similar things, [i.e.,] lentils and onions and the like. The 'arab switch the *fā'* with the *thā'*, so would say: *jadath* [instead of] *jadaf* (lane); or fall into an *āthūr* of evil instead of an *āfūr* (pit) of evil; or *athāthī* [instead of] *athāfīy* (“cooking stones”). I've heard many from the Banū Asad call *maghāfīr* (tree sap) *maghāthīr*.

وأما قوله: وَفُومَهَا وَعَدَسِيهَا وَبَصَلِهَا  
 فَإِنَّ الْفُومَ فِيمَا ذَكَرَ لُغَةً قَدِيمَةً وَهِيَ الْحِنْطَةُ وَالْخُبْزُ جَمِيعًا قَدْ  
 ذُكِرَ. قَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ:  
 سَمِعْنَا الْعَرَبَ مِنْ أَهْلِ هَذِهِ اللُّغَةِ يَقُولُونَ: فُومُوا لَنَا بِالتَّشْدِيدِ لَا  
 غَيْرَ، يَرِيدُونَ اخْتَبَزُوا وَهِيَ فِي قِرَاءَةِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ وَتُومَهَا بِالنَّاءِ،  
 فَكَأَنَّهُ أَشْبَهُ الْمَعْنِيِّينَ بِالصَّوَابِ لِأَنَّهُ مَعَ مَا يَشَاكِلُهُ: مِنَ الْعَدَسِ  
 وَالْبَصَلِ وَشِبْهِهِ. وَالْعَرَبُ تُبَدِّلُ الْفَاءَ بِالنَّاءِ فَيَقُولُونَ: جَدَثَ  
 وَجَدَفَتْ، وَوَقَعُوا فِي عَاثُورٍ شَرٍّ وَعَافُورٍ شَرٍّ، وَالْأَثَائِي  
 وَالْأَثَائِي. وَسَمِعْتُ كَثِيرًا مِنْ بَنِي أَسَدٍ يَسْمَوْنَ الْمَغَافِيرَ الْمَغَاثِيرَ

Farrā' is dealing with two interpretations for the word *fūm*: 1) that it means wheat or bread, which is some argue is supported by an unspecified tribe's use of the etymologically related verb

<sup>101</sup> Ramzi Baalbaki, “The Treatment of the *Qirā'āt* by the Second and Third Century Grammarians,” *Zeitschrift Für Arabische Linguistik* 15 (1985), 23.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-26.

“*fawwama*” (i.e., to bake); or 2) that it means garlic, which is supported by Ibn Mas‘ūd’s reading “*thūm*,” presumably the more common word for “garlic” for Farrā’’s audience as indicated by his favor for Ibn Mas‘ūd’s. Farrā’ prefers the latter interpretation for two reasons. First, he states that it makes more sense semantically, as garlic fits better with lentils and onions than bread; and second, that the *fā’* → *thā’* sound change is observed in the speech of many tribes, particularly that of the Najdī Banū Asad. This is illustrative of Farrā’’s permissive attitude toward the transmission of the *qirā’āt*. Mind you, there is no indication that Farrā’ saw this variation as the corrupted product of oral transmission; all his quotations of Ibn Mas‘ūd’s readings or codex take their attribution at face value. However, these citations show that Farrā’ allowed for the Qur’ān to assume a linguistic identity that did not strictly adhere to that associated with the ‘Uthmānic codex and the dialects associated with it (i.e., Ḥijāzī tribes such as Hudhayl and Thaqīf). In fact, the quotation above features a dialectal feature from outside the Ḥijāz even though Ibn Mas‘ūd belonged to the Banū Hudhayl. This is characteristic of many of the eponymous readings: a variety of dialectal features that cannot be traced to a single geographic origin. Nevertheless, it was not perceived as problematic to admit a reading whose dialectal qualities did not suggest a clear origin, particularly when it was of exegetical value as with the example above. Sound change in the *qirā’āt* was greatly tolerated if it followed the natural patterns of ‘*Arabiyyah*, just as Farrā’ has simply laid out above.

Philologists’ interest in sound change in the transmission of *shawāhid* was uneven. Beginning at the very latest with Abū ‘Ubayd in the early 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, there was a demonstrable interest in how the occurrence of sound change in the transmission of *ḥadīth* affected semantics. While we cannot speak to its significance in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, Abū ‘Ubayd’s *Gharīb al-ḥadīth* demonstrates a real concern with the legal implications of such sound

change. Sound change was a widely acknowledged phenomenon in the *qirā'āt*, with scholars like Farrā' commenting on when it is permissible and when it was not permissible; if it followed the observed rules of *'Arabiyyah* it could serve an assortment of linguistic and exegetical purposes. For poetry, on the other hand, it does not appear to have been a significant issue, even going into the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>103</sup> While one could imagine poetry being recited according to the phonetic standards of the reciter's dialect, works of Arabic philology do not address the issue as directly as with *ḥadīth* and the *qirā'āt*. On this issue of transmission, there is no indication of a coherent policy regarding sound change.

### 2.5. Differences in *i'rāb* ("Case Endings")

Notably absent from the *Kifāyah* is a detailed discussion of transmission's effect upon *i'rāb*. The argument that grammarians avoided *ḥadīth* because it was corrupted by non-verbatim transmission corrupted implies that incorrect *i'rāb* was a factor; of course, as stated before, this reasoning is not without basis (albeit insufficient basis): *ḥadīth* was employed for a variety of philological reasons in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century but *i'rāb* was not a common one. Yet, at least in the case of the *Kifāyah*, it appears that the issue of the transmission of *i'rāb* was either of little concern or not acknowledged. There is a section in the *Kifāyah* that uses terms associated with *i'rāb* (i.e., *naṣb*, *raf'*, and *jar*), but they refer rather to internal vocalization (i.e., dialectal pronunciation not affected by matters of syntax); and there are only two examples of *ḥadīth* whose variant transmissions include divergent vocalizations.<sup>104</sup> We do encounter, however, a general discussion of *lahn* (grammatical error, solecism; this term is often associated with errors

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<sup>103</sup> Mubarrad in the *Muqtaḍab* similarly does not cite poetry in his discussions of sound changes.

<sup>104</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāyah*, 181–82.

in *i' rāb*) in *ḥadīth* transmission.<sup>105</sup> Now, Baghdādī does not describe any of the grammatical errors committed by transmitters, but he does provide reports about those who were known to commit errors (e.g., Ibn Sīrīn, d. 110/729) and those who were known to correct errors (e.g., Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal). The reports in this section describe figures from the late 1<sup>st</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century (e.g., Abū Ma' mar, fl. late 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century) to the early 4<sup>th</sup> century (e.g., Abū l- 'Abbās ibn Surayj, d. 306/919).

There are no references to *lahn* or *i' rāb* in early works of *fiqh* or *ḥadīth* criticism. References to grammatical errors in these works apply to the errors in reciting the Qur' ān. Shāfi' ī, for example, warns of the risks of *lahn* that come with following a non-Arab in prayer.<sup>106</sup> The extent to which grammatical errors affected *ḥadīth* transmission in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century is somewhat of a mystery, though the general lack of grammatical errors in later *ḥadīth* collections (even those of weak *ḥadīth*) indicates that if there were many errors then they were corrected at some point. Since most writing was unvocalized, it is possible that grammatical errors appeared and disappeared in accordance with the grammatical aptitude of the transmitter, even after written *ḥadīth* collections became common. Unfortunately, the most that can be said about *lahn* in *ḥadīth* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century is that it was likely a part of *ḥadīth* transmission of which scholars were aware but were not bothered.

The situation is much clearer for poetry and the *qirā' āt*; in fact, arguments over the *i' rāb* of poetry and the *qirā' āt* engendered some of the most significant grammatical debates of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries. As for the *qirā' āt*, the debates regarding variations in *i' rāb* are well documented. To begin, Nasser found that *i' rāb* was the second most common variation to be

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 185–88, 194–211: باب ذكر الرواية عن من كان لا يرى تغيير اللحن في الحديث.

<sup>106</sup> Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi' ī, *Kitāb al-Umm* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1990), 1:198.

found in the *qirā'āt* he studied (outnumbered only by variations in internal vocalization). This observation is borne out by Farrā'’s *Ma'ānī l-Qur'ān*, where alternate case endings are a major topic of discussion. Consider, as many have before, the famous verse of ablution (Mā'idah: 6)<sup>107</sup> where “feet” can either be read in the accusative (*arjulakum*) or the genitive (*arjulikum*), with each reading requiring the feet be ablated in a slightly different manner (washing vs. wiping). Farrā' notes this is Ibn Mas'ūd's reading (and that Ibn Mas'ūd adjusted the word-order at times to clarify the verses' grammatical reading!).<sup>108</sup> Ultimately, though he notes that the genitive is grammatically possible (and even supported by 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib's reading), he favors the accusative simply because “washing [the feet] is *sunnah*.”<sup>109</sup> In another place, Farrā' rejects Ubayy's reading<sup>110</sup> of a verb in the jussive state (*lā ta'budū*) that is typically read in the nominative not because it contradicted the 'Uthmānic *rasm* (the *nūn* is dropped in Ubayy's reading) but because it was ungrammatical (i.e., an inappropriate apodosis).<sup>111</sup> In yet another location, Farrā' accepts Ubayy's reading of *fa-ṣabran jamīlan* (Yūsuf: 18, i.e., *fa-ṣabrun jamīlun*) on grammatical grounds (i.e., it signifies a self-command),<sup>112</sup> once again ignoring its deviation from the 'Uthmānic script.

Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*, despite a substantially lower number of *qirā'āt* citations than found in Farrā'’s *Ma'ānī*, also weighs in on variations in case endings in the *qirā'āt*, albeit often

<sup>107</sup> يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ

<sup>108</sup> Farrā', *Ma'ānī*, 1:302. عن عبد الله بن مسعود أنه قرأ (وأرجلكم) مقدم ومؤخر

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 1:303.

<sup>110</sup> Baqarah: 83

<sup>111</sup> Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, 1:53. وفي قراءة أبي: «وإذ أخذنا ميثاق بني إسرائيل لا تعبدوا» ومعناها الجزم بالنهى، وليست بجواب لليمين

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 2:39. ولو كان: فصبرا جميلا يكون كالأمر لنفسه بالصبر لجاز. وهي في قراءة أبي (فصبرا جميلا) كذلك على النصب بالألف

indirectly and within the confines of the ‘Uthmānic *rasm*. Baalbaki<sup>113</sup> and Anṣārī<sup>114</sup> have taken up the issue of the *qirā’āt* in the *Kitāb* in detail; the interested reader is encouraged to review their works for a full account, but a few examples will suffice us now. Sībawayhi show his preference for the reading of “*sawā*” in Jāthiyah: 21 (*wa-‘amalū ṣ-ṣālihāti sawā’an maḥyāhum wa-mamātuhum...*) in the nominative (i.e., *sawā’un*) rather than the accusative by presenting a syntactically similar phrase (*marartu bi-‘Abdillāh khayran minhu abūhu*), which he then deems ungrammatical (i.e., *lughah radhī’ah*), intimating his disapproval of reciting *sawā*’ as *sawā’an*.<sup>115</sup> He does the same with the *mā Ḥijāziyyah* (negation particle “*mā*” as used by the tribes of the Ḥijāz); when used according to Ḥijāzī convention it renders the predicate in the negated nominal sentence (*khabar*) in the accusative, but *Tamīmī* convention places it in the nominative—Sībawayhi explicitly states his preference for the latter despite the ubiquitous use of the former in the Qur’ān.<sup>116</sup> Amazingly, Sībawayhi uncritically alludes to the Tamīm tribe reciting the verse as such, with the exception of those who were familiar with the codex of course (*illā man darā kayfa hiya fī l-maṣḥaf*). Ibn Sallām al-Jumāhī compares Sībawayhi’s opinion on a matter of *i’rāb* in the *qirā’āt* with that of the grammarians ‘Īsā ibn ‘Umar (d. 149/766); he states that the latter would pick the accusative over the nominative in ambiguous cases out of habit but then frames Sībawayhi’s judgement in favor of the nominative in grammatical terms supported by the readings of Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā and ‘Īsā ibn Ḥabīb.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Baalbaki, “Treatment of the *Qirā’āt*.”

<sup>114</sup> Aḥmad Makkī Anṣārī, *Sībawayhi wa-l-qirā’āt* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1972), 39–105.

<sup>115</sup> Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*., 2:34.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:59.

<sup>117</sup> Ibn Sallām al-Jumāhī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu‘arā*, 1:19.

Farrā' criticizes Ibn Mas'ūd for using the demonstrative pronoun *hādhā* where *dhālika* is appropriate.<sup>118</sup>

As for poetry, changes in *i'rab* seldom affect the meter. It is therefore common to find various grammatical interpretations and commentaries on Arabic poetry as early as during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Like the *qirā'āt*, early works of Arabic grammar abound in discussions of *i'rab* variations in poetry. We find Tha'lab faulting Sībawayhi for improperly transmitting a line of poetry, thus confusing demonstrative with a possessive particle (*dhā=hādhā* instead of *dhā=ṣāhib*).<sup>119</sup> Zajjāj states that all early grammarians committed this error, citing the following line of poetry which further clarifies the grammatical issue of the first. Similarly, grammarians took issue with Sībawayhi's placing "*Qiyyār*" (name of the poet's horse) in the nominative (i.e., *Qiyyārun*) in "*fa-innī wa-Qiyyāran bi-hā la-gharībun*" (*Qiyyār* and I were strangers in [that place]), where "*Qiyyāran*" is far more common. Farrā' notes that this line is rendered in both the nominative and accusative; he borrows the line from his teacher Kisā'ī, who sides with Sībawayhi in allowing for *Qiyyār* to be placed in the nominative. Ultimately, he disagrees and provides a detailed refutation of Kisā'ī's (and, implicitly, Sībawayhi's) version. Akhfaṣh includes Farrā''s version of this line in his *Ma'ānī*—though it should be noted that there is no indication that he heard it from Farrā', Kisā'ī, or any Kufan. Farrā''s interpretation won the day and can be found in works ranging from Ibn Sallām's *Ṭabaqāt*<sup>120</sup> to Ibn Manẓūr's monumental lexicon, the *Lisān al-'arab*.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, 1:11.

<sup>119</sup> Tha'lab, *Majālis Tha'lab*, 1980, 2:513; quoted in Mūhān, *Shawāhid Sībawayh*, 82.

<sup>120</sup> Ibn Sallām, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1:172.

<sup>121</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, 5:125.

Perhaps the most interesting example of variation in the *i‘rāb* of poetry is one line where the variation affects meter and meter. The line, as it is quoted in Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*, is rendered as follows:

معاويٰ إنا بشر فأسجع      فلسنا بالجبال ولا الحديدًا

In his work *Sharḥ mā yaqa‘u fīhi min al-taṣḥīf wa-l-tahrīf*, Abū Aḥmad al-‘Askarī (d. 382/993) notes two errors in Sībawayhi’s version of this line. First, he notes that it is not necessary to put “*mu‘āwiya*” in the accusative as its nominative form, “*mu‘āwin*,” fits the meter—the line does not serve as an example for poetic license (*ḍarūrat al-shi‘r*) and thus is better rendered in the nominative.<sup>122</sup> Second, he states that the rhyming word is incorrect because it deviates from the rhyme of the (“very famous”) poem to which it belongs. Indeed, what is striking about this example is the *ḥadīdā* contains the rhyme (*dā*). Changing it to the genitive (*dī*) would contrast with the rhyme scheme of the rest of the poem (as found in other sources). In the *Kitāb*, Sībawayhi recites the same line of poetry twice with different *i‘rāb* each time, citing both versions to prove his grammatical point.<sup>123</sup> Similarly, Farrā’ states in the *Ma‘ānī*: “*Al-ḥadīdā*” is recited in the accusative and genitive, but I’ve mostly heard it in the genitive.”<sup>124</sup> Ṭabarī in his *tafsīr* favors Sībawayhi’s interpretation for his analysis of Baqarah: 83 (*wa-bi-l-wālidayni iḥsānan*; to justify placing “*iḥsān*” in the accusative);<sup>125</sup> Ibn ‘Aṭīyah (d. 541/1146) in his *tafsīr* acknowledges some validity to Sībawayhi’s interpretation but in the end sides with Abū ‘Alī al-Fārisī (d. 377/987), who prefers the genitive; Mubarrad faulted Sībawayhi for ignoring the rhyme

<sup>122</sup> Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Abd Allāg al-‘Askarī, *Sharḥ mā yaqa‘u fīhi al-taṣḥīf wa-l-tahrīf*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Aḥmad (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlāduh, 1963), 207

<sup>123</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*., 1:83, 155: ولا سابق شينا إذا كان حائيا and ولا سابقا شينا إذا كان جائيا.

<sup>124</sup> Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī*, 2:348: ويُتشد (الحديدا) خفضًا ونصبًا. وأكثر ما سمعته بالخفض.

<sup>125</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 2:290.

(the rhyme should be “dī” and not “dā” according extant renditions of this poem) but Abū Barakāt ibn al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181) and Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) both claimed that the poem was transmitted in two different versions with two different rhymes (though neither provided proof, i.e., another line from the poem with this rhyme).<sup>126</sup> Needless to say, the provenance of the line remained contested for some time, with arguments centering on the grammatical content of the line taking center stage rather than any discussion of issues of transmission. Still, it is worth noting that when later scholars referenced Sībawayhi’s version of the line, they sometimes refer to it as his “transmission” (*riwāyah*).<sup>127</sup>

If there is any conclusion to be drawn about how transmission affected the *i’rāb* of *ḥadīth*, poetry, or the *qirā’āt*, it goes as follows: not only were discussion such variations endemic in each of these, but they were occasions for serious debate in early works on Arabic grammar. Furthermore, the debates on *i’rāb* led to the alteration and outright forgery of many lines of poetry. In this vein, Ibn Sallām, in his introduction to his grand work of poetry criticism *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu‘arā’*, discusses the issue of forgery in poetry transmission (the blame of which he places in the proliferation of written collections) in the context of philology’s (and grammar in particular) development.<sup>128</sup> To be sure, with regard to this issue there is not much of a comparison of scale to be made between *ḥadīth* on one hand and poetry and the *qirā’āt* on the other. In contrast to Ibn Sallām’s statements on the philological evaluation of poetry, we know little to nothing about what *ḥadīth* transmitters thought of the *i’rāb* of their subject material

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<sup>126</sup> ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī, *Sharḥ abyāt Mughnī l-labīb*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Rabbāḥ and Aḥmad Yūsuf Daqqāq (Beirut: Dār al-Ma’mūn li-l-Turāth, 1973-81), 7:53-54.

<sup>127</sup> Sīrāfī, *Sharḥ*, 1:397; Baghdādī, *Sharḥ*, 1:27; ‘Askarī, *Sharḥ*, 207.

<sup>128</sup> Ibn Sallām, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3–49. This introduction includes the earliest known history of the study of Arabic grammar as well as its account of poetry transmission.

during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. However, with poetry and the *qirā'āt* there is a strong case to make for a comparison in kind: we assume that alterations were made to case endings in *ḥadīth* due to non-verbatim transmission, but we know with as much certainty as we can about anything that happened during the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century that poetry was widely altered and/or forged and that, at the very least if we look to Farrā'’s comments on *ḥadīdā*, such discrepancies did not result in the lowering of poetry’s linguistic status let alone dismissal from the greater linguistic corpus.

## 2.6. Transmission in other than Eloquent Arabic (*al-Lughah al-faṣīḥah*)

In this section, Baghdādī recounts several *ḥadīth* that feature dialectal qualities that do not belong to the elevated Arabic as described by grammarians. He cites the *ḥadīth* cited about fasting mentioned above (*laysa min am-birr...*) as an example of “Ash‘arī” (i.e., Yemeni) Arabic.<sup>129</sup> Baghdādī himself comments on how a version of a *ḥadīth* was circulating that featured the ‘*an‘anah* (replacing the *hamza* with an ‘*ayn*) of the Qays tribe as proof of adulteration of the *ḥadīth*. He additionally cites Ibn ‘Umar and Abū Hurayrah’s use of this dialect in *ḥadīth* (*am-ḍarb* vs. *al-ḍarb*) transmission as proof of the originality of this dialectal feature. He also comments on the inability of non-Arabs (likely Persians, as Aramaic differentiated between the two letters) to differentiate between the *kāf* and the *qāf*. There is a clear pattern: non-eloquent dialects should not be found in the speech of the Prophet but can be found in the speech of others such as his companions. The reports either go back to the time of the Prophet and his companions or reflect the practice contemporary with Baghdādī’s time.

This begs the question: do all the *ḥadīth* citations found in works of grammar from the early period adhere to the standards of ‘*Arabiyyah*? A review of the data from Ḥadīthī and Fajjāl’s work suggests as much. The idea that the Prophet’s words reflect eloquent ‘*Arabiyyah* is

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<sup>129</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāyah*, 183.

never made explicit during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century by grammarians, but it does not appear that they were willing to criticize the Prophet's Arabic in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. This ideology was made explicit later, starting with Jāḥiẓ in the mid-3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, it is worth noting that even if *ḥadīth* was not widespread in grammatical works of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, the ubiquitous awe of the Prophet's speech so familiar today was beginning to establish itself.

As for poetry and *qirā'āt*, the purpose of grammar in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century and onwards was the separation of the eloquent from the non-eloquent. The term *faṣīḥ* is not used in Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* or Farrā's *Ma'ānī*. What we find instead are more general terms, such as *ḥasan* (good), *jayyid* (good), *qabīḥ* (ugly, not good).<sup>131</sup> There is a clear desire to compare different Arabic dialects and establish a common denominator against which the Qur'ān and certain poetry can be compared. Both Farrā' and Sībawayhi cite poetry<sup>132</sup> and *qirā'āt*<sup>133</sup> as examples of poor and good Arabic. And the question of what constituted good Arabic applied to everything said, written, and transmitted in the language.

### 3. Conclusion

There are three important conclusions to be drawn from our review of the philology of transmission. First, there does not appear to have been a sophisticated discussion of the philological implications of poor transmission. Certainly, we find discussions of differences in morphology, syntax, and inflection that are the product of transmission. However, we do not find

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<sup>130</sup> Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-al-tabyīn* (Beirut: Dār wa-al-Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1423), 2:13-14.

<sup>131</sup> M. G. Carter, *Sībawayhi's Principles: Arabic Grammar and Law in Early Islamic Thought*, vol. Number 5, Resources in Arabic and Islamic Studies; (Atlanta, Georgia: Lockwood Press, 2016), Chapter II Carter argues this is indicative of a foundation in the ethics of Islamic law.

<sup>132</sup> Jum'ah, *Shawāhid al-shi'r*, 391–432.

<sup>133</sup> Anṣārī, *Abū Zakarīyā al-Farrā'*, 310ff.

a discussion of how transmission produced these differences, or even if multiple transmissions were permissible for material used to establish the rules of grammar. To be sure, the process of transmission was in its early stages in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, and scholars in the following centuries sought to sort out which transmissions best represented the *'arabiyyah faṣīḥah*, pure eloquent Arabic. Yet, early grammarians' obsession with determining who spoke good Arabic and who did not (evident in their selection of eras from which poetry could be attested, *qirā'āt* that were permissible, and tribes whose Arabic had not been adulterated) would lead one to expect that they would give countenance to the problematic nature of transmission—if the philological errors it produced loomed large.

We see the same with the transmission of *ḥadīth*. Scholars of later centuries were compelled to select the correct transmission, and this was usually done with *isnād* criticism. But the philological differences between various transmissions demanded explanations that reports of a transmitter's character could not supply. This is particularly so because so many trustworthy transmitters transmitted philologically variable, and oftentimes peculiar, *ḥadīth*. To be sure, even in later centuries discussions of the transmission of *ḥadīth* were carried out with greater detail and intensity than discussions of the transmission of poetry. But it must be remembered that there were far greater legal and political implications for the composition of the *ḥadīth* corpus.

Second, it is not readily apparent, or even seem likely, that transmission subjected *ḥadīth* to more severe linguistic adulteration than it did to poetry or the *qirā'āt*—the only exception appears to be word order, though it should be noted that word order plays a diminished role in Arabic syntax than in many other languages (such as English and modern spoken Arabic dialects). Arabic poetry was forged and mutilated to a great extent during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, not to mention characterized by a variety of transmissions. Undoubtedly, meter and rhyme aided its

preservation; it was simply easier to memorize poetry than prose. But regarding the minutia that made up Arabic grammar—matters of vocalization, declension, inflection, and conjugation—meter and rhyme had limited value. *Fā'ilun* and *fā'ilan* (nominative and accusative) share the same metrical pattern. The same goes for the consonantal skeleton of the 'Uthmānic codex, which, it should be mentioned, was not adhered to in every reading. And grammarians were able to easily discard those they found did not fit within their grammatical models. Furthermore, most of the philological issues associated with transmission apply to the individual lexeme rather than alter *ḥadīth* at the level of syntax. Yet, *ḥadīth* figures prominently in early works of lexicography.

We may conclude then that the essence of Abū Ḥayyān's thesis—that grammarians avoided *ḥadīth* due to non-verbatim transmission—is untenable, even if there is an element of truth within it. However, the question remains: why is there so little *ḥadīth* to be found in early works of Arabic grammar? There are two tasks that must be carried out if we are to find the answer to this issue. The first approach is an evaluation of the ideology that lay behind the selection of certain material for citation. This approach asks why *ḥadīth* is cited and who serves as its informants, and how these informants differ from those of poetry or Qur'ānic recitation. This is an exploration of how disciplines developed around the transmission and interpretation of specific material, determining whether primacy is owed to the methodology of a discipline or its subject matter. Second, we need to carry out a more thorough survey of works by Kufan grammarians, who appear to cite *ḥadīth* more frequently. This survey should not be limited to the citation of *ḥadīth* for grammatical purposes but should extend to all citations be they for grammatical, lexical, exegetical purpose or otherwise. This will elucidate the interrelationship between philology and Islamic law as it developed from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> centuries.

CHAPTER III  
THE 'ARABIYYAH OF THE *SHAWĀHID*

1. Introduction

We have seen that Abū Ḥayyān's thesis falters because it attributes an anachronistic understanding of *ḥadīth* criticism to early Arabic grammarians. Previous rejoinders to this thesis have fallen short too. On its own, the argument that poetry and the *qirā'āt* suffered from the same philological issues in transmission as *ḥadīth*, though it provides a rebuttal to Abū Ḥayyān's contention regarding non-verbatim transmission, does not offer a viable alternative. There is truth to Nāyilah and Ḥadīthī's contentions that poetry simply loomed larger in the Arabic cultural memory than *ḥadīth*.<sup>1</sup> However, this does not go far enough to explain why there was such paucity of *ḥadīth* in early works of grammar. The fact that grammarians are found in many *isnāds* from authoritative collections of *ḥadīth* and that the biographical reports describe them studying and writing on *ḥadīth* (at least in the context of lexicography) points to more than a passing familiarity on their part. This is to say that there is enough evidence to suggest that grammarians could have cited more *ḥadīths* had they deemed it appropriate.

It is our contention that a better explanation for the paucity of *ḥadīth* in early works of grammar lies largely in ideological factors. Regarding, the ideological, it is because the collection and evaluation of *ḥadīth* was carried out in an urban environment whereas the collection of Arabic linguistic data was done in the desert. There was an established ideology

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<sup>1</sup> Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif*, 372; Nāyilah, *Shawāhid*, 344.

that the speakers of proper and pure ‘*Arabiyyah* could only be found among semi-nomadic tribes of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>2</sup> Though this ideology was first clearly expressed in the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century, its influence can be discerned in works of philology going back to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, in this chapter, we will examine the apparent ideology behind linguistic citation, showing that the selection and rejection of poetry and the *qirā’āt* was done to align this material with the natural speech of the ‘*arab*. We will then show the situation to be different with *ḥadīth*: first, it was readily identified as a representative of the phonetics and morphology of ‘*Arabiyyah* in Khalīl’s *K. al-‘Ayn* and Farrā’’s *Ma‘ānī l-Qur’ān*; then, that identification as a representative representation of the grammar of ‘*Arabiyyah* was more problematic with Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb* failing to attribute *ḥadīth* of grammatical value to the Prophet. Then, we will show then Farrā’ beginning to depart from this position with an increased acknowledgement of the value of *ḥadīth*. That is, based on our limited resources, Farrā’’s work represents the initial step in the transition from skepticism of *ḥadīth*’s non-‘*arab* caretakers to general acceptance as a linguistic source.

## 2. Whence ‘*Arabiyyah*?

If we are to understand what material the early grammarians admitted or amended in their study of the Arabic language, we must ask: exactly whose Arabic were they collecting, studying, and codifying? It is tempting (but not recommended) to accept the simple answer of the classical historical tradition of grammar, which is “the Arabic of the Qur’ān.” In one report, the second caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb is told by an *a’rābī* (semi-nomadic desert dweller) that an

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<sup>2</sup> Ibn Fāris, *Ṣāḥibī*, 28f. N.b., the semi-nomadic Arab tribes of lower Mesopotamia and the Levant were excluded due to contact with Persian, Greek, and Aramaic speaking populations.

ungrammatical recitation<sup>3</sup> of the Qur’ān impugned the Prophet.<sup>4</sup> He then orders Abū l-Aswad al-Du’alī (d. 69/688), then governor of Basra during the caliphate of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, to set the rules of “*naḥw*” (*awwal man waḍa‘a l-naḥw*) to ensure that the Qur’ān would be properly recited.<sup>5</sup> In a different version, Ziyād ibn Thābit hears the Qur’ān recited ungrammatically and allows Abū l-Aswad to set the rules of “*naḥw*.”<sup>6</sup> In both cases, the origin of Arabic grammar is attributed to the need to protect the Qur’ān from linguistic corruption and degradation.

It is easy to dismiss these accounts as later traditions of a very early event—Abū l-Aswad was not named as the originator of Arabic grammar until the early 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century and the details of these reports only began to emerge in the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> They whiff of the apocryphal and much more justification is needed if they are to be deemed historically significant. However, there is something to these accounts that tells us something about 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century grammar, particularly the report about ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. There are two things worth noting. First, the error in the Qur’ānic recitation was noticed by an “*a rābī*,” a term that denotes a semi-nomadic Arab whose habits, customs, language, and lifestyle are free of the influence of sedentary life. The term eventually acquired a pejorative connotation akin to calling someone “uncouth,” but it was still very much associated with not just a nomadic lifestyle but being culturally alien in a

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<sup>3</sup> While “reading” may seem to be an appropriate term here, I do not use it so as not to project the idea of a Qur’ānic “reading” (*qirā’ah*) to this time. The verb *qara’a* can mean recite as well. The report does not describe the ungrammatical recitation as a “reading,” i.e., it does not describe it as an established mode of recitation but rather as an individual error. However, an interesting question is what was the extent of linguistic corruption of Medina (and the Hijaz in general) during ‘Umar’s caliphate according to later scholars?

<sup>4</sup> أَنْ اللهُ بَرِيٌّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُ, where “*rasūluhu*” is read “*rasūlihi*,” thus giving the meaning of “God is disassociated from the disbelievers and His Prophet” instead of “God is disassociated from the disbelievers as is His Prophet.”

<sup>5</sup> Abū Barakāt ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-‘ulabā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-‘udabā’*, ed. Ibrahīm al-Sāmīrā’ī (Zarqā’, Jordan: Maktabat al-Manār, 1985), 19.

<sup>6</sup> Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muslim Ibn Qutaybah, *Mushkil ta’wīl al-Qur’ān*, ed. Ibrahīm Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Talmon, “Who Was the First Arab Grammarian,” 131–35.

sedentary setting.<sup>8</sup> The second note of importance is that, in the report, the a‘rābī tells ‘Umar that he had come “Medina with no prior knowledge of the Qur’ān.”<sup>9</sup> ‘Umar, of course, relates the correct recitation of the verse as he has the authority to do so. But in the a‘rābī’s role in the report carries authority as well. He is not depicted as pious beyond his interest in learning some of the Qur’ān and being taken aback by the ungrammatical recitation’s rendering the verse as God disassociating himself from His Prophet. Yet, he comes with the ability to interpret the Qur’ān’s language correctly and this sets an important precedent (even if, as a later tradition, it was a precedent *post facto*): the Qur’ān should be intelligible to a semi-nomadic Arab, even if he spoke a different dialect from the Prophet and his companions. While we cannot take this as a historical account and thus as representing the linguistic reality of Islamic society under the companions, it is representative of the discipline of Arabic grammar’s perception of that time and the development of their discipline. Indeed, this is not merely a narrative ploy to endow Arabic grammar the task of preserving the Islamic community’s sacred text; it is an ideology that sets the parameters of linguistic hermeneutics, an ideology that defines not only defines the intended audience of the Qur’ān<sup>10</sup> but the Qur’ān’s mode of reception going forward. That is, philologists claimed that the Qur’ān, at the time of its revelation, was intelligible to the greater Arab population, sedentary and semi-nomadic alike; additionally, linguistic corruption of urban Arabic meant that their urban contemporaries did not speak an attestable dialect, one that reflected usage contemporaneous with the Qur’ān’s revelation—only the semi-nomadic ‘*arab* of their time spoke such a language.

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<sup>8</sup> Jan Restö, *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 92f.

<sup>9</sup> Anbārī, *Nuzhat*, 19. يا أمير المؤمنين، إني قدمت المدينة، ولا علم لي بالقرآن، فسألت من يقرئني، فأقرأني هذا.

<sup>10</sup> For early (4<sup>th</sup> century) account of the Quraysh as the Qur’ān’s first audience, see Ibn Fāris, *Ṣāhibī*, 13f.

Early works of Arabic grammar and lexicography clearly state their reliance of the language of the *‘arab* and *a rāb*. The opening lines of Khalīl’s *Kitāb al-‘Ayn* are quite explicit on this matter:

This is what al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Baṣrī has published on the letters: *alif, bā’, tā’, thā’* and so on. It is the scope of the speech of the *‘arab* and their utterances. Nothing has been left out. He wanted the *‘arab* to be known though it in their poetry, proverbs, and speech, and that nothing deviates from that.

هذا ما ألفه الخليل بن أحمد البصري من حروف: أب ت ث  
مع ما تكملت به فكان مدار كلام العرب وألفاظهم، ولا يخرج  
منها عنه شيء. أراد أن تعرف بها العرب في أشعارها  
وأمثالها ومخاطبتها، وألا يشذ عنه شيء من ذلك.<sup>11</sup>

We have produced these quotations in full because they deliver quite a bit of information on their own supporting our conclusion that the natural speech of the *‘arab*. Nevertheless, some commentary for each is warranted in order to further illuminate how these scholars delineated the parameters of *‘arabiyyah* in accordance with said speech. What must be determined is the approximate tribal and geographic boundaries these scholars applied to the selection of attestable material. That is, who are the *‘arab* according to each of these scholars.

The first quotation is taken from Khalīl’s *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*. However, the opening of the book is not in the voice of the purported author, but rather the book’s redactor, likely a student of his.<sup>12</sup> Schoeler and Talmon have convincingly established Khalīl as the author of this book,<sup>13</sup> but the fact that the statement above was not produced during Khalīl’s lifetime must be acknowledged. Nevertheless, this introduction jibes with the rest of the lexicon and is worth considering. The *Kitāb al-‘Ayn* is preoccupied with the phonetics of *‘Arabiyyah* (e.g., “You do

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<sup>11</sup> Khalīl, *‘Ayn*, 1:47.

<sup>12</sup> Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, 143.

<sup>13</sup> Rafael. Talmon, *Arabic Grammar in Its Formative Age: Kitāb al-‘Ayn and Its Attribution to Ḥalil b. Aḥmad* (New York: Brill, 1997), 91f.; Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, 142f.

not find the *kāf* and the *qāf* in one word unless it is of foreign origin and has been Arabized (*mu‘arrab*)<sup>14</sup>, the foreign origins of words (e.g., “*barq* is alien to ‘*Arabiyyah*, its plural is *burqān*”),<sup>15</sup> native morphology of ‘*Arabiyyah* (“*mushakhlabah* is an Iraqi word, there is nothing of ‘*arabiyyah* in its structure”),<sup>16</sup> and idiomatic usage (“...and they compared [‘Uthmān bin ‘Affān] to a hyena, like the Arabs do when they say ‘You bull, you ass!’”).<sup>17</sup> Throughout the work lexemes are judged based on their relationship to a stable notion of ‘*Arabiyyah*.

But who are the ‘*Arab* who speak ‘*Arabiyyah* in the *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*? The biographical literature tells us little about Khalīl’s interactions with the ‘*Arab*. What is telling, however, is his treatment of the tribal dialects. The most common dialects found in the *Kitāb al-‘Ayn* are those of the Ḥijāz, Banū Tamīm, and Hudhayl.<sup>18</sup> While there is not always an exact correspondence for tribal names in works written centuries apart, these tribes are listed by later scholars<sup>19</sup> as the trustworthy linguist authorities trusted by early linguists. As a counter example, it is worth consideration the criticism of the “dialects”<sup>20</sup> of the tribes of Yemen, which Khalīl describes/classifies as “ugly” (*qabīḥah*).<sup>21</sup> To be sure, the *Kitāb al-‘Ayn* as a lexical work is

<sup>14</sup> Khalīl, ‘*Ayn*, 5:6. قال الخليل: القاف والكاف لا يجتمعان في كلمة واحدة، إلا أن تكون الكلمة معربة من كلام العجم، وكذلك الجيم مع القاف لا يأتلف إلا بفصل لازم.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 5: 155. البُرُقُ دخيل في العربية، ويجمع على برقان.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 4:325. مُشَخَّلِبَةٌ كلمة عراقية، ليس على بنائها شيء من العربية.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 2:341: شَبَّهَهُ بالضَّبْعِ كما يقال في العربية: يا ثورُ، يا جمارُ.

<sup>18</sup> Analysis of Talmon’s citations in Talmon, *Arabic Grammar in Its Formative Age*, 410–11.

<sup>19</sup> Suyūfī, *Muzhir*, 1:167f.

<sup>20</sup> Perhaps today we would consider them to be part of a language unto themselves, though we only have the suggestions of early scholars to go off of and little hard evidence to determine whether they were an Arabic dialect or an “independent” language (like modern Socatran, a modern Yemeni language distinct from but related to Arabic).

<sup>21</sup> Khalīl, ‘*Ayn*, 8:147.

concerned with creating an expansive corpus of linguistic material not confined to “pure ‘*arabiyyah*” (‘*arabiyyah mahḍ*). However, the proportion of citations devoted to tribes described by others as “*faṣīḥ*” (speaking an unadulterated ‘*Arabiyyah*)<sup>22</sup> compared to other tribes known to be in contact with non-Arab speakers and/or living a sedentary life (e.g., Taghlib, who were Christians in northern Mesopotamia, and the Quraysh, who were sedentary) cannot be ignored. The comparison between Hudhayl and Quraysh is instructive. First, they lived in close geographic proximity to one another. However, Hudhayl was reported to have maintained a semi-nomadic lifestyle whereas the Quraysh were settled in the city of Mecca and in constant contact with travelers, pilgrims, and merchants from all over the region. In the *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*, Hudhayl is cited twenty times whereas the Quraysh (who later scholars described as the most eloquent of the ‘*arab* without citing any evidence) are cited once.<sup>23</sup> There is clearly a preference in this work for material ascribed to semi-nomadic speakers of ‘*Arabiyyah*.

This passage from the introduction of Abū ‘Ubaydah’s *Majāz al-Qur’ān* too delineates the place of ‘*Arabiyyah* in the work:

The Qur’ān was revealed in the clarifying Arabic (‘*arabī*) tongue. There is verification of its one verse and another from the Qur’ān: “We have only sent that messenger with the tongue of his people.” [Our] predecessors and those who received the revelation did not need to ask the Prophet about the meaning of the Qur’ān because they were ‘*arab* of tongue. Due to their knowledge of [their tongue], they were in no need of inquiring about its meanings or about the various aspects and epitomes of the speech of the

إنما أنزل القرآن بلسان عربي مبين، وتصدّق ذلك في آية من القرآن، وفي آية أخرى: «وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ»، فلم يحتج السلف ولا الذين أدركوا وحيه إلى النبي صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ يَسْأَلُوا عَنْ مَعَانِيهِ لِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا عَرَبَ الْأَلْسِنِ، فَاسْتَعْنَوْا بِعِلْمِهِمْ بِهِ عَنِ الْمَسْأَلَةِ عَنْ مَعَانِيهِ،

<sup>22</sup> The term *faṣīḥ* is usually translated as “eloquent.” However, since Khalīl asserts it is derived for the term for pure, smooth yogurt without any foam I believe “unadulterated” to be more apt.

<sup>23</sup> Hudayl: al-Khalīl, ‘*Ayn*, 1:170, 223, 232, 309, 344, 2:300, 3:115, 376, 4:161,174, 357, 5:125, 6:37, 77, 4:172, 392, 8:61, 182, 304. And Quraysh: 3:167; other references to the Quraysh in the ‘*Ayn* are in poetry, to individuals, or to cultural practices.

Arabs, The Qur'ān contains much from the speech of the 'arab in terms of inflection/declension (*i' rāb*), and strange usage and meanings.

وعما فيه مما في كلام العرب مثله من الوجوه والتلخيص.  
وفى القرآن مثل ما في الكلام العربي من وجوه الإعراب،  
ومن الغريب، والمعاني.

The passage above from Abū 'Ubaydah's introduction to the *Majāz al-Qur'ān* is interesting in that it speaks of the 'arab and their language as existing in a specific time and place. The language of the Qur'ān, according to Abū 'Ubaydah, is the language of its initial audience. This allowed them to understand the Qur'ān without inquiring about its meanings. This is an interesting position, as there were *ḥadīth* in circulation at the time in which the Prophet explained the meaning of the Qur'ān's language, at least at the figurative level.<sup>24</sup> Muslim scholars centuries later, looking back on the history of the Arabic language, came to see Islam as bringing about a linguistic sea change that would have challenged Qur'ān's original audience on a rhetorical and lexicographical (if not grammatical and phonological) level; an observation supported by the comparison of poetry before and after the life of the Prophet.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, Abū 'Ubaydah expresses a pervasive ideology that characterized his and later times: 1) the Arabic spoken by his contemporaries was not that of the Qur'ān and thus of poorer quality and insufficient to properly understand the text, and 2) there was a need to recover the text's meaning using the Arabic of its original audience as a cipher.

As there was no one remaining from the Qur'ān's original audience, Abū 'Ubaydah had to procure his linguistic data from either 'arab informants (i.e., those ideal listener-speakers who

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<sup>24</sup> See Mūhammad's explanation of the "black and white threads" of Baqarah:187 in Farrā', *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, 1:114-15.

<sup>25</sup> Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, 1:294f.

produced pure ‘*Arabiyyah*) or from transmitted material, primarily poetry and the *qirā’āt*. Keep in mind, that by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century someone like Abū ‘Ubaydah would have heard and transmitted a sizable portion of this material in a teacher-pupil or lecture setting in Kufa, Basra, or Baghdad. His choice in attestation reflects and responds to the conversations teachers and pupils had about it. Describing these conversations is difficult. The later biographical material is quite critical of Abū ‘Ubaydah, often emphasizing his Khārijī leanings or Jewish genealogy. Farrā’ in his *Ma‘ānī l-Qur‘ān* appears to accuse Abū ‘Ubaydah of having little knowledge of ‘*Arabiyyah*.<sup>26</sup> But the *Majāz al-Qur‘ān* is not an anti-Arab, radical, or unlearned work of scholarship. While specific references to Arabic dialects are less frequent in the *Majāz*, Abū ‘Ubaydah enthusiastically cites an anonymous body of “‘*arab*” whose speech is used to verify or justify linguistic constructions in the Qur‘ān, even if the speech of said ‘*arab* did not conform to the dominant linguistic structures of ‘*Arabiyyah*. For example, he favorably adduces the formulation “‘*akalūnī l-barāghīth*” (which is deemed ungrammatical by Sībawayhi)<sup>27</sup> with reference to *Mā‘idah*:74, “‘*amū wa-ṣammū kathīrun minhum*.”<sup>28</sup> In both phrases the verb is in the third-person plural form before the appearance of the verbal subject. In “standard Arabic,” the verb would be in the singular form, and Abū ‘Ubaydah relates a version given to him by a Hudhalī informant named Abū ‘Amr (*akalanī l-barāghīth*). He concludes both versions are permissible.

Throughout the *Majāz*, he uses the familiar phrases: “this is/is not [found] in the speech of the ‘*arab*” (*yakūnu/laysa fī kalām al-‘arab*) and “something the ‘*arab* say” (*mā takallamat*

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<sup>26</sup> Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī*, 1:8.

<sup>27</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 1:19.

<sup>28</sup> Abū ‘Ubaydah, *Majāz*, 1:101-2.

*bihi al-‘arab*) to make blanket statements about constructions of which he may or may not approve.<sup>29</sup> *Kalām al-‘arab* is taken to be something that would be understood among a broad (but select) group of tribes but not particular to any single one. This includes issues of lexicography (he ascribes a word we know to be of Syriac origin to the Arabs: *tūr*),<sup>30</sup> function of particles (explains the *mā al-zā‘idah* as being common to ‘*arab* speech’)<sup>31</sup> and cites a variety of poets from the standard, pre-Bashshār ibn Burd (d. 168/784) milieu (e.g., Akḥṭal,<sup>32</sup> Farazdaq,<sup>33</sup> Abbās ibn Mardās<sup>34</sup>). Abū ‘Ubaydah, while not clearly defining the identity of his contemporary informants, equates their ‘*Arabiyyah* with the ‘*Arabiyyah* of the Prophet’s contemporaries, predecessors, and poets of the Umayyad age who, it should be noted, were not of a sedentary background. This equation indicates that Abū ‘Ubaydah likely held his attested material to the same standard as his contemporaries and required that it be procured from or verified by the speech of non-sedentary ‘*arab*.

Though Farrā’ was less explicit in his method of attesting linguistic data in the *Ma‘ānī l-Qur’ān*, it obvious that the speech of the ‘*arab* serves as the primary cipher for the text of the Qur’ān:

They omit [the *alif*] from “In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful” at the beginning of the *sūrahs* and books [i.e., copies of the Qur’ān] because it falls in a familiar place of whose

وإنما حذفوها من ﴿بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم﴾ أول السور  
والكتب لأنها وقعت في موضع معروف لا يجهل القارئ

<sup>29</sup> E.g., Ibid., 1:8, 309; 2:116.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 2:230.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 2:102.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 1:331.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 2:116.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 2:102.

meaning no reader/reciter is ignorant, he does not need it read. Its inclusion is deemed insignificant, because brevity and diminishing the plentiful is the habit of the 'arab when something's meaning is well-known.

معناه، ولا يحتاج إلى قراءته، فاستُخفَّت طرْحُها لأن من شأن  
العرب الإيجاز وتقليل الكثير إذا عُرف معناه.<sup>35</sup>

And:

Perhaps one could say: How could trade itself turn a profit when it is the trader, the man who turns a profit. This is [found] in the speech of the 'arab: your sale turns a profit and incurs losses. It is a fine saying, for profit and loss occur in trade, so its meaning is understood. And something else in the speech of the 'arab: This is a sleeping night. And something like it in the Book of God: "When the matter determines" while determination is [usually ascribed] to a man.

ربما قال القائل: كيف تريح التجارة وإنما يربح الرجل  
التاجر؟ وذلك من كلام العرب: ربح يبيِّعك وخسر يبيِّعك،  
فحسن القول بذلك لأن الربح والخسران إنما يكونان في  
التجارة، فعلم معناه. ومثله من كلام العرب: هذا ليل نائم.  
ومثله من كتاب الله: «فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الْأَمْرُ» وإنما العزيمة  
للرجال.<sup>36</sup>

Farrā' 's standards for attestation in the *Ma 'ānī l-Qur 'ān* are clear, though they are scattered throughout the text as opposed to being outlined in the beginning. In the examples quoted above, Farrā' is not merely putting the 'arab forward as informants of the correct semantics of 'Arabiyyah, but as intuitively employing figurative speech. In the first example, Farrā' explains the elision of the *alif* from the *basmalah* in terms of the general habit of the 'arab to be concise and abbreviate or abridge their speech when possible. In the second, he explains the Qur'ān's use of metonymy by drawing a parallel to an instance of metonymy in the speech of the Arabs. Throughout the work, Farrā' consults the speech of the Arabs on all sorts of basic matters (phonology, morphology, syntax etc.),<sup>37</sup> but these two quotations above take us from the realm of

<sup>35</sup> Farrā', *Ma 'ānī*, 1:2

<sup>36</sup> Farrā', *Ma 'ānī*, 1:14.

<sup>37</sup> See Ṣubḥī 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Muḥammad 'Abd al-Karīm, *al-Lahajāt al-'arabiyyah fī Ma 'ānī l-Qur 'ān li-l-Farrā'* (Cairo: Dār al-Ṭibā'ah al-Muḥammadiyyah, 1986).

semantics and into pragmatics (minding that we don't anachronistically ascribe this distinction to Farrā'). The type of figurative language featured here is not an issue of interpreting the correct meaning but one of placing the use of language in the cultural context of the 'arab. The habits of the Qur'ān are those of the 'arab, at least linguistically speaking.

The distribution of dialects in the *Ma'ānī l-Qur'ān* is similar to what we found in the *Kitāb al-'Ayn*. On this evidence alone we can conclude Farrā's attitudes delineation attestable 'Arabiyyah resembles that of Khalīl and Abū 'Ubaydah. However, early in the work Farrā provides further indication that he sought to compare the Qur'ān to the speech of specifically the non-sedentary 'arab. Farrā compares the *qurrā's* reading of *al-ḥamdu li-llāh* with the variants (e.g., *al-ḥamda li-llāh*, *al-hamdillāh*) given by the *ahl al-badw* (people of the desert, i.e., Bedouins).<sup>38</sup> While he concurs with the *qurrā'*, he does not deny or reject the other variants, noting that they have a basis in the 'arab's natural use of language.<sup>39</sup> Such is his attitude throughout the work. He remains faithful to the *rasm* of the 'Uthmānic codex, but thoroughly explores a variety of readings (many of which were to become canonical and many of which did not).<sup>40</sup> This will be explored in greater detail in the upcoming section of 'arabiyyah and the *qirā'āt*.

Similarly, Sibawayhi does not explicitly state his criteria for the selection of attestable material. However, a pattern can be discerned from his methodology of citation in the *Kitāb*. We

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<sup>38</sup> Farrā', *Ma'ānī*, 1:3.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. وأما من خفض الدال من «أَلْحَمْدُ» فإنه قال: هذه كلمة «4» كثرت على ألسن العرب حتى صارت كالاسم الواحد فتقل عليهم أن يجتمع في اسم واحد من كلامهم ضمّة بعدها كسرة

<sup>40</sup> Anṣārī, *Abū Zakarīyā al-Farrā'*, 293.

find a clear desire to delineate ‘*Arabiyyah* in accordance with the linguistic practice of the non-sedentary ‘*arab*, as illustrated in the following two quotations:

We’ve heard someone trustworthy from among the ‘*arab* say: The family of Yamāmah gathered (sing. fem. verb with pl. subject) because they say “Yamāmah gathered” when they mean her family. They make the verb feminine when it is attributed to Yamāmah and leave the wording [that includes “family”] as it was.

وسمعنا من العرب من يقول ممن يوثق به: اجتمعت أهل  
اليمامة، لأنه يقول في كلامه: اجتمعت اليمامة، يعني أهل  
اليمامة، فأنت الفعل في اللفظ إذ جعله في اللفظ لليمامة، فترك  
اللفظ يكون على ما يكون عليه في سعة الكلام.<sup>41</sup>

And:

And if you add to ‘*abādīd* (scattered paths) you’d say “‘*abādīdī*” because it has no singular form. Its singular would be on the “*fa’ lūl* or *fa’ līl* pattern. If there is no singular form, you do not exceed it in order to know [i.e., you do not create a singular to better understand the plural form]. This is better than creating something not spoken by the ‘*arab*.

وإن أضفت إلى عباديد قلت: عباديدي؛ لأنه ليس له واحد؛  
وواحد يكون على فعلولٍ أو فعليلٍ أو فعلال؛ فإذا لم يكن  
واحد لم تجاوزه حتى تعلم؛ فهذا أقوى من أن أحدث شيئاً لم  
تكلم به العرب.<sup>42</sup>

The distribution of dialects throughout the *Kitāb* mirrors that of the other sources: a preponderance of Tamīm and Ḥijāzī (sans the Quraysh) dialects with a smattering of other, mostly semi-nomadic tribes.<sup>43</sup> In fact, Sībawayhi’s refers to the Ḥijāzī dialect as the “good, old ‘*Arabiyyah*.”<sup>44</sup> However, most dialectal material is ascribed to the ‘*arab* in general. Indeed, Sībawayhi like all early grammarians worked to discern a standard language among a wide variety of Arabic dialects. It is likely, then, that references to the speech of undefined ‘*arab* (like

<sup>41</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*., 1:53.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 3:397.

<sup>43</sup> Aryeh Levin, “The First Book of Arabic Dialectology: Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 23 (1999): 212; Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 38.

<sup>44</sup> E.g., وهي اللغة العربية القديمة الجيدة, in Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*., 4:473.

in the quotations above) treated linguistic issues for which there was not much variance among the dialects. In both, Sībawayhi expresses the clear standard to which the *‘Arabiyyah* he constructs in the *Kitāb* must be held. The basis for any linguistic rule (or deviation therefrom) should be sourced from the speech of *‘arab* who can be trusted to speak a pure *‘Arabiyyah*. This is evinced by the phrase “We’ve heard someone trustworthy from among the *‘arab*” (*sami ‘nā min al-‘arab man yaqūl mimman yūthaq bihi*). Though Sībawayhi’s informants are often anonymous, the “trustworthy” qualification<sup>45</sup> for admitted anonymous speech in conjunction with his named sources<sup>46</sup> and distribution of tribes among his citations indicates that the primary task of the *Kitāb* was to catalogue, describe, and standardize (to the extent possible) the language of the semi-nomadic tribes with which he and his teachers came in contact.<sup>47</sup>

The second quotation from the *Kitāb* affirms Sībawayhi’s desire to limit the scope of *‘Arabiyyah*. While Arabic, with its stem- and root-based morphology, is an exceedingly productive language, Sībawayhi warns his reader against producing “something not spoken by the *‘arab*.” This draws an important distinction: for Sībawayhi the speech of the *‘arab* is not a model from which *‘Arabiyyah* is to be derived, but fundamental content of the language itself. Even concerning loanwords (*mu‘arrabāt*), the rules are strict—a word of Persian origin, for example, must adhere to proper Arabic phonology and be adapted to Arabic morphology.<sup>48</sup> This standard is found throughout the *Kitāb* and comes out in full force when Sībawayhi treats the Qur’ān and poetry as well.

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<sup>45</sup> E.g., الموثوق بهم see *Ibid.*, 1:304, 309, 319, 320, 330 etc.

<sup>46</sup> Levin, “The First Book of Arabic Dialectology: Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*.”

<sup>47</sup> Aryeh Levin, “Sībawayhi’s Attitude to the Spoken Language,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, no. 17 (1994): 204–43; Levin, “The First Book of Arabic Dialectology: Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*.”

<sup>48</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 4:303.

We have just reviewed several early works that, though all fundamentally philological in subject, were written for different purposes. Khalīl's *Kitāb al-ʿAyn* was the first comprehensive work of Arabic lexicography, whereas Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* was the first comprehensive work of Arabic grammar. Abū ʿUbaydah's *Majāz al-Qurʾān* and Farrā's *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān* both offered a philological exegesis of the Qurʾān but took radically different approaches in doing so. Despite these differences, these works are united in their delineation of *ʿArabiyyah* and its proprietors: it is the language of the *ʿarab*, who are the semi-nomadic Bedouin of the central Arabian lands (i.e., not in the periphery where they could come into contact with Persians, Arameans, or Greeks). With this in mind, we must now answer two questions. First, to what extent did evidence taken from the Qurʾān and poetry conform (or was made to conform) with the language of these semi-nomads? Second, did grammarians feel the *ḥadīth* corpus as it existed in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century represented the language of these semi-nomads.

### 3. Sedentary vs. Nomadic Origins of the *Shawāhid*

A question that looms over the study of the origins of the science of Arabic grammar from what other discipline did it originate? Versteegh has argued that Arabic grammar's roots lie in Qurʾānic exegesis, which supports the Islamic traditions account of the origin of Arabic grammar mentioned above.<sup>49</sup> Carter has argued in favor of a connection between Arabic grammar and Islamic law on the level of ethical and practical terminology.<sup>50</sup> Both scholars provide strong evidence for their theses, but neither conclusively proves that his main contention applies across the body of early works on Arabic grammar. Their arguments are based on a reading of terminology that is either so general that it can't be shown that they were adopted with

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<sup>49</sup> Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qurʾanic Exegesis in Early Islam*.

<sup>50</sup> Carter, *Sībawayhi's Principles*.

a certain methodology in mind or are found so infrequently in ungrammatical sources that a developed conception of a rule of Arabic grammar cannot be conclusively inferred.<sup>51</sup> What these studies do show, however, is that there was a shared epistemological foundation for the study of Arabic grammar, Qur'ānic exegesis, and Islamic law in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Though the primacy and technical nature of the terms identified by Versteegh and Carter are by no means certain, we are shown a common vocabulary found throughout the scholarship of the time. In another take on the origins of Arabic grammar, Levin argues that Sībawayhi was solely concerned with the description Arabic language; the inclusion of the Qur'ān and poetry was secondary and subservient to this task.<sup>52</sup> While there is not enough evidence to apply his argument to other extant works of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, he does show that Sībawayhi's interest in decidedly secular linguistic matters distinguished grammar from contemporary endeavors in law (which was focused on how to receive, interpret, and employ tradition) and exegesis (which, before Abū 'Ubaydah and Farrā', was occupied with personal opinion, *ra'y* in Arabic, and the interpretations of the Prophet's companions). This leaves us with a chicken vs. egg problem: did Arabic grammar emerge *sui generis* and then was found to be useful for the study of the Qur'ān and Islamic law, or did the study of Islam and its Arabic texts generate the need for understanding Arabic grammar? Some awareness of Arabic grammar as a discipline would be assumed if study of the Qur'ān were to necessitate its emergence. Yet, an anthropological interest in the linguistic habits of a marginal, albeit culturally revered, segment of the population was not likely a sufficient cause for the appearance of such an expansive and relevant field as Arabic grammar.

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<sup>51</sup> See Andrew Rippin's review article on Versteegh's book, Rippin, "Miscellen: Studying Early Tafsīr Texts" for criticism of Versteegh's historiographical footing.

<sup>52</sup> Aryeh Levin, "The Status of the Science of Grammar among Islamic Sciences," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 29 (2004), 1-16.

Whatever the case, primacy is beside the point if the question is whether the poetry and the Qur'ānic citations used by grammarians were expected to accord with the 'Arabiyyah of the semi-nomadic Bedouin described above. That is, if we are to determine grammarians' attitude towards poetry and the *qirā'āt*, it does not matter if they were included to support rules regarding the speech of the 'arab or if the speech of the 'arab was included to support conclusions drawn from the study of poetry and the *qirā'āt*. What matters is if grammarians saw them as sharing in the same language by necessity. And, in the case of poetry and the *qirā'āt*, they certainly did.

### 3.1. The 'Arabiyyah of Poetry

Philologists of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century did not account for their selection of poetry citations, beyond claiming they heard it from a teacher or an 'arabī. Fortunately, determining whose poetry the grammarians felt could be attested is a straightforward task. There are, of course, exceptions, but the vast majority of the thousands of lines of poetry found in early works of grammar come from a defined period of time (i.e., the pre-Islamic era through the Umayyad era, stopping just before the rise of *muhdathūn*)<sup>53</sup> and a select number of tribes (e.g., plenty from Hudhayl, who lived in a remote area of the Ḥijāz, and little from Taghlib, who lived in close proximity to Persians and Arameans in Mesopotamia).<sup>54</sup> It can be said with confidence that early grammarians sourced (or claimed to source) the poetry they cited from semi-nomadic Bedouin. However, we must take two things into account: first, that the inclusion of this poetry does not mean that grammarians heard it directly from the 'arab. Sībawayhi and Farrā', for example, often cite their teachers' citations of poetry. Second, that grammarians did not always feel that this poetry represented the natural speech of the 'arab. Specifically, they were aware that the

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<sup>53</sup> Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 40f.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 38–39.

constrictions of rhyme and meter produced unnatural (i.e., non-normative) grammatical constructions. We see that for a line of poetry to be considered to represent *ʿArabiyyah* it must belong to the right geography and period, it must be traced back to an *ʿarabī* (yet does not need to be traced back to the original poet)—only when it meets these conditions if poetic license is to be allowed.

Concerning the first issue, consider the emergence of Arabic literary criticism in the late 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, which was, at the time, focused on establishing the provenance of Arabic poetry. The closest we have to an extant text that demonstrates the early standards of literary criticism are collections of poetry by philologists. The *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* of al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī (d. 178/780), the *Aṣmaʿiyyāt* of Aṣmaʿī, and Abū ʿUbaydah’s commentary on the *Naqāʾiḍ* (Flytings) of the poets Jarīr (d. 110/728) and Farazdaq (d. 114/732) all exhibit signs of choosing the poetry of these collections based on their exemplification of *ʿArabiyyah*. Mufaḍḍal and Aṣmaʿī’s works are simple collections with no commentary; however, their selections are restricted to pre- and early Islamic material that fits within grammarians’ definition of *ʿarab* outlined above and, if later commentaries are any indication, the poetry contains distinctly *ʿarab* linguistic features and cultural references. Abū ʿUbaydah’s commentary utilizes references to the *ayyām al-ʿarab* (famous battles of the Arabs before Islam), the commentary of his teachers and peers (particularly Aṣmaʿī), the Qurʾān, some *ḥadīth*, and a lot of poetry other than that of Jarīr and Farazdaq. Its poetry citations, as represented in the index of the consulted edition,<sup>55</sup> is marked by the same distribution among the tribes and geographies as that found in Abū ʿUbaydah’s *Majāz al-Qurʾān*.

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<sup>55</sup> Abū ʿUbaydah Maʿmar ibn al-Muthannā, *Naqāʾiḍ Jarīr wa-Farazdaq*, ed. Khalīl ʿUmrān al-Manṣūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1998), 391–411. N.b. the many poets from the early Islamic and Umayyad eras, as well as a few Qurashīs.

The biographical sources depict the scholarship of Arabic poetry during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century as preoccupied with the linguistic and cultural peculiarities of the *‘arab*.<sup>56</sup> The use of terms such as “*ma ‘ānī*” (meanings/semantics) and “*gharīb*” (rare words/uses) in works and discussions of poetry criticism suggests their readers (i.e., the literate, educated, and sedentary scholarly class of Kufa, Basra, and Baghdad) were not assumed to have a strong background in *‘Arabiyyah*. To be sure, contemporaneous poetry production was undergoing a dramatic urbanization (e.g., Abū Nuwās).<sup>57</sup> However, the poetry as the subject of scholarship, particularly as it related to *‘Arabiyyah* and the Qur’ān, was confined to the output that either predated the corruption of *‘Arabiyyah* in the new Islamic urban environments or to later poets from those tribes and geographies designated free from such linguistic corruption.

The poetry that made it into the extant collections from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century was selected based on a confidence in its origins. This confidence was often based on circular logic: collectors and transmitters ingested enough trustworthy to develop an internal sense of what authentic poetry should look like, which was then used to authenticate the material used to develop this sense.<sup>58</sup> In the absence of an *isnād* or any method by which the transmission of the poem could be evaluated, it seems that this internal sense is most likely related to the language and cultural content of the poetry. This is to say that an internalized knowledge of *‘Arabiyyah* was essential to the process of authentication. And it seems that there was very little poetry that scholars were

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<sup>56</sup> Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 44-45; Drory, Rina, "The Abbasid Construction of the Jahiliyya: Cultural Authority in the Making," *Studia Islamica*, no. 83 (1996): 33-49. (add to bibliography)

<sup>57</sup> Wagner, Ewald, “Abū Nuwās,” in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 05 April 2021  
<[http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912\\_ei3\\_SIM\\_0085](http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_SIM_0085)>

<sup>58</sup> Wen-chin Ouyang, *Literary Criticism in Medieval Arabic-Islamic Culture: The Making of a Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 92f.

comfortable deeming authentic. The biographical literature is replete with accounts of philologists' self-reflection on their knowledge of poetry; the earliest extant collections of poetry (all by scholars we can refer to as philologists) contain a relatively small number of poems from the Jāhilyyah and early Islamic period (only around 100 for Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī and Aṣma'ī). This account should not simply be taken as indicative of a general distrust of poetry at the time (though there certainly was a healthy amount) but as a testament to the critical prowess and discerning taste the Arabic philological tradition ascribed to itself. Knowledge of poetry could bring high social and monetary status. There is a report in which Mufaḍḍal and Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah (d. 155/771) are called to demonstrate their knowledge of poetry before the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdī (d. 168/785). Though the Caliph rewarded Ḥammād for the beauty of the poetry he recited, Mufaḍḍal received the bigger prize for reciting poetry less beautiful but more demonstrably authentic.<sup>59</sup> The details of these accounts do not need to be accepted as historical fact in order to appreciate the picture they paint of the place of Arabic poetry in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century: that true, authentic Arabic poetry preserved not only a social and cultural reality that was in decline, but a linguistic reality that was no longer true for the Muslim community, a community that was heir to an Arabic Qur'ān and a religion that emerged from an Arabic milieu.

Philologists understood that poetry did not always represent the natural speech of the 'arab. Sībawayhi and Farrā' explicitly separate poetic license (*iḍṭirār/ḍarūrat al-shi'r*) from natural speech in their treatment of grammatically problematic verses, even when the poetry is sourced from 'arab of trustworthy tongue. Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*, in particular, goes to great lengths to define when the laws of natural speech can be transgressed in poetry, often noting when these

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<sup>59</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, 6:2710f.

poetic usages are weak (*da ʿif*) or not permissible (*lā yajūz*) in natural speech.<sup>60</sup> Sībawayhi also devotes entire chapters to issues of poetic license, treating topics morphological topics such as *tarkhīm* (shortening) and *qāfiyah* (rhyme) and issues of grammar/syntax (*mā yaḥtamal al-shiʿr*).<sup>61</sup> Of note is that Sībawayhi sees ungrammatical constructions in poetry as intentional; he states “They are not compelled [to follow any ungrammatical linguistic construct] unless they are attempting [a specific] meaning.”<sup>62</sup> Poetic license, in Sībawayhi’s description, does not permit just any construction but only that which is chosen intentionally—the poet understands *ʿArabiyyah* well enough to play off its rules instead of blindly breaking them.

Farrāʾ in his *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān* too notes the difference between natural speech and what is allowed in poetry, but in a far less structured manner than Sībawayhi. There is one direct reference to poetic license (*ḍarūrat al-shiʿr*), where Farrāʾ cites a line of poetry to show that a certain grammatical rule<sup>63</sup> can only be broken in the context of poetry.<sup>64</sup> At another point, Farrāʾ states that an ungrammatical construction is permissible in a line of poetry because its “inflexibility” (*ḍayq*, lit. “constriction”) necessitates it.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, Farrāʾ notes when the grammatical structure of the Qurʾān mirrors less-common structures of found in poetry.<sup>66</sup> Rhyme too allows for unnatural morphological constructions in poetry that are not permitted in reciting

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<sup>60</sup> Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 43–45.

<sup>61</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 1:26; 2:239; 4:204. *Tarkhīm*; *mā yaḥtamal al-shiʿr*; *qāfiyah*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:32: وليس شيء يضطر إليه إلا وهم يحاولون به وجها.

<sup>63</sup> I.e., that a verbal apodosis (*jizāʾ*) cannot feature a *nūn al-tawkīd*.

<sup>64</sup> Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī*, 1:162.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:253.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:65-69.

the Qur'ān.<sup>67</sup> Like Sībawayhi, Farrā' does not criticize poetry for following different standards than natural speech. However, like Sībawayhi, he needs his audience to understand that ungrammatical constructions in poetry are not to be emulated in daily speech but rather are an exceptional linguistic class justified by the poet's mastery of 'Arabiyyah (i.e., to cite a familiar adage, "you need to know the rules before you can break them").

The consequence of this perspective is found throughout works of Arabic philology, where poetry citations are regularly buttressed of citations of other material (such as the Qur'ān or directly attested speech of the 'arab) or presented alongside an accepted abstraction (*tamthīl*) of a linguistic rule. The 'Arabiyyah of Arabic poetry is thus conditional: it first must be verified to come from someone who has mastered 'Arabiyyah and, second, must fit within one of the established ungrammatical constructions (i.e., not be a personal invention); indeed, there was understood to be intuition for even ungrammatical 'Arabiyyah.

### 3.2. The 'Arabiyyah of the *Qirā'āt*

By the time of Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324/936), it was widely held that the *qirā'āt* of the Qur'ān should conform to the established rules of 'Arabiyyah. During the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, however, the rules of 'Arabiyyah had not yet been established to the point that there was sufficient consensus among the grammarians to fully authenticate (or "canonize," in the case of the movement of Ibn Mujāhid) a complete *qirā'āt* of the Qur'ān. To be sure, the *qirā'āt* of the seven eponymous readers were widely known and operative in Arabic grammar during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century; Farrā''s *Ma'ānī* directly references all these readings and Sībawayhi in the *Kitāb* indirectly references a

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 1:315, 428.

handful.<sup>68</sup> Their treatment raises very important questions that are beyond the scope of this dissertation: in what way were grammarians of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century exposed to the various *qirā'āt*, how fixed and comprehensive were the *qirā'āt* of the eponymous readers at the time, and what does this say about the liturgical uses of these readings? What we can speak to here are the linguistic standards scholars of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century applied to the *qirā'āt* and what this tells us about the expectations of philologists vis-à-vis the linguistic reality of the Qur'ān during their time and how they imagined its linguistic reality of the original audience of the Qur'ānic revelation. As shown in the previous chapter, there was a certain amount of permissible malleability in the *qirā'āt*, particularly when liturgical recitation was not an issue. We find variegated nominal and verbal forms, occasional reordering of words, and extensive phonetic variation. However, by the time of Ṭabarī, adherence to the 'Uthmānic *rasm* and the general *ijmā'* of the *qurrā'* was given far greater weight in the selection of the *qirā'āt* than by Farrā', whose primary goal was to examine a panoply the *qirā'āt* in light of the emerging the rules of 'Arabiyyah; a diachronic study of this attitude, i.e., the significance of 'Arabiyyah with respect to the other criteria for selection of the *qirā'āt*, aids us in our understanding of just what was expected from the 'Arabiyyah of the *qirā'āt* in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century.

Let us consider responses from grammarians and grammatically minded exegetes to the ostensibly ungrammatical verse “*inna hādhāni la-sāhirāni*.”<sup>69</sup> The allegation is ostensible in our view even though it contradicts a well-established rule of Arabic grammar: that the *ism* (i.e., subject) of “*inna*” should be in the accusative (i.e., *hādhayni*), while the script reads “*hādhāni*,” is notably in the nominative. Indeed, some grammarians and exegetes went to great lengths to

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<sup>68</sup> Baalbaki, Ramzi, “Treatment of the Qirā'āt,” 17–21.

<sup>69</sup> Ṭaha: 63; Nasser, *Transmission*, 46ff.

find an attestable example of ‘*Arabiyyah* that permitted the *ism* of *inna* to remain in the nominative.<sup>70</sup> Very early on, this verse was viewed as problematic, and each scholar’s response shows both the personal approach of said scholar and the expectations of his audience.

Of the seven canonical readers, six follow the ungrammatical ‘Uthmānic *rasm* of “*hādhāni*” (or “*hādhānni*,” in the case of Ibn Kathīr) and only Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’ gives us “*hādhayni*.”<sup>71</sup> With the exception of Sībawayhi, all early grammarians had something to say on the matter. Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, in his discussion on the grammatical function of particles stemming from the root ‘-n’ (i.e., *an/in/anna/inna*), has the following to say:

The ‘*arab* have two dialect [al pronunciations] of *inna*: elided [pronunciation, i.e., “*in*”] (*takhfif*) or full [pronunciation, i.e., “*inna*”] (*tathqil*). As for the one who elides [the extra “n,” he puts [its *ism* (“subject”)] in the nominative, except for some of the Hījāz who elide but put [the *ism*] in the accusative because they treat it (*tawahhum*) as if it were the full [pronunciation, i.e., “*inna*”]. So [the verse] is recited: *in kullan lammā layuwaffiyannahum* (“Verily all will be repaid,” Hūd: 111); they elide and put “*kull*” (“all”) in the accusative. As for *in hādhāni la-sāhirāni*, those who elide [the “n” are speakers] of the dialect of those who elide and place [the *ism* in the] nominative. That is one way. And then there are those who use the *lām* in the place of *illā* (“unless”) and treat “*in*” as a negation [particle], according to the interpretation [of the verse]: These two are nothing but sorcerers.

وللعرب في (إنّ) لغتان: التّخفيف والتّثقيّل، فأما من خفّف  
فإنّه يرفّع بها، إلّا أنّ ناساً من أهل الحجاز يخفّفون،  
وينصبون على توهم التّثقيلة، وقرىء: وإنّ كلّاً لمّا ليؤفّيهم  
خفّفوا ونصبوا (كلّاً). وأما إنّ هذان لساحران فمن خفّف فهو  
بلغة الذين يخفّفون ويرفعون، فذلك وجّه، ومنهم من يجعل  
اللّام في موضع (إلّا)، ويجعل (إنّ) جحداً، على تفسير: ما  
هذان إلّا ساحران<sup>72</sup>

Khalīl only addresses one *qirā’ah*, that of Ḥafṣ’s transmission of ‘Āṣim’s. He does not attribute it to ‘Āṣim but simply states that it follows the dialects of those who place the *ism* of

<sup>70</sup> See Ṭabarī’s account in Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 18:327ff.

<sup>71</sup> Nasser, *Second Canonization*, 574.

<sup>72</sup> Khalīl, ‘*Ayn*, 8:397.

*inna* in the nominative, nothing more. Khalīl did not clarify which exact tribes speak as such, though he does place them in the Ḥijāz. He offers a grammatical explication where *in* is taken to be a negation particle and the *lām* an exceptive particle. Of note is the absence of references to other readings, a statement of preference, or criticism of this any or any other variant. Compare to Akhfash al-Awsat’s take on the verse:

[*In*] can have the meaning [of *inna*] but only when its predicate is [preceded by] a *lām*, such as: “*in Zaydun la-muntaliqun*” (“Zayd is leaving”). You must say the *lām* lest the [*in*] is confused with “*mā*” (“no,” the negation particle). Some have alleged one can say: “*in Zaydan la-muntaliqun*” (“Zayd is leaving”) constructed according to the meaning [of the former example]. It is like: “*in kull(u/a) nafsin lammā ‘alayhā ḥāfiẓun*” (“There is no soul but that which has a protector,” Ṭāriq: 4), which is read in both the accusative and nominative with the *mā* added for emphasis, and the *lām* added for emphasis, like in [the verse]: “*wa-in kāna aṣḥābu al-aykati la-zālimīna*” (“and the forest people were unjust,” Ḥijr: 78). But it occurs before a verb when you elide [the second *nūn*] just as with *lākin* (with) falls before a verb if you elide [the second *nūn*]. Do you not see that you say: “*lākin qad qāla dhāka Zaydun*” (“But Zaid had said that”) but they do not take away the *lām* in the verse “*wa-in kāna aṣḥābu al-aykati la-zālimīna*” (“The forest-dwellers are unjust”)? According to this dialect, from what we’ve seen—and God only knows— [is the verse] “*in hādhāni la-sāḥirāni*.” Some geminate [the *nūn*] and say “*inna hādhāni*.” That is barely attested, only that they allege that [the tribe] Balḥārith ibn Ka‘b turns the *yā* in such places into an *alif*, thus they say: “*ra’aytu akhawāka*” (instead of *akhawaykā*, “I saw your two brothers) and “*ra’aytu al-rajulāni*” (instead of *rajulayni*, “I saw two men”)...[more examples]...as such they allege that this verse is read according to this dialect with [full pronunciation of *inna*]. Abū Zayd [al-Anṣārī] said that he heard an eloquent *a rābī* from the Balḥārith [tribe] say: “*darabtu yadāhu*” and “*waḍa tu ‘alāhu*” when he [meant] *yadayhi* and *alayhi*. Some say *inna hādhayni la-sāḥirāni*” but

وتكون خفيفة في معنى الثقيلة وهي مكسورة ولا تكون إلا وفي خبرها اللام، يقولون: "إِنْ زَيْدٌ لَمُنْطَلِقٌ" ولا يقولونه بغير لام مخافة ان تلتبس بالتى معناها "ما." وقد زعموا ان بعضهم يقول: "إِنْ زَيْدًا لَمُنْطَلِقٌ" يعملها على المعنى وهي مثل {إِنْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ} يقرأ بالنصب والرفع و "ما" زيادة للتوكيد، واللام زيادة للتوكيد وهي التي في قوله {وَإِنْ كَانَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ ظَالِمِينَ} ولكنها انما وقعت على الفعل حين خففت كما تقع "الكن" على الفعل إذا خففت. ألا ترى أنك تقول: "الكن قد قال ذلك زيد." ولم يُعْرَوْها من اللام في قوله {وَإِنْ كَانَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ ظَالِمِينَ} وعلى هذه اللغة فيما نرى - والله أعلم - {إِنْ هَآذَانِ لَسَآجِرَانِ} وقد شددها قوم فقالوا {إِنْ هَآذَانِ} وهذا لا يكاد يعرف إلا أنهم زاعمون أن بلحارث بن كعب يجعلون الياء في أشباه هذا ألفا فيقولون: "رأيت أخواك" و"رأيت الرجلان" وأوضعتة علاه" و"ذهبت إلاه" فزعموا أنه على هذه اللغة بالنتقيل تقرأ. وزعم أبو زيد أنه سمع أعرابياً فصيحاً من بلحارث يقول: "ضَرَبْتُ يَدَاهُ" و"وضعتة علاه" يريد: يَدَيْهِ وَعَلَيْهِ. وقال

that goes against the [*rasm of*] the Book.

بعضهم ﴿إِنَّ هَذَيْنِ لَسَاحِرَانِ﴾ وذلك خلاف الكتاب.<sup>73</sup>

Akhfash al-Awsaṭ offers additional perspectives on the reading. In his discussion of the *in khafifah* (i.e., with the elision of the second *nūn*), Akhfash presents the same grammatical construction as that seen above with Khalīl (*in* + nominative subject + *lām* + nominative predicate) but without identifying *in* as a negation particle or *lām* as an exceptive particle. Akhfash confidently presents (Ṭāriq: 4) and (Ḥijr: 78) as examples of this construction. He is less sure with *in hādhāni*, as clearly indicated by his interjection of uncertainty: “from what we’ve seen—and God only knows”; he is unsure of the allegation that the Balḥārith don’t decline the dual suffix, as indicated by the qualifying statement: “and it is hardly/only attested (*lā yukādu yu ‘rafu illā*),” though he does cite the trusted linguist Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī’s (d. 215/830) claim that he had heard it directly from the Balḥārith. He ends the discussion with a quick motion to the grammatical reading but quickly notes that it contradicts the ‘Uthmānic *rasm*. Abū ‘Ubaydah is less rigid in his analysis:

Abū ‘Amr and Yūnus would say: “*inna hādhayni la-sāhirāni*” in terms of pronunciation and write out “*hādhāni*,” just as they add to and take away from the Book while the pronunciation is correct. Abū l-Khaṭṭāb claimed he heard some of the Banū Kinānah and others put both [the subject and predicate after *inna*] in the nominative in place of the genitive or accusative. Bishr ibn Hilāl said *in* had the meaning of *ibtidā’* and *tjāb* [i.e., starting a nominal sentence or requiring an apodosis]. Do you not see that it has agency on that which follows it but not on that which follows that which follows it? So, you put the predicate in the nominative, and you don’t put it in the accusative like you do the subject [i.e., *ism inna*]. The *majāz* of the verse is the *majāz* of two [complete] statements, which can be interpreted as: “Verily,

قال أبو عمرو وعيسى ويونس ﴿إِنَّ هَذَيْنِ لَسَاحِرَانِ﴾ في اللفظ  
وكتب ﴿هذان﴾ كما يزيدون وينقصون في الكتاب واللفظ  
صواب. وزعم أبو الخطاب أنه سمع قوما من بني كنانة  
وغيرهم يرفعون الاثنتين في موضع الجر والنصب، قال بشر  
بن هلال «إِنَّ» بمعنى الابتداء والإيجاب، ألا ترى أنها تعمل  
فيما يليها ولا تعمل فيما بعد الذي بعدها فترفع الخبر ولا  
تنصبه كما تنصب الاسم فكان مجاز ﴿إِنَّ هذان لَسَاحِرَانِ﴾  
مجاز كلامين، مخرجه: إنه أي نعم، ثم قلت: هذان

<sup>73</sup> Akhfash, *Ma ‘ānī*, 1:120-21.

yes indeed” and then you say, “these two are magicians” (*hādhāni sāhirāni*)

First off, Abū ‘Ubaydah appears to have little problem with reading the Qur’ān in a way that doesn’t reflect the ‘Uthmānic *rasm*. It is hard to know how extensive the additions and deletions (*kamā yazīdūna wa-yanquṣūna*) he allows were; at the very least his discussion of this verse suggests that the alteration of long vowels, which can be found throughout the canonical readings, was permissible in his view if the pronunciation (*lafẓ*) was correct—which is to say that if it followed the rules of ‘*Arabiyyah*. He also cites an informant who attributes this grammatical construction to the Banū Kinānah, but he also explains it along the more usual grammatical lines by asserting that it is made up of two sentences put together (“yes, indeed” + “They are two magicians”); this allows him to preserve the grammaticality of the verse by categorizing it as one of his rhetorical tropes (i.e., *majāz al-kalāmāyn*)—though we are left wondering what was the purpose of the *lām*. Farrā’, in his treatment of the verse, leans on linguistic as well as non-linguistic evidence:

And [the verse]: *inna hādhāni la-sāhirāni*...

The Qur’ān reciters differ in it. Some say it is a solecism, but we perform it so as not to contradict the [script of] the Book. Abū l-‘Abbāṣ [Tha‘lab] informed us... [*isnād* featuring Farrā’] from ‘Ā’ishah that she was asked about [the verse] in [Sūrat] al-Nisā’: *lākinna al-rāsikhūna fī l-‘ilmi minhum... wa-l-muqīmīna al-ṣalāta*” and about [the verse] in [Sūrat] al-Mā’idah: “*inna alladhīna āmanū wa-alladhīna hādū wa-l-ṣābi‘ūn*), and about the verse: “*inna hādhāni la-sāhirāni*). She said: “Oh son of my brother, it is a scribal error (*khaṭa’ min al-kātib*). Abū ‘Amr recited it: “*inna hādhayni la-sāhirāni*” which he justified by stating that it had reached him from some of the Prophet’s (peace upon him) companions that he said: “There is a solecism in the codex (*muṣḥaf*),

وقوله: إن هذان لساحران قد اختلف فيه القراء فقال بعضهم:

هو لحن ولكننا نمضي عليه لنلا نخالف الكتاب. حدثنا أبو

العباس قال حدثنا محمد قال حدثنا الفراء قال حدثني أبو

معاوية الضريير عن هاشم بن عروة بن الزبير عن أبيه عن

عائشة أنها سألت عن قوله في النساء (لكن الراسخون في

العلم منهم.... والمقيميين الصلاة) وعن قوله في المائدة (إن

الذين آمنوا والذين هادوا والصابئون) وعن قوله (إن هذان

لساحران) فقالت: يا ابن أخي هذا كان خطأ من الكاتب. وقرأ

<sup>74</sup> Abū ‘Ubaydah, *Majāz*, 2:21-22.

the ‘*arab* will straighten them out.”

Farrā’ said: “I do not wish to contradict [the script of] the Book. Some recite it: “*in hādhāni la-sāhirāni*” with a [*nūn* elided from *inna*]. In ‘Abd Allāh [Ibn Mas‘ūd’s] reading [it is]: “*wa-asarrū l-najwā an[na?] hadhāni la-sāhirāni* (“and they spoke secretly: these two are sorcerers”)” and in the reading of Ubayy: “*in dhāni illā sāhirāni*.” There are two aspects/sides to our reading with the gemination of *inna* and the *alif*:

One is that it is the dialect of the Banū al-Ḥārith ibn Ka‘b; they mark both [the subject and predicate of *inna* when in the dual], whether in the nominative, accusative, or genitive—with an *alif*

A member of the Banū Asad recited this line [from the poetry of] the Banū l-Ḥārith:

*Fa-aṭraqa iṭraq al-shujā’i wa-law yarā*

*Musāghan li-nābāhu al-shujā’u la-ṣammamā*

(He looked on in silence as the brace do, if a brave man see something his two incisors could bite into, he goes silent)

He said: I had not seen anyone more eloquent than this Asadī, who said of [the Banū l-Ḥārith]: This is the handwriting of my brother himself [i.e., my brother transcribed this line of poetry?]

That—even if rare—is more analogous because the ‘*arab* put the *wāw* (w) after the *ḍammah* (u) because the *wāw* cannot be given *i’rāb*; then, they say: *ra’aytu al-muslimāna* (I saw the Muslims) and put the *yā’* (y) after the *kasrah* (i) of the *mīm* (m). When they see that the *yā’* is of the dual, then they can’t put a *kasrah* before it, so they put a *fathah* (a) and leave the *alif* (ā) to follow it and say: *rajulāni* in every case (*ḥāl*).

The ‘*arab* agree that the *alif* is fixed in “*kilā l-rajulayni*” in the nominative, accusative, and genitive dual; except the Banū Kinānah, who say: “*ra’aytu kilay l-rajulayni*” and “*marartu bi-kilay l-rajulayni*” It is ugly and rare; they read it thus by analogy [to the dual *ism*].

The other approach is to say: I find the *alif* to be a

أبو عمرو (إن هذين لساحران) واحتج أنه بلغه عن بعض

أصحاب محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال: إن في

المصحف لحنا وستقيمه العرب.

قال الفراء: ولست أشتهي على أن أخالف الكتاب وقرأ

بعضهم (إن هذان لساحران) خفيفة وفي قراءة عبد الله:

(وأسروا النجوى أن هذان ساحران) وفي قراءة أبي (إن دان

.إلا ساحران) فقراءتنا بتشديد (إن) وبالألف على جهتين

إحدهما على لغة بني الحارث بن كعب: يجعلون الاثنتين في

رفعهما ونصبهما وخفضهما بالألف

وأنشدني رجل من الأسد عنهم. يريد بني الحارث

فأطرق إطراق الشجاع ولو يرى ... مساعا لناباه الشجاع

لصمما

قال: وما رأيت أفصح من هذا الأسدي وحكى هذا الرجل

عنهم: هذا خط يدا أخي بعينه.

وذلك- وإن كان قليلا- أقيس لأن العرب قالوا: مسلمون

فجعلوا الواو تابعة للضممة لأن الواو لا تعرب ثم قالوا: رأيت

المسلمين فجعلوا الياء تابعة لكسرة الميم. فلما رأوا أن الياء

من الاثنتين لا يمكنهم كسر ما قبلها، وثبت مفتوحا: تركوا

.الألف تتبعه، فقالوا: رجلان في كل حال

وقد اجتمعت العرب على إثبات الألف في كلا الرجلين في

support and not the *lām* of the root. When you use the dual, you add a *nūn* to it but leave the *alif* as it is in every case; just as the ‘*arab* say *alladhī* then add a *nūn* to signify the plural and say: *alladhīna* in the nominative, accusative, and genitive; likewise, they leave *hādhāni* [as it is] in the nominative, accusative, and genitive; but the Kinānah say *alladhūna*

الرفع والنصب والخفض وهما اثنان، إلا بنى كنانة فإنهم يقولون: رأيت كلي الرجلين ومررت بكلي الرجلين. وهي قبيحة قليلة، مضوا على القياس

والوجه الآخر أن تقول: وجدت الألف من هذا دعامة وليست بلام فعل، فلما تثبتت زدت عليها نونا ثم تركت الألف ثابتة على حالها لا تزول على كل حال كما قالت العرب (الذي) ثم زادوا نونا تدل على الجماع، فقالوا: الذين في رفعهم ونصبهم وخفضهم كما تركوا (هذان) في رفعه ونصبه وخفضه. وكنانة يقولون (الذون)<sup>75</sup>

This passage features much of what we’ve seen with Khalīl, Akhfash, and Abū ‘Ubaydah. However, there is a further synthesis that distinguishes Farrā’ from his philologist peers. Khalīl was content to offer one explanation for one reading without acknowledgement of the allegations of ungrammaticality; Akhfash readily accepts the grammatical construct presented by Khalīl and attempts to refute the reading of *-n* as *inna* because it “goes against the [rasm] of the [Holy] Book,” which is to say that he feels the dialect it represents is poorly attested; Abū ‘Ubaydah allows for discrepancies between the *rasm* of the Book and its recitation and offers the dialect of the Banū Kanānah (as opposed to Akhfash’s Banū Balḥārith) basis of this grammatical (or ungrammatical, depending on whom is speaking) construction—however, he offers a totally novel interpretation (i.e., two complete sentences put together) that fits this passage within a certain rhetorical trope he identifies in the introduction to his *Majāz*. Indeed,

<sup>75</sup> Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī*, 2:183-84.

Farrā'’s argument addresses all these possibilities (save Abū 'Ubaydah's *majāz*-based interpretation).

Farrā' approaches the issue from several standpoints, which he is careful to counterbalance. First, he presents the opinion that the script is ungrammatical but “we perform it so as not to contradict the [script of] the Book.” However, this is followed by two ḥadīth that do not support this contention. In one, 'Ā'ishah characterizes this feature of the 'Uthmānic script as an error on the part of the scribe (“*yā bna akhī hādhā khaṭa'un min al-kātibī*”).<sup>76</sup> This is followed by a ḥadīth of the Prophet (most often attributed to 'Uthmān or 'Ā'ishah)<sup>77</sup> where he states that even though there are ungrammatical passages in the Qur'ān, they need not be corrected because “the 'arab will straighten it out.” The position implied by these ḥadīth is closer to what we saw in the beginning of Abū 'Ubaydah's passage than to the opinion that the passage is ungrammatical but must be read according to the script. Where the latter allows that the Qur'ān has a linguistic reality beyond its consonantal script (though the extent of this reality is of course tempered by philologists' devotion to the 'Uthmānic *rasm*), the former severely limits this reality. Farrā' then attempts to thread the needle, not content with either reciting the Qur'ān ungrammatically or in a manner than contradicts the script.

Farrā' presents a few readings, some from non-'Uthmānic codices, that are grammatical: there is the reading of ' -n as “*in*” (i.e., *khafīfah* as seen with Khalīl and Akhfash), Ibn Mas'ūd's reading of “*an*” (without the *lām*), and Ubayy's “*inna hadhāni la-sāḥirāni*.” The first, unattributed reading is well-known and found among the canonical *qirā'āt*; the former is the

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<sup>76</sup> See also *ibid.*, 1:106.

<sup>77</sup> See below, 204.

reading of Ibn Kathīr and ‘Aṣim (through Ḥafṣ) and is approved by Khalīl and Akhfash in the passages quoted above; Ibn Mas‘ūd and Ubayy’s both contradict the ‘Uthmānic *rasm* but are grammatical and of supportive semantic value for the readings based on the ‘Uthmānic *rasm*. These readings preface Farrā’ ’s own preferred reading (with *tashdīd* and the *alif*), which he states can be supported in two ways: first, that it belongs to the dialect of al-Ḥārith ibn Ka‘b (Balḥārith, according to Akhfash) and second that it is indeclinable in the same way as the plural demonstrative “*alladhīna*.” As for the former, Farrā’ differs with Akhfash regarding the attestability of this dialect, noting that he heard it from one of the most eloquent people he had ever known (and member of the tribe Asad, whose dialect was regularly attested by grammarians). Farrā’ notes that this dialectal feature is rare but claims that it is more analogous on phonological grounds than *hādhayni*: the plural suffix (i.e., *-ūna/īna*) is not a diphthong, similarly, *hadhāni* is not a diphthong. In further support of this contention, he notes that in the instance of *kilā* (“both”), the diptotic form is the exception, only found among the Banū Kinānah. Farrā’ ’s second argument in support of “our reading” is similarly built upon morphological reasoning: when the *nūn* is added as a suffix it tends to preserve the vowel before it. Thus, when forming a plural from the demonstrative *alladhī*, the ‘*arab* retain the *yā*’ (ī) after adding a *nūn* rather than forming a new word that declines like a plural suffix (i.e., *alladhūna*). Similarly, the addition of the *nūn* after the *alif* dual marker would fix the *alif* in place. Farrā’ , through an accounting of the natural phonology of the ‘*arab*, renders the passage grammatical, albeit an uncommon grammaticality.

Though this discussion has been limited to a single verse, it is one of the grammatically most contentious verses in the Qur’ān. Its treatment puts on display the diverse array of philological attitudes towards the *qirā’āt*. The consolidation of the *qirā’āt*, if not their original

genesis, was a philological endeavor during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>; albeit one with significant pressure from the *sunnaḥ*, that is, the established and familiar variations of recitation the process of whose canonization had already begun. However, despite this pressure to accept the *sunnaḥ* (inclusive of the ‘Uthmānic *rasm*, of course) there was a remarkable effort to reconcile apparent incongruities with the laws of ‘*Arabiyyah*—though this requirement was made explicit in later works on the *qirā’āt*, it was not explicitly stated in any of the works quoted above. Nevertheless, the general discomfort displayed by these philologists at the idea of accepting an ungrammatical reading was too much; rather than accept a reading as ungrammatical, significant effort was expended at interpreting the passage as grammatical, which is a reflection of a fundamental epistemological ideology of the study of the language of the Qur’ān that has dominated since that time: that the *qirā’āt*, if they are to be of liturgical or exegetical value, must reflect the natural speech of the ‘*arab*.

### 3.3. The ‘*Arabiyyah* of *Ḥadīth*

A sharper distinction should be made between attitudes towards the ‘*Arabiyyah* of *ḥadīth* in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century and the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century than what has been made for poetry and the *qirā’āt*—this is because there was a fundamental shift in the importance of *ḥadīth* at the turn of the century, and this is reflected in Farrā’<sup>’</sup>s *Ma‘ānī l-Qur’ān* which features dozens of *ḥadīth* for linguistic purposes and a couple hundred more for narrative and exegetical purposes. The status of *ḥadīth* prior to this shift, however, is the focus of this section; what we find is a curiosity in the lexical value of *ḥadīth* regarding its impact on religious content of the Arabic lexicon and a general indifference to its grammar, to the point it is not identified as the speech of the Prophet. Our sources are unfortunately limited, Khalīl’s ‘*Ayn* and Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb* are the only two works of Arabic philology from the period and *ḥadīth* collections, *tafsīr* and works on *fiqh* from

this time do not provide much information on the ‘*Arabiyyah* of *ḥadīth*. This presents us with the difficult task of arguing *ex silentio*, that is, noting the absence of *ḥadīth* from grammatical discussions and the absence of attribution of *ḥadīth* to the Prophet when *ḥadīth* are quoted in these discussions. Philologists did not make their attitudes towards *ḥadīth* explicit in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century; rather, they must be inferred. So, let us review several citations of *ḥadīth* from Khalīl’s ‘*Ayn* and Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*.

### 3.3.1. *Ḥadīth* in the *K. al- ‘Ayn*

The lexical value of *ḥadīth* has been understood to be twofold: first, that it explicates the lexicon the ‘*arab* at the time of Revelation and, second, that it explicates linguistic innovations in the Arabic language that were brought on by the Revelation.<sup>78</sup> As for the former, the role played by *ḥadīth* is largely anthropological rather than linguistic in that it describes the practices and daily realities of the ‘*arab* during as opposed to providing phonological, morphological or etymological data. Consider Khalīl’s entry for *sh-gh-r* in the ‘*Ayn*:

*Sh-gh-r*: The dog “*shaghara*,” [meaning] he raised one of his two [hind] legs to urinate. A land [that is] “*shāghirah*” with its [hind?] legs is one that leaves itself open to attack.

And the statement of the Prophet, peace upon him, “There is no “*shighār*” in Islam”— [refers to when] a man marries his sister off to someone who has married his sister to the [first man] or something like that, with no dowry between the two. One says, “So and so *shāghara* [i.e., exchanged sisters in marriage with] me” and “The watering hole *ishtaghara*,” i.e., it moved off to some other spot, and a group that is “*mushtagharah*” is one that has been separated from the main road and open to attack.

شَعَرَ: شَعَرَ الكلب: رفع إحدى رجليه ليبول. وبلدة شاعِرَةٌ

بِرَجلِها إذا لم تمتنع من الغارة

وقول النبي- صلى الله عليه وعلى آله وسلم:- لا شِغَارَ في

الإسلام، وهو أن يزوج الرجل أخته من رجلٍ، على أن

يزوجه أخته ونحو ذلك، ولا مهر بينهما. يقال: شاعَرَني

فلان.

واشْتَعَرَ المَنْهَلُ أي: تباعد وصار في ناحية. ورُقْفَةٌ مُشْتَعِرَةٌ

أي: مُنْفَرِدَةٌ عن السابِلة. وشِغَارٌ على الغارة

<sup>78</sup> Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, 1:238.

While there is a plausible link between *shaghara* and *ishtaghara* (lifting the leg to urinate→leaving oneself exposed→isolating oneself; note that the *wazn* of the former is the reflexive of the latter), *shighār* (gerund of *shāghara*) does not appear to be semantically related. Khalīl does not seem concerned, as he expends no effort to determine the relation (or if there is even a relation) between the lexemes. Rather, the purpose of this *ḥadīth* is to explain a certain practice of the ‘*arab* during the time of the Revelation to which the Prophet put an end. That is, the ‘*arab*-ness of the *ḥadīth* comes not directly from its linguistic value but rather from its reference to pre-Islamic practice, which is to say its anthropological value. Khalīl generalizes this anthropological value into linguistic value when he presents the meaning of the verb whose gerund is found in the *ḥadīth* (i.e., *shighār*→*shāghara*), a remarkable act given that this author has been unable to find any other variation of *shighār* related to *shāghara* in works or reports dated to Khalīl’s time.<sup>79</sup> Most references to *shighār* that postdate the ‘*Ayn* refer to this *ḥadīth*. This is common for *ḥadīth* that address a prohibited practice; since exchanging female relatives in marriage to avoid paying a dowry was ostensibly no longer practiced by Muslims, it follows that the term would have little semantic relevance outside of certain legal discussions and as a philological curiosity.

As for *ḥadīth* that explicate changes in Arabic brought on by Islam, there are several to be found in Khalīl’s ‘*Ayn* but not necessarily where they would be expected. Nothing from the lists of words introduced to the Arabic lexicon or altered by Islam by the likes of Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1004), Ibn Burhān (d. 518/1124), and Suyūṭī<sup>80</sup> is supported by *ḥadīth* in the ‘*Ayn*, though they all have entries (e.g., *ḥajj*, *ṣalāt*, *sujūd*, *rukū* ). Rather, *ḥadīth* features in entries for other

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<sup>79</sup> Based on extensive searches of digital libraries detailed in the introduction.

<sup>80</sup> All three quoted in Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, 1:235ff.

lexemes of less obvious Islamic provenance, such as *sabab* (which took on new semantic import with its paring with *nasab* in the Qur’ān),<sup>81</sup> *nabī* (where a *ḥadīth* is cited to explain the elision of the *hamzah* at the end),<sup>82</sup> and *fiṭrah* (which took on a special role in Islamic ethics).<sup>83</sup> Khalīl’s treatment of *s-b-h* and its variants is informative:

*Subbūh*: *Quddūs*, meaning God. The pattern *fu‘ūl* is only found in speech for these two [words].  
*Subḥah*: Beads used to count glorifications (*yusabbiḥu bi-‘adadihā*) [of God]. In *ḥadīth*, Gabriel said to the Prophet, peace upon him: Below the throne of God are 70 curtains. Were we to approach one we would be burned by the lights (*subḥāt*) of our Lord’s face.  
 By *subḥah* he means his grandeur, splendor, and light. *Tasbīḥ* means prayer, as in the verse: *fa-subḥāna Allāh ḥīna tumsūna wa-ḥīna tuṣbiḥūn* (So glorify God in the evening and the morning, Rūm: 17). The verse commands prayer at its appointed time.

A‘shā recited:  
 Give glory (*sabbiḥ*) at the evening time and forenoon...and don’t serve Satan and God [together?], just worship [God?]

By which he means [by *sabbiḥ*] pray. And the verse: *Fa-law-lā annahu kāna min al-musabbiḥīna* (If he were not one of the glorifiers..., Ṣāfāt: 143), by which he means those who pray (*muṣallīn*). *Sabḥ* is a gerund just like *sabāḥah*, [as in] “The swimmer swam (*sabaḥa al-sābiḥ*) in water.” The “swimming” (*ṣābiḥ*) horse is one who extends its two legs well while running. “Stars “swim” (*tasbaḥ*) in the heavens,” meaning they move along in their orbits. *Subḥah* in prayer is voluntary devotion.

وَالسُّبُّوحُ: الْقُدُّوسُ، هُوَ اللَّهُ، وَلَيْسَ فِي الْكَلَامِ فُعُولٌ غَيْرُ هَذَيْنِ. وَالسُّبْحَةُ: خَزَزَاتٌ يُسَبَّحُ بَعْدَهَا. وَفِي الْحَدِيثِ أَنَّ جِبْرِيلَ قَالَ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ لِلَّهِ دُونَ الْعَرْشِ سَبْعِينَ حِجَابًا لَوْ دَنَوْنَا مِنْ أَحَدِهَا لَأَحْرَقْتَنَا سُبْحَاتٌ وَجْهَ رَبِّنَا. يَعْنِي بِالسُّبْحَةِ جَلَالَهُ وَعَظَمَتَهُ وَنُورَهُ. وَالتَّسْبِيحُ يَكُونُ فِي مَعْنَى الصَّلَاةِ وَبِهِ يُفَسَّرُ قَوْلُهُ- عَزَّ وَجَلَّ- فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ جِئِنَ تُمَسُونَ وَجِئِنَ تُصْبِحُونَ، الْآيَةُ تَأْمُرُ بِالصَّلَاةِ فِي أَوْقَاتِهَا، قَالَ: الْأَعَشَى: وَسَبَّحْ عَلَى حِينِ الْعَشِيِّاتِ وَالضُّحَى ... وَلَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَاللَّهُ فَاعْبُدَا. يَعْنِي يَعْنِي الصَّلَاةَ. وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ الْمُصَلِّينَ. وَالسَّبَّحُ مَصْدَرٌ كَالسَّبَّاحَةِ، سَبَّحَ السَّابِحُ فِي الْمَاءِ. وَالسَّابِحُ مِنَ الْخَيْلِ: الْحَسَنُ مَدَّ الْيَدَيْنِ فِي الْجَزْيِ. وَالنُّجُومُ تَسْبَحُ فِي الْفَلَكَ: تَجْرِي فِي دَوْرَانِهِ. وَالسُّبْحَةُ مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ: التَّطَوُّعُ.

<sup>81</sup> Khalīl, ‘Ayn, 7:203.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 8:382.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 7:418.

In this entry, the *ḥadīth* provides the primary semantic grounding in that it ties two meanings of *s-b-ḥ* (to glorify and to pray) together; *subḥah* is first introduced as prayer beads without a corroborating citation (likely because the meaning was well-known) and then followed by the *ḥadīth* where a second meaning is presented: the glory/grandeur/light of God. The addition of this *differentia specificum* obviates reliance on circular definition (i.e., not “prayer beads→prayer” but “prayer beads→glorification→prayer”). In this respect, the *ḥadīth* serves as a semantic cypher for the following two verses and line of poetry, all three of which depict the lexeme in its Islamized form; *s-b-ḥ* does not signify prayer as a specific practice with specific associations (as with *ṣalāt*) but rather endows the idea of prayer with the power of glorification of God. The secondary<sup>84</sup> meaning, i.e., to swim, is inserted at the end almost as an afterthought. The figurative usage proffered by Khalīl (the swimming of the stars, that is) is familiar trope in pre-Islamic poetic imagery.<sup>85</sup> The main thrust of the entry is not to provide a comprehensive account of the meanings associated with *s-b-ḥ*, but rather to show what Islam had produced and at the center was a *ḥadīth*—granted, this *ḥadīth* quotes the angel Gabriel and not the Prophet; nevertheless, it represents the unique ability of *ḥadīth* to explicate the linguistic developments of Islam.

Furthermore, in the *K. al-‘Ayn*, *ḥadīth* is often accompanied by a narrative that supplies additional semantic value to the word’s entry, often in conjunction with the Qur’ān (i.e., *sabab al-nuzūl*) but not poetry. The narrative places the Prophet’s speech in contrast with the expectations of his audience, at various points Muslims, new converts, ‘*arab* pagans, and ‘*arab*

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<sup>84</sup> Secondary in Khalīl’s schemata; the semantic and etymological relationship between swimming and glorifying is difficult to establish and thus I, the author of this dissertation, offer no comment on the matter.

<sup>85</sup>See poetry quoted in the *Lisān*, Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān*, 2:473f.

Jews. In the following example, Khalīl explores the meaning of the Qur’ānic “*furqān*” and the related but extra-Qur’ānic “*fārūq*”:

*Furqān*: and book revealed by God that separates the true from the false, which God has made a “*furqān*,” i.e., a demonstrable proof over the polytheists, and a victory. The Battle of Furqān is Battle of Badr and Uḥud, where God separated the true from the false. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was named “*fārūq*” because he killed a hypocrite with whom he quarreled over a ruling of the Prophet, peace upon him. So, Gabriel, peace upon him, said: “God has named ‘Umar *Fārūq*” and the Prophet said: “Look at what ‘Umar has done, he has produced something that contents God, they found that he has killed a hypocrite.

والفُرْقَانُ: كل كتاب أنزل به فَرَّقَ اللهُ بين الحق والباطل ويجعل الله للمؤمنين فُرْقَاناً أي حجة ظاهرة على المشركين، وظفراً. ويوم الفُرْقَان يوم بدر وأحد، فَرَّقَ اللهُ بين الحق والباطل. وسمي عمر بن الخطاب فاروقاً، وذلك أنه قتل منافقاً اختصم إليه رغبة عن قضاء قضى له رسول الله- صلى الله عليه وعلى آله وسلم- فقال جبرئيل- عليه السلام- قد سمى الله عمر الفاروق، فقال رسول الله: انظروا ما فعل عمر، فقد صنع شيئاً، لله فيه رضى فوجدوه قد قتل منافقاً<sup>86</sup>

The meaning of *fārūq* is established by a semantic network that extends beyond the Prophet’s speech. First, Khalīl precedes the discussion of *fārūq* with an explication of the meaning of *furqān*, which, it appears, was so commonly understood to mean “that which separates the true from the false” that it did not require a corroborating citation. This semantic value is implicit in the following discussion on *fārūq*, where ‘Umar’s killing of a hypocrite (*munafiq*) is given as an example of separating the true from the false. It is worth noting too that the Prophet’s speech does not provide meaning through direct comment on the word *fārūq* but rather through an ethical evaluation of ‘Umar’s actions that is set parallel to the Qur’ān’s own ethical act of separating the true from the false. The inherent lexical value here is not linguistic but rather an ethical analogy: just as the Qur’ān separated the true from the false through its

<sup>86</sup> Khalīl, ‘*Ayn*, 5:148.

revelation, so too did ‘Umar separate the believer from the unbeliever when he killed the hypocrite.

In these examples, there is little effort to demonstrate the ‘*arabī* quality of *ḥadīth*. To be sure, Khalīl in the introduction to the *K. al-‘Ayn* states that his goal is to record the natural iterations of the words that make up the lexicon of ‘*Arabiyyah* (as opposed to the unnatural but analogous (*qiyāsī*) iterations of the *naḥḥārīyūn*), and these examples are no exception. However, the *K. al-‘Ayn* represents an early stage of Arabic lexicography, one before the mechanisms used to group certain speech within the umbrella of ‘*Arabiyyah* had been fully fleshed out. Additionally, there is no attempt to identify the provenance of any *ḥadīth*, which is to be expected; however, the presentation of *ḥadīth* give some clues to their status among scholars outside the field of transmission (whose works, even in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, are drastically more preoccupied with provenance). There is simply no consistency in how it is presented: at times speech is directly ascribed to the Prophet (e.g., “‘*an al-nabī...annahū qāla...*”); other times it is paraphrased (*jā’ a ‘an al-nabī...annahū nahā...*); most often, a short phrase, concept, or religious ruling is simply attributed to *ḥadīth* (e.g., “*jā’ a fī l-ḥadīth,*” “*fī l-ḥadīth*”). *Ḥadīth* for Khalīl is not a body of linguistically well-defined material but rather an amorphous body of statements, rulings, and customs with linguistically useful components.

### 3.3.2. *Ḥadīth* in Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*

The presence of *ḥadīth*, and the extent of this presence, has been a topic of some debate over the past half century. While some have argued that there are little or no *ḥadīth* in the *Kitāb*, others have argued that there is in fact a great quantity.<sup>87</sup> The truth is that there are a little more

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<sup>87</sup> See Chapter I for discussion of the literature.

than a dozen *ḥadīth* quoted in the *Kitāb*, and none of them are attributed to the Prophet or identified as *ḥadīth* in any way. They are rather presented as sayings variously attributed to the ‘*arab*, anonymous speakers, or as a common phrase that the readers themselves may utter. As for the ‘*Arab*, consider the following quotations:

Yūnus stated that some of the ‘*arab* say: seek protection in God

وزعم يونس أن من العرب من يقول: عائذُ بالله من شر فلان<sup>88</sup>

One of the ‘*Arab* said: Oh God, forgive me

بعض العرب يقول: يا رب اغفر لي<sup>89</sup>

One of the ‘*arab* stated: There is no might, no power except through God

قال بعض العرب: لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله<sup>90</sup>

There most striking aspect of these quotations is that they are all common pious phrases. Ostensibly, they originate from *ḥadīth* in that it was the Prophet who introduced them to his followers. They are counted among the *ḥadīth* Sībawayhi cites by Fajjāl,<sup>91</sup> but not Ḥadīthī,<sup>92</sup> or Harūn.<sup>93</sup> However, it is not clear from context if they are interpreted as part of the *ḥadīth* corpus or rather as a common, pious idiomatic phrase that circulated among the ‘*arab*. The first example is familiar to whomever has recited “*a ‘ūdhu bi-llāhi min al-shayṭān al-rajīm*” before the Qur’ān; however, Sībawayhi discusses two grammatical variations (‘*ā’idhan* vs. ‘*ā’idhun*) which are found alternately in Mālik’s *Muwaṭṭa’* and Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad*. The second example echoes

<sup>88</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 1:347.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 2:209.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 2:292.

<sup>91</sup> Fajjāl, *Irtikāz*, 60–66.

<sup>92</sup> Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif*, 69.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Abd al-Sallām Harūn’s index of the *Kitāb*, 5:29.

the phrase found in prayer (*rabbi -ghfur lī*); however, the form Sībawayhi attributes to the ‘*arab*’ contains the vocative particle and differs grammatically from that found in Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad*<sup>94</sup> and Nisā’ī’s *Sunan*.<sup>95</sup> The third example is one of the most common statements of faith in Islam and one with perhaps the most grammatical interpretations; the form quoted by Sībawayhi is widely attested.<sup>96</sup> In all three cases, these *ḥadīth* are cited to resolve or explicate a grammatical issue; the first two of the three offer permissible alternatives to the more widely-accepted grammatical phrasing (the last, as anyone who has been tasked with analyzing its *i’rāb* knows, is a maze of grammatical possibilities, which Sībawayhi partially explores). The phrases themselves are presented as inherently indicative of proper ‘*Arabiyyah*’ but rather serve as a general scaffolding upon which grammatical readings may be tested.

The fuller, more readily identifiable *ḥadīth* are either attributed to a hypothetical speaker (e.g., *ka-qawlihum*, *mithla dhālika qawluhum*, *wa-qālū*, *kamā qāla*) or presented as an example of something the reader would say (e.g., *taqūlu*, *qawluka*). Consider the following examples:

And likewise: we leave he who wakes you

ومثل ذلك: ونخلع ونترك من يفجرك<sup>97</sup>

As one said: God forbids you from “he said, someone said”

كما قال: إن الله ينهك عن قيل وقال<sup>98</sup>

As for their statement: Every child is born according to a natural disposition [i.e., Muslim]; it is his parents who make him a Jew or Christian

أما قولهم: كل مولود يولد على الفطرة حتى يكون أبواه هما اللذان يهودانه وينصرانه<sup>99</sup>

<sup>94</sup> *Yā rabbi ghfur lī dhanabī*; the *bā*’ takes the *kasrah* as a shortened form of the possessive first person attached pronoun *yā*’. Cited in Fajjāl, *Irtikāz*, 322.

<sup>95</sup> Same difference as in Aḥmad’s *Musnad*. Cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> For full *takhrīj*, see *Ibid.*, 330.

<sup>97</sup> Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb.*, 1:74.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:268.

As for: [With] praise and sanctification, Lord of  
the angles and the soul

وأما: سبوحا قدوسا رب الملائكة والروح<sup>100</sup>

The first example is cited after a verse from the Qur'ān and just before a line of poetry by Qays ibn al-Khaṭīm (d. 620 B.C.E.) to establish when two verbs can take one direct object. The next example demonstrates when non-nouns can be fixed and declined like nouns (and is followed by a line of poetry by Ibn Muqbal). The third example sets off a lengthy discussion on the grammaticality of *ḍamīr al-faṣl*; it is noteworthy that the word in the *ḥadīth* upon which Sībawayhi's discussion hinges is not found in any other transmission—that is, its form is unique to Sībawayhi and those directly quoting him. The last example appears in the chapter on the elision of verbs; while Sībawayhi does not discuss variant interpretations of its grammaticality but does delve into a rather detailed account of the pragmatics (in the linguistic sense) that underlie the verb's elision. In each example, the *ḥadīth* is accepted as correct 'Arabiyyah on par with poetry and the Qur'ān. Khalīl identifies the third example as a *ḥadīth* in the *K. al-'Ayn*, which makes Sībawayhi's treatment worth review. Sībawayhi was Khalīl's student, after all, and this *ḥadīth* was widely circulated.<sup>101</sup> Considering his treatment of this *ḥadīth* in its larger context:

In this matter, many of the 'arab give "huwa" and its relatives the status of the subject noun (*ism muḥtadā*) and that which follows is built upon it. As if you said: "I think Zayd, his father is better than him" and "I found 'Umar, his father is better than him." An [example] of that which has reached us is that Ru'bah [ibn ?] would say: "I think Zayd, he is better than you." 'Isā told us that man people read the verse as: *wa-mā ḡalamnāhum wa-lākin kānū hum al-ḡālimūn* (we did not do them wrong; it was rather them who were the wrongdoers). The poet Qays ibn Dhurayḡ (d.

وقد جعل ناس كثير من العرب هو وأخواتها في هذا الباب  
بمنزلة اسم مبتدأ وما بعده ميني عليه، فكأنك تقول: أظن زيدا  
أبوه خير منه، ووجدت عمرا أخوه خير منه. فمن ذلك أنه  
بلغنا أن روبة كان يقول: أظن زيدا هو خير منك. وحدثنا  
عيسى أن ناسا كثيرا يقرؤونها: " وما ظلمناهم ولكن كانوا

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 2:393.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 1:327.

<sup>101</sup> For a partial but illuminating *takhrīj*, see Fajjāl, *Irtikāz*, 356–57.

61/280) said:

You cry over Lubnā when it was you who left her...you had more power over her while you were on the hill

Abū 'Amr used to say: If he [exists] then he is the rational being

As for their saying: "Every child is born in a natural state [i.e., a Muslim], it is his parents who turn him into a Jew or a Christian;" are three approaches to it, two of which [concern] the nominative and one the accusative.

One of the two nominative approaches is that "child" is concealed in "is," "parents" are the subject [of the nominal sentence that follows "is"] and what follows is built upon that. As if one were saying: "So that the child, it is his parents who turn him into a Jew or a Christian" ...

[The "second approach" (*al-wijh al-thānī*), according to Sībawayhi, is that *humā* functions as "*faṣl*" (lit. "division"), and it is the subject of its own sentence, which itself is the predicate of the nominal sentence following "*kāna*" whose subject is "*abawāhu*."]

The *ḥadīth* is presented differently from the *qirā'ah* and the poetry; the latter two are cited in support of Sībawayhi's description of a rule but the *ḥadīth* is presented as a problem with multiple solutions (only one of which is supported by poetry). It is, first, possible that he regarded it as the Prophet's speech but did not feel the need to ascribe it; this is supported by its inclusion in the *K. al-'Ayn*. It is, second, possible that Sībawayhi was familiar with its ascription to the Prophet but chose a less well-known wording, which led to him to drop the ascription; this is somewhat supported by the fact that the passages key word (*humā*) is not found in other variations of the *ḥadīth*. It is also possible he did not know this was a *ḥadīth* and rather regarded either as a popular phrase (which ought to be explained according to the laws of 'Arabiyyah) or even a common saying of the 'arab (though this is unlikely, given that Sībawayhi freely quotes the speech of the 'arab throughout the *Kitāb*). While I am inclined to the first position, there is no definitive proof for any of these options. However, what can be said is that in each position

:هم الظالمون. "وقال الشاعر، قيس بن ذريح

تبكي على لبنى وأنت تركتها ... وكنت عليها بالملا أنت أقدر

وكان أبو عمرو يقول: إن كان لهو العاقل

وأما قولهم: " كل مولود يولد على الفطرة، حتى يكون أبواه

هما اللذان يهودانه وينصرانه "، ففيه ثلاثة أوجه: فالرفع

وجهان والنصب وجه واحد

فأحد وجهي الرفع أن يكون المولود مضمرا في يكون،

والأبوان مبتدآن، وما بعدهما مبني عليهما، كأنه قال: حتى

يكون المولود أبواه اللذان يهودانه وينصرانه

the actual content of the *ḥadīth* is identified with the speech of the ‘*arab*, so much so that Sībawayhi could produce two grammatical interpretations for its uncommon syntax.

These quotations show Sībawayhi equating *ḥadīth* with the speech of the ‘*arab*. Whether or not he considered them to be *ḥadīth* is beside the point: they are identified in other contemporary or near-contemporary sources as *ḥadīth* and their presence in the *Kitāb* attests to the existence of *ḥadīth* that met the standards of ‘*Arabiyyah*. Additionally, it is worth noting that unattributed *ḥadīth* is not held up as a negative example, i.e., of ungrammatical ‘*Arabiyyah*; Sībawayhi’s attitude, based on the evidence of the *Kitāb*, can only be described as neutral.

### 3.3.3. Ḥadīth in Farrā’ ’s *Ma ‘ānī l-Qur’ān*: The Turning Point

Not only does Farrā’ identify *ḥadīth* as *ḥadīth* in the *Ma ‘ānī l-Qur’ān*, but he cites them often and for a variety of topics. The *Ma ‘ānī l-Qur’ān* is a unique work of exegesis, one that at times married philology with the established *tafsīr* tradition and at times put them at odds. It is simultaneously characterized by Farrā’ ’s unique scholarly personality and molded by external dogmatic pressure of the *sunnah* and theology. As such, it encapsulates the context in which *ḥadīth* entered the realm of philology; how it did so is a dissertation topic unto itself. However, in the limited space allotted by this current project, we shall consider how Farrā’ treated *ḥadīth* as an attestable representation of ‘*Arabiyyah*.

Farrā’ ’s *Ma ‘ānī* is greatly concerned with the *qirā’āt* of the Qur’ān, and thus Arabic phonetics in general. According to Farrā’ , ‘*Arabiyyah* possessed unique phonetic habits and saw only certain forms of sound change. Thus, the application of phonetic analysis to the Prophet’s speech signals the omni-present ideology: that the Prophet spoke in a natural, ‘*arabī* manner and that it’s possible to find examples of authentic ‘*arabī* phonetics in the *ḥadīth* corpus. We encounter this early in the *Ma ‘ānī*, in his treatment of the *Fātiḥah*. It begins with a discussion of

unattested (i.e., not even as a *qirā'ah shādhah*) dialectal pronunciations of words and phrases from the Qur'ān's opening Sūrah. Unlike his predecessors and contemporaries, Farrā' cites the Prophet on phonetics with some frequency. Furthermore, he not only shows interest in the phonetics in the Prophet's speech itself but acknowledging the role of transmission in shaping the phonetic data. Consider the example from *Fātiḥah* attesting not to a reading specifically but to a common sound change in 'Arabiyyah (i.e., vowel assimilation). The passage is worth quoting in its entirety:

And similarly, from what they say of it which is of two types if it is followed by a *yā' sākinah* or *kasrah*, his saying: "It is in *Umm al-Kitāb* (lit., "Mother of the Book," the *Fātiḥah*)<sup>102</sup> and "So that He sent a messenger among its *Umm*."<sup>103</sup> The *alif* in "*umm*" can be pronounced with a *u* or a *i* for the two letters together in the place of the *yā'*. The *kasrah*, like the saying of the Sublime, "To his *imm* the sixth." And the saying of what has been transmitted from the Prophet, peace upon him: "*Ūṣī mra'an bi-immihi*." The one who pronounces it with a "u" says that "u" is the original [pronunciation] of *umm* and a *ummahāt*. The one who pronounces it with an "i" argues: this is happens a lot in speech; it is hard to pronounce a "u" when it is preceded by a *yā'* or *kasrah*. It is permissible to pronounce the *alif* with a *kasrah* if it is followed by a *kasrah* or *yā'* if what is before it is pronounced with a *fathah*. You may say: a person is by his mother (*'inda ummihi*), but you cannot say "*'inda immihi*" and likewise if what is before it is pronounced with a *ḍammah* then it cannot be pronounced with a *kasrah*. So, you'd say "I followed his mother "*'ummahu*" but not with a *kasrah*.

ومثله مما قالوا فيه بالوجهين إذا وليته ياء ساكنة أو كسرة،  
قوله: «وإنه في أم الكتاب» و«حتى يبعث في أمها رسولا»  
يجوز رفع الألف من «أم» و«أمها» وكسرها في الحرفين  
جميعا لمكان الياء. والكسرة مثل قوله تبارك وتعالى: «فلأمه  
السدس»، وقول من روى عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم:  
(أوصى امرأ بأمه). فمن رفع قال: الرفع هو الأصل في الأم  
والأمهات. ومن كسر قال: هي كثيرة المجرى في الكلام  
فاستنقل ضمة قبلها ياء ساكنة أو كسرة. وإنما يجوز كسر  
ألف «أم» إذا وليها كسرة أو ياء فإذا انفتح ما قبلها فقلت:  
فلان عند أمه، لم يجوز أن تقول: عند إمه، وكذلك إذا كان ما  
قبلها مضموما لم يجوز كسرها فتقول: أتبعته أمه، ولا يجوز  
الكسر.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Q Zakhrāf: 4

<sup>103</sup> Q Qaṣaṣ: 59

<sup>104</sup> Farrā', *Ma'ānī*, 1:5-6

The above quotation is taken from Farrā’'s commentary on the *Fātiḥah*, specifically on the final verse “*ṣirāṭa allādhīna an ‘amta ‘alayhim ḡhayri maghḏūbi ‘alayhim wa-lā l-dāllīn*. In the following section (where we encounter the quotation above), he describes two “*madhhabs*” (i.e., schools [of thought], approaches) for ‘*alayhum* and ‘*alayhim* respectively (from *Fātiḥah*: 7, “*ḡhayri al-maghḏūbi ‘alayhim maghḏūbi*,” “those with whom none are angry”). The first is justified through *qiyās* (it is *hum* when nominative or accusative, and thus should be when genitive); but the second is not presented as simple *samā’*, which is to say that it was not justified by attribution to the ‘*arab* along. Rather, for Farrā’ the use of “*him*” (the more prevalent, non-*qiyāsī* form) is justified because it follows a natural rule of phonology (assimilation of the *kasrah* with the *yā’*-based diptote).<sup>105</sup>

Farrā’'s position here is unique but not entirely unremarkable. His predecessors and contemporaries too discussed the circumstances of assimilation with the *kasrah*, Sībawayhi allows for partial assimilation of the *ḍammah* with the *kasrah* in this setting (as opposed to the total assimilation in the example above) —he states this was Khalīl’s position as well.<sup>106</sup> Akhfash discusses internal assimilation of the *kasrah* (*mutnin* → *mitnin*) in his discussion of the etymology of the word “*ism*” (name, word) the *Fātiḥah* (like Farrā’), but nothing about the assimilation with initial *hamzah*.<sup>107</sup> Whatever the exact positions of these three, their attitude towards phonetics is that it be deduced from naturally produced ‘*arabiyyah*. The *shawāhid* cited by each on this topic makes this clear: Sībawayhi cites a standard selection of poetry (‘Ajjāj, A’shā, Ḥassān ibn Thābit etc.), noting how various pronunciations of the *hamzah* affect the

<sup>105</sup> Farrā’, *Ma ‘ānī*, 1:6-7; see also Akhfash, *Ma ‘ānī*, 1:26-7.

<sup>106</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 3:542.

<sup>107</sup> Akhfash, *Ma ‘ānī*, 1:4.

meter.<sup>108</sup> He also references a verse (Niml: 25); more specifically, he references ‘Īsā ibn ‘Umar’s statement on “lightening” (*takhfif*) the *alif*, which while not directly referred to as a *qirā’ah* certainly addresses a topic of interest to the readers. Akhfash relies primarily on Qur’ānic data to explain the phonetic behavior of the *hamzah*, which is to be expected from a work primarily on the Qur’ān. Akhfash and Sībawayhi present a fixed phonetic system regarding the *alif*, which makes Farrā’ ’s citation of the Prophet stand out. First of all, Farrā’ appears less interested in producing a closed system of phonetics than with exploring the roots of variation. There is no indication in this passage that Farrā’ prefers one reading over another (though general trends in preference have been observed in the *Ma ‘ānī*).<sup>109</sup> To be sure, the readings associated with this phonetic phenomenon are less common, though not considered *shādhah* by later scholars. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, it is the reading of Farrā’ ’s teacher Kisā’ī that uses the *kasrah* with the initial *hamzah* as is the other Kufan reader Ḥamzah (d. 156/772).<sup>110</sup> The *ḥadīth* is given equal status/agency with the Qur’ān readings for two likely reasons: both are representations of Qur’ānic ‘Arabiyyah and both are subject to the filter of transmission. As for the Qur’ān, this is understood by reference to the Kisā’ī/Ḥamzah variant, an acknowledgement that this is one possible rendition of the original delivery of the verse.

Likewise, with the *ḥadīth* we are confronted by the phrase *man rawā* (one who transmits), by which Farrā’ indicates this speech is not the sole product of the Prophet but is at a minimum influenced by transmission—simply, Farrā’ puts the phrase in the mouth of the transmitter rather than the Prophet (*qawl man rawā ‘an al-nabī*; the saying of one who relates

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<sup>108</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 3:550.

<sup>109</sup> Anṣārī, *Abū Zakarīyā al-Farrā’*, 297.

<sup>110</sup> Nasser, *Second Canonization*, 662, 752.

from the Prophet). This is a fairly common<sup>111</sup> but not universal way to introduce the Prophet's speech—this occurs when material of linguistic is presented; *ḥadīth* that serves other purposes (e.g., *sabab al-nuzūl*, *sunnah*) is not accompanied by acknowledgement of transmission. There remains the question whether this acknowledgement of the effect of transmission of the philology of *ḥadīth* demonstrates a latent or a nascent critical attitude towards *ḥadīth*. To some extent, it is both: it is latent in that there may be some acknowledgement of variation in *ḥadīth* (as evinced by the report of Abū 'Amr discussing *yatakhawwal* vs. *yatakhawwan*) and nascent in that concerns about the fidelity of transmission portend need for or the coming (or just starting to develop) critical apparatus of *jarḥ wa-ta'dīl*. Whatever the case, the absence of concrete criticism must be noted as evidence against the early existence of a sophisticated critical apparatus but not against an awareness of a need for one.

The Prophet's speech plays an even greater role in determining the bounds of Arabic morphology. The following passage is rather remarkable in that it addresses a permissible but very uncommon morphological phenomenon in Arabic: the nominalization of verbs. This is morphologically (but not exegetically) more significant than the previous quotation in that the analysis of morphological structure does not serve a lexical (i.e., exegetical) purpose but rather represents the product of the natural speech of the 'arab:

If you wish the origin of *al-ān* (now) to be, as you say, "The time has come (*āna*) for you to act," you insert [in front of] it the *alif* and *lām*, then leave it in its verbal form in the accusative, which comes from the verb [of the sentence]. This is a good feature, like they say "The Prophet, peace upon him, forbade "He said this, this was said (*qīla wa-qāla*)" and too many questions. Those two (*qīla wa-qāla*) become like nouns and are

وإن شئت جعلت (الآن) أصلها من قولك: أن لك أن تفعل،  
أدخلت عليها الألف واللام، ثم تركتها على مذهب فعل فأتاها  
النصب من نصب فعل. وهو وجه جيد كما قالوا: نهى رسول  
الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن قيل وقال وكثرة السؤال، فكانتا

<sup>111</sup> E.g., Farrā', *Ma'ānī*, 2:20 (ذكر الأعمش في حديث عن 3:183 (... جاء عن النبي أنه قال...); 2:400 (ذكر عن النبي صلعم أنه قرأ بها); وهو وجه جيد كما قالوا: نهى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن قيل وقال وكثرة السؤال، فكانتا... النبي).

thus in the accusative. If you put them in the genitive as if we extracted them from the intention of the verb it would be correct. I've heard the 'Arab say “*Min shabba ilā dabb*” with a *fathah*, and this means “from when he was little until he started crawling,” so [*shabb*] is a verb.

كالاسمين فهما منصوبتان. ولو خفضتا على أنهما أخرجنا  
من نية الفعل كان صوابا سمعت العرب تقول: من شب إلى  
دب بالفتح، ومن شب إلى دب يقول: مذ كان صغيرا إلى أن

دب، وهو فعل.<sup>112</sup>

First, though “*qīla wa-qāla*” is not introduced as the direct speech of the Prophet here (it is rather something said about the Prophet’s speech), other scholars have recorded *ḥadīths* that contain this phrase.<sup>113</sup> Its earliest attestation (in Mālik’s *Muwattaʿa*)<sup>114</sup> predates Farrā’s death by several decades. It is *mutawātir* and it is entirely conceivable, perhaps even likely, that it was widely accepted as the Prophet’s speech during Farrā’s lifetime. This is not so much a comment on a specific morphology; that is, the *ḥadīth* cited does not specifically address the possibility of using the verb *āna* (the time approaches) as a noun. Rather, two forms of a different verb (*qīla*, it was said, and *qāla*, he said) are adduced from the *ḥadīth* to introduce a global morphological concept: the nominalization of verbs without morphological transformation. Farrā does not endorse this as a productive aspect of the ‘*Arabiyyah*—one cannot nominalize any verb. Rather, this appears to inadvertently fall into Farrā’s “*kathīr al-majrā fī l-kalām*” category, which is to say this only occurs as a product of the frequency of speech.<sup>115</sup> What is interesting here is that *qīla wa-qāla* is not specifically attributed to the ‘*arab*, which is to say its frequency is not the product of idiomatic *a rābī* usage. There are two factors, not necessarily appreciated by Farrā, underlying its inclusion: first, the belief that the Prophet was personally inventive in his use of

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 1:468.

<sup>113</sup> E.g., Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Zuhayr ibn Nāṣir al-Nāṣir (Beirut: Dār Ṭawq al-Najāt, 1422), 2:124 (#1477); Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj and Muḥammad Fu‘ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, N.D.), 3:1341 (#593). “إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَرِهَ لَكُمْ ثَلَاثًا: قِيلَ وَقَالَ، وَإِضَاعَةَ الْمَالِ، وَكَثْرَةَ السُّؤَالِ.”

<sup>114</sup> Mālik ibn Anas, *Muwattaʿa*, 1:260.

<sup>115</sup> Anṣārī, *Abū Zakarīyā al-Farrā*, 472f.

‘*Arabiyyah*, and this inventiveness was accepted as producing and normalizing new idiomatic phrases. In such a case, *qāla wa-qāla* would not be cited due to the frequency of usage by the ‘*arab* at the time of the Prophet. There are no examples from pre-Islamic poetry or prose that contain the phrase (though it is used by a *mukhaḍram*, see next paragraph)—one would wonder if there were such examples that could be sourced from the *a ‘rāb*. Rather, the frequency came later and is inherent in the *ḥadīth* itself; that is, the contents of the *ḥadīth* were so widely circulated by Farrā’ ’s time that it met the qualifications for *kathīr al-majrā fī l-kalām*. This is further supported by Sībawayhi’s (unattributed, of course) quotation of this *ḥadīth*.

This is one of the few *ḥadīth* Sībawayhi cites, which he does for the same reason as Farrā’ (nominalization of non-nouns).<sup>116</sup> It is not presented as a *ḥadīth* but is simply preceded by *qāla* without attribution. Unlike Farrā’, Sībawayhi further supports this phenomenon by quoting the *mukhaḍram* poet Tamīm ibn Muqbil (d. 36-37?): “Fate arrived the morning after it had sent to them something other than your repeated saying “*qālin wa-qāli*.” The advantage to using poetry here is that the meter forces the genitive in *qāla—qālin*, attesting that verbs that are nominalized can be *munṣarif* and *ghayr munṣarif*. However, the line of poetry is cited in support of the (unidentified as such) *ḥadīth*, giving the impression that Sībawayhi felt his audience would be more familiar with this example Prophet’s speech (if he saw it as such) than the line of poetry by Ibn Muqbal; note too that Ibn Muqbil, as a *mukhaḍram* poet who live after the death of the Prophet, could have been alluding to this *ḥadīth* as well. What all of this tells us is that the phrase had a markedly Islamic connotation—it is, after all, preceded by either *inna llāha yanḥāka ‘an* (“God forbids you from...”), as is the case with Sībawayhi, or *nahā [al-nabī] ‘an* (“the Prophet prohibited...”), such as that found in Mālik, Bukhārī, and Muslim. So, with Farrā’ and (to a

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<sup>116</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 3:628.

much lesser extent, if at all) Sībawayhi we find the Prophet's speech given agency in determining the morphological possibilities of 'Arabiyyah. However, beyond this there is the expectation that the audience is familiar with this *ḥadīth* (as evinced by the way each presented the *ḥadīth*) and that it would have appeared to be an aberration (but in fact was not). Simply put, this shows that elements of the *ḥadīth* corpus as it existed in the latter half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century was considered morphologically problematic or confusing and, like the Qur'ān, required philological investigation; of course, the pull to do so was much stronger with the Qur'ān because, as then as now as we can assume, there were more people reciting the Qur'ān than *ḥadīth*. However, the issue was significant enough to find its way into philological discussions, even if it was not addressed head-on.

While we have regarded the above as a morphological issue, Khadījah Ḥadīthī counts this citation as one of Farrā's syntax citations. She is correct, which is not to say we are incorrect in counting this as a morphological citation. One of the main issues in nominalizing verbs is whether they can be declined or not, which is a grammatical issue; this is rather an indication of the overlap between issues of morphology and grammar in the Arabic linguistic tradition. This is an important point, for when morphological citations of *ḥadīth* are considered, the paucity of *ḥadīth* in early works of Arabic grammar discussed in Part I of this dissertation appear less striking—though, there are admittedly not enough morphological citations to revise our position that *ḥadīth* citation specifically in 2<sup>nd</sup> century Arabic grammar was uncommon. There are other examples from the *Ma'ānī* where the line between morphology and grammar is blurred. Let us, then, move on to the role of *ḥadīth* for attesting grammatical phenomenon.

Ḥadīthī counts one examples of *ḥadīth* citations for the purpose of phonology, five for morphology, and seven for syntax (two of which address the same verse and the same issue).<sup>117</sup> We have found more than that, but not enough to claim *ḥadīth* played a significant role in defining the Arabic language before Farrā' or in the *Ma'ānī*. Certainly, the examples given so far demonstrate that *ḥadīth* was an acceptable representation of 'Arabiyyah, but its numbers show, without doubt, that it was not the main source for establishing the 'Arabiyyah's grammar. But that's okay, because what was going on at the time was not the rise of *ḥadīth* to an equal status with poetry of the Qur'ān—frankly, that never happened. Rather, the primary consequence of the inclusion of *ḥadīth* in philological settings, as we have seen, was to establish the Prophet's speech as representing 'Arabiyyah. That is, it was defined in a manner that supported the classical depiction of the Qur'ānic event as linguistic defined by 'Arabiyyah. The production of proper syntax is the ultimate representation of natural speech, the speech of an individual whose life is centered around a specific cultural and linguistic setting. So, while the point made below is not materially different than that made in the previous sections of phonology and morphology, the fact that Farrā' perceived grammatical value in the Prophet's speech (and, as we will show, more value than previous scholars have assumed) is significant: *ḥadīth* is justified as 'Arabiyyah not because it is sourced from the *a'rāb* but rather because of its increasing importance in Islamic scholarship and the fact that the corpus itself began to depict the Prophet as master of the acceptable 'Arabiyyah dialects. Let us consider a few examples of grammatical citations to show this is the case. First, let us begin with a straightforward example:

And His saying: They only take revenge which God enriches them. This is a rebuke to them because the Prophet, peace upon him, came to Medina when its people were in need, then they

وقوله (وما نقموا إلا أن أغناهم الله) هذا تعبير لهم لأن رسول

<sup>117</sup> Ḥadīthī, *Mawqif*, 78-86. Phonology and morphology are not distinguished, but categorized as *ṣarf*

were enriched with booty and he said: Do not take revenge except [for] enrichment. So, the “*an*” here is in the place of the accusative.

الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قدم على أهل المدينة وهم محتاجون،  
فأثروا من الغنائم، فقال: وما تقموا إلا الغنى فرأى في

موضع نصب.<sup>118</sup>

The point here is straightforward: Farrā’ sees the *ḥadīth* as semantically equivalent to the Qur’ānic verse, the only difference being the use of the gerund as opposed to the particle + imperfect accusative. This is a straightforward example of the Prophet’s syntax being representative as natural Arabic speech. To be sure, the grammatical rule expounded upon here is not complicated in the least. And, to be sure, the reason why this citation was chosen has more to do with demonstrating the semantic equivalency with the Qur’ānic verse (*illā an aghnāhum=illā l-ghinā*) than with any sense that the ‘*Arabiyyah*’ demonstrated here is particularly remarkable. Nevertheless, the implication is clear and significant: the Prophet spoke with the proper syntax of ‘*Arabiyyah*. The constituent elements were there, and little was needed to bring them together. Furthermore, this instance shows that exegetical clarity has an impact on choice of citation; there are examples from the Qur’ān, prose, or poetry, but here there is a *sabab* (occasion of revelation, i.e., Muḥammad’s followers in Medina being in need of booty) that underlies this verse and gives the *ḥadīth* an added exegetical power on top of its grammatical content.

Farrā’ ’s treatment of the *qirā’āt* has received substantial attention;<sup>119</sup> they are a central topic of the *Ma’ānī* and a very important data point for the scholar. Unsurprisingly, because of the prevalence of both in the *Ma’ānī*, the Prophet’s speech and the *qirā’āt* intersect throughout.

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<sup>118</sup> Farrā’, *Ma’ānī*, 1:446.

<sup>119</sup> Becks series of articles are a must: Edmund Beck, “Die b. Mas’ūdvarianten Bei al-Farrā’ I,” *Orientalia N.S.* 25, no. 4 (1956): 353–83; Edmund Beck, “Die b. Mas’ūdvarianten Bei al-Farrā’ II,” *Orientalia N.S.* 28, no. 2 (1959): 186–205; Edmund Beck, “Die b. Mas’ūdvarianten Bei al-Farrā’ III,” *Orientalia N.S.* 28, no. 3 (1959): 230–56; Edmund Beck, “Die Zuverlässigkeit Der Überlieferung von Ausser ‘uṭmanischen Varianten Bei Al-Farra’,” *Orientalia N.S.* 23, no. 4 (1954): 412–35; Edmund Beck, “‘Arabiyya, Sunna Und ‘Ammā in Der Koranlesung Des Zweiten Jahrhunderts,” *Orientalia N.S.* 15 (n.d.): 180–224.

Farrā'’s treatment of these readings tells us a lot about attitudes towards the epistemological value of *ḥadīth*, *isnāds*, and how scholars at the time weighed pieces of evidence against one another.

It should be stated outright that the value of readings attributed to the Prophet was phonological, morphological, and grammatical in nature. While other readers such as Ibn ‘Abbās, Ḥamzah, ‘Āṣim etc. receive far more mentions than the Prophet, the Prophet’s readings are as treated as authoritative as the eponymous readings. Furthermore, Farrā’ shows more concern about the transmission of the Prophet’s readings than he does about the transmission of any of the eponymous readers. Mind you, Farrā’ was contemporaneous with several of the eponymous readers, and the readings of those whom he did not know personally were well known by the time he composed the *Ma‘ānī*. Nevertheless, Farrā’ does not show the concern for the *isnād* that characterized later criticism of the *qirā’āt*. This is expected, as Nasser has shown the arrival of transmitter criticism to be late, 4<sup>th</sup> century and onwards.<sup>120</sup> But Farrā’’s work shows that the idea of transmitter criticism had begun to penetrate philological scholarship at the turn of the century, albeit in a limited application to the Prophet’s readings. Overall, the Prophet’s position vis-à-vis the *qirā’āt* in Farrā’’s *Ma‘ānī* is illustrative of the emerging need for transmission criticism in alignment with the linguistic-exegetical value/agency inherent in the *qirā’āt*. That is, it is representative of the stage in the emergence of the consciousness of canonization of Farrā’’s time: a central, if amorphous, body of liturgically sanctioned Qur’ānic material surrounded by a supportive, if plastic, body of linguistically and exegetically interpretive material legitimated by either attachment to an expert of ‘*Arabiyyah*’ (as Shah

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<sup>120</sup> Nasser, *Second Canonization*, 100ff.

demonstrated the early *qurrā'* to be)<sup>121</sup> or somewhat authenticated by the emerging authority of the *isnād*.

There are numerous examples of the Prophet's readings being cited to explain linguistic phenomenon. At times a prophetic *qirā'ah* is used to support the readings of other readers; in such cases the prophetic reading is introduced with a simple attribution such as “*dhukira 'an an-nabī ṣallā llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallim annahu qara 'a bihā* (it has been recalled of the Prophet, peace upon him, that he read it [as such]).<sup>122</sup> Sometimes the Prophet's *qirā'ah* reflects standard usage (*qirā'at al- 'āmmah*).<sup>123</sup> And then there are times where the Prophet's reading stands alone (i.e., is an *aḥād*).<sup>124</sup> This is to be expected: as we have seen, the Prophet is depicted by the *ḥadīth* corpus and the *sīrah* tradition as sanctioning a dialectally diverse to the Qur'ān. More often than not, however, the Prophet is cited to justify the existence, if not the liturgical use, of variant readings. This is significant for two reasons: first, it shows that scholars believed the Prophet gave permission for the creation of linguistically diverse Qur'ānic corpus within the bounds of 'Arabiyyah, and second, that these variants are of exegetical value, linguistically and otherwise, for the text of the Qur'ān.

Let us consider two examples of the Prophet's readings. First is the sound change *mudhdhakir* → *muddakir* in the Qur'ān<sup>125</sup> and second the pronunciation of the *al-ḥurūf al-*

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<sup>121</sup> Mustafā Shah, “Exploring the Genesis of Early Arabic Linguistic Thought: Qur'anic Readers and Grammarians of the Baṣran Tradition (Part II),” *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 5, no. 2 (2003): 1–47; Mustafā Shah, “Exploring the Genesis of Early Arabic Linguistic Thought: Qur'anic Readers and Grammarians of the Kūfan Tradition (Part I),” *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2003): 47–78.

<sup>122</sup> Farrā', *Ma 'ānī*, 2:20; see also 2:174 (هكذا أقرأني رسول الله).

<sup>123</sup> E.g., *Ibid.*, 1:310.

<sup>124</sup> E.g., *Ibid.*, 1:65.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:107.

*mutaqatta‘ah* as “‘tā’-hā’.”<sup>126</sup> In both instances the Prophet’s speech is presented as distinctly Arabic. As for the former, the reading that uses the *dāl* instead of the *dhāl* is more common, though the ‘Uthmānic script accommodates both. However, Farrā’ presents the *dāl* as the primary reading but allows that the Asad tribe read it with a *dhāl*. As for *tā’ hā’*, Farrā’ demonstrates its ‘*arab*-ness through juxtaposition. In his explication, he first mentions that they are letters of the Arabic alphabet but then provides a non-linguistic interpretation Farrā’ attributes to *tafsīr* that interprets it as “*yā rajul*” (“oh man”! i.e., “hey you”). This could be in reference to the position found in Muqātil’s *Tafsīr*. However, Muqātil asserts that *ṭaha* is Syriac for *yā rajul*.<sup>127</sup> Farrā’ too says it could mean “*yā rajul*,” but does not describe it as a Syriac phrase. Indeed, it is entirely possible that Farrā’ was aware of Muqātil’s position. Several references to the *mufasssīrūn* in the *Ma‘ānī* correspond to Muqātil’s positions.<sup>128</sup> If Farrā’ was responding to Muqātil’s interpretation, the alternative pronunciation draws its legitimacy from the Prophet’s ‘*Arabiyyah* to refute the possibility that it was a Syriac word. In general, Farrā’ does not discuss the foreign origin on certain words of the Qur’ān; rather, when they are commented upon, he tends to offer a quick gloss with a more familiar Arabic work (e.g., *qartās* → *ṣahīfah*;<sup>129</sup> *istabraq* → *ma ghalaza min al-dībāj*;<sup>130</sup> *zanjabīl* → ‘*ayn*).<sup>131</sup> Farrā’ does not go as far as Abū ‘Ubaydah in claiming that there are no foreign words in the Qur’ān. However, he does

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 2:174.

<sup>127</sup> Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shaḥḥatah (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1423), 3:20.

<sup>128</sup> E.g., Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī*, 1:218; Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, 4:318. And Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī*, 2:195; Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, 3:46.

<sup>129</sup> Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī*, 1:343.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 3:118.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 3:217.

not show any interest in accounting for how foreign words are Arabized. Sībawayhi recognizes the phenomenon,<sup>132</sup> but it is remarkable that the Prophet’s speech is not used to justify the inclusion of non-‘*arab* words.

Readings of the Prophet are often contextualized, usually by a companion who claims that he (or she in the case of ‘Ā’ishah) heard it directly from the Prophet. Regarding the *muddakar* reading, this is then followed by a lengthy *isnād* and an *athar* where Ibn Mas‘ūd “corrects” the reading of someone who read *t-h* as *ṭa-ha*, stating that the pronunciation should be “*ṭi-hi*.” When the man objects, Ibn Mas‘ūd replies that the Prophet recited it to him as such. There are several things to remark on here. First, is that the Prophet’s reading is attached to Ibn Mas‘ūd’s, if not exactly an eponymous reader then certainly a seminal figure. Moreover, it is depicted as operative in the transmission of the reading, which is to say that proximity to the Prophet legitimates the personal reading. Note, it is not simply the reading of the Prophet but how the Prophet recited it to Ibn Mas‘ūd; this legitimates not only this individual reading but presents the possibility that any unusual/dialectal reading related by Ibn Mas‘ūd to have as solid a foundation. Which is to say it legitimates him as a reader in general and not transmitter of a single reading. The second thing to notice is that Farrā’ gives an *isnād* between himself and Ibn Mas‘ūd. This in itself is not unusual. However, when we take a step back, we find that it is not standard as well; there seems to be no pattern to when Farrā’ cites an *isnād*—he sometimes uses *isnāds* for all sorts of material, from readings of the Prophet,<sup>133</sup> to *tafsīr* of Ibn ‘Abbās,<sup>134</sup> to

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<sup>132</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb.*, 4:303.

<sup>133</sup> Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān*, 1:310, 416, 2:18, 67, 3:131, 262.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:69 3:36.

readings attributed to companions of the Prophet such as ‘Alī<sup>135</sup> and ‘Ā’ishah.<sup>136</sup> But then there are instances where the *isnād* is left out.<sup>137</sup> This is illustrative of the liminal stage of transmission criticism at the turn of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. If, as Nasser convincingly asserts,<sup>138</sup> *isnāds* were likely not in use during the time of the eponymous readers, their inclusion in Farrā’<sup>’</sup>s *Ma ‘ānī* marks a distinct break from the prevailing methodology, even if they were not as extensively and exhaustively cited as in the later *qirā’āt* tradition.

Another work of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century serves as an interesting point of reference. Only a few decades after Farrā’<sup>’</sup>s death, one Abū ‘Amr al-Dūrī (d. 247/) compiled a collection of readings attributed to the Prophet published today as *Juz’ fīhi qirā’āt al-nabī* (Volume of Readings of the Prophet).<sup>139</sup> Unlike Farrā’<sup>’</sup>, Dūrī provides an *isnād* for every reading of the Prophet; and like we see with Farrā’<sup>’</sup>, these *isnāds* often feature eponymous readers.<sup>140</sup> However, later works of *Ma ‘ānī*, like those of Zajjāj and Naḥḥās, like Farrā’<sup>’</sup> do not make consistent use of the *isnād* for the readings of the Prophet.<sup>141</sup> They are even rarer, if present at all, in Ibn Jinnī’s *Muḥtasib*. What accounts for this is the difference in the nature of these works and, thus, their prevailing methodology. Ibn Jinnī’s work is a linguistic investigation of the *qirā’āt*, a methodology that

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 2:40.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 3:131.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 1:325, 2:20.

<sup>138</sup> Nasser, *Second Canonization*, 116.

<sup>139</sup> Abū ‘Umar Ḥafṣ ibn ‘Umar al-Dūrī, *Juz’ Fīhi Qirā’āt Al-Nabī*, ed. Ḥikmat Bashīr Yāsīn (Medina: Maktabat al-Dār bi-l-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, 1988).

<sup>140</sup> E.g., Kisā’ī a dozen times; Ibid., 1, 17, 18, 24, 35, 45, 48, 70, 95, 102, 115, 129.

<sup>141</sup> Though Rafīdah states that tracing readings back to the Prophet was becoming standard practice by this time (see Ibrāhīm Rafīdah, *al-Naḥw wa-kutub al-tafsīr* (Misrata, Libya: Al-Dār al-Jamāhīriyyah li-l-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘ wa-al-I‘lān, 1990), 380–81.), we still find readings attributed to the Prophet without an *isnād*, e.g., Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-Sarī al-Zajjāj, *Ma ‘ānī l-Qur’ān wa-i‘rābuhu*, ed. ‘Abd al-Jalīl ‘Abduh Shiblī (Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1988), 1:47, 3:349.

does not deem *isnāds* necessary (*isnāds* to earlier linguistic authorities are found, but not for readers or readings). Dūrī's a *muṣannaf* in the *āthār* tradition, for which the *isnād* is fundamental. And then the *Ma'ānī* are exegetical works that drew from both the linguistic and *āthār* traditions, which suggests a middle ground between the former two.

The *qirā'āt* of the Prophet in the *Ma'ānī* are of little direct exegetical value. At the level of phonetics, the impact of variation is seldom felt beyond the Qur'ān's immediate liturgical role. This is to say that the pronunciation of individual letters, combinations and so on had little effect on the theological or legislative content of the Qur'ān. There are some differences in morphology and grammar in the *qirā'āt*, were of some significance. However, the main value of the Prophet's readings lie in what they tell us about the process of canonization of the Qur'ān. Consider Farrā's position vis-à-vis 'Uthmānic codex. The fixed consonantal skeleton greatly constrained the potential morphological content of the Qur'ān. There were plenty of *qirā'āt* that went against the 'Uthmānic script, and Farrā' shows a great interest in the dialectal data they provide. However, Farrā' considered adherence to the script necessary, even if deviations provide valuable linguistic data.<sup>142</sup> There are, it should be noted, no examples of the Prophet endorsing or commenting upon a non-'Uthmānic variants in Farrā's *Ma'ānī*, though there are some classified as *shawādhdh*. However, literature on the *qirā'āt* after Farrā' contain *qirā'āt* of the Prophet that are found in the canonized seven or ten as well as *shawādhdh* and non-'Uthmānic readings. For example, there are five non-'Uthmānic readings attributed to the Prophet in Ibn Jinnī's *Muḥtasib*,<sup>143</sup> and Dūrī's collection likewise is littered with non-canonical readings of all kinds.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Anṣārī, *Abū Zakarīyā al-Farrā'*, 293.

<sup>143</sup> Ibn Jinnī, *al-Muḥtasib*, 1:76 (*hudayy* instead of *hudāy*), 1:151 (*qayyūm* instead of *qayyām*), 2:174 (*ya'tūna* instead of *yu'tūna*, and 'Ā'ishah calls it *taḥrīf!*); and *shadhdh* readings that don't break the script: 2:95 (*'unuthan* instead of *anāthan*), 2:364 (*qurrat* instead of *qurrāt*).

What Farrā'’s *Ma'ānī* does, then, with the Prophet’s *qirā'āt* is reinforces the authenticity of the 'Uthmānic script, which he is diligent in holding against the other regional and personal codices. If Dūrī's work is any indication, there were plenty of non-'Uthmānic readings attributed to the Prophet in circulation during Farrā'’s time. Nevertheless, Farrā' does not include such readings; whether this was deliberate or not, the effect is the same: adherence to the rules of 'Arabiyyah and the 'Uthmānic codex, with the exegetical support of non-canonical readings.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have first shown that the primary goal of early philologists was to describe the linguistic environment in which the Qur'ān was revealed. It was not necessary for us to take sides in the debate on the origins of the scholarship of Arabic linguistics: whether it originated from Qur'ānic exegesis (as Versteegh would have it), Islamic law (as Carter has argued), or emerged *sui generis* out of the straightforward desire to describe the language (as Levin has argued), philologists were still concerned with describing the language spoken by those who lived in the areas in which Islam first expanded—ostensibly the language of those who encountered the Prophet during his lifetime and/or his companions after his death; whatever their motivations or inspirations, the reality was their task was to describe the language/dialects of the Qur'ān's original audience. We have shown this to be the case in Khalīl's *K. al-'Ayn*, Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*, and the works of Farrā' and Abū 'Ubaydah. This is the standard by which *ḥadīth* was to be measured were it to be used for linguistic purposes.

Next, we showed that philologists were able to align material that did not represent the natural speech of the 'Arab with the rules they derived from said natural speech. Poetry, though

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<sup>144</sup>al-Dūrī, *Juz' fīhi Qirā'āt al-nabī*, 6–7. The editor asserts that these all have weak chains of transmission yet praises Dūrī for his reliability in transmitting *qirā'āt* (but not *āthār*).

produced by native speakers, was not taken to be representative of natural speech (see *ḍarūrat al-shiʿr*, poetic license) and was thus supported by citations of the “*kalām al-ʿarab*.” The same occurred with the *qirāʾāt*; though there do not appear to have been any standardized readings associated with the *ʿarab* or any specific tribe, the *qirāʾāt* are nevertheless compared to non-standard readings of the *ʿarab* and their speech in general. The situation with *ḥadīth* is different. Khalīl cites plenty of *ḥadīth* but not for grammatical purposes.<sup>145</sup> Sībawayhi cites *ḥadīth* for grammatical purposes but does not identify it with as *ḥadīth*. Abū ʿUbaydah’s *Majāz* appears to ignore *ḥadīth* and Akhfash’s *Maʿānī* only cites a handful. Farrā’’s *Maʿānī*, on the other hand, abounds with *ḥadīth*. It is still the case that Farrā’, like Sībawayhi, does not frequently cite *ḥadīth* for grammatical purposes. But Farrā’ cites substantially more *ḥadīth* than Sībawayhi; and before dismissing this difference because Farrā’’s work is an exegetical text (which tend to feature a substantial amount of *ḥadīth*), it should be noted that Abū ʿUbaydah and Akhfash’s works are exegetical as well but feature only a handful of *ḥadīths*. While this transition requires a study unto itself, we have seen sufficient evidence to show that the exegetical context afforded a scholar such as Farrā’ the opportunity to incorporate more *ḥadīth* in his analysis.

In this chapter, we have shown that the Abū Ḥayyān thesis, which holds that early grammarians avoided *ḥadīth* because non-verbatim transmission corrupted it to the point that it no longer represented true *ʿArabiyyah*—does not hold up because philologists were able to identify *ḥadīth* that they felt represented true *ʿArabiyyah*. The question then shifts to: if there were *ḥadīths* in circulation that represented *ʿArabiyyah*, why do we not find more *ḥadīth* in grammatical discussions? In the coming chapter, we will address this problem and show that the

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<sup>145</sup> This statement is based on my evaluation of the grammatical material from the *ʿAyn* quoted in Talmon, *Arabic Grammar in Its Formative Age*, 288–372.

primary difference between authorities cited by philologists and *ḥadīth* transmitters was social and cultural, i.e., *ḥadīth* was sourced from the city (which native speakers of *ʿArabiyyah* did not inhabit) and linguistic material was sourced directly from the semi-nomadic *ʿarab* of the desert.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROPHET'S SPEECH BETWEEN THE TOWN AND THE DESERT

#### 1. Introduction

We have seen a marked difference in 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century texts as well as the biographical sources in the treatment of *ḥadīth* on one hand and poetry and the *qira'āt* on the other. Unless new texts from the period emerge, the fact remains apparent that 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century philology was little concerned with *ḥadīth* outside the field of lexicography. The biographical literature, though it deems a few of the more famous philologists like Aṣma'ī and Khalīl as “trustworthy” transmitters, makes little more than passing references to philologists' knowledge of *ḥadīth*. If philologists were not overly concerned with verbatim transmission in general (as we have shown in Chapter II), and if there were *ḥadīth* in circulation during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century that some philologists, at least, considered representative of *ʿArabiyyah* (as we have shown in Chapter III), then there must be a different reason for the relative infrequency of its citation for grammatical purpose. In this chapter, we will advance an alternative thesis: that following the laws of *ʿArabiyyah* alone was not sufficient to deem something attestable; rather, it had to be traced back to the *ʿarab*, either directly or through a scholar who had spent a significant amount of time living with the *ʿarab*. *ʿArabiyyah*, by ideological necessity, had to be sourced from the *ʿarab*.

The legitimacy of *ḥadīth* during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, on the other hand, was determined by its association with individuals known for their connection to the Prophet—this connection could either be a direct family relation with the Prophet, such as with the Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), or with a companion, such as with ʿUrwah ibn Zubayr (d. 94/713), or from close contact with such figures in Mecca and Medina, such as with Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 123/741)

and Mālik ibn Anas (there are accounts of scholars travelling around the empire in search of *ḥadīth*, but it is noteworthy that their origin point most often is Mecca or Medina). In the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, *isnād* criticism had not yet been developed to the extent that a lone scholar could evaluate an *isnād*—there were no biographical dictionaries, not to mention the fact that there were not multiple collections of *ḥadīths* whose contents and *isnāds* could be compared. The validity of a *ḥadīth* was best demonstrated by an association with the cynosures among its keepers. To be sure, philologists clustered around their cynosures (in Iraq, at least) as well, figures from the early and mid-2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century such as Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’, Kisā’ī and Khalīl; but rather than associating with figures close to the Prophet (geographically or genealogically), these figures were known for their direct contact with eloquent ‘*arab* (i.e., *al-mawthūq bi-‘arabiyyatihim*). Scholars in the late 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century and for centuries afterwards were concerned with the exact nature of these figures’ contact with the ‘*arab*; to them, it mattered from what tribe the informant originated, what the informant’s motivations were (and if payment was involved), whether the informant was encountered in the city (e.g., Basra or Baghdad) or in the desert.<sup>1</sup>

This difference played out in the biographical material as well. To be sure, accounts of these figures’ lives were shaped by later dogmatic considerations. The field of *ḥadīth* criticism was predicated upon the ability to determine the piety (and memory, manners, etc.) of early transmitters. Likewise, there is a preoccupation in the later biographical sources with demonstrating the piety of some early philologists. Nevertheless, how later sources described the actual mechanics of these scholar’s acquisition of knowledge (*ṭalab al-‘ilm*) appear to reflect practical considerations more than dogmatic ones. The collection of both *ḥadīth* and the *kalām*

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<sup>1</sup> Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, 137ff.

*al-‘arab* both required substantial travel (which is reflected in the biographical sources) but to markedly distinct destinations. Thus, when later biographers were tasked with describing the practices of early *ḥadīth* transmitters, they found themselves describing urban and Islamic manners; the measure of a scholar’s literacy, behavior in the market, or ability to lead prayer arose in discussions of a transmitter’s qualifications.<sup>2</sup> The process of collecting the *kalām al-‘arab*, on the other hand, is littered with anecdotes of ‘*arab* behaving in petty, unscrupulous ways or carrying out some strange task necessitated by the harsh nature of their lives. The roughness of the ‘*arab* (or, often when a pejorative connotation is intended, the *a ‘rāb*) is a motif that extends beyond the field of Arabic philology. However, both this unique, desert-induced roughness and ‘*Arabiyyah* are described as being a natural quality particular to the ‘*arab*. In the following sections, we will examine how descriptions of the collection of *ḥādīth* and *kalām al-‘arab* differed in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century on a practical and ethical level—and, further, that this difference better justifies *ḥadīth*’s absence from the early discussions of the grammar of ‘*Arabiyyah*.

## 2. The Philologists

Philologists saw a difference between eloquence that resulted from one’s natural disposition and acquired eloquence. It was permissible to quote from those who possessed either, albeit for the latter only if certain conditions were met. The natural ‘*Arabiyyah* belonged to a specific class of ‘*arab*, though scholars of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century differed on who best exemplified this disposition: Suyūṭī, for example, reported that Abū ‘Amr considered the tribes living in the region of Mt. Sarāt (in the Ḥijāz) to be the most eloquent;<sup>3</sup> Khalīl in the *K. al-‘Ayn* mentions the

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<sup>2</sup> E.g., Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāyah*, 81ff.

<sup>3</sup> Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, 2:410. وقال الأصمعي: قال أبو عمرو بن العلاء: أفصح الشعراء ألسنا وأعربهم أهل السَّرَوَاتِ.

“Qa‘īn Naṣr, or Naṣr Qa‘īn” as possibly the most eloquent of the ‘*arab* (*yuqālu afṣaḥu al-‘arabi Qa‘īnu Naṣrin aw Naṣru Qa‘īnin*);<sup>4</sup> Farrā’, similar to Khalīl, claims to have heard the Banū Asad were the most eloquent of the ‘*arab*.<sup>5</sup> In none of these cases are we confronted with the ideological argument, standard from the time of Ibn Fāris<sup>6</sup> onwards, that the Quraysh were the most eloquent of the ‘*arab*. Ostensibly, this is because they came into contact with all the tribes during the Ḥajj, even before Islam, and adopted only the best features of their speech. The consequence of this was that the Qur’ān’s first audience was best situated to receive and appreciate its linguistic splendor. This interpretation became widespread and remains to this day. Early philologists, however, were less concerned with determining who was the most eloquent than with recording and analyzing examples of eloquence, that is, defining the natural linguistic disposition of the ‘*arab*. It is through this effort that a scholar acquired eloquence and could be legitimately consulted or quoted.<sup>7</sup>

The picture painted by the later biographical of the early collection of Arabic linguistic data reflects what we see in the sources from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Certainly, the details of the events and opinions they record are not confirmed by contemporary extant sources. Additionally, certain themes reoccur enough to suggest that they may be topoi. Nevertheless, we can discern a shared ideology between the extant and later biographical sources: that the collection of linguistic material directly from the ‘*arab* was methodologically distinct from the collection of

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<sup>4</sup> Khalīl, *‘Ayn*, 1:169.

<sup>5</sup> Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī*, 3:14. منها قال: وسمعت بعض العرب يقول: تترك بني أسد وهم فصحاء. Farrā’'s point here is not to identify the Banū Asad as particularly eloquent but rather his following remark on how this member of the ‘*arab* he heard did not decline the name Asad.

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Fāris, *Ṣāhibī*, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, 1:143.

other material (i.e., *ḥadīth*, *akhbār*, *qirā'āt* etc.) and that this distinction was necessary for legitimating linguistic data.

## 2.1. The Biographical Sources

The travels of several 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century philologists feature prominently in the biographical sources: namely, Abū 'Amr, Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, and Kisā'ī. These are substantial figures whose reputations extend beyond the realm of philology; consequently, their biographies are shaped by expectations associated with their non-philological studies. The figure of Khalīl ibn Aḥmad has taken on such mythic proportions as to call into question the extent of his scholarship as described by the later biographical tradition.<sup>8</sup> Gouttenoire has shown how the biographical tradition employed the moral topos of Abū 'Amr's burning of his language notebooks as an act of expiation, so to speak, in order to morally authenticate his Qur'ānic reading;<sup>9</sup> the early philologists were considered morally problematic (*ahl al-ahwā'*), though Kisā'ī's habit of drinking wine did not disqualify his reading.<sup>10</sup> It is unlikely that these concerns were fully operative during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century—which is to say that a large amount of linguistic data from Abū 'Amr was transmitted in writing (demonstrable in both the *K. al-'Ayn* and Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*) and Kisā'ī's reading was widely transmitted and evaluated on linguistic rather than moral grounds. This is supported by Nasser's dating of the beginning the moral evaluation of Qur'ān readers according to the standards of *ḥadīth* criticism in the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, when examining later biographical sources we must be careful with evaluations of character and

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<sup>8</sup> Talmon, *Arabic Grammar*, 44–51.

<sup>9</sup> Marie-Andrée Gouttenoire, “Les Enjeux de l'Écriture Biographique Relative Aux Savants Iraquiens Du II/VIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle et à Leur Transmission Du Fond Arabo-Bédouin: Le Cas de Abū 'Amr b. Al-'Alā' (m. 154/770),” *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 57 (2006): 66f.

<sup>10</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu'āt fī ṭabaqāt al-lughawīyyīn wa-al-nuḥāt*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrahīm (Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-'Aṣriyyah, 2003), 2:163.

instead focus on the practical descriptions of the collection of linguistic data; whatever the moral failings and qualms of a scholar, our sources place clear and consistent value in the shared methodology of these scholars.

The term “methodology” here is to be general so as not to convey anachronism, at least with regards to the anthropological aspect of their endeavor (already in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century a sophisticated methodology of Arabic linguistics had emerged). We know little about their “fieldwork,” so to speak, so it is difficult to fully state the extent of the ‘*arab*’s influence on their linguistic methodology. Still, palpable importance is placed on direct conversation with the ‘*arab* in their native environment; and we can speak to who they decided were the ‘*arab* whose speech was attestable (*al-‘arab al-mawthūq bi-him/bi-‘arabiyyatihim*).

It seems unlikely that the ‘*arab* directly contributed to Arabic linguistics on the methodological level, at least according to the extant works of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Baalbaki, among others,<sup>11</sup> has convincingly shown the originality of Sībawayhi’s methodology and Talmon has made a convincing case for an established Iraqi school in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century,<sup>12</sup> though the answer to how well defined and influential this school was requires further debate.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, we encounter anecdotes where philologists interrogate the ‘*arab* on theoretical aspects of their language. For example, Abū ‘Amr quizzes an “*a rābī*” about the etymology of horses (an example of an Arabic plural noun without a morphologically related singular form or verb):

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<sup>11</sup> Ramzī. Baalbaki, *Legacy*; Aryeh Levin, “The First Book of Arabic Dialectology: Sībawayhi’s Kitāb,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 23 (1999): 208–20; Aryeh Levin, “Sībawayhi’s Attitude to the Spoken Language,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, no. 17 (1994): 204–43; Amal Marogy, *Kitāb Sībawayhi: Syntax and Pragmatics* (Leiden: Brill, 2010) These are all studies that attest to the originality and sophistication of the *Kitāb*.

<sup>12</sup> Rafael Talmon, *Eighth Century Iraqi-Grammar* (Boston: Brill, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 21–23.

Abū ‘Amr was asked about the etymology of the word “horses” (*khayl*) but he did not know it. An *a‘rābī* passed by and the questioner wanted to ask him. So Abū ‘Amr said, “Let me, I can better handle the question and am more knowledgeable.” He asked him, and the *a‘rābī* said “the etymology of a name comes from the action of the named thing.” The group didn’t know what the *a‘rābī* meant, so they asked Abū ‘Amr about it and he said, “he was referring to “*khuyalā*” (proud, wondrous things), which is [related to?] “*khayl*” (gerund for *khāla*, to do something well with care) and wonder. Do you not see [that one says]: the [horses, i.e., *khayl*] trotted proudly (*khuyalā‘a wa-takabburan*)

وسئل أبو عمرو عن اشتقاق الخيل، فلم يعرفه، فمرّ أعرابيّ  
محرم، فأراد السائل سؤال الأعرابيّ، فقال له أبو عمرو: دعني،  
فأنا ألطف بسؤاله وأعرف، فسأله، فقال الأعرابيّ: اشتقاق الاسم  
من فعل المسّمى، فلم يعرف القوم ما أراد الأعرابيّ، فسألوا أبا  
عمرو عن ذلك، فقال: ذهب إلى «الخيلاء» التي في الخيل  
والعجب، ألا ترى أنها تمشى العرضنة خيلاء وتكبراً! 14

As the personal notebooks of these philologists did not survive, the majority of their recorded encounters with the *‘arab* either took place in urban areas and were observed by their students or were recalled by the philologist at a later date in front of his students. What is striking about this example is that it places terms into the mouth of an *‘arab* that, at least at a later date, carry a technical meaning; specifically, *ism* (name/noun/adjective), *fi‘l* (action/verb), and *musammā* (named thing), all of which later assume discipline-specific connotations. While possibly or even likely apocryphal, there is still an element to the scene painted here worth considering. While it may seem unlikely that a random *a‘rābī* in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century would employ sophisticated linguistic terminology (though we can’t discount that the terms were used literally to mean simply “something named after what it does,” i.e., “*ism musammā li-fi‘lihi*”), here is the idea that the *‘arab* had an intimate understanding of their language that could reveal facts not discerned by philologists in their urban circles.

<sup>14</sup> Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt al-naḥwīyyīn wa-al-lughawīyyīn*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1984), 36.

The same idea comes up in the famous debate between Kisā'ī and Sībawayhi, known as the “Hornet Issue” (*al-mas'alah al-zunbūriyyah*). Kisā'ī, according to the audience, comes out victorious as he can procure 'arab who attest to his interpretation of a grammatical construction. The biographical tradition, being inclined towards the Basrans, strove to vindicate Sībawayhi. But to do so, they did not go after Kisā'ī's use of 'arab to settle the debate but rather went after his choice in 'arab. While some claim Kisā'ī was intentionally deceptive and others that he was ignorant, at no point to later scholars criticize Kisā'ī solely on a linguistic basis (e.g., using analogous reasoning, *qiyās*, to show it is an unnatural construct); Abū Barakāt al-Anbārī in the *Inṣāf fi masā'il al-khilāf bayna al-naḥwiyyīn al-baṣriyyīn wa-l-kūfiyyīn* (Fair treatment of issues of difference between the grammarians of Basra and Kufa) offers a thorough *qiyās*-based rebuttal of the Kisā'ī's argument; but his argument is not that Kisā'ī's interpretation did not represent the speech of the 'arab, but rather that it represented an aberrant (*shādhah*) dialect, a distinction he treats as more significant than the accusations that Kisā'ī bribed his 'arab to lie.<sup>15</sup> Even in the 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century, Abū Barakāt's *qiyās*-based argument is employed to show what citing the right 'arab would have produced and not a dismissal of Kisā'ī's use of 'arab.

The biographical sources give the following geographical distribution of these figures' “fieldwork”:

Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā'

Ḥijāz, Najd<sup>16</sup>

Khalīl ibn Aḥmad

Ḥijāz, Najd, Tihāmah<sup>17</sup>, environs of Basra<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Abū Barakāt 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad Al-Anbārī, *al-Inṣāf fi masā'il al-khilāf bayna al-naḥwiyyīn al-baṣriyyīn wa-al-Kūfiyyīn*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-'Aṣriyyah, 2003), 2:577.

<sup>16</sup> Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-Ruwāt 'alā anbā' al-Nuḥāt*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1982), 4:136.

<sup>17</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-'udabā'*, 4:1738.

The inclusion of the Ḥijāz and Najd are logical for two reasons: first, that the Qur'ān was revealed in the Ḥijāz and would thus reflect its 'Arabiyyah and, second, that these scholars traveled through Najd when performing the Ḥajj. The sources quote these scholars on dialects of tribes who dwelled outside this area but not to any degree that suggests their dialects formed a fundamental part of the linguistic corpus of 'Arabiyyah. Taghlib, for example, dwelled in northern and south-eastern Mesopotamia—this put them in contact with Kufa and Basra, but their dialect remains marginal, only quoted once in the *K. al-'Ayn*,<sup>21</sup> *Kitāb*,<sup>22</sup> and never in the early *Ma'ānīs* of Farrā', Akhfash, Abū 'Ubaydah. The same can be said of other Mesopotamian tribes such as Bakr ibn Wā'il<sup>23</sup> or Levantine tribes such as Ghassān,<sup>24</sup> who are quoted sparingly. According to my count, the “people of the Ḥijāz,” on the other hand, are mentioned more around six dozen times in the *Kitāb* and Farrā's *Ma'ānī*, two dozen times in the *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, eighteen times in Akhfash's *Ma'ānī*, and nine times in the *Majāz al-Qur'ān* (comparatively large, as dialects do not feature as prominently in Abū 'Ubaydah's work). Tribes from Najd such as Asad and Tamīm are likewise quoted frequently. This evidence establishes, at a minimum, a correlation between the areas in which early philologists were reputed to have travelled. It is

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:1266. Account of a trip to al-Ahwāz.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:1738.

<sup>20</sup> Marzubānī, *Nūr*, 287.

<sup>21</sup> al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, *Kitāb Al-'Ayn*, 5:47.

<sup>22</sup> Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb.*, 3:95.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ, *Ma'ānī L-Qur'ān*, 1:30; Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb.*, 3:535, 4:107, 113, 197.

<sup>24</sup> Abū 'Ubaydah, *Majāz Al-Qur'ān*, 1:148 (quotes a Ghāssānī poet but does not identify him as such).

always possible that this was a latter back-projection. In the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century Abū Maṣṣūr al-Azharī took pride in the ‘*Arabiyyah* he learned when help captive by Qarmatians from the Asad tribe in East Arabic (a later example of the suspension of moral/dogmatic considerations when accepting linguistic data).<sup>25</sup> But then Ibn Jinnī and his poet companion Mutanabbī both studied ‘*Arabiyyah* in northern Mesopotamia (the seat of their patron state, the Hamdanids), which Ibn Jinnī notes was one of the few places where one could still find native speakers.<sup>26</sup>

Travelling philologists are all said to have recorded a great quantity of the speech of the ‘*arab* in writing. Abū ‘Amr’s house was reported to have been piled high with books that housed the speech of the ‘*arab*.<sup>27</sup> Khalīl was said to have Kisā’ī said he expended 15 bottles of ink recording the speech of the ‘*arab*.<sup>28</sup> Khalīl was not reported to have had “field notes,” though he was reported to have written a work called *K. al-Shawāhid* (Book of Attestations), which quite possibly contained his records of the attestable speech of the ‘*arab*.<sup>29</sup> These descriptions of the philologists’ personal writings mirrors that described by Schoeler and Motzki with *ḥadīth* transmitters; burning one’s notebooks is a shared theme found in the biographical tradition of both fields. However, we still know little about Khalīl’s travels to the desert other than that they were extensions of the *ḥajj*. Jāḥiẓ attributed the saying “Go learn grammar (*naḥw*), for it is beauty for the lowly and leaving it is ignoble for the honorable” to Khalīl’s primary teacher Sakhtiyānī (d. 131/748); a jurist, *ḥadīth* transmitter and wholly undefinable polymath of the early

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<sup>25</sup> Azhari, *Tahdhīb*, 1:8.

<sup>26</sup> Abū l-Faṭḥ ‘Uthmān Ibn Jinnī, *al-Khaṣā’iṣ* (Cairo: al-Hay’ah al-Miṣrīyah al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1986), 2:7.

<sup>27</sup> al-Qiftī, *Inbāh*, 4:133.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:258.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:381.

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>30</sup> Leaving aside the question of whether Sakhtiyānī instructed his student to study ‘*Arabiyyah*, this still seems an anachronistic projection of the later meaning of *naḥw*. It is an important question: what extent knowledge of ‘*Arabiyyah* was considered a prerequisite among jurists and *ḥadīth* transmitters. Sībawayhi was motivated to study grammar due to an embarrassing solecism made in a *ḥadīth* circle; he sought out instructors in Basra, namely Khalīl. Ru’āsī instructed Farrā’ to go to Basra and Baghdad to study with (and challenge) its luminaries. Kisā’ī’s has a similar story, which is worth mentioning in full:

The reason [Kisā’ī took up ‘*Arabiyyah*] is that he came upon some folks from Habbār. He has grown weary and said to them “I am at a loss (‘*ayaytu*)” and they said, “You sit with us while speaking solecisms?” Kisā’ī said, “What solecism did I speak?” They said, “If you meant the foiling some deception or confusion in the matter then you say ‘*ayaytu* lightly [i.e., without the *shaddah*]. If you meant you were tired then you say a ‘*yaytu*.” So he rejected this word/speech then got up immediately and asked who taught grammar (*naḥw*). They sent him to Ma’ādh al-Harrā’. He studied with him until he had learned all he could, then he went to Basra where he met Khalīl and attended his lectures. One of the *a’rāb* said to him, “You left the Asads of Kufa and its Tamīms, while they are the eloquent ones, and came to Basra? So, he said to Khalīl, “From where did you get your knowledge?” [Khalīl] said, “From the deserts of the Ḥijāz, Najd, and Tihāmah.” So Khalīl traveled about, using fifteen bottles of ink recording [the speech] of the ‘*arab* in addition to what he memorized.

وسببه أنه جاء إلى قوم من الهَبَّاريين، وقد أعياء، فقال لهم: قد عيبيت، فقالوا له: أتجالسنا وأنت تلحن؟ فقال: كيف لحننت؟ قالوا: إن كنت أردت من انقطاع الحيلة والتحير في الأمر فقل عيبيت مخففاً، وإن كنت أردت من التعب فقل أعييبت، فأنف من هذه الكلمة، ثم قام من فوره ذلك فسأل من يعلم النحو، فأرشدته إلى معاذ الهراء، فلزمه حتى أنفد ما عنده، ثم خرج إلى البصرة فلقى الخليل وجلس في حلقاته، فقال له رجل من الأعراب: تركت أسد الكوفة وتميمها وعندها الفصاحة وجئت إلى البصرة؟! فقال لل خليل: من أين أخذت علمك هذا؟ قال: من بوادي الحجاز ونجد وتهامه، فخرج ورجع وقد أنفد خمس عشرة قنينة حبرا في الكتابة عن

العرب سوى ما حفظ.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 2:151. وكان أيوب السخيتاني يقول: تعلموا النحو، فإنه جمال للوضع، وتركه هجنة للشريف.

<sup>31</sup> al-Qiftī, *Inbāh*, 2:258.

Though the location of the event is not mentioned by Qifṭī (d. 646/1248), one would assume it was in or near Kufa as the Habbārūn sent him to study with the Kufan scholar Mu‘ādh al-Harrā’. There are some expected traces of anti-Basran sentiment: Kisā’ī is admonished by an *a‘rābī* no less for having left the eloquent *‘arab* that dwelled around Kufa for Basra—to which Kisā’ī responds by leaving Khalīl and Basra to go to the desert to procure his own data. Talmon<sup>32</sup> and Dévényi<sup>33</sup> have shown that Kisā’ī’s grammatical methodology was distinct from Sībawayhi’s, which at the very least affirms that Kisā’ī did not cleave to Khalīl and his circle. The biographical sources do not mention Sībawayhi travelling to the desert, though in the *Kitāb* he mentions hearing directly from the *‘arab*, often with Khalīl.<sup>34</sup> Still, Sībawayhi’s role in the grammatical tradition was not diminished by having studied only in Basra and Baghdad as the Basran tradition had plenty of figures who had spent time in the desert—the *Kitāb*’s debt to them is plain. It is still worth mentioning that in the *al-mas‘alah al-zunbūriyyah*, if Kisā’ī was disingenuous or just plain wrong in his selection of adjudicating *‘arab*, he was seen by the spectators in his debate with Sībawayhi as more familiar with the *‘arab* than Sībawayhi. By the late 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, linguistic scholarly circles in the *amṣār* of Iraq centered around a figure or pedigree with extensive experience in the desert—Sībawayhi belonged to Khalīl’s and Kisā’ī headed his own. The figures of the early 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century quote these central figures freely and are eager to cite them as a source whenever they can. Indeed, supporting a grammatical argument with speech that can be traced back to the mouths of the *‘arab* transcended the grammatical schools, be they in their nascent, developing, matured, or anachronistically back-projected forms.

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<sup>32</sup> Talmon, *Eighth Century Iraqi-Grammar*, 15.

<sup>33</sup> Kinga Dévényi, “Al-Farrā’ and al-Kisā’ī: References to Grammarians and Qur’an Readers in the Ma‘ānī l-Qur’ān of al-Farrā’,” *The Arabist. Budapest Studies in Arabic* 3–4 (1991): 159–71.

<sup>34</sup> Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 152–53.

## 2.2. The Extant Sources

Works from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century and early 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century are remarkably consistent with the style in which ‘*arab* informants are quoted. They are introduced most often anonymously, though some are identified; they carry the same value as other *shawāhid*, i.e., they are not subordinate to other material and their recorded speech was even cause for debate; they are quoted on every topic related to ‘*Arabiyyah* (e.g., grammar, phonology etc.) and the Arabic language at large (e.g., rhetoric, literary themes, and customs and cultural practices). Personal contact with the ‘*arab* was prized and the early literature and biographical material is littered with anecdotes of early philologists’ dealings with the ‘*arab* (and a ‘*rāb*, as the term’s pejorative sense had not yet become dominant ubiquitous). To show that this contact was a more significant epistemological concern than transmission, let us consider what the early scholars themselves said (i.e., extant works of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century) and what was later attributed or said of these scholars.

It must be said once again and not for the last time that the extant sources that depict contact with ‘*arab* are incredibly limited—from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century we have Khalīl’s *K. al-‘Ayn* and Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb* and from the early 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century (at the latest) there is Akhfash and Farrā’’s *Ma‘ānī* and Abū ‘Ubaydah’s *Majāz*. However, though the number of works is limited, they contain a large number of greatly detailed references to contact with the ‘*arab*. A review of a few examples from each is worthwhile and illustrative of the expected relationship between a philologist and the ‘*arab* during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century.

Khalīl is one of the philologists who was said to have had extensive contact with the ‘*arab*, and this is clearly supported by the *K. al-‘Ayn*. The general tone of reference towards the ‘*arab* is one of authoritative familiarity: discourse in the *K. al-‘Ayn*, particularly when the ‘*arab*



393/1003) in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Abū ‘Ubadyah states “the ‘*arab* define it as “the time in which stones are supple (*al-ḥijāratu raṭibatun*, i.e., a long time ago before stones had hardened).”<sup>38</sup>

Sībawayhi’s language too demonstrates a significant amount of contact with the ‘*arab*, as indicated by phrases like “*sama ‘nā min al- ‘arab*” (we heard from the ‘*arab*) or “*min afwāh al- ‘arab*” (from the mouths of the ‘*arab*).<sup>39</sup> The *Kitāb* preserves his teachers’ contact with the ‘*arab* as well, particularly Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb (d. 182/798) and Khalīl. We frequently encounter phrases such as “Yūnus stated (*za ‘ama*)<sup>40</sup> that some of the ‘*arab* say...”<sup>41</sup> or “Khalīl stated, God have mercy on him, that he heard one of the ‘*arab* say...” In some instances, Sībawayhi considers his own experience with the ‘*arab* in comparison with those of his teachers:

Yūnus stated that “*labbayka*” is one word but it comes in the construct form (*iḍāfah*) like when you say “*alayka*”  
Khalīl stated that it is dual with [the same status as] *ḥawālayka* (all around you). Because we have heard them [i.e., the ‘*arab*] say “*labb [labb]*” so they decline it as they would “*amsī*” (yesterday) or “*ghāqī*”<sup>42</sup> (crow’s caw) but in the function of the accusative. And *ḥawālayk* has the status of *ḥanānayka*.

وزعم يونس أن لبيك اسم واحد، ولكنه جاء على هذا اللفظ  
في الإضافة، كقولك: عليك  
وزعم الخليل أنها تثنية بمنزلة حوالبك، لأننا سمعناهم  
يقولون: حنان. وبعض العرب يقول: "لب [لب]"<sup>43</sup> فيجزيه  
مجرى أمس وغاق، ولكن موضعه نصب. وحوالبك بمنزلة

<sup>38</sup> Abū l-Fayḍ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘arūs min jawāhir al-qāmūs*, ed. ‘Alī Shīrī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), 15:583.

<sup>39</sup> Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 25–26.

<sup>40</sup> Fajjāl argues that *za ‘ama* did not carry its later pejorative sense; this is convincing, as he points out its widespread, non-pejorative use in *ḥadīth* literature from the time. Fajjāl, *Irtikāz*, 178–79.

<sup>41</sup> Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, 2:27, 63, 65, 83, 112, 143, 184, 199, 205, 213, 276, 315, 319, 337, 355, 361, 411, 415. To take just one volume of the *Kitāb* as an example.

<sup>42</sup> See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, 10:295 for possible vocalizations.

<sup>43</sup> Sīrāfī reports seeing *lubb* twice in one manuscript and once in another; two times supports the dual interpretation; Abū Sa‘īd al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Sīrāfī, *Sharḥ Kitāb Sībawayhi*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Mahdalī and ‘Alī Sayyid ‘Alī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah, 2008), 2:241.

Sībawayhi uses the first-person plural “we heard” (*sama* ‘*nā*) to refer to Khalīl and himself; it is unclear if this means that they both heard directly from the ‘*arab* in this instance or whether Sībawayhi is co-assuming Khalīl’s authority. At any rate, this is a clear example of how an impasse in grammatical analysis is solved by appeal to the speech of the ‘*arab* (*samā* ‘ over *qiyās*, if you will, or, more accurately, *qiyās*-supported *samā* ‘ over *qiyās* alone). Even when there is a multiplicity of grammatical interpretations, as in the following example, direct attestation of the speech of the ‘*arab* is sought to justify this multiplicity.

As for “*subbūhan quddūsan rabba al-malā’ikati wa-l-rūhi*” (Gloried, Sacred Lord of the Angles and Soul), it is not of the same status as *subhāna Allāhi* because *subbūh* and *quddūs* are *isms* (~noun/adjective). Rather, it is like saying: “I remembered the Gloried Sacred [God].” It is as if something occurred to someone, or he remembered and he said: “*subbūhan,*” i.e., “I remembered the Gloried (*subbūhan*).” like you say: “*ahla dhāka*” (people of such and such) when you heard a man recall another man with praise or contempt, as if he said, “I recalled the people of such and such, because when the man thinks of the other (*jarā dhikhu al-rajuli fī mantiqihī*) it acquires the status of “I remember so and so” or “I remembered so and so.” It’s like when someone recites [a poem] then say, “*ṣādiqan*” (truthfully), “recitation” takes on the status of “he said” (*qāla*), then he says *qāla* or *ahla dhāka*, and makes it function with the verb that follows the one who is saying or remembering. Likewise: *subbūhan quddūsan* is as if itself takes on the status of the man who remembers or the reciter [of poetry] where he remembers then says “*subbūhan quddūsan,*” i.e., “you recall the *subbūh* (glorified) follow what it recalled and what occurred to it. They cut off the verb because this phrase becomes for them a substitute (*badal*) for “I glorified” Just as one says “*marḥaban*” instead of “Your land greets and welcomes [you].”

وأما سبوحا قدوسا رب الملائكة والروح، فليس بمنزلة  
سبحان الله؛ لأن السبوح والقدوس اسم، ولكنه على قوله:  
أذكر سبوحا قدوسا. وذلك أنه خطر على باله أو ذكره ذاك  
فقال: سبوحا، أي ذكرت سبوحا، كما تقول: أهل ذلك، إذا  
سمعت الرجل ذكر الرجل بثناء أو يذم، كأنه قال: ذكرت أهل  
ذاك؛ لأنه حيث جرى ذكر الرجل " في منطقة " صار عنده  
بمنزلة قوله: أذكر فلانا، أو ذكرت فلانا. كما أنه حيث أنشد  
ثم قال: صادقا، صار الإنشاد عنده بمنزلة قال، ثم قال:  
صادقا وأهل ذلك، فحمله على الفعل متابعا للقائل والذاكر.  
فكذلك: سبوحا قدوسا، كأن نفسه " صارت " بمنزلة الرجل  
الذاكر والمنشد حيث خطر على باله الذكر، ثم قال: سبوحا  
قدوسا، أي ذكرت سبوحا، متابعا لها فيما ذكرت وخطر على  
بالها.

<sup>44</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1:351.

There are some ‘*arab* who put it in the nominative and say: *subbūhan quddūsan [rabba al-malā`ikati wa-l-rūhi]*, and likewise say: “*ahlu dhāka*” and “*ṣādiqun*,” by God [?]. All of this is in accordance with what we have heard from the ‘*arab* in terms of when they speak with the nominative or accusative.

وخزلوا الفعل لأن هذا الكلام صار عندهم بدلا من سيحت،  
 كما كان مرحبا بدلا من رحبت بلادك وأهلت  
 ومن العرب من يرفع فيقول: سيوح قدوس [رب الملائكة  
 والروح]، كما قال: أهل ذاك وصادق والله. وكل هذا على ما  
 سمعنا العرب تتكلم به رفعا ونصبا<sup>45</sup>.

This passage touches on all the important topics of this chapter: contact with the ‘*arab*, grammatical justification, and even *ḥadīth*. What is most striking is that the *ḥadīth* is given no introduction whatsoever; it is merely preceded with “as for...” (*ammā*). Though this *ḥadīth* is identified as a *ḥadīth* in the *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*, it is also a common *du‘ā* used in prayer and would possibly have been widely known to ‘*arab* and non-‘*arab* alike. It is not presented in any way that associates it with an individual or group in a manner that restricts its permissible versions.

The explanation that follows is a fascinating example of Sībawayhi’s focus on pragmatics. While the term “pragmatics” in its current technical sense as a branch of linguistics does not fully map to Sībawayhi’s methodology, important parallels have been observed, notably by Marogy<sup>46</sup> and Baalbaki.<sup>47</sup> Marogy is correct in that Sībawayhi’s concept of *istiḳāmah* (correctness of speech) is not a formal description but rather an analysis of the speaker’s intentions and the mechanisms by which the listener interprets the speech;<sup>48</sup> we see this in the example above, where Sībawayhi reconstructs the intention of the speaker through the grammatical lens of *iḍmār* (the interpreting mechanism for the listener). The pertinent point is

<sup>45</sup> Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb*, 1:295.

<sup>46</sup> Marogy, *Kitāb Sībawayhi*, 200–201 (synopsis of her project).

<sup>47</sup> Baalbaki, *Legacy*, 191–207.

<sup>48</sup> Marogy, *Kitāb Sībawayhi*, 74f.

that for Sībawayhi, the speaker must be from among the ‘*arab*’ as the purpose of his book, in Marogy’s convincing analysis, is to represent ‘*Arabiyyah*’ as a process particular to the ‘*arab*’. So, this *ḥadīth*, if it were even considered as such by Sībawayhi, his audience, or whomever he heard this from, is not presented as a fixed form that must be grammatically justified but rather as a common phrase with several forms justified by attested usage by the ‘*arab*’ in accordance with their intentionality.

Grammarians from the generation following Sībawayhi (i.e., Akhfash, Abū ‘Ubaydah, Farrā’) do not demonstrate the same level of interest as Sībawayhi in the pragmatic aspects of language. To be sure, none of their extant works are straightforward treatments of grammar like Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*; perhaps Akhfash’s *Maqāyīs fī l-naḥw* or Farrā’’s *K. al-Ḥudūd* were influenced by Sībawayhi’s methodology but we simply can’t know without seeing these works (even if quoted in later works). Nevertheless, in their extant works, particularly those on the Qur’ān, their descriptions of the speech of the ‘*arab*’ that demonstrate the essentiality of direct contact with the ‘*arab*’.

In their *Ma‘ānī*, Akhfash<sup>49</sup> and Farrā’<sup>50</sup> frequently cite the ‘*arab*’s readings of the Qur’ān and both mention having heard these readings directly. It is not entirely clear that these qualified as *qirā’āt* in the technical sense, i.e., qualified for liturgical use. Both use the term *qirā’at al-‘arab* (or some variation), which we find with readings attributed to eponymous readers like Kisā’ī and Ibn Mas‘ūd. However, that references to the “readings of the ‘*arab*” are general and that there are no readings associated with individual *a‘rāb* or tribes shows that there was no sense of systematizing or formalization (i.e., *ikhtiyār*) associated with these readings; they were

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<sup>49</sup> E.g., Akhfash, *Ma‘ānī*, 1:11, 27, 46, 51, 89, 92, 110, 202, 318, 350, 2:216, 219, 407, 469.

<sup>50</sup> E.g., Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī*, 1:2, 42, 49, 239, 252, 299, 306, 398, 2:26, 95, 342, 3:145.

not to be prescribed but rather consulted. For example, Farrā' and Akhfash discussed the variations of *al-ḥamd(u/a/i) l-llāh* from the Fātiḥah found among the speech of the 'arab. Yet neither presents these variations as possible readings but rather as a jumping off point for linguistic discussions (the phenomenon of proximal sound change for Farrā' and an overview of declension for Akhfash). Indeed, in these works, and those of later scholars, we don't encounter any eponymous reader among the 'arab, nor to we encounter any tribal reading (e.g., *qirā'at Tamīm*, or *qirā'at Hudhayl*); Farrā' makes a passing reference to the 'arab "writing in the *maṣāḥif*" (*wa-ḡad katabat fī l-maṣāḥif*), but only regarding the writing of the *alif* and *wāw*. Nevertheless, Akhfash and Farrā' grant the 'arab a significant linguistic (if not liturgical) authority that can be contemporaneously and instantly demonstrated. This is illustrated by the following example:

And the verse: "Do not let [the hatred of a people] drive you to injustice..."  
 Yaḥyā ibn Waththāb and A'mash read it as *lā yujrimannakum*, from *ajramtu*—however the speech of the 'arab and the *qirā'ah* of the *qurrā'* is *yajramannakum* with a *fathah* on the *yā'*. There is the *tafsīr* "Don't be burdened by a people."  
 Farrā' stated: I heard the 'arab say, "So and so is the *jarīmah* of his people," by which they mean he is the provider for his people, meaning he goes out and "*yajramuhum*," i.e., acquires for them. The meaning between the two is close: "don't let people acquire for you that which makes you do evil."

وقوله: ولا يجرمكم قرأها يحيى بن وثاب والاعمش: ولا يجرمكم، من أجمت، وكلام العرب وقراءة القراء يجرمكم بفتح الياء. جاء التفسير: ولا يحملنكم بغض قوم. قال الفراء: وسمعت العرب تقول: فلان جريمة أهله، يريدون: كاسب لأهله، وخرج يجرمهم: يكسب لهم. والمعنى فيها متقارب: لا يكسبنكم بغض قوم أن تفعلوا شرا.<sup>51</sup>

Here, Farrā' argues in favor of a certain reading based on a comparison to the speech of the 'arab. There are a few additional takeaways: first, that Farrā' sets two non-canonical readers (A'mash and Yaḥyā ibn Waththāb) against an undefined body of readers (*qirā'āt al-qurrā'*) and the speech of the 'arab, setting up the latter two groups as purveyors of the correct version. And

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 1:299.

while Farrā' uses *kalām al-‘arab* (speech of the ‘*arab*) instead of *qirā’at al-‘arab* (reading of the ‘*arab*), grouping this along with the *qirā’at al-qurrā’* indicates that this, according to Farrā’, was how some ‘*arab* recited this verse. Second, the discussion of the speech of the ‘*arab* is preceded by a quick reference to *tafsīr*—while the phrasing here is not the more common “*jā’ a fī l-tafsīr*” (i.e., it is claimed in the field *tafsīr*), which Farrā’ uses to indicate the non-philological tradition of Qur’ānic exegesis of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, this likely points to the *tafsīr* tradition as Akhfash similarly provides it as an example of paraphrastic exegesis<sup>52</sup> and it is found in this form in Muqātil’s *Tafsīr*.<sup>53</sup> No linguistic argumentation is attributed to “*tafsīr*,” which is standard practice in Farrā’ and Akhfash’s *Ma‘ānī*; there is no indication that they saw the *tafsīr* tradition as embodying or even referring to ‘*Arabiyyah*. Ultimately, Farrā’ manages to balance lexical and morphological consideration with respect to both the exegetical and philological traditions by acknowledging that there are multiple meanings to the verbal stem *j-r-m*; he unites these meanings, however, by citing an idiom of ‘*Arabiyyah* that he had heard personally that connotes both meanings.

The last early scholar worth mentioning is Abū ‘Ubaydah, though he directly quotes the ‘*arab* and their dialects only a handful of times.<sup>54</sup> However, he explicitly states in his introduction that the framework of inquiry presupposes that the language of the Qur’ān is built upon the linguistic habits of the ‘*arab*. And, while he may not attest to personal contact with the ‘*arab*, the frequency with which he cites the experiences of others demonstrates its essentiality. Abū ‘Amr is by far the most cited authority in the *Majāz* and the nature of these citations

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<sup>52</sup> Akhfash, *Ma‘ānī*, 1:272.

<sup>53</sup> Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 1:457.

<sup>54</sup> Abū ‘Ubaydah, *Majāz*, 2:22, 23, 170, 208.

demonstrates that Abū ‘Amr’s own grammatical theory was fundamental to Abū ‘Ubaydah’s.<sup>55</sup> Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb is also frequently cited; Qifṭī and Zubaydī report that Abū ‘Ubaydah said of Yūnus that “the only knowledge he had is what he saw with his own eyes.”<sup>56</sup> It should also be remembered that Abū ‘Ubaydah was a renowned transmitter of poetry who was said to have extensive contact with poets from among the ‘arab—in one report, Abū ‘Ubaydah along with Abū ‘Amr and Yūnus debated the etymology of the ‘*arabī rājiz* Ru’bah (a discussion which includes comparison of eloquence to genealogy). Thus, while there is little in the *Majāz* that attests to direct sourcing from the ‘arab on Abū ‘Ubaydah’s part, the work and his biography give us no reason to think he valued artificial analysis of language over direct citation of the ‘arab.

Early philologists were keen on pointing out when other scholars were not properly citing the ‘arab or ignoring them altogether. Khalīl spoke of the *naḥārīr* (purveyors of non-organic linguistic forms)<sup>57</sup> who purposefully created linguistic forms that cannot be found in the speech of the ‘arab.<sup>58</sup> There are the *naḥwiyyūn* who, in Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*, are depicted as those who produce analogous speech not heard among the ‘arab.<sup>59</sup> Sībawayhi grants that these scholars employ some form of methodology, but he does not depict it as one grounded in the speech of ‘arab but rather overly reliant on analogy (*qiyās*). Farrā’ too refers to the *naḥwiyyūn*, according to Talmon’s observations, when “he considers his own contribution innovative with

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<sup>55</sup> Talmon, *Eighth Century Iraqi-Grammar*, 106f.

<sup>56</sup> al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, 4:74: وقال أبو عبيدة: لم يكن عنده- يعنى يونس- علم إلا ما رآه بعين.

<sup>57</sup> Baalbaki, *The Arabic Lexicographical Tradition*, 28.

<sup>58</sup> Khalīl, *Ayn*, 1:53.

<sup>59</sup> Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 2:364: فإنما هو شيء قاسوه لم تكلم به العرب، ووضعوا الكلام في غير موضعه.

respect to them.”<sup>60</sup> While Talmon is also right in observing that it is “impossible to conclude how authoritative are the anonymous figures against whom Farrā’ addresses himself...,”<sup>61</sup> it should be noted that the citations of the *naḥwiyyūn* he provides from Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb* and Farrā’’s *Ma’ānī* do not engage the speech of the ‘*arab* but rather tend to portray questionable or contentious analogous reasoning—in short, there is no indication that these anonymous grammarians had sufficient (or even notable) contact with the ‘*arab*.

In this section, we have shown that direct contact with the ‘*arab* (real or alleged) to be a fundamental and indispensable aspect of the early study of Arabic linguistics. This is consistent across the evidence taken from extant works and from the biographical tradition. Furthermore, the leading authorities from this period (i.e., Abū ‘Amr, Khalīl, Kisā’ī) spent a significant amount of time in the desert collecting linguistic data. In the eyes of their students and peers, they were legitimate conduits to the ‘*arab* and could be cited as readily. While they travelled to cities for their studies as well, it was the same cities in Iraq (Baghdad, Basra, Kufa), mostly. We find stray references to travels to Syria (Abū ‘Amr died in Syria,<sup>62</sup> and there some accounts of Kisā’ī traveling to Syria).<sup>63</sup> Additionally, references to a Medinese/Hijazi school of grammar in Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb* and Farrā’’s *Ma’ānī* are indicative of linguistic scholarship outside of Iraq—it is unclear if these two scholars became acquainted with this school during their travels (we don’t have any information on either of them performing the *ḥajj*, though there is no reason to assume

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<sup>60</sup> Talmon, *Eighth Century Iraqi-Grammar*, 19.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, 4:135.

<sup>63</sup> Abū l-Khayr Shams al-Dīn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-nihāyah fī ṭabaqāt al-qurrā’* (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah, [n.d.]), 1:405.

they didn't) or if they met Medinese/Hijazi scholars in Iraq.<sup>64</sup> With only seven mentions in the *Kitāb* (four of which refer to readings rather than grammatical interpretations)<sup>65</sup> and two mentions in the *Ma'ānī* (but with around one hundred references to the *qirā'āt* of Medina),<sup>66</sup> it's next to impossible to speak to the sophistication of this school and its relation to the 'arab. Whatever the status of a Medinese school at the time, it is apparent that Iraqi philologists did not feel it necessary to travel to Medina to consult its scholars. While their goal may have been to describe and record the linguistic environment of the Qur'ān's revelation, geographical proximity to the site of the revelation was not qualifying unto itself and personal piety was not a prerequisite for relating linguistic material; contact with the 'arab was essential. With the collection, recording, and transmission of *ḥadīth*, on the other hand, we find that the matter was quite different.

### 3. The *Muḥaddithūn*

Though references to eloquence (*faṣāḥah*) and the *a'rāb* can be found in the *ḥadīth* literature (i.e., *ḥadīth* collections, manuals, biographical dictionaries, etc.), they are qualitatively different from their depictions in philological contexts. First, *a'rāb* is substantially more common than 'arab in *ḥadīth* literature when describing someone of a semi-nomadic background (both are found in philological works, but 'arabī and 'arab are decisively more frequent). Where eloquence for a *ḥadīth* transmitter is a distinguishing (and favored) feature, it is an indispensable quality for a language informant. And while we find references to the *a'rāb* in *ḥadīth* literature,

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<sup>64</sup> Rafael Talmon, "An Eighth-Century Grammatical School in Medina: The Collection and Evaluation of the Available Material," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 48, no. 2 (1985): 227.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 226–27.

<sup>66</sup> Farrā', *Ma'ānī*, 1:358, 2:81.

they are few and far between and do not impart the prestige found in philological scholarship. And, finally, early *ḥadīth* literature does not demonstrate serious engagement with philological scholarship. To be sure, there are as few sources for the development of *ḥadīth* scholarship in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century as there are sources for the development of grammar. When we speak of references to *aʿrāb* and eloquence, we mean references in works from a century or more after these references ostensibly took place. But our argument does not rest on these being accurate, but rather that they reflect the scale of importance of *ʿArabiyyah* and the *aʿrāb* in *ḥadīth* scholarship. References to eloquent transmitters supports there having been figures who delivered *ḥadīth* with proper *ʿArabiyyah*, but the paucity of references to the *aʿrāb* is indicative of its marginal importance in establishing the reliability of a transmitter.

Here is where it is tempting to incline towards the Abū Ḥayyān thesis, as this sounds like another way of saying “there were too many foreigners transmitting *ḥadīth* non-verbatim.” But there is an important distinction to be made: as our work in the previous chapters has shown, philologists demonstrated significant flexibility with the syntax and declension of poetry and the Qurʾān—thus, their concerns would not have been about change at this level (which occurred during the transmission of any material) but about the lack of involvement of those who would make sure any changes were in line with correct *ʿArabiyyah*. True, there were a lot of *ʿajam* transmitting *ḥadīth* (there were many of *ʿarab* stock too, if not exactly a semi-nomadic desert dweller). But there were *ʿajam* among the philologists, only these *ʿajam* had extensive contact with the *ʿarab* or mentors who had done so. This may appear an *argumentum ad ignorantiam* in that we are arguing from a lack of *aʿrāb* among the transmitters. But it must be remembered that the issue is one of scale, that awareness of philological concerns about the transmission of *ḥadīth* did not reach a level that would have resulted in a total embargo—that is, that *ḥadīth* transmitters

simply did not have the linguistic and cultural cachet that was the legitimating factor in Arabic philology.

In the final pages of this dissertation, we will do the following: 1) show that the *a' rāb* are of marginal importance in the biographical literature; 2) that while there was an appreciation of eloquence among *ḥadīth* scholars (and a common trait of the biggest figures), it is far from a requisite qualification; and 3) that 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century works on *ḥadīth* or Islamic law display a general interest in the study of *'Arabiyyah* but no sense of methodology or program of implementation. However, *ḥadīths* were beginning to emerge at this time that addressed issues related to the language of the *'arab* and the Qur'ān. We will conclude the chapter with a review of what the *ḥadīth* corpus had to say about its own language and that of Islam in general—this is, so to speak, a preview of where the study of the philology of *ḥadīth* in the centuries that follow will take us.

### 3.1. Did the *a' rāb* transmit *ḥadīth*? (Not really)

Hypothetically, the presence of *a' rāb* among the *ḥadīth* transmitters would support Abū Ḥayyān's thesis over this dissertation's thesis. If there were transmitters who could render a *ḥadīth* in proper *'Arabiyyah*, then it is plausible that his *ḥadīth* was rejected not because it was improper *'Arabiyyah* but because it didn't reflect the original *'Arabiyyah* of the Prophet, i.e., was still transmitted non-verbatim. But there are very few *a' rāb* mentioned in *ḥadīth* literature. When they are mentioned, it is not with reverence (sometimes the opposite). The value placed on association with the desert is, at best, incidental—from the perspective of language, that is. We find in the biographical literature descriptions of scholars' "knowledge of the *'arab*" (*'ilm bi-l-'arab*), which can apply to knowledge of their language but is also used for knowledge of their poetry in general, habits, histories (*ayyām*, battles) etc., this being a useful auxiliary tool to the

study of Islamic law. But, as we shall see, descriptions of important *ḥadīth* and legal scholars' knowledge of the *ʿarab* is decidedly non-linguistic.

To determine the importance of the *a ʿrāb* in *ḥadīth* transmission, I compared references to the *a ʿrāb* in the biographical literature to the most frequently cited *ḥadīth* collections from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> centuries. That is, for the latter, I searched Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *al-Jarḥ wa-al-ta'dīl* (Impugning and justifying [the men of *ḥadīth*]), Ibn Ḥibbān's *Thiqāt*<sup>67</sup> (The Trustworthy) and *Majrūḥīn*<sup>68</sup> (The Impugned), and Ibn Ḥajar's *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* (Approximation of [Mizzī's] (d. 742/1341) Revision),<sup>69</sup> *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Revision [Mizzī's Revision]), and *Ta'jīl al-manfa'ah* (The Hastening of Advantage)<sup>70</sup> and for *a ʿrābī* and its variations (i.e., with definite article, preceded by conjunctions and particles, other morphologies based on the root etc.). I then ran searches for the names associated with the *a ʿrāb* (both those found in the previously mentioned collections and Ibn Nadīm's list of *a ʿrāb* informants in the *Fihrist*)<sup>71</sup> in dozens of *ḥadīth* collections, including the *Ṣiḥāḥ*, from the time of Mālik (2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century) to Bayḥiqī (5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century). This produced the following conclusions:

1) Most *ḥadīth* transmitters who are called *a ʿrābī* come from the generation of the *ṣaḥābah*, followed by the *tābi ʿūn*, and the *tābi ʿū l-tābi ʿīn* (companions of the Prophet, those that

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<sup>67</sup> Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Thiqāt* (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyyah, 1973).

<sup>68</sup> Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb Al-Majrūḥīn Min al-Muḥaddithīn Wa-al-Ḍu'afā' Wa-al-Matrūkīn*, ed. Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyid (Aleppo: Dār al-Wa'y, 1396).

<sup>69</sup> Abū l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, ed. Muḥammad 'Awwāmah (Syria: Dār al-Rashīd, 1986).

<sup>70</sup> Abū l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar and Ikrām Allāh Imdād al-Ḥaqq, *Ta'jīl al-manfa'ah* (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā'ir, 1996).

<sup>71</sup> Abū l-Faraj Muḥammad ibn al-Ishāq Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ramaḍān (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1997), 70.

followed, and those that followed those that followed, i.e., to the end of the Umayyad period). There are a few from the 2nd century, but they are mentioned as students of important figures like Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Shu‘bah; there are only a handful mentioned from the 3rd/9th century onwards. It is difficult to draw conclusions about this distribution—there were only around two dozen figures (out of tens of thousands) who came up in my searches. It is worth observing, however, that if association with the *a‘rāb* was a legitimating factory it was not back projected on the first generations of transmitters—what we observe instead in the back projection of *isnāds* is the tendency to latch on to figures specifically legitimated by personal or family connections—e.g., Zuhrī→ ‘Urwah ibn Zubayr→ ‘Ā’ishah.<sup>72</sup>

2) The moral stature of these figures (e.g., Zuhrī, ‘Urwah, ‘Ā’ishah) differs substantially from the *a‘rāb*, of their time and long after. The *a‘rāb* were gradually acclimated to Islam, if we are to believe the reports of frustrated companions of the Prophet and early Islamic leaders lecturing the *a‘rāb* on their now prohibited practices.<sup>73</sup> Even references to their eloquence, so familiar to philology, are entirely absent here.

3) Most references to the *a‘rāb* are brief and the vast majority of the *a‘rāb* mentioned are either unknown (*majhūl*) or transmitted only a handful of *ḥadīth*. The purported *ṣaḥābī* Asmar ibn Mudarris (fl. 1st/7th century, *ṣaḥābī*) and his daughter ‘Aqīlah are both described as *a‘rābī*<sup>74</sup> and are ascribed a single *ḥadīth*.<sup>75</sup> One transmitter referred to as an *a‘rābī*, Salīm ibn Muṭṭir (fl.

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<sup>72</sup> Schoeler, G., “‘Urwa-b. al-Zubayr,” in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. And Lecker, M., “al-Zuhri,” in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs

<sup>73</sup> E.g., stopping an *a‘rābī* from peeing in the mosque (Mālik ibn Anas, *Muwatta‘*, 1:64; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:54.)

<sup>74</sup> Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 2:343.

<sup>75</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, 1:338.

1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century, *tābi* ʿī), was described as “rejected due to how little he transmitted” (*munkar ʿalā qillat riwāyatihī*).<sup>76</sup> Bistām ibn al-Naḍr (fl. 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century) transmitted a *ḥadīth* from an anonymous *a ʿrābī*, but it is the only *ḥadīth* ascribed to him.<sup>77</sup> Of the over two-dozen figures I’ve found who are called *a ʿrābī* or transmitted from an anonymous *a ʿrābī*, only two transmitted a significant quantity of *ḥadīth*: ʿAwf al-A ʿrābī (fl. mid-2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century) and Abū Saʿīd ibn al-A ʿrābī (d. 340/952).

ʿAwf was a student of Shuʿbah’s and is counted among the *thiqāt*.<sup>78</sup> While not a central figure, he transmitted a significant number of *ḥadīth* and appears in *isnāds* in the *muṣannafs* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq<sup>79</sup> and Ibn Abī Shaybah<sup>80</sup> and the *sunan* of Abū Dāwud<sup>81</sup> and Nisāʿī.<sup>82</sup> We have little information about his origins or tribal affiliations; though, Ibn Saʿd describes him as a *mawlā* of Ṭayʿ and Dhahabī says decisively that he is “not an *a ʿrābī*.” These are the only two references to his origin aside from his *laqab*; if he is indeed from among the *a ʿrāb* then our sources did not feel that detail adds to his profile as a *ḥadīth* transmitter. Similarly, Abū Saʿīd is

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<sup>76</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūhīn*, 1:354.

<sup>77</sup> Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 2:414; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 6:111.

<sup>78</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 7:296; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 7:15.

<sup>79</sup> Abū Bakr ʿAbd al-Razzāq, ed., *al-Muṣannaf* ([India]: Al-Majlis al-ʿIlmī, 1403), 10:11.

<sup>80</sup> Abū Bakr Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Ḥūt (Riyad: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1409), 1:131, 6:222.

<sup>81</sup> Abū Dāwud Sulaymān ibn al-Ashʿath, *Sunan* (Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyyah, ca1985), 1:209.

<sup>82</sup> Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad ibn Shuʿayb al-Nisāʿī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, ed. Ḥasan ʿAbd al-Munʿim Shiblī (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risālah, 2001), 2:119, 6:325.

also decidedly not portrayed as an *a 'rābī*; in fact, it is his Sufism that garners the most attention.<sup>83</sup>

In some of the biographical literature dedicated to the philologists, there are accounts of non-philologists excelling in knowledge of poetry and 'arab history and culture. Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820) was reported to have taught poetry. Aṣma'ī, for example, reported that he studied the poetry of Shanfarā with Shāfi'ī and was said to have studied the poetry of Hudhayl with a “man from the Āl Muṭṭalib by the name of Ibn Idrīs [al-Shāfi'ī].”<sup>84</sup> The famous 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century historian Zubayr ibn Bakkār traced his knowledge to Shāfi'ī, who taught Zubayr's uncle about the poetry and battles of the 'arab.<sup>85</sup> Shāfi'ī's travels and studies make him unique among scholars of the late 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. First, his *rihlāt* extended to both the desert (*bādiyah*) and the cities around the Islamic empire. He is described as first pursuing knowledge of “poetry, the battles of the 'arab (*ayyām al-nās*, lit. days of the people) and *adab*” before pursuing *fiqh* (which he took up only after being admonished for pursuing the “childish” topic of poetry).<sup>86</sup> His travels to the desert were limited according to the biographical sources, only to the territory of Hudhayl around Mecca.<sup>87</sup> His travels to study *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* were much more widespread. He read the *Muwatta'* with Mālik at an early age, travelled through Yemen where he served as governor, studied with the Ḥanafī jurist Shaybānī (while remaining, for the time, a Mālikī) in Baghdād and then to Egypt where he settled, taught, and formed his own school. Shāfi'ī is an exceptional figure, and

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<sup>83</sup> Yūsuf ibn Quzaghī Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat khawāṣṣ al-ummah fī khaṣā'is al-a'immaḥ*, ed. 'Āmir al-Najjār (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīniyyah, 2006), 3:852.

<sup>84</sup> Suyūfī, *Muzhir*, 1:126.

<sup>85</sup> Abu Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhiqī, *Manāqib Al-Shāfi'ī*, ed. Al-Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, 1970), 2:45.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:96.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:100.

his knowledge of the *‘arab* features prominently in his biography. However, references to his knowledge of the *‘arab* are limited to the poetry of Hudhayl and battles and histories (primarily Hudhayl, though it is implied he studied other tribes).

The biographies of other early important *ḥadīth* scholars and jurists do not feature encounters with the *‘arab* like seen with Shāfi‘ī. Mālik was a resident of Medina and thus in the proximity of the eloquent *‘arab* of the Ḥijāz; but his biography centers on his activity in Medina and how this afforded him access to members of the Prophet’s household and other key figures in *ḥadīth* transmission associated with the city. The same can be said of earlier figures like ‘Urwah ibn Zubayr and Zuhri; from the time of the Prophet’s death until the time of Shāfi‘ī and beyond, living in Mecca and Medina afforded a prestige derived from proximity to the Prophet, his companions, and their descendants. When travelling for the sake of gathering *ḥadīth* became a widespread practice, cities were the targets of scholars. Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s work, *al-Riḥlah fī ṭalab al-ḥadīth* (Travels in Search of *Ḥadīth*)<sup>88</sup> is full such travel stories: Abū l-Dardā’ relating a *ḥadīth* to someone who came to him in Damascus from Medina;<sup>89</sup> Sha‘bī (d. 103/723) is said to have visited several cities to verify the veracity of a single *ḥadīth*;<sup>90</sup> even the extensive travels of Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, who lived at a time by which *ḥadīth* had become widely known in the town and desert, are limited to the cities (Mecca, Medina, Ṣalā, Fuṣṭāt, Ṭabariyyah, Jerusalem, Damascus, Homs, Antakya, Tarsus, Baysān, Raqqā, Baghdad).<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Riḥlah fī ṭalab al-ḥadīth*, ed. Nūr al-Dīn ‘Atar (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1395).

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

Baghdādī’s work is consistent in this respect: *ḥadīth* scholars focused on cities in their travels. This is even purportedly the case for the *ṣaḥābah*, whom Baghdādī reports were already interested in collecting and comparing *ḥadīth* as they scattered across the conquered lands.

Interestingly, one *ṣaḥābī* is called an *a’rābī* during his travels:

...from Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh, who said, “I heard of a *ḥadīth* from one of the Prophet’s companions. So, I bought a camel and loaded it up for travel I traveled to him for a month before I arrived to a *miṣr*.” [Jābir continued], “A black slave-boy came out to me, and I said, ‘Ask so-and-so if I may enter.’ So, he entered and said, ‘There is an *a’rābī* at the door asking for permission to enter.’ He replied, ‘Go out to him and ask him ‘who are you?’” [Jābir] said, “Tell him its Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh.” He went out to [Jābir] and each clung to his companion. He said, “What brought you?” and [Jābir] replied, “I hear that you relate a *ḥadīth* from God’s messenger on *qiṣāṣ* (revenge killing). I don’t know anyone who has memorized it except you. I would love for you to recall it to me.” He said, “Yes, I heard the God’s messenger say...”

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ بَلَغَنِي حَدِيثٌ عَنْ رَجُلٍ، مِنْ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَاسْتَرَيْتُ بَعِيرًا فَسَدَدْتُ عَلَيْهِ رَحْلًا، ثُمَّ سِرْتُ إِلَيْهِ شَهْرًا حَتَّى قِيمْتُ مِصْرَ، قَالَ: فَخَرَجَ إِلَيَّ غُلَامٌ أَسْوَدٌ فَقُلْتُ: اسْتَأْذِنْ لِي عَلَى فُلَانٍ، قَالَ: فَدَخَلَ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ أَعْرَابِيًّا بِالْبَابِ يَسْتَأْذِنُ، قَالَ فَاخْرُجْ إِلَيْهِ، فَقُلْ لَهُ مَنْ أَنْتَ؟ قَالَ: فَقَالَ لَهُ: أَحْبَبُهُ أَنِّي جَابِرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: فَخَرَجَ إِلَيْهِ، فَالْتَزَمَ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا صَاحِبَهُ قَالَ: فَقَالَ: مَا جَاءَ بِكَ [ص:114]، قَالَ حَدِيثٌ بَلَغَنِي أَنَّكَ تُحَدِّثُ بِهِ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي الْقِصَاصِ، وَمَا أَعْلَمُ أَحَدًا يَحْفَظُهُ غَيْرَكَ فَأَحْبَبْتُ أَنْ تُنَادِرَنِي، فَقَالَ: نَعَمْ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ...:92

There are two points worth noting: first, that the journey is to and from an urban center. Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī was a member of the Khazraj tribe and a native of Medina (the likely starting point of the journey) and in other versions of this story (where Jābir is not called an *a’rābī*) his destination is an urban center (*miṣr*) in Shām.<sup>93</sup> This is the case for stories of the travels of the rest of the *ṣaḥābah* in Baghdādī’s work. Moreover, it aligns with the dominant narrative of Islam’s early years: The Prophet’s companions spread out among the *amṣār* taking Islam with them. In our comparison of works of *jarḥ wa-ta’dīl* and *ḥadīth* collections, we did not find evidence of a companion settling down with a specific group of *a’rābī* and relating *ḥadīth* to

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 110.

them (whereas this was quite common in Islam’s emerging urban centers). This is all to say that even if the companions themselves spoke a version of attestable ‘*Arabiyyah*, it was almost immediately transferred to a linguistically diverse urban environment. To be sure, for the first few decades of their history the *amṣār* were populated by conglomerates of ‘*arab* tribes. But, assuming language behaved back then as it does today, their dialects would begin influencing one another immediately; not to mention the effect of the sizeable settlements of Persians and Arameans by the end of the century in said *amṣār*. As mentioned above, most of the *a ‘rāb* mentioned in the biographical dictionaries are from the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century—by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century the *a ‘rāb* are absent from these travel stories.

The second point worth noticing is that the report makes a point of mentioning that a black slave-boy (*ghulām aswad*) called Jābir an *a ‘rābī*. Ethnic perceptions are very much based on their context—time and place most of all—and the fact that this is a report about the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century recorded in the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century seriously complicates matters. The term *a ‘rābī* varies in terms of who it describes and the extent of its pejorative connotations (*ghulām aswad* is more stable). It should not necessarily be taken to mean the Jābir, a lifelong resident of Medina, was considered an *a ‘rābī* in the sense of being a semi-nomadic desert dwelling with all the uncouth trimmings (though he may have appeared as much to the slave boy after a month’s travel). Thus, references to the *a ‘rāb* among the early generations in *ḥadīth* literature should not be taken to necessarily reflect the meaning of *a ‘rāb* known to the philologists of the late 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, the *a ‘rāb* found in *ḥadīth*, though, who encountered the Prophet and his companions do resemble the *a ‘rāb* described by philologists—that is, they are an “other,” different from the ‘*arab* of cities even like Mecca and Medina, whose customs and behaviors

haven't always caught up with new Islamic norms.<sup>94</sup> This is all to say that not only are there very few references to the *a 'rāb* in *ḥadīth* literature, but also these references do not all employ *a 'rāb* in the same way.

The *ḥadīth* literature shows that the *a 'rāb* contributed little to *ḥadīth* transmission in the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> centuries. They are mentioned sporadically, those who are mentioned transmitted very little, and the semantic chronology of the term *a 'rābī* is itself problematic. While Shāfi'ī was said to have traveled to study with Hudhayl, he is only reported to have taught poetry and history and not grammar or lexicography. Shāfi'ī is also unique in this respect as we do not find other non-philologists—transmitter, jurists or otherwise—travelling to the desert at that time. Instead, reports of travels in search of *ḥadīth* are set in urban centers going back to the time of the companions. While the content of *ḥadīth* still represented *'Arabiyyah*, culturally and linguistically speaking, its handlers did not.

### 3.2. But weren't a lot of the early *muḥaddithūn faṣīḥ*? (Of course!)

Despite the absence of authentic *'arab* or *a 'rāb* transmitters, there were still many who were described as *faṣīḥ* (eloquent). This is true of Mālik,<sup>95</sup> Shāfi'ī,<sup>96</sup> Awzā'ī,<sup>97</sup> Ḥammād ibn Salamah,<sup>98</sup> Ḥasan al-Baṣrī,<sup>99</sup> and Abū Mushir.<sup>100</sup> These scholars represent a fair geographic

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<sup>94</sup> Restö, *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads*, 82f.

<sup>95</sup> al-Bayhiqī, *Manāqib*, 2:41.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:226, 2:49, 176, 177, 237, 251, 258, 267.

<sup>97</sup> Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Mukram Ibn Manzūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq*, ed. Rūḥiyyah al-Naḥḥās, Riyāḍ 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Murād, and Muḥammad Muṭī' (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr li-l-Ṭabā'ah wa-al-Tawzī' wa-al-Nashr, 1984), 14:315.

<sup>98</sup> Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a 'lām Al-Nubalā'* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2006), 7:107.

<sup>99</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān, *Thiqāt*, 4:122.

<sup>100</sup> Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ*, 1:287.

distribution as well, each with adequate overlap with the domain of the eloquent *‘arab*. This prompts the question: if the *‘arab* were *faṣīḥ* and the *muḥaddithūn* were *faṣīḥ*, then why would philologists take from one but not the other? The answer is that eloquence was a natural state of the *‘arab* but only an interpretive tool for the *muḥaddithūn*. The grammar of what an *‘arab* said could be mapped to other speech but all an eloquent *muḥaddith* could do was repeat what he heard or alter it to make it grammatical—to be sure, philologists did this too, but they had the advantage of hearing their material directly from the *‘arab* whereas the *muḥaddith* heard it from another *muḥaddith*. This can be demonstrated by a quick examination of reports of *ḥadīth* scholar’s eloquence (they are short and few) as well as a look at how philologists looked at the language of *ḥadīth* scholars.

Most references to scholars’ eloquence in the biographical dictionaries come at the end of their entry, one in a list of laudatory adjectives along the lines of: [he was] “brilliant in *‘Arabiyyah*, knowledgeable, eloquent and well-spoken”<sup>101</sup> or “he was from the notable *muḥaddithūn*, perceptive in language (*lughāt*, dialects?), eloquent and articulate.”<sup>102</sup> For the most part there are few details that tie their eloquence to practice. However, several of the *muḥaddithūn* who are described as *faṣīḥ* are also described as having studied *‘Arabiyyah*, namely Ḥammād ibn Salamah (who also taught)<sup>103</sup> and Shāfi‘ī.<sup>104</sup> The early 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century grammarian Māzinī (d. 247/862) is quoted as stating “Shafi‘ī is a *ḥujjah* (lit. proof but here meaning

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<sup>101</sup> Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī, *Ṭabaqāt ‘ulamā’ al-ḥadīth*, ed. Akram al-Būshī and Ibrāhīm al-Zaybaq (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 1996), 1:308.

<sup>102</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥuffāz* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1403), 462.

<sup>103</sup> al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 51.

<sup>104</sup> al-Bayhiqī, *Manāqib*, 1:97.

attestable) for us in grammar.”<sup>105</sup> Māzinī studied with Shāfi‘ī and we find him transmitting some of Shāfi‘ī’s legal and exegetical statements,<sup>106</sup> but nothing of grammatical value. The reader A‘mash, who also transmitted *ḥadīth*, is noted as a polymath and eloquent.<sup>107</sup> Ḥammād is reported to have said, “Whosoever commits a solecism [when relating] my *ḥadīth* has lied about me,”<sup>108</sup> and “One who studies *ḥadīth* but not grammar is like a donkey loaded with an empty grain bag.”<sup>109</sup> He also taught Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb *‘Arabiyyah*—and Sībawayhi decided to learn *‘Arabiyyah* after being admonished by Ḥammād for improperly reciting a *ḥadīth*, though Sībawayhi went elsewhere for his education. Ḥammād is an outlier; no other *muḥaddith* is reported to have taught *‘Arabiyyah*. As mentioned above, Shāfi‘ī taught in the ancillary fields of *‘arab* history and poetry, but not *‘Arabiyyah* itself. Ultimately, the eloquence of these scholars did not give them standing in philological circles, apart from Ḥammād though his linguistic prestige came not from studying *ḥadīth*.

Early works of philology offer some clues regarding the linguistic backgrounds of *ḥadīth* transmitters. The *Ma‘ānī l-Qur‘ān* of Farrā’ and Akhfash both frequently mention the lexical knowledge of the *mufassirūn* (exegetes), who drew from the *ḥadīth* corpus in their interpretations of the Qur‘ān; but only Farrā’ refers directly to the *muḥaddithūn*. Two are truly illuminating and deserve to be quoted full:

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 2:44.

<sup>106</sup> Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Naḥḥās, *Umdat al-kuttāb*, ed. Bassām ‘Abd al-Waḥḥāb al-Jābī (Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2004), 47, 201, 295, 426; Ibn Jinnī, *Khaṣā‘iṣ*, 1:206.

<sup>107</sup> Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Ijlī, *al-Thiqāt* (Mecca: Dār al-Bāz, 1984), 204.

<sup>108</sup> Abū l-Sa‘īd al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Sīrāfi, *Akḥbār al-naḥwiyyīn al-Baṣriyyīn*, ed. Ṭaha Muḥammad al-Zaynī and Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Khafājī (Cairo: Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mun‘im, 1373), 35.

<sup>109</sup> al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, 1:364.

And the verse: The people of paradise that day will have the best abodes and finest resting places. [Farrā'] said: Some of the *muḥaddithūn* related that He finishes judgement of humanity in the half of the day then places the people of paradise in paradise and the people of hellfire in hellfire. That is [the reference in] “best abodes and finest resting places.” The *ahl al-kalām* (theologians), if an idiot and rational man gather before them, would not find it permissible to say, “This is the dumber of the two” or “the more rational of the two,” for they say, “We do not say, ‘This is the more rational of the two’ unless the two are rational but one more so than the other.” I’ve heard the verse “*khayrun mustaqarran*” where the people of paradise are made to have “better abodes” than the people of fire; but there is nothing good about the abode of the people of hellfire, so know that this is an error on the part of these two.

وقوله: (أصحاب الجنة يومئذ خير مستقرا وأحسن مقيلا) قال: بعض المحدثين يرون أنه يفرغ من حساب الناس في نصف ذلك اليوم فيقيل أهل الجنة في الجنة وأهل النار في النار. فذلك قوله (خير مستقرا وأحسن مقيلا) وأهل الكلام إذا اجتمع لهم أحمق وعاقل لم يستجيزوا أن يقولوا: هذا أحمق الرجلين ولا أعقل الرجلين، ويقولون لا نقول: هذا أعقل الرجلين إلا لعاقلين تفضل أحدهما على صاحبه. وقد سمعت قول الله (خير مستقرا) فجعل أهل الجنة خيرا مستقرا من أهل النار، وليس في مستقر أهل النار شيء من الخير فاعرف ذلك من خطائهم<sup>110</sup>

This is the earliest reference to the *muḥaddithūn* and the *ahl al-kalām* in a work on Arabic linguistics that I have found. However, in addition to being a work of linguistics, it is also an exegesis of the Qur’ān, which makes the reference more at home. In this passage, Farrā’ uses a piece of exegetical information taken from the *muḥaddithūn* to contextualize the verse (that the people of paradise and hellfire will be placed in their abodes on the day of judgement). This is then followed by his account of how the *ahl al-kalām* conceive, on a semantic and logical level, of comparatives and superlatives (*ism tafḍīl* in later grammatical terminology). Taken together, they solve a grammatical problem, i.e., why are *mustaqarr* and *maqīl* in the accusative? Farrā’’s answer, from what I can discern, is that since the verse refers to the abodes of the people of paradise who have been judged worthy (details from the *muḥaddithūn*) and a comparative shouldn’t compare two classes of people (stupid vs. rational → resident of paradise vs. resident of hellfire, according to the *ahl al-kalām*), then semantically speaking the verse means the residents

<sup>110</sup> Farrā’, *Ma’ānī*, 2:266.

of paradise will have the “best abodes” rather than “better abodes than the people of hellfire.” The latter interpretation is implied by the reading “*kayran mustaqarran*,” which Farrā’ rejects. Grammatical thinking is ascribed to the *ahl al-kalām*, albeit on their terms, but not to the *muḥaddithūn*. However, in another location in the *Ma‘ānī*, Farrā’ refers to the *fuṣaḥā’* among the *muḥaddithūn* when explaining the language of the verse “*Muttaki’na ‘alā furush baṭā’ inuhā min istabraq*” (Leaning upon cushions stuffed with brocade, Raḥmān: 54)

And the verse, “Leaning upon cushions stuffed with brocade.”  
*istabraq*: thick brocade. *Baṭānah* (inside/belly) could mean *zahārah* (outside/back). *Zahārah* is *baṭānah* in the speech of the ‘*arab*, because each could be a side, so the ‘*arab* could say: This is the back of the sky, and this is belly of the sky, for the exterior which you see.

[Farrā’] said: One of the eloquent *muḥaddithūn* related to me that Ibn Zubayr condemned the murder of ‘Uthmān, God’s mercy upon him, and said, “They attacked him like thieves from behind the village. God killed them totally, and whoever escaped did so under the belly of the stars.” He means: they fled at night, and changed the backs of the stars to their bellies, and that is permissible according to what I’ve told you.

وقوله: مُتَّكِيْنَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ  
 الإستبرق: ما غلظ من الديباج، وَقَدْ تَكُونُ الْبَطَانَةُ: ظَهْرًا،  
 وَالظَّهْرَةُ بَطَانَةٌ فِي كَلَامِ الْعَرَبِ، وَذَلِكَ أَنْ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا قَدْ  
 يَكُونُ وَجْهًا، وَقَدْ تَقُولُ الْعَرَبُ: هَذَا ظَهْرُ السَّمَاءِ، وَهَذَا بَطْنُ  
 السَّمَاءِ لظَاهِرِهَا الَّذِي تَرَاهُ.

قال: وأخبرني بعض فصحاء المحدثين عن ابن الزبير يعيب قتلة  
 عثمان رحمه الله فقال: خرجوا عليه كاللصوص من وراء القرية،  
 فقتلهم الله كل قتلة، ونجا من نجا منهم تحت بطون الكواكب  
 يريد: هربوا ليلا، فجعل ظهور الكواكب بطونا، وذلك جائز على  
 ما أخبرتك به<sup>111</sup>

Here, Farrā’ grants the *muḥaddithūn* a modicum of insight: the *ḥadīth* they related features an idiomatic usage of inside vs. outside. It is important that Farrā’ marked his source as “one of the eloquent *muḥaddithūn*.” The problem the *ḥadīth* solves is introduced as an aspect of the *kalām al-‘arab*, their natural speech. This may be only one reference, but it is the only

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 3:118.

reference we have from a philologist from this time to linguistic abilities of the *muḥaddithūn*. Since the problem was tied to the natural speech of the ‘*arab*, it mattered that these *muḥaddithūn* understood this natural speech, which is implied by their designation as *fuṣaḥā’*. This passage alone does not speak to Farrā’'s concerns about non-*faṣīḥ* transmitters, whether he feared they faltered in transmission or performance of the *ḥadīth*. At a minimum, however, it does show eloquence was a qualification for the *muḥaddithūn* in matters related to the natural speech of the ‘*arab*. However, Farrā’'s *Ma‘ānī l-Qur‘ān* is unique; it incorporates many different disciplines and, unlike Akhfash’s *Ma‘ānī* or Abū ‘Ubaydah’s *Majāz* or Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*, features many *ḥadīth*, albeit for mostly exegetical and lexicographical reasons and only occasionally for grammar. We have, therefore, very little evidence from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century about the linguistic qualifications of *ḥadīth* scholars; with the exception of Shāfi‘ī, who wrote on the role of ‘*Arabiyyah* in scholarship in both the *Risālah* and the *K. al-‘Umm*.

### 3.3. Shāfi‘ī and ‘*Arabiyyah*

Shāfi‘ī does not employ grammatical terminology or methodology in his works, at least in a way that reflects Iraqi practice in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, there is still a significant amount of information on the position of ‘*Arabiyyah* in his hermeneutics and his attitude towards scholars of ‘*Arabiyyah*; this is most clear in a section in his *Risālah* on ‘*Arabiyyah* in which he states the following positions:

1) The Qur‘ān was revealed entirely in Arabic. This means both that there were no foreign words in the Qur‘ān and that there were no words the ‘*arab* found difficult. He supports this contention simply, stating that ‘*Arabiyyah* is the vastest language

structurally/methodologically speaking (*awsa ‘ al-lughāt madhaban*) with the largest vocabulary (*aktharuhā alfāzan*).<sup>112</sup>

2) He compares the study of ‘*Arabiyyah* to the study of *ḥadīth*; This is not a comparison of methodology—his point is rather to show that intense interpersonal study is required of scholars of both disciplines. He is quite clear in that ‘*Arabiyyah* can only be obtained from the ‘*arab* and that, “[o]nly those who have received it from the Arabs know it, and no one shares in it with them unless he has depended on them to learn it. Whoever receives it from them becomes one of the speakers of their language.”<sup>113</sup> Also, Shāfi‘ī states that ‘*Arabiyyah* was more accessible in his time than the study of *ḥadīth*, stating, “Knowledge of the majority of the language among the majority of the Arabs is more common than knowledge of the majority of Prophetic practices among the majority of scholars.”<sup>114</sup>

3) Shāfi‘ī viewed knowledge of ‘*Arabiyyah* as a prerequisite for the study of *ḥadīth* and the *sunnah*. A short quotation is worth quoting in full:

Regarding hadith-reports that seem inconsistent and which themselves do not indicate that abrogation has occurred, all the Prophet’s commands agree with each other and valid, without any contradiction between them. God’s Emissary was an Arabic speaker and a native Arab. The Arabs might say something in an unrestricted way and intend it to apply unrestrictedly, or unrestrictedly and intend it to apply in a restrictive way, as I have previously explained to you regarding the Book of God and accounts of the

فَأَمَّا الْمُخْتَلِفَةُ الَّتِي لَا دِلَالَةَ عَلَى أَيِّهَا نَاسِخٌ وَلَا أَيُّهَا مَنْسُوخٌ،  
فَكُلُّ أَمْرِهِ مُوْتَفِّقٌ صَحِيحٌ، لَا اخْتِلَافَ فِيهِ  
وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ عَرَبِيٌّ اللِّسَانِ وَالذَّارِ، فَقَدْ يَقُولُ الْقَوْلَ عَامًّا يُرِيدُ  
بِهِ الْعَامَّةَ، وَعَامًّا يُرِيدُ بِهِ الْخَاصَّ، كَمَا وَصَفْتُ لَكَ فِي كِتَابِ  
اللَّهِ وَسُنَنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ قَبْلَ هَذَا.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Shāfi‘ī, *Epistle*, 35.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 37 (Lowry’s translation). ومن قبله منها فهو من أهل لسانها

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 (Lowry’s translation). وعلم أكثر اللسان في أكثر العرب أعم من علم أكثر السنن في العلماء

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

practices of His Emissary. (Lowry's Translation)

Here, Shāfi'ī draws a connection between language use, language analysis, and the textual hermeneutics of his legal approach. Concerning language use, Shāfi'ī states the equivalence between the Prophet and the 'arab (*Rasūlu Allāhi 'arabiyyu l-lisāni wa-l-dāri*); this allows him to analyze the speech of both in the same terms: restricted (*khāṣṣ*) and unrestricted (*'āmm*). The Prophet's speech had restricted and unrestricted legal applications, just as the speech of the 'arab had restricted and unrestricted meaning (the terms *muqayyad* and *muṭlaq* became the standard in the context of semantics). We are not given specific examples, but it can be said in general that Shāfi'ī depicts legal and linguistic analysis as the synthetic product of a shared original principle; this is supported by his statement, "No one may reason by analogy unless he knows the prior practices, the opinions of the forebears, the people's consensus, their legal disagreements, and the Arabic language."<sup>116</sup>

These examples offer the most detailed look at the role of philologists and the study of 'Arabiyyah in the eyes of *ḥadīth* scholars during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. It is a limited look, as we are dealing with a single scholar (and an innovative one, at that!) and thus cannot speak to the larger situation, let alone the situation in Iraq where the discipline of philology as we know it was emerging. Early Ḥanafī works do not take up philological subjects; Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189/805) mentions 'Arabiyyah in the context of prayer or the performance of other verbal duties,<sup>117</sup> but there is no discussion of what constitutes 'Arabiyyah or how much one needs to know for prayer vs. scholarship. At any rate, in early works of there is no evidence

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 365. ولا يكون لأحد أن يقيس حتى يكون عالماً بما مضى قبله من السنن، وأقاويل السلف، وإجماع الناس، واختلافهم، ولسان العرب 365.

<sup>117</sup> Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, *al-Aṣl al-ma'rūf bi-l-mabsūṭ*, ed. Abū l-Wafā al-Afghānī (Karachi: Idārat al-Qur'ān wa-al-'Ulūm al-Islāmiyyah, 1966), 1:219, 2:357.

of a true philological analysis based on an established or even emerging methodology in works of early Islamic jurisprudence.

Early *ḥadīth* scholarship, by which we mean the collections of *ḥadīth* that emerged in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, does not reflect on the nature of the language of the corpus. Shaybānī's discussion of what language may be used in prayer is based on the opinions of jurists and not supported by *ḥadīth* (which is characteristic of Ḥanafī thought at the time). Among 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century collections of *ḥadīth*, I have found a statement attributed to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb encouraging "mutual understanding in 'Arabiyyah,"<sup>118</sup> or encouraging "deep learning of religion, mastering expressing what one sees, and learning 'Arabiyyah,"<sup>119</sup> or telling those speaking a foreign language around the Ka'bah to speak 'Arabiyyah.<sup>120</sup> But there is no treatment of the Arabic language that extends beyond extolling its virtues and the necessity of performing Islam's verbal customs in it. This changes rapidly in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, when a significant quantity of *ḥadīth* were recorded that not only address the nature of the Arabic language but position the *ḥadīth* corpus as a unique linguistic cypher of the Qur'ān specifically and 'Arabiyyah in general. Let us finish this dissertation, then with a review of these *ḥadīth*, for their emergence at the turn of the century is indicative of the consequence of the *ḥadīth* corpus's growing importance and the pressure this began to exert at the turn of the century.

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<sup>118</sup> Ma' mar, *Jāmi'*, 11:213.

<sup>119</sup> 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, 4:323.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:496.

#### 4. Views on ‘*Arabiyyah* in the Ḥadīth Corpus

The Qur’ān itself states explicitly that it is in Arabic (or, to our philologists’ term, ‘*Arabiyyah*).<sup>121</sup> Muslims going back to the time of the Prophet were keenly aware of the importance of the revelation being in Arabic (or, according to the philologists, ‘*Arabiyyah*). That the Prophet spoke Arabic (or, according to the philologists, ‘*Arabiyyah*) is frankly self-evident; no scholar to my knowledge, apart from a few modern revisionists,<sup>122</sup> has claimed he spoke another language or even a less prestigious dialect of ‘*Arabiyyah*. There was no dogmatic pressure to demonstrate that the Prophet spoke ‘*Arabiyyah*; there was, however, pressure to demonstrate that the Prophet spoke the most eloquent form(s)<sup>123</sup> of ‘*Arabiyyah*. The *ḥadīth* wherein the Prophet proclaims that “I am the most eloquent of the Arabs” was early. It is found in Ibn Hishām’s (d. 218/833) recension of Ibn Ishāq’s (d. 151/769) biography of the Prophet, likely written in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Over the next century, many *ḥadīth* were recorded that featured the Prophet’s prowess in and opinions about ‘*Arabiyyah*. Let us consider, then, the implications and reception of these *ḥadīths* in Islamic scholarship (philological and otherwise) in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>121</sup> See Q Aḥqāf 12; Yūsuf 2, Shu‘arā’ 195; Zukhruf 3; Ṭaha 113; Fuṣṣilat 3; Ra‘d 37; Zumar 28; Shūrā 7 (variously *qur’ānan/lisānan/ḥukman ‘arabiyyan*).

<sup>122</sup> Some scholars have asserted that Islam’s origins were non-Arab (e.g., Cook/Crone, *Hagarism*, op. cit.), which would imply that there was either no Muḥammad to speak ‘*Arabiyyah* or that, if he indeed existed, he lived where he would have spoken something other than ‘*Arabiyyah* (Aramaic or a less prestigious dialect of Arabic, perhaps). See also Luxemburg’s claim that much of the Qur’ān was written in Syriac, see Christoph Luxenberg, *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran: A Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Koran* (Berlin: H. Schiler, 2007).

<sup>123</sup> Muslim scholars have either stated he spoke the Meccan dialect, which itself was ostensibly an amalgam of the most eloquent dialects, or that he spoke a variety of dialects.

#### 4.1. Recitation of the Qur'ān

##### 4.1.1. *A 'ribū l-Qur'ān* (“Clearly recite the Qur'ān”)

There are variations of this *ḥadīth* found in works from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century attributed to the Prophet, Abū Bakr (d. 13/634), 'Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644), Ibn Mas'ūd (d. 32/650), and Ubayy ibn Ka'b (d. 30/648) to name but a few. In each, the meaning of *a 'ribū* (or, variously, *u 'riba*, *i 'rāb*, etc.) is the same. If this *ḥadīth* were originally composed with the grammatical meaning “speak with full case-endings” in mind, it would be rightly tempting to dismiss its authenticity. The grammatical meaning of *i 'rāb* would have been anachronistic during the time of the Prophet, when the meaning of *i 'rāb* more likely meant “speaking clearly full pronunciation.”<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, the task of this dissertation is not to determine the authenticity of any given *ḥadīth*; what matters is what scholars of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, when this *ḥadīth* is first recorded, thought it meant. First, let us review a few variations of this *ḥadīth*:

The Prophet:	أعربوا القرآن والتمسوا غرائبه	Clearly recite <sup>125</sup> the Qur'ān and grasp its strange [lexical] uses
Ibn Mas'ūd:	أعربوا القرآن فإنه عربي	Clearly recite the Qur'ān, for it is Arabic
Abū Bakr:	لأن أعرب آية أحب إلي من أن أحفظ آية	To clearly recite a verse is dearer to me than memorizing one.
'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb:	تعلموا إعراب القرآن كما تعلمون حفظه	Learn the clear recitation of the Qur'ān just as you've learned to memorize it.
'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb:	أعربوا القرآن فإنه عربي وتفقهوا في السنة	Clearly recite the Qur'ān for it is Arabic and learn the <i>sunnah</i> .

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<sup>124</sup> Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān*, 1:588.

<sup>125</sup> This translation of *i 'rāb* was chosen for its simplicity, and that it does not commit to an early or later meaning.

The addition of “*iltamisū gharā’ibahu*” (“grasp its strange [lexical] uses”) in the *ḥadīth* above attributed to the Prophet points to a philological meaning. “*Garīb*” at that time had taken the technical meaning of “strange or uncommon word”; many lexical works with *gharīb* in the title had been produced by the early 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>126</sup> Ibn Mas‘ūd’s is interesting in that he describes the Qur’ān as ‘*arabī*, just as the Qur’ān describes itself. While ‘*arabī* in the Qur’ān is most understood to mean “Arabic,” it should also be understood in opposition to ‘*ajam* (foreign or unclear).<sup>127</sup> The latter interpretation could apply to Ibn Mas‘ūd’s statement as well. However, in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century it was largely understood as “Arabic.”<sup>128</sup> Abū Bakr and ‘Umar’s statements are straightforward endorsements of what was felt in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century to be the requirements for proper liturgical recitation of the Qur’ān. Taken together, these statements reinforce the idea that the Qur’ān must be recited according to the laws of ‘*Arabiyyah*, at least from a 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century perspective. This was, and continued to be, the prevailing position of specialists in *qirā’āt* and non-specialists, though this rule, while certainly operative,<sup>129</sup> was not fully articulated until Ibn Mujādid’s work on the Seven Readings.<sup>130</sup>

Such *ḥadīths* became widespread after the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century in a large variety of works. During the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, however, I have only been able to find them in works of *faḍā’il al-Qur’ān* (“virtues of the Qur’ān), specifically the chapters on this topic in larger collections like Ibn Abī Shaybah’s (d. 239/849) *Muṣannaḥ*<sup>131</sup> and Sa‘īd ibn Manṣūr’s (d. 227/842) *Sunan*<sup>132</sup> or

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<sup>126</sup> Baalbaki, *The Arabic Lexicographical Tradition*, 36–45.

<sup>127</sup> Peter Webb, *Imagining the Arabs* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 118–19.

<sup>128</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, 1:588.

<sup>129</sup> Anṣārī, *Abū Zakarīyā al-Farrā’*, 297.

<sup>130</sup> Nasser, *Transmission*, 45–65.

<sup>131</sup> Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaḥ*, 6:116.

independent works like Abū ‘Ubayd’s (d. 224/838) *Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*.<sup>133</sup> The Qur’ān’s “virtues” according to these works include (in addition to proper recitation according to the rules of ‘*Arabiyyah*) accounting for its formation as a codex, proper demeanor during recitation (e.g., volume of one’s voice, crying during recitation, how to hold the book properly etc.), liturgical performance, and teaching the Qur’ān to non-Muslims. These *ḥadīth*, however, are strikingly absent from the chapters on the *faḍā’il al-Qur’ān* in Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim’s (d. 261/275) canonical *ḥadīth* collections.

Paul Kahle, based on a passage attributed to Farrā’ found in a document recovered from the Cairo Geniza,<sup>134</sup> argued that these *ḥadīths* indicate that the Qur’ān was originally recited in its Meccan environment without case endings, and it was rather the work of philologists that introduced *i’rāb* to Qur’ān recitation. The passage contains some variations on this *ḥadīth* and a synopsis of the early linguistic history of the Quraysh (i.e., that they created their own dialect by visiting the nomadic tribes of the environs of Mecca, or through marriage to the women from these tribes). However, the passage is preserved in a 6<sup>th</sup> century manuscript that is not a work attributed to Farrā’. Furthermore, the descriptions of linguistic situation in Mecca during the time of the Prophet share many parallels with Ibn Fāris’s description in his *Ṣāhibī fī fiqh al-lughah* but

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<sup>132</sup> Abū ‘Uthmān Sa’īd ibn Maṣṣūr, *Sunan Sa’īd Ibn Maṣṣūr*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A‘zamī ([India]: Dār al-Salāfiyyah, 1982), 1:146-49, 2:270-72.

<sup>133</sup> Al-Qāsim ibn Sallām Abū ‘Ubayd, *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān* ([Morocco]: Al-Mamlakah al-Maghribiyyah – Wazārat al-Awqāf wa-al-Shu‘ūn al-Islamiyyah, 1995), 2:177ff.

<sup>134</sup> Paul Kahle, “The Qur’ān and the ‘Arabīya,” in *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume*, ed. Samuel Löwinger and Joseph Somogyi, vol. Part I (Budapest, n.d.), 163–82; Paul Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959), 115–17; Paul Kahle, “The Arabic Readers of the Koran,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 8, no. 2 (April 1949): 65–71.

does not match his treatment of dialects in the *Ma‘ānī l-Qur‘ān*.<sup>135</sup> And, finally, these *ḥadīths* should not be taken as conclusive evidence that the Qur‘ān was not read without *i‘rāb* by a significant percentage of Muslims leading up to Farrā‘’s time; to be sure, there is nothing illogical in the conclusion that these *ḥadīths* indicate that some Muslims were not reading with full *i‘rāb*. It is plausible that, if these *ḥadīths* are indeed authentic, the Prophet and his companions directed such statements to these tribes. It is also plausible that, authentic or not, such *ḥadīths* were employed to legitimate the activity of philologists, i.e., the linguistic investigation of the Qur‘ān. While the latter feels more plausible to this author, the important point here is that 1) these *ḥadīth* tell us that philologians felt it necessary to stress the importance of the Qur‘ān to their audience and 2) that *ḥadīth* had the authority to prescribe how the Qur‘ān is treated and utilized, in linguistic matters and otherwise.

4.1.2. *Nazala l-Qur‘ānu ‘alā sab‘ati aḥruf* (“The Qur‘ān was revealed in seven modes”<sup>136</sup>)

This is a very significant and famous *ḥadīth*, known as the *sab‘at aḥruf* (seven modes) *ḥadīth*, which serves as the primary justification for the Qur‘ān’s variant readings. The keyword in this *ḥadīth* is *aḥruf* (sing. *ḥarf*), whose translation is problematic. Nasser has offered the best translation: “mode.” While Nasser is correct in stating that any translation of this term is a speculation as we are not entirely sure of what *ḥarf* (singular of *aḥruf*) meant at the time of the Prophet, there is plenty of evidence from the 3rd/9th century that supports this translation, chief among which is Abū ‘Ubayd’s commentary on the *ḥadīth*.<sup>137</sup> Shady Nasser has provided a

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<sup>135</sup> Larcher sees this as evidence that the idea predates Ibn Fāris, but he does not compare it to Farrā‘’s position in the *Ma‘ānī*; Pierre Larcher, “D’Ibn Fāris à al-Farrā‘: Ou, Un Retour Aux Sources Sur La Luġa al-Fushā,” *Asiatische Studien/Etudes Asiatiques* 59, no. 3 (2005): 797–814.

<sup>136</sup> See Nasser, *Transmission*, 15.

<sup>137</sup> Abū ‘Ubayd, *Fadā’il*, 2:178.

thorough analysis of the background and function of this *ḥadīth*, which we can summarize as follows: the earliest extant sources to include this *ḥadīth* date to the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century and the reliability of the *isnāds*<sup>138</sup> potentially date the *ḥadīth* to the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century. The following variants of this *ḥadīth*, all attributed to the Prophet, are worth review as well:

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | The Qur’ān was revealed in seven modes.   | إِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ نَزَلَ عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَحْرُفٍ. <sup>139</sup>  |
| 2 | This Qur’ān was revealed in seven modes, so do not quarrel about it. To do so is disbelief.   | إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ نَزَلَ عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَحْرُفٍ، فَلَا تَمَارَوْا فِيهِ، فَإِنَّ مِرَاءً فِيهِ كَفْرٌ. <sup>140</sup>  |
| 3 | This Qur’ān was revealed in seven modes. Whatever you’ve recited is correct. so do not quarrel about it. To do so is disbelief.   | إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ نَزَلَ عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَحْرُفٍ، فَأَيُّ ذَلِكَ قَرَأْتُمْ أَصَبْتُمْ، فَلَا تَمَارَوْا فِي الْقُرْآنِ، فَإِنَّ مِرَاءً فِيهِ كَفْرٌ. <sup>141</sup>   |
| 4 | I met Gabriel at Ahjār al-Mirā’ and said: Oh Gabriel, I was sent to an illiterate <sup>143</sup> community. Man, woman, slave boy, slave girl, even the old man could not read at all. So [Gabriel] said: the Qur’ān was revealed in seven modes. | لَقِيتُ جَبْرِيْلَ عِنْدَ أَحْجَارِ الْمِرَاءِ، فَقُلْتُ: يَا جَبْرِيْلُ، إِنِّي أُرْسِلْتُ إِلَى أُمَّةٍ أُمَّيَّةِ الرَّجُلِ وَالْمَرْأَةِ وَالغُلَامِ وَالْجَارِيَةِ وَالشَّيْخِ الْفَانِي الَّذِي لَمْ يَقْرَأْ كِتَابًا قَطُّ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ نَزَلَ عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَحْرُفٍ. <sup>142</sup> |
| 5 | From ‘Umar ibn al-Khāṭṭāb: He said: I heard Hishām ibn Ḥakīm ibn Ḥizām reading Sūrat al-Furqān in a different way than I recite it, and [different than] how the Prophet, peace be upon him, read it to me.                                       | عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ هِشَامَ بْنَ حَكِيمِ بْنِ جِرَامٍ يَقْرَأُ سُورَةَ الْفُرْقَانِ عَلَى غَيْرِ مَا أَقْرَأُهَا، وَقَدْ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ   |

<sup>138</sup> According to Harold Motzki’s methodology as employed by Nasser; Nasser, *The Transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qur’ān*, 18.

<sup>139</sup> Abū ‘Ubayd, *Faḍā’il*, 2:163.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 2:166.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 2:167.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> While the term “*ummī*” has been posited to mean “without scripture,” by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century it was largely understood to signify illiterate; see Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 2:259 and 23:371-2.

I grabbed him by his cloak and took him to the Prophet, peace be upon him, and said: I heard this man recite Sūrat al-Furqān differently than how you recite it to me. So, the Prophet said [to Hishām]: “Recite,” and he recited the recitation I had heard from him. The Prophet, peace upon him, said: “As such it was revealed,” then he said to me: “Recite,” so I recited and he said: “As such it was revealed, for the Qur’ān was revealed in seven modes, recite that which is feasible.”

صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَقْرَأْنِيهَا، فَأَخَذْتُ بِثَوْبِهِ، فَدَهَبْتُ بِهِ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ، فَقُلْتُ: إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ هَذَا يَفْرَأُ سُورَةَ الْفُرْقَانِ عَلَى غَيْرِ مَا أَقْرَأْتَنِي فَقَالَ: «أَقْرَأْ». .  
 فَقَرَأَ الْفِرَاءَةَ الَّتِي سَمِعْتُ مِنْهُ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «هَكَذَا أَنْزَلْتُ»، ثُمَّ قَالَ لِي: «أَقْرَأْ». . فَقَرَأْتُ، فَقَالَ: «هَكَذَا أَنْزَلْتُ، إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ نَزَلَ عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَحْرَفٍ،  
 فَأَقْرَأُوا مِنْهُ مَا تَيَسَّرَ.»<sup>144</sup>

Taken together, these *hadīths* provide a clear picture of, at a minimum, a 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century perspective of the Qur’ān’s original linguistic environment. First, is that the Prophet communicated to his community that God permitted linguistic diversity in the Revelation. Specifically, as intimated by the simple statement “whatever you’ve recited is correct” (#3), that the Qur’ān’s original audience possessed an inherent linguistic agency that resulted in a correct recitation so long as the reciter relied on his or her natural impulses. To deny or argue about this is disbelief (# 2, 3). That the Prophet describes his community as “illiterate” (“*ummiyyah*,” #4) is significant because it underscores this individual linguistic agency; his community did not recite the Qur’ān correctly because they were able to read a standardized version but rather because their main interaction with it was oral and aural, placing the importance of linguistic performance rather than linguistic analysis. ‘Umar’s story (#5) is particularly fascinating because it shows the Prophet simultaneously permitting two disparate readings. To be sure, these *hadīth* do not offer any clues as to the extent of permitted differences. As well shall see, philologists of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century took it upon themselves to define the permissible from the impermissible.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 2:163.

Consider Abū 'Ubayd's rather self-confident remarks on these *ḥadīth* (they are all found in his

*Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*):

We only see the Preserved<sup>145</sup> as the seven because they are well-known. The meaning of those seven is not that one mode (*ḥarf*) is in seven ways. This is something not present. But for us [it means] that it was revealed in seven different Arabic dialects (*luḡhāt...min luḡhāt al-'arab*) in all the Qur'ān. One mode is one tribe's dialect, and the second from another one, and the third from and likewise until seven.

...

These *ḥadīths* that mention tribes and proofs of their speech clarifies of the meaning of the seven modes that they are dialects. Some people corrupt this meaning [by basing it on] another *ḥadīth*: The Qur'ān was revealed in seven: permitted (*ḥalāl*) and forbidden (*ḥarām*), *muḥkam* and *mutashābihāt* [i.e., clear and ambiguous verse], news of what came before you and what will come after, and proverbs" Abū 'Ubaydah said: I know this *ḥadīth*, I have heard arguments [in its favor] from Layth, [who heard it] from 'Uqayl, from Ibn Shihāb, from Salamah ibn Abī Salamah, from his father, who raised it [to the Prophet]. But this [*ḥadīth*] is related to the other. Rather, the meaning of "the Qur'ān was revealed in seven" is seven features, or seven qualities. As for, the *ḥadīth* on the *sab'at aḥruf*, *aḥruf* can only mean dialects. This interpretation is clear in the *ḥadīth* itself. Do you not see how 'Umar said: "I heard Hishām ibn Ḥakīm read Sūrat al-Furqān differently than I?" And the same with Ubayy ibn Ka'b when he differed with another person in recitation; and 'Abd Allāh [Ibn Mas'ūd] difference with another, and likewise the *ḥadīth* of 'Umar ibn al-'Āṣ. Do you not see that their differences are in the aspects and modes in which utterances differ? As for interpretation (of the *ḥadīth*), they do not differ on it, the *ḥadīth* of 'Abd Allāh (Ibn Mas'ūd) clarifies it.

ولا نرى المحفوظ إلا السبعة، لأنها المشهورة. وليس معنى تلك السبعة أن يكون الحرف الواحد يقرأ على سبعة أوجه، هذا شيء غير موجود، ولكنه عندنا أنه نزل على سبع لغات متفرقة في جميع القرآن من لغات العرب، فيكون الحرف منها بلغة قبيلة، والثاني بلغة أخرى سوى الأولى، والثالث بلغة أخرى سواهما، كذلك إلى السبعة.<sup>146</sup>

...

فهذه الأحاديث التي فيها ذكر القبائل، والاحتجاج بكلام العرب، بين لك معنى السبعة الأحرف أنها إنما هي اللغات. وقد حمل بعض الناس معناها على الحديث الآخر: نزل القرآن في سبع؛ حلال وحرām، ومحكم، ومتشابه، وخبر ما قبلكم، وخبر ما بعدكم، وضرب الأمثال. "قال أبو عبيد: وقد عرفت هذا الحديث، سمعت حجاجا يحدثه عن الليث، عن عقيل، عن ابن شهاب، عن سلمة بن أبي سلمة، عن أبيه، يرفعه. وليس هذا من ذلك في شيء، إنما هذا «القرآن نزل في سبع»، ومعناه سبع خصال، أو سبع خلال، وتلك الأحاديث إنما هي «نزل القرآن على سبعة أحرف» والأحرف لا معنى لها إلا اللغات. مع أن تأويل كل حديث

<sup>145</sup> I.e., the Qur'ān (see *al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*, the "preserved tablet," a name given to the Qur'ān).

<sup>146</sup> Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il*, 2:168.

منها بين في الحديث نفسه. ألا ترى أن عمر قال: سمعت  
 هشام بن حكيم يقرأ سورة الفرقان على غير ما أقرأ؟ فكذلك  
 حديث أبي بن كعب حين اختلف هو وغيره في القراءة، ومنه  
 اختلاف عبد الله مع غيره، ومثله حديث عمرو بن العاص.  
 أفلمست ترى اختلافهم إنما كان في الوجوه والحروف التي  
 تفرق فيها الألفاظ، فأما التأويل فلم يختلفوا فيه، ويبينه حديث  
 عبد الله.<sup>147</sup>

Abū ‘Ubayd was both a prominent philologist and jurist, and this opinion reflects his expertise in both fields. This passage also demonstrates that Abū ‘Ubayd felt that the *ḥadīths* should be taken together to define his contemporaries’ approach to the language of the Qur’ān. His assertiveness is also noteworthy: e.g., “As for interpretation (of the *ḥadīth*), they do not differ on it, the *ḥadīth* of ‘Abd Allāh (Ibn Mas‘ūd) clarifies it.” Of course, there was substantial differences on the meaning and authenticity of this *ḥadīth*, the most obvious of which was the Shī‘ī rejection of the *sab‘at aḥruf* tradition.<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless, what we know about Abū ‘Ubayd suggests that his opinions were fairly noncontentious among the *ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-jamā‘ah*. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was said to have disapproved of Abū ‘Ubayd’s interest in Farrā’’s *Ma‘ānī* but this is the most significant disapproval to appear in the biographical sources.<sup>149</sup>

Abū ‘Ubayd’s *Faḍā’il* differs from other works/chapters from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century in that he supports the principle of the *sab‘at aḥruf* with *ḥadīths* that specifically mention the dialects

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 2:175.

<sup>148</sup> Nasser, *Transmission*, 31–32.

<sup>149</sup> Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām ‘Abd al-Mun‘im (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2002), 1:105; see also Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, 12:403 (Baghdādī claims Abū ‘Ubayd did not finish the work because he died).

that comprise the seven modes. The *ḥadīths* he cites exclusively mention tribes from the Western Arabia: Quraysh, Khuzā‘ah, Sa‘d ibn Bakr, Jashm ibn Bakr (originally part of Taghlib, but migrated to Arabia during the 6<sup>th</sup> century), Naṣr ibn Mu‘āwiyah, Thaḳīf, and Hudhayl.<sup>150</sup> However, even a cursory examination of grammatical texts from this time shows that while many philologists expressed their admiration of these tribes’ dialects, the amount of linguistic data attributed to them is disproportionately small—often, philologists consulted the poetry of tribes from Najd and the semi-nomadic ‘*arab* who frequented Kufa and (more often) Basra. This contradiction is a feature of Arabic philology throughout its history: to analyze the West Arabian ‘*Arabiyyah* of the Qur’ān, philologists used data drawn from central and north-east Arabia. Moving past this contradiction was made possible by the content of these *ḥadīths*, which describe the linguistic environment of Qur’ān’s revelation as initially confused but flexible.

#### 4.1.3. *Sa-tuqayyimuhu al-‘arab* (“The ‘Arab will set it straight”)

It is reported that when ‘Uthmān was presented with some of the first copies of the Qur’ān, he found some ungrammatical passages (*ḥurūf min al-laḥn*); but he was not worried, and instead told those he tasked with compiling the Qur’ān the following: “Don’t change it, the ‘Arab will change it.” Or, alternatively, “They will i‘rāb (*sa-tu‘ribuhā*) it according to their language. If the scribe is from Thaḳīf and the one who dictates it from Hudhayl, you won’t find [these errors].”<sup>151</sup> Most attribute this statement to ‘Uthmān, though it has also been attributed to the Prophet.<sup>152</sup> It is a question worth asking if this was ever taken as license for the ‘Uthmānic script to break the rules of ‘*Arabiyyah*. This *ḥadīth* is often cited in the context of one specific verse of

<sup>150</sup> Abū ‘Ubayd, *Faḍā’il*, 2:169-70.

<sup>151</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fi ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrahīm (Cairo: al-Hay‘ah al-Miṣrīyah al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1974), 2:320.

<sup>152</sup> Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī*, 2:183.

the Qur’ān: *Inna hādhāni la-sāhirāni* (“These two are magicians”). The problem here is that the verse breaks a standard rule of not just the reified ‘*Arabiyyah*’ that philologists expected from the Qur’ān. *Hādhāni* is in the nominative case whereas it should be in the accusative as it is the subject of the nominal sentence that follows the particle *inna* (which changes the subject of the sentence from the nominative to the accusative). If rendered grammatically, it should be *hādhayni* instead. However, the grammatical reading is a minority among the canonical seven, which is indicative of the extent to which many felt it necessary to adhere to the ‘Uthmānic script. Let us consider the position of a few prominent philologists on the matter:

To explain why some readers went against the ‘Uthmānic script for *Hādhāni*, Farrā’ quotes a slightly different version of this *ḥadīth* (but attributes it to the Prophet) and another *ḥadīth* on the same subject attributed to ‘Ā’ishah:

His statement: *(Inna Hādhāni la-sāhirāni)*  
 The readers differ in this. Some say: It is ungrammatical, but we pass over it so as not to contradict the Book [i.e., ‘Uthmānic script]. Abū l-‘Abbās [Tha‘lab] told us: Muḥammad [ibn ?] told us: Farrā’ said: Abū Mu‘āwiyah al-Ḍarīr heard from Hāshim ibn al-Zubayr, who heard it from his father who heard from ‘Ā’ishah that she was asked about the verse in [Sūrat] al-Nisā’: *Lākinī al-rāsikhū fī ‘ilmi min-hum... wa-l-muqīmīna al-ṣalāta* (“But those of him well-grounded in knowledge...and those who perform prayers”) and about the verse in [Sūrat] al-Mā’idah: *Inna alladhīna Āmanū wa-alladhīna hādū wa-l-ṣābi’ūn* (Those who believe, those who are guided, and the apostates (*ṣābi’ūna*)) and the verse: *Inna Hādhāni la-sāhirāni*. She said, “Oh son of my brother, this is an error of the scribe.” Abū ‘Amr [ibn al-‘Alā] read it: *Inna hādhayni la-sāhirāni*. He justified this with that which had come down to him from the companions of the Prophet that he said: “In the *Muṣḥaf* is a solecism. The ‘Arab will straighten it out.” Farrā’ said: I don’t wish to go against the Book [i.e., ‘Uthmānic codex]. And some read it: *In*

وقوله: ﴿إن هذان لساحران﴾ قد اختلف فيه القراء فقال بعضهم: هو لحن ولكننا نمضي عليه لئلا نخالف الكتاب. حدثنا أبو العباس قال حدثنا محمد قال حدثنا الفراء قال حدثني أبو معاوية الضرير عن هاشم بن عروة بن الزبير عن أبيه عن عائشة أنها سئلت عن قوله في النساء ﴿لكن الراسخون في العلم منهم.... والمقيمون الصلاة﴾ وعن قوله في المائدة ﴿إن الذين آمنوا والذين هادوا والصابئون﴾ وعن قوله ﴿إن هذان لساحران﴾ فقالت: يا ابن أخي هذا كان خطأ من الكاتب. وقرأ أبو عمرو ﴿إن هذين لساحران﴾ واحتج أنه بلغه عن بعض أصحاب محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال: إن في المصحف لحنا وستقيمه العرب

Farrā’ here commits to the ‘Uthmānic script without condemning those readings that contradict it. Notice that in quoting ‘Ā’ishah, Farrā’ points out that there are several other verses in the Qur’ān that are in their strict adherence to the ‘Uthmānic script ungrammatical.<sup>154</sup> ‘Ā’ishah attributes this to scribal error, which, accompanied by the Prophet’s statement that the ‘Arab will sort it out, implies that it is permissible to read it in accordance in one’s own natural Arabic (or, in the case of 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century philologists, according to the permissible dialectal variants that fall within the category of ‘Arabiyyah). But Farrā’ is wary of doing so or advising others to do so, and he is also wary of speaking against the practice; he rather presents it as a matter of personal conviction (*lā ashtahī*... “I do not wish to contradict the Book”). This sets him apart from his contemporaries.

Abū ‘Ubaydah is position on this verse in the *Majāz* is more concrete, his approval of multiple readings more readily apparent. He attributes the grammatical reading to three readers, one canonical (Abū ‘Amr) and two non-canonical, Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb (d. 183/798) and ‘Īsā ibn ‘Umar (d. 149/766). However, he follows this with an interesting statement: “It is written “*ḥadhāni*,” as the Book is wont to add or subtract [letters], but the pronunciation [*hādhayni*] is correct.” But then he offers an interesting dialectal justification for the ungrammatical reading, citing Akhfash al-Akbar who claimed to have heard the tribe Kinānah (“*za ‘ama...annahu sami ‘a qawman min banī Kanānah*) put the subject and predicate of *inna* in the nominative.

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Q Mā’idah: 162 and Ṭaha: 69.

Additionally, unlike Farrā', Abū 'Ubaydah cites several lines of poetry to support the ungrammatical readings.<sup>155</sup> He cites “eloquent pilgrims,”<sup>156</sup> whose pronunciation of the *talbiyah* is similarly ungrammatical.<sup>157</sup> There is a far greater effort on the part of Abū 'Ubaydah to justify the reading that contradicts the 'Uthmānic script than what we find with Farrā'. Akhfash al-Awsaṭ adds little to this discussion in his *Ma 'ānī*, only addressing problems with the particle *inna* (i.e., *in* vs. *inna*; whether it functions as an emphatic, conditional (it does not here), or exceptive particle);<sup>158</sup> his take does not add to this discussion.

Over a half-century later, Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889) felt it necessary to address an entire chapter in his *Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān* (Interpreting Problematic [Passages/Concepts] of the Qur'ān) to “Allegations of Solecism in the Qur'ān.”<sup>159</sup> 'Uthmān's dismissal of solecism and 'Ā'ishah's identification of three ungrammatical passages in the 'Uthmānic codex posed a special problem for Ibn Qutaybah. As such, he devotes an entire chapter of his to the issue. He attributes reasoning to the readers not found in earlier sources; in his telling, Abū 'Amr and Yūnus, “blamed the scribe just as 'Ā'ishah had.”<sup>160</sup> As for the reason behind the persistence of the 'Uthmānic codex, Ibn Qutaybah notes that 'Āṣim<sup>161</sup> recited the verse grammatically but did not change the script because Ḥajjāj had charged him and Nājiyah ibn Ramḥ with destroying all

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<sup>155</sup> Abū 'Ubaydah, *Majāz*, 2:22.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:23: الفصحاء من المحرمين.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.* *Inna al-ḥamda wa-al-ni'mata laka=inna al-ḥamdu wa-al-ni'matu laka.*

<sup>158</sup> Akhfash, *Ma 'ānī*, 1:120-21.

<sup>159</sup> Ibn Qutaybah, *Mushkil*, 36–45 باب ما ادعى على القرآن من اللحن.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

non-ʿUthmānic codices (after they had bought it for 60 dirhams from its owner).<sup>162</sup> He cites Ubayy’s codex as an example of a script that represented the grammatical. Yet, he also presents a justification of the ungrammaticality of the ʿUthmānic codes in a lengthy discussion of how frequency of use leads to the leveling of case endings.<sup>163</sup> Nevertheless, this is a state of confusion with which Ibn Qutaybah was comfortable. He shows that there was an acceptance of a general unevenness in the script and argues that it was not a problem during the time of the Prophet due to the Qur’ān’s audience’s knowledge of *ʿArabiyyah*. It was only after generations lived in the *amṣār* away from this linguistic environment, only after non-native speakers started reciting the Qur’ān that, according to Ibn Qutaybah, the script became an issue.<sup>164</sup>

Ultimately, the problem of the script was not one of dogma but of ideology. Variations didn’t have as much an effect on the semantics of the Qur’ān but did threaten its classification as the paragon of *ʿArabiyyah*. However, the *ḥadīth* corpus provided an out: it gave the Qur’ān’s audience license to differ on minor linguistic matters, and scholars were happy to do so.

#### 4.2. The Prophet’s Eloquence

This is a fascinating topic that cannot be fully addressed in this dissertation; it is a matter of the Prophet’s speech as *adab* and *balāghah*, literature and rhetoric. Fortunately, the task at hand is not to define the literary and rhetorical features of the Prophet’s speech in collections from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. Rather, the pertinent point for our purposes is that portions the *ḥadīth* corpus presented itself in a literary manner—meaning, that the contents of the *ḥadīth* itself

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>163</sup> While I do not wish to imply that Ibn Qutaybah, or anyone else of his time, comprehended this grammatical change as “leveling” in its modern linguistic usage, Ibn Qutaybah and other philologists demonstrate remarkable awareness of the natural process of language change.

<sup>164</sup> Ibn Qutaybah, *Mushkil*, 42.

address the splendor of its language. To be sure, the vast majority of *ḥadīth* do not fall in this category; *ḥadīth* was valued for expressing its legal content succinctly and directly. *Ḥadīth*—as dogmatic, theological, and legal commentary on the Islam—was by and large clearer and more direct than the Qur’ān. Further research on this matter should do its best to date some of the more famous *ḥadīths* of eloquence (we will review a few shortly). Early *ḥadīth* collections, such as Mālik’s *Muwatta’*, feature *ḥadīths* primarily concerned with legal and theological matters; we do not know if the *ḥadīths* in this section were in circulation at that time but not included in such collections because they did not serve said collections intended purpose, or if they first appeared in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century as interest in *ḥadīth* as literature arose.

Indeed, there is a marked increase in the reception of *ḥadīth* as literature in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. Jāḥiẓ, in his book of Arabic literary criticism *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn* (Statement and Expression), gushes with praise for the Prophet’s speech; he refers to the Prophet speech as “of greatest general use with the most specific wording.”<sup>165</sup> Ibn Mu’tazz’s (d. 247/861) *Kitāb al-Badī’* (Book of “Literary Innovation”),<sup>166</sup> a watershed moment in the history of Arabic rhetoric and literary criticism, prominently features *ḥadīth*.<sup>167</sup> *Ḥadīth* comprises the first and one of the more significant chapters in Mubarrad’s seminal literary collection *al-Kāmil fī l-lughah wa-l-adab* (The Complete [Collection] of [Arabic] Language and Literature).<sup>168</sup> By the end of the century, the literary contours of the *ḥadīth* corpus and been clearly set forth, if not fully defined.

<sup>165</sup> al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 2:13-14 لم يسمع الناس بكلام قط أعم نفعاً، ولا أقصد لفظاً

<sup>166</sup> *Badī’* is exceeding hard to translate here; it connotes rhetoric, but this is an early work that predates the word *badī’*’s terminological specification. It loosely means something new, but Ibn al-Mu’tazz argues in this work that these “new” literary tropes, ascribed to the *muḥdathūn* (innovative poets of the early Abbasid era), can actually be found in pre-Islamic poetry, *ḥadīth*, and the Qur’ān.

<sup>167</sup> Abū l-‘Abbās ‘Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mu’tazz, *al-Badī’ fī l-badī’*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Khafājī (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1988), 73, 77, 108, 124.

<sup>168</sup> Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, 1:7-10.

A couple examples will clarify some of the expectations held by scholars at that time. This first is taken from Tha‘lab’s *Majālis* (Sessions/Lectures):

Abū l-‘Abbās [Tha‘lab] told us: Ibn A‘rābī told us: One day the Prophet, peace upon him, was sitting with his companions when a cloud rose up. Someone said to him: "Oh, Messenger of God." This is a cloud. The Prophet said: "What do you think of its *qawā‘id*?" They said: "How lovely it is, how strong and solid." He said: "What do you think of its *riḥā*?" They said: "How lovely it is, and firmly round." He said: "What do you think of its *bawāsiq*?" They said: "How lovely it is, how strong and erect it is." He said, "What do you think of its lightning? Is it bright or dim, or does it cut [through the cloud]?" They said: "It cuts." So, he said: "This is [a cloud bringing] and abundance of rain (*ḥayā*)." They said, "Oh Messenger of God, how eloquent you are! We have never seen anyone more eloquent than you." He replied: "Nothing stops me [from being eloquent]. The Qur’ān was revealed in my language, in clear Arabic." [Tha‘lab] said: *Qawā‘id* is its lower portion, the *riḥā* is its middle, its greatest portion. The *bawāsiq* are its highest portions. When lightning flies about from side to side, up from the top, then there is no doubt that rain is coming. When lightning comes from the bottom rain might not come.

وحدثنا أبو العباس، ثنا ابن الأعرابي قال: بينا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ذات يوم جالساً مع أصحابه إذا نشأت سحابة، فقيل: يا رسول الله، هذه سحابة. فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: كيف ترون قواعدها؟ قالوا: ما أحسنها وأشد تمكناً. قال فكيف ترون رجاها؟ قالوا: ما أحسنها وأشد استدارتها. قال: فكيف ترون بواسقها؟ قالوا: ما أحسنها وأشد استقامتها. قال: فكيف ترون برقها، أوميضاً أم خفياً أم يشق شقاً؟ قالوا: بل يشق شقاً. قال: فهذا الحيا. قالوا: يا رسول الله ما أفصحك، ما رأينا الذي هو أفصح منك. فقال: " ما يمنعني وإنما أنزل القرآن بلساني، بلسان عربي مبين." قال: قواعدها أسافلها. ورجاها: وسطها ومعظمها. وبواسقها: أعاليها. وإذا استطار البرق فيها من طرفها إلى طرفها، وهو أعاليها، فهو الذي لا يشك في مطره وجوده. وإذا كان البرق من أسافلها لم يكذب يصدق.<sup>169</sup>

There are two notable aspects to Prophet’s eloquence as viewed from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century: first, it represented a lexical precision that necessitated additional explanation. Moreover, the nature of this precision is cultural, meaning that it originates from the very linguistic and natural environment of the ‘*arab*. The rare words used here are particular to clouds; *riḥā* here refers to the bulbous midsection of a cloud (likely a cumulonimbus based on the descriptions above and in the *Lisān*) but its other uses are distinct to ‘*arab* culture as well (e.g., the rounded millstone used

<sup>169</sup> Tha‘lab, *Majālis*, 454–55.

by the ‘*arab*, camel chest).<sup>170</sup> And, while *bawāsiq* (pl. *bāsiq*) at its base level signifies “high” or “tall,” citations in early lexicons specifically refer to date palms, clouds, and social capital.<sup>171</sup> These word does not appear to have been in common usage during the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century and are treated, with great respect, as archaisms. Second, the *ḥadīth* itself identifies the Prophet’s speech as eloquent. This is common. Ibn ‘Abbās was reported to have said, “Nothing has brought me joy like what the Prophet wrote to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib: If a man is brought joy by that which does not exist, then it will pass him by. He will mourn for that which he cannot have. Make that which brings you sadness and joy that which brings you close to God.”<sup>172</sup> ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib is reported to have said: “I heard no Arabic word from the ‘*arab* that I had not heard from the Prophet, peace upon him. And I heard him say, “He died the death of the nose,”<sup>173</sup> which I had never heard from the ‘*arab* before.” The marvel is widespread and consistent; it also had a profound effect upon the attitudes of philologists. Let us close this section with a commentary on a *ḥadīth* provided by Mubarrad in his treatise on rhetoric:

All of this [discussion about the virtues of poetry] is fine and good. Their virtue comes from them being speech. But what is all of this in comparison with the Prophet’s statement: “Peace suffices as the malady.” Look at this speech; there is nothing superfluous, nothing left out. The meaning is overextended nor too brief. Look at its splendor, its majesty; He said, “Peace suffices as the malady.” What better exhortation is there? What reproach weightier in the heart? This speech if greater than can be

فكل هؤلاء محسن مجمل. والفضل منهم لأنهم كلامًا،  
 وأسبقهم إلى المعنى. ولكن أين هذا كله من قول رسول الله،  
 صلى الله عليه وسلم: "كفى بالسلامة داء"  
 فانظر إلى هذا الكلام، الذي لا زيادة فيه ولا نقصان، لا  
 يطول المعنى ولا يقصر عنه. وانظر إلى فخامته وجزالته؛

<sup>170</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, 14:314.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 10:20. See also Q *Qāf*:10.

<sup>172</sup> Tha‘lab, *Majālis*, 1980, 155. ما فرحت بكلام بعد كلام رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مثل كلام كتبه إلي علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه: إن المرء ليفرح بما لم يكن ليفوته، ويحزن لما لم يكن ليناله. فاجعل فرحك وحزنك بما يقربك من الله

<sup>173</sup> It was related that the ‘*arab* of the Jāhiliyyah believed your soul left your body from your wounds (if you die in battle) or your nose (if you die with no visible injury).Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq*, 9:38.

described or essence fully encompassed.

يقول "كفى بالسلامة داء." "فأي كلام أو عظم، أو زجر في

القلب أو قر؟ إن هذا الكلام ليجلّ عن أن يبلغه وصف، أو

يحيط بكنهه قول.<sup>174</sup>

Mubarrad's statement here represents the culmination of a process that began perhaps as early as the time of the Prophet. At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, Mubarrad articulated a hierarchy that placed *ḥadīth* only second to the Qur'ān.<sup>175</sup> This had significance beyond the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century—this hierarchy is operative, for example, in works on the *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* such those by Bāqillānī (d. 402/1013) and 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078).<sup>176</sup> With this in mind, we may make the following statements about the *ḥadīth* corpus's reflection 'Arabiyyah of the Qur'ān and the Prophet: both exhibit a dialectal diversity that was natural and acceptable during the revelation; it remained acceptable as long as the linguistic and cultural background Qur'ān's original audience remained the dominant linguistic and cultural background of the Muslim community; consequentially, philologists felt that the Muslim community's separation from this background affected its understanding of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, leading to efforts such as that by Tha'lab above to clarify and contextualize their content.

## 5. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have accomplished two tasks: the first, we have demonstrated that the acquisition of knowledge in the fields of *ḥadīth* and philology differed on a fundamental level, to the extent that there could not have been a crossover in methodology that would have allowed philologists to freely quote the material of *ḥadīth* transmitters. Second, we have reviewed a

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<sup>174</sup> Mubarrad, *Balāghah*, 90.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-92.

<sup>176</sup> The Prophet's speech figures prominently in both works, is analyzed and praised for its linguistic splendor, and serves as a cypher for some of aspects of the Ash'arī take on the Qur'ān's inimitability.

series of *ḥadīth* that touch on aspects of the language of the Qur'ān and 'Arabiyyah in general that were first recorded in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, portending the coming shift in *ḥadīth*'s linguistic role in Islamic thought.

Among the philologists, we find both in the biographical material and extant works from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century stresses contact with the 'arab as the primary legitimating factor in Arabic philology. Even the earliest biographical material is consistent in emphasizing this contact; many of the key figures of 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century philology were recorded to have traveled to just the right places in order to have been exposed to the right varieties of 'Arabiyyah. The purported founders of the purported Basran and Kufan schools, Khalīl and Kisā'ī respectively, were both said to have travelled extensively in the deserts collecting the speech of the 'arab. While it may be tempting to call these back projections (later scholars of both schools had a vested interest in legitimating their forefathers), this is fully supported by the extant sources. Both Khalīl and Kisā'ī are quoted speaking of their interactions with the 'arab. And the authors of these works (i.e., Sībawayhi, Farrā', Akhfash, and Abū 'Ubaydah) spoke of their own interactions with the 'arab, though they did not happen to describe extensive travels *à la* Kisā'ī, Khalīl, and Abū 'Amr. There are some references to some of these scholars having studied *ḥadīth*; but while there is no reason to suspect that these scholars did not, in fact, study *ḥadīth*, the early biographical literature must not have felt it significant as we do not find detailed accounts of their non-philological studies until centuries later. Additionally, apart from Farrā''s *Ma'ānī*, the early works simply do not feature much material related to *ḥadīth* studies, be it methodological or the citation of *ḥadīth* itself.

By contrast, the biographical material and early extant literature associated with the study of *ḥadīth* does not engage the philology of the Arabic language. It does not acknowledge a

distinct *‘Arabiyyah*; it may be assumed, but it is not discussed. The *a‘rāb* (or *‘arab*) are hardly represented among *ḥadīth* transmitters—those that we find largely lived in the first century and we know very little about them. They certainly would not have been available to the philologists of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Again, apart from Farrā’'s *Ma‘ānī*, there is no overlap between the authorities quoted in works on *‘Arabiyyah* and the authorities of *ḥadīth* studies in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century (e.g., Sībawayhi does not quote his *ḥadīth* teacher, Ḥammād ibn Salamah). Shāfi‘ī represents a minor exception to this; his biography features travel into the desert in the style of the philologists. Yet, he was only said to have taught poetry and history (*ayyām, akhbār*) and his own works feature only rudimentary references to principles that, at his time, were being fleshed out in Iraq. Shāfi‘ī, like Farrā’, marks a departure from the norms of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century; in their works we see the beginnings of the disciplinary synthesis that defined Islamic scholarship in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century.

The *ḥadīths* we reviewed speak to this synthesis. They authorize the efforts of the philologists while simultaneously granting themselves the authority to do so. There were *ḥadīths* that implored reciters of the Qur’ān to do so according to the rules being established (i.e., *A‘ribū l-Qur’ān*); there were *ḥadīths* that justified the plurality of readings of the Qur’ān that were of such interest to the philologists; and there were those *ḥadīth* the purpose of whose transmission could only be to preserve the splendor of the Prophet’s speech—*ḥadīths* that easily entered the corpus of attestable linguistic consulted by philologists of Arabic to this day. The review of these *ḥadīths* has been to draw our attention to the shift at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century: these *ḥadīths* are not found in 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century works (with the single exception that found its way into Farrā’'s *Ma‘ānī*) but rapidly spread in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. And it is with this shift in mind that we begin our final review of the research presented over the past two hundred pages.

## CONCLUSION

There is a dissonance between the prevalent laudatory view of the Prophet's speech and its marginal status in early Arabic philology. From at least the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, he has been described as “the most eloquent of the ‘*arab*,” and eloquent speech from the Prophet's time served as the basis for the formation of normative Arabic grammar from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century onward. Yet, extant works of Arabic grammar from the early period rarely cite the speech of the Prophet. By contrast, early works of Arabic lexicography abound with *ḥadīth*. In the first chapter, we reviewed several theories that have been set forth to explain this contradiction, and many speak to real issues concerning the emergence Arabic grammar as a distinct discipline in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. However, these theories project an anachronistic understanding on the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century of Islamic scholarship. As we have shown, Arabic scholarship from this time did not center on issues of transmission but rather favored an ideology of origin that placed the speech of desert-dwelling, semi-nomadic ‘*arab* above that of the urban populations of the early Islamic empire who transmitted *ḥadīth*.

This dissertation is fundamentally a reevaluation of the 8<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century Andalusian scholar Abū Ḥayyān's thesis for the absence of *ḥadīth* in early discussions of Arabic grammar: that early grammarians were concerned with the effects of non-verbatim transmission (*al-riwāyah bi-l-mā'nā*, as opposed to verbatim transmission, *al-riwāyah bi-l-lafẓ*), often by non-native speakers of Arabic (i.e., ‘*ajam*, Persians). The argument goes that oral transmission of

*ḥadīth* had so severely affected its linguistic integrity that it could not be cited as the authentic ‘*Arabiyyah*’ of the Prophet Muḥammad. Though it is certainly true that oral transmission of *ḥadīth* affected its linguistic content, it is not a sufficient explanation for a total absence of *ḥadīth* in early works of Arabic grammar. Pre-Islamic poetry and the *qirā’āt* were similarly affected by oral transmission. To be sure, poetic meter and the fixed ‘Uthmānic script of the Qur’ān made the wholesale reconfiguration of word-order extremely difficult; but this did not prevent grammarians from engaging in contentious debates that pivoted on which transmission one accepted (not to mention the fact that as an inflectional language, word order in Arabic can be highly variable and thus of less significance in the overall configuration of the language). The effects of non-verbatim transmission had a significant impact on morphology and phonetics, yet *ḥadīth* figure prominently in lexicography. Early works of Arabic philology simply do not support the contention that early Arabic philologists were overly concerned with transmission.

To understand why *ḥadīth* did not hold a place of prominence in grammar in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, we need to separate the attitudes towards transmission in first centuries of Islamic history from the more refined methodologies that emerged after the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century. While transmission was certainly a concern in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, scholars from this time lacked the critical apparatus that later scholars took for granted; there was no *isnād* criticism, there were no biographical dictionaries to check transmitters’ reputation, no *ḥadīth* collections, dictionaries, or histories to compare variants. Indeed, as we have seen the problems that prompted the creation of said apparatus were latent in the transmission of all ancient Arabic material—*ḥadīth*, history, poetry, and prose alike. Furthermore, many of the problems inherent in transmission at the time were linguistic in nature, i.e., the process of oral transmission changed the exact wording of a given statement. Nevertheless, in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, *isnād* criticism was only beginning to

emerge in the fields of *ḥadīth* transmission while *isnāds* were largely absent from philology. For *ḥadīth*, this was a matter of prestige derived from connection to the Prophet; the most important *ḥadīth* transmitters of the first century were associated with the family and companions of the Prophet; for grammar, it was a matter of prestige derived from linguistic identity (i.e., linguistic material was attributed to a class of *‘arab* whose speech still represented the linguistic environment of the Qur’ān’s revelation). Thus, the absence of *ḥadīth* in early works of Arabic grammar should not be considered a problem of methodology—i.e., grammarians dismissing the methodology of *ḥadīth* scholars—but the consequence of specialization in certain material (i.e., the speech of the *‘arab* vs. a collection of statements collected by a given scholar).

In Chapter 2, we compared attitudes towards the philological problems associated with the transmission of *ḥadīth* to those of Arabic poetry and the *qirā’āt*. We found that grammarians could not have disqualified *ḥadīth* based on linguistic standards of transmission that both poetry and the *qirā’āt* to meet. While changes in word order were rare though not unheard of, we find significant variations at the inflectional and morphological level—which is significant given that discussions of inflection (*i‘rāb*) and morphology (*ṣarf*) make up the bulk of the extant works on non-lexicographical works of Arabic philology. This, added to the fact that, like with *ḥadīth*, there were many Persian transmitters of poetry and known forgers, makes concerns about the fidelity of transmission an unlikely cause of *ḥadīth*’s absence. In fact, we find that grammatical differences that resulted from transmission served as enduring catalysts in multi-generational debates. With this in mind, we proposed a new hypothesis: that it was *ḥadīth* that was marginalized by its association with urban scholars, as opposed to the *‘arab* whose natural speech served as the foundation to the study of *‘Arabiyyah*.

In Chapter 3, we demonstrated the centrality of *‘arab* speech to the study of *‘Arabiyyah*. This was done through, first, an analysis of how 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century philologists defined the scope of *‘Arabiyyah*, linguistically and geographically speaking. Despite later, ideologically inspired declarations that the Quraysh were the most eloquent of the *‘arab* and that the Qur’ān was revealed in their dialect, references to the dialects of semi-nomadic tribes of Ḥijāz (e.g., Hudhayl) and Najd (e.g., Tamīm) dominate these works. We then showed how philologists were able to portray poetry, the *qirā’āt* and *ḥadīth* as representative of *‘Arabiyyah*. They were able to find poetry and the *qirā’āt* recited among the *‘arab* (though there is no one *qirā’ah* of an individual from the *‘arab* or a tribe)—not as much with *ḥadīth*. We find some citations (ascribed and otherwise) in Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb* for grammatical and morphological purposes and some in Khalīl’s *Kitāb al-‘Ayn* that explain morphology. Ultimately, their numbers in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century are low. This is less the case with Farrā’’s *Ma‘ānī l-Qur’ān*, which makes increased use of *ḥadīth* compared to the *Kitāb*. Farrā’ has no qualms citing *ḥadīth* for any linguistic purpose, particularly when it is of exegetical value. But exegetical is the keyword here: four out of every five *ḥadīth* cited in his *Ma‘ānī* serves an exegetical as opposed to linguistic purpose. Farrā’’s *Ma‘ānī* thus marks a point of departure for *ḥadīth* in philology rather than a culmination.

In Chapter 4, I tested my hypothesis by comparing the methodologies of data collection of grammarians and *ḥadīth* transmitters. This investigation showed that the main point of divergence between the two is the latter gathered their data from a variety of Arab and non-Arab urban centers whereas the former restricted their data collection to specific *‘arab* tribes in specific geographies. The extant philological works from the time show a clear dependence on personal contact with the *‘arab*—i.e., the observation of speech—whether it be direct contact on the part of the author or quoted from a teacher. This was observed in the biographical sources (in

which both the Kufan and Basran schools were given their original legitimation through the extensive travels of their alleged founders) as well as in the extant sources. We find the situation to be different in the study of *ḥadīth*, among both transmitters and jurists. There are very few references to *ḥadīth* transmitters among the *‘arab/a‘rāb* in the biographical literature. The references we find are mostly to individuals in the first generations of Muslims, and these figures transmitted very few *ḥadīths*. There are next to none in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, and the only one who transmitted any quantity of *ḥadīth* is lauded as Shu‘bah’s associate more so than his *‘arab* origins. References to the eloquence (*faṣāḥah*) of *ḥadīth* transmitters is perfunctory and adds little to nothing to our knowledge of their familiarity with the study of *‘Arabiyyah*—it certainly does not imply that they studied with the eloquent *‘arab* (*al-fuṣaḥā’ min al-‘arab*). With one exception: al-Shāfi‘ī. The biographical sources relate that he studied poetry and *‘Arabiyyah* with the Hudhayl tribe; some philologists were said to have studied with him. Nevertheless, his discussions of *‘Arabiyyah* and its relevance to the study of law do not utilize and grammatical methodology or terminology—Shāfi‘ī, it seems, is content with underscoring the importance of studying *‘Arabiyyah* from the *‘arab* without reference to how or what one may learn. However, Shāfi‘ī, like Farrā’, still marks a departure from the scholarly methods of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century; even his cursory references to *‘Arabiyyah* stand out in the field of jurisprudence in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Ultimately, we do not find the legitimating qualities required by philologists and found among the *‘arab* in the scholarship of *ḥadīth* transmission and Islamic law. It was important to review *ḥadīths* on the language of the Qur’ān and *‘Arabiyyah* in general to mark the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century as an inflection point for the role of *ḥadīth* in Arabic philology and set it apart from the attitudes of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. These *ḥadīth* and others like them provided the justification not only for its own entry into Arabic philology but justification for the use Arabic philology in religious scholarship.

Though this dissertation has focused on one very specific problem (lack of citation of *ḥadīth* in early Arabic grammar), its implications are far reaching. We have touched upon the origin of the grammatical schools, the nature of the *qirā'āt*, the philology of transmission and concept of a “fixed text” in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. A few comments on where our findings may take us in each of these areas is warranted.

I have avoided engaging the debate about the origins and nature of the Basran and Kufan schools because we do not have an extant Kufan text from the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. Farrā' should be considered a 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century scholar because, having died in 207/822, that is when he studied and spent most of his years teaching. However, his attitude towards *ḥadīth* represents a significant departure from what we see in the *Kitāb*. The *Ma'ānī* was described as unique and innovative text by 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century scholars, which suggests that similar earlier Kufan works that were available then likely differed in content and methodology. Indeed, Farrā'’s teachers are said to have written *Ma'ānī*, as did his contemporaries Akhfash and Abū 'Ubaydah. Without having these works, however, it is impossible to determine if Farrā' was wholly original and innovative or whether use of *ḥadīth* was common among his teachers (the biographical literature does not record this). To further our understanding of this issue, we need a deeper understanding of the origins and development of *fiqh* and *ḥadīth* transmission in Kufa as compared to Basra and the involvement of reported philologists in this development. It is possible, and indeed necessary, to study the work of later scholars and compare their affiliation to attitudes towards *ḥadīth* citation. This task, however, is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Our study also has some significant implications for the *qirā'āt*, particularly regarding those attributed to the Prophet in Farrā'’s *Ma'ānī l-Qur'ān*. We have observed significant flexibility with the *qirā'āt* on the level of phonetics, morphology, vowelings and inflection. To be

sure, very few of these variations changed the meaning of the Qur'ān in any way that struck at its dogmatic or theological heart. But the notion of the Qur'ān as a fixed text differs from era to era, and we are still trying to understand what the attitudes were in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century. References to *qirā'āt* of the Prophet that existed outside the system of readers (some of which were considered anomalous or even countered the 'Uthmānic script) beg the question: did scholars of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries (i.e., pre-Ibn Mujāhid) understand the *qirā'āt* as originating from the Prophet or as informed renditions of specialists? This is still an open question, but it is worth noting that non-'Uthmānic codices and isolated readings held more agency in Farrā's *Ma'ānī* than what is observed a century later. Unfortunately, we do not have another source on the *qirā'āt* from this time, though there are a few from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century and quite a large number from the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century onwards. To progress further on this topic, one would have to trawl these works for data on the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century and compare and amalgamate it, very skeptically. That is, the currently available step forward in this area is to reconstruct the attitudes of Farrā's contemporaries towards the *qirā'āt* and then study them in light of the *Ma'ānī* (and vice versa).

Finally, I argue that what we have observed should change how we talk about texts in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century being “fixed,” particularly in the early part of the century. The ubiquity of *ḥadīth* and *isnāds* throughout the history of Islamic scholarship is misleading because its ubiquity does not extend all the way back to its origins. Certainly, *ḥadīth* criticism employed the *isnād* early (early 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century in extent works, late 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century according to the tradition); but it was only a partial application compared to the complex apparatus it became in the following centuries. The question that arises, then, is this: to what extent were the *ḥadīth*, the *qirā'āt*, and poetry legitimated by an examination of transmission (i.e., be it linguistic or an *isnād*) and to what extent was it legitimated by the personal authority of the transmitters. Later scholars

approached this issue in their discussions of *tawātur*, where the use of the *isnād* is central. But if knowledge of *isnāds* was not ubiquitous enough to epistemically support a single *ḥadīth*, then how was an acolyte to be sure of the knowledge of his teachers. The stories of *riḥlāt fī ṭalab al-‘ilm* show scholars travelling to ascertain the authenticity of a *ḥadīth* based on their interactions with its transmitter—not merely a confirmation of the *isnād* but a confirmation of character of the transmitter. To further our understanding of this issue would require an extensive cross-disciplinary comparison of scholarly travels in the first two centuries, one immediately complicated by a reliance on later sources. We have provided a starting point for such a study but, unfortunately, there was not time to pursue it further in this dissertation.

The next problem that follows our refutation of Abū Ḥayyān’s thesis is how *ḥadīth* entered and spread throughout Arabic philology in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. Farrā’<sup>’s</sup> *Ma‘ānī* has given us many clues. In this work, we see a concerted effort on the part of Farrā’ to balance and reconcile the semantics of the Qur’ān as suggested by linguistic analysis and the semantics suggested by the narrative-exegetical tradition. The latter part is heavily associated with *ḥadīth* and suggests that the study of exegesis and Qur’ānic hermeneutics (an increasingly philological endeavor from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century onwards) contributed to *ḥadīth*’s rising importance in philological circles. Such a study requires the identification of all *ḥadīth* in philological works in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century and analysis of the purposes of their citation and the nature of the discussions into which they are entered (e.g., *ḥadīth* used in *gharīb al-Qur’ān* vs. Qur’ān quotes in *gharīb al-ḥadīth* works; a dissection of Ibn Qutaybah’s *Ta’wīl mushkil al-Qur’ān*; *ḥadīth*’s role in philological analysis of abrogation in the Qur’ān).

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