Between Dogmatism and Speculation:
A Critical Assessment of Qirā'āt Studies

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper analyzes the current state of Western research on the variant readings of the Qur'ān and how it differs from traditional Muslim scholarship, through the lens of objectivity and bias.

Methodology: Descriptive and analytical. After a brief survey of the major views in the field, I identify three major sources of contention between the two camps: the problem of sources, disagreements concerning the history of the Arabic language, and disputes over the value of the isnād (chain of transmission) as an indicator of historical reliability. I then discuss how to use the concept of "objectivity as responsibility" (as discussed by Heldke and Kellert) to defuse the bias paradox.

Findings: Each camp's premises and goals impact their research, and each camp may perceive the other as biased. I chart out five suggestions for measures that the two camps could adopt to facilitate a more productive and objective way forward.

Originality: The article's originality lies in (I) its breadth, including incorporation of recent scholarship, (II) its depth: it pinpoint assumptions and disagreements that underly the rift, (III) analysis of the rift through a philosophical paradigm.

Keywords: Dogmatism; Qirā'āt Studies; isnād (chain of transmission); Western research; muṣḥafs

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بين الدوغمائية والتخمين: تقييم لمجال دراسات القراءات القرآنية

سهيل لاهير

أستاذ مشارك في كلية اللاهوت بهارتفورد – الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية

ملخص البحث

أهداف البحث: هذه المقالة عبارة عن تحليل نقدي للوضع الراهن للدراسات الغربية حول القراءات القرآنية المختلفة، وأوجه الاختلاف بينها وبين دراسات علماء المسلمين، بين المنظورين الموضوعي والذاتي.

منهج الدراسة: المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. فبعد عرض موجز لأبرز الآراء المطروحة في هذا الخصوص، حددنا ثلاثة محاور أساسية للخلاف بين الفريقين الأساسيين: إشكالية المصادر، والخلاف بشأن تاريخ اللغة العربية، والجدل حول قيمة الإسناد (الطريق الموصلة إلى المتن) كدليل على الموثوقية التاريخية. ثم تطرقنا إلى مفهوم «الموضوعية كتعهد مسؤولية» (كما أشار هيلدك وكيللرت) للخروج من معضلة التحيز.

النتائج: تأثرت دراسة كل فريق بمنطلقاته وأهدافه الخاصة، وبناءً عليه يمكن أن يرى كل فريق أن خصمه منحاز. وقد قدمنا خمس اقتراحات لخطوات يمكن أن يتبعها الطرفين من أجل مستقبل بحثي أكثر ثراءً وموضوعية.

أصالة البحث: تكمن أصالة هذا البحث في: (١) اتساع نطاقه، إذ يشمل الدراسات الحديثة أيضًا، و(٢) تعمّقه: إذ يُحدد الافتراضات والاختلافات التي يرتكز عليها الخلاف، و(٣) التحليل الفلسفي للخلاف.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدوغمائية، دراسة القراءات القرآنية، الإسناد (الطريق الموصلة إلى المتن)، الدراسات الغربية، المصاحف.

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Introduction

Ever since the publication of Edward Said's "Orientalism"[1], the Western study of Islam has not been the same and has arguably lost a significant part of its claim to be objective, unbiased scholarship. Said's book likely had a catalytic effect on the post-World War II emergence of a less confrontational approach to Islamic Studies in the West. Nevertheless, the new situation that was ushered in is still far from a friendly, cooperative intercivilizational dialogue. While there are certainly political tensions between the Western and Islamic worlds that exacerbate the situation, another major aggravating component, and one that cannot be overlooked, is the existence (or perceived existence) of biases on each side.

Angelika Neuwirth, in a 2007 article[2] attempting to evaluate the current state of Qur'ānic studies, spoke of the problems of "ideological bias" and "identity politics." Most scholars, both Muslim and non-Muslim, both in the West and in the Islamic world, would probably agree with this evaluation on a conceptual level. However, there would also be major disagreements over what the problematic biases are and how to surmount them. Perceptions and conceptions of bias are inherently subjective, for "all observers are positioned." As a result, "[a]ll epistemological views are partial and perspectival; that is, all views necessarily exhibit bias."[3] Hence, either we must have access to objective criteria for evaluating different epistemic views, or we must abandon the quest for true objectivity and concede that truth is relative. This is the *paradox of bias* that philosophers, as well as theorists in feminism and other fields, have grappled with, and I will explore a possible way out of this quandary.

This paper analyzes the Orientalist discussions on variant Qur'ānic readings *(qirā'āt)* as a window into the larger question of what sorts of assumptions and biases underlie both Western and traditional Muslim methodologies for studying the Qur'ān. I show that the two sides have different epistemological premises (with each side therefore seeing the other as biased), which in turn often influence their methodologies in dealing with the *qirā'āt*, and I present a critical assessment of major points of contention between the two camps. Finally, approaching the problem of objectivity through the lens of "objectivity as responsibility," as elaborated by two contemporary American philosophers[4], I ruminate on the potentialities and pitfalls related to research in this subdiscipline moving ahead more fruitfully.

Numerous survey summaries of scholarship in the field of *qirā'āt* already exist within other published articles and books[5]. The current article's original contribution lies in (I) its breadth, including the incorporation of more recent scholarship on the early state of the Arabic language and its bearing on Qur'ānic readings, and (II) its depth, in that it attempts to pinpoint the major assumptions and disagreements that underlie the rift between Western and traditional Muslim scholarship on the matter and thereafter concertedly analyzes the rift through a philosophical paradigm for approaching bias.

Before proceeding, a terminological clarification is in order. I acknowledge that the term "Orientalist" is not diachronically static in its implications and might sometimes be used with pejorative connotations. Nevertheless, for the sake of convenience, I will use the term nonpejoratively in this article to refer to scholarship on Islam that is conducted by either modern non-Muslim Western researchers or by researchers who might self-identify as Muslim but who adopt assumptions and/or methodologies of the former group to an extent significant enough to make their research alien to what might be termed "traditional Muslim scholarship." I should also clarify that

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(1) Said, Edward. "Orientalism: Western representations of the Orient." *New York: Pantheon* (1978). Said's book attracted a plethora of reviews and ignited much discussion and debate across numerous disciplines, including Islamic studies, literary studies, gender studies and anthropology. For a recent survey of Said's work and its impact, see: Varisco, Daniel Martin. *Reading Orientalism: Said and the unsaid*. University of Washington Press, 2017.

(2) Angelika Neuwirth. "Orientalism in Oriental Studies? Qur'ānic Studies as a Case in Point," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 9:2 (2007), 115-127.

(3) Heikes, Deborah K. "The bias paradox: why it's not just for feminists anymore." *Synthese* 138.3 (2004): 315-335.

(4) Heldke, Lisa M., and Stephen H. Kellert. "Objectivity as responsibility." *Metaphilosophy* 26.4 (1995): 360-378.

(5) One of the most recent being Shady Hekmat Nasser's, *Transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qur'ān: The problem of tawatur and the emergence of Shawadhdh*, Diss Harvard University, 2011.

by "traditional Muslim scholarship," I refer to a broad set of theological commitments that have been considered essential and normative by the dominant voices in Muslim scholarship, across sectarian boundaries and across the centuries, including belief in the Qur'ān's divine origin.

Historical Overview of the Study of Variant Readings

"Muslims, from the beginning until now, are that group of people that has coalesced around the Qur'ān," remarked Canadian American religious studies scholar Wilfred Cantwell Smith (d. 2000)[1]. Indeed, Muslims concur on the centrality of the Qur'ān to Islamic faith, liturgy and devotion. German Qur'ānic studies scholar Otto Pretzl (d. 1941) observed that ʿilm al-qirā'ah is the oldest field to have emerged in Islam[2], and I need not discuss here the plethora of books Muslims have produced in this genre over the centuries[3]. Instead, I will present a synopsis of the Muslim views about the variant readings, followed by a survey of prominent Orientalist views.

Muslims and Orientalists agree that the Qur'ān was initially recorded in a 'defective' script that is open to being read with many different vowellings and consonantal pointings (even though many of these logical possibilities would be ruled out by syntactic and semantic considerations). Muslims believe that the text was dictated by the Prophet Muḥammad to scribes and that today's received consonantal text is a faithful and accurate transmission of Caliph 'Uthmān's standardized official version of that text. The dominant Sunnī Muslim position maintains that the Prophet Muḥammad himself allowed some flexibility in oral recitation and that the correct pronunciation of the Qur'ān has been accurately preserved and transmitted orally through the (Seven or Ten[4]) readings that eventually acquired canonical status in the Sunnī world. Many Sunnīs (and Zaydīs) further assert that the canonical readings are transmitted by *tawātur* (unbroken mass transmission to the level that rules out the possibility of error) and that the variations between the readings are of divine origin. However, there has not been unanimity about this last aspect even in the Sunnī world, with the maverick Ḥanbalī al-Ṭūfī (d. 716 H) being a prominent dissenting voice[5]. Sunnīs (and Zaydīs) have also acknowledged that there have been attempts, across history, to recite the Qur'ān based on autonomous individual *ijtihād* and that some reciters made recitation errors that have been perpetuated by their students after them; indeed, it was the awareness of the existence of such anomalous recitations that provided the impetus for 'canonizers' such as Ibn Mujāhid to devise criteria to help distinguish sound readings from unsound or doubtful readings[6].

Imāmi Shīʿtes dissent from the dominant Sunnī/Zaydī position and believe that while canonical readings are acceptable for use in literature and law, there is nevertheless only one original oral recitation, which is no longer recoverable. They therefore generally deny that *tawātur* of the readings can be traced back to the Prophet himself[7].

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(1) W.C. Smith, "Scripture as Form and Concept," *Rethinking Scripture*, ed. Miriam Levering, (New York: SUNY, 1988), 30.

(2) See: Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī, *al-Taysīr fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sabʿ*, ed. Otto Pretzl (Istanbul: Maṭbaʿat al-Dawlah, 1930), Introduction (*-j-*).

(3) For a detailed study, see: Dr. Muḥammad al-Mukhtār Wald Abbāh, *Tārīkh al-Qirā'āt fī al-Mashriq wal-Maghrib*, (Salā, Morocco: al-Mu'assasah al-Islāmiyyah lil-Tarbiyah wal-ʿUlūm wal-Thaqāfah, 2001/1422). For an Orientalist presentation, see: Nöldeke, Theodor, et al. T*he History of the Qur'ān*. (Brill, 2013), 545-583.

(4) The Seven readings have been widely acknowledged as canonical, more so than the additional three about which there has been controversy, with some Sunnī and Zaydī scholars expressing or implying a lack of certainty about the strength of their transmission.

(5) Ṭūfī, while agreeing that the Seven readings are *mutawātir* in their transmission from the Seven Reciters, expresses his reservations as to whether their *tawātur* extends to the Prophet himself. He realizes that such a claim is not without controversy and that some people, who are "lacking in verification ability (*taḥqīq*)" flee from this view, thinking that it implies non-*tawātur* of the Qur'ān. He notes that this is not the case, because the Qur'ān is not identical with *qirā'āt*, and there is *ijmāʿ* on *tawātur* of the Qur'ān. See: Sulaymān al-Ṭūfī, *Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar al-Rawḍah*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1987-1989ff), *21/2*.

(6) Abū Bakr Ibn Mujāhid, *Al-Sabʿah*, ed. Shawqī Ḍayf, (Miṣr, Dār al-Maʿārif, 1972), 45-49.

(7) See: Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shīʿah*, #912. For a brief but useful treatment of Imāmi views from an Uṣūlī Twelver perspective, see: Rasūl Jaʿfariyān, *Ukdhubat Taḥrīf al-Qur'ān a bayn al-Shīʿa wal-Sunna*, ([Iran]: Mumaththiliyat al-Imām al-Qaid al-Sayyid al-Khamanai fi al-Hajj, 1413/1992).

The prevailing Orientalist view is one of skepticism to the provenance of the *qirā'āt*, attributing their variations (at least in part) to imperfect human attempts to decode the skeletal 'Uthmānic text (*rasm*). Some Western academics have gone further and have suggested that some readings were invented to support certain theological or legal views (Burton). Those who are skeptical of the consonantal text itself have suggested that scribal errors led to erroneous readings of some Qur'ānic words that should therefore be emended (Bellamy, Stewart, Powers). Others are skeptical of the canonical oral tradition and have suggested that the pronunciation of the Qur'ān has changed over time in response to the codification of grammar (Vollers, van Putten). Before proceeding to identify the major points of contention (and thence some of the possible underlying biases), it is useful to present a brief (and roughly chronological) synopsis of the prominent Orientalist views I have just mentioned.

Ignaz Goldziher (d. 1921 CE), a Hungarian Jew who is often considered the father of modern Orientalist scholarship on Islam, wrote briefly about the variant readings in the second chapter of his study of Qur'ānic exegesis. The main point of his stance is that in the earliest era of Islam, there was much flexibility ('liberalism') allowed in how to read the Qur'ānic text. Goldziher appears to maintain (although he does not expound this explicitly) that the initial freedom to variant readings included freedom for individuals to autonomously exercise *ijtihād* in order to decipher the consonantal text and thereby produce a potentially new reading. He proffers that this notion of freedom was worrying to those who were more conservatively minded, who opposed this approach. Eventually, Goldziher continues, a middle-way solution came to dominate, which allowed freedom within the constraints of the 'Uthmānic text, thereby balancing individual freedom with the practical need for standardization and uniformity. Nevertheless, he intimates that the conservative tendency continued to criticize and impose a backlash on the brave, independent thinkers (such as Ibn al-'Arabī, Ibn Shannabūdh and Abū Shāmah) who questioned the dominant rigidity and sought to recover the original freedoms[1].

Theodor Nöldeke (d. 1930 CE), a German Orientalist who authored a seminal Western work on Qur'ānic studies, appears to acknowledge that some variant readings are "genuine" in the sense that they are transmissions of oral recitations from early generations. Other variant readings, he says, came from dialectical variations, or from grammatical mistakes, while still others were "freely construed," and emerged from "the search for, and joy in, the unexpected aspects of the consonantal text." He opines that the imposition of tradition (embodied in the criteria of isnād, and of the "catholic tendency" of "doctrine of the majority") was not initially dominant but only eventually became the norm, probably post-Ibn Mujāhid. He proffers that the standardization of Qur'ānic recitation (i.e., reducing the number of variants that were allowed) took place in two stages and would eventually have led to a single version had it not been for the process being derailed by Ibn Mujāhid's "narrow traditionalist" intervention that did not allow the combining of variants from different transmissions[2].

John Burton, in his 1977 book *The Collection of the Qur'ān*, asserts that the Qur'ān was collected and arranged by the Prophet Muḥammad himself. He claims that the variant readings emerged much later and were in fact fabricated by jurists in an attempt to provide Qur'ānic evidence for their own views in legal debates of the time. Hence, he argues that traditional accounts about Caliph 'Uthmān collecting and standardizing the text were fabricated to bolster the idea that the variant readings date back to the earliest period (hence giving them more weight as a legal source)[3].

Orientalist scholarship today shows a wide affirmation, at least in the broad outlines, of the traditional view of the Qur'ānic text as an early fixed text composed of the suras we have, and mid-twentieth-century hypercritical

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(1) Goldziher, Ignác. *Schools of Koranic commentators*. Harrassowitz in Kommission, 2006, 25-35. See also the Arabic version, which includes the editor's rejoinders to some of Goldziher's arguments: 'Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Najjār, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, (Cairo: Khānjī, 1955/1374), 48-72. The German version is in Goldziher, Ignác. *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung: an der Universität Upsala gehaltene Olaus-Petri-Vorlesungen*. No. 6. Brill, 1920, 33-54.

(2) Nöldeke, Theodor, et al., *The History of the Qurʾān*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013). 471-504.

(3) Burton, *op. cit.*, esp. 171-185.

views, such as those of English academic John Wansborough (d. 2002 CE), have been largely rejected or marginalized. Nevertheless, among the skeptical voices still current in the Orientalist landscape are those who feel that scribal errors, as well as mistakes in the vowelling and pointing of the consonantal text, have found their way into the current, received Qur'ānic text, which is therefore in need of emendation. James Bellamy (d. 2015 CE), an American scholar of literature, in a series of articles that spans almost thirty years[1], suggests a total of 29 emendations to the text. More recently, American Devin Stewart (b. *ca*. 1962 CE), even though he disagrees with many of Bellamy's specific examples, nevertheless agrees with him in principle and suggests some of his own emendations[2]. American David Stephan Powers (*b. ca*. 1951 CE) believes that changes were made to the Qur'ānic text before it acquired canonical status and suggests that the word *kalāla* in Qur'ān 4:23 was originally "*kalla* in the sense of daughter-in-law, as found in Akkadian, Hebrew and Aramaic. He holds that since Muḥammad was granted license to marry Zaynab, his daughter-in-law by his adopted son, the Qur'ānic reading of 4:23 that forbade such a marriage had to be changed."[3]

There are clearly differences between the abovementioned views of Goldziher, Nöldeke and Burton. Nevertheless, there is a common thread across all of them, namely, that many (if not all) variant readings arose from individual attempts, autonomous of oral tradition, to decipher the consonantal ('Uthmānic or Prophetic) text. This Orientalist view, one will observe, happens to be similar to the standard Twelver Shi'īte view and has more recently been championed by Shady Nasser[4], who bolsters the earlier arguments with the argument that the nature of the variants in Qur'ānic readings are the same as those in transmitted variants of poetry and that the source of the variants in both cases is the imperfect oral tradition[5]. Research by another Muslim academic, Behnam Sadeghi, might possibly (but not necessarily fully) be adduced as supporting Nasser's view. According to Sadeghi, modern techniques of "genealogical" stemmatic analysis point to the accurate semi-oral transmission of a prototype Qur'ānic text (that of the Prophet himself), which is the 'common ancestor' of the 'Uthmānic text, as well as of the 'Companion codices' variants that are attested in early manuscripts and in *qirā'āt* literature[6].

The above views deal more with the origins of the variant readings and make no overt statement about whether the readings have changed over time or been diachronically static. I will close this section of the paper with a quick survey of other views that do comment on this subject. German Karl Vollers (d. 1909 CE) opines that the Qur'ān was revealed in the Makkan dialect and was therefore initially recited without case endings (*i'rāb*), which were only added later with the codification and ascendancy of classical Arabic to bring the Qur'ān into line with this by-then-prestigious language[7]. His view was refuted soon after by his fellow German Nöldeke

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(1) J.A. Bellamy, "The mysterious letters of the Qur'an: Old abbreviations of the *Basmalah*," *JAOS* 93, 1973, 267–85; idem, "*Al-Raqim or al-Ruqud*?: A note on Surah 18:9," *JAOS* 111, 1991, 115–7; idem, "*Fa-Ummuhu Hawiyah*: A note on Surah 101:9," *JAOS* 112, 1992, 485–7; idem, "Some proposed emendations to the text of the Koran;" *JAOS* 113, 1993, 562-573; idem, "More proposed emendations to the Text of the Koran," *JAOS* 116, 1996, 196–204\; idem, "Textual criticism of the Koran (Presidential Address)," *JAOS* 121, 2001, 1–6; idem, "A further note on 'Isa," *JAOS* 122, 2002, 587–8.

(2) Stewart, Devin J. "Notes on medieval and modern emendations of the Qur'ān." *The Qur'ān in its Historical Context*. *London* (2008): 225-248.

(3) Varisco, Daniel Martin. "Muhammad Is Not the Father of Any of Your Men: The Making of the Last Prophet by David S. Powers." *Review of Middle East Studies*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2010, pp. 117–118. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41970350.

(4) Nasser happens to come from a Twelver Shi'īte background, but it would not be objective to attribute his position to ideological bias. Rather, his arguments should be engaged on their own terms.

(5) Shady Hekmat Nasser, *Transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qur'ān: The problem of tawatur and the emergence of Shawadhdh*, Diss Harvard University, 2011.

(6) Sadeghi, Behnam, and Uwe Bergmann. "The Codex of a Companion of the Prophet and the Qur'ān of the Prophet." *Arabica* 57.4 (2010): 343-436.

(7) Vollers, Karl, *Volkssprache und Schriftsprache im alten Arabien*, (Walter de Gruyter, 1906).

and has been largely discredited[1]. Luxenberg (pseudonym) has gone even further, alleging that the Muslim tradition has failed to realize that the original language of the Qur'ān was heavily permeated by Syro-Aramaic (linguistic) and Christian (scriptural and liturgical) influence and that the received reading of the Qur'ān needs to undergo major emendation to reflect this. After dismissing the received variants of many Qur'ānic verses, he proceeds to construct his own readings of these verses, taking full liberty with the vowellings and pointings of the consonantal text to produce novel (yet in his mind more original and authentic) readings, including most notoriously his suggestion that the phrase *wa-zawwajnāhum bi-ḥūrin 'īn* ("We have wed them with wide-eyed women with white-and-dark contrasted eyes") should actually be read *wa-rawwaḥnāhum bi-ḥūrin 'īn* ("We have granted them rest with white, (crystal-)clear grapes," which is a reinterpretation accomplished by changing one changed dotting (z → r) and one appeal to lexicology (ḥūr as white grapes)[2]. More recently, Harvard-trained Ahmad al-Jallad and Leiden-trained Marijn van Putten have used information from inscriptions, comparative Semitics and other sources to suggest that some aspects of the pronunciation of the Qur'ān may have changed over time[3].

Major Points of Contention

The quotation from John Burton that I placed at the beginning of this paper points to the fact that the large corpus of variant Qur'ānic readings (even before distinguishing between canonical and noncanonical readings) has a negligible effect on the broad themes and message of the Qur'ān[4]. The study of *qirā'āt* is therefore relatively isolated from some more contentious issues in Qur'ānic studies (such as the question of the Qur'ān's authorship), at least if we leave aside the more radical revisionist emendations, such as those of Luxenberg. Having outlined the terrain of Orientalist scholarship on the variant readings and how it compares with traditional Muslim views, I will now proceed to identify some of the major epistemological and methodological points of contention on which hinge the rifts between the two camps.

1. Expanded Role of Assumptions and Conjecture, Due to a Dearth of Early Sources

The dearth of extant early sources is a perennial problem that plagues academic inquiry into the early history of any nation, culture or religion. Islamic and Qur'ānic studies in general, as well as the study of Qur'ānic variants specifically, are no exception to this phenomenon. Several writers of the first two Hijrī centuries are

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(1) Van Putten has observed that the existing refutations of Vollers are inadequate and biased, but that nevertheless, Vollers was not correct. See: Marijn van Putten and Phillip W. Stokes. "Case in the Qurʾānic Consonantal Text." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 108 (2018): 143-179.

(2) Luxenberg, Christoph. *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran: a Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Koran*. Verlag Hans Schiler, 2007. Lunxenberg's book was not generally taken very seriously in academic circles, drawing numerous negative reviews and refutations, but did find some traction with some Orientalists. Among the critiques, see: Stefan Wild, "Lost in philology? The virgins of paradise and the Luxenberg hypothesis." *The Qurʾān in context*. Brill, 2009. 625-648. For examples of works that admit some merit to Luxenberg's suggestions, even if only in broad terms, see: Claude Gilliot, "Reconsidering the Authorship of the Qur'ān: Is the Qur'an partly the fruit of a progressive and collective work?." *The Qur'an in Its Historical Context*, 2007: 88-108; also, Devin Stewart, *op. cit*.

(3) See, among other writings by van Putten and al-Jallad: van Putten, Marijn. "The development of the triphthongs in Qur'ānic and Classical Arabic." *Arabian Epigraphic Notes*: 47; Al-Jallad, Ahmad. "Was it sūrat al-baqárah? Evidence for Antepenultimate Stress in the Quranic Consonantal Text and its Relevance for صلوه Type Nouns." *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 167.1 (2017): 81-90.

(4) Devin Stewart has made a comment that seemingly casts doubt on my above assertion. Stewart claims that "traditional commentaries exhibit blind spots regarding the meaning of certain important texts, suggesting that there was a significant rupture in early Islamic history during which an understanding of certain passages was simply lost." (Stewart, *op. cit*.) Nevertheless, he does not provide any concrete example of any Qur'ānic passage that exhibits a major loss of meaning. Furthermore, Stewart's own proposed methodology for emendation of the Qur'ānic text includes resorting to other similar Qur'ānic passages, suggesting that he does in fact agree that the basic meanings and themes of the Qur'ān are indeed sufficiently unambiguous to justify intereferentiality.

mentioned as having produced books on *qirā'āt*[1], but sadly, none of these works has survived. In fact, in the study of *qirā'āt,* the problem of a dearth of early sources is compounded by the fact that many of the existing early Qur'ānic manuscripts do not tell us anything about how the text was pronounced (neither in terms of the articulation points of letters nor the pointing and vowelling of the consonantal text). Whatever relevant sources do exist, even from later periods in which their authenticity is not disputed, are in turn subject to being construed in a way that fits with the individual researcher's assumptions (methodological, metaphysical and ideological). In reality, the remaining points to be discussed below can be considered elaborations of this point.

It is not difficult to find examples, in both Muslim and Orientalist writings, of fiat assumptions and unwarranted generalizations that reflect the assumptions and ideological commitments of the writers. Everyone has metaphysical/ideological commitments, as well as their own cultural and other biases, as is acknowledged in modern theoretical/philosophical literature about objectivity. Responsible scholarship would thus require sufficient awareness of the other camp's beliefs and commitments, as well as self-awareness, to be able to refrain from making off-the-cuff statements without explaining one's reasoning, especially if one is not engaging with relevant material in the indigenous tradition.

For example, Muslim traditional scholars would judge the following statements to be biased, since they are given as mere assertions without any explanation:

- That the number of Companions who had memorized the Qur'ān "could well have been extremely small."[2] This assertion sidesteps the entire discussion in *'ulūm al-Qur'ān* works (such as Suyūṭī's *Itqan*) dealing with narrations on the matter. A responsible approach would be to engage Suyūṭī's discussion and to explain why one disagrees with it. Otherwise, one cannot blame Muslim readers for assuming one was simply ignorant of Muslim analyses of the issue.

- That it would be "too easy a way out" for modern scholarship to accept that variations in Companion codices are simply examples of exegetical comments or paraphrases. Similarly, from the same writer, "Very little examination is needed to reveal the fact that this account is largely fictitious," and "In neither case, however, can we feel much confidence in the statements."[3]

- That "One cannot argue that the Prophet used one variant one day and the other the next."[4] This begs the question, "Why not?" Indeed, Western orality theory readily produces one plausible rejoinder to Bellamy: that variant recitations can be considered as different oral performances of the same text[5]. Of course, such an explanation might or might not be acceptable to Muslim scholars (one's adversary's adversary is not necessarily one's ally), but the entire discussion does bring to the fore some important questions about assumptions: How do we define a "text"? Of what value is the modern conception of "text" for an aural-cum-written text like the Qur'ān? What does this say about the limitations of carrying over assumptions from Biblical studies into Qur'ānic studies?

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(1) Among them: Yaḥyā ibn Yaʿmur (d. 90 H), Abān ibn Taghlib (d. 141 H), Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 150 H), Abū ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ (d. 154 H), Zāʾidah ibn Qudāmah al-Thaqafī (d. 161 H) and al-Akhfash al-Akbar (d. 177 H). See: Muḥammad Ibn al-Jazarī, *Al-Nashr fi al-Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshr* (Miṣr : al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, s.d.); Ibn al-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist* (Beirut: Maktabat Khayyaṭ, 1966), 35

(2) Nöldeke, 473.

(3) Jeffery, Arthur, ed., *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qurʾān: The Old Codices*. EJ Brill, 1937, X, 5, 6.

(4) Bellamy, *Textual Criticism*, 2.

(5) Schoeler observes that, "[i]n the field of poetry, the varying and flexible nature of a text was considered normal." Gregory Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam*, 32-33. For more on orality theory, see Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002); Daniel Madigan, *The* Qur'ān'*s Self-Image: Writing and Authority in Islam's Scripture* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, c2001).

Similarly, Orientalist scholars would likely find statements such as the following problematic:

- Ibn al-Munayyir's assertion that "it is necessarily known" that the Prophet recited all the variants (*wujūh*) to the angel Gabriel, and they are all transmitted from him by *tawātur*. This assertion is sidestepping any discussion of the dissent that exists within the tradition regarding tawātur of the details of the variant readings.

- While responding to Ibn al-Ḥājib's claim that 'details of delivery' are not necessarily *mutawātir,* Zarkashī asserts that the common denominator of these elements is indeed *mutawātir* (e.g., despite the readers' disagreement on how much precisely to prolong a long vowel (*madd*), there remains *tawātur* of the underlying principle that the *madd* is to be prolonged. Clearly, this reduces the scope of disagreement but does not entirely disprove Ibn al-Ḥājib's claim, for showing *tawātur* of the generic concept of *madd* does not establish *tawātur* of, for example, the particular view of Ḥamzah al-Zayyāt that the *madd* is invariably prolonged six counts.

2. Whose Arabic?

"The linguistic conditions that prevailed in Arabia at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an are one of the most hotly debated issues among Arabists. …. This also means that the linguistic status of the Qur'an itself is not univocally clear."- Jan Retso[1]

Premodern Arab/Muslim scholarship has tended to assert that the Arabs learned their script from the people of al-Ḥīrah (in Iraq), based on reports of this effect in some indigenous historical sources. Orientalist scholarship holds that the Arabic script derives from the Nabatean Aramaic script[2]. In light of the modern findings, Muslims have been forced to revisit the received account of the origins of the Arabic script. For example, Egyptian professor Dr. 'Abd al-Ṣabūr Shāhīn (d. 2010) observes that the history of the Arabs before Islam and their relationship to the other surrounding peoples were not documented systematically. As a result, he explains, we have only scattered references in poetry and chronicles that themselves may have been distorted over time, consequently reaching us in ambiguous or even incoherent form. In other words, we need not be dogmatic in holding onto the received account in this matter[3].

Orientalists are also at odds with the traditional Arab/Muslim account of the state of Arabic during the rise of Islam and in its first two centuries. The indigenous tradition has typically maintained that while dialectical variations did exist in pre-Islamic Arabia, the Qurashite dialect represented the highest form of Arabic, which was also used by poets. As Islam spread with the early conquests, the purity of Arabic was diluted through non-Arabs' use of the language and through interaction with other cultures, thereby leading to the emergence of spoken dialects that differ markedly from the 'original' Arabic. Bedouins were considered to be the last repositories of pure Arabic, and there are plentiful reports of early Muslim philologists joining the company of Bedouins to learn correct Arabic from them. Various aspects of this picture are challenged by Orientalists, who have a skeptical view of the Muslim account of the development of Arabic. Orientalists generally maintain that dialects have existed in Arabia since pre-Islamic times, and they have different views on how the language of the Qur'ān fits into this picture. Many agree that the Qur'ān uses an intertribal poetic koiné termed pre-

(1) Retsö, Jan. "Arabs and Arabic in the Age of the Prophet." *The Qurʾān in Context*. Brill, 2009, 281, 281-292.

(2) A foundational work in this regard is: Diem, Werner. "Some glimpses at the rise and early development of the Arabic orthography." *Orientalia* 45 (1976): 251-261. Diem also published a series of four, more extensive articles on this in German, in Orientalia, the first of them being: Diem, Werner. "Untersuchungen zur frühen Geschichte der arabischen Orthographie I. Die Schreibung der Vokale." *Orientalia* 48.2 (1979): 207-257. A more recent work, reflecting newer discoveries and development of the field is: Knauf, Ernst Axel. "Arabo-Aramaic And 'Arabiyya: From Ancient Arabic To Early Standard Arabic, 200 CE – 600 CE." *The Qurʾān in Context*. Brill, 2009. 197-254. Another key work is: Nehmé, Laila. "A glimpse of the development of the Nabataean script into Arabic based on old and new epigraphic material." *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*. Archaeopress, 2010.

(3) Dr. 'Abd al-Ṣabūr Shāhīn, *Tārīkh al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Qalam, 1966), 61-74.

classical Arabic[1], but there are other views as well[2]. Rabin suggests that before Islam, there had already emerged an official Makkan language (Knauf uses the term 'early classical Arabic' for a similar but not solely Makkan concept) that was close to the koiné and that the Qur'ān uses this language[3]. Van Putten holds that even if a koiné existed, it does not automatically follow that the Qur'ān would have been composed in it.

These are not entirely abstract, theoretical disagreements, for if indeed there was some degree of 'classicization' of the Qur'ānic pronunciation, then it would follow that the way the Qur'ān is pronounced today differs in some respects from the way the Prophet pronounced it. For example, van Putten argues that the Qur'ānic orthography, in which a distinction is maintained between *alif mamdūdah* and *alif maqṣūrah*, represents the Hijazi dialect and that therefore *imālah* was pronounced by the Hijazis. He finds additional support for this in an argument based on the analysis of Qur'ānic rhymes, namely, that *alif mamdūdah* and *alif maqṣūrah* appear for the most part to not rhyme with each other in the verse-endings *(fawāṣil)*. This finding challenges the received view within the indigenous tradition, that the Hijazis did *not* pronounce *imālah* and that it was the Tamimis who did pronounce it. The resulting consequences problematize (potentially, at least) the received notion of regional readings (for example, that Nāfi''s reading is Madinian).

3. The Value of Isnād

This disagreement is in reality an offshoot of Muslim-Orientalist disputes about the provenance of hadith. British-German Orientalist Joseph Schacht's (d. 1969 CE) skeptical dismissal of the value of isnāds has been shown by Muslim hadith-expert and academic Mustafa Azami (d. 2017 CE) to contain substantial inconsistencies and conjecture, while a new wave of German scholarship led by Harald Motzki considers isnāds as credible data seriously worthy of further analysis rather than out-of-hand dismissal. Nevertheless, skeptical views still persist in Orientalist scholarship, and the two camps (the 'skeptic' and the 'sanguine' as termed by Berg) appear to be at an unresolvable impasse due to radically different presuppositions or ideological commitments that condition their interpretation of data[4].

These disagreements percolate through to the study of variant Qur'ānic readings because they impact the credibility given to the following:

(i) Various reports in the hadith literature and chronicles about the collection and canonization of the Qur'ān, reported attempts at emending its text, and reports (such as those of the Seven *Aḥruf)* about the diversity of readings that existed in the nascent era of Islam.

(ii) The isnāds linking the canonical readings back to the Prophet.

Those who reject the value of isnād can simply dismiss all of the above transmissions (as Burton has done[5]) or choose selectively from the entire body of narrations (including those considered *ṣaḥīḥ* by Muslim hadith-experts' analysis, as well as those judged *ḍaʿīf*), based only on each narration's accordance with other

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(1) See: al-Sharkawi, Muhammad, "Arabic language: pre-classical", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Brill, 2016.

(2) Macdonald has shown that the received knowledge from the early period is sparse. (See: Michael C.A. Macdonald. "Reflections on the linguistic map of pre-Islamic Arabia." *Arabian archaeology and epigraphy* 11.1 (2000): 28-79.) Hence, views about the period will inevitably have an element of speculation.

(3) Rabin, Chaim. "The beginnings of classical Arabic." *Studia islamica* 4 (1955): 19-37.

(4) Berg, Herbert. "Competing Paradigms in the Study of Islamic Origins: Qur'ān 15: 89–91 and the Value of Isnāds." *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*: 259-290.

(5) "We must learn this simple wisdom: one must either accept all hadiths impartially with uncritical trust, or one must regard each and every hadith as at least potentially guilty of a greater or lesser degree of inherent bias, whether or not this is immediately visible to Western eyes. We cannot in our arrogance continue to presume that guided by mere literary intuition we can safely pick our way, selecting or rejecting hadiths on the excuse that where no motive for any particular statement was discernible by us, none was therefore intended." Burton, 233.

assumptions or external evidence, (as was done by Australian Protestant Semiticist Arthur Jeffery (d. 1959 CE)[1]). The sanguines, on the other hand, can and do use isnād analyses as data to help reconstruct historical facts. Motzki, for example, conducts his own isnād-cum-matn analysis of the narrations on the collection of the Qur'ān and concludes that they were in circulation since at least the late 1st century[2].

The documented isnāds for the canonical readings have many strands going back to the eponymous readers (i.e., 2nd century Hijri), but very few strands link eponymous reciters to the Prophet. An isnād-based argument can therefore make a credible case for establishing the continuity of the recitation tradition back to the eponymous reciters[3] but falls short (at least of establishing the mass transmission of *tawātur*) in the period from the eponymous readers back to the Prophet. Attempts to decisively prove anything one way or the other in this earliest period once again fall prey to the "dearth of sources" problem, being heavily influenced by presuppositions and ideological commitments. I feel this impasse could only be broken, or at least softened, if compelling external empirical evidence can be found to bolster one side, or by proffering a composite argument with reference to the larger picture of early Islam[4].

An Objective Way Ahead[5]

Philosophers Heldke and Kellert proffer that "Inquiry is marked by objectivity to the extent that its participants acknowledge, fulfill and expand responsibility to the context of inquiry."[6] I find several aspects of their formulation of "objectivity as responsibility" useful in helping to chart out some suggestions (below[7]) for a way ahead in the study of Qur'ānic readings between the Muslim and Orientalist worlds.

1. Goals and Presuppositions

Academic inquiry into Qur'ānic studies is "marked by values, interests and power," and responsibility dictates a crucial need for "explicitness about the values, interests, goals, presuppositions, and judgments operating in this context …. Objectivity emerges not from the attempt to eliminate all theoretical commitments, interpretations, and judgments from the processes of observation and evaluation but from participants in inquiry responsibly subjecting these elements to critical scrutiny."

Charting a constructive way ahead requires us to realize two things:

(i) There are theological/metaphysical commitments in both camps regarding the central question of the divine origin or otherwise of the Qur'ān, and neither position can be considered inherently more neutral

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(1) Thus, Jeffery feels confident in Ibn Abi Dawud's reports in his *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, even though their isnāds are weak, because their content is in conformity with information obtained from other "directions." Jeffery, *Materials for the Study of the Qur'ān*, VIII.

(2) Harald Motzki, "The Collection of the Qur'ān. A Reconsideration of Western Views in Light of Recent Methodological Developments," *Der Islam* 78.1 (2001): 1-34.

(3) This conclusion is upheld by Nöldeke, although it is not clear whether he reached it on the basis of the isnāds or by some other means. He writes that "as far as the complete readings of the Koran from approximately 300 AH onwards are concerned, much knowledge has certainly been lost, but serious changes have hardly taken place." Nöldeke, 498.

(4) I have elsewhere presented a general argument of this sort, based on ubiquity of the oral Qur'ān in early Islam, to make a case for the general reliability of the oral tradition, but it is unlikely to convince someone who has strong commitments to the skeptic view. See: Suheil Laher, *Twisted Threads: Genesis, Development and Application of the Term and Concept of Tawātur in Islamic Thought*, Diss Harvard University, 2014.

(5) Some readers may find this section, and its suggestions, to be subjective. I would respond that all analyses inherently have a subjective dimension, but this should not stop us from attempting to identify the factors underlying difference of opinion and inquiring into possible ways to surmount or at least be aware of these. I welcome engagement and disagreement with the elements of my analysis and alternative suggestions, whether through application of Heldke and Kellert's framework or through some other paradigm.

(6) Heldke and Kellert, *op. cit*.

(7) Hence, please note that all unattributed quotations below are from Heldke and Kellert, *op. cit*.

than the other. Good intentions (such as those espoused by Bellamy and Luxenberg, who declared they want to help Muslims better understand their scripture) might be well meaning, but it would be naive for their proponents to ignore the theological elephant in the room. In particular, some of these more radical Western views contain elements that are considered blasphemous (*kufr*) by the established classical schools of Islamic theology.

(ii) Individual researchers even within one camp can vary with regard to their goals, assumptions, etc. It would be unfair and naive to assume that a Muslim researcher automatically accepts every minute element of the indigenous tradition and can never be more than a mere apologist[1] or that an Orientalist researcher is necessarily seeking to undermine Islam (rather than merely attempting to make sense of empirical date from his own starting point). Truth *can* be self-serving, and indeed every truth will almost inevitably serve the interests of some person or group. Hence, as Wild observes, "the religious or cultural background of a scholar must not be used to discredit his or her ideas." Furthermore, researchers on both sides should also avoid making assertions that are not backed by evidence (see the examples cited earlier in this paper) or at least accompanied by the acknowledgement of subjective presuppositions that would be rejected by the other camp.

2. Responsibility to the Public

Heldke and Kellert have also pointed out that responsibility involves not only discussants but also the public. Even though the entire corpus of received variant readings has no major impact on the broad themes and meanings of the Qur'ān, nevertheless, many Muslim laymen would likely be confused and troubled to suddenly be informed of some details of the subject. Given that the public is not qualified to engage in academic debates, it would generally appear prudent to confine research discussions to the scholarly circles of the two camps, especially since (one would like to assume) the intentions of Orientalists are to seek the truth rather than to undermine the Islamic faith. At the same time, Muslim scholars may need to give some thought as to how to broach these topics with the public in a way that is intellectually and theologically honest and responsible. A prominent Western Muslim cleric was recently criticized by some Muslims when private email comments he had made about the *qirā'āt* were made public.

3. Selectivity

"Not every challenge or charge levelled is one that an individual is obliged to treat seriously, for not every criticism is issued responsibly. Some objections are simply misguided or would take too much time seriously to consider."

Muslim scholars can concede Stefan Wild's assertion that, "scholarship has the right to ask all questions," and that, "[t]here can be no academic censorship that precludes expressing and discussing certain ideas."[2] Nevertheless, Orientalists might do well to concede that Muslim scholars will not feel compelled to respond to all criticisms and that the absence of a Muslim response does not necessarily serve as proof of rectitude of the Orientalist position. For example, the Orientalist methodology for emending the text of the Qur'ān, as Stewart has acknowledged, "inevitably remains somewhat subjective." It should therefore be understandable that Muslim scholars might simply ignore such research, especially given that they might judge many Orientalist scholars as lacking the requisite mastery of Arabic for such a task. Wild has astutely observed that, "a contribution to a Qurʾānic topic authored by a non-Muslim cannot be considered true just because it causes a scandal and is opposed by Muslim scholarship."[3]

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(1) Stewart, *op. cit.*, has observed that the Muslim scholarly tradition has indeed looked critically at Qurʾānic transmission.

(2) Wild, *op. cit.* Of course, given that Muslim scholars do not have any means for imposing censorship on Orientalist publications, one could say that Muslims *cannot but* concede this point.

(3) Wild, *op. cit.*

4. Humility and Expanded Responsibility

"It is not enough to acknowledge one's biases, values and presuppositions; one ought also to interrogate them and subject them to rigorous evaluation by others and by oneself.""

We can extrapolate from this quote the suggestion that each camp should acknowledge the strengths of the other side. Muslim scholars generally have a superior grounding in the foundational texts of the tradition, while Orientalists are often better informed regarding the disciplines (such as comparative Semitics) that impact the study of *qirā'āt* but are not part of the repertoire of traditional Islamic scholarship. In this light, one can appreciate Jeffery's acknowledgement that "Muslim savants" have a more intimate acquaintance with the Qur'ānic text than "any Western scholar can hope to attain."[1] Muslims need to keep abreast of new empirical data (such as inscriptions), as well developments in traditionally "non-Islamic" ancillary fields that are relevant to the larger context of the study of variant readings. Muslims should use such information to either fine-tune and elaborate the "traditional" understanding if the data support it or modify the received wisdom and adjust the theories of indigenous scholarship if the data irreconcilably oppose it.

Responsible objectivity, Heldke and Kellert proffer, also calls for seeking out additional parties to be responsible to by seeking the perspectives of those whose voices are normally excluded. In our case, a major contention between Orientalists and the traditional Sunnī position is one of the reliability of the oral tradition. It is not difficult to understand that, for an outsider at least, the default assumption would be that "the Qur'ān is open to the same types of copyists' errors and problems of transmission that occur in other works handed down by humans, including sacred texts."[2] Muslim scholars need to think deeply in order to determine to what extent (if at all) it is a nonnegotiable theological constant that the reliable oral transmission of the Qur'ān includes *all the smallest details of the variant canonical readings*. To help steer clear of fanatical dogmatism, this decision should factor in empirical evidence, as well as the awareness of the differences of opinion that exist within the Muslim scholarly tradition regarding some details of the *qirā'āt*. Can voices that were often dismissed as those of maverick figures within the tradition—such as the views of the Sunnī Ṭufī, or the Twelver Shī'ites—simply be dismissed by the criterion of unpopularity? Or should they be revisited and some of their views potentially accepted if empirical and analytical evidence suggests they might indeed be valid? Western scholars should (as already mentioned earlier) be willing to question their assumptions about the extent to which it is justified to consider that Qur'ānic studies must follow a trajectory parallel to Biblical studies. While Orientalists may have reasons to be skeptical of traditional accounts, they should nevertheless not be overly dismissive, as if asserting the falsity of something by fiat.

5. Power Imbalances

Power imbalances may hold people back from critically responding or from acting on their convictions, and true responsibility "challenges those excluded to demand that their voices be heard." This is certainly a desirable aspiration, but we may well inquire if the playing field is truly level in an age wherein religion and traditional values are often devalued, marginalized and considered irrational or backward. European Enlightenment thinkers were largely concerned with achieving an objectivity of knowledge that could reground religion and revitalize faith in a contemporary context; however, since then, modernism and postmodernism have led to the permeation and even the domination of relativism and skepticism into religious studies. Granted, not every discussion about the variant readings has a theological dimension, and there is much research in this discipline of *qirā'āt* that can be pursued without treading into theological ground wherein emotions run high.

Full theological agreement between the two camps is not envisioned in the near future at least, and Muslim scholars might sometimes disagree as to where the boundaries of nonnegotiable theological commitment lie, but responsible research on both sides can help negotiate the chasms.

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(1) Jeffery, IX.

(2) Stewart, *op. cit.*

Concluding Remarks

Although there is not much theology at stake in the study of variant readings, it is understandable that Muslim scholars will be wary of enthusiastically adopting Orientalist theories about the *qirā'āt*, given the political history of Orientalism *à la* Edward Said and given the emergence of strong evidence disproving or at least seriously casting doubt on some earlier Orientalist hypotheses (such as those of Schacht and Wansborough). Nevertheless, traditionally grounded Muslim scholars need to engage Orientalist critiques and understand their premises and methods, as well as the ancillary disciplines they are drawing upon, and thereafter turn to refuting anything they deem to be unsound. In the process, these scholars will have to grapple with their own tradition and determine what is constant and theologically central from that which is open to interpretation. The *kalām* enterprise, which emerged within the first century of Islam, engaged other ideologies of the time[1]. The Muslim scholarly tradition's healthy history of engagement with empirical evidence should now be continued to objectively explore (without feeling threatened) new evidence and research that relate to the Qur'ān and the state of the early Arabic language. New empirical data must be incorporated into the Muslims' intellectual framework in a way that is both intellectually honest and consistent with theological constants in the tradition. This approach is essential if the traditional Muslim discourse is to remain relevant and credible today.

Orientalists, in turn, can keep their research objective by not being unduly dismissive of the Muslim/Arab scholarly tradition and by being willing to acknowledge their own metaphysical commitments. Muslim scholars would also appreciate Orientalists acknowledging that the Qur'ān is an aural-cum-written text that differs in numerous ways from the Bible. It would also appear prudent that specialized research not be disseminated outside of scholarly circles, even if the ostensible aim is to help Muslims better understand their own scripture.

In purely philosophical terms, there may be problems with defining rationality by common assent[2]; nevertheless, one would imagine that most academics tacitly have faith in the merits of peer review. If both the Muslim and Orientalist camps can conduct their research responsibly through observing guidelines such as those outlined in this paper, then it is hoped that this approach would provide more objectivity, which in turn would foster the building and maintenance of open bridges of communication, taking us beyond both Said's "Orientalism" and Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations".

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(1) Recall that Ghazālī's *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa,* a summary of Ibn Sīnā intended as a prelude to refuting him in the *Tahāfut,* was so well done that in Europe it was used as a handbook for studying *falsafa*! See: Minnema, Anthony H. "Algazel Latinus: The Audience of the Summa theoricae philosophiae, 1150–1600." *Traditio* 69 (2014): 153-215.

(2) Heikes, *op. cit.*

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