SURPLUS OF MEANING OR SUSPENDING PHILOLOGY?: SOME REFLECTIONS ON PHILOLOGICAL RAMIFICATION IN CLASSICAL QURʾĀN COMMENTARY

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Abstract

This study examines the philological data criteria used for exploring the genuine meanings and denominators of Arabic verbatim of the Qurʾān by Muslim exegetes of the classical period, with a special focus on the philological ramification of the commentary of *dhālika l-kitāb* pattern in Q 2:2.

Having attained the status of a corpus (*kitāb*) in the aftermath of a very long-phased oral tradition, the Qurʾān's textus receptus reflects both portrayals of verbality and scriptural traits embedded in its Arabic verbatim yielded by the compilation process. The Qurʾān, representing a junction spot for oral and written traditions in Arab culture, is known to be molded according to the Arabic language register and also formalized the language's post facto grammar. In this vein, the Qurʾānic text bears a reflexive affiliation with its pertinent language. This article

argues that the lingual reciprocity between the Qurʾānic text and its language underwent a critical suspension through commentaries when the case was Qurʾān's *al-kitāb*. In this article, the first layer of the data reflects the historical background of the term *kitāb*. Then, it construes the word within Qurʾān's cross-references. It exemplifies commentaries on the *dhālika l-kitāb* pattern, circumventing philological evidence. After elucidating different grounds leading to philological ramification, I argue that a philological inference from the Qurʾān nests in its fullest sense only when the commentator credits historical data and cross-references within the Qurʾānic content.

Introduction[*]

Religion has played a crucial role in the spiritual life of Muslim society from the very outset, influencing almost every sphere of cultural activity. Quotations from the Qurʾān and the sayings of the Prophet are prevalent in all branches of Arabic literature. Given this background, it is reasonable to assume that religious influences also played a role in Arabic philology. This is particularly evident as the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth, especially the former, were prominent sources of Arabic grammar and lexicography.[1] In a manner analogous to the influence of the Vedas on Indian grammar, Homer on Greek grammar, the books of Confucius on Chinese grammar, and the Biblical Canon on Hebrew grammar, the impetus for the commencement of Arabic philological studies emanated from the meticulous examination of the Muslim Holy Book.

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[*]   While penning this article, I have benefited from my PhD dissertation that is achieved at Marmara University, Institute of Social Sciences under the supervisorship of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Muhammed Coşkun.

[1]   Whereas linguistic evidence extracted from the texts of ḥadīth genre was deemed improper for serving the grammatology of the Arabic language in the first century of Islam, lexicographical works of early period drew on it extensively from the very outset. L. Kopf, "Religious Influences on Medieval Arabic Philology", *Studia Islamica* 5 (1956), 3; For a comprehensive early history of lexicographical tradition of Arabic language see Soner Gündüzöz, "Arap Sözlük Bilimi ve Sözlük Çalışmaları", *İslam Medeniyetinde Dil İlimleri: Tarih ve Problemler*, ed. İsmail Güler (İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2017), 23-64.

The Arabic scholarly tradition has indeed transmitted certain information indicating that even some of the earliest philologists were influenced in their professional pursuits by religious considerations. Notably, figures such as Abū ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ (d. 154/771) and Abū ʿAmr al-Shaybānī (d. 213/828) expressed reservations about the compatibility of collecting ancient poetry and Bedouin sayings with the obligation imposed on every educated Muslim to engage in the study of religious literature. Abū ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ, as recounted, fervently burned his extensive collection of philological notes in a display of piety, with the explicit intent of dedicating himself wholly to the study of the Qurʾān. Upon resuming his philological endeavors, he had to rely entirely on his memory. Abū ʿAmr al-Shaybānī, on the other hand, was primarily occupied by compiling the *dīwān*s of various Arab tribes. He transcribed the Qurʾān and placed the manuscript in the mosque of Kūfah upon completing the *dīwān* of any given tribe. This account evidently suggests that he undertook this practice as a means of atonement for having engaged in worldly pursuits.[2]

In fact, linguistic studies are known to have embarked upon the transition of the Qurʾānic text from oral to written form. Arabic linguistics made significant progress in the 2nd-4th centuries AH due to the challenges faced in transcribing the language. The development of Arabic linguistics was primarily driven by the need to overcome these challenges. Although there were no written texts other than the *muʿallaqāt* before the Qurʾān became a codex, the emergence of Sībawayhi's (d. 180/796) *al-Kitāb*[3] is remarkable. Sībawayhi discussed

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[2]   Kopf, "Religious Influences on Medieval Arabic Philology", 4.

[3]   Baalbaki scrutinizes the methodological principles and techniques inherent in Sībawayhi's examination of the Arabic language and traces the evolution of these methodologies as shaped by subsequent grammarians. By situating the *al-Kitāb* within the milieu of early Arabic philological endeavors, he dissects numerous passages to elucidate the coherence of the author's grammatical analytical system and the interconnectedness of his analytical instruments and concern. The text notably emphasizes Sībawayhi's profound impact on the broader tradition of Arabic grammar throughout its entirety. Ramzi Baalbaki, *The Legacy of the* Kitāb*: Sībawayhi's Analytical Methods Within the Context of the Arabic Grammatical Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2008). Although the main content of Sībawayhi's book is based on the ideas of Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, it is important to note that the opinions of linguists, grammarians, and qirāʾah scholars, such as Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb, Akhfash al-Akbar, Abū ʿAmr ibn-ʿAlāʾ, ʿĪsā ibn ʿUmar al-Thaqafī, Ibn Abī Isḥāq al-Ḥaḍramī, and Hārūn al-Aʿwar al-Qārī, also made significant contributions to the book.

issues related to Arabic grammatology depth in the 2nd century AH, showing the path of Arabic philology after the Qurʾān.[4]

As a tentative hypothesis, Goldziher (d. 1921) proposed that the categorization of the three parts of speech of Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* did not originate in Ḥijāz. There is no conclusive evidence supporting the notion that this theory, which implies the influence of Greek logic, had its inception there. He alludes to preliminary remarks in Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb*, who introduced this division at the beginning of his book. As Sībawayhi's lifespan coincided with a period under ʿAbbāsid rule when Greek philosophy exerted a considerable influence on Arab intellectuals, Goldziher raises the question of a probable external influence, namely, Greek, albeit being hesitant in this argument.[5]

However, regarding the inception of Arab linguistic inquiry and its dependency on the Qurʾānic text,[6] there is a broad consensus among scholars. Those who critically assess the data from the Arab tradition, as compiled by Flügel (d. 1870), generally concur that Abū l-Aswad al-Duʾalī (d. 69/688) can be acknowledged as the progenitor of Arabic grammar.[7] However, tradition, unsatisfied with this attribution, credits ʿAlī (d. 40/661), the caliph, as the individual who provided the initial impetus to the development of grammar as a science. Flügel, while earnestly presenting the pertinent details of this tradition, incorporates them into his scholarly reflections, ultimately concluding that Abū l-Aswad (d. 69/688) was the first to compose a grammatical work based on the information supposedly conveyed to him by ʿAlī. Among ʿAlī's contributions to Abū l-Aswad, significant emphasis is placed on his

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Mehmet Reşit Özbalıkçı, "Sîbeveyhi", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2009).

4 Mehmet Şirin Çıkar, "İlk Dönem Arap Dilbilimi", *Kur'an ve Dil: Dilbilim ve Hermenötik Sempozyumu (17-18 Mayıs 2001)* (Erzurum: Bakanlar Matbaası, 2002), 256.

5 Ignaz Goldziher, *On the History of Grammar Among the Arabs: An Essay in Literary History*, trans. Kinga Dévényi - Tamás Iványi (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994), 3-6.

6 Early studies on Arabic syntax and morphology in the post-Qurʾānic period can be exemplified in this respect. Classical treatises on Arabic rhetoric are the other denominator proving the normative role of Qurʾānic text over Arabic philology. Halim Öznurhan, "Kur'an'ın Arap Diline Tesiri", *İslâm Öncesi Araplarda Dil ve Edebiyat,* ed. Mustafa Çağrıcı (İstanbul: KURAMER, 2019), 119-126.

7 Gustav Flügel, *Die Grammatischen Schulen der Araber. Erste Abtheilung. Die Schulen von Basra und Kufa und die Gemischte Schule* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1862), 18-26.

observations regarding the categorization of speech into three parts: *ism* (name, i.e., noun), *fiʿl* (action, i.e., verb), and *ḥarf* (letter, i.e., particle).[8]

In a scholarly investigation exploring the impact of Greek abstraction on Arabic linguistic cognition, Versteegh asserted that certain facets of the discourse surrounding the *tawqīf*[9] matter exhibited parallels with linguistic deliberations originating in Greek linguistic thought, revealing an external linkage with a special focus on the correspondingly equated *tawqīf* term. Furthermore, Versteegh proposed that the terminology employed in Arabic grammar was constructed upon a presumed Greek model.[10] However, his recent scrutiny of several early Qurʾān commentaries has led him to reject his previous conjecture concerning external influences within the realm of grammar,[11] and Versteegh's reaffirmation underscores the pivotal role played by the linguistic structure of the Qurʾān in shaping the foundational rules of the Arabic language by dismissing the possibility of an external influence.

In summary, it is widely accepted that the formulation of grammatical rules and the linguistic principles of morphology and syntax in the interpretation of the Qurʾān, particularly in early linguistic commentaries, find their basis within the Qurʾānic text, which is the compiled form and textus receptus. This underscores a reciprocal relationship between the Arabic language, serving as the linguistic medium of the Qurʾān, and the Qurʾān itself, elucidating a nuanced interrelationship.

Contrary to the professed commitment of Qurʾānic exegetes to a disciplined philological approach, this article argues that their

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[8] Goldziher, *On the History of Grammar among the Arabs*, 3.

[9] *Tawqīf* is the central term in Islamic theology, connoting the argument that the origins of language depend on divine interference. For theological approaches to the origins of language see Hulusi Arslan - Numan Karagöz, "Dilin Kökeni ve Teolojik Bağlamı", *Mesned İlahiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 12/2 (Autumn 2021), 431-451.

[10] C. H. M. Versteegh, *Greek Elements in Arabic Linguistic Thinking* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 128-148.

[11] Mustafa Shah, "The Philological Endeavours of the Early Arabic Linguists: Theological Implications of the *tawqīf-iṣṭilāḥ* Antithesis and the *majāz* Controversy — Part I", *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 1/1 (1999), 29; Kees Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qurʾānic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 19.

engagement was not always consistent with philological principles. Saleh posits that scholars, relying on philological deductions in Qurʾānic exegesis, often assume that commentaries faithfully represent the state of philological knowledge at their time of writing. However, this perspective overlooks the complex motivations that drove exegetes, as their work frequently aimed to navigate through philology while adhering to its rules. He suggested that scholars' reliance on classical dictionaries with the expectation of finding unbiased philological discussions of Qurʾānic roots is misleading. Lexicography and Qurʾānic studies are often intertwined, and dictionaries seldom challenge the interpretations of commentators. Instead, they tended to reinforce and complement the findings of these studies. He emphasizes the need to reconsider the assumptions about the relationship between philology, commentaries, and lexicons in understanding the meanings of Qurʾānic terms.[12]

Inspired by Saleh's remarks, this paper calls into question the reciprocity in relation through the following query: In formulating a philological understanding and interpretation of the Qurʾān as a linguistic corpus, does the Arabic grammatical framework developed subsequent to the Qurʾān possess standalone sufficiency in revealing the meanings of concepts and expressions in the Qurʾān's discourse? Alternatively, what are the ways of suspending philological evidence in commentaries that result in a surplus of meaning?

In this context, the *al-kitāb* in the Qurʾān has been chosen as an illustrative example to ground the argument of this paper. First, it is important to explore the manifestation of the concept of *al-kitāb* in the historical context of the Ḥijāz region during the 1st/7th century. The concept is a distinguishing link between oral and written traditions. This historical background provides the meta-textual context of the Qurʾān, helping to reveal the semantic domain of *al-kitāb* in Arab oral culture before the Qurʾān was codified. Next, the meanings assigned to *al-kitāb* within the intratextual context of the Qurʾān are addressed. Finally, this text manifests the philological deductions that lead to a

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[12] Waled Saleh, "The Etymological Fallacy and Qurʾānic Studies: Muhammad, Paradise, and Late Antiquity", *The Qurʾān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾānic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth et al. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 651-652.

surplus in the meaning of a specified, referred to as "ramification", by citing classical exegeses within the framework of Q 2:2.

1. From Nonliterate to Literate Culture: *Kitāb* as a Junction Spot in a Revelatory Epoch

Oral tradition, the primary and still widely prevalent method of human communication, goes beyond simple conversation. It encompasses a dynamic and highly diverse auditory medium for the evolution, storage, and transmission of knowledge, art, and ideas. It is often contrasted with literacy, with which it interacts in numerous ways, and with literature, where it interacts in terms of size, diversity, and societal impact. For thousands of years before the advent of writing, a relatively recent development in human history, oral tradition, as the exclusive mode of communication, played a crucial role in establishing and sustaining societies and their institutions. Furthermore, various studies conducted across six continents have demonstrated that even in the 21st century, with increasing literacy rates, oral tradition continues to be the predominant form of communication. Our current understanding of oral tradition relies not on documents, which are essentially written interpretations of oral traditions, but on insights gained through direct study of societies heavily reliant on oral tradition as a primary form of communication.[13]

The sacred texts of Judaism[14] and Christianity, as well as the Qurʾān, originated within the cultural contexts of their respective societies, succeeding in a long-phased oral tradition.[15] Writing has been a

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[13] For psychodynamics of orality and basic proponents of orally based thought and expression see Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2012), 31-74; For orality of literacy in hermenetical sense refer to Recep Alpyağıl, *Kimin Tarihi Hangi Hermenötik?: Kurʾân'ı Anlama Yolunda Felsefî Denemeler I* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2018), 87-91.

[14] The classical Rabbinic tradition, encompassing legal, discursive, and exegetical aspects, asserts its identity as Oral Torah, transmitted orally in an uninterrupted chain, tracing its authority back to divine revelation given to Moses at Sinai. Despite this claim, since the third century C.E., the tradition has been codified in written text. Martin Jaffee, through careful examination and analysis of evidence, demonstrates that the Rabbinic tradition, as it exists today, evolved through a reciprocal interpretation of both oral and written modes. Martin S. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE-400 CE* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[15] For the oral tradition in Semitic religions in pre-Islamic period see Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*; Elizabeth Shanks Alexander, *Transmitting Mishnah: The Shaping Influence of Oral Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Oral

common aspect of daily life for many centuries in Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean. In contrast, the western region of Arabian peninsula, where the Qurʾān was revealed, did not have a tradition of extensive literary production. Nevertheless, the Qurʾān was revealed through a significant literary genre embedded in Arabic verbatim in this context. Although archaeological evidence for this region, particularly during the sixth century, is limited, there are indications of a modest spread of literacy even in this area.[16]

In contrast with the scarcity of writing acts and the tradition of compiling books, poetry, and orories were widely accepted during the era of the Qurʾān's revelation, and sources reported that literacy was limited in Arab society, where oral culture dominated. Even in Mecca, the most important religious and commercial center of the Arab Peninsula in the 1st century AH, few people could write. Al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) stated that only seventeen people were literate.[17] Therefore, it is fair to say that the society in which the Qurʾān was revealed was a nonliterate society that can also be termed "preliterate". This means that not only were the majority of people nonliterate, but they also lacked the habits and concepts that come with literacy. Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845) noted in his *al-Ṭabaqāt* that writing was not well known among the Arabs and that, among the companions, only Rāfiʿ ibn Mālik (d. 3/625) knew how to write.[18]

As the literacy rate was limited, only a small number of individuals were capable of writing down the revealed Qurʾānic verses. The narratives transmitted from the Prophet forbidding the act of writing Prophetic sayings may well be taken as one of the fundamental features of oral culture in Arab society that is characterized by the

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narrative techniques in Rabbinic Judaism and Islamic tradition bear an apparent kindred features as analyzed by Toprak in detail. See Mehmet Sait Toprak, *Talmud ve Hadîs: Karşılaştırmalı Bir Araştırma* (İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınları, 2012), 58-130.

[16] Peter Stein, "Literacy in Pre-Islamic Arabia: An Analysis of the Epigraphic Evidence", *The Qurʾān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾānic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth et al. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 255-256.

[17] Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyá ibn Jābir ibn Dāwūd al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1988), 454.

[18] Dücane Cündioğlu, *Sözlü Kültür'den Yazılı Kültür'e Anlam'ın Tarihi* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 1997), 107.

authority of speech and narrative chain,[19] and pejorative connotations regarding writing in the first generation of Islam indicate a hesitant attitude toward the act of writing in the first epoch of Islam.[20] Additionally, the scarcity of writing materials resulted in the prevalent absence of the concept of a "book" in the cultural atmosphere of the region. Nevertheless, it is inaccurate to claim that Arabs were entirely unfamiliar with books and writing materials. They were familiar with the Jews and Christians who possessed religious texts and were aware of the books they held in high regard. When the term "book" was used, they associated it with the books belonging to these religious groups, which the Qurʾān refers to as *ahl al-kitāb*.[21] Therefore, it is possible to consider the Qurʾānic text as a distinguishing link between the oral and written periods in Arab culture. The attribution of the name *kitāb* to the Qurʾān holds another significant meaning related to the religious atmosphere on the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula. In this period, the epithet *ahl al-kitāb* (People of the Book) was the opposite and counterpart of the epithet *ummī* (unlettered). While the former referred to Jews and Christians, the latter referred to pagan Arabs.[22] In this vein, Türcan meticulously manifests the fact that the presence of the two subject segments in the society of pre-Islamic Ḥijāz and its environs leads us to identify two distinct identity groups, albeit portraying similarities at the same time. The defining characteristic of the People of the Book is their identification with sacred scriptural knowledge. Conversely, illiterate Arabs find common ground in Kaʿbah. The *sharīʿah*, which is based on scriptural knowledge, consists mainly of explicit injunctions and was transmitted by the prophets. In contrast, the *sharīʿah* to which the illiterate Arabs adhered was primarily concerned with observing the sacred symbols, rituals, and prohibitions associated with the pilgrimage. The descendants of

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[19] For the phenomenological nature of oral narratives, see Toprak, *Talmud ve Hadîs*, 64-65.

[20] According to Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/729), the generation of the Companions believed that the Israelites deviated from the right path due to the books they inherited. As a result, they were not in favor of written documentation of knowledge. To understand the Companions' attitude towards writing, see Cündioğlu, *Sözlü Kültür'den Yazılı Kültür'e Anlam'ın Tarihi*, 111-115.

[21] Hidayet Aydar, "Kur'an'da Kitap Kavramı ve Bir Kitap Olarak Levh-i Mahfuz", *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 2 (2000), 65.

[22] Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *Mafhūm al-naṣṣ: Dirāsah fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* (al-Dār al-Bayḍāʾ: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-ʿArabī, 2013), 53-54.

Ishmael had no prophetic experience prior to Islam. Nevertheless, both segments reflected the practical applications of the Prophet Abraham in their way of life. There are differences and similarities between religious and social behavior, and their consequences are shaped by these two identity substrates. Theoretically, we are faced with two different cultural developments: one formed by fixed information consolidated in a text and the other by the physical possibilities offered by a form of worship. The authority of the former is directly proportional to the mediation between the adherents and the text, while in the latter, it depends on the ability to mediate between the rules of worship and the custodianship of the places of worship.[23]

The mere mention of numerous book- and writing-related concepts in the Qurʾān, during a time when oral culture was dominant, suggests that the verses aimed at social transformation through revelation. This social transformation serves as a foundation for mental transformation through concepts related to the book and writing.[24]

On the other hand, the first generation of Muslims did not view the Qurʾānic text as a scripture to be studied directly in textual form due to the lack of widespread written culture. It is important to consider these factors when analyzing their perceptions of the Qurʾānic text.[25] The Qurʾān, being a "parole"[26] at the very outset, was transmitted into a corpus recorded in Arabic "language" in a scriptural form after its compilation.

The main objective of writing down the Qurʾān was to preserve it from any alteration or distortion.[27] Neuwirth highlights the fact that the

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[23]   Selim Türcan, *İlk Dönem Kur'an Tasavvuru ve Dönüşümü -Kimlik ve Kitâb İlişkisi Bağlamında-* (Ankara: Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2007), 69-70.

[24]   Toprak, *Talmud ve Hadîs*, 39.

[25]   Muhammed Coşkun, *Modern Dünyada Kur'an Yorumu* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2018), 18.

[26]   The Qurʾān reflects a wide range of oratory characteristics embedded its verbatim. Oral expression codes, such as reiterations of the narratives, oaths, and catechetic expressions, together with context-based remarks are the main hallmarks in the Qurʾānic discourse. For a comprehensive analysis of oral expression types in the Qurʾān, see Süleyman Gezer, *Sözlü Kültürden Yazılı Kültüre Kur'an* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2015), 162-249.

[27]   Emphasizing the steps taken to ensure the preservation of oral narratives, oral tradition exemplifies the meticulous efforts of religious communities in safeguarding assembled parchments and scrolls with reverence. This process

authority of writing is attributed to the divine origin of the Qurʾān. This recognition of "writing" as the principal means of conveying authority brought about a profound transformation in the Arab worldview, particularly in the communities directly influenced by the Qurʾān's proclamation. The transition was from a mainly tribal culture that focused on collective rituals and oral traditions to a new universal culture characterized by textuality and discourse. This transformation aligns with what Guy Stroumsa, an Oxford historian of religions, called a significant "religious mutation of late antiquity".[28]

However, this significant development has led to a continuous need for literacy activities and the increasing use of writing in Arabic from the perspective of Arab cultural history. The establishment and advancement of Arabic linguistics was facilitated by this, which also ensured the preservation of oral heritage, including that inherited from the pre-Islamic era, by transforming it into a written, permanent form.[29] However, the transition of the Qurʾān from the spoken word to a written text presented the challenge of interpretation.

Before the compilation process in relation, the Qurʾān had not been a written text meant to be read by its addressees at its core. In essence, this text did not originate from a single instance but rather developed over approximately twenty years, arising dialectically from independent events and occurrences. As such, it constitutes a speech

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marks the transition of scriptures from oral tradition to written documents, highlighting their reception and development; see Siobhán Dowling Long - Fiachra Long, *Reading the Sacred Scriptures: From Oral Tradition to Written Documents and Their Reception* (London, New York: Routledge, 2017).

[28] Angelika Neuwirth, "The 'Discovery of Writing' in the Qurʾan: Tracing an Epistemic Revolution in Late Antiquity", *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara* 2/1 (2016), 31.

[29] Ali Bulut, "Sözlü Gelenekten Yazılı Geleneğe Geçiş ve Bunda Kur'an'ın Etkisi", *İslam Öncesi Araplarda Dil ve Edebiyat*, ed. Mustafa Çağrıcı (İstanbul: KURAMER, 2019), 108.

act[30] that involves a speaker, an addressee, and an extratextual context.[31]

According to Dindi, the Qurʾān underwent a two-facet alienation to itself, and the compilation process constituted the second and most crucial process. First, the divine discourse and its connotations, beyond its inherent transcendent metaphysical essence, underwent a transformation within a distinct milieu – specifically, the 1st/7th-century Ḥijāz region. It assumed form within the intellectual and imaginative framework of the Arab intellect, alienating into its linguistic and cognitive paradigms within this cultural context. As a consequence of this alienation, it can be posited that the divine discourse fundamentally became estranged from its inherent nature and essence.[32] To elaborate, the initial divergence of the discourse from its divine origin, subsequent descent onto the human plane in the 1st/7th-century Ḥijāz region, and the articulation of its universal message within the contours of their beliefs and cognitive patterns engendered the initial form of estrangement. This inaugural estrangement need not necessarily be construed pejoratively; instead, it might be viewed as an organic process. The crux lies in the conveyance of the God's message

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[30] Austin and Searle proposed the Speech Act Theory, which posits that every speech act is also an action. This means that some acts can only be carried out through speech. Every speech is an act or at least leads to an act. Austin used the term "Illocutionary Act" to describe the speech act. The term "Perlocutionary Act" is used to express the situation of speech leading an act. Scriptures perform some kinds of acts through utterances or provide some acts occur on the acceptors as well. For types of speech acts, see J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 94-101.

[31] Ömer Özsoy, "'Çeviri Kuramı' Açısından Kur'an Çevirisi Sorunu", *2. Kur'an Sempozyumu Tebliğler - Müzakereler 4-5 Kasım 1995* (Ankara: Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 1996), 264; Austin and Searle proposed the Speech Act Theory, which posits that every speech act is also an action. This means that some acts can only be carried out through speech. Every speech is an act or at least leads to an act. Austin used the term "Illocutionary Act" to describe the speech act. The term "Perlocutionary Act" is used to express the situation of the speech leading an act. Scriptures perform some kinds of acts through utterances or provide some acts occur on the acceptors as well. Therefore, Speech Act Theory is crucial to understanding verses of the Qurʾān. For a detailed analysis of the Qurʾān from the perspective of speech act theory, see Hasan Er, *Dinî Sözcelerin Edimselliği* (Bursa: Bursa Uludağ University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2019).

[32] Alienation of a word within a speech is a Ricoeurian theory. For details see Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Dennis B. Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 37-59.

and its incitement of the recipient toward specific actions. Consequently, the actual pernicious estrangement arises from the second form, the metamorphosis of a vibrant, dynamic discourse,[33] i.e., oral communication/speech, which supplements the meaning, envelops, and essentially embodies the meaning and message, into a textual form through detachment from the contextual elements of space and time, the historical-cultural milieu inherent in this spatial and temporal framework.[34]

Thus, starting from the era of the *Tābiʿūn* (second generation/successors), the Qurʾān ceased to be a spoken discourse[35] within the dynamic flow of life and historical challenges as it had been in the first generation. It had transformed into a codified book, and the dynamic interaction with the first generation had transitioned into a paradigm dominated by narratives and *its own* language. It was now a *kitāb*, a book with a start and end. Its being a scripture seems to have led Qurʾān commentators of the classical period to equate *al-kitāb* with the Qurʾān itself in its complete form, creating an apparent ramification in philological deductions from corresponding verses hosting this. To unveil the wide-range semantics of *al-kitāb* in the Qurʾān, the application of intratextual references is crucial. This approach is expected to unveil an intratextual basis. Then, explanations of the exegetes will be provided.

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[33] The dynamic nature of the Qurʾān towards its addressees is clearly evident in "say-statements". Say-statements are not simply one of the rhetorical devices used in the Qurʾān; they demonstrate its fundamental sense of itself. The Qurʾān is a record of God's centuries-long address to doubting, questioning, searching, and straying humanity. It is the place where the Arabs are finally brought into the conversation directly, through divine revelation. Divine revelation is an authoritative response to what people are saying, as Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/787) described it as *jawābᵃⁿ li-qawlihim*. So, it naturally awaits its opportunity. Daniel A. Madigan, *The Qurʾân's Self-Image: Writing and Authority in Islam's Scripture* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 64.

[34] Emrah Dindi, *İlahi Kelamın Kendine Yabancılaşması: Hermenötik Bir Soruşturma* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2021), 29.

[35] The main discursive property of Qurʾān's rhetoric makes itself evident in implied speaker and addressee pronouns like "I", "You", "We". Application of personal pronouns in question is a hallmark for indicating Qurʾān's oral nature succeeding its compilation. For analysis of this property of the Qurʾān, see Neal Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text* (London: SCM Press, 2003), 224-255.

1.1. *Al-Kitāb* as the Source of Divine Prescription

The concept of *kitāb,* frequently mentioned in the Qurʾān, is closely related to revelatory events. However, considering God's intervention in history through both creation and revelation, the proposition that the foundation of communication between God and humans, which is revelation, is both existential and intellectual appears to be justified. Divine will, in this sense, manifests itself not only through revelation, opening itself to humanity but also through the act of creation, demonstrating its will. It should be noted that within the scope of revelation and the book, the sovereignty of the Supreme Creator over the laws of creation is also considered. Therefore, the concept of the "book" is one of the fundamental concepts that elucidates God's relationship with existence and humanity.[36]

The concept in question has various meanings. It refers to the oral revelation conveyed by Prophet Muḥammad, which had not yet been compiled into a written manuscript, the Torah given to Moses, the revelation sent by God to previous communities and prophets, the transcendent source where God inscribed all His knowledge, decisions, decrees, and guidance based on the revelation possessed by the monotheistic believers referred to as the People of the Book, and any written document such as letters and records. After the Qurʾān was transcribed and standardized into a codex in the mid-1st century of the Hijrah, the terms "book" and "the book of Allah" have been commonly used to refer to all the verses compiled in the manuscript.[37]

Although various aspects of the meanings of the word *kitāb* in the Qurʾān have been discussed, making a definitive distinction among these meanings[38] is challenging. For example, it is difficult to separate the meaning of God's having knowledge of the death of everything on earth, such as the knowledge of everything else, and that nothing will happen without His permission, as stated in Q 3:145, from the divine decrees that are binding on the believers, also referred to as *kitāb*

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[36]   Mücteba Altındaş, *Kur'an'da Kitap Kavramı* (Ankara: Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2012), 5.

[37]   William A. Graham, "The Earliest Meaning of 'Qurʾān'", *Die Welt des Islams* 23/24 (1984), 361-362.

[38]   For such a classification, see Abū l-Faraj Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Jawzī al-Baghdādī, *Nuzhat al-aʿyun al-nawāẓir fī ʿilm al-wujūh wa-l-naẓāʾir*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Karīm Kāẓim al-Rāḍī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1984), 525.

Allāh, as mentioned in Q 4:24. Similarly, it is challenging to separate the context of Q 6:165, which mentions God's writing His mercy upon Himself, from verses stating that all the deeds of His servants are recorded by God (Q 3:181) or by angels (Q 10:21). Grouping them based on their contexts is challenging, as each group can be inclusive of the others.[39]

In the self-references of the Qurʾān, the concept of the *kitāb* (book) is frequently encountered.[40] While researchers have mostly examined the similarities between the concepts in the language structure of the Qurʾān related to revelation and the book and those in the beliefs of the Near East in the context of the late ancient era, the Qurʾān itself does not claim uniqueness when presenting its own bookish quality. In fact, words derived from the root k-t-b, which are related to the concept of writing, are often used in the tradition of divine revelations, of which the Qurʾān is also a part, or within the framework of God's relationship with the created beings.

Andani points out that Qurʾānic verbatim embodies a hierarchy of *kitāb*. Transcending *kitāb*, as the source of divine prescriptions, differs from Arabic Qurʾān(s)/recitations. According to the Qurʾān, there is one celestial divine writing that is transcendent in nature and variously called *al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ* (Q 85:21-22), *kitāb maknūn* (Q 56:77-80), *kitāb mubīn* (Q 6:59, 10:61, 11:6, 12:1-3, 26:1-3, 27:1, 27:75, 28:1-2, 34:3, etc.), *kitāb ḥakīm* (Q 10:1), *umm al-kitāb* (Q 13:39, 43:4), and often just *kitāb* (Q 6:38, 18:49, 20:52, 22:70, etc.). He refers to transcendent *kitāb* as the "revelatory principle", which denotes the archetypal and ontological source of Qurʾānic revelation.[41] The transcendent *kitāb* of God's knowledge, records, and deeds remains "carefully distinguished from the Arabic Qurʾāns uttered by Muḥammad within the discourse of the Qurʾān".[42]

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[39] Madigan, *The Qurʾân's Self-Image*, 4-5.

[40] The Qurʾānic verses qualifying Arabic Qurʾān revealed to the Prophet as *kitāb* are as follows: : 2:87, 2:89, 2:176, 3:3, 3:7, 4:105, 4:127, 4:136, 4:140, 5:48, 6:114, 6:155, 7:196, 16:64, 16:89, 18:27, 21:10, 28:86, 29:45, 29:47, 29:48, 29:51, 35:31, 38:29, 39:23, 39:41, 42:15, 56:30. However, there exist other verses presenting *kitāb* distinct from Arabic Qurʾān, such as 10:37, 12:1-2, 15:1, 27:1, 41:3, 43:2-4, 56:77-80.

[41] Khalil Andani, *Revelation in Islam: Qurʾānic, Sunni, and Shiʿi Ismaili Perspectives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Studies, PhD Dissertation, 2019), 55.

[42] Andani, *Revelation in Islam*, 56.

Similarly, Madigan observes that the Qurʾān consistently maintains a clear distinction from the concept of *kitāb* by consistently referring to it in the third person. It extensively focuses on activities such as observing, proclaiming, defending, and defining the *kitāb*, emphasizing that they are not interchangeable entities. However, the Qurʾān does not treat the *kitāb* as a static entity detached from itself. Instead, it highlights the dynamic process of "reciting" as the means through which the *kitāb* is revealed and engages with humanity. Thus, the frequent use of the term *kitāb* in connection with the revelations to the Prophet signifies a concern about their source, composition, and, consequently, their authority and truthfulness rather than the manner of display or eventual storage.[43]

One of the commonly used terms for God's all-encompassing book that includes virtually everything is *kitāb mubīn* (Q 6:59, 10:61, 11:6, 34:3, 27:75). This particular *kitāb mubīn* is prominently featured in the introductions of Meccan sūrahs, which present Muḥammad's Arabic recitations. Numerous Middle Meccan sūrahs contain announcements of revelations that revolve around the terms *kitāb mubīn* and Qurʾān. Many of these sūrah openings allude to the signs of a physically absent *kitāb mubīn*:[44]

> Alif Lām Rāʾ. These are the signs of the clear *kitāb* (*al-kitāb al-mubīn*). We have sent it down as an Arabic Qurʾān; happily, you will understand. (Q 12:1-3)
> Alif Lām Rāʾ. These are the signs of the *kitāb* and a clear Qurʾān (*Qurʾān mubīn*). (Q 15:1)
> Ṭāʾ Sīn Mīm. These are the signs of the clear *kitāb* (*al-kitāb al-mubīn*). (Q 26:1-2)
> Tāʾ Sīn. These are the signs of the Qurʾān and a clear *kitāb* (*kitāb mubīn*). (Q 27:1)
> Ṭāʾ Sīn Mīm. These are the signs of the clear *kitāb* (*al-kitāb al-mubīn*). (Q 28:1-2)
> Ḥāʾ Mīm. A clear *kitāb* (*wa-l-kitāb al-mubīn*) was used. Behold We have made it an Arabic Qurʾān; happily, you will understand. In addition, behold it is in the *umm al-kitāb* with Us, sublime indeed, wise. (Q 43:1-4)

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[43]   Madigan, *The Qurʾân's Self-Image*, 181-182.
[44]   Andani, *Revelation in Islam*, 53.

> Ḥā' Mīm. A clear *kitāb* (*wa-l-kitāb al-mubīn*) was used. We
> sent it down in a blessed night. We are ever-warned. (Q 44:1-
> 3)

The announcements of the Qur'ānic sūrahs (Q 12, 15, 26, 27, 28) refer to the "signs of the clear *kitāb*" using the remote demonstrative pronoun *tilka*, in contrast to the proximate *hādhihī*. This language choice implies that this *kitāb* and its signs are absent and not immediately present to the audience of the Arabic Qur'āns. These instances bear resemblance to the phrase *dhālika l-kitāb* (that is the *kitāb*) found in Q 2:2. This has led to confusion among Qur'ān commentators regarding the true reference of "that *kitāb*" as opposed to "this *kitāb*". The introductions of sūrahs 12, 43, and 44 assert that this very same *kitāb mubīn* has been "sent down" in the form of Qur'āns. The Qur'ānic phrasing in the aforementioned sūrah proclamations, particularly the "signs (*āyāt*)" referred to in these proclamations (e.g., "*tilka āyāt al-kitāb al-mubīn*"), does not pertain to the actual verses of the Arabic Qur'āns. Instead, they allude to God's signs and decrees in the cosmos and history. The Prophet's recitations of the Qur'ān effectively describe "those signs" of the *kitāb* in the Arabic language for his community. In addition, if the *kitāb mubīn* is the realm of God's knowledge, records, and deeds, then "those signs of the *kitāb mubīn*" must be something absent from the audience hearing the Qur'ān. Therefore, it is fair to say that the pronoun *tilka/dhālika*, instead of *hādhihī/hādhā*, demonstrates this "distance" between the revelatory principle of the Qur'ān, namely, *al-kitāb*, and its product, the Qur'ān.[45]

1.2. Surplus in the Meaning of *al-Kitāb*

When we examine the exegesis works, it can be observed that commentators sometimes display conflicting interpretations regarding the distinction between the divine address revealed to Prophet Muḥammad and the transcendent *Kitāb*, in other words, the Qur'ān's self-references as the product of this address and the transcendent *Kitāb*, which is the source of the divine speech. As far as I detected, there are four main grounds leading to philological ramifications within the interpretations found in classical exegesis works regarding the meaning of the phrase "the book of which there is no doubt (*al-*

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[45] Andani, *Revelation in Islam*, 54.

kitāb lā rayb fīhi)" in verses 1-2 of al-Baqarah, which mentions the unquestionable Book, revealing this dilemma.

Sample 1: Philology Through Narratives

Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 150/767) claimed that Q 2:2 was revealed when Prophet Muḥammad invited two Jews to Islam, and they objected, stating that "no book had been revealed after the time of Prophet Moses. According to him, the *dhālika l-kitāb* in the verse refers to the Qurʾān they denied, and the function of the pronoun in the verse is similar to *hādhā*.[46]

Similarly, al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) interprets the pronoun *dhālika* in the verse as referring to the Qurʾān itself. Based on narratives from Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68/687-688), Ibn Jurayj, and Mujāhid ibn Jabr (d. 103/721), he argues that it is linguistically appropriate to refer to something distant as if it were close, concerning the pronoun's reference, because anything related to a ruling and its news is understandable to the addressee, even if it implies something other than what is now and nearby. It can be used instead of "this" in the same way a person conveys a conversation to another, replacing "that" with "this".[47] However, he also records the other interpretation stating that the phrase probably refers to the Torah and the Gospel. Accordingly, when this interpretation is directed toward this perspective, there is no objection to it because, in that case, it signifies an informative reference to something absent, and it is valid in philological terms.[48] Similarly, Abū Isḥāq al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923) mentioned that the term *al-kitāb* in the verse refers to the book promised and sent to Moses and Jesus in their own languages.[49]

Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938), relying on the same narration from Ibn ʿAbbās, said that *al-kitāb* in the verse refers to the Qurʾān.[50]

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[46] Abū l-Ḥasan Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Maḥmūd Shiḥātah (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 2010), 1/81.

[47] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Giza: Dār Hijr, 2001), 1/228-229.

[48] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 1/230.

[49] Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-Sarī ibn Sahl al- Zajjāj, *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān wa-iʿrābuhū*, ed. ʿAbd al-Jalīl ʿAbduh Shalabī (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1988), 1/66.

[50] Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Ḥātim Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*, ed. Asʿad Muḥammad Ṭayyib (Riyadh: Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafá al-Bāz, 1997), 1/34.

On the other hand, Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983) highlights another narration from Zayd ibn Aslam (d. 136/754) that we do not encounter in the abovementioned exegetical works: *Al-kitāb* in the verse refers to the preserved tablet, implying that in the preserved book, there is no doubt.[51]

The sample philological deductions given herein reveal how commentators interpret the same pronoun in the verse based on different narrations. Each commentary, which relies on specific narrations to reveal meaning, ended in various philological interpretations. Despite the variations in the narrations, the texts suggest there is a selective process in choosing which narrations to use in the commentary, which leads to overlooking philological evidence. Al-Ṭabarī and Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī, drawing on different narrations, assign significantly different meanings to the same expression in the verse, resulting in a kind of surplus of meaning.

Sample 2: Philology Through Theological Premises

Al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) stated that the synonymous use of *dhālika* and *hādhā* has a linguistic background. He emphasized that *dhālika* should refer to something distant, stating that it points to the parts revealed before Sūrat al-Baqarah in the Qurʾān. [52]

When we look at al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1210) exegetical work, the background of this deduction comes to the forefront as a Muʿtazilī opinion that is probably affiliated with the doctrine of createdness of the Qurʾān.[53] Al-Rāzī points out that this inference was first initiated by

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[51] Abū l-Layth Imām al-Hudá Naṣr ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-ʿulūm*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿawwiḍ et al. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1993), 1/88-89.

[52] Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt Ahl al-sunnah: Tafsīr al-Māturīdī*, ed. Majdī Bāsallūm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2005), 1/372.

[53] For the extensions of the theological doctrine of createdness of Qurʾān within exegetical works, see Huzeyfe Yalçın, *Tefsirlere Yansıyan Mezhebî Yorumların Kritiği: Halku'l-Kur'ân Örneği* (Mardin: Mardin Artuklu University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2021), 28-78. For the influence of theological doctrine of Qurʾān's createdness over the notions of revelation, see Harun Öğmüş, "Halku'l-Kur'ân Tartışmalarının Vahyin Allah'tan İnsana İntikaliyle İlgili Telakkiler Üzerindeki Etkisi", Selçuk *Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 28/28 (2009), 19-46.

Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm (d. 200/816),[54] who was one of the prominent figures of the Basran Mu'tazilah.[55]

Sample 3: Philology Through Hermeneutics

Al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) argued that the pronoun refers to the articulated and finished letters "Alif, lām, mīm" in the verse context. According to him, something articulated and completed is now distant in its ruling, and it is pointed to as *dhālika*, similar to its counterpart in Q 12:37 (*dhālikumā mimmā 'allamanī Rabbī*).[56] Actually, what the exegete does corresponds to philosophical hermeneutics in modern terms. He questions the distance of the parole between the source of it and the addressee, revealing some kind of comprehension act that is kindred to the "fusion of horizons" theory.[57]

Sample 4: Philology Through Discourse Analysis

Al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) summarized the ramifications of the interpretations of the term *al-kitāb* in the verse, stating that those who believe it refers to the Torah and the Bible differ regarding the addressee of the verse. According to them, those who argue that the addressee is Prophet Muḥammad say that it means there is no doubt in this Qur'ān mentioned in the Torah and the Bible. However, those who claim that the addressee is the Jews and Christians say that the promised book that will come to them is the Qur'ān revealed to Prophet Muḥammad.[58]

On the other hand, the statement in the verse that there is no doubt about *al-kitāb* complicates the understanding of the word as the

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[54] Abū 'Abd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1420), 2/259.

[55] Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, "Esam, Ebû Bekir", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1995).

[56] Abū l-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn 'Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Khwārazmī al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa-'uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta'wīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1407), 1/32-33.

[57] The fusion of horizons is a crucial concept in hermeneutics, a philosophical and interpretive approach to comprehending texts and communication. This idea was developed by the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer in his influential work, *Truth and Method*, published in 1960. For the English translation of the work: Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer - Donald G. Marshall (London: Continuum Publishing Group, 2006).

[58] Abū l-Hasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Baṣrī al-Māwardī, *al-Nukat wa-l-'uyūn*, ed. 'Abd al-Maqṣūd ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.), 1/67.

Qurʾān. It is well established in various verses that the opponents of Prophet Muḥammad always question the source and scriptural quality of revelation. Indeed, in Q 2:23, there is a challenge to those doubts. While al-Zamakhsharī states that "the verse does not deny the ability of anyone to doubt the Qurʾān, rather it declares that the Qurʾān is not a place of doubt and carries clear evidence", this commentary seems to overlook the hierarchy between *al-kitāb* as the source of Qurʾān and the Qurʾān itself.

Moreover, when we compare all the verses where the expression "there is no doubt in it (*lā raybᵃ fīh*)" ꓶ is used in the Qurʾān, we see that this phrase is always used to qualify aspects related to the unseen that is away from human reach, implying a distance. For example, at Q 3:9, 3:25, 4:87, 6:12, 22:7, 40:59, 42:7, 26:32, and 45:32, the phrase "there is no doubt" qualifies the judgment day. Additionally, in such verses as Q 15:1, 10:37, 27:1, and 32:2, *al-kitāb* and the Qurʾān are mentioned separately, indicating that interpreting *al-kitāb* as the Qurʾān is presumptive.

However, whereas the Qurʾān and *al-kitāb* are both separate in verses, exegetes did not hesitate to equate the terms with the scriptures preceding the Qurʾān or the Qurʾānic corpus itself. For example, al-Ṭabarī, relying on a narration from Mujāhid, stated that the *al-kitāb* in Q 15:1 refers to the divine books before the Qurʾān, namely, the Torah and the Gospel.[59] However, al-Māturīdī mentioned that the "clear book" in the verse could refer to either the Qurʾān being recited to them or the books of previous nations that existed before the Prophet Muḥammad.[60] Al-Zamakhsharī, claiming that the demonstrative pronoun at the beginning of the verse refers to the entirety of the sūrah's verses, implied that the Qurʾān and the term *al-kitāb* in the verse are synonymous.[61]

Similarly, in Q 27:1, *al-kitāb* and the Qurʾān are presented as distinct entities, and commentators' preferences regarding the content of *al-kitāb* are generally similar to those in Q 15:1. Al-Ṭabarī, for example, asserted that the term *kitāb mubīn* refers to the Qurʾān.[62] Muqātil explained the definition of *kitāb mubīn* as the manifestation

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[59] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 14/5.
[60] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt Ahl al-sunnah*, 6/419.
[61] Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2/569.
[62] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 18/5-7.

of its commands and prohibitions, indicating that he also understood *al-kitāb* as the Qurʾān.[63] Al-Zamakhsharī suggested that the term *kitāb mubīn* could be attributed to the preserved tablet or understood as referring to the Qurʾān itself. He argued that the ambiguity in the term aimed to highlight its grandeur, comparing it to attributing one synonymous attribute to another, similar to saying both are manifest.[64]

In summary, the interpretation of the term *al-kitāb* in various Qurʾānic verses is subject to different perspectives among classical commentators. While some identify it with the Qurʾān itself, others associate it with the divine Scriptures preceding the Qurʾān, such as the Torah and the Gospel. The differences in interpretation highlight the complexity of understanding certain Qurʾānic terms and the diversity of perspectives among commentators, as well as the inadequacy of philological deductions when they are not accompanied by intratextual references.

Conclusion

Understanding a phrase or the equivalent of a word in the linguistic structure of the Qurʾān is not merely confined to conceptually analyzing through linguistic-based methods or making direct inferences through analytical propositions. To comprehend a language, a discourse inevitably entails understanding the speaker of the discourse, the language encompassed by the discourse, the society inherent in this language, the culture of this society,[65] and the instruments of this culture related to time and space – essentially, understanding both linguistic and nonlinguistic elements in depth within a holistic framework. This unity inevitably requires transcending the confines of language, delving into what lies beyond language – into the initially unseen and imperceptible phenomena left

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[63] Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil*, 3/296.

[64] Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3/346.

[65] The relationship between language and society has led to its characterization as a "social institution". Sociologists have examined the inseparable connections and relationships between language and society from various perspectives, while linguists and anthropologists have conducted extensive research in this field. For a comprehensive literature review on the connections between language, society, and culture, please refer to the following work: Doğan Aksan, *Her Yönüyle Dil: Ana Çizgileriyle Dilbilim* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2007), 64-68; Also see Christine Jourdan - Kevin Tuite, *Language, Culture, and Society: Key Topics in Linguistic Anthropology* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

behind by language. The structure of sentences in the Qurʾān, which is distinct from analytical propositions, always carries the character of an oral address alongside it.[66]

Considering the Qurʾān's relationship with the oral tradition and its possession of a spoken discourse genre before being compiled into a corpus, it is possible to answer the question posed in this article. The language and stylistic attributes of the Qurʾān contain distinctive expression codes that reflect the oral culture of the time when it was revealed. The meanings conveyed by the words of the Qurʾān go beyond the text itself. Consequently, the meanings of the Qurʾānic discourse are not limited to the text alone. They exist predominantly within the historical and cultural context in which the discourse is situated, namely, within history.

From the time of the Tābiʿūn onward, the Qurʾān underwent a transformation. It evolved from being a spoken discourse integrated into the dynamic fabric of life and historical challenges, as it was during the first generation, to becoming a codified book. Dynamic engagement with the initial generation gave way to a paradigm dominated by narratives and the inherent language of the Qurʾān itself. It transitioned from a living discourse to a fixed book, with a defined beginning and end. The term *kitāb* (book) became synonymous with the Qurʾān in its complete form, leading commentators from the classical period to associate the term *al-kitāb* directly with the Qurʾān. While the demonstrative pronoun *dhālika*, in contrast to the proximate *hādhihī*, denotes a remote object, implying that *dhālika l-kitāb* and its signs are absent and not immediately present to the audience of the Arabic Qurʾān, the exegetes bypassed philology, leading to a surplus of meaning in the verse.

Exegetes performing deductions from Q 2:2 occasionally suspended the philological data in various ways. They applied to narratives that may well lead to contradictory deductions when the exegete does not apply to intratextual references within the Qurʾānic text or the historical background. Theological premises are the other agencies leading the exegete to bypass philological evidence; thus, the act of exegesis reveals a surplus in the meaning of corresponding verses or vocables. Applying hermeneutics is another way of obtaining

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[66] Dücane Cündioğlu, *Anlamın Buharlaşması ve Kur'an -Hermeneutik Bir Deneyim II-* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2013), 34.

a surplus of meaning. Philology through hermeneutics encompasses analytical reasoning, overlooking the fact that Qurʾānic discourse is intertwined with its *sui generis* rhetorical properties and its historical background, which defuses analytical reasoning.

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