

# Glossary

**abrogation** (ar. *naskh*) the idea that some verses or rulings revealed in earlier times were later replaced or annulled by verses or rulings revealed at a later time

***al-ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭaʿa*** lit. “disconnected letters”; these are one or more letters preceding twenty-nine suras in the Qurʾān, also known as “the mysterious letters” and “*awāʾil al-suwar*”

***al-idghām al-kabīr*** major assimilation

***al-ʾamma*** the majority of readers

***al-ʾarḍa al-akhīra*** lit. “the final review”; an Islamic tradition that Jibrīl reviewed with the Prophet all the Qurʾān, with all its permitted variants, twice before his death

***al-amṣār*** regions within the Islamic empire

**archetype** a manuscript from which all extant copies are derived

***aṣl*** lit. “principle”; a principle or foundation upon which other issues are based

**autograph** a manuscript written by the original author

***āya*** verse or sign

***basmala*** the Islamic invocation *bi-smi llāhi l-raḥmāni l-raḥīm*, which is found at the beginning of all the qurʾānic suras except *sūrat al-Tawba* (Q.9)

**bifolium** a folio that is folded in half (pl. bifolia)

**codex** a bound volume (pl. codices)

**codicology** the study of codices

**colophon** inscription at the beginning or the end of a manuscript to provide additional information about the work

**dagger *alif*** a superscript *alif* that represents a pronunciation of an *alif* that is not reflected in the *rasm*

**diacritical marks** symbols added to letters to indicate various phonetic or grammatical features

**early Abbasid period** the period from the Abbasid revolution in 132/749 to the death of al-Maʾmūn in 218/833

**exemplar** a manuscript from which another is copied

**facsimile** a photographic reproduction of a manuscript

***farsh al-ḥurūf*** individual variants that are applicable to specific words

***fāṣila*** comma or a sign between verses (pl. *fawāṣil*)

**folio** a single leaf, front and back

***ḥadhf*** deletion

**hadith** prophetic tradition

**hamza** glottal stop

**ḥarf** lit. “letter” (pl. *ḥurūf*)

**hijra** lit. “emigration”; the term refers to the emigration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in AD 622, which was later adopted by the second caliph ‘Umar as the starting year of the Muslim lunar calendar known as the *Hijrī* calendar

**homoioteleuton** a copying error occurs when a scribe skips over a portion of text that has a similar ending to another portion they are copying, resulting in a loss of text.

**idghām** assimilation

**ijmā‘** consensus

**ijtihād** personal interpretation

**iltifāt** pronominal shift

**imāla** The shift of the a → e

**isnād** chain of narrators

**i‘rāb** inflexion

**jāhiliyya** age of ignorance; this term is used to refer to the historical period in western central Arabia immediately prior to the beginning of Islam

**kitāb** book

**laḥn** solecism

**lugha** linguistic practices or dialect (pl. *lughāt*)

**madd** elongation

**madhhab** school of thought (pl. *madhāhib*)

**maḥḍar** a legal proceeding, a decree

**matn al-hadith** the main text of the hadith

**miqlāb** envelope flap

**mukhaffaf** consonants pronounced without *tashdīd*

**muṣṣhaf** codex (pl. *maṣāḥif*)

**nuqqāt** vocalizers

**original reading** reading presumably contained in the “original” text before any alteration

**original text** the text that was initially written by the first scribe before any change

**orthography** the set of spelling and other writing conventions governing a writing system

**paleography** the study of ancient writing

**palimpsest** a manuscript or piece of writing material on which the original writing has been effaced to make room for later writing but of which traces remain

**parchment** skin of an animal which has been cured, scraped to remove remaining fat and hair, and dried. It was a common medium for writing

**qirā'a** variant reading of the Qur'ān (pl. *qirā'āt*)

**quinion** quire of five bifolia

**quire** originally referred to “four sheets of folded parchment or paper,” but today used as a synonym to mean a number of bifolia stacked and sewn together

**Quraysh** the tribe of the Prophet

**qurrā'** readers (sg. *qāri'*)

**rasm** lit. “tracing”; Consonantal skeletal text

**rāwī** a transmitter of an eponymous reader

**reading tradition** a system and a collection of readings of the Qur'ān attributed to an eponymous reader

**recension** an editorial revision of a literary work

**recto** the front side of a folio

**ṣaḥāba** the Prophet's companions

**sartāb** fore-edge flap

**scriptio continua** continuous writing without breaks between words even when one word is divided between two lines

**scriptio defectiva** system of writing in which the *matres lectionis* are not written

**scriptio inferior** text that has faded or been erased and has been overwritten

**scriptio plena** system of writing in which the *matres lectionis* are written

**scriptio superior** the top layer of text on a page that has been written on more than once

**shamsa** circular or almond-shape decorative medallion that is often found on the front cover of a manuscript or in the middle of a page

**sīra** the Prophet's biography

**sura** chapter of the Qur'ān

**takhmīs sign** a sign between groups of five verses

**tanwīn** nunation

**ṭarīq** a transmitter of a *rāwī*

**tashdīd** gemination

**taṣḥīf** misspelling or misreading a word

**taṭwīl** elongation

**tawqīfī** fixed; cannot be changed

**taʿshīr sign** a sign between groups of ten verses

**textus receptus** Latin term that means “received text”; the term refers to an accepted form of a textual tradition

**transliteration** the phonetic representation of a word using the corresponding characters of a different language

**urtext** original text

**uṣūl al-qirāʾa** the general linguistic principles of recitation which the reader would utilize uniformly throughout the Qurʾān

**vellum** very fine parchment made of the skin of very young or stillborn calves

**verso** the back side of a folio

**vocalization** diacritical signs indicating the reading of the consonantal text

**wahy** inspiration

The glossary is a composite of definitions some of them are from the following sources: Maḥmūd Ismāʿīl Ṣāliḥ, *Dictionary of Islamic Words & Expressions: Romanized Arabic-English*, 3rd ed (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2011); Paul D. Wegner, *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods & Results* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2006); Jane Dammen McAuliffe, ed., *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). For simplicity and ease of reference, I have omitted quotation marks in this glossary even though some wording might be directly quoted from the sources cited.