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On the Historicity of ʿUthmān's Canonization of the Qur'an, Part 1: The State of the Field

https://doi.org/10.1515/jiqsa-2025-0016

Abstract: The identity of the early Muslim ruler or statesman who canonized the underlying consonantal text (*rasm*) of the Qur'an has been heavily debated in Western scholarship for more than a century. On the one hand, most Western scholars–past and present–have accepted the Islamic historical tradition's unanimous identification of the early Arab Muslim ruler ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān (r. 24–35/644–656) as the Qur'an's canonizer. On the other hand, a persistent revisionist minority have instead sided with certain Christian sources in identifying the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 65–86/685–705) and his infamous governor al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95/714) as the true canonizers and even collectors or composers of the Qur'an. Some Western scholars have also argued for various medial positions: that al-Ḥajjāj redacted and re-canonized ʿUthmān's canonical text; and/or that al-Ḥajjāj merely corrected some scribal errors therein; and/or that al-Ḥajjāj merely added diacritical markings thereto. The present article–the first in a tripartite series–contends that the available evidence strongly supports and confirms the ʿUthmānic hypothesis, on the one hand; and strongly contradicts and falsifies all versions of the Ḥajjājian hypothesis, on the other.

Keywords: Qur'an; collection; codification; canonization; ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān; al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf; ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān; Umayyad; Marwanid; ʿUthmānic.

Introduction

For more than a century, Western scholars have debated the identity of the early Muslim ruler or statesman who canonized the Qur'an,[1] establishing the standard

1 By 'canonization', I mean the event or process of a specific text's (or a specific version of a text's) (1) becoming widespread across a community; (2) acquiring a dominant or official status in that community; and (3) becoming fixed in the eyes of the community and, to an overwhelming extent, in its actual transmission and preservation – allowing, of course, for scribal errors and even the

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text-type of the underlying consonantal text (*rasm*) present in nearly all qur'anic manuscripts.[2] The Islamic historical tradition is unanimous in identifying ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān (r. 24–35/644–656) as the ruler in question, a view that was initially endorsed by the nineteenth-century European founders of the modern Western study of early Islam.[3] In 1911, however, this consensus was challenged by Paul Casanova, who rejected the historicity of the ʿUthmānic canonization and instead identified al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95/714), the infamous governor who served the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 65–86/685–705), as the Qur'an's true canonizer.[4] The ʿUthmānic consensus remained dominant for the next half-century,[5] but now had to contend with a spectrum of Ḥajjājian revisionist hypotheses: that al-Ḥajjāj corrected errors in ʿUthmān's consonantal canon and re-canonized the text;[6] and/or that al-Ḥajjāj altered or redacted the contents of ʿUthmān's consonantal canon and re-canonized the text;[7] or that al-Ḥajjāj, *rather than ʿUthmān*, produced the canonical consonantal text.[8] Additionally, there also existed a view that al-Ḥajjāj

occasional interpolation. (This last-mentioned process, whereby a text becomes fixed, is sometimes referred to as 'codification.') The further, *doctrinal-normative* aspect of canonization, whereby a text becomes viewed as a–or as *the*–definitive source of legal and theological doctrines for the community, is not the focus of the present work. See esp. Neuwirth, "Qurʾan and History," 2, 13, in this regard. For some related discussions, see Donner, "The Qurʾān in Recent Scholarship," 41; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 56–62, 85; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 850–56, 860, 887–89.

2 For various observations regarding the general uniformity of this text-type across the qur'anic manuscript record, see Muir, *The Life of Muhammad*, 1:xiv–xv; Nöldeke, *Sketches*, 53–54; Hurgronje, *Mohammedanism*, 27–28; Lammens, *L'Islam*, 44–45 [= *Islām*, 38]; Cook, *The Koran*, 117; Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 364; Aʿẓamī, *Ageless Qurʾan Timeless Text*, *passim*; Van Putten, "The Grace of God," 272.

3 E. g., Weil, *Historisch-Kritische Einleitung in den Koran*, 46–54; Muir, *The Life of Muhammad*, 1:xi–xiv; Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorâns*, 204 ff.; Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Moḥammad*, 1:58–59; Weil, *Geschichte der islamischen Völker*, 28–29 [= *A History of the Islamic Peoples*, 32–33]; Muir, *The Corân*, 38–40; Nöldeke, *Sketches*, 49 ff.; Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, 203–4 [= *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, 169].

4 Casanova, *Mohammed*, 103–42.

5 E. g., Margoliouth, *Early Development*, 37; Mingana and Lewis, *Leaves from three ancient Qurâns*, xx; Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, 7:388–418 [= "ʿUthman and the Recension of the Koran"]; Schwally, "Betrachtungen"; Nöldeke and Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 2:47 ff. [= *The History of the Qurʾān*, 251 ff.]; Lammens, *L'Islam*, 44–45 [= *Islām*, 38]; Jeffery, "Progress in the Study of the Qurʾān Text," 7–8; Levi della Vida, "ʿOthmān b. ʿAffān," 1009, col. 2; Jeffery, *Materials*, 8; Nöldeke *et al.*, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 3:1 ff. [= *The History of the Qurʾān*, 389 ff.]; Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, 49; Blachère, *Introduction*, 52 ff.; Bell, *Introduction*, 42–43; Bell and Watt, *Bell's Introduction*, 42–44.

6 Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text," 298 n48; Blachère, *Introduction*, 75 ff., esp. 77–78, 90–91.

7 Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script*, 47–49; Dietrich, "al-Ḥadjdjādj b. Yūsuf," 41.

8 Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān According to Christian Writers"; Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 18.

clarified the orthography of ʿUthmān's consonantal canon by adding diacritical markings.[9]

Alongside these dueling ʿUthmānic and Ḥajjājian positions, two new hypotheses were introduced in 1977: the first by John Wansbrough, who argued that the qur'anic text only crystalized c. 800 CE, in the early Abbasid period;[10] and the second by John Burton, who argued that Muḥammad himself (d. 11/632) was the Qur'an's true canonizer.[11] Neither view gained much traction, however, with Wansbrough's in particular receiving widespread criticism in the 1990s and 2000s.[12] Only the ʿUthmānic and (various) Ḥajjājian hypotheses have endured into the twenty-first century, the former of which continues to occupy a more dominant position within the field.[13]

The present article–which is the first in a tripartite series–aims to **(1)** identify and summarize the key arguments that have been formulated by Western scholars for and against the historicity of ʿUthmān's and al-Ḥajjāj's respective involvements in the production of the canonical qur'anic text; **(2)** augment and supplement these arguments with supporting argumentation and commentary where necessary, filling in some gaps in the existing scholarship; and **(3)** compare and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of said arguments. Throughout this critical survey, three key conclusions will emerge: **firstly**, that proponents of (all versions of) the Ḥajjājian hypothesis have failed to adequately engage with the relevant primary and secondary sources; **secondly**, that the available evidence overwhelmingly supports and confirms the ʿUthmānic hypothesis; and, **thirdly**, that the available evidence at best only weakly supports, and at worst strongly contradicts, all versions of the Ḥajjājian hypothesis. In other words, based on the available evidence, there can be little doubt that it was ʿUthmān, and not al-Ḥajjāj, who canonized the Qur'an.

9 Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorâns*, 305 ff., esp. 307–8; Margoliouth, "Textual Variations," 336, 339; Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text," 298 n48; Bell, *Introduction*, 43; Bell and Watt, *Bell's Introduction*, 47–48.

10 Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 43 ff.

11 Burton, *Collection*.

12 E. g., Crone, "Two Legal Problems," 17–18 (incl. n48); Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 550 (incl. n26); Whelan, "Forgotten Witness"; Donner, *Narratives*, into. and ch. 1; Motzki, "Collection"; Neuwirth, "Structural, Linguistic and Literary Features," 100; Sinai, "When Did the Consonantal Skeleton of the Quran Reach Closure? Part I," 275; Van Putten, "The Grace of God," 271; Sidky, "Regionality," 135–36; Tottoli, *The Qurʾan*, 3; Lindstedt, *Muḥammad*, 14 ff.

13 For some current literature, see below.

Arguments for ʿUthmān

To begin with, proponents of the ʿUthmānic hypothesis in the Western academy have developed at least nine distinct arguments in favor of this view (listed and henceforth referred to as **U1**, **U2**, **U3**, etc.):

U1. Hossein Modarressi and Gregor Schoeler have both argued that the unanimous consensus of early Muslims regarding the occurrence of the ʿUthmānic canonization is indicative of, or consistent with, a genuine collective memory.[14]

U2. Behnam Sadeghi and Nicolai Sinai have both argued that it would have been extremely difficult for Muslims after the time of ʿUthmān–divided as they were by region and sect–to have collectively or unanimously converged upon a false, secondary narrative about the canonization of the Qur'an, which means that the ʿUthmānic consensus more likely reflects a genuine historical memory.[15]

U3. Friedrich Schwally (very briefly) and Sadeghi (in more detail) have both essentially argued that the acceptance of the ʿUthmānic canonization by anti-ʿUthmānic factions fulfills the criteria of dissimilarity and embarrassment. On this view, anti-ʿUthmānic factions like the Shīʿah and the Ibāḍiyyah would likely not have accepted any hitherto-unheard-of ʿUthmānic narrative falsely created by another faction, and would likely not have created such a narrative themselves, such that their begrudging acceptance thereof is best explained by positing: that ʿUthmān actually canonized the Qur'an; that this event was witnessed or experienced by all and sundry; and that the ʿUthmānic canonization thus became an incontestable fact recognized by all factions, including hostile factions–above all, the Shīʿah and the Ibāḍiyyah–that emerged or crystalized following ʿUthmān's murder.[16]

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14 Modarressi, "Early Debates," 13–14; Schoeler, "Codification," 787. See also Welch, "al-Ḳurʾān: 3," 405, col. 2.

15 Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 365–66; Sinai, "When Did the Consonantal Skeleton of the Quran Reach Closure? Part II," 509–10; idem, *The Qurʾan*, 46. For some related points, see Hurgronje, *Mohammedanism*, 26–28; Kara, "Contemporary Shiʿi Approaches," 123–34. Less directly, see Donner, *Narratives*, intro.

16 Schwally, "Betrachtungen," 324–25; Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 365–66. Less directly, see Donner, *Narratives*, intro. In a sense, this takes care of the question raised in Sinai, "Part II," 511 n7: "how far into the early eighth century can we confidently trace back the Shii assumption that the standard *rasm* was promulgated by ʿUthmān?" Based on Schwally, Sadeghi, and Donner's argument, we can infer that the Shīʿī assumption in question dates as far back as the time of ʿUthmān himself. This argument would apply even if Shīʿī, Ibāḍī, etc., sources obtained their reports on the ʿUthmānic canonization from proto-Sunnī sources like al-Zuhrī: It is unexpected that anti-ʿUthmān sources would accept and cite such inexpedient or contentious reports from their opponents and

U4. Sadeghi (in more detail) and Sinai (in less detail) have both argued: that the canonization of the Qur'an is evident from the universality and uniformity of a single text-type in the qur'anic manuscript record; that this canonization must have been a public event of great religious and political significance; that the identity of whoever carried out this canonization must thus have entered into the public knowledge or collective memory of the early Muslim community at large; that such a fundamental piece of information could not have been successfully and consistently forgotten and overwritten across the community *as a whole*, across *all regions and sects*; that the early Muslim consensus regarding the occurrence of an ʿUthmānic canonization is the only candidate for being this enduring public knowledge of the Qur'an's canonization; and that the early Muslim consensus regarding the occurrence of an ʿUthmānic canonization thus likely originated as a genuine collective memory of ʿUthmān's actually canonizing the Qur'an.[17]

U5. Schoeler and Sinai have both argued that the widely reported hostility of the early Muslim Qur'an-reciters (*qurrāʾ*) towards ʿUthmān's canonization is best explained as a broadly accurate record of the authentic reaction of a social group or profession whose interests were undermined by ʿUthmān's actions; and that other reports commending ʿUthmān's canonization are best explained as apologetical responses to this historic controversy.[18]

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rivals unless said reports were at least broadly consistent with their own (Shīʿī, Ibāḍī, etc.) sectarian communal memories.

For some Shīʿī sources that mention or cite reports of the ʿUthmānic canonization, see Sulaym [attr.], *Kitāb Sulaym*, 210, 416; Ibn al-Aʿtham, *Futūḥ*, 2:407; Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:196–97.

For some Ibāḍī sources that mention or cite reports of the ʿUthmānic canonization, see Barrādī, *al-Jawāhir al-muntaqāh*, 73; Qalhātī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, 2:210–11; Izkawī, *Kashf al-ghummah*, 2:160. All of these Ibāḍī sources, along with the *Mukhtaṣar* preserved in the so-called Hinds Xerox, quote or redact the non-extant *Kitāb Ṣifat aḥdāth ʿUthmān*, an "eastern" Ibāḍī work that is "unlikely to have been written much before the 150s/770s." See Crone and Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim*, 189–90 (incl. n7).

For a Khārijī source (albeit recorded in a Sunnī source), see Ṭabarī, *Annales*, 2nd series, 1:516. See also Hagemann, *The Khārijites in Early Islamic Historical Tradition*, 126, 241.

For other hostile reports and statements recorded in Sunnī sources, see Schoeler, "Codification," 787; Sinai, "Part II," 511; Anthony and Bronson, "Did Ḥafṣah Edit the Qurʾān?," 112.

17 Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 366; Sinai, "Part II," 510–11. The point here is not that all public memory is true, but rather, that *something of this magnitude and importance* could not have been uniformly forgotten and overwritten *in conditions like this*.

18 Schoeler, "Codification," 787–88; Sinai, "Part II," 511–12; idem, *The Qurʾan*, 46–47. See also Margoliouth, *Early Development*, 37; Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, 7:409 ff. [= "ʿUthman and the Recension of the Koran," 382 ff.]; Jeffery, *Materials*, 8; etc.

U6. Schoeler has argued that no one would have falsely created the reports of the minor variants that characterized the qur'anic codices that ʿUthmān dispatched to different provinces as part of his canonization project, such that the reports in question must reflect genuine observations of ʿUthmān's canonical codices.[19]

U7. Sadeghi has argued–on the basis of earlier research by Theodore Nöldeke and Michael Cook–that the aforementioned variants of ʿUthmān's regional copies form stemmata consistent with the scenario of copying from a single archetype; that these reports thus likely record the actual variants of a real set of manuscripts copied from a single archetype; that early Muslims thus accurately preserved certain minute details about the history of the Qur'an; that these same early Muslims were unanimous in identifying ʿUthmān as the one who canonized the Qur'an and produced the aforementioned regional copies; that more basic or general information about the history of the Qur'an–such as the identity of its canonizer–would have been much easier for early Muslims to preserve, or much more likely to have been preserved by them, than such minute details; which means that the early Muslim consensus regarding the basic or general fact of ʿUthmān's canonization is probably *also* accurate. In short, this is an *a fortiori* argument: If early Muslims were able to accurately record some minute details about the history of the Qur'an, then it is all the more likely that they were correct in their consensus regarding the ʿUthmānic canonization.[20]

U8. Hythem Sidky has argued that the traditional Muslim consensus that ʿUthmān produced four regional copies of his canonical Qur'an–one for Medina, one for Syria, one for Kufah, and one for Basrah–is confirmed by a stemmatic analysis of early qur'anic manuscript variants; that this is unlikely to be a coincidence; that the existence of four original regional copies cannot have been inferred at some later point on the basis of the manuscript evidence; and thus, that the traditional Muslim consensus thereon must have originated as a collective memory of ʿUthmān's actually producing four regional codices as part of his canonization project.[21]

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19 Schoeler, "Codification," 788.

20 Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 367–70. For the stemmata in question, see Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorâns*, 242 n1; Nöldeke *et al.*, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 3:15 [= *The History of the Qur'ān*, 399–400]; Cook, "Stemma."

21 Sidky, "Regionality," esp. 182–83. It is worth noting that there are contradictory reports about the historic consensus of Muslim scholars regarding the number and destinations of ʿUthmān's *maṣāḥif*. For example, Makkī, *Ibānah*, 65, asserts that the view that ʿUthmān produced seven *maṣāḥif* is supported by more transmitters than the view that he produced five, whilst al-Dānī, *Muqniʿ*, 19, asserts that the view that ʿUthmān produced four *maṣāḥif*–for Medina, Syria, Kufah, and Basrah, respectively–is the sounder view and the one adhered to by the majority of scholars.

U9. Sidky has argued that the original copy of the canonical Qur'an that ʿUthmān sent to Syria was reportedly sent to the city of Ḥimṣ in particular; that Ḥimṣ was overshadowed by Damascus as the foremost Syrian city immediately after ʿUthmān's death (i. e., with the rise of Muʿāwiyah and the Umayyad Dynasty in Damascus); that a later, false report about the original Syrian copy of the canonical Qur'an would thus be expected to mention Damascus rather than Ḥimṣ; and that the report of ʿUthmān's sending a copy to Ḥimṣ thus fulfills the criterion of dissimilarity and plausibly reflects an archaic (pre-Umayyad) memory of ʿUthmān's having actually done so.[22]

Stephen Shoemaker and Guillaume Dye, two leading skeptics of the ʿUthmānic hypothesis, have broadly responded to the first three arguments (**U1–3**), each of which appeals in some way to the consensus of early Muslims.[23] In particular, Shoe-

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Al-Dānī is corroborated in his assertion by al-Labīd al-Tūnisī, *al-Durrah al-ṣaqīlah*, 212–13, who claims that the correct and well-known view is that only four *maṣāḥif* were produced, other than ʿUthmān's private *muṣḥaf*; and by Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Rajrājī (cited in Shirshāl, *Dirāsah*, in Ibn Najāḥ, *Mukhtaṣar*, 1:139), who claims that the well-known view, to which the majority of scholars adhere, is that ʿUthmān produced four *maṣāḥif* (for Medina, Syria, Kufah, and Basrah, respectively). This would seem to be contradicted by Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, 17:40, who asserts that the well-known view is that ʿUthmān produced five *maṣāḥif*; but this contradiction is probably illusory. If we turn to al-Jaʿbarī, *Jamīlat arbāb al-marāṣid*, 1:369–70, who was operating in Cairo a century before Ibn Ḥajar and those statements on this matter might thus shed light upon Ibn Ḥajar's source-material, we find a germane commentary of a famous poem by al-Shāṭibī. In this commentary, al-Jaʿbarī clarifies that al-Shāṭibī's poem describes ʿUthmān's producing five *maṣāḥif* based on Ḥafṣah's *ṣuḥuf*: (1) a private copy for himself; (2) a Medinan exemplar; (3) a Kufan exemplar; (4) a Basran exemplar; and (5) a Syrian exemplar. Thereafter, with a note of uncertainty, the poem also mentions: (6) a Meccan exemplar; (7) a Baḥrānī exemplar; and (8) a Yemenite exemplar. Finally, after clarifying the poem, al-Jaʿbarī claims that the first five (i. e., the Medinan, Syrian, Kufan, and Basran exemplars, along with ʿUthmān's private copy) are agreed upon, whereas the last three (i. e., the Meccan, Baḥrānī, and Yemenite exemplars) are contested. In short, the majority view of classical Islamic scholarship appears to have been that ʿUthmān produced four regional exemplars. There was some uncertainty about whether a fifth codex was also produced, but since this was a private copy just for ʿUthmān, it is irrelevant for our purposes: The majority of classical Muslim scholars seem to have accepted that only four regional exemplars (for Medina, Syria, Kufah, and Basrah, respectively) were produced, four public copies of the Qur'an in the leading provincial centers, from which the conventional text type spread. As it happens, this also seems to be the view attributed to the earliest authorities (Ibn Shabbah, *Taʾrīkh*, 3:997–98, citing Abū Muḥammad al-Qurashī; Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣāḥif*, 34, citing Ḥamzah al-Zayyāt), which strengthens the idea that the consensus derives from an early communal memory.

22 Sidky, "Regionality," 171, 183.

23 It should be noted however that neither Shoemaker nor Dye directly engage with Schwally, Modarressi, Schoeler, and Sadeghi on these points. Instead, their responses are directed against Welch, Donner, and Sinai.

maker and Dye contend: that an early Muslim consensus on an earlier point of history could actually be the product of some kind of false, secondary narrative;[24] that the power and influence of the Umayyad state could explain the spread and predomination of the ʿUthmānic narrative across the diverse sects and regions of early Islam;[25] and that early Muslims did not unanimously agree on the identity of the qur'anic canonizer in any case.[26]

Shoemaker and Dye are certainly correct in pointing out the possibility that an early Muslim consensus–unanimous or otherwise–regarding an earlier point of history could be mistaken,[27] even if some of the examples cited by Dye to illustrate this possibility–for example, that early Muslims collectively forgot that Muḥammad actually died after 11/632–are extremely dubious and highly contested.[28] However, the assertion that early Muslims did not unanimously agree on the identity of the Qur'an's canonizer is simply false: *In virtually every known instance of an early Islamic source that recounts or mentions the Qur'an's canonizer, ʿUthmān is identified as such*.[29] Against this, skeptics like Shoemaker and Dye have only been able to adduce (1) disagreements regarding the *pre-ʿUthmānic* state of the qur'anic text;[30] (2) disagreements regarding *specific details* of ʿUthmān's canonization;[31] (3) various reports of al-Ḥajjāj's enforcing *the ʿUthmānic text* and of his sending fresh copies of *the ʿUthmānic text* to some provinces;[32] and (4) an important early historical source–the *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* of Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845)–that does not explicitly con-

24 Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 72–73, 80; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 867–70; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 34–35. See also idem, *The Death of a Prophet*, 156–58.

25 Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 37–38, 48–49, 59. See also De Prémare, *Aux origines du Coran*, 72–73; Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 148, 158; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 74; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 871.

26 Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, e. g., 17–18, 24 ff.

27 Similarly, Motzki, "Collection," 13; Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 366.

28 Cf. Shaddel, "Periodisation and the *futūḥ*."

29 I base this assertion on the explicit statements made by Schwally *et al*. to this effect; on my own exhaustive survey of both the Western and Arabic literature on this topic; and on the complete failure of highly motivated skeptics to identify even a single convincing counterexample. The closest thing to an exception that I have found is a distorted version of the "common link" Abū Isḥāq's *ḥadīth* on the ʿUthmānic canonization (i. e., a distorted version thereof in which ʿUmar has been added and ʿUthmān has been omitted), discussed in Part 2 of this article.

30 Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 72; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 869; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, ch. 1.

31 De Prémare, *Aux origines du Coran*, ch. 4; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 74–80; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 870–82; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 29. See also Blachère, *Introduction*, 52 ff.; Burton, *Collection*, ch. 7; Comerro, *Les traditions sur la constitution du muṣḥaf de ʿUthmān*; Sinai, "Part II," 512; etc.

32 See the section on **Ḥ3–4**, below.

tradict the basic ʿUthmānic narrative, but merely fails to mention it, or to mention it specifically in the sections devoted to ʿUthmān and his aide Zayd b. Thābit, or to mention the famous report from Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī in particular.[33] It is only in *Christian sources* that we find any real dissent from the ʿUthmānic consensus, as will be discussed below.[34]

Moreover, regarding a hypothetical Umayyad rewriting of the collective Muslim memory of the history of the Qur'an, Shoemaker *et al*. have thus far failed to explain exactly how this could have been achieved, especially given the regional and sectarian divisions of Islam during the Umayyad period.[35] Certainly, a vague appeal to the power and influence of the Umayyad state will not suffice, especially given the survival of all manner of anti-Umayyad and counter-Umayyad narratives and opinions scattered across the Islamic historical tradition.[36] In fact, the notion that the Umayyads possessed the power to control early Muslim memory and opinion seems outright inconsistent with our general picture of the dynasty, as Sadeghi has

33 See variously Casanova, *Mohammed*, 109–10; De Prémare, *Aux origines du Coran*, 78–80; idem, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 201; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 78; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 879–80; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 26 ff. Cf. Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:343–44 (indirectly); ibid., 3:502 (including an abridged version of the "common link" Ibn Sīrīn's report, discussed in Part 2 of this article); ibid., 5:233 (discussed below). Cf. also Fudge, "Scepticism as Method," 6.

34 Again, see the section on **Ḥ3–4**, below.

35 For example, consider the following regional and sectarian survey attributed to the Abbasid scion Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (d. 125/744), in anon., *Akhbār*, 206: "As for Kufah and the alluvial plain [around] it, [the people] there are partisans for ʿAlī and his descendants. As for [the people of] Basrah and the alluvial plain [around] it, [they are] partisans for ʿUthmān who profess abstention [from violence] and who say: 'Be a servant of God who is killed, rather than a servant of God who kills.' As for al-Jazīrah, [its people are] renegade Ḥarūriyyah [i. e., Khawārij], and Bedouins who are almost unbelievers, and Muslims who are [similar] in character to Christians. As for the People of Syria, they do not recognize [as legitimate anyone] other than the Āl Abī Sufyān; [they are characterized by] an obedience to the Banū Marwān, and [by] a deep-rooted hostility towards us, and [by] a compounding ignorance. As for the People of Mecca and Medina, [an affinity towards] Abū Bakr and ʿUmar has overcome them." (See also Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, 1:204, and the sources listed in Daniel, *Khurasan*, 63 n24, although the latter all seem to be dependent on the anonymous *Akhbār* and/or Ibn Qutaybah.) Of course, this survey only survives in sources from the Abbasid period, but the key divisions outlined therein already existed c. 700 CE. In other words, by the time of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj, there were already Shīʿah of various kinds in Kufah; proto-Ibāḍiyyah in Basrah; Khawārij in various regions; non-Umayyad ʿUthmāniyyah in Medina and Basrah; Murjiʾah in Kufah; etc. See variously Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, *passim*; Wilkinson, *Ibâḍism*, ch. 5; Haider, *The Origins of the Shīʿa*.

36 For a Shīʿī example, see Yaʿqūbī, *Mushākalat al-nās*, 199–202. For a Khārijī example, see Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, appendix 3. For Abbasid examples, see Ṭabarī, *Annales*, 3rd series, 4:2175–76 (citing al-Muʿtaḍid bi-Llāh); Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil*, 2:10–11. For some other examples, see Ṭabarī, *Annales*, 2nd series, 2:1086–87 (citing al-Shaʿbī and Saʿīd b. Jubayr); and 2nd series, 3:1391–93 (citing Ḥasan al-Baṣrī). For a discussion of some of these latter sources, see Donner, "Umayyad Efforts," 194–96.

pointed out: "Relatively decentralized, and continually facing rebellion and dissension, the Umayyads were hard-pressed to preserve their political authority over their domain."[37] Sadeghi supports this point with an *a fortiori* appeal to the famous failure of the rationalist inquisition instituted by al-Maʾmūn (r. 198–218/813–833): If even the later Abbasid Dynasty proved incapable of easily controlling Islamic doctrine and Muslim opinion, what chance did the relatively weaker and less centralized Umayyad Dynasty have?[38]

Finally, it should be acknowledged that Schoeler's and Sadeghi's respective appeals (**U6–7**) to the variants that characterized the copies of the canonical Qur'an that ʿUthmān sent to the provinces are undermined by Marijn van Putten, who acknowledges that the variants in question could have originated with "any group of interdependent manuscripts copied from each other" (i. e., not necessarily ʿUthmān's);[39] and by Sidky, who argues that early Muslim scholars in fact obtained their knowledge of said variants by examining later copies of the original manuscripts.[40] In other words, Schoeler's and Sadeghi's arguments both rest on the assumption that there is some kind of inherent link between (1) the accurate preservation of these variants and (2) their retrospective attribution to ʿUthmān, such that the accuracy of the former can be transferred to the latter. Per Sidky, this assumption appears to be false: Knowledge of the variants that characterized the original regional copies of the canonical Qur'an seems to have been obtained on the basis of direct observation of later manuscripts, whereas knowledge of their ultimate ʿUthmānic provenance seems to have been *assumed* or *inferred* on the basis of the traditional consensus that ʿUthmān canonized the Qur'an and dispatched copies to the provinces. The early Muslim scholars who made this assumption or inference were likely correct; but their correctness in this regard can only be ascertained based on *other considerations* (i. e., the other arguments outlined above), independently of how accurately they recorded variants from early qur'anic manuscripts.

In short, there are currently nine arguments in favor of the ʿUthmānic hypothesis, variously appealing to (**U1**) the unanimous consensus of early Muslims thereon;

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37 Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 366.

38 Ibid. It might be objected that, if the Umayyads were weaker than the Abbasids, ʿUthmān's government was weaker still, making it even less likely that he could have controlled early Muslim opinion and memory. This is no doubt true, but also irrelevant: Nobody has argued that ʿUthmān foisted a false memory upon the early Muslim community that eclipsed all prior memories. Indeed, when it comes to public opinion in ʿUthmān's time, the Islamic sources paint a decidedly mixed picture: the *qurrāʾ* and others reportedly criticized ʿUthmān's canonization (see **U5**, above); some Kufans actively resisted his efforts (see **Ḥ3–4**, below); and there are even accusations–in Shīʿī reports in particular–that ʿUthmān's text was corrupted or deficient (see the discussion on **¬Ḥ10**, below).

39 Van Putten, "The Grace of God," 273.

40 Sidky, "Regionality," 138, 182.

(U2) the agreement thereon of Muslims divided by region and sect; **(U3)** the agreement thereon even of Muslims who despised or criticized ʿUthmān; **(U4)** the public nature of such an event; **(U5)** the early controversy provoked by ʿUthmān's project; **(U6–7)** the reports of the minor variants in ʿUthmān's codices; **(U8)** the congruence between a stemmatic analysis of early qur'anic manuscript variants and the consensus of early Muslim scholars regarding the number of ʿUthmān's manuscripts; and **(U9)** the plausibly archaic character of a report about ʿUthmān's sending a codex to Ḥimṣ. Skeptics of the ʿUthmānic hypothesis have only responded to the first three of these arguments, although their counterarguments thereagainst are generally weak. Alongside these, there are also valid criticisms that can be raised against the sixth and seventh arguments. As things currently stand, however, the ʿUthmānic hypothesis remains strongly justified: it is supported by multiple kinds of evidence, including narrative reports and manuscript variants; it is supported by broader historical considerations relating to communal divisions and public knowledge; it is supported by Islamic reports and sources of diverse regional and sectarian provenance, thereby fulfilling the criterion of multiple, independent attestation; it is supported by anti-ʿUthmānic sources, thereby fulfilling the criteria of dissimilarity and embarrassment; and it is supported by at least one report that resists later historical expectations (about the location of ʿUthmān's Syrian codex), again plausibly fulfilling the criterion of dissimilarity. It is probably no exaggeration to say that ʿUthmān's canonization of the Qur'an is one of the best-attested facts of early Islamic history.

Arguments against ʿUthmān

Alongside their criticisms of the arguments in favor of the ʿUthmānic hypothesis, skeptics thereof have also devised at least seven additional arguments against this view (listed and henceforth referred to as **¬U1**, **¬U2**, **¬U3**, etc.):

¬U1. Alphonse Mingana, Chase Robinson, and Shoemaker have all variously argued that the composition and canonization of the Qur'an ought to have followed a similar timeframe to that of the Jewish and Christian scriptures, which would entail a much later date of canonization than ʿUthmān.[41]

¬U2. Mingana, Robinson, Dye, and Shoemaker have all variously argued that the infrastructure and technology that would have been necessary for ʿUthmān's

41 Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān According to Christian Writers," 412–13; Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik*, 101–2; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 38–39.

canonization–above all, a strong centralized state and a developed tradition of Arabic writing and literature–did not yet exist during his reign.[42]

¬U3. Mingana, Wansbrough, Dye, and Shoemaker have all variously appealed to the absence of references to, or a dependence upon, the Qur'an in early non-Islamic sources, treaties from the Arab conquests, early Arabic inscriptions, a Marwanid-era curriculum for training scribes, pre-Marwanid Islamic jurisprudence, and the proto-Ḥanafī creed known as *al-Fiqh al-Akbar I*, all of which suggests that the Qur'an was not yet canonized during most of the first/seventh century.[43]

¬U4. Alfred-Louis de Prémare, Robinson, Shoemaker, and Dye have all appealed to the qur'anic inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock (completed in 72/691), which differ in some respects from the canonical Qur'an, as further evidence that the Qur'an remained in an uncanonized state long after the time of ʿUthmān.[44]

¬U5. Yehuda Nevo, Judith Koren, De Prémare, Dye, and Shoemaker have all appealed to the Syrian Church Father John of Damascus (wr. early-eighth century CE), whose description of the Qur'an contradicts some aspects of the arrangement and contents of the canonical Qur'an, as evidence that the Qur'an was not yet canonized at the turn of the eighth century CE. To bolster this argument, some scholars have further argued that John was a reliable source, and that his account finds some corroboration in both Islamic sources and the qur'anic manuscript record.[45]

¬U6. Nevo, Koren, De Prémare, Shoemaker, and others have appealed to the Syriac Christian text known as *The Disputation between a Muslim and a Monk of Bēt Ḥālē* (wr. late-eighth or early-ninth century CE),[46] which differentiates Sūrat al-Baqarah from the Qur'an, as further evidence that the Qur'an remained

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42 Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān According to Christian Writers," 412–14; Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik*, 102; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 79–80; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 881; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 33, 41–42, 55, 65, and ch. 5.

43 Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān According to Christian Writers," 406, 411; Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 44; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 81–84; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 883–87; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 56–57, 66.

44 De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 193; Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik*, 102–3; Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 148, 321 n132; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 82–83; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 885; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 64–65. See also Powers, *Muhammad*, 161, 292–93 n48; Amir-Moezzi and Kohlberg, "Qur'anic Recensions," 59–60.

45 Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, 236–38; De Prémare, *Aux origines du Coran*, 95–97; idem, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 195–97, 207; Small, *Textual Criticism*, 122–23; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 93–95; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 50–53. See also Tillier and Vanthieghem, *The Book of the Cow*, 36. Additionally, see Schadler, *John of Damascus*, chs. 3–4.

46 For the date of this text, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 472; and esp. Taylor, "Disputation," 190 ff.

in an uncanonized–and indeed, *uncollected*–state long after the time of ʿUthmān.[47]

¬U7. Shoemaker has appealed to P. Hamb. Arab. 68, a recently published qur'anic manuscript (wr. late-seventh or early-eighth century CE) that solely comprises Sūrat al-Baqarah and differs from the canonical qur'anic text in some places, as further evidence that the Qur'an remained in an uncanonized–and indeed, *uncollected*–state long after the time of ʿUthmān.[48]

All but the last of these skeptical arguments have been criticized or undermined in existing scholarship, with the last being exempted only due to its recency.[49] To begin with (**¬U1**), the relative rapidity of the Muslim process of compilation and canonization–compared to the Bible–has already been explained, on two grounds. Firstly, as Nöldeke, Schwally, and Cook have all pointed out, Muḥammad and his followers lived in the aftermath of the establishment of the Jewish and Christian scriptures and explicitly operated with this concept or model in mind, which helps to explain the Muslim preoccupation with establishing a scripture of their own from the outset.[50] Secondly, as Cook has again pointed out, the early Muslims who canonized the Qur'an already had access to, and evidently made use of, a state, in contrast to their Jewish and Christian predecessors.[51] In light of these clear historical and contextual disanalogies, the belated process of biblical canonization–variously adduced by Mingana, Robinson, and Shoemaker–becomes irrelevant.

Mingana, Robinson, Dye, and Shoemaker's contention (**¬U2**) that ʿUthmān lacked the power, infrastructure, and technology necessary for a canonization is also unjustified and mistaken on multiple counts. Firstly, Nabia Abbott, Petra Sijpesteijn, and Van Putten have all variously shown–on the basis of early Arabic papyri, inscriptions, and orthography–that a developed tradition of Arabic writing

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47 Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, 241–42; De Prémare, *Aux origines du Coran*, 94; idem, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 194–95, 207; Small, *Textual Criticism*, 122–23; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 52–53. See also Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 17–18, 167 n14; Crone, "Jāhilī and Jewish Law," 179; Griffith, *Syriac Writers on Muslims*, 33–34; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 471–72; Griffith, "Disputing with Islam in Syriac," 47–48; Tillier and Vanthieghem, *The Book of the Cow*, 36.

48 Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 50, 52. See also Tillier and Vanthieghem, *The Book of the Cow*.

49 I. e., having only just been expressed in Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*.

50 Nöldeke and Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 2:119–21 [= *The History of the Qurʾān*, 311–13]; Cook, *The Koran*, 123.

51 Cook, *The Koran*, 123–24. For other comments linking qur'anic textual uniformity to the early Islamic state or some kind of centralized effort, see variously Muir, *The Life of Muhammad*, 1:xiv–xv; Nöldeke, *Sketches*, 53–54; Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, 7:417 [= "ʿUthman and the Recension of the Koran," 389]; Lammens, *L'Islam*, 44–45 [= *Islam*, 38]; Hamdan, "The Second *Maṣāḥif* Project," 829–30; Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 158; idem, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 37, 205.

and even a developed Arabic bureaucratic tradition existed prior to ʿUthmān.[52] (To this can be added the fact, already admitted by Mingana, that Christian and Jewish scribes were readily available for Muslim employment at the outset.[53]) Secondly, as both Robert Hoyland and Cook have pointed out, early Christian sources and later Islamic sources agree that, already in the time of ʿUmar (r. 13–23/634–644), there existed a central government with the power to appoint, dismiss, and coordinate governors and generals across the early Arab empire.[54]

To the foregoing can be added the consideration that most Muslims remained concentrated in a small number of cities and regions during the time of ʿUthmān,[55] making it that much easier for him to execute his canonization.[56] In other words, whilst there is no doubt that ʿUthmān's government was weaker than Muʿāwiyah's, ʿAbd al-Malik's, or al-Maʾmūn's, the socio-political conditions of ʿUthmān's time were far more favorable or conducive to a canonization project in this key respect.[57] Moreover, whilst it is true that ʿUthmān faced popular unrest towards the end of his reign, this still leaves the beginning and middle thereof as viable points at which he could have carried out his canonization project,[58] as is indeed explicitly indicated by some reports.[59] What then is missing, in terms of power, infrastructure, technology, and logistics, for a canonization of the Qur'an during the reign of ʿUthmān? Skeptics of the ʿUthmānic canonization seem to be creating problems where none exist.[60]

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52 Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script*, 48; Sijpesteijn, "Arabic Script and Language in the Earliest Papyri"; Van Putten, "The Development of the Hijazi Orthography," esp. 125–26 (explicitly responding to Shoemaker). Cf. Shoemaker, *Quest*, 51 n181, but cf. in turn Macdonald and al-Jallad, "Literacy in 6th and 7th Century Hijaz."

53 Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān According to Christian Writers," 413.

54 Hoyland, "New Documentary Texts," esp. 398–99; Cook, *A History of the Muslim World*, 97–101. See also Crone, "The Early Islamic World," 311.

55 E. g., Crone, "The Early Islamic World," 311–12.

56 This takes care of the suggestion in Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 79, and idem, "Le corpus coranique," 881, that ʿUthmān's sending of a single codex each to Medina, Basrah, Kufah, and Syria would have been insufficient for his purposes. In fact, ʿUthmān perfectly targeted the most populous and influential Muslim centers, which could–and evidently *did*–act as parent nodes in the copying and dissemination of the canonical Qur'an.

57 See also **U2–3** and the discussion thereon, above; and **¬Ḥ8** and the discussion thereon, below.

58 This takes care of the objection raised in Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik*, 102; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 79–80; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 41.

59 The early Arabic annalistic tradition does not record a specific date for the Qur'an's canonization, as noted in Cook, "A Koranic Codex," 100 n49; idem, *The Koran*, 117. In some narrative reports, however, there are certain temporal indications, noted in Nöldeke and Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 2:49 [= *The History of the Qurʾān*, 252]. See also the "common link" Abū Isḥāq's *ḥadīth*, discussed in Part 2 of this article.

60 In this respect, Sinai, "Part I," 287–88, concedes too much to Robinson.

Mingana's, Wansbrough's, Dye's, and Shoemaker's various appeals (**¬U3**) to the absence of references to the Qur'an in the first/seventh century have also been criticized. Firstly, Abbott has explained the early Christian silence thereon by arguing that early Christians were frequently uninterested in their new Muslim overlords and misinformed even regarding basic facts about them, making the early Christian failure to refer to the Qur'an unsurprising.[61] Secondly, Sinai has explained the apparent failure of early Muslims to rely on the Qur'an in matters of doctrine by arguing that the Qur'an was not readily available to most Muslims in the early period; that most early Muslims possessed only a superficial knowledge of its contents; and that the Qur'an was initially treated more as a ritual object than a programmatic source of doctrine.[62]

To the foregoing can be added the following considerations. Firstly, the absence of the Qur'an from *al-Fiqh al-Akbar I* is irrelevant, since this text probably never existed as such[63] and would be an extreme outlier in any case, in light of the heavy qur'anic presence in most early Islamic epistles.[64] Secondly, the idea of the Qur'an's absence from the earliest phase of Islamic jurisprudence is subject to at least some debate.[65] Thirdly, an explanation for the absence of the Qur'an from early Arabic treaties has already been indicated by Dye, who acknowledges that such treaties were written in conformity to established pre-Islamic conventions.[66] Fourthly, an explanation for the absence of the Qur'an from a Marwanid-era scribal curriculum has again already been indicated by Dye, who acknowledges that most scribes at this point were still non-Muslims.[67] Fifthly, it is well known that the early Muslim conquerors of the Middle East isolated themselves in garrison cities and did not generally attempt to convert the Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian populations of their new empire,[68] which further helps to explain the early non-Muslim ignorance of the Qur'an. Sixthly, other than the isolated case of John of Damascus, early

61 Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script*, 48.

62 Sinai, "Part I," 289–91. For more on the idea that the Qur'an was initially treated more as a sacred or ritual object, see Madigan, *The Qurʾān's Self-Image*, 50–52 (incl. n137). For more on the early Muslim ignorance of, or lack of access to, the Qur'an, see Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, 7:415 [= "ʿUthman and the Recension of the Koran," 387–88]; Nöldeke *et al.*, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 3:119 [= *The History of the Qurʾān*, 473]; Kister, "*…Illā Bi-Ḥaqqihi…*," 51; Bulliet, *Islam*, 28–31; Cook, *The Koran*, 137–38; Donner, "From Believers to Muslims," 26–27; idem, *Muhammad*, 77; Sinai, "The Unknown Known," 80; Tannous, *The Making of the Medieval Middle East*, *passim*; etc.

63 Cf. Van Ess, *Theology and Society*, 1:237 ff.; Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī*, 56 ff. I owe thanks to Ramon Harvey for these references.

64 Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 16; Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 70–71.

65 E. g., Katz, *Body of Text*.

66 Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 81; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 883.

67 Idem, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 84; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 886.

68 E. g., Crone, *Nativist Prophets*, ch. 1.

non-Muslim writers seemingly failed to mention the Qur'an until around the turn of the ninth century CE,[69] which fits poorly with the premise–shared by Mingana, Dye, and Shoemaker–that a canonized Qur'an would have been visible to, and inspired comments by, early non-Muslim writers. In other words, whether one adopts an ʿUthmānic or Ḥajjājian view, it seems that the Qur'an remained largely invisible to outsiders for decades after its canonization.

De Prémare, Robinson, Shoemaker, and Dye's appeal (**¬U4**) to the Dome of the Rock has also been criticized by Sinai, who points out–following Estelle Whelan–that the Dome's inscriptions can be interpreted as nothing more than quotations from the canonical Qur'an that have been selected, slightly paraphrased in places, and combined with honorific formulae to form a coherent (pro-Islamic and anti-Christian) message.[70] In other words, these inscriptions constitute equivocal evidence, being compatible with, or explicable on, either view.[71]

Sinai has also criticized De Prémare, Dye, and Shoemaker's appeal (**¬U5**) to John of Damascus, on two grounds. Firstly, for all that De Prémare *et al*. insist on John's reliability,[72] it would really come as no surprise if John–a hostile writer dealing with a rival religious tradition–was simply misinformed about the precise contents and arrangement of the Qur'an and/or erred in his recounting thereof, or in other words: John's testimony is highly equivocal evidence.[73] Secondly, De Prémare *et al*. posit that al-Ḥajjāj disseminated the canonical qur'anic text-type and ruthlessly purged any and all prior qur'anic texts and traditions c. 700 CE; yet John, who was writing in the 730s CE or later, apparently still had access to pre-canonical (or as De Prémare *et al*. would have it, *pre-Ḥajjājian*) qur'anic texts and traditions. This poses an obvious problem for De Prémare *et al*.: If John was writing three decades or more after the Ḥajjājian canonization, why were the effects thereof not at all evident in

69 E. g., Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 499–501. Similarly, see Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān According to Christian Writers," 411.

70 Sinai, "Part I," 277–78, citing Whelan, "Forgotten Witness." As Whelan (ibid., 6–8) notes and Sinai ("Part I," 278) reiterates, this kind of inscriptional adaption of the Qur'an can be observed in later contexts as well.

71 Likewise, Cook, *The Koran*, 119–20. The charges of circularity in Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 83, and special pleading in Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 321 n132, and *Creating the Qurʾan*, 65, miss the point.

72 E. g., Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 94; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 50–52. See also De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 197.

73 Sinai, "Part I," 286–87. For more on the debate over John's reliability and his sources, see Becker, "Christian Polemic," 244–47/4–7; Merrill, "Of the Tractate of John of Damascus on Islam"; Meyendorff, "Byzantine Views of Islam," esp. 118; Sahas, *John of Damascus*, ch. 5; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 488–89 (incl. n116); Louth, *St John Damascene*, 79–81; Popov, "Speaking His Mind"; Neil, "The Earliest Greek Understandings of Islam," 220–22; Schadler, *John of Damascus*, chs. 3–4.

John's writing?[74] In other words, even for proponents of the Ḥajjājian hypothesis, there is a reason to suppose that John was really just referring to the canonical (or, as De Prémare *et al*. would have it, the *Ḥajjājian*) text-type.

The problem of equivocality also applies to De Prémare *et al*.'s appeal (**¬U6**) to the *Disputation*, which Sinai argues could simply reflect the outsized importance of Sūrat al-Baqarah within the Qur'an, leading the *Disputation*'s Christian author to wrongly assume that Sūrat al-Baqarah was distinct from the rest of the Qur'an.[75] However, David Taylor offers another explanation: The *Disputation* distinguishes between Sūrat al-Baqarah and the rest of the Qur'an because it is citing a polemical Christian tradition that identifies a monk named Sergius Baḥīrā as the author of the former and Muḥammad as the author of the latter. In other words, according to the *Disputation*, Muslims variously derive their doctrines from the Torah, the Gospel, the Qur'an (i. e., from Muḥammad), and Sūrat al-Baqarah (i. e., ultimately from Sergius Baḥīrā). The *Disputation* is thus referring here to the alleged origins of different parts of the Qur'an in Muḥammad's time, not describing the state of the text after Muḥammad's death (let alone after ʿUthmān's death).[76]

This brings us finally to Shoemaker's appeal (**¬U7**) to P. Hamb. Arab. 68, which even the recent editors thereof have acknowledged may simply be a *vademecum* or extract of Sūrat al-Baqarah from the canonical Qur'an.[77] This explanation is strengthened by the fact that literally all of the forty-one variants contained in this manuscript are consistent with being scribal errors relative to the canonical text.[78] This is exactly what would be predicted for the scenario of a canon-derived *vademecum*, in contrast to Shoemaker's hypothesis that the manuscript embodies some kind of pre-canonical–indeed, a *free-floating* or *pre-collected*–version of the text.[79] In short, P. Hamb. Arab. 68 is at best equivocal evidence of an uncanonized Qur'an in the late-seventh or early-eighth century CE, and at worst inconsistent with such a hypothesis, most likely being a product of the canonical text-type.

In short, there are currently seven arguments against the ʿUthmānic hypothesis, variously appealing to (**¬U1**) the Jewish and Christian timeframe of canonization; (**¬U2**) an absence of necessary technology and infrastructure in ʿUthmān's time; (**¬U3**) the absence of the Qur'an from various early contexts; (**¬U4**) the Dome of the Rock inscriptions; (**¬U5**) the writings of John of Damascus; (**¬U6**) *The Disputation*

74 Sinai, "Part I," 287.

75 Ibid., 286.

76 Taylor, "Disputation," 190–200, esp. 193.

77 Tillier and Vanthieghem, *The Book of the Cow*, 37, 39. Likewise, see Déroche, "Forward," in ibid., xi. Additionally, see Tiller, Vanthieghem, and Colini, "History of a Fragmentary "Sūra of the Cow"."

78 Tillier and Vanthieghem, *The Book of the Cow*, 21 ff.

79 Cf. also Déroche, "Forward," in ibid., xii: the "text is basically that of the Vulgate." Compare this with the genuinely pre-canonical Ṣanʿā' palimpsest, discussed below.

between a Muslim and a Monk of Bēt Ḥālē; and (¬**U7**) P. Hamb. Arab. 68. The first six have been heavily criticized or otherwise undermined by the existing scholarship, and the seventh holds up no better. In each of these cases, we are dealing with equivocal evidence, misinterpreted evidence, and/or contrary evidence. As things currently stand, the criticisms of the ʿUthmānic hypothesis remain weak, whilst the ʿUthmānic hypothesis itself remains strong.

Arguments for al-Ḥajjāj

Having thus summarized the existing arguments in Western scholarship for and against the ʿUthmānic hypothesis, we can now shift our focus to the Ḥajjājian hypothesis. As noted at the outset, there is actually a spectrum of Ḥajjājian hypotheses (listed and henceforth referred to as **Ḥ1**, **Ḥ2**, **Ḥ3**, and **Ḥ4**), each of which I will now summarize in turn.

al-Ḥajjāj and diacritics (Ḥ1)

To begin with the mildest of the Ḥajjājian hypotheses (**Ḥ1**), a number of Western scholars–including Nöldeke, David Margoliouth, Arthur Jeffery, Richard Bell, W. Montgomery Watt, Claude Gilliot, Omar Hamdan, and Herbert Berg–have argued or otherwise suggested that al-Ḥajjāj oversaw a project to add diacritical markings–above all, consonantal dotting–to the bare *rasm* of ʿUthmānic codices.[80] This argument rests upon the following sources:

1. **Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī** (d. 360/970–971), who reported that the earliest qur'anic codices (*maṣāḥif*) were written using an undotted Arabic script; that this caused a profusion of linguistic and scribal errors; and that this motivated al-Ḥajjāj to commission scribes to add dots (*nuqaṭ*) to distinguish otherwise ambiguous consonants.[81]

80 Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorâns*, 305 ff., esp. 307–8 (citing Ibn ʿAṭiyyah and Ibn Khallikān); Margoliouth, "Textual Variations," 336, 339 (citing al-ʿAskarī); Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text," 298 n48 (citing Ibn Khallikān and al-ʿAskarī); Bell, *Introduction*, 43 (citing no source); Bell and Watt, *Bell's Introduction*, 47–48 (citing no source); Gilliot, "Creation of a Fixed Text," 48 (citing no source); Hamdan, "The Second *Maṣāḥif* Project," esp. 807 ff. (citing Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī); Berg, "The Collection and Canonization of the Qurʾān," 41–42 (citing Ibn Khallikān and Hamdan). See also Sinai, "Part I," 283–84 (citing Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī, Ibn Khallikān, and Ibn ʿAṭiyyah).

81 Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī, *Tanbīh*, 27. It is clear in Ḥamzah's report that *nuqaṭ* here means consonantal dots, e. g., to distinguish the letters *bāʾ*, *tāʾ*, and *thāʾ*.

2. **al-ʿAskarī** (d. 382/993), who seemingly quoted Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī.[82]
3. **Ibn Khallikān** (d. 681/1282), who quoted al-ʿAskarī.[83]
4. **Ibn ʿAṭiyyah** (d. 541/1147), who reported that the vowelization of the qur'anic text (*shakl al-muṣḥaf wa-naqṭihi*) was undertaken by ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj, the latter of whom also introduced *ḥizb* subdivisions and commissioned Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Yaḥyā b. Yaʿmar to this end.[84]

This hypothesis has been variously criticized by Régis Blachère, De Prémare, Keith Small, François Déroche, Sinai, Dye, Adam Bursi, and Shoemaker, on two principal grounds. Firstly, no matter how you look at it, the basic notion of a single, definitive, sweeping imposition of diacritics is inconsistent with the manuscript record: on the one hand, some diacritics are present already in the earliest manuscripts, rather than appearing abruptly at some secondary stage; and, on the other hand, their use remained sporadic or inconsistent in manuscripts long after the time of al-Ḥajjāj.[85] Secondly, the early Islamic sources are inconsistent on the question of who added diacritical markings to the Qur'an, with different sources naming different governors and scribes in this regard.[86] In light of the foregoing, it seems reasonable to infer that the reports of al-Ḥajjāj's being the one responsible for the addition of diacritics into codices of the canonical ʿUthmānic text-type ultimately reflect faulty guesswork, inferences, or speculation by later Muslim scholars, who sought–as in so many other cases–to identify a "great man" responsible for some specific aspect of their culture or society.[87]

82 ʿAskarī, *Sharḥ*, 13.

83 Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, 2:32.

84 Ibn ʿAṭiyyah, *Tafsīr*, 40. In this context, *shakl* likely refers to vowelization with shaped vowel signs, e. g., the conventional *ḍammah*, *fatḥah*, and *kasrah*, whereas *naqṭ* likely refers to vowelization with circular vowel signs, e. g., a red dot. I owe thanks to Marijn van Putten for this clarification.

85 Blachère, *Introduction*, 77; De Prémare, *Aux origines du Coran*, 84; Small, *Textual Criticism*, 165; Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, 72, 96–97, 138; Sinai, "Part I," 283–84 n64; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 63–64, 87; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 890; Bursi, "Connecting the Dots," 125–26, 128–29; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 44–45. Cf. Fudge, "Scepticism as Method," 11, on this point.

86 Blachère, *Introduction*, 77; De Prémare, *Aux origines du Coran*, 84; idem, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 204; Bursi, "Connecting the Dots," 123–25.

87 *Pace* Hamdan, "The Second *Maṣāḥif* Project," 809. See Little, "Where Did You Learn to Write Arabic?," 170–71, for more on the unreliability of this genre of "firsts" (*awāʾil*); and Bursi, "Connecting the Dots," 123–25, in relation to the reports on al-Ḥajjāj *et al.* in particular.

al-Ḥajjāj and textual corrections (Ḥ2)

The next Ḥajjājian hypothesis (**Ḥ2**) is the idea, variously expressed by Jeffery, Blachère, and Déroche, that al-Ḥajjāj made some corrections to the text of the ʿUthmānic canon.[88] This idea is largely based on a report recorded twice by Ibn Abī Dāwūd (Baghdadi; d. 316/929), once from his father Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (Eastern then Basran; d. 275/889) and once from Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (Basran; d. 250/864–865 or 255/869), both from ʿAbbād b. Ṣuhayb (Basran; d. post-202/817–818), from ʿAwf b. Abī Jamīlah (Basran; d. 146–147/763–765), who stated that al-Ḥajjāj changed eleven wordings (*ḥarf*s) in the ʿUthmānic codex (*muṣḥaf ʿuthmān*).[89] The changes in question were the following:

1. *yatasanna* ("it did not age") to *yatasannah* ("it did not age") in Q 2:259.
2. *sharīʿah* ("a law") to *shirʿah* ("a law") in Q 5:48.
3. *yanshurukum* ("He spreads you out") to *yusayyirukum* ("He allows you to travel") in Q 10:22.
4. *ātīkum* ("I will give you") to *unabbiʾukum* ("I will tell you") in Q 12:45.
5. *li-llāh* ("to God") to *allāh* ("God") in Q 23:87 and 23:89.
6. *al-mukhrajīn* ("those who will be expelled") to *al-marjūmīn* ("those who will be stoned") in Q 26:116.
7. *al-marjūmīn* ("those who will be stoned") to *al-mukhrajīn* ("those who will be expelled") in Q 26:167.
8. *maʿāyishahum* ("their livelihoods") to *maʿīshatahum* ("their livelihood") in Q 43:32.
9. *yāsin* ("unpolluted") to *āsin* ("unpolluted") in Q 47:15.
10. *wa-ttaqaw* ("and [those who] fear [God]") to *wa-anfaqū* ("and [those who] provide support") in Q 57:7.
11. *bi-ẓanīn* ("unreliable") to *bi-ḍanīn* ("a withholder [of information]") in Q 81:24.

However, as Sadeghi has pointed out, "there is no chance that al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ could have dislodged the various regional branches of the ʿUṯmānic textual tradition especially outside Iraq, and there is no evidence that he attempted to do so either in or outside Iraq; but there is evidence that if he did try, he failed."[90] For example, some of the aforementioned variants that ʿAwf attributed to ʿUthmān's original text–variants that al-Ḥajjāj supposedly changed–survive within the canonical *qirāʾāt* of

88 Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text," 298 n48; Blachère, *Introduction*, 90–91; Déroche, *The One and the Many*, esp. 133. See also Berg, "The Collection and Canonization of the Qurʾān," 41.

89 Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣāḥif*, 49–50, 117–18.

90 Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 365 n36.

the ʿUthmānic text-type,[91] which entails that, in the best-case scenario, al-Ḥajjāj was only able to replace some qur'anic texts in his vicinity, or that his impact was fleeting. Moreover, as Sadeghi again points out, ʿAwf's assumption that the so-called Ḥajjājian variants were non-ʿUthmānic is unjustified:

> The differences are well within the range of variations one expects to emerge naturally within a textual tradition. A close study of the variants shows that the Baṣran author of the report had simply assumed that one particular Baṣran copy belonging to the standard text type represented the original text sent out by ʿUṯmān. He thus naively assumed that the eleven differences with al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ's codex represented changes made by the despised governor.[92]

In other words, if indeed al-Ḥajjāj commissioned the production of a copy of the Qur'an, and if indeed this copy contained the variants documented by ʿAwf, there is no reason to accept ʿAwf's assertion that al-Ḥajjāj was responsible for the variants in question. On the contrary, these variants are consistent with being *intra-ʿUthmānic developments*: some or all of them may be the organic products of scribal error in the transmission of the canonical ʿUthmānic text-type; and some or all of them may derive from the original canonical ʿUthmānic text. Either way, there is no reason to credit such variants to al-Ḥajjāj.[93]

al-Ḥajjāj and (re-)canonization (Ḥ3–4)

This leaves us with the final two Ḥajjājian hypotheses, which rely upon more or less the same evidence, and which we may thus treat together: (**Ḥ3**) the view that that al-Ḥajjāj interpolated or redacted the contents of ʿUthmān's Qur'an and re-canonized it;[94] and (**Ḥ4**) the view that al-Ḥajjāj, *rather than ʿUthmān*, canonized the

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91 For example, the standard Egyptian Qur'an of the modern era, which is based on the *qirāʾah* of Ḥafṣ ← ʿĀṣim, still contains *li-llāh* in verses 23:87 and 23:89.

92 Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 365 n36.

93 See also Sinai, "Part I," 284 (incl. n65), and Van Putten and Sidky, "The Codices of Unknown Successors." Additionally, see Aʿẓamī, *The History of the Qurʾānic Text*, 102, who suggests that ʿAwf was motivated by hostility towards the Umayyads; and Hamdan, "The Second *Maṣāḥif* Project," 799–800, who credits this report to hostile Kufans (though all of the tradents cited in its *isnād* are Basran).

94 Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script*, 49; Dietrich, "al-Ḥadjdjādj b. Yūsuf," 41; Gilliot, "Reconsidering the Authorship of the Qurʾān," 100; Powers, *Muhammad*, ch. 8; idem, *Zayd*, 122–23; Donner, "*Dīn*, *Islām*, und *Muslim* im Koran," esp. 132–33; Tottoli, *The Qurʾan*, 161–62. See also Amir-Moezzi and Kohlberg, "Qur'anic Recensions," 53–61, 166; Kohlberg and Amir-Moezzi, *Revelation and Falsification*, 22 (incl. n108). For some more tentative or uncertain statements to this effect, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 500–501; Small, *Textual Criticism*, 8, 106, 111, 122–23, 152, 164 ff., 173, 183; Déroche, *The One and the Many*, x, 129–33, 140.

Qur'an.[95] Proponents of both views have variously appealed to the following: (**1**) Christian sources that identify al-Ḥajjāj as the Qur'an's canonizer or re-canonizer; (**2**) Islamic sources that allegedly depict al-Ḥajjāj in a similar light; and (**3**) the alleged absence of any surviving qur'anic manuscripts from prior to the time of al-Ḥajjāj.

There are three main Christian sources that proponents of the Ḥajjājian canonization and re-canonization hypotheses have variously cited as direct evidence for their respective positions:

1. **Łewond's Armenian translation and redaction of *The Correspondence of Leo III and ʿUmar II***, an earlier Palestinian Christian work. The Armenian redaction has been variously dated to some point in the eighth century CE, or to some point after the end of the eighth century CE, or to some point between the late-eighth and the early-tenth century CE, or to the late-eighth or early-ninth century CE, or to (possibly the second half of) the ninth century CE.[96] According to this work, the Roman emperor Leo III the Isaurian (r. 717–741 CE) recounted, in a letter to the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 99–101/717–720), that the Qur'an was initially written down by ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib ("Abū Turāb"), and Salmān al-Fārisī; that al-Ḥajjāj later gathered up most copies thereof, rewrote and replaced them with a new Qur'an, and disseminated this new Qur'an across the Arab empire; and that some portion of ʿAlī's qur'anic writings escaped al-Ḥajjāj's purge and lingered on.[97]
2. ***The Disputation of the Monk Abraham of Tiberias***, a Palestinian Arabic Christian work that takes the form of a debate between a Tiberian monk named Abraham and an Arab Muslim official named ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Hāshimī, which has been dated to the early-ninth century CE.[98] According to this work,

95 Casanova, *Mohammed*, 103–42; Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān According to Christian Writers"; Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 18; De Prémare, *Les fondations de l'islam*, ch. 15; Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, part III, ch. 2; De Prémare, *Aux origines du Coran*, 90 ff.; Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik*, 100–104; De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik"; Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 146–58; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?"; idem, "Le corpus coranique"; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, esp. chs. 1–3.

96 Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm*, appendix 2, esp. 163, 171; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 490 ff., esp. 499 ff.; Greenwood, "The Letter of Leo III in *Ghewond*," esp. 205–6; Palombo, "The 'Correspondence' of Leo III and ʿUmar II"; La Porta and Vacca, *An Armenian Futūḥ Narrative*, xxii–xxv, 190–97.

97 For the text of this letter, see the sources just cited. For pro-Ḥajjājian citations of this source, see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 18, 168 n21; Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, 239–40; Dye, "Le corpus coranique," 893; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 53–55. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 500–501.

98 Szilágyi, "The Disputation of the Monk Abraham of Tiberias," 91–92.

the Qur'an was transcribed after Muḥammad's death by his companions, including Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, and Muʿāwiyah, after which it was composed and arranged by al-Ḥajjāj.[99]

3. ***The Letter of ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī to ʿAbd Allāh b. Ismāʿīl al-Hāshimī***, an Arabic Christian epistolic work that has been variously dated to the time of the Abbasid caliph al-Maʾmūn (r. 198–218/813–833), the tenth century CE, or even later, though the majority of scholars agree on the first dating.[100] According to this work, the Qur'an survived after Muḥammad's death in fragmentary transcriptions; these fragments were collected and corrected by ʿUthmān, who dispatched copies to the major provinces of the empire and destroyed most prior fragments and copies. Thereafter, all of ʿUthmān's copies were collected in turn by al-Ḥajjāj, who removed all anti-Umayyad and pro-Abbasid passages from the Qur'an, reissued new copies to the major provinces of the empire, and destroyed all the prior copies.[101]

To these three works we can add a fourth:

4. ***The Affair of the Qur'an***, a short Syriac Christian composition that possibly dates from the eighth or ninth century CE.[102] According to this work, al-Ḥajjāj collected prior qur'anic texts from across the empire, destroyed them, and commissioned Christian scholars and priests to assist him in producing a new qur'anic text.[103]

In short, these four early Christian sources agree that al-Ḥajjāj played an important role in the production of the canonical qur'anic text: The *Correspondence of Leo*, the *Disputation of Abraham*, and the *Affair of the Qur'an* all seem to depict him as

99 Marcuzzo, *Le dialogue d'Abraham*, 331. For pro-Ḥajjājian citations of this source, see Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, 241–42; Dye, "Le corpus coranique," 893; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 55–58. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 501.

100 E. g., Muir, "The Apology of Al Kindy"; Griffith, "The Prophet Muḥammad," 106–7; Tartar, *Dialogue islamo-chrétien*; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 472 (incl. n61); Bottini, "The Apology of al-Kindī," 587–88.

101 Kindī, *Risālah*, 77–83. For pro-Ḥajjājian citations of this source, see Casanova, *Mohammed*, 110 ff.; Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān According to Christian Writers," 407 ff.; Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script*, 49; Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 18, 168 n21; De Prémare, *Les fondations de l'islam*, 461–62; Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik*, 103; Powers, *Muhammad*, 160–61, 292 n45; Amir-Moezzi and Kohlberg, "Qur'anic Recensions," 59; Dye, "Le corpus coranique," 892; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 55–58. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 501; Déroche, *The One and the Many*, 132–33.

102 Roggema, "*ʿEltā d-Quran*, 'The Affair of the Qurʾān'," 595–96.

103 Idem, *The Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā*, 304–9.

the Qur'an's collector, composer, and canonizer, whilst the *Letter of al-Kindī* instead depicts him as a redactor and re-canonizer of ʿUthmān's Qur'an. The adoption of either the *canonizer* view (**Ḥ4**) or the *re-canonizer* view (**Ḥ3**) by pro-Ḥajjājian scholars thus effectively amounts to a choice between al-Kindī and the rest–a choice that seems to be determined by whether the scholars in question are otherwise swayed by some of the pro-ʿUthmānic or anti-ʿUthmānic arguments outlined above. In other words, if indeed there is good evidence that ʿUthmān canonized the Qur'an, this would suggest that al-Ḥajjāj merely re-canonized this ʿUthmānic text, along the lines of al-Kindī; but if there is good evidence against an initial ʿUthmānic canonization, this would strengthen the idea that al-Ḥajjāj was the Qur'an's actual canonizer, as indicated by the other three sources.

In and of themselves, however, these four Christian sources are highly equivocal: They might embody a common, genuine memory of al-Ḥajjāj's involvement in the production of the Qur'an's content (whether as a canonizer or a re-canonizer), but they could just as easily embody a common Christian polemical distortion of the Qur'an's history, as scholars like Jeffery, Harald Motzki, and Sinai have suggested.[104] In other words, we could easily be dealing here with a false Christian allegation–born from a misunderstanding or exaggeration of al-Ḥajjāj's involvement with the Qur'an–that emerged in a Christian intellectual center like Palestine at some point in the eighth century CE and thence spread to Armenia and other regions.[105] Indeed, the strong arguments outlined above in favor of the ʿUthmānic hypothesis, and those outlined below against the Ḥajjājian hypothesis, precisely give us a reason to adopt such an explanation for the data.

To defend the reliability of these Christian sources, Casanova, Mingana, and Shoemaker have all appealed to their relative earliness,[106] though such an appeal fails on two counts. Firstly, as Motzki has noted and Shoemaker also seems to acknowledge, an earlier source is not necessarily a more reliable source.[107] In other words, in light of the strong arguments for ʿUthmān (above) and against al-Ḥajjāj (below), the relative earliness of the Christian sources would count for little here. Secondly, the Christian sources in question are not actually particularly early: The Armenian redaction of the *Letter of Leo*, which is the earliest of the four, has

104 Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text," 298 n48; Motzki, "Collection," 14, 20; Sinai, "Part I," 284. See also Nöldeke *et al*., *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 3:104 n1 [= *The History of the Qurʾān*, 462–63 n604]; Déroche, *The One and the Many*, 132–33.

105 For Palestine as a root node for early Christian apologies and polemics against Islam, especially in relation to Armenia, see Palombo, "The 'Correspondence' of Leo III and ʿUmar II," 259, 264; Shoemaker, *A Prophet Has Appeared*, 62–63, 219; Roohi, *Pseudo-Sebēos on Muslim-Jewish Intimacy*.

106 Casanova, *Mohammed*, 119; Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān According to Christian Writers," 407; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 53–58.

107 Motzki, "Collection," 14; Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 148–49.

only been vaguely dated to the eighth century CE at the earliest.[108] By contrast, Motzki has demonstrated that at least one version of the ʿUthmānic narrative can be confidently traced back to a Muslim source–Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī–who died in 123–125/740–743.[109] In other words, if this debate comes down to a contest over the earliest securely dated report of the Qur'an's canonizer, then the ʿUthmānic hypothesis clearly has the edge.[110]

Alongside this, Casanova and others have appealed to other points of evidence–both direct and indirect–to corroborate these Christian accounts of al-Ḥajjāj.[111] Most of the indirect evidence has been covered already, such as the early absence of references to the Qur'an and the testimony of John of Damascus. Clearly, such equivocal evidence will not suffice to overcome the strong considerations outlined above in favor of interpretating the Christian sources as co-products of a polemical distortion. In addition to these, however, proponents of the Ḥajjājian canonization and re-canonization hypotheses have appealed to two further sets of indirect and direct evidence to corroborate the Christian sources: the dating of the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an, which I will discuss below; and putative Islamic reports of al-Ḥajjāj's canonizing activities, to which I will now turn.

From Casanova onwards, pro-Ḥajjājian scholars have appealed to various reports preserved in Islamic sources that apparently depict al-Ḥajjāj's canonization or re-canonization of the Qur'an under ʿAbd al-Malik.[112] To begin with, some have cited Ibn Abī Dāwūd's report of al-Ḥajjāj's eleven corrections of the

108 See above. Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 53–58, equivocates between this Armenian redaction of the *Letter* and the *Letter*'s hypothetical (Greek or Arabic) *Urtext* in his attempt to provide the former with an earlier dating. To this end, Shoemaker cites Schadler, *John of Damascus*, 126 ff., who dates the *Urtext* back to the early-eighth century CE; though it should also be noted that Palombo, "The 'Correspondence' of Leo III and ʿUmar II," instead dates the *Urtext* to the late-eighth century CE. All of this is irrelevant, however: It is not the *Letter*'s hypothetical *Urtext* that is known to contain a reference to al-Ḥajjāj, but rather, its extant Armenian redaction. It is thus the date of the latter, not the former, that matters for our purposes.

109 Motzki, "Collection," reiterated in Sinai, "Part I," 282.

110 Of course, only (**Ḥ4**) the hypothesis that al-Ḥajjāj was the Qur'an's true canonizer would lose out in this contest: The re-canonizer hypothesis (**Ḥ3**), which accepts an initial canonization by ʿUthmān, is perfectly compatible with the relatively earliness of the ʿUthmānic narrative.

111 E. g., Casanova, *Mohammed*, 124–28, esp. 127; De Prémare, *Les fondations de l'islam*, ch. 15; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 88 ff.; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 892 ff.; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, ch. 2.

112 Wherever possible, I have subjected these reports to an *isnād-cum-matn* analysis (ICMA), reconstructing earlier versions thereof and tracing them back to the relevant "partial common links" (PCLs) and "common links" (CLs). For more on the methodology and terminology of the ICMA, see Görke, "Eschatology," 184–95; Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions," 250–52; Pavlovitch, *Formation*, 22 ff.; Little, "The Hadith of ʿĀʾišah's Marital Age" [unabr.], 108 ff., esp. 130–33.

ʿUthmānic codex,[113] and some have even cited the reports of his adding diacritics to qur'anic codices,[114] all of which have been dealt with already. Additionally, Casanova, Mingana, Albert Dietrich, De Prémare, Powers, and Shoemaker have cited various reports of al-Ḥajjāj's suppressing non-ʿUthmānic/non-canonical versions of the Qur'an, especially that of ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd (Ḥijāzo-Kufan; d. 32–33/652–654), which retained some adherents in Umayyad Kufah.[115] For example:

1. **Abū Bakr b. ʿAyyāsh (Kufan; d. 193/809) ← ʿĀṣim b. Abī l-Najūd (Kufan; d. 127–128/744–746)**: ʿĀṣim heard al-Ḥajjāj give a sermon from the pulpit [i. e., in the main mosque of Kufah] in which he mentioned a Qur'an that Ibn Masʿūd used to recite (*yaqraʾu qurʾānan*), dismissed it as mere Bedouin *rajaz*, and fantasized about beheading him. Thereafter, al-Aʿmash corroborated ʿĀṣim's testimony.[116]
2. **Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl (Kufan; d. 195/810–811) ← Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣah (Kufan; d. post-132/750)**: Sālim heard al-Ḥajjāj give a sermon from the pulpit [i. e., in the main mosque of Kufah] in which he mentioned Ibn Masʿūd's qur'anic recitation (*qirāʾah*), dismissed it as mere Bedouin *rajaz*, threatened to kill anyone found reciting it, and declared that he would even use a pig's rib bone to scrape Ibn Masʿūd's recitation off a qur'anic codex (*muṣḥaf*).[117]
3. **Yaḥyā b. Ziyād al-Farrāʾ (Kufan; d. 207/823)**: al-Farrāʾ personally examined the codex (*muṣḥaf*) of al-Ḥārith b. Suwayd al-Taymī (Kufan; d. soon before 73/692), which had been buried in the days of al-Ḥajjāj.[118] [Note: al-Ḥārith was one of Ibn Masʿūd's students.]
4. **Ibn Qutaybah (Baghdadi; d. 276/889)**: al-Ḥajjāj deputized ʿĀṣim b. al-ʿAjjāj al-Jaḥdarī (Basran), Nājiyah b. Rumḥ (Basran?), and ʿAlī b. Aṣmaʿ (Basran) to

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113 Powers, *Muhammad*, 160–61, 292 n44 and n46; idem, *Zayd*, 122, 139 n28; Tottoli, *The Qurʾan*, 161–62 (incl. n155). See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 501.

114 Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān," 231; Dietrich, "al-Ḥadjdjādj b. Yūsuf," 41, col. 2; Amir-Moezzi and Kohlberg, "Qur'anic Recensions," 58. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 501; Déroche, *The One and the Many*, 131.

115 Casanova, *Mohammed*, 128; Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān," 231; Dietrich, "al-Ḥadjdjādj b. Yūsuf," 41, col. 2; De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 208; Powers, *Muhammad*, 160; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 45. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 501.

116 Reconstructed from Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 4:210; Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, *Ishrāf*, 135–36; Abū l-Faḍl al-Zuhrī, *Ḥadīth al-Zuhrī*, 300–301; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh*, 12:159–62. Cf. Ḥākim, *Mustadrak*, 3:641 (in which ʿĀṣim is absent).

117 Reconstructed from Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 13:386; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh*, 12:160.

118 Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān*, 3:68. I owe thanks to Hythem Sidky for bringing this report to my attention.

> track down qur'anic codices (*maṣāḥif*), tear apart any that they found that contradicted the ʿUthmānic codex (*muṣḥaf ʿuthmān*), and compensate the owner in each case with sixty dirhams.[119]

However, none of these reports state that al-Ḥajjāj's efforts to suppress non-canonical versions of the Qur'an were part of a canonization–or for that matter, redaction or collection–process that he himself had initiated.[120] On the contrary, all of them read perfectly well as witnesses to a consistent Umayyad policy of maintaining the ʿUthmānic canonization at the expense of a non-ʿUthmānic version of the Qur'an that lingered on in some Kufan circles. Indeed, this is how many scholars–including Gotthelf Bergsträßer, Otto Pretzl, Hamdan, and Sinai–have interpreted such reports.[121]

Pro-Ḥajjājian scholars like Dietrich, De Prémare, Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Etan Kohlberg, and Shoemaker have also appealed to a series of reports about a

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119 Ibn Qutaybah, *Taʾwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān*, 51. See also Ibn Muṭarrif, *al-Qurṭayn*, 2:11. The target of this Basran-led purge was presumably the Ibn Masʿūdic text-type in Kufah, as variously noted in Hamdan, "The Second *Maṣāḥif* Project," 823–24; Sinai, "Part I," 281, 283; Dutton, "The Form of the Qurʾan," 188.

120 De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 209–10, and Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 49, also cite Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh*, 12:159–60 ← al-Laftuwānī ← Muḥammad b. Aḥmad and Sulaymān b. Ibrāhīm ← al-Burjī ← al-Jūrijīrī ← Isḥāq b. al-Fayḍ ← Ibn Ḥumayd ← Jarīr ← ʿAṭāʾ b. al-Sāʾib ← ʿAttāb b. Usayd, the latter of whom recounts a story about how Umm Ayman mourned the fact that prophecy or divine inspiration (*waḥy*) had ceased with the Prophet's death, to which al-Ḥajjāj responded: "I only act by inspiration (*mā aʿmalu illā bi-waḥy*)!" De Prémare and Shoemaker attempt to link this report with those of Ibn ʿAyyāsh and Ibn Fuḍayl, which are cited in the same section of Ibn ʿAsākir's *Taʾrīkh*. However, even if we grant that Ibn ʿAsākir's report is historical, it does not follow, merely from the fact that the report is recorded in the same section in Ibn ʿAsākir's *Taʾrīkh* as Ibn ʿAyyāsh's and Ibn Fuḍayl's reports, that all of these independent reports explicate or shed light upon each other. Moreover, even if we further grant that al-Ḥajjāj believed his Qur'an-related activities in particular to be divinely inspired or guided in some way, it does not follow therefrom that al-Ḥajjāj intended to compose or redact the Qur'an; let alone that he did compose or redact the Qur'an; let alone that he was even capable of composing or redacting the Qur'an. In other words, Ibn ʿAsākir's anecdote is completely equivocal and does not change, for example, the fact that Ibn ʿAyyāsh's and Ibn Fuḍayl's reports do not state that al-Ḥajjāj composed or redacted the Qur'an and are consistent with a preceding ʿUthmānic canonization. The same considerations apply to Umayyad notions of the caliph's elevated or even sacred status, also cited in De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 209–10.

121 See variously Nöldeke *et al*., *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 3:104 n1 [= *The History of the Qurʾān*, 462–63 n604]; Aʿẓamī, *The History of the Qurʾānic Text*, 103–4; Hamdan, "The Second *Maṣāḥif* Project," 798–99, 823–24, and *passim*; Sinai, "Part I," 281, 283. Additionally, see Judd, "Al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ b. Yūsuf," 53 ff., 57. For the Kufan resistance to the ʿUthmānic text-type more broadly, see also Nöldeke and Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, II, 49 [= *The History of the Qurʾān*, 252]; Jeffery, *Materials*, 8; Blachère, *Introduction*, 63–64; Jones, "The Qurʾān–II," 241.

committee of Qur'an specialists who were commissioned by al-Ḥajjāj to count and measure various aspects of the qur'anic text.[122] For example:

5. **ʿAbd Allāh b. Bakr al-Sahmī (Basro-Baghdadi; d. 208/823) ← ʿAmr b. al-Munajjal (Basran) ← Muṭahhar b. Khālid (Basran) ← al-Ḥimmānī (Basran)**: al-Ḥajjāj commissioned a team of Qur'an specialists (*al-qurrāʾ wa-l-ḥuffāẓ wa-l-kuttāb*), including al-Ḥimmānī, to count the number of *ḥarf*s (letters or consonants) in the Qur'an; to identify the exact middle point of the Qur'an; to divide the text into thirds; and to divide the text into sevenths.[123]
6. **ʿAbd Allāh b. Bakr al-Sahmī (Basro-Baghdadi; d. 208/823) ← ʿAmr b. al-Munajjal (Basran) ← Tawbah b. ʿUlwān (Basran) ← Shihāb b. Shurnufah al-Mujāshiʿī (Basran) ← al-Ḥimmānī (Basran)**: al-Ḥajjāj commissioned a team of Qur'an specialists, including al-Ḥimmānī, to divide the Qur'an into quarters.[124]
7. **ʿAbd Allāh b. Bakr al-Sahmī (Basro-Baghdadi; d. 208/823) ← ʿAmr b. al-Munajjal (Basran) ← Muṭahhar b. Khālid (Basran) ← al-Ḥimmānī (Basran)**: al-Ḥimmānī *et al*. figured it out [i. e., the fourfold division of the Qur'an] over the course of four months, and al-Ḥajjāj [from that time onwards] would recite a fourth of the Qur'an every night.[125]
8. **al-Dānī (Andalusian; d. 444/1053) ← Abū l-Fatḥ Fāris b. Aḥmad b. Mūsā al-Muqriʾ (Syro-Egyptian; d. 401/1010–1011) ← Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl Ibn al-Bannā al-Muhandis (Egyptian; d. 385/995) ← Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān b. Shabīb (Rāzī-Egyptian; d. 312/924–925) ← Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Faḍl b. Shādhān b. ʿĪsā al-Muqriʾ (Rāzī; d. c. 298/902–903) ← Aḥmad b. Kurayb (?) ← Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Quṭaʿī (Basran) ← Maḥbūb (Basran) and Yazīd b. al-Naḍr al-Mujāshiʿī (Basran) ← Shihāb b. Shurnufah al-Mujāshiʿī (Basran) ← al-Ḥimmānī (Basran)**: al-Ḥajjāj commissioned a team of Qur'an specialists, including al-Ḥimmānī, to count the number of verses in the Qur'an.[126]

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122 Dietrich, "al-Ḥadjdjādj b. Yūsuf," 41, col. 2; De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 209; Amir-Moezzi and Kohlberg, "Qur'anic Recensions," 58, 191 n76; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 49, 273 n32. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 501.

123 Reconstructed from Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣāḥif*, 119–20; Dānī, *Bayān*, 74, 300–301.

124 Reconstructed from Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣāḥif*, 120; Dānī, *Bayān*, 301.

125 Reconstructed from Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣāḥif*, 120; Dānī, *Bayān*, 301 (though cf. the omission of Muṭahhar); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh*, 12:116. Cf. the misinterpretation in De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 209.

126 Dānī, *Bayān*, 81. The trident "Aḥmad b. Kurayb" has proved troublesome: I cannot find any other mention of such a person in the entire extant Ḥadīth corpus and ancillary literature. Moreover, al-Dānī (ibid., 23, 33, 38, 45–46, 50, 53, 58, 61, 63, 69, 73, 81–82, 109, 130, 135, etc.) frequently cites the following *isnād*: ← Fāris ← Aḥmad al-Miṣrī ← Aḥmad al-Rāzī ← al-Faḍl ← Aḥmad b. Yazīd. This

Again, however, none of these reports in any way indicate that al-Ḥajjāj canonized–let alone redacted or collected–the Qur'an. Taken at face value, they state nothing more than that al-Ḥajjāj commissioned a group of Qur'an specialists to learn more about the Qur'an's dimensions or proportions as a written text (e. g., to aid memorization of the Qur'an), as variously noted by Bergsträßer, Pretzl, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Aʿẓamī, and Hamdan.[127]

Pro-Ḥajjājian scholars like Casanova, Mingana, De Prémare, Powers, Amir-Moezzi, Kohlberg, Dye, and Shoemaker have also appealed to a series of reports about al-Ḥajjāj's commissioning the production of qur'anic codices (*maṣāḥif*), and of his sending these codices to various provinces.[128] In particular:

9. **Muḥammad b. Zabālah (Medinan; d. post-199/814) ← Mālik b. Anas (Medinan; d. 179/795)**: al-Ḥajjāj sent qur'anic codices (*maṣāḥif*) to the major cities, including one to Medina, which was stored in a chest in the main mosque and recited on Thursdays and Fridays; then the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdī (r. 158–169/775–785) sent codices of great value (*maṣāḥif lahā athmān*), which were also stored in chests in the mosque and recited.[129]
10. **Ibn Shabbah (Basran; d. 262/876) ← Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā (Medinan) ← ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿImrān (Medinan) ← Muḥriz b. Thābit (Medinan) ← Thābit, one of al-Ḥajjāj's guards (?)**: al-Ḥajjāj commissioned the writing of qur'anic codices (*maṣāḥif*) and sent them to the garrison cities, including one to Medina; ʿUthmān's family disliked this; they were asked to bring forth ʿUthmān's archetypal codex (*muṣḥaf ʿuthmān*), so that it could be used for recitation [i. e., in the main mosque], but they claimed that it had been destroyed when ʿUthmān was murdered. ← **Muḥriz**: It was alternatively reported that ʿUthmān's archetypal codex (*muṣḥaf ʿuthmān*) was inherited by Khālid b. ʿAmr b. ʿUthmān. ← **Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā**: al-Mahdī sent a qur'anic codex (*muṣḥaf*) to Medina, which continued to be read [i. e., in the main mosque] until Muḥammad b.

makes it seem like "Aḥmad b. Kurayb" is a corruption of "Aḥmad b. Yazīd," i. e., Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Yazīd b. Azdādh/Yazdādh al-Ḥulwānī al-Ṣaffār (Eastern; d. 250/864–865).

127 Nöldeke *et al*., *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 3:260–61 [= *The History of the Qurʾān*, 593–94]; Aʿẓamī, *The History of the Qurʾānic Text*, 104–5; Hamdan, "The Second *Maṣāḥif* Project."

128 Casanova, *Mohammed*, 124–28; Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān," 231; De Prémare, *Les fondations de l'islam*, 296, 460–61; De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 204–5; Powers, *Muhammad*, 160–61, 292 n46; Amir-Moezzi and Kohlberg, "Qur'anic Recensions," 58–59; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 64; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 865; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 46. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 501; Déroche, *The One and the Many*, 131–32, 267 nn84–85.

129 Ibn Zabālah, *Akhbār al-Madīnah*, 124; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durrah al-thamīnah*, ed. Shukr, 329–30; idem, *al-Durrah al-thamīnah*, ed. Shukrī, 166–67; Fāsī, *Shifāʾ al-gharām*, 2:439; Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ al-wafā*, 1:369, 2:668.

Yaḥyā's day, whilst al-Ḥajjāj's codex was stored away in a chest under the pulpit.[130]

11. **Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (Egyptian; d. 268/882) ← Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Bukayr (Egyptian; d. 231/845) *et al.***: al-Ḥajjāj commissioned the writing of qur'anic codices (*maṣāḥif*) and sent them to the garrison cities, including one to Egypt; this angered ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Marwān, the governor of Egypt, who declared that al-Ḥajjāj had overstepped his bounds [i. e., as the governor of Iraq]; ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz instead commissioned the writing of his own qur'anic codex (*muṣḥaf*); this codex was proofread by local Qur'an-reciters (*qurrāʾ*), one of whom discovered a scribal error therein, which was then corrected; the codex later became known as the Codex of Asmāʾ and ended up being used for a time in the Mosque of al-ʿAytham in al-Fusṭāṭ, before finally ending up in the city's main mosque, where it still remained in Ibn Bukayr or Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's day.[131]

Once again, however, none of these reports state that al-Ḥajjāj canonized–let alone collected–the Qur'an. Indeed, all three reports are ostensibly *inconsistent* with such an interpretation. In the first case, Ibn Zabālah's report speaks of al-Ḥajjāj's sending *maṣāḥif* in the same terms and in the same breath as it speaks of al-Mahdī's sending *maṣāḥif*, which immediately suggests–unless we suppose a *third* canonization scenario under the Abbasids–that we are dealing in both cases with the sending of fresh copies of the Qur'an, not of *new versions*.[132] In the second case, Ibn Shabbah's report explicitly refers to the ʿUthmānic canonization, and further observes that al-Mahdī's *muṣḥaf* replaced al-Ḥajjāj's *muṣḥaf* in the main mosque of Medina, which reinforces the notion that we are simply dealing with the sending of fresh copies of the Qur'an by successive Muslim patrons.[133] In the third case, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam reported that al-Ḥajjāj's sending of a *muṣḥaf* to Egypt was countermanded by the local governor, which immediately suggests that we are dealing with something other than a state-backed canonization, as Sinai has noted;[134] and that Egypt already possessed a community of Qur'an-reciters intimately familiar with the canonical text, which

130 Ibn Shabbah, *Taʾrīkh*, 1:7–8. See also Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ al-wafā*, 2:667–68.

131 Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, 144–45. See also Ibn Duqmāq, *Description de l'Égypte* / *Kitāb al-Intiṣār*, 4:72–73; Maqrīzī, *Mawāʿiẓ*, 4:19 ff. (quoting al-Quḍāʿī); Ibn Ḥajar, *Raf' al-iṣr*, 215.

132 *Contra* Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 64; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 859. See also Sinai, "Part I," 280–81 (incl. n49), although the analysis therein is predicated upon a detail ("he was the first of those who sent codices to the [smaller] towns") that is only present in al-Samhūdī's redaction of Ibn Zabālah's text; see the references cited above.

133 Similarly, see Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 365 n36.

134 Sinai, "Part I," 285.

implies that the Qur'an had already been canonized previously.[135] In short, all three of these reports clearly envisage a scenario in which al-Ḥajjāj–like al-Mahdī after him–sponsored the production and dissemination of fresh copies of the Qur'an, without any appreciable changes to the existing text. Such also seems to be the view of Bergsträßer, Pretzl, al-Aʿẓamī, Hamdan, Sadeghi, and Sinai.[136]

Finally, pro-Ḥajjājian scholars like Mingana, De Prémare, Dye, and Shoemaker have also appealed to a series of miscellaneous reports that putatively describe some kind of collection, composition, or redaction of the Qur'an by ʿAbd al-Malik and/or al-Ḥajjāj. In particular:

12. **ʿAlī b. Mushir (Kufan; d. 189/804–805) ← al-Aʿmash (Kufan; d. 147–148/764–766)**: al-Aʿmash heard al-Ḥajjāj give a sermon from the pulpit [i. e., in the main mosque of Kufah] in which he commanded his audience to "compose" (*allifū*) the Qur'an like it was composed by Gabriel, i. e.: "The *sūrah* in which the cow is mentioned"; "The *sūrah* in which the family of ʿImrān are mentioned"; "The *sūrah* in which women are mentioned"; etc. Thereafter, al-Aʿmash mentioned this to Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī (Kufan; d. 96/714), who responded that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yazīd (Kufan; d. post-80/699) had reported that Ibn Masʿūd had referred to "the Sūrah of the Cow" during a pilgrimage ritual at Minā.[137]
13. **Ibn Saʿd (Basro-Baghdadi; d. 230/845) ← al-Wāqidī (Medino-Baghdadi; d. 207/823) ← Ibn Abī Sabrah (Medino-Baghdadi; d. 162/778–779 or 172/788–789) ← Abū Mūsā al-Ḥannāṭ (Medino-Kufan; d. 151/768) ← al-Quraẓī (Medinan; d. 108/726–727 or 117–120/735–738) ← ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (d. 86/705)**: ʿAbd al-Malik gave a speech [i. e., in the main mosque of Medina] in which he

135 The inference in Hamdan, "The Second *Maṣāḥif* Project," 824, that no qur'anic codices of the ʿUthmānic text-type existed prior to this point in Egypt seems questionable to me. For example, the very fact that ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was apparently able to produce a codex of the conventional type might be taken to suggest, on the contrary, that ʿUthmānic exemplars had already filtered into Egypt by this point.

136 Nöldeke *et al*., *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 3:104 n1 [= *The History of the Qur'ān*, 462–63 n604]; Aʿẓamī, *The History of the Qur'ānic Text*, 104; Hamdan, "The Second *Maṣāḥif* Project," 824, 828, and *passim*; Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 365 n36; Sinai, "Part I," 280–81 and *passim*.

137 ʿAlī b. Mushir is a PCL, and al-Aʿmash the CL, for this *ḥadīth*. ʿAlī in turn is cited by three junior PCLs: (1) Minjāb ← ʿAlī ← al-Aʿmash; (2) ʿAbd al-Ghaffār ← ʿAlī ← al-Aʿmash; and (3) al-Ṣaghānī ← Ismāʿīl b. al-Khalīl ← ʿAlī ← al-Aʿmash. For co-transmissions from the junior PCL Minjāb, see Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:588; Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 10:115–66. For co-transmissions from the junior PCL ʿAbd al-Ghaffār, see Abū Yaʿlā, *Musnad*, 8:477–78; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 9:185. For co-transmissions from the junior PCL al-Ṣaghānī, see Abū ʿAwānah, *al-Musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ*, 10:184–85; Jawraqānī, *Abāṭīl*, 2:336–37.

praised the Medinans for their adherence to the old ways (*al-amr al-awwal*); warned them against the flood of unknown *ḥadīth*s (*aḥādīth*) coming from the East [i. e., Iraq], in which the only recognizable element is the recitation of the Qur'an (*qirāʾat al-qurʾān*); commanded them to continue adhering to "what is in your [qur'anic] codex" (*mā fī muṣḥafikum*), i. e., the one upon which ʿUthmān ("the wronged leader") and Zayd b. Thābit had united them; commanded them to adhere to the religious ordinances (*farāʾiḍ*) upon which ʿUthmān ("your wronged leader") had united them; and praised the efforts of ʿUthmān and Zayd in fortifying some things and eliminating other things.[138]

14. **al-Balādhurī (Baghdadi; d. post-270/883–884) ← al-Madāʾinī (Baghdadi; d. 224–225/838–840) *et al.***: ʿAbd al-Malik used to say: "I fear [the occurrence of my] death during the month of Ramaḍān, in which I was born; in which I was weaned; in which I collected the Qur'an (*jamaʿtu l-qurʾān*); and in which the people swore allegiance to me."[139]
15. **al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923)**: In an anti-Umayyad speech commissioned by the Abbasid caliph al-Muʿtaḍid bi-Llāh in 284/897 to be read in public from the pulpits, the Marwanids were accused of "substituting the Book of God (*tabdīl kitāb allāh*); suspending His decrees; appropriating God's property and distributing [it] amongst themselves; destroying His sanctuary; and making permissible that which He had forbidden." Thereafter, the Sufyanids and Marwanids alike were further accused of being "leaders of unbelief; leaders of misguidance; enemies of the religion; those who fought against the Messenger; those who changed [divine] decrees; those who substituted the Book (*mubaddilī l-kitāb*); and those who shed blood illicitly."[140]
16. ***al-Risālah fī l-Qadar*, attributed to Ḥasan b. Yasār (Basran; d. 110/728)**: Ḥasan wrote as part of his response to ʿAbd al-Malik: "The Book of God was sent down in the ways in which it was sent down, O Commander of the Believers, so do not misconstrue it (*wa-lā tuḥarrifhu*) and misinterpret it (*wa-tataʾawwalhu ghayr taʾwīlihi*)!"[141]

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138 Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 5:233.

139 Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, 7:269. See also Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓim*, 6:277; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 3:531; Bar Hebraeus, *Taʾrīkh*, 194; Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 177.

140 Ṭabarī, *Annales*, 3rd series, 4:2175–76.

141 Ritter, "Studien," 69. For the much-debated date and authorship of this text, see ibid., 63–64; Obermann, "Political Theology in Early Islam," 154 ff.; Schacht, *Origins*, 229; Van Ess, *Anfänge*, 18; Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 160–63; Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 118–23; Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 49–51; Mourad, *Early Islam*, ch. 6; etc.

The first of these reports, which can be traced–by means of an *isnād-cum-matn* analysis–back to the early Kufan "partial common link" (PCL) ʿAlī b. Mushir,[142] has been interpreted by De Prémare, Dye, and Shoemaker as an account of al-Ḥajjāj's ordering a team of scribes to collect or compose the Qur'an, bringing together hitherto-discrete *sūrah*s to form the canonical text.[143] It is certainly true that al-Ḥajjāj's use of the term *taʾlīf* ("to compose") immediately suggests that we are dealing with the collection or creation of a text, but other elements in the narrative militate against such an interpretation: al-Ḥajjāj is clearly addressing the Kufan public in a Friday sermon, not a scriptorium, as Sinai has pointed out;[144] the peculiar difference between al-Ḥajjāj's phrasing ("the *sūrah* in which the cow is mentioned") and Ibn Masʿūd's ("the Sūrah of the Cow") remains unexplained on De Prémare *et al.*'s interpretation; and the entire second half of the narrative, which is clearly intended as some kind of response to al-Ḥajjāj, seems completely irrelevant.

Against De Prémare *et al.*, Sinai has suggested that this report instead reflects an early debate over the proper order of the qur'anic text.[145] There is certainly something to this view: In ʿAlī b. Mushir's original formulation, al-Ḥajjāj refers to al-Baqarah, then Āl ʿImrān, then al-Nisāʾ,[146] which notably corresponds to the ʿUthmānic *sūrah*-order, in contradistinction to the famous Ibn Masʿūdic order of al-Baqarah, then al-Nisāʾ, then Āl ʿImrān.[147] We thus have a reasonable alternative interpretation of *taʾlīf*, which can be understood as something more like *tartīb* ("to

142 ʿAlī is associated with a distinctive redaction of this *ḥadīth*, which included the following combination of elements and wordings: Gabriel; Q 2–4; and the detail that Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī "cursed" al-Ḥajjāj.

143 De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 206–7; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 89–93; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 894–98; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 49–50.

144 Sinai, "Part I," 283. Similarly, Fudge, "Scepticism as Method," 12.

145 Sinai, "Part I," 283 (incl. n61).

146 *Contra* ʿIyāḍ, *Sharḥ*, 4:372–73; De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 207; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 90, 92; and Fudge, "Scepticism as Method," 12. The ʿUthmānic *sūrah*-order is preserved by the junior PCLs ʿAbd al-Ghaffār (← ʿAlī ← al-Aʿmash) and al-Ṣaghānī (← Ismāʿīl b. al-Khalīl ← ʿAlī ← al-Aʿmash), both against the junior PCL Minjāb (← ʿAlī ← al-Aʿmash), who instead has al-Ḥajjāj giving the *sūrah*s in the Ibn Masʿūdic order. See also Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:328 (← Musaddad ← ʿAbd al-Wāḥid ← al-Aʿmash), in which the ʿUthmānic *sūrah*-order is likewise attributed to al-Ḥajjāj, corroborating ʿAbd al-Ghaffār and al-Ṣaghānī. Minjāb probably got his wires crossed: In thinking about the Ibn Masʿūdic *sūrah*-order that al-Ḥajjāj is made to counter in ʿAlī's redaction, Minjāb subconsciously or accidently rendered the *sūrah*s in al-Ḥajjāj's own speech in the Ibn Masʿūdic order. Either way, ʿIyāḍ, De Prémare, Dye, and Fudge all failed to undertake a comprehensive collation and ICMA of this *ḥadīth* and were thus misled by Minjāb's distortion of ʿAlī's redaction.

147 Jeffery, *Materials*, 20–24.

arrange") than *jamʿ* ("to collect") in this context;[148] or in other words, ʿAlī's report depicts yet another instance in which al-Ḥajjāj criticized the Ibn Masʿūdic text-type favored by many Kufans.[149] However, this interpretation still leaves unsolved the puzzle of al-Ḥajjāj and Ibn Masʿūd's peculiar phrasings, not to mention the latter's specific purpose in the narrative.

There is a simple solution to this quandary: In its *prior formulation* (i. e., the *Vorlage* behind ʿAlī b. Mushir's redaction), this *ḥadīth* was a contribution to an early debate over *the formal titling of* sūrah*s*. In other words, al-Ḥajjāj is presented here as a proponent of the view that the giving of proper names to *sūrah*s (e. g., "the Sūrah of the Cow") is an innovation, and that *sūrah*s should instead be referred to in a more descriptive or less formal fashion (e. g., "the *sūrah* in which the cow is mentioned"). Immediately, all mysteries are solved: al-Ḥajjāj addresses the general public because he is trying to influence how people refer to the Qur'an; the peculiar difference in usage reflects opposing perspectives on the formal titling of *sūrah*s; and the anecdote about Ibn Masʿūd is cited to prove–to a Kufan audience–that *sūrah*s possessed formal titles (e. g., "the Sūrah of the Cow") all along.[150]

This interpretation is confirmed by a co-transmission from the report's "common link" (CL) al-Aʿmash, which does not contain the term *taʾlīf*; and two further co-transmissions that contain neither the term *taʾlīf* nor references to Āl ʿImrān and al-Nisāʾ (the inclusion of which would be required to illustrate the ʿUthmānic versus Ibn Masʿūdic *sūrah*-order). According to the first of these, from

148 See for example ʿAskarī, *al-Furūq al-lughawiyyah*, 148–49, who identifies the semantic distinctions and overlaps between *taʾlīf* and *tartīb*, both of which can be used to describe something that is arranged in a deliberate or principled way (*fī-mā yuʾallafu ʿalā stiqāmah*). See also the discussion of the meanings of *taʾlīf* in Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 90–92, who acknowledges that the semantic range thereof encompasses "agencer le Coran" and "de mettre en ordre." For a related survey, see Gilliot, "Les traditions sur la composition du coordination du Coran (*taʾlīf al-qurʾān*)."

149 I owe thanks to Mohsen Goudarzi for alerting me to this possibility in the first place.

150 See also ʿIyāḍ, *Sharḥ*, 4:372–73, who rightly notes–in the context of this *ḥadīth*–that Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī is repudiating al-Ḥajjāj's prohibition of usages like "the Sūrah of the Cow"; that Ibn Masʿūd's statement proves that "the Sūrah of the Cow" is a permissible usage; and that al-Ḥajjāj's appeal to Gabriel's *taʾlīf* could be a reference to the ordering of *sūrah*s. However, ʿIyāḍ further argues that al-Ḥajjāj (i. e., in Muslim's redaction of Minjāb's redaction of ʿAlī b. Mushir's redaction of the *ḥadīth*) cites al-Baqarah, then al-Nisāʾ, then Āl ʿImrān; that this *sūrah*-order is non-ʿUthmānic; that al-Ḥajjāj, as a supporter of the ʿUthmānic text, could not have been advocating such a non-ʿUthmānic *sūrah*-order; that al-Ḥajjāj's appeal to Gabriel's *taʾlīf* thus could not have been an appeal to the correct order of the *sūrah*s; and that al-Ḥajjāj's appeal to Gabriel's *taʾlīf* thus could only have been an appeal to the correct order of verses within *sūrah*s. This line of reasoning is predicated upon Minjāb's distortion of the *ḥadīth*, noted above.

al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) ← Musaddad (Basran; d. 228/842–843) ← ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Ziyād (Basran; d. 176–177/792–794) ← al-Aʿmash, the latter stated:

> I heard al-Ḥajjāj say, [when he was standing] on the pulpit: "The *sūrah* in which the cow is mentioned," and "The *sūrah* in which the family of ʿImrān are mentioned," and "The *sūrah* in which the women are mentioned."[151]

According to the second transmission, from the PCL Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah (Kufo-Meccan; d. 198/814) ← al-Aʿmash, the latter stated:

> I heard al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf say: "Do not say, 'The Sūrah of the Cow,' nor 'The Sūrah of Such-and-Such.'"[152]

According to the third transmission, from the PCL al-Dawraqī (d. 252/866) ← Zakariyyāʾ b. Abī Zāʾidah (Kufan; d. 149/766–767) ← al-Aʿmash, the latter stated:

> I heard al-Ḥajjāj say: "Do not say, 'The Sūrah of the Cow.' [Instead] say: 'The *sūrah* in which the cow is mentioned.'"[153]

(For a diagram of the relevant *isnād*s, see Fig. 1, below.)

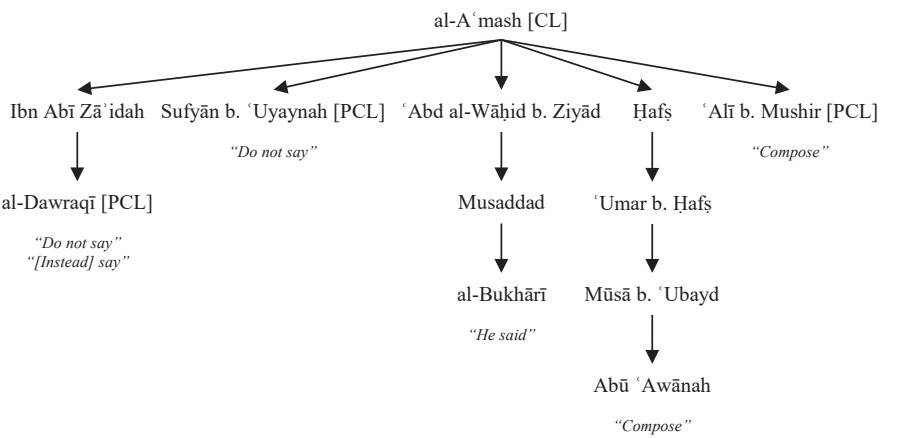

Fig. 1: Transmissions from al-Aʿmash

151 Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:328.

152 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:588; Ḥumaydī, *Musnad*, 1:215; Fākihī, *Akhbār Makkah*, 4:287–88.

153 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:588; Nasāʾī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 4:185; Ibn Khuzaymah, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1353; Abū Nuʿaym, *al-Musnad al-mustakhraj*, 3:377.

Identical statements appear in the mouths of the Prophet and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar (Medinan; d. 73–74/691–693) in a series of Basran transmissions,[154] which confirms both that the formal titling of *sūrah*s was debated in early Iraq, and also that al-Aʿmash's report belongs to–and should be interpreted in light of–this particular discourse.

In short, De Prémare *et al.*'s interpretation of ʿAlī b. Mushir's report–as an account of the collection or composition of the Qur'an–ignores the internal evidence of the report itself and the external evidence of the co-transmissions from al-Aʿmash and parallel reports. In light of such evidence, the meaning and history of the report are clear: (1) the issue of the formal titling of *sūrah*s was debated in early Iraq; (2) as part of this debate, al-Aʿmash disseminated a report in which al-Ḥajjāj rejects the formal titling of *sūrah*s, and in which Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī refutes al-Ḥajjāj by citing an anecdote in which Ibn Masʿūd uses a formal *sūrah* title; and (3) al-Aʿmash's report was subsequently expanded to incorporate the separate issue of the ʿUthmānic versus Ibn Masʿūdic *sūrah*-order, with al-Ḥajjāj defending the former as embodying the Qur'an's original arrangement (*ta'līf*).[155]

De Prémare and Shoemaker's interpretation of Ibn Saʿd's report about ʿAbd al-Malik's speech in Medina fares little better.[156] The message of the speech attributed to ʿAbd al-Malik is straightforward: The Medinans–and presumably all Muslims–should stick to the old ways (*al-amr al-awwal*), caliphal ordinances (*farāʾiḍ*), and the Qur'an, as opposed to the new phenomenon of *ḥadīth*s (*aḥādīth*) spilling out of "the East" (i. e., Iraq). The report takes the ʿUthmānic canonization for granted, crediting both ʿUthmān ("the wronged leader") and his aide Zayd with establishing a commonly accepted qur'anic codex (*muṣḥaf*).[157] The universality of

154 For a transmission from Shuʿbah (Basran) ← Khālid al-Ḥadhdhāʾ (Basran) ← Nāfiʿ (Medinan) ← Ibn ʿUmar (Medinan), see Bayhaqī, *Shuʿab al-īmān*, 4:173. For the report of the CL Abū ʿUbaydah ʿUbays b. Maymūn (Basran) ← Mūsā b. Anas (Basran) ← Anas b. Mālik (Medino-Basran) ← the Prophet, see Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-awsaṭ*, 6:47–48; Mustaghfirī, *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān*, 2:511; Bayhaqī, *Shuʿab al-īmān*, 4:172–73; Jawraqānī, *Abāṭīl*, 2:331. For a related report from the CL Ḥammād (Basran) ← Yūnus (Basran) ← Ḥasan (Basran) ← the Prophet, see Ibn al-Ḍurays, *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān*, 85–87.
155 It is plausible that al-Aʿmash himself was responsible for this secondary expansion of his own report, in light of the co-transmission of Abū ʿAwānah, *al-Musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ*, 10:187–88 ← Mūsā b. ʿUbayd al-Ṭarsūsī ← ʿUmar b. Ḥafṣ (Kufan; d. 222/836–837) ← Ḥafṣ b. Ghiyāth (Kufan; d. 194–196/809–812) ← al-Aʿmash: "I heard al-Ḥajjāj say: 'Compose the Qur'an like Gabriel composed it: "The *sūrah* in which the cow is mentioned…"'" In other words, the use of *ta'līf* in ʿAlī b. Mushir's transmission from al-Aʿmash is corroborated by Abū ʿAwānah's transmission from al-Aʿmash. Of course, the possibility that ʿAlī's more popular version contaminated Abū ʿAwānah's version, and that ʿAlī was the one responsible for adding the element of Gabriel's *ta'līf* into al-Aʿmash's *ḥadīth*, cannot be discounted.
156 De Prémare, *Aux origines du Coran*, 92–93; idem, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 202–3, 206; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qur'an*, 47–48.
157 See also Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 71–72; Anthony, *Muhammad*, 91–2.

this ʿUthmānic Qur'an is also taken for granted: By rhetorically declaring that the only recognizable elements in the Eastern flood of *ḥadīth*s are quotations from the Qur'an, this report assumes that Medinans and Easterners alike share a common qur'anic text. In other words, far from describing or alluding to "the existence of different 'Qurʾānic' traditions in different parts of the empire" and to "a Qurʾān which had not yet stabilized," as De Prémare would have it,[158] Ibn Saʿd's report assumes and reinforces the standard ʿUthmānic narrative.

The next report under consideration is al-Balādhurī's, according to which ʿAbd al-Malik stated "I collected the Qur'an" (*jamaʿtu al-qurʾān*) during the month of Ramaḍān. In contrast to the preceding two reports (both of which are inimical to a pro-Ḥajjājian interpretation), this report seems genuinely equivocal. It could be taken to mean that ʿAbd al-Malik collected the Qur'an in the same sense that Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and/or ʿUthmān reportedly collected (*jamaʿa*) the Qur'an, as Mingana seems to have assumed;[159] but it could also be taken to mean that ʿAbd al-Malik merely *memorized* the Qur'an, as Sinai and Bruce Fudge have argued,[160] and as even pro-Ḥajjājian scholars like De Prémare have acknowledged.[161]

The penultimate text under consideration is al-Ṭabarī's quotation from al-Muʿtaḍid bi-Llāh's speech, in which the Marwanids are accused of "substituting the Book of God (*tabdīl kitāb allāh*)," and in which the Umayyads in general are accused of being "those who substituted the Book (*mubaddilī l-kitāb*)." Margoliouth suggested that this could be understood as a reference to al-Ḥajjāj's production of his own "edition" of the Qur'an, though in Margoliouth's eyes, this project amounted to little more than the introduction of "punctuation" into the Qur'an.[162] Once again, however, we are dealing with an equivocal text: We could easily understand the charge to be that the Umayyads substituted the Qur'an *as a source of doctrine or guidance*, not that they literally replaced one *muṣḥaf* with another. Such an interpretation fits comfortably with other anti-Umayyad rhetoric and slogans, such as the common rebel demand that the Umayyads ought to adhere to "the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Prophet"; this implies that, in the eyes of their critics, the Umayyads often disregarded the Qur'an.[163] This interpretation is further strength-

158 De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 203.

159 Mingana, "The Transmission of the Kurʾān," 230. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 501 n166.

160 Sinai, "Part I," 282–83 (incl. n60); Fudge, "Scepticism as Method," 12. See also Déroche, *The One and the Many*, 129. More generally, on the semantic range of *jamʿ*, see Gilliot, "Collecte ou mémorisation du Coran."

161 De Prémare, *Aux origines du Coran*, 82; idem, *Les fondations de l'islam*, 297; idem, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 200–201; Powers, *Muhammad*, 160, 292 n41; Amir-Moezzi and Kohlberg, "Qur'anic Recensions," 59; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 45.

162 Margoliouth, "Textual Variations," 336.

163 E. g., Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 59 ff.

ened by research on early Muslim interpretations of the qur'anic accusations of *tabdīl* and *taḥrīf* against the People of Book, which were initially understood as accusations of the misinterpretation, misrepresentation, or obscuration of scripture, not of physical alterations to the text.[164]

The final text under consideration is a passage from the *Risālah* attributed to Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, in which ʿAbd al-Malik is advised regarding the Qur'an: "Do not misconstrue it (*wa-lā tuḥarrifhu*) and misinterpret it (*wa-tataʾawwalhu ghayr taʾwīlihi*)!" Robinson implies that this passage refers to ʿAbd al-Malik's redaction and canonization of the Qur'an,[165] but once again, we are dealing with an equivocal text: The accusation of *taḥrīf* could refer to some kind of textual alteration, but it could just as easily refer to a deliberate misinterpretation, misrepresentation, or obfuscation of the text. Indeed, the latter interpretation again seems more likely in light of the aforementioned research on early Muslim interpretations of the qur'anic accusation of *taḥrīf*.

In short, none of the Islamic reports just surveyed straightforwardly, directly, or explicitly describe al-Ḥajjāj's collecting, composing, redacting, canonizing, or re-canonizing the Qur'an: **(1–4)** the reports of al-Ḥajjāj's suppressing Ibn Masʿūd's version of the Qur'an in Kufah, and of his destroying non-ʿUthmānic codices, are consistent with an Umayyad policy of maintaining the ʿUthmānic canonization; **(5–8)** al-Ḥimmānī's anecdotes describe nothing more than an attempt by al-Ḥajjāj to measure and quantify various aspects of the qur'anic text; **(9–11)** the reports of al-Ḥajjāj's sending *maṣāḥif* to certain provinces describe nothing more than his sending of fresh copies, like al-Mahdī after him; **(12)** al-Aʿmash's report about al-Ḥajjāj likely describes a debate over the formal titling of *sūrah*s and–in certain secondary redactions–a debate over the ʿUthmānic versus Ibn Masʿūdic ordering of *sūrah*s; **(13)** Ibn Saʿd's report describes ʿAbd al-Malik's upholding the ʿUthmānic canonization; **(14)** al-Balādhurī's report is consistent with ʿAbd al-Malik's merely recalling his memorization of the Qur'an; and **(15–16)** the statements respectively attributed to al-Muʿtaḍid bi-Llāh and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī probably refer to a perceived Umayyad disregard for, or misinterpretation of, the Qur'an.

It is only the Christian sources that clearly describe al-Ḥajjāj's canonizing or re-canonizing the Qur'an, and it is only by superimposing these Christian sources over the Islamic sources that the latter appear to closely resemble the former. Such an interpretative imposition is not illegitimate in principle: It is certainly conceivable that early Christian sources would accurately preserve a datum about early Islam that later Muslims found to be inconvenient or incomprehensible, such that the

164 E. g., Reynolds, "Qurʾanic Accusation," esp. 192 ff.; Nickel, *Narratives of Tampering*.
165 Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik*, 103.

datum in question only survived in marginal contexts or in some half-remembered form in later Islamic sources.[166] In the present case, however, such an interpretation is simply not viable. In light of the strong arguments in favor of the ʿUthmānic hypothesis (above) and against the Ḥajjājian hypotheses (below), we are strongly justified in rejecting the notion that the Islamic reports of al-Ḥajjāj's Qur'an-related activities are anything other than what they appear to be. In other words, whether we approach these reports on their own or in the light of broader evidence and considerations, the outcome is the same: none of them clearly describe a canonization or re-canonization of the Qur'an by al-Ḥajjāj; and it is unlikely that any of them originated as memories or witnesses to a canonization or re-canonization of the Qur'an by al-Ḥajjāj. In short, Sinai *et al.*'s interpretations of the relevant Islamic reports are generally stronger than those of De Prémare *et al.*

The final set of evidence cited by pro-Ḥajjājian scholars is the qur'anic manuscript record. According to Casanova, De Prémare, Powers, Dye, and Shoemaker, no extant qur'anic manuscript can be confidently dated prior to the time of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj; and the earliest of them date to ʿAbd al-Malik's reign; all of which is consistent with **(Ḥ3–4)** the hypothesis that al-Ḥajjāj produced the Qur'an or else destroyed all prior versions of the text.[167] In fact, as will discussed more below, there are now multiple qur'anic manuscripts that have been dated back to before ʿAbd al-Malik, on the basis of both radiocarbon and paleographic dating. Pro-Ḥajjājian scholars like Dye and Shoemaker simply reject these results.

In sum, all of the Ḥajjājian hypotheses under consideration rely upon weak or equivocal evidence at best and misinterpreted evidence at worst. Certainly, none of these Ḥajjājian hypotheses can be sustained in the face of the much stronger pro-ʿUthmānic and anti-Ḥajjājian arguments outlined above and below. In particular: **(Ḥ1)** the hypothesis that al-Ḥajjāj added diacritics to the ʿUthmānic Qur'an rests on questionable reports and contradicts the manuscript record; **(Ḥ2)** the hypothesis that al-Ḥajjāj slightly corrected the text of the ʿUthmānic Qur'an is based on an implausible report; and **(Ḥ3)** the hypothesis that al-Ḥajjāj redacted and re-canonized the ʿUthmānic Qur'an and **(Ḥ4)** the hypothesis that al-Ḥajjāj *rather than ʿUthmān* canonized the Qur'an are both based on several dubious and relatively late Christian sources; a series of Islamic sources that are equivocal at best and irrelevant or even contrary at worst; and an overly skeptical approach to the qur'anic

166 Something like this idea comes across in Casanova, *Mohammed*, 122; Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 18; De Prémare, *Aux origines du Coran*, 84; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 87, 89; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 44–45, 49, and passim.

167 Casanova, *Mohammed*, 123; De Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik," 193–94; Powers, *Muhammad*, 292–93 n48; idem, *Zayd*, 122; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 67–69; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 861–66; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, ch. 3.

manuscript record. As things currently stand, there is no good reason to accept the proposition that al-Ḥajjāj intervened in any way regarding the text or content of the canonical Qur'an.

Arguments against al-Ḥajjāj

Alongside the foregoing, defenders of the ʿUthmānic hypothesis–in both the secular Western academy and Islamic seminarian contexts–have devised at least fourteen additional arguments against the general hypothesis that the canonical qur'anic text-type was canonized after the time of ʿUthmān, especially by al-Ḥajjāj (listed and henceforth referred to as **¬Ḥ1**, **¬Ḥ2**, **¬Ḥ3**, etc.):

¬Ḥ1. Abbott has argued that there was already a politico-religious need for a canonical qur'anic text prior to the time of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj, i. e., during the reigns of ʿUthmān (r. 24–35/644–656) and Muʿāwiyah (r. 41–60/661–680), which undermines the hypothesis (**Ḥ4**) that al-Ḥajjāj was the Qur'an's true canonizer (though not **Ḥ3**, the hypothesis that he redacted an existing canon).[168] In a similar vein, in response to the more specific hypothesis (a variant of **Ḥ3**) that al-Ḥajjāj removed anti-Umayyad passages from the Qur'an, Abū l-Qāsim al-Khūʾī has argued that Muʿāwiyah would have made such an attempt already.[169]

¬Ḥ2. Donner and Sinai have both argued that the Qur'an contains no clear references to the first *fitnah* and all of the conflicts, sects, doctrines, events, terminology, etc., that arose or occurred therein and thereafter, which is inconsistent with the hypothesis (**Ḥ4**) that the qur'anic text of the extant canon remained open, fluid, or unfixed after ʿUthmān's death. In short, there are no post-ʿUthmānic anachronisms in the Qur'an, which is inconsistent with a post-ʿUthmānic canonization.[170]

¬Ḥ3. Schoeler and Sinai have both argued that the presence of various linguistic archaisms, obscurities, and inconsistencies in the canonical qur'anic text is

168 Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script*, 48–49.

169 Khūʾī, *Bayān*, 219–20 [= *Prolegomena*, 151].

170 Donner, *Narratives*, ch. 1; Sinai, "Part II," 515 ff.; idem, *The Qurʾan*, 47; idem, "Christian Elephant," 75 ff. Indeed, as Sinai emphasizes, the qur'anic text does not even seem to contain conquest-era anachronisms, an observation reiterated in Cook, *The Koran*, 133. This implies that the Qur'an's contents had already substantially congealed prior to the ʿUthmānic canonization–an implication that the undertext of the DAM 01–27.1, or Ṣanʿāʾ 1 palimpsest, seems to confirm, as will be discussed more below (s. v. **¬Ḥ14**).

inconsistent with the hypothesis (**Ḥ4**) of a Ḥajjājian (or any late) canonization, since we would expect successive generations of scribes, tradents, and/or exegetes (e. g., up until c. 700 CE) to have glossed, updated, or corrected an unfixed text in accordance with their changing linguistic norms and understandings.[171]

¬Ḥ4. Sinai has argued that the highly allusive and uncontextualized character of the canonical qur'anic text is inconsistent with the hypothesis (**Ḥ4**) of a Ḥajjājian (or any late) canonization, since we would otherwise expect successive generations of scribes, tradents, and/or exegetes (e. g., up until c. 700 CE) to have incorporated into the as-yet-unfixed qur'anic text biographical details and narrative elaborations from the ancillary corpus of exegetical and Sīrah-Maghāzī reports that was already emerging towards the end of the first/seventh century.[172]

¬Ḥ5. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm al-Zurqānī and al-Khūʾī have both argued (*contra* **Ḥ3–4**) that thousands of Qur'an-memorizers (*ḥuffāẓ*) existed in the time of al-Ḥajjāj, whose memorizations of the Qur'an could not have been overwritten by al-Ḥajjāj, even if he had replaced every qur'anic codex.[173]

¬Ḥ6. al-Zurqānī has argued (*contra* **Ḥ3–4**) that the leading religious figures of al-Ḥajjāj's time would have resisted and fought against any attempt by him to alter or replace the text of the Qur'an.[174]

¬Ḥ7. al-Zurqānī and al-Khūʾī have both argued (*contra* **Ḥ3–4**) that al-Ḥajjāj, a mere governor with no authority over the domains of other governors, could not have imposed a new version of the Qur'an across the entire Arab empire.[175]

¬Ḥ8. Sadeghi and Sinai have both argued (*contra* **Ḥ3–4**) that it is highly unlikely that the Umayyads could have successfully imposed a new scripture–or a new version of an old scripture–upon the increasingly diffuse and heavily divided Muslim communities of the post-*fitnah* era, especially the Shīʿah, the Ibāḍiyyah, and other such factions opposed to their rule. As such, the canon-

171 Schoeler, "Codification," 788–89; Sinai, "Part II," 519–20; idem, "Christian Elephant," 81 ff. See also Cook, *The Koran*, 133. This line of argumentation will be strengthened if we can use the ICMA to trace the confusion of early Muslim exegetes over obscure words in the Qur'an as far back as the early Marwanid period. If Muslim exegetes c. 700 CE were already confounded by numerous words in the Qur'an, this would suggest that they were dealing with a text that was already old and fixed, rather than one that was composed, and/or remained open until, c. 700 CE. Again, however, the success of this augmented line of argumentation depends on future research.

172 Sinai, "Part II," 517–19; idem, "Christian Elephant," 81 ff. (incl. n89).

173 Zurqānī, *Manāhil al-ʿirfān*, 1:274; Khūʾī, *Bayān*, 219 [= *Prolegomena*, 151].

174 Zurqānī, *Manāhil al-ʿirfān*, 1:273.

175 Ibid., 274; Khūʾī, *Bayān*, 219 [= *Prolegomena*, 151].

ical qur'anic text-type shared by the Ahl al-Sunnah, the Shīʿah, the Ibāḍiyyah, etc., must be a common *pre-sectarian* and thus *pre-fitnah* inheritance.[176]

¬Ḥ9. al-Zurqānī, al-Khūʾī, Aʿẓamī, Sadeghi, and Hamdan have variously argued *e silentio* (*contra* **Ḥ3–4**) that the absence of Islamic reports of al-Ḥajjāj's interpolating and replacing the text of the Qur'an is inconsistent with the historical occurrence thereof, given that such an imposition would have been widely discussed, criticized, and reported by scholars at the time or the community in general; and given that al-Ḥajjāj and the Umayyads could not have suppressed all memories thereof across the community.[177]

¬Ḥ10. al-Khūʾī, al-Aʿẓamī, Sadeghi, Hamdan, Sinai, and Yasin Dutton have variously argued *e silentio* (*contra* **Ḥ3–4**) that the absence of any explicit mention of an Umayyad canonization or redaction of the Qur'an *even in anti-Umayyad sources* (i. e., sources that otherwise enumerate Umayyad crimes and outrages) is inconsistent with the historical occurrence of any such Umayyad canonization or redaction.[178]

¬Ḥ11. Sinai has argued *e silentio* (*contra* **Ḥ3–4**) that the absence of any mention of al-Ḥajjāj's redaction or canonization of the Qur'an by John of Damascus is inconsistent with the historical occurrence of any such Ḥajjājian redaction or canonization, since it is reasonable to expect that John–a critic of Islam who lived in the Umayyad heartland of Syria during ʿAbd al-Malik's reign–would have seized upon such an occurrence to delegitimize the Qur'an.[179]

¬Ḥ12. Sinai and Van Putten have both appealed to the fact that multiple qur'anic manuscripts of the canonical text-type have been radiocarbon dated to before the time of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj with a high degree of probability, which is strong evidence against the hypothesis (**Ḥ4**) that al-Ḥajjāj was responsible for producing and establishing this canonical text-type.[180] Moreover, as Van Putten in particular has emphasized, the ultimate arche-

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176 Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 366, 414; Sinai, "Part II," 510, 516. See also Blachère, *Introduction*, 91–92, and Donner, *Narratives*, intro.

177 Zurqānī, *Manāhil al-ʿirfān*, 1:273–74; Khūʾī, *Bayān*, 219 [= *Prolegomena*, 151]; Aʿẓamī, *The History of the Qurʾānic Text*, 103 n73; Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 366; Hamdan, "The Second *Maṣāḥif* Project," 799–800.

178 Khūʾī, *Bayān*, 219 [= *Prolegomena*, 151]; Aʿẓamī, *The History of the Qurʾānic Text*, 103 n73; Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 366; Hamdan, "The Second *Maṣāḥif* Project," 799–800; Sinai, "Part II," 510–11; Dutton, "The Form of the Qurʾan," 188.

179 Sinai, "Part I," 287.

180 Idem, *The Qurʾan*, 46, 56 n34, citing Dutton, "An Umayyad Fragment," esp. 63–64, and Marx and Jocham, "Datierungen" [= "Radiocarbon (14C) Dating"]. Likewise, Van Putten, "The Grace of God," 275 ff., 279, citing the Corpus Coranicum website. See also Sidky, "Regionality," 148–53; anon., "Concise List of Arabic Manuscripts."

type behind all of these extant witnesses to the canonical text-type must be *earlier still*, which further strengthens the hypothesis of a pre-Ḥajjājian canonization.[181]

¬Ḥ13. Van Putten has appealed to the paleographical research of Déroche, who identified the "O1" Arabic script-style with the official media of ʿAbd al-Malik and various "Ḥijāzī" script-styles with the preceding era; and, on this basis, dated *Codex Parisino-petropolitanus* and other such "Ḥijāzī" manuscripts of the canonical text-type to the pre-Marwanid era. It follows from this that the canonical text-type was not produced by al-Ḥajjāj and predates him (*contra* **Ḥ4**).[182]

¬Ḥ14. Sinai has appealed to Sadeghi's research on the famous DAM 01–27.1 (or Ṣanʿāʾ 1) palimpsest to undermine the specific hypothesis (**Ḥ4**) that al-Ḥajjāj *composed* or *collected* the Qur'an.[183] The parchment of this manuscript has been radiocarbon dated prior to 660 CE with a > 95 % probability and prior to 646 CE with a 75.1 % probability.[184] The manuscript's so-called "C-1" undertext, which was likely written soon after the parchment was initially produced,[185] preserves a non-canonical text-type of the Qur'an: the order of the *sūrah*s that survive in this fragmentary manuscript differs from the canonical order; the *sūrah*s in question share the same verses in the same order as their canonical counterparts; but the verses in question often differ in wording–with omissions, substitutions, assimilations, and mild paraphrases–from their canonical counterparts.[186] On various historical and textual-critical grounds, Sadeghi has concluded that the C-1 and canonical text-types are not mutually dependent, but instead co-descend from a written archetype, i. e., *an even earlier version of the Qur'an*–a version of the Qur'an that existed *prior to* DAM 01–27.1, which itself likely predates 646 CE–with the same *sūrah*s containing approximately the same verses as those shared by DAM 01–27.1 and

181 Van Putten, "The Grace of God," 274, 279.

182 See Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, e. g., 73, 97–99, 139. I owe thanks to Van Putten for bringing this research to my attention and highlighting its significance for the present debate. Déroche (ibid., 96–97, 127, 139–40) seems to accept the idea of some kind of Ḥajjājian reform, but this turns out to involve stylistic and formatting changes, rather than any kind of redaction or canonization. Indeed, Déroche (ibid., 72, 97, 138) is skeptical even of the idea that al-Ḥajjāj introduced diacritics into the Qur'an, concluding at best (ibid., 140) that the "almost systematic" addition of *alif*s to the word *qāla* in an Egyptian manuscript (i. e., to distinguish *qāla* from *qul*) may be connected to al-Ḥajjāj's efforts.

183 Sinai, "Part I," 275–76; idem, "Part II," 513–14; idem, *The Qur'an*, 46, 56 n35.

184 Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 348–54, 383.

185 Ibid., 354.

186 Ibid., 344, 360 ff., and passim.

the extant canon.[187] All of this is inconsistent with the hypothesis (**Ḥ4**) that al-Ḥajjāj created the extant canonical text of the Qur'an by collecting together hitherto discrete *sūrah*s, etc.

Naturally, some pro-Ḥajjājian scholars–specifically, Shoemaker and Dye–have responded to some of these arguments. To begin with, both Shoemaker and Dye have objected to Donner and Sinai's appeal (**¬Ḥ2**) to the absence of anachronisms in the Qur'an, on the following grounds. Firstly, both Shoemaker and Dye have argued that a lack of post-Muḥammadan *ex eventu* prophecies does not necessarily preclude a later composition of the text.[188] Secondly, Shoemaker has argued that the Qur'an was composed and/or redacted by al-Ḥajjāj in strict accordance with an ahistorical and timeless genre or style, such that we would not expect it to refer to the *fitnah*, etc., on either the ʿUthmānic or Ḥajjājian view.[189] Thirdly, Dye has argued that ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj deliberately abstained from incorporating any overtly pro-Umayyad passages when they composed and/or redacted the Qur'an, in order to maximize its appeal to and reception by all Islamic factions; they did this, according to Dye, to fulfill their goal of creating a distinctive marker of Islamic confessional identity (i. e., a new Islamic scripture).[190] Fourthly, Dye has argued that the Qur'an actually does contain passages and entire *sūrah*s that cite, or simply are, texts that were composed after ʿUthmān's time.[191] Fifthly, Shoemaker has argued that the Qur'an's anti-Jewish and anti-Christian passages are actually anachronisms introduced in the Sufyanid and/or Marwanid periods.[192]

Against the foregoing, Sinai has variously countered as follows. Firstly, the specific conditions of post-Muḥammadan and especially post-ʿUthmānic Muslim society–the conquests, civil wars, sectarian debates, and so on–generate the reasonable expectation that a text or corpus created or updated after Muḥammad and especially after ʿUthmān would bear an imprint of said conditions.[193] Secondly, the Qur'an appears to be free not merely of *ex eventu* prophecies, but of any of the major developments and interests that arose in the time between Muḥammad and al-Ḥajjāj, including sectarian disputes.[194] Thirdly, any notion that the composers or redactors of the Qur'an unto and/or under al-Ḥajjāj deliberately refrained from

187 Ibid., 394 ff.; Sadeghi and Goudarzi, "Ṣanʿāʾ 1."
188 Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 153; Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 70.
189 Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 153–55.
190 Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 104.
191 Ibid., 70–71.
192 Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 59–60.
193 Sinai, "Christian Elephant," 75 ff.
194 Sinai, "Part II," 515–16; idem, "Christian Elephant," 75 ff.

leaving their ideological and temporal fingerprints on the text is highly implausible, especially in light of the complete lack of this kind of compunction evident in the early Ḥadīth corpus.[195] Fourthly, those passages in the Qur'an that even Sinai concedes may be post-Muḥammadan still fit into the era between Muḥammad and ʿUthmān.[196] Fifthly, Dye *et al.*'s putative examples of post-ʿUthmānic compositions in the Qur'an are highly debatable.[197] Sixthly, Shoemaker's argument that anti-Jewish and anti-Christian passages postdate Muḥammad and ʿUthmān rests upon the assumption that Donner's famous hypothesis that Islam began as an ecumenical community of believers is correct–a hypothesis that scholars like Sinai reject in the first place, independently of the canonization debate.[198] Seventhly, Dye and Shoemaker's contention that the Qur'an was assembled by al-Ḥajjāj from *entire texts and compositions* that were updated or even created during the great conquests, civil wars, sectarian disputes, Umayyad hegemony, etc., makes it all the more likely, on such a view, that the Qur'an would contain blatant post-Muḥammadan and especially post-ʿUthmānic anachronisms (which it does not).[199]

It should also be noted that, even if one accepts Donner's "believers" thesis, Shoemaker's appeal to anti-Jewish and anti-Christian anachronisms in the Qur'an remains weak. The hypothesis of an early ecumenical community of believers in no way entails or predicts that the community in question would not conflict with some Jews and Christians, nor that Muḥammad would not express criticisms of some Jews and Christians in his preaching and teaching. In fact, this point has already been addressed by both Donner and Juan Cole, who variously argue that qur'anic criticisms of Jews and Christians tend to be directed against certain Jewish and Christian communities and sects, or specific beliefs and practices, rather than Jews and Christians unconditionally.[200] Indeed, it would be strange if Muḥammad, who was the leader of a monotheistic *reform* movement on Donner's view, expressed no criticisms of the preceding monotheistic traditions. Thus, even on Donner's view, there is no strong reason to think that qur'anic criticisms of Jews and Christians betray a later hand, any more than the qur'anic use of terms like "submitters" or "exclusive devotees" (*muslimūn*) to describe its followers and the correct attitude that they should adopt towards God.[201]

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195 Idem, "Christian Elephant," 76.

196 Ibid., 78–80.

197 Ibid., 79, 86 ff., 94 ff.

198 Ibid., 80–81.

199 Ibid., 82–84 and passim.

200 Donner, "From Believers to Muslims," esp. 24–28; idem, *Muhammad*, ch. 2, esp. 70–72, 77; Cole, *Muhammad*, *passim*.

201 *Pace* Donner, "*Dīn*, *Islām*, und *Muslim* im Koran," esp. 132–33. For the meaning of the terms *muslim* and *islām* in the Qur'an, see Goudarzi, "Worship," esp. 41–46.

Shoemaker has also objected to Sinai's appeal (¬**Ḥ3**) to linguistic archaisms, obscurities, and inconsistencies in the Qur'an, as follows. Firstly, Shoemaker criticizes the traditional Islamic narrative that the Qur'an was accurately preserved from Muḥammad by his followers, asserting that this narrative is inconsistent with the fact that later Muslim exegetes were ignorant of the meanings of some words in the Qur'an.[202] Thereafter, Shoemaker cites Cook's inference that the editing of the Qur'an during its collection and canonization must have been conservative or minimal; Patricia Crone's suggestion that parts of the Qur'an long predated Muḥammad, such that the meanings of some words therein had long been lost; and Cook's dual suggestion that parts of the Qur'an long predated Muḥammad and/or remained generally inaccessible until decades after his death.[203] In the end, Shoemaker seems to affirm all of these hypotheses, whilst also affirming that most of the Qur'an originated with Muḥammad in one form or another.[204]

Against the foregoing, Sinai has variously countered as follows. Firstly, Shoemaker's suggestion–following Crone and Cook–that Muḥammad's followers inherited "ancient writings" fits poorly with his general thesis that early Muslims were largely non-literate and preserved their proto-qur'anic material orally.[205] Secondly, Shoemaker's so-called alternative explanations simply do not address Sinai's key point: If the qur'anic corpus remained fluid or unfixed unto the time of al-Ḥajjāj, it is reasonable to expect–in respect to any archaic texts and traditions, Muḥammadan or otherwise, that ended up in the canonical Qur'an–that obscure words would have been glossed, updated, or paraphrased; that apparent grammatical errors would have been corrected; and so on.[206] (In other words, whatever its cause, the phenomenon of the early Muslim loss of knowledge of the contexts, subtexts, and meanings of various parts of the Qur'an[207] actually fits poorly with the Ḥajjā-

202 Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 236. This exegetical and historical amnesia is also cited in Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 84–85.

203 Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 236–37.

204 Ibid., 237–38.

205 Sinai, "Christian Elephant," 85.

206 Ibid., 82 ff. (incl. n96).

207 For more on the amnesia of early Islamic exegetical and historical memory regarding various aspects of the Qur'an, or the way in the former often seems disconnected from the latter, see Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary*, 3–4; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, ch. 1; Cook, *Muhammad*, 70–73; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, ch. 9; idem, "Two Legal Problems"; Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry*; Cook, *The Koran*, ch. 13; Robinson, "Reconstructing Early Islam," 117; Conrad, "Qurʾānic Studies," 12–13; Gilliot, "Reconsidering the Authorship of the Qurʾān," 98; Reynolds, *The Qurʾān and Its Biblical Subtext*; Donner, *Muhammad*, 56; Reynolds, "Variant Readings"; Sinai, "The Unknown Known," 47–48 (incl. n4), 80; Pavlovitch, *Formation*, ix–xi, ch. 2, 512 ff.; Crone, *Qurʾānic Pagans*; Tannous, *The Making of the Medieval Middle East*, esp. 295 ff.; Cole, *Muhammad*, passim.

jian hypothesis.) Thirdly, Shoemaker fails to explain why early Muslims would have incorporated into their scripture ancient texts and traditions that were already unintelligible to them.[208]

Shoemaker has also objected to Sinai's appeal (¬**Ḥ8**) to the trans-sectarian acceptance–and thus *pre-sectarian* provenance–of the canonical Qur'an by arguing that the Umayyads were able to achieve such an acceptance through sheer force: they promulgated their new Qur'an across the empire; confiscated and destroyed all other versions of the Qur'an or proto-qur'anic material; and violently persecuted anyone who defied them in this regard, especially the early Shīʿah.[209]

To a certain extent, Shoemaker's scenario is not unfeasible. The Shīʿah in al-Ḥajjāj's time were almost entirely confined to Kufah,[210] making the hypothetical task of suppressing their original version(s) of the Qur'an more attainable for the Umayyad state. After all, the Umayyads appear to have more or less succeeded in carrying out an analogous task in precisely the same place: They suppressed the Ibn Masʿūdic text-type to which many Kufans initially clung, by variously threatening such Kufans, confiscating and destroying their codices, and aggressively promoting the ʿUthmānic Qur'an instead.[211] *Mutatis mutandis*, it is conceivable that the Umayyads could have succeeded in depriving the Shīʿah of Kufah in particular of any and all copies of their original Qur'an(s) and/or other sacred texts, leaving them with no option but to adopt the Umayyad-approved qur'anic text instead.

There are serious difficulties with such a scenario, however. In the first place, the Shīʿah–as a distinct sectarian tendency with a profound ideological antipathy towards the Umayyads and a history of rebellion–were presumably more capable of resistance than Kufans in general, or in other words: Umayyad successes against disorganized or miscellaneous Kufans do not guarantee analogous successes against the Shīʿah in particular. Moreover, even if we suppose that the Umayyads could have confiscated any and all proto-qur'anic *maṣāḥif* and *ṣuḥuf* from the Shīʿah, it is quite another matter to suppose that they were able to compel the Shīʿah to adopt *an entirely new text*, which is precisely Shoemaker's thesis. In other words, it is one thing to suppose that the Shīʿah would have accepted an altered but still fundamentally familiar version of their own scripture; and quite another to suppose that they would have accepted a new scripture with little resemblance to whatever they had possessed previously. Finally, the difficulties posed by the Shīʿah for Shoemaker's scenario are only magnified in the case of the Khawārij and the proto-Ibāḍiyyah,

208 Sinai, "Christian Elephant," 85–86 n100.
209 Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 37–38.
210 See Haider, *The Origins of the Shīʿa*, 14; idem, "Geography," 312.
211 See above.

who were already dispersing beyond Iraq to the hinterlands of the Arab empire by al-Ḥajjāj's time.[212]

Dye has also objected to Hamdan's argument (¬**Ḥ9**) that "any textual alteration or tampering with the Qurʾan from al-Ḥajjāj, or anyone else for that matter, even if minimal, such as the above-mentioned case of the two *alif*s, cannot have taken place without any reaction from the contemporary *ʿulamāʾ*."[213] Against this, Dye contends that the assumption that proper scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*) existed in al-Ḥajjāj's time is anachronistic; that the assumption that a version of the Qur'an was already established by that time is anachronistic; and that the Sunnī dogma of the Qur'an's perfect preservation would have overwritten inexpedient memories of al-Ḥajjāj's modifying the Qur'an.[214]

There are three problems with Dye's response to Hamdan. Firstly, Dye needlessly focuses on Hamdan's use of the term *ʿulamāʾ*, when Hamdan's point still works if we speak instead of proto-scholars scattered across early Muslim society (such as authoritative dispensers of legal opinions, prayer leaders, preachers, and storytellers):[215] If the Umayyad state had produced a new version of an established scripture, it is reasonable to expect that the religious specialists of the time–however informal or nascent they may have been–would have noticed and discussed this fact, leaving a clear imprint on later Islamic historical memory. Secondly, nothing hinges on Hamdan's assumption that a canonical version of the Qur'an already existed prior to al-Ḥajjāj. The key point is that religious specialists at the time would have noticed and made a fuss if the state had *changed* or *replaced* whatever scripture or sacred material they were already using at the time, canonical or otherwise; and that some reports thereof ought to have survived. Indeed, Hamdan's argument is only strengthened by Dye's contention that there was no preceding canon, and that al-Ḥajjāj *collected* or *composed* the Qur'an: The more drastic the state intervention, the greater the odds that leaders across the community would have noticed and commented thereon. Thirdly, if indeed al-Ḥajjāj had actually altered or created the Qur'an, it is questionable that a Sunnī doctrine of qur'anic immutability would have developed in the first place, or at the very least, that such a

212 E. g., Wilkinson, *Ibâḍism*, ch. 5.

213 Hamdan, "The Second *Maṣāḥif* Project," 799–800.

214 Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 86–87; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 890–91.

215 See for example Brockopp, *Muhammad's Heirs*, esp. chs. 1–2, who argues for the existence of "proto-scholars" in this era, including "pious individuals who were not professionals" ≤ 680 CE (ibid., 56); "private religious experts" and "small, disorganized groups of individual savants" c. 691 CE (ibid., 66–67); and "individual savants spread throughout the world" c. 680–750 CE (ibid., 82).

doctrine could have overwhelmed a communal memory of such an important state imposition.

Shoemaker has also objected to Sinai's appeal (**¬Ḥ10**) to the silence of anti-Umayyad sources by asserting that continual Umayyad and later Sunnī threats and violence throughout history compelled the Shīʿah in particular to forget that al-Ḥajjāj had created the Qur'an and forced it upon them. In other words, according to Shoemaker, the particular conditions and pressures of early Islamic history were such that we would not expect Shīʿī memories of the Qur'an's true Ḥajjājian provenance to have survived unto the extant sources.[216]

There are three problems with Shoemaker's counterargument. Firstly, it fits awkwardly with the already-mentioned fact that the Shīʿah and other anti-Umayyad factions remembered and recorded numerous other Umayyad crimes and sins: If the Shīʿah and others were able to transmit such material, why not reports of the comparatively greater outrage of al-Ḥajjāj's creating or redacting scripture? Secondly, Shoemaker's hypothesis is flatly contradicted by other evidence that he himself cites: Shīʿī reports that Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān corrupted or censored the qur'anic text in some way.[217] The survival of such reports in Shīʿī sources proves that the Shīʿah were willing and able to record reports that contradict the orthodox Sunnī narrative of the Qur'an's history, which is inconsistent with Shoemaker's hypothesis that a Shīʿī fear of contradicting said narrative drove them to abandon all memories and reports of al-Ḥajjāj and the Qur'an. Thirdly, as Sadeghi has pointed out, the Umayyads generally come across as an embattled dynasty who did not and could not micromanage Muslim memory and opinion.[218]

In contrast to Shoemaker, Dye has argued that, in fact, a "nombre d'ouvrages imamites pré-bouyides" contain reports that "reprochaient aux Omeyyades d'avoir censuré des passages mentionnant ʿAlī et sa famille, d'en avoir ajouté d'autres de leur cru, et d'avoir trafiqué et altéré des passages entiers, modifiant ainsi leur signification."[219] However, neither Dye nor any other proponent of the Ḥajjājian hypothesis has ever been able to adduce even a single Shīʿī report–nor any Islamic report, for that matter–of al-Ḥajjāj's creation, redaction, or canonization of the Qur'an.[220]

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216 Shoemaker, *Creating the Qur'an*, 37–38.

217 Shoemaker, *Creating the Qur'an*, 35. See also Kohlberg and Amir-Moezzi, *Revelation and Falsification*, e. g., 24 ff.

218 Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 366.

219 Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 61; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 855. See also Blachère, *Introduction*, 91–92, for a similar claim.

220 Dye cites Amir-Moezzi, *Le Coran silencieux*, and both Amir-Moezzi's and De Smet's contributions in *Controverses sur les écritures canoniques de l'islam*, all without specific pagination. I searched in vain in these sources for any citation of a relevant Shīʿī source. I can only assume, in

Dye and Shoemaker have also objected to Sinai's appeal (¬**Ḥ12**) to qur'anic manuscripts that have been radiocarbon dated prior to the time of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj. Though not rejecting radiocarbon dating outright, both Dye and Shoemaker argue that the method is not definitive and should be used with caution and in combination with paleographic and historical evidence, for six reasons. Firstly, radiocarbon dating only produces approximate results, making it difficult to use as a means of distinguishing between pre-Marwanid and Marwanid-era qur'anic manuscripts.[221] Secondly, radiocarbon dating (as applied by different laboratories) has produced highly discrepant date-ranges for some qur'anic manuscripts.[222] Thirdly, radiocarbon dating has produced date-ranges for qur'anic manuscripts and other Arabic papyri that contradict or poorly align with paleographical and other historical evidence, including colophons.[223] Fourthly, it is possible for the results of radiocarbon dating to be thrown off due to the conditions of the production and storage of the parchment or manuscript.[224] Fifthly, it is possible that a qur'anic manuscript could have been produced using old, unused parchment, or else both old and new parchment, such that the radiocarbon dating of the old parchment would produce a misleading date-range for the manuscript.[225] Sixthly, historic differences in the rates of Carbon-14 in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres can throw off the results of radiocarbon dating, if data from the wrong hemisphere is used to calibrate the results in any given instance.[226]

There is no doubt that some degree of caution is warranted regarding the results of radiocarbon dating, which are best used in combination with other forms of evidence,[227] as Sinai has also acknowledged.[228] However, this warrant does not

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the cases of both Dye and Blachère, that Shīʿī reports of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān have been confused with al-Kindī's report of al-Ḥajjāj's qur'anic interpolations. As far as I can tell, the closest thing we have to an Islamic report of al-Ḥajjāj's creating or redacting the Qur'an is Ibn Abī Dāwūd's report of al-Ḥajjāj's eleven changes to the ʿUthmānic codex. However, given that the handful of alleged changes in question amount to mere emendations of perceived scribal errors (as opposed to the removal of anti-Umayyad passages, for example), it would be misleading to describe this report as an account of a redaction of the Qur'an.

221 Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 72–73.

222 Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 67; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 863–64; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 73–75, 83–84, 86–87.

223 Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 67; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 863; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 76–82, 86–87.

224 Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 75–76.

225 Ibid., 78–79, 84–86.

226 Ibid., 87 ff.

227 See also Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, 11–13; Fedeli, "Is the Dating of Early Qurʾānic Manuscripts Still a Problem?," 10; Cellard, "Les manuscrits coraniques anciens," 678–79.

228 Sinai, "Part I," 276 nn21–22; idem, "Part II," 509. *Contra* Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 77.

extend to Dye and Shoemaker's general skepticism towards all instances of radiocarbon dating that have produced results indicating a pre-700 CE provenance for an early qur'anic manuscript. For example, Sidky has criticized the notion that parchment was created and then stored for decades or even centuries before finally being used to make qur'anic manuscripts; highlighted problems with one of the laboratories that produced discrepant date-ranges for an early qur'anic manuscript; and argued that paleographic evidence corroborates the pre-700 CE dates that have been produced in the radiocarbon dating of some early qur'anic manuscripts.[229] Meanwhile, Ali Aghaei, Michael Marx, and others have argued that the growing number of samples of radiocarbon-dated qur'anic manuscripts will help to resolve the problems raised by Shoemaker.[230]

The debate over radiocarbon dating is a highly technical one and will have to be resolved by the relevant specialists. In the meantime, I will confine myself to a non-technical criticism of Dye and Shoemaker's general skepticism of radiocarbon dating in relation to early qur'anic manuscripts. The criticism arises from the fact that nearly a dozen different early qur'anic manuscripts of the canonical text-type have been radiocarbon dated with a high degree of probability prior to 700 CE.[231] For the hypothesis (**Ḥ4**) that al-Ḥajjāj collected, assembled, or ordered the canonical text-type to retain any viability, *every single one of these radiocarbon datings would have to be erroneous*: If even a single manuscript of the canonical text-type predates the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik, the specific hypothesis that al-Ḥajjāj created the canonical text-type is falsified. Could it really be the case that multiple laboratories working with multiple different manuscripts have all erred in their pre-700 CE datings of said manuscripts? It seems easier to suppose that it least some of these results are accurate, or in other words, that we indeed possess at least one or two pre-Ḥajjājian manuscripts of the canonical qur'anic text-type.

Dye has also objected to Déroche's paleographic dating of Codex Parisino-petropolitanus prior to the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik (i. e., the basis of ¬**Ḥ13**), on the following

229 Sidky, "Radiocarbon Dating" and forthcoming.

230 Aghaei *et al*., "Radiocarbon Dating," 308.

231 Namely: (1) DAM 01–25.1 = 543–643 CE, with 95.4 % probability; (2) Birmingham 1572 = 568–645 CE; (3) Is. 1615 I = 591–643 CE; (4) MS 247 / Qāf 47 / Ms. Or. Fol. 4313 = 606–652 CE; (5) DAM 01–29.1 = 633–655 CE; (6) Ma VI 165 = 649–675 CE; (7) Arabe 331 / Marcel 3 / Leiden Or. 14.545b,c = 652–763 CE, with 90 % probability pre-700 CE; (8) We. II 1913 = 662–765 CE; (9) Arabe 335 / Marcel 5 / Leiden Or. 14.545a = 652–763 CE, with 75 % probability of being from the first/seventh CE. For all of these MSS, see Marx and Jocham, "Datierungen" [= "Radiocarbon (14C) Dating"]; Sinai, *The Qurʾan*, 46, 56 n34; Van Putten, "The Grace of God," 275 ff.; Sidky, "Regionality," 148 ff.; anon., "Concise List of Arabic Manuscripts."

grounds. Firstly, paleography yields only approximate results in most cases.[232] Secondly, Déroche's dating of the codex prior to the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik rests upon the absence therein of formatting features that were introduced under ʿAbd al-Malik according to reports that Dye doubts or rejects.[233] Thirdly, even if such reports are accepted, the codex's large format indicates that it was intended for public recitation in a mosque–an innovation that was reportedly introduced by al-Ḥajjāj.[234] Fourthly, even on Déroche's view that the codex reflects a pre-Marwanid style, it is possible that the style still lingered on into the Marwanid period, such that the codex in question could still be a product of the Marwanid period.[235]

As with radiocarbon dating, the debate over paleographic dating is highly technical and will have to be resolved by the relevant specialists. In the meantime, I will confine myself to the following three points. Firstly, Déroche's paleographic dating of Codex Parisino-petropolitanus and other such manuscripts prior to the Marwanid period is based not only on reports of al-Ḥajjāj's formatting reforms, but also on the fact that such manuscripts are written in "Ḥijāzī" script-styles of Arabic that predate the distinctive "O1" script-style used in Marwanid imperial media.[236] Secondly, even if we accept that al-Ḥajjāj introduced the convention of reciting from codices in mosques,[237] the mere fact that Codex Parisino-petropolitanus has a large formatting does not necessitate that it was produced as such for that specific purpose. Thirdly, there are numerous early qur'anic manuscripts that were written in "Ḥijāzī" script-styles (i. e., script-styles that are consistent with a pre-Marwanid provenance), including some that have been radiocarbon dated with a high probability prior to 700 CE, or in other words: We have cases in which radiocarbon dating and paleographic dating converge on the same conclusion.[238]

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232 Dye, "Le corpus coranique," 864.

233 Idem, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 68; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 865.

234 Idem, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 68; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 865.

235 Idem, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 68 n41; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 864–65.

236 E. g., Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 80, 139, regarding the connection between the "O1" script-style and Marwanid imperial media. See also ibid., 86, 90–94, regarding the connection between Marwanid architecture and certain illuminations and decorations on qur'anic manuscripts. It should also be noted that the pre-Marwanid provenance of the "Ḥijāzī" and "Kufic B" script-styles–which Déroche (ibid., 5 ff., 62–63, 73) accepted based on Ibn al-Nadīm's account of the history of Arabic script-styles–is corroborated by a slew of qur'anic manuscripts written in these styles that have been radiocarbon dated to the first/seventh century; see Marx and Jocham, "Radiocarbon (14C) Dating," 216.

237 See also Sinai, "Part I," 281 n51.

238 For some examples, see Marx and Jocham, "Radiocarbon (14C) Dating," 216.

Dye and Shoemaker have also objected to Sinai's appeal (**¬Ḥ14**) to Sadeghi's research on the C-1 undertext of the famous DAM 01–27.1 or Ṣanʿāʾ 1 palimpsest, on the following grounds. Firstly, the radiocarbon dating of this manuscript by multiple laboratories has produced highly discrepant results, rendering its exact provenance uncertain.[239] Secondly, according to Éléonore Cellard's paleographic analysis of the C-1 undertext, the original manuscript may have been produced at the end of the first century AH / the beginning of the eighth century CE.[240]

I will set aside for now the technical debate over the radiocarbon and paleographic dating of this manuscript, and I will even concede, for the sake of argument, that the manuscript dates from around 700 CE[241] and thus represents another example of a non-canonical qur'anic text-type that lingered on even after the predomination of the canonical text-type.[242] The key implication of Sadeghi's research[243] remains unchanged: There are strong historical and textual-critical grounds for thinking that the C-1 *text-type* (i. e., as distinct from its *earliest extant textual witness*) is pre-canonical,[244] which again implies that the contents of the Qur'an had already substantially congealed prior to its canonization.

Of course, the DAM 01–27.1 or Ṣanʿāʾ 1 manuscript preserves only a large portion of the extant Qur'an, so it is possible that the initial collection of *sūrah*s (i. e., the

239 Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 67; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 863–64; Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 73–75, 83–84, 86. Pieces of the famous Ṣanʿāʾ manuscript (DAM 01–27.1) have been variously dated: by an Arizona laboratory to 578–669 CE; by a Lyon laboratory to 543–643, 433–599, and 388–535 CE; by a Zürich laboratory to 565–660 CE; by a Kiel laboratory to 430–495 or 530–610 CE; and by an Oxford laboratory to 595–658 CE.

240 Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 76–77. See also Cellard, "Un nouveau témoignage," 1111–14; idem, "The Ṣanʿāʾ Palimpsest," 2 n9.

241 Along the lines of Dye, "Pourquoi et comment se fait un texte canonique?," 67; idem, "Le corpus coranique," 864.

242 According to the reasoning given by Shoemaker (*Creating the Qurʾan*, 77), this would falsify the hypothesis of a Ḥajjājian canonization, since it would show that "at this time the Qur'an still had not yet been standardized." The *Correspondence of Leo*, which asserts that "there remained a small bit of Abū Turāb's writings, for he [i. e., Ḥajjāj] was not able to eliminate it entirely" (La Porta and Vacca, *An Armenian Futūḥ Narrative*, 131), would likewise falsify the hypothesis of a Ḥajjājian canonization on Shoemaker's view. Of course, Shoemaker's reasoning here rests upon the reductionistic assumption that a real canonization event requires *the instantaneous and universal rejection of any and all prior material in favor of the canon*. *Contra* Shoemaker, proponents of the ʿUthmānic hypothesis–both medieval and modern–have always acknowledged that some non-canonical material lingered on for a time in some circles (above all, the Ibn Masʿūdic text-type in Kufah), arguing instead for the more nuanced and realistic view that the ʿUthmānic canon *rapidly predominated and attained a widespread and official acceptance*. See also Fudge, "Scepticism as Method," 5.

243 I owe thanks to Sidky for emphasizing this implication to me.

244 See esp. Sadeghi and Bergmann, "Codex," 394 ff.; Sadeghi and Goudarzi, "Ṣanʿāʾ 1," 17–18.

qur'anic archetype) that preexisted and gave rise to both C-1 and the canon only comprised a smaller number of *sūrah*s; included familiar *sūrah*s with more substantial variation; and/or included other *sūrah*s that have not survived.[245] In other words, by appealing to the gaps in the DAM 01–27.1 manuscript, it remains possible to argue that the canonization of the Qur'an also involved a *collection* of material, of the sort attributed to al-Ḥajjāj by Christian sources, and to ʿUthmān and/or his predecessors by Islamic sources. Still, the mildness of the variation between the C-1 text and the canonical text seems inconsistent with Shoemaker *et al.*'s hypothesis that the canonical Qur'an was assembled by al-Ḥajjāj from a diffuse proto-qur'anic corpus of fluid oral traditions.[246]

Finally, it should be acknowledged that al-Zurqānī and al-Khūʾī's appeal (¬**Ḥ5**) to the existence of thousands of Qur'an-memorizers already prior to al-Ḥajjāj will cut little ice with skeptics like Dye and Shoemaker, who presumably reject reports of this kind at the outset. In other words, the existence of a widespread institution of accurately memorizing the entire Qur'an is something that needs to be demonstrated or confirmed rather than assumed.[247] Likewise, it should be acknowledged that al-Zurqānī and al-Khūʾī's appeal (¬**Ḥ7**) to al-Ḥajjāj's limited gubernatorial power will not suffice against Casanova *et al.*, who have consistently hypothesized that al-Ḥajjāj was enacting an imperial policy on behalf of the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik and with the support of the broader Umayyad government. In other words, al-Zur-

245 E. g., Crone, *Qurʾānic Pagans*, xiii, who questioned whether the original C-1 manuscript included Sūrat al-Baqarah. See also Motzki, "Collection," 2.

246 E. g., Shoemaker, *Creating the Qur'an*, 13–14, 49 ff., 238, and passim.

247 It seems probable that a class of Qur'an-related specialists known as the *qurrāʾ* already existed by the middle of the first/seventh century, since–as was discussed above–they appear to have constituted one of the factions or demographics that opposed and ultimately rebelled against ʿUthmān. However, there is some evidence that the early *qurrāʾ* were (1) not highly accurate memorizers of (2) the entirety of (3) the canonical Qur'an, including: the fact that the *qurrāʾ* were seemingly threatened by ʿUthmān's canonization of the Qur'an; the fact that the ʿUthmānic and C-1 text-types exhibit variation that is consistent with some degree of oral paraphrasing; and the existence of early *ḥadīth*s endorsing the concept of "seven *aḥruf*," including the paraphrasing of verse-endings within certain limits. On the other hand, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's above-discussed report depicts the *qurrāʾ* of Egypt as highly accurate memorizers of the entirety of the canonical Qur'an by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's governorship (65–86/685–705), or in other words: There is also evidence that is consistent with al-Zurqānī and al-Khūʾī's supposition. The accuracy of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's report in this regard will have to be determined by future scholarship. For studies on the *qurrāʾ* and debates over their origins, development, and even the meaning of their appellation, see esp. Shah, "Quest," and the extensive literature cited therein. See also Van Putten, "During the 70's…," who argues that attempts to reinterpret *qurrāʾ* as the plural of *qārī* ("villager") rather than *qāriʾ* ("reciter") are grammatically unsound.

qānī and al-Khūʾī were simply criticizing a different hypothesis to the one outlined by Casanova *et al*.[248]

In short, there are currently fourteen arguments against Ḥajjājian hypothesis, variously appealing to (¬**Ḥ1**) pre-Ḥajjājian religio-political conditions and interests; (¬**Ḥ2**) the absence of anachronisms in the Qur'an; (¬**Ḥ3**) the presence of linguistic archaisms, obscurities, and inconsistencies in the Qur'an; (¬**Ḥ4**) the highly allusive and uncontextualized character of the Qur'an; (¬**Ḥ5**) early Qur'an-memorizers; (¬**Ḥ6**) early religious leaders; (¬**Ḥ7**) al-Ḥajjāj's limited powers as a governor; (¬**Ḥ8**) the trans-sectarian acceptance of the canonical qur'anic text-type; (¬**Ḥ9**) the general silence of Islamic sources; (¬**Ḥ10**) the silence of anti-Umayyad Islamic sources in particular; (¬**Ḥ11**) the silence of John of Damascus; (¬**Ḥ12**) the radiocarbon dating of early qur'anic manuscripts; (¬**Ḥ13**) the paleographic dating of early qur'anic manuscripts; and (¬**Ḥ14**) the undertext of the famous Ṣanʿāʾ palimpsest. Proponents of Ḥajjājian hypothesis have responded to the bulk of these arguments, although most of their objections are implausible; generate further problems or inconsistencies; or otherwise fail to engage with key points of evidence and argumentation. As things currently stand, most of the arguments against the Ḥajjājian hypothesis remain strong. Collectively, these arguments are overwhelming.

Evidence and Explanations: A Final Comment

The preceding century of debate over the identity of the Qur'an's canonizer has produced a considerable body of literature and argumentation for and against each of the following hypotheses: that ʿUthmān canonized the consonantal qur'anic text (*rasm*); that al-Ḥajjāj added diacritics to ʿUthmān's canonical text; that al-Ḥajjāj corrected some mistakes in ʿUthmān's canonical text; that al-Ḥajjāj interpolated or redacted some passages in ʿUthmān's canonical text and re-canonized it; and

248 Of course, as was discussed already, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's report does give the impression that al-Ḥajjāj's Qur'an-related activities (which likely amounted to little more than the production and dissemination of fresh copies of the canonical ʿUthmānic text) were regionally confined due to his limited gubernatorial power. However, the issue here is that Casanova *et al*. have cited a report (in which al-Ḥajjāj's project is confined due to his limited gubernatorial power) that is inconsistent with their hypothesis (that al-Ḥajjāj collected and canonized the Qur'an with the backing of the caliph and the central government). In other words, rather than simply assuming–along the lines of al-Zurqānī and al-Khūʾī–that al-Ḥajjāj operated as a mere governor, this criticism proceeds by pointing out that, in the very evidence adduced by proponents of the Ḥajjājian hypothesis, there are indications that al-Ḥajjāj operated as a mere governor, and that his Qur'an-related efforts–whatever they may have been–suffered accordingly.

that al-Ḥajjāj, and not ʿUthmān, produced the canonical qur'anic text. (Considerable energy was also directed, above all in the 1990s and 2000s, to criticizing and refuting the hypothesis of a qur'anic canonization c. 800 CE, which is now defunct.)

The sheer volume of the relevant scholarship might give the impression that the identity of the qur'anic canonizer is an intractable question; that a serious case can be made in either direction; and that a strong body of evidence exists in favor of a Ḥajjājian collection, redaction, and/or canonization of the Qur'an. In reality, the existing arguments and available evidence overwhelmingly support and confirm the ʿUthmānic hypothesis, on the one hand; and undermine and falsify all versions of the Ḥajjājian hypothesis, on the other. *Apropos* this point, pro-Ḥajjājian and anti-ʿUthmānic scholarship suffers from a recurring failure to adequately engage with contrary argumentation; a consistent reliance on weak evidence in the face of strong evidence; a general failure to seriously engage with most of the available primary-source material; and a tendency to fundamentally misinterpret key primary sources.

This is not to say that no evidence exists in favor of the various versions of the Ḥajjājian hypothesis: proponents of the 'diacritics' hypothesis (**Ḥ1**) can appeal to Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī's and Ibn ʿAṭiyyah's reports that al-Ḥajjāj added diacritics to the ʿUthmānic text; proponents of the 'correction' hypothesis (**Ḥ2**) can appeal to Ibn Abī Dāwūd's report about al-Ḥajjāj's eleven emendations of the ʿUthmānic text; proponents of the 'redaction' hypothesis (**Ḥ3**) can appeal to al-Kindī's report about al-Ḥajjāj's interpolation and re-canonization of the ʿUthmānic text; and proponents of the 'composition' hypothesis (**Ḥ4**) can appeal to the *Correspondence of Leo*, the *Disputation of Abraham*, and the *Affair of the Qur'an*, which variously report that al-Ḥajjāj collected, recomposed, and canonized the Qur'an. Meanwhile, Islamic reports of al-Ḥajjāj's suppression of non-ʿUthmānic text-types, quantification of aspects of the qur'anic text, and dissemination of fresh copies of the Qur'an, can all be reinterpreted as *indirect* or *half-suppressed* memories of some more radical intervention on the part of al-Ḥajjāj.

However, all of these Ḥajjājian hypotheses rely upon equivocal evidence at best and contradict stronger points of evidence at worst. Firstly, the reports of al-Ḥajjāj's diacritics are contradicted by other reports and by the manuscript record. Secondly, the report of al-Ḥajjāj's eleven emendations probably mistakes organic intra-ʿUthmānic scribal errors and variants for deliberate changes introduced by al-Ḥajjāj. Thirdly, the four Christian reports of al-Ḥajjāj's canonization or re-canonization of the Qur'an are plausibly the products of an eighth-century CE Christian polemical distortion or misunderstanding. The latter hypothesis is strongly supported by additional points of evidence that are unexpected on the view that al-Ḥajjāj created, redacted, canonized, or re-canonized the Qur'an, including: the absence of any clear or convincing post-*fitnah* and Umayyad-era anachronisms in the Qur'an; the pres-

ence therein of linguistic archaisms, obscurities, and inconsistencies; the absence therein of biographical details and narrative elaborations; the acceptance of the same qur'anic text-type by rival and even anti-Umayyad sects; the absence of any clear or direct Islamic reports, including in anti-Umayyad sources, of al-Ḥajjāj's creating, interpolating, or canonizing the Qur'an; the failure of John of Damascus–al-Ḥajjāj's contemporary–to mention the same; and the existence of multiple manuscripts of the canonical qur'anic text-type that have been dated on both radiocarbon and paleographic grounds to before the time of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj.

By contrast, the ʿUthmānic hypothesis is supported by multiple strong points of evidence, including: the consensus of all Islamic reports and accounts of the canonization of the Qur'an; the agreement thereon of diverse regions and sects, including those who despised or criticized ʿUthmān; the unlikelihood of the early Muslim community's collectively and consistently forgetting the identity of the Qur'an's canonizer; the early controversy associated with ʿUthmān's canonization; and the congruence between a stemmatic analysis of early qur'anic manuscript variants and the consensus of early Muslim scholars regarding the number of ʿUthmān's manuscripts. Meanwhile, all of the criticisms of the ʿUthmānic hypothesis–ranging from the appeal to Biblical analogues to the appeal to P. Hamb. Arab. 68–rely upon equivocal or misinterpreted evidence and unsound historical argumentation.

In short, there is a fundamental asymmetry in the evidence for and against each hypothesis, and in the explanatory power of each hypothesis. On the one hand, the ʿUthmānic hypothesis is supported by multiple strong points of evidence and is only putatively contradicted by weak or equivocal points of evidence that are easily reconciled therewith. On the other hand, all versions of the Ḥajjājian hypothesis are supported only by weak or equivocal evidence and are strongly contradicted by numerous points of evidence that are difficult to reconcile therewith. To put it simply, the ʿUthmānic hypothesis is a *good explanation*–and indeed *the best explanation*–for the evidence; the Ḥajjājian hypothesis–in all its forms–is a *bad explanation* for the evidence; and we are strongly justified in accepting the former and rejecting the latter.

Of course, any given version of the Ḥajjājian hypothesis could be propped up by an endless series of *ad hoc* auxiliary hypotheses designed to explain away the inexpedient evidence, and/or by other, existing hypotheses that can serve a similar, supporting function. We have encountered some examples already: perhaps the Shīʿī silence on al-Ḥajjāj's redaction or composition of the Qur'an is explained by a long-term Shīʿī fear of contradicting the Sunnī doctrine of qur'anic preservation; perhaps the canonical Qur'an contains a whole series of post-ʿUthmānic compositions; perhaps some parts of al-Ḥajjāj's newly composed Qur'an originated as ancient, incomprehensible texts that were somehow already fixed, thereby explaining the failure of post-ʿUthmānic tradents, scribes, and exegetes to gloss or update them; and so on. However, the very fact that the Ḥajjājian hypothesis requires an elaborate web of unsupported

assumptions and poorly supported premises reinforces its explanatory inferiority, especially in comparison with the far simpler ʿUthmānic hypothesis.[249] Moreover, as we have already seen in the cases just mentioned, such supporting hypotheses often contradict other points of evidence and generate further problems for the Ḥajjājian hypothesis.[250] In short, the Ḥajjājian hypothesis–in all of its guises–can only be reconciled with the available evidence with great difficulty, in stark contrast with the ʿUthmānic hypothesis.[251] As long as this fundamental explanatory asymmetry holds true, we are strongly justified in rejecting the former and accepting the latter.

Conclusion

Based on the arguments and evidence surveyed thus far, it seems likely that ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān (r. 24–35/644–656) canonized the Qur'an, which is to say: he selected or produced a single codex of the Qur'an; produced four copies thereof; retained one copy in Medina and sent the other three to Basrah, Kufah, and Ḥimṣ; and commanded that all other qur'anic texts across the nascent Arab empire be destroyed. The development of the Qur'an as a text prior to ʿUthmān remains murky,[252] but it seems probable that ʿUthmān drew upon an even earlier qur'anic archetype of some kind in his production of the canonical text.

ʿUthmān's efforts met with some criticism and resistance: a nascent class of proto-qur'anic "reciters" (*qurrāʾ*) impotently protested his imposition of a single text at the expense of all others; and some Kufans refused to relinquish, and continued to produce codices of, the qur'anic text-type associated with ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd (d. 32–33/652–654). This hostility may have even contributed to the eventual uprising against ʿUthmān, resulting ultimately in his death. Despite this, ʿUthmān's canonization project was highly successful: most other qur'anic texts across the empire were destroyed; his regional codices were widely copied thereafter; and his version of the

249 For a related comment on parsimony, see Sinai, "Part II," 512.

250 In general, see idem, "Christian Elephant," 62–63 (incl. n20), 85 n100.

251 This is certainly not to deny that the ʿUthmānic hypothesis requires some supporting hypotheses. For example, see the responses to **¬U3**, above. However, most of these responses rest on hypotheses that were formulated independently of the debate over the ʿUthmānic canonization and/or possess some independent evidence, such that none of them are *ad hoc* auxiliary hypotheses per se. (Moreover, as was again already noted, the **Ḥ3–4** variants of the Ḥajjājian hypothesis also require a similar supporting hypothesis in this instance.) By contrast, the ʿUthmānic hypothesis does not require anything resembling the slew of unsupported, implausible, and/or evidence-contradicting additional hypotheses required by the Ḥajjājian hypothesis.

252 See Part 2 of this article.

Qur'an was accepted by most early Muslims and thence inherited even by later sects who were hostile towards him. Consequently, all extant qur'anic manuscripts–with literally one known exception–embody the ʿUthmānic text-type in their underlying consonantal text, or in other words: Other than the undertext of the famous Ṣanʿāʾ palimpsest, all extant qur'anic manuscripts descend from ʿUthmān's qur'anic archetype.

After ʿUthmān's death, his canonical text was upheld by the Umayyad Dynasty, who continued to root out codices of the Ibn Masʿūdic text-type that still lingered in Kufah. The infamous governor of Iraq, al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95/714), was particularly forceful in this regard, condemning the Ibn Masʿūdic text-type in public sermons delivered in the main mosque of Kufah; threatening those who continued to adhere thereto; and deputizing Basran agents to confiscate and destroy codices thereof. Alongside this, al-Ḥajjāj commissioned a team of Qur'an specialists to divide the ʿUthmānic text into halves, thirds, quarters, and sevenths, to aid memorization and recitation; and he further commissioned the production of fresh copies of the text, which he dispatched from Iraq to other provinces. The codex that he sent to Medina was accepted and henceforth used for liturgical purposes in the city's main mosque; but the codex that he sent to Egypt was rejected by the local governor ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Marwān (governed 65–86/685–705), who was outraged by al-Ḥajjāj's presumption and instead commissioned the production of his own codex.

At some point in the following century, a Christian source (probably in Palestine) misunderstood or exaggerated al-Ḥajjāj's Qur'an-related activities, resulting in the emergence and proliferation of a polemical Christian motif about al-Ḥajjāj's collection, rewriting, redaction, and/or canonization of the Qur'an that spread as far as Armenia. Meanwhile, a Basran Shīʿī named ʿAwf b. Abī Jamīlah (d. 146–147/763–765) noticed eleven minor textual variants of the Qur'an and concluded that al-Ḥajjāj had introduced the variants in question. Finally, as Muslim scholars discussed and debated the early development of qur'anic orthography over the ensuing centuries, some also speculated that al-Ḥajjāj was the one who introduced diacritical markings into the text.

Muslim memories of the ʿUthmānic canonization were also subject to a certain amount of distortion and falsification, resulting in numerous contradictions regarding the context and details thereof. On the basic facts of the matter, however, there was no disagreement: The Muslim community as a whole always remembered that it was ʿUthmān who canonized the consonantal text of the Qur'an.

Here ends Part 1 in my tripartite series of articles on the historicity of ʿUthmān's canonization of the Qur'an. In Part 2, I undertake a historical-critical analysis of the *ḥadīth*s on the ʿUthmānic canonization, arguing that they embody or reflect genuine historical memories thereof. In Part 3, I develop an additional Ḥadīth-based argument against the hypothesis that al-Ḥajjāj and ʿAbd al-Malik created the Qur'an.

Note of Acknowledgement: I owe thanks to Saqib Hussain, Hythem Sidky, Marijn van Putten, Christopher Melchert, Mohammad al-Firas, Abdallah Ounes, J. I., Hasan M., Javad T. Hashmi, Seyfeddin Kara, Behnam Sadeghi, Sean W. Anthony, Nicolai Sinai, Pavel Pavlovitch, and Reviewer 2, for their feedback, insights, and suggestions on various aspects and topics covered herein; to Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, for assistance regarding early Shīʿī views of the Qur'an; to Adam Gaiser, for assistance regarding early Khārijī views of the Qur'an; to M. Barmayoun and Mark Randolph, for providing me with access to sources that were otherwise beyond my reach; to the editors of *JIQSA*, for their infinite patience; and to Terron Poole and Roxanna Irani of the *Sképsislamica* podcast, my discussion with whom rekindled my interest in this topic.

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