

Gabriel S. Reynolds, "Intratextuality Doublets and Orality in the Qur'an with Attention to Suras 61 and 66", Unlocking the Medinan Qur'an, ed. Nicolai Sinai, Leiden: Brill, 2022, s. 513-542  
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has somehow managed to suppress reports of Muḥammad reciting from sheets, as other prophets are said to have done in 98:2-3, delivery would still be oral.<sup>3</sup>

In elaborating this view, Jones notes, and refutes, the theory of Richard Bell that during the third period of the Qur'an's composition, the "book" period, Muhammad personally took on the task of writing his proclamations down.<sup>4</sup>

A different sort of case for the oral origins of the Qur'an has recently been made in the fascinating study of Andrew Bannister, *The Oral Formulaic Theory of the Qur'an*.<sup>5</sup> Bannister seeks to apply the ideas of Milman Parry (d. 1935) and Parry's student Albert Lord (d. 1991), who studied orality in the Homeric corpus and in the live performances of Yugoslavian singers, to the Qur'an.<sup>6</sup> Through a statistical analysis of "formulas" in the Qur'an, Bannister develops two principal arguments: first, that the Qur'an generally was composed in an oral-formulaic mode and, secondly, that the "Medinan" Qur'an shows even more oral-formulaic traits than the "Meccan" Qur'an. Working with Nöldeke's chronological classification of the Qur'an's suras, he concludes that Medinan suras

3 Jones, "The Oral and the Written", 58-59. Cf. Q 29:48: "You did not use to recite any scripture before it, nor did you write it with your right hand, for then the impugners would have been sceptical."

4 Richard Bell (trans.), *The Qur'an: Translated with a Critical Re-arrangement of the Surahs*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1937), vi: "The translation goes frankly on the assumption that the Qur'an was in written form when the redactors started their work, whether actually written by Muhammad himself, as I personally believe, or by others at his dictation."—Jones does not, however, mention the arguments of John Wansbrough that the Qur'an was composed through a written process not unlike that of the Synoptic Gospels. On the relationship of John Wansbrough's ideas to New Testament scholarship, and the method of "form criticism" in particular, see now Devin Stewart, "Wansbrough, Bultmann, and the Theory of Variant Traditions in the Qur'an", in *Qur'anic Studies Today*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth and Michael A. Sells (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 17-51. At the end of his article (pp. 42-46), Stewart argues that a more fruitful approach to the formation of the Qur'anic text might be that of "redaction criticism" as it developed in New Testament studies.

5 Andrew Bannister, *An Oral-Formulaic Study of the Qur'an* (Lanham: Lexington, 2014). Bannister's work might be read together with the critical review of Marianna Klar in *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 19, no. 1 (2017), 102-121.

6 Bannister, *Oral-Formulaic Study*, 272: "Searching the Homeric corpus for 'formulaic language', Parry was able to identify not merely repeated phraseology saturating the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but whole systems of formulas, built as generations of poets had created new formulas by analogy with existing ones." Milman Parry, "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making: II. The Homeric Language as the Language of an Oral Poetry", 335 (cited by Bannister, *Oral-Formulaic Study*, 75): "The highest sort of oral verse-making achieves the new by the best and the most varied and perhaps the fullest use of the old."

contain a greater proportion of "formulas", or small groups of words repeated in the Qur'anic text (a notion discussed further below), and hence exhibits what Bannister calls a higher "formulaic density".

In the present study I mean to complicate the arguments of Bannister through a study of two suras traditionally classified as "Medinan": al-Şaff (Q 61) and al-Taḥrīm (Q 66). Thereby I will attempt to make a larger point about the process by which the Qur'an was composed. I will argue that the sort of "intra-textuality" found in these (and other) suras points to a more complicated process by which the Qur'an was redacted. These suras both contain cases of "doublets", entire verses that are found verbatim (or almost verbatim) elsewhere in the Qur'an. I will argue that these cases—and similar cases in the Qur'an—reflect a written process behind the composition of the Qur'an.

1 Introduction to Sūrat al-Şaff and Sūrat al-Taḥrīm 02 Mart 2023

Sūrat al-Şaff (Q 61) and Sūrat al-Taḥrīm (Q 66) are part of a series of shorter so-called "Medinan" suras that stretches from Sura 57 to Sura 66 (although traditional scholars are divided over the dating of Sura 64, Sūrat al-Taḥābun, and sometimes over Sūrat al-Şaff as well).<sup>7</sup> Our two suras are a similar length: al-Şaff is made up of fourteen verses and al-Taḥrīm of twelve verses. Both suras have a relatively high mean verse length. In transliterated letters al-Şaff has a mean verse length of 100.14 and al-Taḥrīm of 138.33 (making it the sura with the fourth longest mean verse length in the Qur'anic corpus).<sup>8</sup> In addition, both suras employ references to Biblical protagonists in order to advance a particular argument apparently connected to a problem faced by the Qur'anic Prophet.

Most of the Muslim exegetes date these two suras to the Medinan period in light of the "occasions of revelation" accounts connected to them. Sura 61 is seen as representing a moment when the Prophet called on his community in Medina to rally together in their military struggles against unbelievers and hypocrites, at some point after the Battle of Uḥud (in part because v. 3 is usually

7 Al-Bayḏāwī (d. 685/1286) dates Sūrat al-Şaff to the Meccan period. See Theodor Nöldeke et al., *The History of the Qur'an*, ed. and trans. W.H. Behn (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 157, n. 103. Al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), however, makes it Medinan. See Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl*, 4 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1947), vol. 4, 522.

8 For these numbers I am indebted to Nicolai Sinai, "The Unknown Known: Some Groundwork for Interpreting the Medinan Qur'an", *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 66 (2015-2016).

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