The Evolution of Arabic Writing Due to European Influence:
The case of punctuation

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Abstract[1]

The spread of foreign languages, especially French, under European colonial rule inspired certain Arabic writers and scholars in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century to look at ways to develop the Arabic language. This happened because they felt that foreign languages had started to overtake Arabic because they were easier to read (ZAKĪ 1901: 2). In this paper, I will discuss the use of punctuation marks in Arabic texts since the mid-nineteenth century as an example of the evolution of Arabic writing due to European influence. I will explain the reasons why punctuation marks were integrated into Arabic texts, quoting Arabic writers and scholars from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. These include Zaynab Fawwāz,[2] the first writer to address the issue of punctuation marks in Arabic writings (FAWWĀZ 2007: 105-107), and ʾAḥmad Zakī[3] who officially integrated punctuation into the Arabic language (ZAKĪ 1912). I will also explain the opposition that came from conservative scholars who were reluctant to change any aspect of Arabic writing. This is because they believed in the sanctity of Arabic as it is the language of the Qurʾān and it represents Arabic identity. Therefore, one should avoid any "borrowing" from colonial languages in order to preserve Arabic identity (MEYNET 1971: 94).

Keywords: Punctuation, Arabic writing, ʾAḥmad Zakī, printing, Arabic Renaissance / *an-Nahḍa al-ʿarabiyya*, transmission of knowledge

Introduction

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century the Arabic language was an important factor for uniting Arab people, and many journalists and intellectuals (such as Zaynab Fawwāz and ʾAḥmad Zakī[4]) encouraged the development of Arabic by explaining

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2 A Lebanese journalist and feminist writer who died in 1914.

3 Arabic philologist and member of the Academy of Arabic Language *Maǧmaʿ al-luġa al-ʿarabiyya* who died in 1934.

4 ʾAḥmad Zakī b. ʾIbrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh an-Najjār, known as *Šayḫ al-ʿUrūba* (the Dean of Arabism). He was born in Alexandria of a Morrocan father and a Kurdish mother. His father was a merchant in Palestine and then he settled in Egypt. With his mastery of the French language, he worked in the press

that language, like life, goes through changes. This idea contradicted the way Arabic was seen at the time, as it was considered to be a divine language because the Qurʾān was written in Arabic. Traditionalists, such as Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭuwayrānī, therefore, were reluctant to encourage its development, saying that it should remain as it is. Roland MEYNET notes that this period was marked by a debate between progressive and conservative Arabs:

> What is at stake is the mindset, the worldview that informs its discussions and work: a great debate is introduced, different from the usual quarrel between ancients and moderns, and of a different nature than the banal opposition between conservatives and progressives. Two fundamental conceptions of language clash: respect of the sanctity of the language on the one hand, on the other hand considering language as a tool that is used and that adapts to new needs when it proves to be inadequate.[5] (MEYNET 1971: 94)

The history of modern Arabic punctuation started in the period called the Arabic Renaissance *(an-Nahḍa al-ʿarabiyya)*. Punctuation is rarely mentioned as an important aspect in the linguistic evolution of Arabic writing[6]. Previous studies of Arabic punctuation only mention ʾAḥmad Zakī's work on the subject when explaining the history of Arabic punctuation, thus neglecting a large part of its history, which started almost thirty years before ʾAḥmad Zakī's contribution to the subject.

In this paper, I will explain in detail how punctuation became part of Arabic and the reasons for integrating punctuation marks into the language. First, I will give a general introduction to the forerunners of Arabic punctuation, I will then trace the history of modern Arabic punctuation through the work of Zaynab Fawwāz (died 1914), aṭ-Ṭuwayrānī[7] (died 1897) and ʾAḥmad Zakī (died 1934).

1. Introduction to the forerunners of Arabic Punctuation

> The use of punctuation marks is a modern invention in written Arabic, Classical Arabic used other means to set off or highlight parts of the text, for instance by the use of a stroke over titles of sections in manuscripts, while Qurʾānic manuscripts use

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office of the Ministry of the Interior in Egypt. He then became editor and translator for the newspaper *al-Waqāʾiʿ al-Miṣriyya*, a professor of Translation at the School of the Khedive, and a professor of Arabic at the French Institute of Archaeology in Cairo. In addition to his integration of punctuation marks into written Arabic, he took the lead in finding Arabic equivalents for words borrowed from European languages, for example, he gave the equivalent *sayyāra* for "*automobile*". He also showed the Arabic origin of many Spanish and Portuguese names (toponymes) that were incorrectly transcribed in Arabic. Zakī also participated in many conferences of the International Congress of Orientalists, and he was respected by Europeans for his erudition (al-ĠUNDĪ 1964). Zakī was also a member of The Academy of the Arabic Language *(Majmaʿ al-Luġa al-ʿArabiyya)*.

5   All quotations by Roland MEYNET in this paper are translated from French.

6   Studies of the linguistic reforms during this period (that is, *an-Nahḍa*) mostly focus on the modernization of Arabic through terminological and lexicographical reforms.

7   Editor in chief of the newspaper *an-Nīl* at the time, died in 1897.

a set of signs to indicate pauses in the recitation *(ʿalāmāt al-waqf)*. (REZAEI 2008: 741).

The history of the Arabic language neglects punctuation. When we talk about the history of Arabic punctuation we are not referring to the punctuation of today, but to the signs that divided the sentences and paragraphs in ancient texts. The "separators" between sentences *al-fawāṣil*[8] correspond to a concept that existed in the Arabic script before the Qurʾānic Revelation. This concept has been associated with rhymes that marked the end of a verse in poetry. Al-Ǧāḥiẓ (died 255/868 AD) says that the end of a sentence in Arabic writings is marked by rhyme, and by *fāṣila*[9] (a separator or a break) in the Qurʾān (ḤASNĀWĪ 1973: 139):

سمى الله تعالى كتابه اسما مخالفا لما سمى العرب كلامهم على الجملة والتفصيل: سمى جملته قرآنا كما سموا ديوانا ، وبعضه سورة كقصيدة ، وبعضة آية كالبيت ، وآخره فاصلة كقافية .

sammā ʾllāhu taʿālā kitāba-hū ʾsman muḫālifan li-mā sammā ʾl-ʿarabu kalāma-hum ʿalā ʾl-ǧumlati wa-ʾt-tafṣīl: sammā ǧumlata-hū qurʾānan kamā sammū dīwānan, wa-baʿda-hū sūra ka-qaṣīda, wa-baʿda-hū āya ka-ʾl-bayt, wa-ʾāḫira-hū fāṣila ka-qāfiya

God refers to his word by different names than what the Arabs call their books: He named his book Qurʾān instead of *dīwān* (collection of poems), He named a chapter sūra instead of *qaṣīda* (poem), He named a verse *bayt* instead of *ʾāya*, and the end of a bayt *fāṣila* instead of *qāfiya* (rhyme). (quoted by al-ḪŪFĪ 1971: 119).

Since the revelation of the Qurʾān, the division of the Qurʾānic text into verses, suras, etc, and adding signs to guide the recitation[10] of the Qurʾān has continued to grow: other than rhyme, signs used to mark the end of verses and signs dividing the Qurʾān in sections were added after the compilation of the Qurʾān (in the ninth century A.D.). Pause signs at the time initially indicated where it is possible or impossible to pause (according to the grammatical structure and the meaning of the verse, and also for rhythmic reasons because they were auditory marks[11]). Pause signs then evolved and other types of pauses were

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8 For more information about the term *al-fawāṣil*, see al-ḪŪFĪ 1971: 114-28 and ḤASNĀWĪ 1973: 137-47.

9 The use of a different term for the Qurʾān was probably to avoid assimilation between the Qurʾān and poetry.

10 Reading the Qurʾān "aloud" to an audience was widespread at that time because it was difficult to have a copy (DÉROCHE 2005: 97). Pause signs at the time were therefore intended to organize the text and also to guide the reading aloud. However, nowadays, pause signs in the Qurʾān may have other functions than guiding the reading aloud because the Qurʾān is now accessible to all and can be read individually and in silence as a religious practice.

11 As a matter of fact, even punctuation signs in Europe were, at first, auditory marks because a silent individual reading was not common. Nina CATACH (1994: 16) explains that "visual" reading is a recent phenomenon that was in the past only practiced by scholars. CATACH gives the example of the middle

added to indicate where a pause is tolerated but where linking the phrase (not pausing) is preferred (and vice versa)[12] (AWAD 2013: 16). The form of pause signs was an abbreviation to the referred type of pause. For example, the sign ○̇ (*mīm*) is the last letter *waqf lāzim* (obligatory pause) and the sign ○̈ <SLĂ> is an abbreviation of *al-waṣl ʾawlā* (literally meaning "linking preferable") formed by the medial letter of the first word and the last two letters of the second word (DICHY 2004: 54-55). The latter sign indicates that, though it is possible to pause, it is preferable not to.

ʾAḥmad Zakī refers to pause signs and to "the science of making a pause"[13] *al-waqf wa-'l-ibtidāʾ* (literary meaning: pausing and starting again) as the forerunner of the Arabic punctuation (ZAKĪ 1995: 10). The segmentation of texts by signs was only a matter of interest to the Qurʾān to ensure the quality of recitation so that the faithful would avoid the confusion of meaning (ZAKĪ 1995: 10-11).

The importance of segmenting non-religious texts was considered only in the late nineteenth century. The writer Zaynab Fawwāz was inspired by French punctuation and suggested including European punctuation into Arabic texts in an article published in the Egyptian magazine *al-Fatā* in 1893. Following her suggestion, Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭuwayrānī, the editor in chief of *an-Nīl* newspaper at the time, tried in vain to "create" signs synonymous to those used in French writings in order to avoid "borrowing" from foreign signs.

ʾAḥmad Zakī, who officially integrated punctuation marks as part of Arabic, introduced punctuation in the Arab world after his trip to France, in the introduction of his book *ad-Dunyā fī bārīs* (Life in Paris):

رأينا لتقدم لعصر ، في الكتابة والفكر ، بوجوب إتحاف أبناء العربية ، بالإشارات المستعملة في أغلب اللغات الأوربـاوية ، لإرشاد القارئ على مواقع الوقوف القليل والمستطيل ومواضع التعجب والحيرة والاستفهام ونحو ذلك. لا جزم أن هذه الإشارات خير مرشد له في حسن التلاوة وعدم خلط الجمل مع بعضها ، كما هو حاصل في أغلب المطبوعات العربية ، بحيث يضطر الإنسان كثيرا لمراجعة نفسه وإعادة القراءة لمعرفة أول الجملة من آخرها .

> With the development of writing and thinking in our time, we find mandatory that Arab society be aware of the signs used in most European countries. These signs indicate the locations of long breaks and short breaks, and also express interrogation and exclamation, ... etc. There is no doubt that these signs are an important guide for proper loud reading without confusing

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ages when we usually read aloud for someone else. Punctuation then was intended to help "say" the text properly.

12 Amr OSMAN (2012: 99) says that "*Waqf* also had a bearing on legal issues and disputes" because the place of the pause in a verse would lead to different interpretations. We think this was probably the reason for adding the pause signs that gives the possibility to either pause or not to pause *al-waqf ʾawlā* (pause preferable but not obligatory) and *al-waṣl ʾawlā* (linking preferable but not obligatory). For the interpretative aspect of pause signs, see OSMAN 2012, vol. 14: 90-109.

13 Which is part of the science of [good] cantilation of the Qurʾān *ʿilm at-taǧwīd*.

the sentences, which is the case in the Arab printings where the reader must mentally repeat the phrase to know where it ends. (ZAKĪ 1900: 1)

Before Fawwāz's letter, comparison between Arabic and European languages was present in Arabic travelogues, for example, Rifāʿa R. aṭ-ṬAHṬĀWĪ [14] said that the easiness of the French language explains the scientific and literary development of the French:

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من جملة ما يعين الفرنساويين على التقدم في العلوم والفنون سهولة لغتهم وسائر ما تكملها

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min ğumlati mā yuʿīnu al-fransāwiyyūn ʿalā 't-taqaddumi fī 'l-ʿulūmi wa-'l-funūn suhūlatu luġatihim wa-sāʾiri mā tukmilu-hā

What helps the French in literary and scientific development is the easiness of their language and all that perfect it. (aṭ-Ṭahṭāwī, in YĀRID 1992: 113)

Comparing Arabic with French, aṭ-Ṭahṭāwī found the French language easier. He explains that the French can easily read and understand without very much knowledge of grammar and rhetoric unlike the Arabic (YARED 1992: 113). However, the integration of European punctuation in the Arabic language is marked by the observations of Zaynab Fawwāz, Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭuwayrānī, and by the work of ʾAḥmad Zakī. In the next pages, we will explain the contribution of each.

2. Zaynab Fawwāz

The Lebanese writer Zaynab Fawwāz was the first to have discussed the importance of punctuation marks used in Europe and the need to include them in the Arabic language. She wrote about punctuation in a letter to the magazine *al-Fatā* in 1310/1893.[15]

Inspired by French punctuation, she suggested using punctuation in Arabic. Zaynab Fawwāz gave no name for punctuation, but introduced it as follows:

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فالفرنساويون إذا كتبوا جملة تظهر للقارئ بتشخيصها وإشاراتها الدقيقة وذلك بوضع علامات تدل على معان خفية لا تظهر من تركيب الحروف فقط ...

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fa-'l-faransāwiyyūn ʾiḏā katabū ğumlatan taẓharu li-l-qāriʾ bi-tašḫīṣi-hā wa-ʾišārāti-hā ad-daqīqa wa-ḏālika bi-waḍ ̔i ʿalāmātin tadullu ʿalā ma ̔ānin ḫafiyya lā taẓhar min tarkībi 'l-ḥurūfi faqaṭ

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14 Rifāʾa aṭ-Ṭahṭāwī (died in 1873) studied at *al-ʾAzhar*, and in 1826 he accompanied the Egyptian scholars to France as a "spiritual guide". He remained there until 1831 and wrote his observations on France in the book *Taḫlīṣ al-ʾibrīz fī talḫīṣ Bārīs* or "The Refinement of Gold: Abbreviated Paris" (published for the first time in 1834).

15 See her book *ar-Rasāʾil az-Zaynabiyya* (Letters of Zaynab) in which she gathered her letters and articles.

> The reader can easily understand the meaning of the French text for the
> French use of signs that add a hidden meaning incommunicable by words.
> (FAWWĀZ 2007: 105)

Fawwāz said that punctuation is used to understand the text more quickly, without having
to mentally rehearse phrases. Her focus on the "hidden meanings" of punctuation marks
probably comes from the fact that she is a literary person, therefore she saw those "hidden
meanings" as expressive of emotions, which is important to use in novels and plays to
create a connection with the reader. She cited the following marks (and created Arabic
equivalents for some of them):

1. The two points *(aṣ-ṣifrayn)* serve to explain a word or phrase.
2. The exclamation mark *(al-ʾalif wa-ṣifr)* is used to express surprise, disgust *(al-išmiʾzāz)* or the vocative *(an-nidāʾ).*
3. The question mark (she did not give a name to this sign) is placed at the end of a
   question.
4. Brackets *(al-qawsān)* are used to enclose a phrase that, if omitted, does not change
   the meaning.
5. Ellipsis *(ʾaṣfār at-taʿlīq)*: According to Fawwāz, they can be placed in the middle of
   a sentence to replace words that are understood within the context without the need
   to write them, or to replace inappropriate words such as swear words, but they can
   also be used at the end of a sentence when the rest of the phrase is understood
   within the context. Fawwāz also considers that "at the end of a sentence, the ellipsis
   calls the reader's astonishment" *(ibid.).*

In her letter, Zaynab Fawwāz said that some newspapers (She does not say the names of
the newspapers) already use punctuation,[16] but that the Arabic reader does not know their
meaning. She therefore called on experts to do research on the subject and to integrate
punctuation into Arabic. She considered the lack of punctuation as a deficiency in Arabic.
Fawwāz considered Arabic as richer and superior to European languages, but that the latter
are more developed than Arabic because of their use of punctuation. Punctuation should
therefore be used in Arabic writings to encourage the development of the language.

3. Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭuwayrānī

The letter of Zaynab Fawwāz was considered by Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭuwayrānī, founder and editor
of the Egyptian newspaper *an-Nīl*. The latter wrote a book on punctuation entitled *Kitāb
ḫaṭṭ al-ʾišārāt* (The book of putting signs, 1310/1893) and quoted the letter of Fawwāz in
his introduction. In his book, aṭ-Ṭuwayrānī tried to incorporate the concept of "punctuating
texts", but by inventing other signs with different features than signs of European
punctuation, in order to avoid borrowing from a foreign language.

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16 Fawwāz probably knew about punctuation from those newspapers because she never travelled to
   Europe.

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ولما كانت الدلالة عن هذه المعاني تهم الكاتب والقارئ والمستمع ولم تكن موجودة عندنا
وليس علينا أن نكتفي بمجرد الأخذ والتلقي بل لابد من التروي والتدبر في كيفية
الضروري منها وصور استعماله وما يلزم وليس معلوما عندنا أو ليس موضوعا له علامة
عندهم أو ما هو موجود لديهم وليس مما يلائمنا وكيف يصح أن نبحث عن مجموع هذه
العلامات وما هي الصور التي تناسب أن تكون علامة على حسب أشكال خطنا
وقابليته كما فعلنا بالأشكال الحسابية والهندسية وغيرها وأن نتحرى أبسط الصور التي
يسهل تعلمها وتعليمها وتداولها بين العموم منا وأن نتباعد بقدر الإمكان عن العلامات
المركبة أو ذات الصعوبة حتى لا تشق معرفتها على العامة.

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> These signs [sc. punctuation marks] refer to meanings that are important for
> the author, the reader and listener. They do not exist in our [Arabic]
> language, but it is not enough to use them as they are in the French language.
> We must know their need, necessity and functions and take what is necessary
> for us and what is appropriate to our language and then give them
> appropriate forms adapt to the Arabic language as we have done before with
> signs used in mathematics. We should also seek simplicity in forming signs
> corresponding to the Arabic language to avoid difficulties in understanding.
> (aṭ-ṬUWAYRĀNĪ 1893: 7)

Aṭ-Ṭuwayrānī associated punctuation, or as he called it *fann ḫaṭṭ al-ʾišārāt* (the art of
putting signs), to musical signs that guide the melody used in a musical score to guide the
musician (1893: 7-8). He tried to create Arabic signs in order to avoid borrowing them
from a foreign language, but his system of signs has not been used, probably because of
their large number and the similarity of some forms that made them difficult to remember.
He divided the signs into three parts according to the means of transmission of knowledge
(oral or written):

1. *ʾišārāt al-mafāhīm* or "signs of understanding" (54 signs): They serve to guide silent
   reading by segmenting sentences and expressing emotions such as surprise or
   questioning. These signs are the equivalent to European punctuation.
2. *ʾišārāt al-ʾaṣwāt* or "signs of tonality" (17 signs): They are used to guide the loud
   reading to a public. They indicate where the pause should be as well as when to
   speed or slow the reading.
3. *ʾišārāt al-ʾafʿāl* or "signs of movement" (14 characters): They are also used to guide
   loud reading and serve to control the body language of the reader.

Aṭ-Ṭuwayrānī gave no explanation, nor to the choice of forms of signs, nor to the choice of
their function (see the table in the appendix for those signs). The work of aṭ-Ṭuwayrānī
shows the mindset of the time by wanting to avoid foreign influence on Arabic in order to
keep its "purity" and it also reflects the contradiction between linguists on the subject of
borrowing from foreign languages. Meynet explains the mentality of the time regarding the
reform of the Arabic script:

It is that, facing the west, the Arabs want to assert their "national" personality. This seems to convince themselves first of the richness of their culture, their civilization and their language. This may seem paradoxical, because we know without doubt how the Arabs are proud of their past. (MEYNET 1971: 87)

Accepting to reform Arabic writing means accepting to change the bases, and to recognize that this instrument [meaning the Arabic language] is now inadequate, defective, and that the other [Europe], once again, is right. A reform of Arabic writing can only appear to be an imitation of the other, an acceptance of the principles of writing of the other [...]. Arabic language is somehow the last thing that is unique to Arabs; they are particularly attached to it. [Already] dispossessed by the other and by themselves of their right, invested and invaded by the sciences and technology of the other, by his art and forms of expression (novels, theater, cinema ...), they [the Arabs] refuse to violate their language. (MEYNET 1971: 88)

4. ʾAḥmad Zakī, an effort to modernize

Punctuation marks were more or less known in the Arabic language even before their official integration as part of Arabic by ʾAḥmad Zakī. In his book *at-Tarqīm wa-ʿalāmātu-hū fī ʾl-luġa al-ʿarabiyya*, ʾAḥmad Zakī gave the name *ʿAlāmāt at-tarqīm*[17] to punctuation marks and gave each punctuation mark the name we use today. Zakī explained in more detail the functions of each punctuation mark based on French punctuation rules and those of pause signs in the Qurʾān[18] (ZAKĪ 1912: 7). Before writing his book integrating punctuation marks into Arabic writing, he introduced punctuation in the introduction to his book *ad-Dunyā fī Bārīs* (Life in Paris) as signs used in European languages to indicate the different pauses and some emotions, he gave a brief introduction to the functions of each sign and he punctuated his book according to those functions. He predicted the possible opposition to using punctuation by conservative scholars:

وقد رأيت في التعبير على أسلوب جديد, قد لا يروق المتمسكين بقديم التقاليد, الغافلين بمناهجهم القديم العقيم، عما حدث في العالم من التقدم العظيم.

I used a new style of expression that will not be appreciated by those who cling to the old traditions of writing. In doing so, they ignore the development that took place in the other languages of the world. (ZAKĪ 1900: 1)

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17 *Tarqīm* is the name used today to refer to punctuation marks. Zakī chose the word *tarqīm* because this word refers to inscription symbols used in writing. For example, the word *raqam* (meaning "number") is derived from *tarqīm* and it refers to the symbols indicating numbers (ZAKĪ 1995: 13).

18 While Zakī said that he was inspired by the rules of pause signs in the Qurʾān, he does not explain how. Therefore, there are two hypotheses for this statement: either that pause signs are in fact punctuation marks used for the Qurʾān, or that this statement was made to avoid debates with conservative scholars who would object to punctuating Arabic texts with European signs.

Punctuation marks were not only introduced to guide silent reading (written transmission of knowledge), but also *tilāwa* or the reading aloud of a text (oral transmission of knowledge):

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ولقد أشار سعادة أحمد حشمت باشا بتدارك النقص الحاصل في تلاوة الكتابة العربيّة ؛ وطلب استنباط طريقة لوضع العلامات التي تساعد على فهم الكلام ، بفصل أجزائه بعضها عن بعض، ليتمكّن القارئ من تنويع صوته (...) واشترط (حفظه الله) أن يكون ذلك الاصطلاح بطريقة منطقيّة مضبوطة ، منطبقة على القواعد والأصول المقرّرة للوقف والابتداء ، في اللّغة العربيّة .

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> ʾAḥmad Ḥišmat Pasha[19] underlined the deficit in reading (aloud) of Arabic texts and asked to find a way to put signs helpful for understanding the text and the division of its parts, so that the reader may vary his tone while reading it [...]. He emphasised that the terms used for those signs must be logical and based on the rules of pausing used in Arabic [meaning in the Qurʾān]. (ZAKĪ 1912: 7)[20]

Zakī noticed that punctuation allows the French, at any age and regardless of their education, to read without hesitation, which was not the case with Arab people of the time who had to have enough grammatical knowledge to identify the beginning of a new sentence (ZAKĪ 1995: 5). He said that it was important to punctuate old Arabic manuscripts so that Arab people can easily read and understand them; this was also a way to preserve Arabic cultural heritage so that future generations would continue to easily read and study it.

The reason for the inclusion of punctuation in Arabic was first social, because of the Western colonization in the Arab world. Scholars of the period of the Renaissance feared that Arabic would no longer be used, and would be replaced by a European language (especially French). Punctuation would allow Arab people to read and understand the Arabic text as easily as French and that way, French would not overtake Arabic. ʾAḥmad Zakī expressed his fears and his vision of the importance of the use of punctuation:

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ولقد طالما فكر الغيورون على اللغة العربية، العاملون على تسهيل تناولها ، في تلافي هذا الخلل الفاضح ، وتدارك هذا النقص الواضح ، خصوصا بعد اندماج الأمم بعضها ببعض ، وشيوع اللغات الأجنبية في بلادنا ؛ فرأوا أن الوقت قد حان لإدخال نظام جديد في كتابتنا الحالية – مطبوعة أو مخطوطة – تسهيلا لتناول العلوم ، وضنّاً بالوقت

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19 Egyptian minister of education at the time, and responsible for the "revival of Arabic literature" (ʾiḥyāʾ al-ʾādāb al-ʿarabiyya). He was also responsible for printing old Arabic books, and he contributed to giving Arabic a more important place in education (ZAKĪ 1995: 10).

20 Zakī said that readers (qurrāʾ) changed the tone of their voice to ensure correct receipt of the message in a text (warning, preaching, etc.), but that there was no graphic representation for the different tones and pauses in secular Arabic texts. Because Arabs are already familiar with French punctuation, the latter can be used to refer to the different kinds of pauses (ZAKĪ 1995: 10).

الثمين أن يضيع هدرا بين تردد النظر وبين اشتغال الذهن في تفهم عبارات كان من أيسر
الأمور إدراك معانيها ، لو كانت تقاسيمها وأجزاءها مفصولة أو موصولة بعلامات تبين
أغراضها وتوضح مراميها .

> Those interested in the Arabic language and who want to facilitate the receipt
> of this language consider this lack [that is to say, no punctuation], especially
> that Foreign languages are widely used in the Arab world, so it is time to
> integrate a new system in our writing, handwritten or printed, to facilitate its
> receipt and so that readers would spend less time reading due to
> segmentation of sentences and texts. That way they can better understand the
> meaning of the text. (Zakī 1995: 6)

Zakī introduced ten punctuation marks: the comma, the semicolon, the period, the question
mark, the exclamation mark, the colon, the ellipsis, the dash, quotation marks and
parentheses. He divided those signs into two categories: pause signs (ʿalāmāt al-waqf) and
signs of intonation and purposes of speech (ʿalāmāt an-nabarāt aṣ-ṣawtiyya wa-tamyīz al-
ʾagrāḍ al-kalāmiyya). As examples, he punctuates Qurʾānic verses as well as phrases from
old Arabic books.

4.1. Pause signs (ʿalāmāt al-waqf)

In this category, Zakī was inspired by ancient Greek punctuation: the three points and
Aristophanes.[21] He used the terms that were already used to indicate the pauses in the
Qurʾān. The pause signs according to Zakī were the following:

1. *al-waqf an-nāqiṣ:* equivalent to the *sous-point* of Aristophanes, represented by the
   comma.
2. *al-waqf al-kāfī:* equivalent to the *point moyen* of Aristophanes, represented by the
   semicolon.
3. *al-waqf at-tāmm:* equivalent to the *point parfait* and represented by the period.

4.2. Signs of intonation and purposes of speech (ʿalāmāt an-nabarāt aṣ-ṣawtiyya wa-
tamyīz al-ʾagrāḍ al-kalāmiyya)

The signs of intonation are the question mark, exclamation mark and ellipsis, while signs of
purposes of speech are the quotation mark, colon, dash, and parentheses.

 ʾAḥmad Zakī cared to lay down general rules of punctuation marks, dividing them
according to their function into grammatical marks and intonation or expressive marks. He
also invented another punctuation mark specific to the Arabic language; this sign consists

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21 The three points are: the point in the top of the sentence to say that the sentence is complete *(point
parfait)*, the medial point *(point moyen)* to indicate that the sentence is grammatically complete, but
what follows is related in meaning, and the point in the bottom (*sous-point*) of the sentence to say that
the sentence is incomplete.

of a comma with two points below called شولة مثناة *šawla muṯannāt*. This sign was to be placed in a text with rhymes *(saǧʿ)*.

ʾAḥmad Zakī states that the purpose of punctuation does not only serve to control pauses in the text, but also to combine the ideas of the text in order to create a bond between the writer and the reader. Zakī says writers are free to use a sign rather than another, or not to use some, the overall goal is to respect their general rules of use (ZAKĪ 1995: 31).

The work of ʾAḥmad Zakī on punctuation has given general rules for writers at the time on how to punctuate their texts. This has improved the quality of printed Arabic books.[22] This however is different from the relationship between punctuation and printing in Europe: in Europe, typographers were the first to put treaties of modern punctuation in the 16th century, the most famous one was written by Etienne Dolet in Lyon. The main reason for generalizing rules of punctuation in Europe was the rise of printing. In the Arab world, punctuation was added about two centuries after the use of printing[23] and, as we saw in this paper, the main reason for adding punctuation was to protect Arabic from the spread of foreign languages, especially French, due to colonialism.

Conclusion

We can conclude that the integration of punctuation in Arabic has the following objectives:

1. To enable the Arab world to easily read new and old books. In other words, so that reading would be accessible and easy for everyone.
2. Faster reading without mental repetition of phrases to identify the beginning of new sentences.
3. Easier transfer for the writer's intentions and "emotions" that are either hardly expressed by words or to avoid lengthening in expressing them.

The integration of punctuation marks was an example of using linguistic reforms to serve social interests. This linguistic reform has changed the role of Arabic writing, making it a language of education. It has also participated in encouraging Arabs to read in their own language, especially since punctuation was integrated in the nineteenth century where the printed editions (that started in the seventeenth century but were not common) were competing with manuscript writing and where books were more "accessible" to a larger public.

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22 For more information about this subject, see AWAD 2013.

23 Although the printing started to overtake manuscripts in the nineteenth century, printing in the Arab world actually started around the seventeenth century.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix: Signs suggested by aṭ-Ṭuwayrānī

1. Signs of comprehension (*ʾišārāt al-mafāhīm*)

●	Sign for beginning or end of a subject *ʿalāmat ibtidāʾ al-mawḍūʿ*
● ●	Sign for beginning or end of content [24] *ʿalāmat ibtidāʾ al-maḍmūn*
● ●	Sign for beginning a phrase *ʿalāmat ibtidāʾ al-ǧumla*
● ● ● ●	Sign for resumption of speech *ʿalāmat istiʾnāf al-kalām*
● ● ●	Sign that links two topics together (put at the beginning of a paragraph to link it to the previous subject) *ʿalāmat taʿalluq mawḍūʿ bi-mā qabli-hī*
● ● ●	Sign that links two contents together *ʿalāmat taʿalluq maḍmūn bi-mā qabli-hi*
❘ ●	Sign that links two phrases together *ʿalāmat taʿalluq ǧumla bi-mā qabli-hā*
● ● ●	Sign to strengthen an idea *ʿalāmat aṯ-ṯubūt*

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24 The names of signs are translated as they appear in aṭ-Ṭuwayrānī's book. He does not explain what he means by *mawḍūʿ* (subject) and *maḍmūn*.
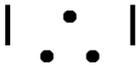
Sign	Description
O	Sign for showing interest in a subject *ʿalāmat al-ihtimām*
O•	Sign to 'meditate' over an idea *ʿalāmat at-taʾammul*
•O•	Sign that calls for verification of information *ʿalāmat intiẓār at-taḥqīq*
‖	Sign for doubt *ʿalāmat aš-šakk*
⫾⫾⫾	Sign to indicate a mistake *ʿalāmat al-ġalaṭ*
❘•❘	Sign for exaggeration *ʿalāmat al-mubālaġa*
•❘•	Sign for lack of reliability *ʿalāmat buʿd aṣ-ṣidq*
•‖	Sign for denial or disclaimer *ʿalāmat at-takḏīb*
( )	Sign for jurisdiction of note *ʿalāmat iḫtiṣāṣ al-mulāḥaẓa*
‖•	Sign for explication *ʿalāmat šarḥ muġmaḍ*
❘ ⦂	Sign for proof *ʿalāmat aš-šāhid*
⦂ ❘	Sign for digression *ʿalāmat al-istiṭrād*
∴ ❘	Sign for change of subject *ʿalāmat al-ḫurūǧ ʿan al-mawḍūʿ*
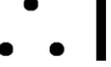
Sign	Description
) (	Sign for quotation ʿalāmat kalām al-ġayr
:)	Sign for representation ʿalāmat at-tamṯīl
/ ∴	Sign for change of subject or of content ʿalāmat al-intiqāl
//	Sign for result ʿalāmat intiẓār an-natīǧa
═	Sign for omission ʿalāmat haḏf al-maʿlūm
▬ •	Sign for supplements ʿalāmat al-mutammimāt
▬	Sign for equals (or for end of speech if put at the end of a text) ʿalāmat at-tasāwī
•▬•	Sign for preference ʿalāmat at-tarǧīḥ
I o I	Sign for (direct) questions ʿalāmat al-istifhām al-ḥaqīqī
o I o	Sign for question of denial ʿalāmat al-istifhām al-ʾinkārī
o•o	Sign for question of disapproval ʿalāmat al-istifhām al-istihǧānī
▪ ▪ ▪ ▪	Sign for question of exclusion ʿalāmat al-istifhām al-istibʿādī
o o	Sign for exclamation ʿalāmat at-taʿaǧǧub

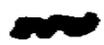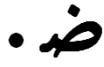| Sign	Description
)	Sign for vulnerability ʿalāmat at-taʾattur
))	Sign for approbation ʿalāmat al-istiḥsān
⁒	Sign for disapproval ʿalāmat al-istihǧān
—⁝	Sign for exposure ʿalāmat at-taʿrīḍ
(—	Sign for question ʿalāmat as-suʾāl
—)	Sign for response ʿalāmat al-ǧawāb
⁞ | ⁞	Sign for arbitration ʿalāmat at-taḥkīm
≡	Sign for control to impose the writer's thought ʿalāmat at-taḥakkum
| ⁖ |	Sign to encourage the reader's own thought ʿalāmat al-istiṭlāʿ
| | ∴	Sign for complaint ʿalāmat aš-šakwā
ح	Sign for weakness of an idea ʿalāmat aḍ-ḍuʿf
٣	Sign for mediation ʿalāmat at-tawassuṭ
ع	Sign for force or strength ʿalāmat al-quwwa

Symbol	Description
⸬	Sign for validation *ʿalāmat at-taṯabbut*
••O	Sign for tidings *ʿalāmat al-istibšār*
—•—	Sign for sadness *ʿalāmat al-ḥuzn*
///	Sign for threat *ʿalāmat at-tawaʿʿud*
• O ǀ	Sign for entreaty *ʿalāmat al-istiʿṭāf*
ǀ O •	Sign for surprise *ʿalāmat al-mufāǧaʾa*
• • •	Sign for repitition *ʿalāmat at-tikrār*

2.   Signs of tonality (*ʾišārāt al-ʾaṣwāt*)

Symbol	Description
)••	Sign for the usual voice *ʿalāmat aṣ-ṣawt al-muʿtād*
ǀ ∴ ǀ	Sign for speed in reading *ʿalāmat as-surʿa*
ǀ ⁝ ǀ	Sign for slow reading *ʿalāmat al-buṭʾ*
)))	Sign for repitition if tonality *ʿalāmat at-tardīd*
(((	Sign for a loud voice *ʿalāmat irtifāʿ aṣ-ṣawt*

Symbol	Description
▬ │	Sign for a low voice *ʿalāmat inḫifāḍ aṣ-ṣawt*
३	Sign for degradation of voice *ʿalāmat at-tadarruǧ*
٤ ३	Sign for recitation *ʿalāmat at-tartīl*
∨ ∧	Sign for chanting *ʿalāmat at-tarannum*
▬ •	Sign for pause *ʿalāmat al-waqf*
│ ▬ │	Sign for fulcrum *ʿalāmat al-irtikāz*
٢ ˙	Sign for a long pause *ʿalāmat as-sukūt aṭ-ṭawīl*
ڢ	Sign for precipitation in reading *ʿalāmat al-indifāʿ*
ﻟم •	Sign for a trembling voice *ʿalāmat ʾihtizāz aṣ-ṣawt*
• ﻟم	Sign for a breaking voice *ʿalāmat taqattuʿ aṣ-ṣawt*
• ٩	Sign for not pausing *ʿalāmat waṣl al-kalimāt*
م	Sign for a voice carrying emotion *ʿalāmat aṣ-ṣawt*

3. Signs of movement (i.e., body language) (ʾišārāt al-ʾafʿāl)

ل		Sign for action *ʿalāmat al-fiʿl*
لسـ		Sign for not moving *ʿalāmat as-sukūn*
⁓	∗	Sign for moving (* reproduced from unclear original) *ʿalāmat al-ḥaraka*
ضـ ٠		Sign for eye movement *ʿalāmat ḥarakat al-ʿuyūn*
٠ صـ		Sign for turning around *ʿalāmat al-iltifāt*
ـﻟ	∗	Sign for moving the head (* original, not clear) *ʿalāmat taḥrīk ar-raʾs*
ل		Sign for bending the head *ʿalāmat ʾiḥnāʾ ar-raʾs*
W		Sign for moving fingers *ʿalāmat ḥarakat al-ʾanāmil*
M		Sign for moving one or both hands[25] *ʿalāmat ḥarakat al-yad*
١ Λ ١		Sign for moving one or both arms *ʿalāmat ḥarakat aḏ-ḏirāʿ*
bb		Sign for inaction *ʿalāmat at-taqāʿus*

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25 The sign ٢ is put if both hands or arms are required.

	Sign for moving feet *ʿalāmat ḥarakat al-qadam*
	Sign for walking *ʿalāmat at-tamaššī*