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For Anna, Dilly, and Phoebe

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Chapter One: Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

Of all the Qur'ān's literary characteristics, perhaps its most distinctive is its stylistic diversity. Among its suras, or "chapters," there are vast disparities in verse length, rhyme, syntax, terminology, and topics of discourse. For over a century, Western scholars of the Qur'ān have attempted to classify the various modes of Qur'anic discourse and to understand how they operate alongside one another in forming a single corpus of literature, namely, the Qur'ān. While much has been written alluding to Qur'anic genre, these writings are often presented within introductory surveys, are devoid of any rigorous methodological framework, or focus only on Qur'anic formulae. Synthesizing existing conceptions of Qur'anic genre with genre theory, this dissertation establishes a literary framework for approaching Qur'anic genre based on the concept of "Qur'anic utterances": thematically and syntactically demarcated literary units by which genres are communicated. Chapter one opens with a survey of engagement with Qur'anic genre in the modern and classical traditions and establishes a novel methodological framework for approaching Qur'anic genre rooted in genre theory. Chapters two through five outline, catalogue, and analyze the four fundamental communicative genres of Qur'anic discourse: religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict. Chapter six examines the final two peripheral communicative genres of prayer and creed, and chapter seven concludes the study by looking forward to the ways in which the Qur'ān combines its six communicative genres to create longer and more complex composite genres. A comprehensive catalog of the occurrences of each Qur'anic communicative genre is included as an appendix.

A more nuanced understanding of Qur'anic genre engenders a fuller appreciation of the Qur'ān as literature and a new method of literary inquiry into both the textual history of the

Qur'ān and the evolving concerns, beliefs, and practices of the earliest Muslim community. Genre remains an understudied aspect of the Qur'anic literary character, but the usefulness of a genre-critical reading of the Qur'ān can hardly be overestimated. The literary structure of the Qur'ān has long been difficult for its Western audience to discern; in describing a first-time reader's perception of the Qur'ān's literary structure, Neal Robinson borrows the phrase "narrative anarchy."[1] But, what are the literary phenomena at the root of such a characterization? Do the Qur'ān and its component suras exist outside the genre classifications expected by or familiar to a Western readership? A fundamental goal of a genre-critical analysis of the Qur'ān is to recognize how the Qur'ān, as a singular piece of literature, exists as a complex interaction of generic forms, whether they be its suras, the smaller generic forms that compose those suras, or even later interpolations embedded in the text.[2]

Of great importance, too, are the potential benefits a genre-critical analysis of the Qur'ān has for the study of the Qur'ān's textual history and, indeed, the history of the earliest Muslim community. Beginning with the work of Gustav Weil and culminating in the publication of Theodor Nöldeke's *Geschichte des Qorāns,* the chronological reordering of the Qur'anic revelation in Western scholarship became an endeavor in which traditional Muslim accounts of the Qur'ān's revelation were considered alongside an analysis of the Qur'ān's literary features.[3]

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[1] Neal Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text* (London: SCM Press, 2003), 1.

[2] For an illustration of the usefulness of studies of individual Qur'anic genres, see: Devin J. Stewart, "The Mysterious Letters and Other Formal Features of the Qur'ān in Light of Greek and Babylonian Oracular Texts," in *New Perspectives on the Qur'ān: The Qur'ān in its Historical Context 2*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2011), 323-348; Devin J. Stewart, "Wansbrough, Bultmann, and the Theory of Variant Traditions in the Qurʾān," in *Qur'ānic Studies Today*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth and Michael Sells (London: Routledge, 2016), 17-51.

[3] Gustav Weil, *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in den Koran* (Bielefeld: Velhagen & Klasing, 1844); Nöldeke, Theodor, et al., *The History of the Qur'ān*, tr. Wolfgang H. Behn (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

These features, ranging from verse length, to end-rhyme, to terminology, helped Nöldeke and succeeding scholars produce a chronological narrative of Qur'anic revelation in which particular types of revelation are assigned to particular chronological periods. A recent study has challenged the efficacy of this regimentation, but a deeper discussion of this chronological framework is necessary to understand the importance of genre criticism in Qur'anic studies.[4]

Towards a Genre-Critical Chronology of the Qur'ān

Nöldeke's chronological arrangement of the Qur'ān according to changes in both theme and syntax functionally divides the Qur'ān into chronological periods on the basis of its changing employment of generic forms; the Meccan and Medinan periodizations are characterized by drastically different genre usage. There are two conceivable reasons for this outcome: either Nöldeke's organization of the Qur'anic revelation by means of theme and syntax represents a chronological development of Qur'anic style and a characteristic of this chronological development is the segmented use of genre *or* Nöldeke's organization of the revelation by means of theme and syntax actually organizes the Qur'ān by genre and this organization by genre has been treated as a chronological rendering of the material.[5]

The likelihood that this second explanation is accurate is supported by the very definition of a literary genre. The definition of literary genres as standardized forms of utterances characterized by particular thematic content, styles, and compositional structures provides a

[4] Adam Flowers, "Reconsidering Qur'anic Genre," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies 20,* no. 2 (2018): 19-46.

[5] Recent studies correlating changes in Qur'anic style (in particular, average verse length) to chronological development include: Nicolai Sinai, "Inner-Qur'anic Chronology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, ed. Muhammad Abdel Haleem and Mustafa Shah (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 346-361; Behnam Sadeghi, "The Chronology of the Qur'ān: A Stylometric Research Program," *Arabica* 58 (2011): 210–299. I have challenged this correlation in Adam Flowers, "The Computer and the Qur'ān: An Analysis and Appraisal," *in New Trends in Qur'anic Studies: Text, Context, and Interpretation*, ed. Mun'im Sirry (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2019), 125-148.

useful illustration of how any thematic and syntactic analysis of a multi-genred text will naturally separate genres of discourse into an ostensibly chronological reordering.[6] The conventions that govern individual genres can include form, style, and content, and all are primary considerations in Nöldeke's analysis of the Qur'ān text. Indeed, Emmanuelle Stefanidis has noted this multidimensional aspect of Nöldeke's analysis, characterizing it as both "a literary study of Qur'anic themes" and an attempt at "making the Qur'an a gradually stylistically evolving text."[7] In this way, Nöldeke uses the variables of both theme and syntax to construct a chronological ordering.

In texts of a single genre, changes in the variables of theme and syntax may very well correlate to the passage of time; at the very least, there is no obvious factor governing these variables outside chronological development. In texts exhibiting multiple genres of discourse, however, this additional factor is readily apparent: the conventions of the various genres themselves. Because individual genres exhibit peculiarities in form, style, and content, a multi-genred text will inherently display variations in these factors wholly independent of any chronological considerations. For example, two texts of different genres written at precisely the same time will display differences in form, style, and content solely because they adhere to different generic conventions. When a literary analysis of a multi-genred text organizes that text on the basis of changes in form, style, and content, it is likely that these changes correspond to inherent thematic and syntactic differences between genres, and, therefore, an organization of the text into distinct groups of genre, not chronological periods, is produced.

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[6] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," in *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*, tr. Vern W. McGee, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 60.

[7] Emmanuelle Stefanidis, "The Qur'ān Made Linear: A Study of the *Geschichte des Qorāns*' Chronological Reordering," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 10, no. 2 (2008): 4-5.

Indeed, Hartwig Hirschfeld, in his 1902 *New Researches Into The Composition And Exegesis Of The Qoran*, organized the Qur'anic revelation into a chronology explicitly connected to the changing employment of specific generic forms.[8] It is important to note that Hirschfeld's organization of Qur'anic chronology based on the Qur'ān's varying genres maps very closely onto Nöldeke's, further emphasizing the penchant of Nöldeke's chronology to organize the Qur'ān according to the literary genres it employs.

This is not to say, however, that chronological development does not affect the text. Rather, multi-genred texts like the Qur'ān contain two potential causes of literary variation: time and genre conventions. When approaching the chronological ordering of the Qur'anic revelation, then, the scholar faces a serious difficulty: how does she account for changes in form, style, and content potentially attributable to the separate sources of chronological development and varying genre conventions?

A chronology of the Qur'ān established by means of literary analysis must first define the genres of Qur'anic discourse, analyze these genres individually for thematic and syntactic development, and, finally, compare the internal developments of individual genres to each other to glean common developments. The first, and most crucial, step in this genre-critical analysis of the Qur'ān text is to divide the Qur'ān into its component genres. That is, the various types of Qur'anic genre must be defined, located within the text, and the Qur'ān's passages must be separated into groups of like genre. This is clearly a difficult task, as it requires precise definitions of each Qur'anic genre and an apparatus by which these genres can be distinguished within the text. Much has been written by Western scholars concerning the types of genre found

[8] Hartwig Hirschfeld, *New Researches Into The Composition and Exegesis of the Qoran* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1902).

in the Qur'ān; recent treatments include the works of Alfred-Louis de Prémare, Carl Ernst, Angelika Neuwirth, Neal Robinson, Karim Samji, and Nicolai Sinai.[9] Unfortunately, because what constitutes an individual genre is often fluid and up for debate, there is no unified theory of Qur'anic genre that can easily be applied to the text.

The problem of defining individual genres of Qur'anic discourse is further complicated by the relationship between genre and the sura. The diversity among the Qur'ān's 114 suras exacerbates this problem, as it appears that some suras exist as a single genre, others as compilations of multiple instances of a single genre, and others still as compilations of various types of genre. Because the relationship between genre and the sura varies across the Qur'anic corpus, it is necessary to attempt to separate each sura into its component generic forms. Unfortunately, such a process has not been attempted across the full Qur'ān text, and, therefore, a methodology for the division of the Qur'ān into its component generic forms does not appear to exist. The goal of the present study is to offer a novel structural analysis of the entire Qur'anic text that facilitates the division of the Qur'ān into utterances that, it will be argued, were the original means of communicating Qur'anic genre. The development of such a method of literary analysis that can separate individual examples of Qur'anic genre from the surrounding Qur'anic corpus is the fundamental task of a genre-critical approach to the chronology of the Qur'ān.

[9] See: Richard Bell, *Introduction to the Qur'ān*, rv. W. Montgomery Watt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970); de Prémare, Alfred-Louis, *Aux origines du Coran: questions d'hier, approaches d'aujourdhui* (Paris: Téraèdre, 2004); Angelika Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage*, tr. Samuel Wilder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019; Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an*; Carl W. Ernst, *How to Read the Qur'an: A New Guide with Select Translations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011); Karim Samji, *The Qur'ān: A Form-Critical History* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018); Nicolai Sinai, *The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

Once all individual instances of Qur'anic genre have been detected and removed from their immediate contexts, all instances of the same genre must be grouped together and analyzed. From here, each group can be subjected to the type of literary analysis employed in Nöldeke's *Geschichte des Qorāns*; changes in theme and syntax are charted across each genre. The reduction of the scope of the literary analysis to the level of the individual genre eliminates the variable of other genres altering the form, style, and content of the text. With this variable removed, it becomes likely that changes or patterns in a genre's theme or syntax correlate to a chronological development within the Qur'ān's usage of that genre. This analysis must be applied to each grouping of texts belonging to a distinct genre. Once completed, each type of Qur'anic genre will have been subjected to a thorough thematic and syntactic analysis and any developments will have been charted.

Finally, the results of the literary analyses of individual groupings of genres must be compared to each other. The goal of this third step of analysis is to detect common literary developments between discrete genres. These developments could be either thematic or syntactic, ranging from shared shifts in terminology to changes in verse length, but, no matter the phenomenon in question, the goal is to find patterns of usage across genres. If similar thematic or syntactic patterns are witnessed across genres, the genres displaying these patterns may be concluded to be developing across the same chronological period. It must be stressed that these common changes and patterns in the usage of theme and syntax across different genres are *relative changes*; the genres need not arrive at a parity of usage, but, rather, only display similar tendencies. The key feature of this comparative analysis is the efficacy of shared patterns across genres in demonstrating a chronological development. Chronological development *cannot*, however, be argued from *prima facie* differences between Qur'anic genres. That is, if two genres

display antithetical employments of theme or syntax, they cannot therefore be assumed to be chronologically distant. This is because, as stated previously, different genres abide by different conventions of form, style, and content. Examples of two different genres composed in the same chronological period may appear markedly different, but their differences may be attributed to differing generic conventions. If, however, two drastically different genres exhibit similar thematic or syntactic changes across their respective examples, a chronological argument can be made, as the only remaining explanation for stylistic patterns would be concurrent, chronological development.[10] The internal thematic and syntactic developments of individual genres should be compared with each other until a sequencing of Qur'anic revelation yielding a coherent and mutually compatible progression of genre usage is ascertained, i.e., a chronological progression.

The results of such a genre-critical approach to Qur'anic chronology will, hopefully, produce a more nuanced understanding of the chronological process of Qur'anic revelation in which different genres of discourse are being utilized and developed simultaneously and different genres are gaining or losing favorability over time. It is not expected that this approach to Qur'anic chronology will necessarily create a chronological organization of the Qur'ān

[10] The argument that similar stylistic and/or thematic changes across groups of different genres correspond to a chronological arrangement of the texts is, to the best of my knowledge, novel, but it is rooted in existing literary approaches to the derivation of relative chronology among texts of a single genre. In particular, Sadeghi's "The Chronology of the Qur'ān" has served as a springboard for this argument into Qur'anic studies. Sadeghi argues that if a sequence of Qur'anic revelations can be shown to demonstrate gradual or "smooth" stylistic change, this sequence represents a chronological organization of the revelation. Unfortunately, he does not account for varying generic conventions affecting the style of the text, a fact that I believe undermines the conclusions he draws from his analysis. If the variable of differing genre conventions is removed, however, gradual stylistic change in a given sequence of Qur'anic revelations likely corresponds to a chronological arrangement, as there is no other apparent impetus for the change. An analysis of Qur'anic genre, such as that which is suggested in this dissertation, divides the Qur'ān into its component generic forms and allows for this type of analysis to be effectively applied.

drastically different from that proposed by Nöldeke; while this is a possibility, the goal of a genre-critical analysis of the Qur'ān is to apply Nöldeke's literary analysis more effectively to a multi-genred Qur'ān text by reducing the potential variables of stylistic variation. Nonetheless, because Nöldeke's chronology has the propensity to divide the Qur'anic revelation into chronological periods characterized by specific genre usage, it is necessary to investigate whether this separation by genre is indeed a chronological phenomenon or whether Nöldeke's analysis inadvertently divides the Qur'ān on the basis of generic convention and not chronological development. This can only be achieved through an understanding of the various types of Qur'anic genre and the utilization of a literary approach to the Qur'ān in which its component generic forms are defined, internal generic developments are distinguished, and these developments are compared between genres.

For these reasons, I have replaced the traditional terminology of Meccan and Medinan "chronological periods" with Meccan and Medinan "literary corpora" in the remainder of this study. By retaining the general Meccan and Medinan categorizations of revelation but reframing them as groupings rooted in literary, in contrast to chronological, affinities, I recognize what Sinai calls the "covariance of stylistic, thematic, and terminological features" between Meccan and Medinan revelations while avoiding the pitfalls of the *prima facie* association of stylistic variation with chronological development.[11] While I do not expect this revised terminology to supplant the deeply entrenched chronological framing in academic discourse, I believe that shifting the Meccan and Medinan designations from chronological to literary classifications

[11] Sinai, "Inner-Qur'anic Chronology," 349.

bridges the gap between proponents of the efficacy of the chronological framing and those, such as Reynolds, who suggest abandoning the Meccan and Medinan classifications altogether.[12]

Survey of Western Scholarship on Qur'anic Genre

Before attempting to establish a literary framework for approaching Qur'anic genre, a survey of scholarly engagement with Qur'anic genre is in order. It begins with an overview of the Western academy's approach to genre in the Qur'ān and is followed by an investigation of the role of genre in early and classical Muslim exegesis of the Qur'ān. Until recently, discussions of Qur'anic genre in the Western academic tradition appeared primarily in introductory surveys of the Qur'ān. A consideration of the work of Richard Bell, Alfred-Louis de Prémare, Carl Ernst, Angelika Neuwirth, and Neal Robinson on Qur'anic genre demonstrates three essential factors to be considered when approaching genre in the Qur'ān: first, the large degree of variation in both form and content across the text; secondly, the relationship between form and content, on the one hand, and socio-religious function, on the other; and thirdly, the three distinct scopes of Qur'anic genre: the Qur'ān as a complete corpus, the sura, and the sura passage.[13]

While often agreeing in their classifications, the works of Western scholars note the high degree of variability of genre types throughout the Qur'ān. The works of the aforementioned scholars each generate between six and eight different categories of Qur'anic genre; this does not include potential subgenres within each of the main classifications.[14] In accordance with the

[12] Gabriel Said Reynolds, "Le problème de la chronologie du Coran," *Arabica* 58 (2011): 477–502.

[13] Bell, *Introduction*; de Prémare, *Aux origines*; Ernst, *How to Read*; Angelika Neuwirth, "Structural, linguistic, and literary features," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 97-113; Robinson, *Discovering*.

[14] It should be noted, however, that the term "genre" is seldom explicitly used in the texts, and, when it is, it is used haphazardly and without a theoretical or methodological framework. More

similarity in number of genre classifications, there are broad resemblances in the classifications themselves. For instance, each of these works remarks upon the Qur'ān's narrative, apocalyptic, polemic, and legislative literary forms. This relative congruity, however, masks a debilitating methodological problem characteristic of a field unacquainted with genre criticism: each study defines the stylistic characteristics of the Qur'ān's literary forms differently, with different studies privileging form, content, or function in their definitions of individual genres.

Secondly, the likelihood of the Qur'ān's largely oral composition, in conjunction with its documentation of the concerns, beliefs, and practices of a nascent religious community, imbues its component literary forms with corresponding socio-religious functions. Scholars have long argued for the Qur'ān's oral composition and, recently, Andrew Bannister has utilized an oral-formulaic analysis of the Qur'ān text to argue for such an oral composition on stylistic grounds.[15] It is clear, too, from the Qur'ān's abundant references to a believing community and directives towards proper conduct that the contents of the Qur'ān are intimately related to the experiences of an evolving religious movement. In this capacity, the literary genres of the Qur'ān are participating in the development of the community, as they are the means by which the revelatory message is delivered to an audience for consumption. Angelika Neuwirth's assessment of Qur'anic genre, for example, is grounded in her coupling of the literary structure of the sura with the ritual structure of religious practice; it may be helpful to characterize her analysis as defining the broader genre of the sura as "liturgy" with specific suras existing as sub-

commonly, terms with approximate meanings to "genre" are used, such as "register" in the work of Robinson.

[15] Andrew G. Bannister, *An Oral-Formulaic Study of the Qur'an* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2014).

genres of this classification.[16] Whether the genre of the sura is related to early Muslim liturgical practice or not, Neuwirth's coupling of text with social function is instructive. The arguments that the Qur'ān makes to its audience are couched in its multiple literary forms, and it is for this reason that the Qur'ān's literary genres must be seen as utilizing their formal and thematic characteristics in the service of a communal function.

Thirdly, a literary framework for approaching Qur'anic genre must account for three distinct scopes: the Qur'ān as a corpus, the sura, and the sura passage. The aforementioned scholars approach the Qur'ān's generic forms at the level of the sura passage; when scholars classify the Qur'ān's literary forms into narrative, apocalyptic, legislative, etc., they are usually referring to the generic forms that are combined to form the sura. The most neglected scope of Qur'anic genre in Western secondary literature, ironically, is that of the Qur'ān itself. Characterizations of the genre of the Qur'ān as a corpus are often relegated to the concluding remarks on the stylistic characteristics of the suras or sura passages, and only preliminary hypotheses are offered. The lack of serious discussion of the genre of the Qur'ān is unfortunate although not unexpected; because sura passages form suras and suras form the Qur'ān, an understanding of the generic form of the Qur'ān would entail an understanding of the generic forms of the sura passages and suras, respectively. In this way, the three scopes of Qur'anic genre are cumulative, and the absence of a comprehensive study of the genres of sura passages has stunted the study of the larger generic forms.

In recent years, however, Karim Samji and Devin Stewart have authored important contributions to the understanding of Qur'anic genre in the form of monographs and extended

[16] Angelika Neuwirth, "Some Remarks on the Special Linguistic and Literary Character of the Qur'ān," in *The Qur'an: Style and Contents*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 253-257.

articles.[17] Karim Samji's *The Qur'ān: A Form-Critical History* represents an important first step in systematically defining the types of literary forms used in the Qur'ān. Unlike the previously surveyed introductory texts, *Form-Critical History* is a monograph dedicated to the definition and explication of the Qur'ān's genres. Samji draws heavily upon form criticism as developed in Biblical studies as a framework to delineate five major Qur'anic genres: prayer, liturgy, wisdom, narrative, and proclamation. Samji accompanies an overview of each genre with a catalog of its characteristic formulae, the social settings in which it was used, and its subgenres. Samji provides an abundance of textual examples of each genre and, in doing so, has created an extensive reference useful to any scholar of the Qur'ān's literary form.

While an essential starting point for a serious understanding of genre in the Qur'ān, *Form-Critical History* is inhibited by several methodological shortcomings. Despite using Biblical form criticism as a basis, Samji's study does not have a comprehensive methodological underpinning for its definition of genre; that is, it considers the formal conventions and social settings of each surveyed genre, but it does not define the relationship between each genre and the act of communication. A consideration of how the Qur'ān communicates each of its component genres is essential because, as this study will argue, it does not communicate all genres in the same manner. Some Qur'anic genres, what this study calls "communicative" genres, exist as intentional units of communication complete with opening and closing boundaries representative of the beginning and ending of a speech act. This concept of communicative genres and the associated term of "utterance" will be further discussed below and

[17] Samji, *Form-Critical*; Devin J. Stewart, "Speech Genres and the Interpretation of the Qur'an," *Religions* 12, no. 529 (2021): 1-34; Devin J. Stewart, "Approaches to the Investigation of Speech Genres in the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 24, no. 1 (2022): 1-45.

are drawn from Mikhail Bakhtin's seminal work on speech genre theory.[18] Other Qur'anic genres are not the Qur'ān's intended modes of communication with its audience and are instead employed within larger communicative genres for a variety of rhetorical purposes. These genres are considered "embedded" genres because they exist within larger pieces of intentional communication and are discussed in more detail in chapter six. The inability of Samji's study to differentiate between communicative and embedded genres runs the risk of incorrectly presenting each of its surveyed genres as equally representative of Qur'anic speech.[19]

Another characteristic of Samji's analysis that should be examined is its focus on introductory formulae. Samji has done the field of Qur'anic studies a great service by cataloguing the wide variety of formulaic language found in the Qur'ān and associating these formulae with specific Qur'anic genres. This coupling of formulae with genres is helpful in identifying when a particular genre is occurring in the Qur'anic text; formulaic language, particularly at the beginnings or endings of suras or passages, can signal to the audience that a genre is being introduced or coming to an end. For a text like the Qur'ān that does not exhibit explicit divisions at the level of the sura passage, the formulae catalogued in Samji's study provide useful means to identify changes in genre that occur throughout an extended text.

These formulae, however, are only small parts of the literary construction of a genre. While formulaic language may be helpful in determining a genre's beginning or end, it is not necessarily useful for characterizing a genre's broader thematic, syntactic, or rhetorical features. Introductory formulae, for example, are helpful in an analysis of genre insofar as they signal the beginning of the larger generic form that can then be analyzed as a complex construction of

[18] Bakthin, "Speech Genres."
[19] As will be noted in chapter six, this difference between communicative and embedded genres is particularly relevant to Samji's chapter on prayer.

thematic, syntactic, and rhetorical conventions. A genre-critical analysis of the Qur'ān, then, must recognize the importance of Qur'anic formulae in accounting for the boundaries of a specific genre while not neglecting its internal structures, arguments, and rhetorical features. An example of the dangers of an overreliance on formulaic language in an analysis of Qur'anic genre is presented in "Chapter Three: Exhortation."

In addition to Samji's *Form-Critical History,* Devin Stewart has written two recent articles that summarize the use of genre criticism in Qur'anic studies and suggest paths forward for its continued application.[20] Unlike Samji's study, Stewart's articles do not attempt to define and catalogue the Qur'ān's genres. Rather, Stewart proposes several critical inclusions in a genre-critical study of the Qur'ān: a rigorous methodology rooted in form criticism and speech genre theory, a comprehensive catalog of the Qur'ān's genres, and genre labels that consider both intra-Qur'anic meta-references and relevant non-Qur'anic generic forms. Additionally, Stewart includes case studies that demonstrate how a fuller understanding of Qur'anic genre can be an effective interpretative tool for enigmatic terms, verses, and passages.

A survey of Western scholarship on Qur'anic genre emphasizes the large degree of variation in form and content across the Qur'ān, the relationship between genre and social context in the Qur'anic milieu, and the multiple scopes at which Qur'anic genre operates. Karim Samji's detailed study more fully explicated the Qur'ān's genres of prayer, liturgy, wisdom, narrative, and proclamation and their associated formulae and social settings. Finally, Devin Stewart has laid the foundation for the comprehensive application of a genre-critical analysis to the Qur'ān. While Western scholarship has contributed to a broad understanding of Qur'anic

[20] Devin J. Stewart, "Speech Genres and the Interpretation of the Qur'an," *Religions* 12, no. 529 (2021): 1-34; Devin J. Stewart, "Approaches to the Investigation of Speech Genres in the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 24, no. 1 (2022): 1-45.

genre and, in more recent years, approached its study head on, the classical Muslim intellectual tradition was itself very much concerned with the Qur'ān's component literary forms, a topic to which we now turn.

Qur'anic Genre in Classical Muslim Scholarship

Despite not having the technical vocabulary of modern genre studies, classical Muslim scholars indeed actively investigated the Qur'ān's various genre forms. In fact, discussions of genre in the Qur'ān were fundamental to a wide variety of *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* traditions including the subgenre of Qur'ān commentary called *i'jāz al-qur'ān*, debates surrounding the Qur'ān's seven *aḥruf* "modes" of revelation, and even in the exegetical methods of interpreters like al-Zamakhsharī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.

The exegetical genre most concerned with the Qur'ān's distinct literary form is *i'jāz al-qur'ān*. By the time of al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013 CE/403 AH), to whom we shall turn shortly, the term *i'jāz al-qur'ān* came to refer to the inimitability of the Qur'ān's rhetorical style.[21] The exegetical genre of *i'jāz al-qur'ān* was fundamentally concerned with establishing the Qur'ān's distinctiveness from other literary forms with particular reference to the Qur'ān's unique style and rhetoric. This interest in the Qur'ān's relation to other, primarily Arabic, literary forms stems from the Qur'ān itself; the Qur'ān recounts and responds to charges that it is the speech of a poet (*shā'ir*) or soothsayer (*kāhin*) and challenges its opponents to produce the like of one of its suras. In this sense, from the time of the Qur'ān's revelation, its audience viewed its form and contents vis-à-vis competing literary traditions.

[21] Issa J. Boullata, "The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qur'ān: *i'jāz* and Related Topics," in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 141.

Classical Muslim scholars created a detailed framework for this comparative analysis in the exegetical genre of *i'jāz al-qur'ān* and, in the process, employed the techniques of genre criticism. Writing in the late-10th-/early-11th-centuries CE, al-Bāqillānī was an important figure in the development of the *i'jāz al-qur'ān* genre, writing one of the earliest comprehensive surveys of the subject.[22] In his *I'jāz al-Qur'ān,* al-Bāqillānī summarizes the three aspects (*wujūh*) of the Qur'ān's miraculous nature: the Qur'ān's foretelling of future events, the Prophet's illiteracy, and the Qur'ān's unique literary composition.[23] For the purposes of understanding al-Bāqillānī's engagement with Qur'anic genre, it is necessary to explore this third aspect further.

For al-Bāqillānī, the fundamental literary concept in understanding the Qur'ān's inimitability is *badī' ta'līfihi* "its singular literary composition." [24] This unique structure is not the product of the Qur'ān's employment of literary forms unknown to its audience; rather, al-Bāqillānī argues, it is a product of the Qur'ān's unique incorporation of a variety of familiar generic forms into a superlative literary whole. Among the genres the forms of which are recognizable in the Qur'ān are: *qiṣaṣ* "narratives," *mawā'iẓ* "exhortations," and *aḥkām* "legal regulations."[25] The Qur'ān is not reducible to these component forms, however. In describing *naẓm al-qur'ān* "the composition of the Qur'ān," al-Bāqillānī declares, *wajadnā jamī'a mā yataṣarrafu fīhi min al-wujūhi allatī qaddamnā dhikrahā 'alā ḥaddin wāḥidin fī ḥusni al-naẓmi* "we find all of what is employed from among the manners [of speech] that we previously mentioned in a single, beautiful composition."[26] In this way, al-Bāqillānī recognizes the multi-generic character of the Qur'ān while affirming the Qur'ān as a singular piece of literature.

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[22] Ibid., 144; al-Bāqillānī. *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1954.
[23] al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz*, 33-35.
[24] Ibid., 36.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid., 37.

For al-Bāqillānī, the Qur'ān is greater than the sum of its generic parts; his recognition of the Qur'ān's unique combination of a variety of literary forms is essential in differentiating the Qur'ān from those literary forms. In order to bolster his claim of the Qur'ān's unique literary construction, al-Bāqillānī presents Qur'anic speech alongside the speech of the Prophet and early companions and challenges his readers to recognize their structural differences. Al-Bāqillānī states, *qad nasaskhtu laka jumalan min kalāmi al-ṣadri al-awwali wa-muḥāwarātihim wa-khuṭabihim* "I have transcribed for you samples of the speech of the First Generation and their conversations and orations" in order that *fa-sayaqa'u laka al-faṣlu bayna kalāmi al-nāsi wa-bayna kalāmi rabbi al-'ālamīna* "will occur to you the distinction between the speech of man and the speech of the Lord of the Worlds."[27] Al-Bāqillānī includes the orations, letters, and treaties of the Prophet and his companions for the express purpose of demonstrating to his readers that, despite any formal similarities, the Qur'ān is distinct in its literary form from the literary forms used by humankind at the time of its revelation. This process of comparative formal analysis is a fundamental argumentative strategy in al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz al-Qur'ān* and is equally at home in the form and genre criticism employed by modern scholars.

Elements of form and genre criticism were not confined to exegetical genres like *i'jāz al-qur'ān* dedicated to an explication of the Qur'ān's unique literary character. As has been noted by previous scholars, the *tafsīr* work *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān* by the exegete al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) preserves early scholarly debates concerning the meaning of the Qur'ān's seven *aḥruf* "modes" and their relation to the Qur'ān's varied literary forms.[28] In his discussion of the *ḥadith* that *nazala al-qur'ānu 'alā sab'ati aḥrufin* "the Qur'ān was revealed according to

[27] Ibid., 153-154.
[28] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1955); Stewart, "Interpretation," 3; Samji, *Form-Critical*, 270.

seven modes," al-Ṭabarī responds to an argument, to which he does not subscribe, that the "seven modes" refer to the seven literary types of *amr* "command," *zajr* "prohibition," *targhīb* "promise," *tarhīb* "threat," *qaṣaṣ* "narrative," *mathal* "parable," and *naḥwa dhālika min al-aqwāli* "similar types of speech."[29] Despite al-Ṭabarī's disagreement with this interpretation, it is clear that an understanding of the Qur'ān as a multi-generic text existed from an early period.

Later in *al-Bayān*, too, al-Ṭabarī compares the Qur'ān to previous scriptures vis-à-vis their inclusion, or lack thereof, of multiple genres of discourse. What differentiates the Qur'ān from previous scriptures, according to al-Ṭabarī, is both that the Qur'ān exhibits a wide variety of literary forms *and* some of its forms are legal in nature. He argues:

> *mā nazala min kutubi allāhi ʿalā man anzalahu min anbiyāʾihi khāliyan min al-ḥudūdi wa-l-aḥkāmi wa-l-ḥalāli wa-l-ḥarām ka-zubūri dāwūda alladhī innamā huwa tadhkīrun wa-mawāʿiẓu wa-injīlu ʿīsā allādhī huwa tamjīdun wa-maḥāmidu wa-ḥaḍḍun ʿalā al-ṣafḥi wa-l-iʿrāḍi dūna ghayrihā min al-aḥkāmi wa-l-sharāʾiʿi wa-mā ashbaha dhālika min al-kutubi allatī nazalat bi-baʿḍi al-maʿānī al-sabʿati allatī yaḥwā jamīʿahā kitābunā alladhī khaṣṣa allāhu bihi nabiyyanā muḥammadan ṣallā allāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam wa-ummatahu*
> "What was [previously] revealed of the scriptures of God to his prophets was without divine ordinances, legal regulations, authorizations, and prohibitions, such as the Psalms of David that are only reminders and exhortations, and the Gospel of Jesus that is glorification, praise, and prompts toward magnanimity without any legal regulations or laws, and what resembles those scriptures that were revealed in one of the seven meanings, all of which are contained in our Scripture that was bestowed upon our Prophet Muhammad and his community."[30]

For al-Ṭabarī, the Qur'ān is formally distinct from previous Judeo-Christian scriptures on three accounts: first, scriptures that were revealed prior to the Qur'ān were revealed in only one of the seven *maʿānī* "meanings" of revelation, second, the Qur'ān was revealed in all seven "meanings," and, third, unlike previous scriptures, the Qur'ān contains legal genres of

[29] al-Ṭabarī, *al-Bayān*, 47.
[30] Ibid., 71.

discourse.[31] The Qur'ān, while still an example of scripture (*kitāb*), displays a different literary form than other scriptures, both in its diversity of component literary forms and in its distinct inclusion of legal literary forms. In these ways, al-Ṭabarī uses comparative formal analysis to establish an overall understanding of Qur'anic genre as multi-faceted and uniquely legal.

Genre-critical approaches to the Qur'ān are not only found in discussions of the Qur'ān as a complete text; another way to uncover genre-critical methods in classical Muslim exegetical literature is to analyze its interpretation of Q. 36:69. The Qur'ān's self-referentiality has long been an object of scholarly examination, and Q. 36:69 is characteristic of this Qur'anic feature: *wa-mā 'allamnāhu al-shi'ra wa-mā yanbaghī lahu in huwa illā dhikrun wa-qur'ānun mubīn* "And We have not taught him poetry, nor is it befitting for him. It is nothing but a reminder and a clear recitation."[32] This verse establishes three basic arguments with which interpreters engaged: God did not teach the Prophet Muhammad poetry, poetry is not "befitting" for the Prophet Muhammad, and the Qur'ān, therefore, is not poetry. Because of the verse's emphasis on the distinction between Qur'anic revelation and poetry, interpreters used its exegesis as an opportunity to expound a variety of arguments about the Qur'ān's literary form.

Al-Zamakhsharī (d. 547/1143), for example, uses a comparative process of literary analysis rooted in form criticism to prove that the Qur'ān is not poetry. Using a series of rhetorical questions, al-Zamakhsharī challenges the reader to find any evidence of poetry in the Qur'ān:

> *al-qur'āna laysa bi-shi'rin wa-mā huwa min al-shi'ri fī shay'in wa-ayna huwa 'an al-shi'ri wa-l-shi'ru innamā huwa kalāmun mawzūnun muqaffan yadullu 'alā ma'nā fa-ayna al-waznu wa-ayna al-taqfiyatu wa-ayna al-ma'ānī allatī yantaḥīhā*

[31] It appears that al-Ṭabarī is using the term *ma'ānī* "meanings" as a synonym for the previously discussed *aḥruf* "modes."
[32] This, and all future translations of the Qur'ān, are based on Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall's translation of the Qur'ān with my own revisions when deemed necessary.

> *al-shu'arā'u 'an ma'ānīhi wa-ayna naẓmu kalāmihim min naẓmihi wa-asālībihi fa-idhan lā munāsabatun baynahu wa-bayna al-shi'ri idhā ḥaqqaqta*
> "The Qur'ān is not poetry, nor does it contain any poetry. Where is the poetry? Poetry is metered and rhymed speech that points to a meaning, so where is the meter [in the Qur'ān]? Where is the rhyme? Where is the meaning from which the poets turn? And where is the composition of their speech among its composition and style? Therefore, it is not appropriate [to compare] between it [the Qur'ān] and between poetry."[33]

When considering these rhetorical questions as a single framework of formal analysis, it is possible to reconstruct al-Zamakhsharī's form-critical methodology. Al-Zamakhsarī considers meter (*wazn*), rhyme (*taqfiyah*), meaning (*ma'ānī*), composition (*naẓm*), and style (*asālīb*) as the primary formal conventions of poetry; that is, they are fundamental for determining whether speech should be considered poetry or not. While he argues that the Qur'ān displays none of these five poetic conventions, and, therefore, should not be considered to be poetry, his analysis begs the question of how many of these five conventions must speech exhibit to be considered poetry? Wherever the line is drawn, al-Zamakhsharī considers the genre of poetry as a critical mass of these five formal conventions. In refuting the Qur'ān's similarities to poetry, he demonstrates a clear understanding of the formal differences between genres.

Al-Rāzī's interpretation of Q. 36:39 takes al-Zamakhsharī's discussion of literary genre further, considering the speaker and her intentions alongside the formal and thematic conventions of a genre. In describing poetry, al-Rāzī states, *al-shi'ru huwa al-kalāmu al-mawzūnu alladhī qaṣada ilā waznihi qaṣdan awwaliyyan wa-ammā man yaqṣidu al-ma'nā fa-yaṣduru mawzūnan muqaffan fa-lā yakūnu shā'iran* "poetry is metered speech that aspires to its meter first-and-foremost. As for him who aspires to meaning and turns away from meter and rhyme, he is not a poet!"[34] For al-Rāzī, the determining factor for speech's genre designation is

[33] al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf* (Beirut: Dar al-Marefah, 2009), 899.
[34] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī*, v. 26 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1981), 105.

the speaker's intentions behind employing specific formal or thematic conventions, *not the formal or thematic conventions themselves*! Al-Rāzī introduces the concept of *qaṣd* "aspiration" or "intention" into the discussion of literary form. For speech to be considered "poetry" and not merely "poetic," its speaker's primary goal must be its adherence to a specific metrical form (*qaṣada ilā waznihi qaṣdan awwaliyyan*); that the speech happens to exhibit a poetic meter (*wazn*) does not in and of itself designate a text as poetry.

Al-Rāzī proceeds to apply this concept of literary genre to the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'ān. After quoting two lines of, ostensibly, poetry attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, al-Rāzī argues:

> *naqūlu dhālika laysa bi-shi'rin li-'adami qaṣdihi ilā al-wazni wa-l-qāfīyati wa-'alā hādhā law ṣadara min al-nabī ṣallā allāhu 'alayhi wa-sallam kalāmun kathīrun mawzūnun muqaffan lā yakūnu shi'ran li-'adami qaṣdihi al-lafẓi qaṣdan awwaliyyan wa-yu'ayyidu mā dhakarnā annaka idhā tatabba'ta kalāma al-nāsi fī al-aswāqi tajidu fīhi mā yakūn mawzūnan wāqi'an fī baḥrin min buḥūri al-shi'ri wa-lā yusammā al-mutakallimu bihi shā'iran wa-lā al-kalāmu shi'ran li-faqdi al-qaṣdi ilā al-lafẓi awwalan*
> "We say that that [those two verses] is not poetry because of the absence of his [the Prophet Muhammad's] aspiration towards meter and rhyme. In spite of this, had much metered and rhymed speech come forth from the Prophet Muhammad, it would [still] not be poetry because the absence of his aspiration toward phonetic expression as the primary aspiration! And, that which supports what we've mentioned is that if you consider the speech of people in the streets, you will find in it that which is metered and occurs in one of the poetic meters, but the speaker is not called 'a poet' nor the speech 'poetry' because an aspiration towards its phonetic expression is absent in the first place."[35]

According to al-Rāzī, the Prophet Muhammad is incapable of being a poet and, by extension, of producing poetry because the primary aim of his speech was not its adherence to meter and rhyme. The genre form of the Prophet Muhammad's speech is a function of his intentions as a speaker, not his speech's resemblance to a specific literary form. In this way, the Qur'ān, as

[35] Ibid.

speech proclaimed by the Prophet Muhammad, cannot be considered poetry, because the Prophet did not intend for it to be poetry, despite any formal or thematic similarities the two genres might share. For al-Rāzī, the intention of the speaker is the fundamental criterion for determining speech's genre designation, not its form or content.

Attention to the genres of Qur'anic discourse was a fundamental, if often implicit, characteristic of classical Muslim exegesis of the Qur'ān. It is not unreasonable to consider classical Muslim examinations of Qur'anic genre commensurate with, and sometimes surpassing, modern Western analyses; despite not attempting to produce comprehensive inventories of Qur'anic genre, classical Muslim scholars like al-Ṭabarī, al-Bāqillānī, al-Zamakhsharī, and al-Rāzī, among many others, carefully consider the various literary forms witnessed in the Qur'ān and their relationships to non-Qur'anic literature like poetry. Now that we have briefly surveyed the study of Qur'anic genre in modern and classical scholarship, we turn to an overview of genre theory to glean any insights and frameworks that might be fruitfully applied to the Qur'ān.

Contributions from Genre Theory

Scholars agree that Qur'anic genre cannot be spoken of as a monolithic concept, whether in terms of its form, content, and socio-religious functions, or in its scope. Unfortunately, Qur'anic studies currently lacks an appropriate literary framework for understanding Qur'anic genre; beyond Karim Samji's recent study, scholars have not attempted to understand the literary forms throughout the entire Qur'ān in any systematic fashion, and this has resulted in terminological and methodological dissonance.

In order to develop a methodological framework for approaching genre in the Qur'ān, it is necessary to review relevant conceptions of genre developed in the field of genre studies. The two influential works surveyed here, "The Problem of Speech Genres" by Mikhail Bakhtin and

"Genre as Social Action" by Carolyn R. Miller, provide the basis for understanding both the literary construction of genre and the relationship between genre and lived situations.[36] An initial appeal to the work of Bakhtin will establish the foundational role of the utterance in communication and its literary construction as a speech genre; reference to Miller's work will then establish that genre forms reflect recurrent social situations. Ultimately, the analytical framework of identifying an utterance, analyzing its generic conventions, and associating specific genre constructions with specific social circumstances will undergird this study's proposed analysis of Qur'anic genre.

According to Bakhtin, all communication, oral or written, occurs in the form of an utterance with distinct formal boundaries. The utterance is the foundational unit of communication; anything that is communicated by a speaker is cast in the form of an utterance. Accordingly, utterances may display drastically different forms, but, Bakhtin argues, "[r]egardless of how varied utterances may be in terms of their length, their content, and their compositional structure, they have common structural features as units of speech communication and, above all, quite clear-cut boundaries."[37] The boundaries of the utterance are, quite simply, the beginning and ending of speech. Bakhtin conceives of the utterance as being bounded by a "change of speaking subjects"; that is, an utterance begins when a speaker initiates communication, and an utterance ends when a speaker completes communication.[38] The completion of an utterance can be recognized by an audience through various means, but the most pertinent to our study, and most exhaustively analysed by Bakhtin, are "[t]ypical

[36] Bakhtin, "Speech Genres"; Carolyn R. Miller, "Genre As Social Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70, no. 2 (1984), 151–167.
[37] Bakhtin, "Speech Genres," 71.
[38] Ibid.

compositional and generic forms of finalisation."[39] The audience recognizes the completion of an utterance precisely because they recognize the specific generic form of the utterance and, accordingly, recognize the typical fashion in which the generic form ends.

Indeed, while the utterance is the means of communication, a realized utterance must take the form of a particular speech genre. The utterance is a useful conceptual tool for understanding the act of communication, but Bakhtin makes clear that, "[w]e speak only in definite speech genres, that is, all utterances have definite and relatively stable typical *forms of construction of the whole*."[40] Because an utterance always takes the form of a particular speech genre, any formal analysis of communication is necessarily a formal analysis of the generic conventions it employs. Speech genres, as the forms taken by all utterances, are the means by which the wide variety of human activity is communicated.

Speech genres, as defined by Bakhtin, are standardized forms of utterances characterized by particular thematic content, styles, and compositional structures. Different speech genres are characterized by different thematic and formal features and are differentiated from each other on these grounds. Bakhtin enumerates the three defining features of speech genres as "thematic content, style, and compositional structure," and goes on to say that the particular combination of these three variables in each speech genre is determined "by the specific nature of the particular sphere of communication."[41] Spheres of communication are infinitely variable, ranging from all manner of intimate conversations to public proclamations, but as certain spheres are encountered repeatedly, "each sphere in which language is used develops its own *relatively stable types* of these utterances. These we may call *speech genres*."[42] Speech genres are standardized forms of

[39] Ibid., 77.
[40] Ibid., 78.
[41] Ibid., 60.
[42] Ibid.

communication that develop in response to recurrent social situations; just as the types of social situations encountered in everyday life are continually evolving, so too are the associated speech genres.

According to Bakhtin, there are two broad types of speech genre: primary and secondary. Although only vaguely defined, primary speech genres consist of simple forms of "unmediated speech communion" in which a single speech genre is employed.[43] Examples of primary speech genres include "the rejoinder in dialogue, everyday stories, letters, diaries, minutes, and so forth."[44] These are to be contrasted with Bakhtin's examples of secondary genres: "novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary."[45] The fundamental difference between primary and secondary speech genres is that secondary speech genres contain within them multiple primary speech genres. That is, secondary speech genres are complex utterances that combine primary speech genres together in order to create a single, organized whole. Bakhtin describes secondary speech genres as follows: "During the process of their formation, they absorb and digest various primary (simple) genres that haven taken form in unmediated speech communion. These primary genres are altered and assume a special character when they enter into complex ones."[46] For Bakhtin, the most important example of a secondary speech genre is that of the novel; he gives the example of a novel containing multiple instances of everyday dialogue or letters.[47] On their own, each piece of dialogue or each letter constitutes its own primary speech genre, but when they are combined together within a novel, they lose their individuality and become smaller parts of the larger literary construction of the novel. In

[43] Ibid., 62.
[44] Ibid., 98.
[45] Ibid., 62.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

context of the Qur'an's literary structure, it will be argued that the Qur'ān exhibits similar generic forms to these primary and secondary genres, what I call "communicative" and "composite" genres, respectively.

Finally, Bakhtin argues that an analysis of changes in the thematic content, styles, and compositional structures of speech genres is an important tool in the study of the historical circumstances that produced the speech genres. Bakhtin's discussion of the relationship between the speaker and the addressee of an utterance is particularly illuminating with regard to the capacity of speech genres to reflect social circumstances. He argues that:[48]

> Under the conditions of a class structure and especially an aristocratic class structure, one observes an extreme differentiation of speech genres and styles, depending on the title, class, rank, wealth, social importance, and age of the addressee and the relative position of the speaker (or writer).

Each speech genre consists of specific literary conventions that correspond to the social needs of certain situations; for example, the mode of address, formality of language, and topic of discourse may all depend upon the comparative social standings of the speaker and her audience. Bakhtin is primarily concerned, however, with the formal characteristics of speech genres, and it is not until Carolyn R. Miller's "Genre as Social Action" that the relationship between genre and the historical circumstances of its development and employment was more fully explored.

Miller's fundamental argument is that specific genres of discourse are reflective of recurrent social situations. Miller characterizes specific genres as developing their literary forms in direct response to specific circumstances.[49] At an initial stage, a speaker communicates a response to a lived situation. But, as this type of situation recurs in a society, so too does the type of utterance used in response to it. When a specific type of utterance is utilized repeatedly in

[48] Ibid., 96.
[49] Miller, "Social Action," 152.

response to a recurrent situation, it becomes a standardized response to that situation; it becomes a genre of discourse. Genres are typified responses to specific social situations, and their thematic content, style, and compositional structures reflect the situation to which they are responding.

Miller further reinforces the connection between genre and social circumstance, arguing that, "the number of genres current in any society is indeterminate and depends upon the complexity and diversity of the society."[50] This relationship between genres and social situations offers a powerful tool for the historian; an analysis of the different types of genres employed by a society informs the historian both of the types of recurrent situations encountered in that society and of the authors' perceptions of those situations. In discussing the scholarly application of genre criticism, Miller suggests:[51]

> Studying the typical uses of rhetoric, and the forms that it takes in those uses, tells us less about the art of individual rhetors or excellence of particular texts than it does about the character of a culture or an historical period.

In this way, classifying and analyzing genre usage in a particular period of history provides an alternate method of historical inquiry into the social practices of that period.

Accordingly, because generic forms are tied to recurrent situations, changes in generic forms may correspond to changes in the character of those recurrent situations and/or the author's perception of those recurrent situations. Analyzing a single example of a specific generic form, such as a single eulogy, may allow the historian to glean a limited amount of information about the practice of lauding the deceased at the time of the eulogy's production. Greater historical and literary insights, however, come from the comparison of all generic forms of the same kind in a certain historical period; this comparative analysis produces a fuller

[50] Ibid., 163.
[51] Ibid., 158.

understanding of the genre and the social practices it reflects and, importantly, allows for an analysis of generic development across time. Because the thematic content, style, and compositional structure of genres form in response to specific social situations, any changes in the form of a genre may indicate changes in the social situation it reflects or changes in the speaker's perception of the situation. By extension, when the chronological sequence of a group of texts is unknown, recognition of a development in the generic forms of the texts may suggest a plausible chronological ordering. The comparison of frequency of genre usage between different genres may be instructive, too; for example, if forms of legal genres are used only scantily in an historical period and then suddenly become widespread in a subsequent period, it may be argued that a change in the historical circumstances has occurred that facilitates the production of legal genres in the latter period.

As Bakhtin and Miller have demonstrated, all communication is produced in bounded utterances, and these utterances must take the form of a speech genre. Speech genres are standardized types of utterances that exhibit particular thematic content, styles, and compositional structures. Genre forms reflect specific social situations, and they can be utilized to analyze the historical circumstances of their production. This framework for understanding genre can be fruitfully applied to the text of the Qur'ān, but the peculiarities of the Qur'ān text (namely its variety in types of discourse, differences in verse and sura length, and a lack of clear boundaries between textual units within suras) necessitate further discussion of precisely how the varying genres of Qur'anic discourse can be defined, delineated, and extracted from the larger Qur'anic text.[52]

[52] For an overview of the use of genre criticism in Biblical Studies, see: Roland Boer, ed., *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies* (San Antonio: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007).

Combining the insights of previous work on Qur'anic genre, on the one hand, and genre theory, on the other, produces a framework for inquiry into Qur'anic genre that establishes that Qur'anic genres are communicated via thematically and syntactically defined utterances exhibiting particular thematic content, styles, and compositional structures. Unfortunately, these generic forms are not marked in the text of the Qur'ān itself. In order to define, delineate, and extract individual instances of Qur'anic genre, therefore, a mode of literary analysis must be developed that can detect the boundaries of utterances and recognize genre forms within the text. Once the boundaries between genres are discovered, each genre can be characterized based on its employment of thematic content, style, and compositional structure. If multiple different generic forms are found within a single sura, the sura itself can be analyzed as a complex genre that combines and appropriates simpler generic forms. Lastly, the Qur'ān's generic forms must be related to specific types of social situation within the earliest Muslim community.

A Literary Framework for Approaching Qur'anic Genre

The primary goal of an analysis of Qur'anic genre should be the classification of the various generic forms witnessed in the Qur'ān. This task is complicated, however, by two main factors: the three scopes of Qur'anic genre and the lack of explicit divisions in the text between genres at the level of the sura passage. As mentioned above, scholars of the Qur'ān have discerned three distinct scopes of Qur'anic genre: the sura passage, the sura, and the Qur'ān as a single corpus.[53] The relationship between these three categories of genre is cumulative; that is, sura passages compose suras and suras compose the Qur'ān. For this reason, any investigation of Qur'anic genre must begin with an analysis of the Qur'ān's smallest scope, the sura passage, and then progress to longer and more complex levels of scope and generic complexity.

[53] Single verses are included in the "sura passages" designation.

Any reader of the Qur'ān will know, however, that the only explicit divisions native to the text are those separating verses and those separating suras. There are no textual divisions between sura passages; indeed, as the Qur'ān text currently stands, any literary unit between the level of the verse and the sura must be inferred from thematic and syntactic clues in the text. When scholars discuss subsections or component genres of suras, they are discussing literary units that are not explicit in text itself. In order to analyze the component genres of the Qur'ān, then, a framework for identifying individual instances of genre within the text must be developed.

Bakhtin considers all communication to be cast in bounded utterances, and these utterances take the forms of different speech genres. Therefore, the goal of identifying individual Qur'anic genres must begin with the identification of individual Qur'anic utterances, as the utterances can then be analyzed for their adherence to particular generic conventions. The literary framework proposed here establishes four fundamental identifying factors for a Qur'anic utterance:

1. Thematic coherence
2. Syntactic coherence
3. Boundedness
4. Social function

Thematic coherence is the first identifying factor of individual Qur'anic utterances, and it refers to a demonstrable thematic relationship between the verses of a single utterance. The verses need not discuss a single topic or even similar topics, but an argument must be presented that connects the content of individual verses as part of a larger thematic whole. In this way, the verses within a single utterance constitute a comprehensible thematic unit.

Similarly, an utterance must display syntactic coherence; that is, the utterance must *make sense*. Pronouns must have stated antecedents, complex structures such as conditionals must have a protasis and apodosis, and the like. Again, arguments for syntactic changes or variance within a single utterance can be made, but it must be demonstrated that the entire utterance remains intelligible to the audience.

The criterion of boundedness is, perhaps, *the* fundamental criterion for the detection of an utterance, as it distinguishes the utterance as an independent literary unit from a simple change in topic or style in a single piece of revelation. This particular concept is taken from Mikhail Bakhtin's work on genre theory, and boundedness refers to a literary form's independence as a piece of communication; regardless of its thematic or syntactic similarity to other pieces of literature, a bounded text has a definite beginning and end. Whether the first and last words in a novel or the opening and closing of the mouth in an oral proclamation, boundedness refers to the beginning and end of the act of communication. Therefore, to establish evidence of the bounds of a Qur'anic utterance is to establish its self-sufficiency as a literary unit. When reading the text of the Qur'ān, it is important to keep in mind the oral-performative nature of much of the revelation of the Qur'ān; the Prophet Muhammad would pronounce the revelation to an audience with which he was interacting in realtime. Therefore, traces of this oral performance should be extant in the text, in particular conventions of beginning and ending speech.[54] If these conventions can be identified within the text, boundedness can be asserted.

One such convention that figures most prominently in the Medinan corpus is the vocative address. A key contention of this study's argument is that the tripartite vocative address (*yā* or

[54] While still exhibiting identifiable opening and closing boundaries, some communicative genres of Qur'anic discourse, like edict, may have been originally composed and transmitted via writing.

yāayyuhā followed by the subject of address and an imperative verb or a rhetorical question) is a standard convention of the communicative genre of Qur'anic exhortation that is used in much of the Medinan literary corpus that signals the beginning of Prophetic communication and establishes the audience of that speech act. Devin Stewart has recently characterized the Qur'ān's placement of its vocatives as "at the opening turn of speech."[55] That these vocatives represent the opening of an independent instance of speech and are not simply a literary device signalling a change in subject or redirecting the audience's attention is supported by four confluent factors: first, syntactically speaking, there is but one instance, Q. 33:53, in which a verse beginning with *yāayyuhā* contains a pronoun or verb with an unstated antecedent or subject. Second, a verse beginning with *yāayyuhā* tends to signal a shift in content from the previous verses. Third, in context of the oral performance of Qur'anic revelation, an explicit direct address like *yāayyuhā* is needed at the beginning of an oration in order to define the revelation's audience and to call the audience to attention, but it is redundant after the initial address. And fourth, narrative passages in the Qur'an, when depicting the beginning of speech from one party to another, often use the vocative particle followed by the subject of address.

If the vocative address can be seen as representing the opening of speech, the address and what immediately follows should be characterized as distinct from the revelation preceding the vocative address. Other potential indicators of boundedness such as series of oaths, emphatic particles, and typified modes of conclusion occur in the text, but, regardless of the specific convention employed, it must be argued that an utterance exists as a distinct literary unit separate from surrounding revelation.

[55] Devin J. Stewart, "Vocatives in the Qur'an and the Framing of Prophetic Proclamations," in *Unlocking the Medinan Qur'an,* ed. Nicolai Sinai (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

The last criterion for defining an utterance is its association with a specific social function. This final step considers the form and rhetorical function of the utterance, relates them to a type of recurrent social situation, and assigns the utterance to a specific genre of discourse, as genres are reflective of the social situations in which they are used. Once an utterance has been defined in terms of its constituent verses, the relationship between these verses and a social situation must be argued and its generic form determined.

There are three general types of generic labels that are used in this study: embedded, communicative, and composite. "Embedded" genres are those literary forms witnessed in the Qur'ān that are not communicated as bounded utterances. Some literary forms, such as oaths, curses, and parables, occur or are referred to throughout the Qur'ān but are not themselves complete units of communication. That is, these forms exist *within* larger bounded utterances and are, therefore, considered to be "embedded" within a larger genre. Because they are not the complete and intended forms of Qur'anic communication, embedded genres are not a focus of the present study but are discussed in greater detail in the chapter six. "Communicative" genres, in contrast, are Qur'anic genres that exist as bounded utterances and are the central objects of study in this dissertation. In accordance with the rubric above, communicative genres all exhibit thematic coherence, syntactic coherence, boundedness, and a demonstrable social function. The Qur'ān displays six distinct communicative genres, each of which is surveyed and analyzed in the following chapters: religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, edict, prayer, and creed. These six communicative genres are the primary means by which the Qur'ān was originally communicated from the Prophet to his audience and, in the present Qur'anic corpus, can occur at the level of the verse, sura passage, or whole sura. Finally, "composite" genres are

complex literary compositions consisting of multiple communicative genres collected together. Despite existing as compilations of smaller genre forms, composite genres are intentional in their construction, and their component genres often display similarities in style and content. By and large, composite genres exist at the level of the whole sura, although, in particularly long and structurally complex suras, they can occur as extended sura passages. Although communicative genres are the focus of this dissertation, chapter seven explores how Q. 3, *Sūra Āl ʻImrān*, combines multiple communicative genres together to form a complex "composite" genre.

First and foremost, a literary investigation of Qur'anic genre must divide a sura into its component utterances on the basis of thematic coherence, syntactic coherence, and boundedness, and culminate in the association of each utterance with a social context and, accordingly, a specific generic form. The remainder of the present study is divided into six chapters that apply this genre-critical analysis to the entirety of the Qur'ān and establish the presence of six communicative Qur'anic genres: religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, edict, prayer, and creed. The next chapter, "Chapter Two: Religio-Political Commentary," surveys the Qur'ān's most prevalent communicative genre and details its three subgenres of diatribe, proclamation, and response. "Chapter Three: Exhortation," explores the communicative genre of exhortation and its apocalyptic, pious, legal, political, and narrative subgenres. "Chapter Four: Narrative," outlines the Qur'ān's narrative communicative genre and its subgenres of foundational, legitimating, and punishment narratives. "Chapter Five: Edict," catalogues the Qur'ān's communicative genre of edict and its doctrinal, dietary, marital, political, and social subgenres. "Chapter Six: Prayer and Creed," discusses the communicative genres of prayer (along with its subgenres of prayers

of praise and protection) and creed and argues that the communicative genres of religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict should be further classified as "fundamental" communicative Qur'anic genres, in contrast to the "peripheral" communicative genres of prayer and creed. "Chapter Seven: Composite Genres and Conclusion" concludes the study and demonstrates how Q. 3, *Sūra Āl 'Imrān*, exists as the composite genre of political treatise. The Appendix closes the study with a comprehensive catalog of each occurrence of all six communicative genres throughout the entire Qur'ān.

Chapter Two: Religio-Political Commentary

Introduction

By a large margin, religio-political commentary is the Qur'ān's most common communicative genre; it accounts for the highest number of total utterances (224) and total number of verses (2922). Indeed, the genre is witnessed across the Meccan and Medinan literary corpora and in well over half of the Qur'ān's suras. This chapter opens with a discussion of the use of the term "religio-political commentary" to define a specific genre and is followed by a comparison between the genre and its late antique analogue of invective, a type of epideictic oratory. It will proceed to define religio-political commentary as a series of declamatory statements characterized by emphatic particles, rhetorical questions, manufactured speech, and *qul* "say!" commands. The audience for such declarations varies, although, unlike the genre of exhortation to be discussed in chapter three, the intended audience is not always clear. It will ultimately argue that religio-political commentary can be divided into three subgenres according to its content: proclamation, response, and diatribe.

Terminology

Devin Stewart has recently suggested that, to the extent possible, Qur'anic genres should be assigned labels consistent with intra-Qur'anic meta-references to genres of discourse.[56] This is a prudent impulse, and, where possible, the present study attempts to do so. Instances of religio-political commentary, however, are so numerous and varied that it is unfeasible to find an intra-Qur'anic generic label that encapsulates the whole genre. The meta-generic references found in religio-political commentary, by and large, refer to genres embedded within specific examples,

[56] Stewart, "Approaches," 9-14.

not to the overarching communicative genre of religio-political commentary itself. Embedded genres will be discussed in greater detail in the sixth chapter of this study.

The term *mathal* is an example of these types of meta-generic labels found throughout the Qur'ān. As a generic label, *mathal* is often translated as "parable" although, as Devin Stewart notes, it can refer to other genres including "proverb" or "exemplum."[57] Karim Samji considers the Qur'ān's use of *mathal* as exemplary of the Qur'ān's narrative genre.[58] The present study, in contrast, argues that the meta-generic term *mathal* can refer to a wide variety of speech genres, as suggested by Stewart, but these genres do not occur as complete Qur'anic utterances and are instead embedded within larger communicative genres for a variety of rhetorical purposes. For example, Stewart lists six examples of *mathal* in the Qur'ān that refer to the genres of "proverb," "similitude," "parable," and "exemplum."[59] According to the present genre-critical analysis, two of these examples occur within the larger communicative genre of religio-political commentary, two within exhortation, and two within narrative. That is, the larger communicative genres of religio-political commentary, exhortation, and narrative may be using proverbs, similitudes, parables, and exempla for any number of rhetorical functions, but the complete units of Qur'anic communication are still the larger communicative genres. In this way, meta-generic terms like *mathal* usually refer to genres that are embedded within communicative genres and, because they occur across a variety of communicative genres, are unsuitable as terms for the communicative genres themselves.

Moving forward, the use of "religio-political commentary" as a genre classification is rooted in the genre's blurring of religious and political spheres of discourse and its penchant to

[57] Ibid., 13.
[58] Samji, *Form-Critical,* 177-181.
[59] Stewart, "Approaches," 13.

respond to and clarify events, statements, and actions. The challenge of defining the Qur'ān's genre of religio-political commentary lies in its pervasiveness and variety throughout the corpus. Because it is prevalent across both the Meccan and Medinan literary corpora, the genre discusses a wide variety of topics in a wide variety of styles. Nicolai Sinai has succinctly described a major thrust of the Qur'ān's literary change between the Meccan and Medinan corpora:

> Whereas the Meccan surahs present [the Prophet Muhammad] as a mere 'warner', a spokesperson entrusted with the delivery of divine admonishments, the Medinan surahs cast him as fulfilling a role of communal leadership, including the adjudication of disputes as well as the mediation of divine forgiveness, and appreciably amplify his authority.[60]

Throughout this shift from religious to political content, however, the Qur'ān consistently employs declarative modes of discourse that exhibit similar syntax and structures. As will be shown below, the Qur'ān often employs emphatic particles, including *inna* and *la-qad*, to introduce a religious or political premise and follows them with the imperative *qul* to offer a response to that premise; I call this a "premise-*qul* command" structure, and it is characteristic of religio-political commentary generally. The Qur'ān thereby uses declarations to establish specific religious and political premises upon which it comments; the term "religio-political commentary" reflects this rhetorical strategy.

Similar modes of public oration existed in the late antique Near East, perhaps most relevantly in the form of epideictic oratory. Late antique public gatherings were stages upon which orators could demonstrate their rhetorical prowess.[61] These gatherings, often festal in nature, were punctuated by public speeches intended to display an orator's rhetorical skill.[62]

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[60] Sinai, *Historical-Critical*, 188.
[61] Alex Petkas, "Epideictic Oratory," in *A Companion to Late Antique Literature,* ed. Scott McGill and Edward J. Watts (New York: Wiley, 2018), 193.
[62] Ibid., 196.

These public speeches were divided into two larger genres, praise and blame, and delivered in either prose or verse.[63] Topics and types of discourse ranged widely: addresses at imperial processions, wedding speeches, eulogies, laments for destroyed cities, and religious contemplations, to name only a few.[64] Indeed, Alex Petkas argues that late antique epideictic oratory helped shape early Christian homiletic discourse. As will be discussed in chapter three, scholars, most notably Gabriel Said Reynolds, have argued that the Syriac Christian homiletic tradition is the key to understanding the Qur'ān's literary structure.[65]

There are three problems with borrowing the term "epideictic oratory" for the Qur'ān's declamatory utterances: late antique epideictic oratory's overwhelming association with praise subgenres, its focus on individuals as opposed to groups, and its frequent setting in non-religious, festal contexts. Any reader familiar with the Qur'ān's rhetoric will notice its harsh statements addressed to multiple disbelieving communities; even the material addressed to the believing community is primarily exhortative, not laudatory. Late antique epideictic oratory, in contrast, is often associated with subgenres of praise, like panegyric and encomium.[66] Additionally, the subjects of such praise tended to be individuals, not communities.[67] With few exceptions, the Qur'ān addresses communities: *ahl al-kitāb, alladhīna āmanū, al-mu'minūn, al-mushrikūn, al-munāfiqūn,* etc. Lastly, while both epideictic oratory and religio-political commentary were performed in public settings, the types of public setting differed drastically between the two. Epideictic oratory had a wide variety of forms that reflected a wide variety of social situations

[63] Ibid., 194-195.
[64] Ibid., 193-208.
[65] Ibid., 197; Gabriel Said Reynolds, "Reading the Qur'ān as homily," in *The Qur'ān and Its Biblical Subtext* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 230-258.
[66] Petkas, "Epideictic Oratory," 194.
[67] Ibid., 201-202.

including, "birthdays, arrivals, departures of important persons such as governors and emperors, contests and feasts."[68] By contrast, the social contexts in which the Qur'ān was revealed seem to have been limited to overtly religious or religiously-charged political settings.[69]

For these reasons, I use the term "religio-political commentary" instead of "epideictic oratory" to describe the Qur'ān's declamatory utterances. This is not to say, however, that late antique epideictic oratory may not usefully be compared to the Qur'ān. One subgenre of late antique epideictic oratory provides a particularly fruitful analogue to the Qur'ān's religio-political commentary: invective.

Comparison to Late Antique Genres

Compared to the praise subgenres of epideictic speech, late antique invective and other blame subgenres were much less frequently used.[70] Modern scholarly work on epideictic oratory mirrors this disparity. Fortunately, Richard Flower's *Emperors and Bishops in Late Roman Invective* provides a helpful survey of the subgenre.[71] Flower describes late antique invective as, "textual attacks in a variety of literary forms,"[72] and argues that its purpose was, "constructing and destroying the authority and orthodoxy of people, events, and texts."[73] As will be demonstrated below, the Qur'ān's religio-political commentary performs these same functions vis-à-vis its religious and political opponents.

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[68] Ibid., 193.
[69] On the social contexts of the Qur'ān's revelation, see: Angelika Neuwirth, "The Liturgical Qur'an," in *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage,* tr. Samuel Wilder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 201-238.
[70] Petkas, "Epideictic Oratory," 194.
[71] Richard Flower, *Emperors and Bishops in Late Roman Invective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[72] Ibid., 6.
[73] Ibid., 8; invective can be considered a subgenre of blame, and blame can be considered a subgenre of epideictic oratory. In this way, invective is a sub-sub-genre of epideictic oratory.

The late antique genre of invective offers a particularly useful corollary to the Qur'ān's religio-political commentary because both genres use public oration to a religiously diverse audience in service of condemning a tyrannical figure or community and establishing the speaker and her community as their virtuous foils. Generally, late antique invective and the Qur'anic revelation were both proclaimed orally.[74] Certainly, invective also took a variety of other written forms, but public speeches were particularly common and even compiled and circulated in writing.[75] Additionally, the listening audiences of the two genres were both religiously diverse. Flower describes the religious context of late antique invective as "a time during which a variety of belief systems co-existed and developed…,"[76] while Patricia Crone has argued that the Qur'ān's listening audience was a mix of pagans, monotheistically-inclined pagans, Jews, and Christians.[77] Late Antique invective and religio-political commentary were performed in similarly broad social contexts.

Turning to the content of the two genres, both invective and religio-commentary condemn a tyrannical figure or community with the purpose of establishing the speaker as their virtuous foil. In the context of invective against imperial authority, Flower writes, "[a]s well as making statements about the emperor, the invectives… also created images of their authors as brave opponents of tyranny."[78] Of particular relevance to Qur'anic rhetoric, late antique Christian orators incorporated Biblical language and references in their speech to argue that,

[74] While there is broad agreement that much of the Qur'ān was proclaimed orally, there is debate surrounding the extent of its oral composition. For two views on this topic, see: Bannister, *Oral-Formulaic*; Neuwirth, *Late Antiquity*.
[75] Flower, *Invective*, 34.
[76] Ibid., 12.
[77] Patricia Crone, "The Religion of Qur'ānic Pagans: God and Lesser Deities," *Arabica* 57 (2010): 151-200.
[78] Flower, *Invective*, 25.

"they, unlike their heretical opponents, possessed both the knowledge and the understanding to perform exegesis properly and so to give a reliable account of orthodoxy."[79] This method of appealing to Biblical precedent in order to establish a speaker's authority over an adversary is a common Qur'anic tactic; in the example of religio-political commentary below, the Qur'ān quotes Jesus in an effort to undermine a Christian theological position and legitimate its own. By citing scripture and Biblical precedent to undermine the views and actions of their opponents, the speakers create an ideological gulf between themselves and the addressees: on the one side, the speakers' scripturally-rooted orthodoxy and, on the other side, the addressees' sinful heterodoxy.

A comparison of an excerpt from *Altercatio Heracliani cum Germinio* and Q. 5:72-77 demonstrates the similarities in rhetorical strategies between invective and religio-political commentary. *Altercatio Heracliani cum Germinio* recounts a confrontation between a Nicene layman, Heraclianus, and an Arian bishop, Germinius, in fourth-century CE Illyria.[80] During the dispute, Heraclianus responds to Germinius' claims concerning the trinity as follows:

> The Father is greater, but in name only. For the Apostle Paul says: 'Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.' Do you not believe that he is the particular power of God and Son of God and true God? For God is all power and we recognise that through that same power all powers were made. For thus is it written: 'By the Word of the Lord, the heavens were fixed and every power of them by the spirit of his mouth.' Understand, therefore, that [C137] through this one power, all powers in the heavens and on earth and in hell came forth; through this one power they came forth from nothing.[81]

This excerpt displays four rhetorical strategies fundamental to late antique invective: proclamations of specific theological claims, appeals to Biblical authority, rhetorical questions, and imperative verbs. Heraclianus begins by asserting his theological claim that "The Father is

[79] Ibid., 181.
[80] Ibid., 230-237.
[81] Ibid., 233.

greater, but in name only" in response to Germinius' claim that The Father is greater than the Son of God.[82] He follows this pronouncement with a quotation from the New Testament (1 Corinthians 1:24) to establish the Biblical legitimacy of his statement. Next, Heraclianus poses a rhetorical question to his adversary; the negative interrogative syntax "[d]o you not…" suggests that Germinius does, or certainly should, believe in Christ's power, as described by Heraclianus. Heraclianus then makes another proclamation regarding God's omnipotence followed by a scriptural citation.[83] Finally, he commands Germinius to "understand" the veracity of his position.

This structure of a claim, appeals to Biblical authority, rhetorical questions, and imperative verbs occurs throughout the corpus of Qur'anic religio-political commentary. One such instance is Q. 5:72-77, an example of its proclamation subgenre:

> 72. They surely disbelieve who say: Indeed, God is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah (himself) said: O Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed, whoso ascribeth partners unto God, for him God hath forbidden Paradise. His abode is the Fire. For evil-doers there will be no helpers.
> 73. They surely disbelieve who say: Indeed, God is the third of three; when there is no God save the One God. If they desist not from so saying a painful doom will fall on those of them who disbelieve.
> 74. Will they not rather turn unto God and seek forgiveness of Him? For God is Forgiving, Merciful.
> 75. The Messiah, son of Mary, was no other than a messenger, messengers (the like of whom) had passed away before him. And his mother was a saintly woman. And they both used to eat (earthly) food. See how We make the revelations clear for them, and see how they are turned away!
> 76. Say: Serve ye in place of God that which possesseth for you neither hurt nor use? God it is Who is the Hearer, the Knower.
> 77. Say: O People of the Scripture! Stress not in your religion other than the truth, and follow not the vain desires of folk who erred of old and led many astray, and erred from a plain road.

[82] Ibid.
[83] Psalms 33:6 (32:6 LXX).

The example begins with the assertion that equating God and Jesus, here rendered *al-masīḥu ibnu maryama* "the Messiah, Son of Mary," is an act of disbelief. As in *Altercatio Heracliani cum Germinio*, this initial claim is immediately followed by an appeal to Biblical tradition. Unlike the example of invective, however, the Qur'ān ascribes a quotation to Jesus himself instead of appealing to a specific Biblical text, although Reynolds argues that the quotation bears a resemblance to John 20:17.[84] Similarly, v. 73 equates belief in the trinity to an act of disbelief. Verse 74 follows the previous claims and appeals to Biblical tradition with a rhetorical question: *a-fa-lā yatūbūna ilā allāhi wa-yastaghfirūnahu* "[w]ill they not rather turn unto God and seek forgiveness of Him?" Assuming a negative response to that question, v. 75 laments its subject's continued disbelief (*yu'fakūn*) despite the clarity of its message (*kayfa nubayyinu lahumu l-āyāti*). Verse 76 asks another rhetorical question, and verse 77 concludes the utterance with two negative imperative verb structures, commanding the People of the Scripture to *lā taghlū fī dīnikum ghayra al-ḥaqqi* "[s]tress not in your religion other than the truth" and *lā tattabi'ū ahwā'a qawmin qad ḍallū min qablu* "follow not the vain desires of folk who erred of old."

Late antique invective and the Qur'ān's religio-political commentary adopt similar rhetorical strategies for similar social purposes. Using a series of declamatory claims, references to Biblical tradition, rhetorical questions, and imperative verbs, each genre seeks to delegitimize the authority of its opponents while bolstering its own. While late antique epideictic oratory is not an exact analogue to the Qur'ān's religio-political commentary, its subgenre of invective uses similar techniques in the condemnation of its opponents' beliefs and practices. We now turn to

[84] Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and the Bible: Text and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 207.

an overview of the genre of religio-political commentary in the Qur'ān and a catalog of its three subgenres: proclamation, response, and diatribe.

An Overview of Religio-Political Commentary

Religio-political commentary is characterized by a series of declamatory statements that include emphatic particles, rhetorical questions, manufactured speech, and *qul* commands. The audience for these utterances varies and is often left unspecified.[85] There are 224 examples of religio-political commentary spread relatively evenly across the Meccan (125) and Medinan (99) literary corpora.

Examples of religio-political commentary vary in style and content. The opening boundary of religio-political commentary often begins with an emphatic particle, *inna* or *la-qad*, or the *qul* command (more on the *qul* command below). These openings serve to establish an initial premise: a religious, political, or social argument that will be explored as the utterance progresses. The example above, Q. 5:72-77, begins with the premise that conflating God and the Messiah is an act of disbelief and, as noted, expands upon this premise by appealing to Biblical tradition, asking rhetorical questions, and commanding its audience. Whether initiated by a specific syntactic structure or not, the establishment of an opening premise is a fundamental feature of religio-political commentary.

Rhetorical questions and manufactured speech are two additional rhetorical techniques characteristic of religio-political commentary. In religio-political commentary, rhetorical questions usually follow the opening premise and serve to emphasize the obvious nature of the premise and/or the obstinacy of an opponent. Like rhetorical questions, which do not require an

[85] For a comparison with declamatory utterances with a primarily believing audience, see: "Chapter Three: Exhortation."

answer and, therefore, do not allow the addressee to speak, the Qur'ān speaks on behalf of its opponents and, paradoxically, silences their voices. This technique, here called manufactured speech, occurs in exactly half of the examples of religio-political commentary and uses the Arabic verb of speech *qāla* "to say" to mimic the actual speech of an individual or community and, ultimately, provide a rebuttal or response.[86] The speech is "manufactured" because the Qur'ān, not the audience it purports to be quoting, is speaking; the Qur'ān, therefore, can reformulate any quoted speech for any rhetorical purpose, rendering the speech inauthentic, or manufactured.

Mehdi Azaiez has recently investigated this rhetorical strategy of manufactured speech in his monograph, *Le contre-discours coranique*.[87] While manufactured speech, as presented here, includes all Qur'anic speech purporting to quote a non-Qur'anic speaker, Azaiez is concerned with "le discours rapporté tenu par l'adversaire."[88] Nonetheless, Azaiez's study is helpful in explicating the rhetorical effects of the Qur'ān's inclusion of manufactured speech. Azaiez reinforces the notion that any Qur'anic attempt to quote non-Qur'anic speech necessarily mediates that speech and, in effect, silences the original speaker; the Qur'ān becomes "un médiateur… [c]ar dire à nouveau la parole de l'autre implique systématiquement une altérité qui prend en charge la parole initiale."[89] Additionally, Azaeiz presents a tripartite framework to describe the Qur'ān's inclusion of and response to manufactured speech: an introductory section preceding to the manufactured speech, the manufactured speech itself, and the Qur'ān's response

[86] On the Qur'ān's use of *qāla*, see: Yehudit Dror, "Verbs of Saying in the Qur'ān: The Case of *qāla*," *Al-Qanṭara* XLII, no. 1 (2021): 1-15; on the related literary phenomenon of cognate curses in the Qur'ān, see: Devin J. Stewart, "The Cognate Curse in the Qur'an," *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association* 2 (2017): 47–87.
[87] Mehdi Azaiez, *Le contre-discours coranique* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015).
[88] Ibid., 290.
[89] Ibid., 155.

to the manufactured speech.[90] As will be seen in the following examples, the present study focuses on the second and third parts of Azaiez' framework (the manufactured speech itself and the Qur'ān's response), as together they exemplify the premise and response structure common in religio-political commentary.

As a rhetorical strategy, then, manufactured speech serves to establish or emphasize a premise with which the Qur'ān can engage. In Q. 5:72-77, the manufactured speech in v. 72 establishes the premise that equating God and the Messiah is an act of disbelief. Did members of the Qur'anic community express the belief that God is the Messiah? Whether or not those who may have held this belief in fact said *inna allāha huwa al-masīḥu ibnu maryama* "Indeed, God is the Messiah, son of Mary" cannot be known definitively from reading the Qur'ān alone. What can be known, however, is that the Qur'ān presents this speech as if it occurred and, in doing so, provides its own rebuttal in the remainder of the verse. In addition to establishing a premise, manufactured speech can emphasize a previously stated premise. This technique most commonly occurs in scenes of the Day of Judgment when believers and disbelievers alike rejoice in or decry their condition, underscoring the eventual reality of eschatological reward or damnation.

Related to this use of *qāla* to manufacture speech, the imperative *qul* "say!" plays two important roles in religio-political commentary: opening the utterance with a declamatory premise or initiating a response to the utterance's opening premise. Relying on the work of Matthias Radscheit, Yehudit Dror categorizes *qul* commands into three basic types: polemic patterns, instructive patterns, and independent *qul* statements.[91] For the study of the Qur'ān's

[90] Ibid., 144.
[91] Dror, "Verbs of Saying," 10; Matthias Radscheit, "Word of God of Prophetic Speech? Reflections on the Qur'anic qul-Statements," in *Encounters of Words and Texts: Intercultural Studies in Honor of Stefan Wild*, ed. Lutz Edzard and Christian Szyska (Hildeshim; New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1997), 33-43.

religio-political commentary, the polemic and instructive patterns are most relevant. In religio-political commentary, polemic pattern *qul* commands function similarly to an introductory emphatic particle: both of them introduce a declamatory statement that establishes a premise for the utterance. Instructive pattern *qul* commands, in contrast, initiate a response to a previously established premise. In this sense, the *qul* structure responds to a previously stated question or charge with the proper guidance for the community. As will be demonstrated below, instructive pattern *qul* commands are primarily associated with the *response* subgenre of religio-political commentary.

Religio-political commentary uses emphatic particles, rhetorical questions, manufactured speech, and *qul* commands to establish and respond to a one or another religious, political, or social premise. While broadly similar in structure, the many examples of religio-political commentary can be divided into three subgenres: *proclamation, response, and diatribe*. Each subgenre demonstrates unique combinations of theme and syntax and serve unique social functions. What follows is a survey of these subgenres beginning with proclamation, the most prevalent and stylistically diverse of the three.

Proclamation

Proclamation is the most common subgenre of religio-political commentary; using combinations of declarative particles, rhetorical questions, manufactured speech, and *qul* structures, Qur'anic proclamations make matter-of-fact statements that reinforce general principles of belief and disbelief. Of the 224 examples of religio-political commentary, 151 are proclamations. The majority of occurrences are found in the Meccan literary corpus (101), with only 50 in the Medinan corpus, and they average 13.27 verses in length. As will be discussed in

chapter three, this connection with the Meccan corpus may be related to the association of the exhortation subgenre with the Medinan corpus.

Proclamation is the dominant mode of communication throughout the Qur'anic corpus. The social function of proclamation accords well with its pervasiveness: the subgenre of proclamation serves to communicate and clarify religious, political, and social norms. As a group, these norms create the foundation for the Qur'anic community's shared beliefs and practices, so, in conveying these norms, proclamations are the means by which the beliefs and practices of the believing community are established, reinforced, or altered. Because of this fundamental role in shaping the Qur'anic community, the Qur'ān uses large numbers of proclamations across both the Meccan and Medinan corpora.

This social function is represented in the subgenre's thematic and syntactic conventions. Qur'anic proclamations typically begin with emphatic syntax: emphatic particles such as *inna, qad,* or *la-qad, qul* commands, oath series, and disjointed letters. The majority of proclamations begin with one of these four openings. The opening verses of proclamations establish a premise upon which the remainder of the utterance can comment; these emphatic introductions serve to underscore that premise. The opening premises vary widely in topic and reflect the ideas and concerns circulating among the Qur'anic listenership. The two examples below, for instance, establish the premises of eschatological punishment and reward and the righteousness of charity in Q. 52:1-49 and Q. 57:18-24, respectively. Following this opening, the Qur'ān uses a variety of rhetorical techniques to explore the premise.

The two primary rhetorical techniques for engaging with the opening premise are the inclusion of manufactured speech and a "premise-*qul* command" structure. As noted, manufactured speech uses *qāla* or other verbs of saying to imitate the speech of an individual or

group. This rhetorical technique is common throughout all the subgenres of religio-political commentary, and it occurs in nearly half of the proclamations. Proclamations use manufactured speech in multiple ways, two of the most common being speaking on behalf of an opponent and speaking on behalf of believers and disbelievers in eschatological scenes. Using this first technique, speaking on behalf of an opponent, proclamations formulate their own conceptions of their opponent's questions or objections and, ultimately, refute them in the subsequent verses. The second technique, speaking on behalf of believers and disbelievers in eschatological scenes, underscores the eventual reality of eschatological reward and punishment by presenting these scenes as predetermined; eschatological Judgment is so certain that the Qur'ān already knows people's reactions and speech on that day.

In addition to using manufactured speech, proclamations employ premise-*qul* command structures to respond to opening premises. Using the previously discussed instructive pattern *qul* commands, nearly a quarter of proclamations (35/151) establish an opening premise and then follow that premise with the second-person singular imperative *qul* "say!" to introduce a response to that premise. The content following the *qul* command depends upon the content of the opening premise, but, generally speaking, it expands upon or underscores the content of the premise. In cases in which the opening premise is the manufactured speech of an opponent, *qul* commands initiate a refutation of the premise.

Finally, proclamations tend to conclude with references to God's omnipotence and omniscience or eschatological punishment. The closing boundaries of proclamations are not as well-defined as their opening boundaries. One reason for this is that there are no concluding syntactic particles equivalent to the introductory syntactic particles of *inna*, *qad*, and *la-qad*. There is, however, formulaic syntax that occurs at the end of verses and may indicate the

conclusion of an utterance. These syntactic markers, which Neuwirth calls *clausulae*, occur throughout religio-political commentary and include such phrases as: *wa-llāhu*, *wa-inna llāha*, *wa-kāna allāhu* plus divine epithets.[92] In addition to these clausulae, proclamations can include references to eschatological punishment to conclude an utterance.

Q. 52:1-49 offers an early Meccan example of a proclamation:

1. By the Mount,
2. And a Scripture inscribed
3. On fine parchment unrolled,
4. And the House frequented,
5. And the roof exalted,
6. And the sea kept filled,
7. Indeed, the doom of thy Lord will surely come to pass;
8. There is none that can ward it off.
9. On the day when the heaven will heave with (awful) heaving,
10. And the mountains move away with (awful) movement,
11. Then woe that day unto the deniers
12. Who play in talk of grave matters;
13. The day when they are thrust with a (disdainful) thrust, into the fire of hell
14. (And it is said unto them): This is the Fire which ye were wont to deny.
15. Is this magic, or do ye not see?
16. Endure the heat thereof, and whether ye are patient of it or impatient of it is all one for you. Ye are only being paid for what ye used to do.
17. Indeed, those who kept their duty dwell in gardens and delight,
18. Happy because of what their Lord hath given them, and (because) their Lord hath warded off from them the torment of hell-fire.
19. (And it is said unto them): Eat and drink in health (as a reward) for what ye used to do,
20. Reclining on ranged couches. And we wed them unto fair ones with wide, lovely eyes.
21. And they who believe and whose seed follow them in faith, We cause their seed to join them (there), and We deprive them of nought of their (life's) work. Every man is a pledge for that which he hath earned.
22. And We provide them with fruit and meat such as they desire.
23. There they pass from hand to hand a cup wherein is neither vanity nor cause of sin.

[92] Angelika Neuwirth, "Two Faces of the Qur'ān: Qur'ān and Muṣḥaf," *Oral Tradition* 25, no. 1 (2010): 141-156. For further discussion of this concluding syntax, see: Devin J. Stewart, "Divine Epithets and the Dibacchius: Clausulae and Qur'anic Rhythm," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 15, no. 2 (2013): 22-64.

24. And there go round, waiting on them menservants of their own, as they were hidden pearls.
25. And some of them draw near unto others, questioning,
26. Saying: Indeed, of old, when we were with our families, we were ever anxious;
27. But God hath been gracious unto us and hath preserved us from the torment of the breath of Fire.
28. Indeed, we used to pray unto Him of old. Indeed, He is the Benign, the Merciful.
29. Therefor remind (men, O Muhammad). By the grace of God thou art neither soothsayer nor madman.
30. Or say they: (he is) a poet, (one) for whom we may expect the accident of time?
31. Say (unto them): Except (your fill)! Indeed, I am with you among the expectant.
32. Do their minds command them to do this, or are they an outrageous folk?
33. Or say they: He hath invented it? Nay, but they will not believe!
34. Then let them produce speech the like thereof, if they are truthful.
35. Or were they created out of naught? Or are they the creators?
36. Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay, but they are sure of nothing!
37. Or do they own the treasures of thy Lord? Or have they been given charge (thereof)?
38. Or have they any stairway (unto heaven) by means of which they overhear (decrees). Then let their listener produce some warrant manifest!
39. Or hath He daughters whereas ye have sons?
40. Or askest thou (Muhammad) a fee from them so that they are plunged in debt?
41. Or possess they the Unseen so that they can write (it) down?
42. Or seek they to ensnare (the messenger)? But those who disbelieve, they are the ensnared!
43. Or have they any god beside God? Glorified be God from all that they ascribe as partner (unto Him)!
44. And if they were to see a fragment of the heaven falling, they would say: A heap of clouds.
45. Then let them be (O Muhammad), till they meet their day, in which they will be thunder-stricken,
46. A day in which their guile will naught avail them, nor will they be helped.
47. And verily, for those who do wrong, there is a punishment beyond that. But most of them know not.
48. So wait patiently (O Muhammad) for thy Lord's decree, for surely thou art in Our sight; and hymn the praise of thy Lord when thou uprisest,
49. And in the night-time also hymn His praise, and at the setting of the stars.

As is characteristic of the Meccan literary corpus, many suras occur as single utterances, as opposed to the compilation of multiple utterances, as is common in the Medinan corpus. In the

example above, Q. 52 is a single proclamation, the second longest proclamation after Q. 30:1-60. Q. 52 opens in emphatic fashion: vv. 1-6 begin the utterance with a series of oaths followed by the emphatic particle *inna* at the start of v. 7. The oath series, an emphatic syntax characteristic of the Meccan corpus, establishes the gravity of the upcoming speech.[93] The opening *inna* in v. 7 announces to the listening audience the end of the emphatic oath structure and the beginning of the utterance's premise: *inna 'adhāba rabbika la-wāqi'* "the doom of thy Lord will surely come to pass." This phrase is the utterance's premise for two reasons: it is preceded by a series of oaths and includes the emphatic particles (*inna* and *la-*), and the remainder of the utterance's content expands upon this thesis. Verse 8 accentuates the inevitability of the eschatological judgment. Verses 9-10 detail the signs of its coming. Verses 11-16 narrate the punishment awaiting the deniers. By contrast, vv. 17-28 describe the pleasures of the believers' eschatological reward as a foil to the punishment of the deniers. Finally, in vv. 29-30, the premise is extended to include the Prophet himself: he can only remind (*dhakkir*) his community of their coming fate despite their distrust in its certainty (*am yaqūlūna shā'irun natarabbaṣu bihi rayba al-manūn*).

The *qul* opening in v. 31 begins the utterance's response to the opening premise: the disbelievers debase themselves with their denial of the certainty of the eschatological Judgment. Starting with v. 31, the Prophet responds directly to the accusation that he is a poet with no superior knowledge of coming events by challenging the disbelievers to *tarabbaṣū* "wait and see!" This challenge sets off a series of rhetorical questions in vv. 32-43, mocking the disbelievers' willful ignorance of God's omnipotence; v. 44 completes the response subsection

[93] For two recent studies on Qur'anic oaths, see: Nora K. Schmid, "Oaths in the Qur'ān: A Structural Marker under the Impact of Knowledge Change," in *Structural Dividers in the Qur'an*, ed. Marianna Klar (London: Routledge, 2021),143–180; Devin J. Stewart, "Introductory Oaths and the Question of Composite Surahs," in *Structural Dividers in the Qur'an*, ed. Marianna Klar (London: Routledge, 2021), 267–337.

with an example of the depth of the disbelievers' incredulity, suggesting that they would explain away even an obvious sign of the Day of Judgment. After establishing the premise of an inevitable eschatological Judgment in vv. 7-30, vv. 31-44 respond to this premise by highlighting the absurdity of its denial by the disbelievers.

The utterance ends with a concluding reassurance to the Prophet that the disbelievers' eschatological punishment is certain. Verse 45 commands the Prophet to *dharhum* "leave [the disbelievers]," for their punishment on the Day of Judgment has already been declared. In fact, all the Prophet must do is *iṣbir li-ḥukmi rabbika* "wait patiently for your Lord's decree," for he has fulfilled his role as a warner. As a complete utterance, then, Q. 5:1-49 is a tripartite proclamation: vv. 1-30 establish the inevitability of eschatological Judgment, vv. 31-44 respond to this premise by mocking the disbelievers' doubt, and vv. 45-49 conclude the utterance by reassuring the Prophet and reaffirming the disbelievers' ultimate punishment.

A note should be made here about the Qur'ān's apocalyptic material. Religio-political commentary, along with exhortation, contain material that has traditionally been associated with an "apocalyptic" genre; indeed, the opening survey of Western scholarship on Qur'anic genre pointed out that each of the studies discussed included a discrete genre engaged with apocalyptic or eschatological themes. The present study recognizes the Qur'ān's apocalyptic content but does not consider it to be its own communicative genre. Instead, this study argues that apocalyptic content is merely a feature of certain examples of religio-political commentary, such as the proclamation above, or, in the case of exhortation, considered to be a subgenre of a larger communicative genre. Q. 52:1-49 illustrates the reasoning for this argument. Despite an abundance of apocalyptic language (opening oath series in vv. 1-6, explication of eschatological signs in vv. 7-10, description of eschatological punishment and reward in vv. 11-28, and the

command to the Prophet to *dhakkir* "remind" his community of eschatological judgment), the sura still exists within the overarching premise-*qul* command structure characteristic of the religio-political commentary at large, regardless of its specific content. Similar examples occur throughout religio-political commentary and its subgenres. For this reason, the present study does not consider "apocalypse" to be its own communicative genre.

Turning now to a Medinan proclamation, Q. 57:18-24 asserts the righteousness of those who practice charity (*al-muṣṣaddiqīna wa-l-muṣṣaddiqāti*):

> 18. Indeed, those who give alms, both men and women, and lend unto God a goodly loan, it will be doubled for them, and theirs will be a rich reward.
> 19. And those who believe in God and His messengers, they are the loyal, and the martyrs are with their Lord; they have their reward and their light; while as for those who disbelieve and deny Our revelations, they are owners of hell-fire.
> 20. Know that the life of the world is only play, and idle talk, and pageantry, and boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children; as the likeness of vegetation after rain, whereof the growth is pleasing to the husbandman, but afterward it drieth up and thou seest it turning yellow, then it becometh straw. And in the Hereafter there is grievous punishment, and (also) forgiveness from God and His good pleasure, whereas the life of the world is but matter of illusion.
> 21. Race one with another for forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whereof the breadth is as the breadth of the heavens and the earth, which is in store for those who believe in God and His messengers. Such is the bounty of God, which He bestoweth upon whom He will, and God is of Infinite Bounty.
> 22. Naught of disaster befalleth in the earth or in yourselves but it is in a Book before we bring it into being – Indeed, that is easy for Good –
> 23. That ye grieve not for the sake of that which hath escaped you, nor yet exult because of that which hath been given. God loveth not all prideful boasters,
> 24. Who hoard and who enjoin upon the people avarice. And whosoever turneth away, still God is the Absolute, the Owner of Praise.

Verses 18-19 open with the emphatic particle *inna* followed by a two-verse premise: those who practice charity are righteous and will be rewarded. By equating charitable spending in v. 18 with belief in God and his Messenger in v. 19, the two-verse premise stresses the fundamental role of charity to the believing community. The utterance follows this opening premise with two separate responses in vv. 20-21 and vv. 22-23. Verses 20-21 immediately follow the premise and

argue that the rewards of this world are fleeting, so believers should spend them generously and await an eternal reward in Paradise. Notably, v. 20 includes the previously discussed exemplum syntax (*ka-mathali*) that is found throughout religio-political commentary generally. Verses 22-23 again underscore the insignificance of worldly benefit and harm. This second response, however, establishes a predestined register (*kitābin*) of human fortune and misfortune *likaylā ta'saw 'alā mā fātakum wa-lā tafraḥū bi-mā ātākum* "that ye grieve not for the sake of that which hath escaped you, nor yet exult because of that which hath been given." This divorcing of human agency from the acquisition of wealth supports the utterance's initial premise; exulting in personal wealth may lead to hoarding one's wealth, so, by removing any human agency and, therefore, any reason to rejoice in its acquisition, the only virtuous use of personal wealth is to spend it charitably. Verse 24 concludes the proclamation with a condemnation of those who are stingy (*alladhīna yabkhalūna*) and a formulaic clausula characteristic of the Medinan literary corpus: *fa-inna llāha huwa al-ghaniyyu al-ḥamīd* "God is the Absolute, the Owner of Praise." Viewed as a whole, Q. 57:18-24 is a standard proclamation complete with an opening premise, a response to the premise, and a conclusion.

Response

While the response subgenre uses the same emphatic particles, manufactured speech, and *qul* structures used in the proclamation subgenre, it uses them to respond to specific charges, questions, and events affecting the listening community. There are 38 responses in total, and they are mostly Medinan in designation (28/38). Because these utterances often respond to singular events or questions, they are on average shorter in length (9.68 verses) than the other two subgenres.

Proclamation is by far the most common religio-political commentary subgenre and exhibits most of the syntactic structures and rhetorical strategies of the genre at large. Therefore, the subgenre of response (and diatribe, below) display comparable emphatic introductions, manufactured speech, and premise-*qul* command structures. What differentiates response from proclamation is its inclusion of the context of the utterance's revelation: that is, responses are, literally, responding to a specific statement or event that is described in the utterance. While proclamations make declamatory statements concerning the tenets of belief and disbelief, responses interpret or clarify statements or events.

To this end, responses include a higher frequency of syntactic particles of time and verbs of questioning than other subgenres of religio-political commentary. Because many responses recall past events, the subgenre displays increased usage of adverbs and conjunctions of time. These particles include *idh* "when," *thumma* "then," and *ba'da* "after," among others. These types of syntactic particles are necessary when recounting events, as they establish the sequence of multiple past events. Much like the narrative communicative genre, responses use *idh* at the beginning of a description of a past event.

Responses may also include verbs of questioning or *qāla* "to say" conjugated in the future tense, often at the beginning of the utterance. Like other religio-political commentary subgenres, response establishes an initial premise with which the rest of the utterance can engage. Indeed, over half of the examples of response (20/38) display the premise-*qul* command structure. Unlike the other subgenres, however, response launches many of these premises with contrived speech in the form of a question or the future speech of an opponent. Nine responses begin with the verb *sa'ala* "to ask," conjugated either in the masculine singular or masculine plural forms and often including the object pronoun *-ka* "you (m. sing.)," presumably referring to

the Prophet. The questioners, if the Qur'ān is recording actual petitions, appear to be the community at large; all but one of the *sa'ala* verbs have no explicitly named subject, and the lone named subject is *al-nās* "the people." The questions range in content from new moons, spending, fighting during the sacred month, spoils of war, and the Hour. In examples beginning with a question, the question establishes the premise while the remainder of the utterance responds to the premise by answering the question. Similarly, six responses open with verbs of speech such as *qāla* "to say" or *za'ama* "to allege," conjugated in either the masculine singular or plural forms and sometimes with the future prefix *sa-*. Rather than answering an initial question, these utterances respond to a statement or anticipated statement of a speaker, usually an opponent. Like other subgenres of religio-political commentary, over half of responses conclude with formulaic clausulae.

A Meccan example of a response occurs in Q. 7:187-193:

> 187. They ask thee of the (destined) Hour, when is its appointed time? Say: Knowledge thereof is with my Lord only. He alone will manifest it at its proper time. It is heavy in the heavens and the earth. It cometh not to you save suddenly. They question thee as if thou couldst be well informed thereof. Say: Knowledge thereof is with God only, but most of mankind know not.
> 188. Say: For myself I have no power to benefit, nor power to hurt, save that which God willeth. Had I knowledge of the Unseen, I should have abundance of wealth, and adversity would not touch me. I am but a warner, and a bearer of good tidings unto folk who believe.
> 189. He it is Who did create you from a single soul, and therefrom did make his mate that he might take rest in her. And when he covered her she bore a light burden, and she passed (unnoticed) with it, but when it became heavy they cried unto God, their Lord, saying: If thou givest unto us aright we shall be of the thankful.
> 190. But when He gave unto them aright, they ascribed unto Him partners in respect of that which He had given them. High is He Exalted above all that they associate (with Him).
> 191. Attribute they as partners to God those who created naught, but are themselves created,
> 192. And cannot give them help, nor can they help themselves?
> 193. And if ye call them to the Guidance, they follow you not. Whether ye call them or are silent is the same for you.

The utterance opens with a question: *ayyāna mursāhā* "when is [the Hour's] appointed time?" As is characteristic of these types of responses, the inquirer is unspecified. This question establishes the premise of the utterance, i.e., when the Hour will occur, and it is immediately followed by a *qul* command that prompts an answer. Q. 7:187-193 presents two responses to the initial question, first in the middle of v. 187 and then at the end of v. 187 and continuing through v. 192. Verse 187 gives three answers to the question of when the Hour will occur: *innamā 'ilmuhā 'inda rabbi* "knowledge thereof is with my Lord only," at *waqtihā* "its time," and *baghtatan* "suddenly."

The end of v. 187 responds to the utterance's initial question by critiquing the manner in which it is asked, a response that continues through v. 192. Rather than provide an additional answer to when the Hour will occur, the end of v. 187 states that the question is being asked *ka'annaka ḥafiyyun* "as if thou [the Prophet] couldst be well informed thereof." The verse responds to this presumption with an additional *qul* command, again informing the audience that *innamā 'ilmuhā 'inda allahi* "knowledge thereof is with my Lord only." Verses 188-192, however, expand upon this response and explain why the Prophet does not know when the Hour will occur. Verse 188 begins with another *qul* command and stresses his role as a mere *nadhīr* "warner." Verse 189 highlights God's omnipotence through His creation of mankind and, in context of the previous verse, underscores the power differential between God and the Prophet. Verses 190-192 present the situation in which disbelievers call upon God's might and mercy and, having benefited from them, ascribe partners to him. Verse 193 concludes the utterance by reassuring the Prophet and, presumably, the believing community that it is *sawā'un 'alaykum* "the same for you," whether or not the disbelievers heed the Qur'ān's message. The structure of Q. 7:187-193 is as follows: an opening question establishing the premise of the time of the Hour,

an answer to the opening question, a response to the manner in which the question was asked, and, finally, a reassuring conclusion.

> Q. 33:35-40 offers a Medinan example of a response:
>
> 35. Indeed, men who surrender unto God, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard (their modesty), and men who remember God much and women who remember - God hath prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.
> 36. When God and his Messenger have decided an affair, a believing man or woman has no choice in it; and whoso is rebellious to God and His messenger, he verily goeth astray in error manifest.
> 37. And when thou saidst unto him on whom God hath conferred favour and thou hast conferred favour: Keep thy wife to thyself, and fear God! And thou didst hide in thy mind that which God was to bring to light, and thou didst fear mankind whereas God hath a better right that thou shouldst fear Him. So when Zayd had performed that necessary formality (of divorce) from her, We gave her unto thee in marriage, so that (henceforth) there is no fault upon the believers in respect of wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have performed the necessary formality (of release) from them. The commandment of God must be fulfilled.
> 38. There is no reproach for the Prophet in that which God maketh his due. That was God's way with those who passed away of old - and the commandment of God is certain destiny –
> 39. Who delivered the messages of God and feared Him, and feared none save God. God keepeth good account.
> 40. Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the messenger of God and the Seal of the Prophets; and God is ever Aware of all things.

The emphatic particle *inna* in v. 35 opens the utterance and initiates a premise that extends to v. 36. The premise operates in two parts: the first, in v. 35, establishes a general list of virtuous conduct and the second, in v. 36, contrasts this list with a single prohibition. Verse 35 lists ten examples of virtuous conduct, including patience (*al-ṣābirīna wa-l-ṣābirāti*), humility (*al-khāshi'īna wa-l-khāshi'āti*), and charity (*al-mutaṣaddiqīna wa-l-mutaṣaddiqāti*). Against this list of ten virtues, v. 36 includes a single act at odds with belief: *mā kāna li-mu'minin wa-lā*

mu'minatin idhā qaḍā llāhu wa-rasūluhu amran an yakūna lahumu al-khiyaratu min amrihim "When God and his Messenger have decided an affair, a believing man or woman has no choice in it." The inclusion of this lone prohibition directly after an extended list of virtues highlights the prohibition and suggests that it, rather than the list of virtues, is the primary argumentative thrust of the utterance. This suggestion is borne out when the opening premise is read in conjunction with its following response.

Verses 37-40 respond to the premise that believers do not have a choice in a matter previously decided by God and the Messenger by reinterpreting a communal controversy in light of this premise. Verse 37 alludes to the event in question: despite knowing that he intended to marry his adopted son Zayd's wife, the Prophet told Zayd *amsik 'alayka zawjaka wa-ttaqi llāha* "Keep thy wife to thyself, and fear God!" The verse proceeds to claim that the Prophet eventually married Zayd's wife to show that *lā yakūna 'alā al-mu'minīna ḥarajun fī azwāji ad'iyā'ihim idhā qaḍaw minhunna waṭaran* "there is no fault upon the believers in respect of wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have performed the necessary formality (of release) from them." Presumably, the Prophet's decision to marry his adopted son's wife caused a communal controversy, as v. 38 absolves the Prophet of any fault in the decision and emphasizes that the marriage was *amru llāhi* "the command of God." Verse 39 refers to, and presumably praises, those who *lā yakhshawna aḥadan illā allāha* "feared none save God," recalling the Prophet fearing the people (*takhshā l-nāsa*) and their reactions in v. 36. Finally, verse 40 concludes the utterance with a declaration concerning the Prophet's status as a father, complete with a closing formulaic clausula. As a whole, vv. 37-40 describe a controversial event in which the believing community was at odds with the decision of the Prophet to marry his adopted son's wife. These verses recast the marriage in light of the utterance's opening premise on the finality

of a decided matter and demonstrate that the community's antagonism towards the marriage was both unbecoming and misguided.

David Powers has argued that Q. 33:36-40 is a later interpolation modeled to appear as an historical event in the Prophet's life with "[t]he primary function… to support a key theological doctrine: the Qur'ānic pronouncement that Muḥammad is the Seal of Prophets (*khātam al-nabiyyīn*)."[94] Whether referring to an actual historical occurrence or not, Q. 33:35-40 (Powers does not include v. 35 in the grouping) describes and comments upon an event in an effort to assess its religious, political, or social significance, a fundamental function of the response subgenre.

Diatribe

The third subgenre of religio-political commentary is diatribe, a series of declarations condemning a specific group or community. There are 35 total examples, 14 Meccan and 21 Medinan, and they average 15.71 verses in length. Diatribe is unlike the other subgenres of religio-political commentary because, instead of declaring principles of belief and disbelief or responding to a statement or event, it criticizes the actions and beliefs of a community.[95] The primary targets of the Qur'ān's ire include the Disbelievers (*alladhīna kafarū*), the Associators (*al-mushrikūn*), the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*), the Children of Israel (*banū isrā'īl*), the Hypocrites (*al-munāfiqūn*), and the Bedouins (*al-a'rāb*).

Although similar in structure to proclamation and response, diatribe exhibits curse structures and increased use of rhetorical questions and manufactured speech. In a subgenre dedicated to criticizing opponent groups, curses play an appropriately prominent role in

[94] David S. Powers, *Muḥammad Is Not the Father of Any of Your Men* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 120.
[95] As will be shown below, Q. 111 is the lone example of diatribe that targets an individual.

response's strategies of condemnation. Nearly a third of all examples include a curse; the most common type of curse syntax is *waylun li-* "Woe to…" followed by the object of the curse.[96] In Q. 25:1-77, the wrongdoer is even presented as cursing *himself* on the Day of Judgment!

In addition to curses, diatribe displays increased employment of rhetorical questions and manufactured speech in comparison to the other two subgenres. A quarter of diatribes begin with the interrogative particle *a-*, almost the same number of examples of religio-political commentary using an emphatic opening. Similarly, diatribe includes increased instances of manufactured speech. Because diatribe engages with a specific community, it is common for the subgenre to insert the speech of that community into the utterance in order to refute the content of their speech; nearly seventy percent of diatribes (24/35) include this type of manufactured speech. It should be noted, too, that the premise-response structure and formulaic conclusions discussed for the previous subgenres are also present in diatribe.

A particularly interesting example of a Meccan diatribe occurs in Q. 111:

1. May the hands of Abu Lahab perish, and may he perish!
2. His wealth and gains will not exempt him.
3. He will be plunged in flaming Fire,
4. And his wife, the wood-carrier,
5. Will have upon her neck a halter of palm-fibre.

This short sura is unique in a few respects: it is one of the few examples of religio-political commentary that occurs as a single sura and it is the only diatribe whose subject is an individual, although the wife of Abu Lahab is mentioned. The utterance begins by cursing Abu Lahab, using the optative phrase *tabbat yadā abī lahabin wa-tabb* "May the hands of Abu Lahab perish, and may he perish!" This curse establishes the premise of the utterance: the condemnation of Abu

[96] On Qur'anic curses, see: Devin J. Stewart, "Curses," in *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

Lahab. Verse 2 expands the premise by arguing that his worldly gains will not avail him because, in v. 3, he will receive an eschatological punishment (*nāran*). Verses 4-5 introduce the wife of Abu Lahab and allude to her unique eschatological punishment (*fī jīdihā ḥablun min masad*). Unlike other diatribes, this utterance does not include the reasons for Abu Lahab's condemnation; contrived speech is often the vehicle for communicating a diatribe's context, but it is absent in this sura. While brief, Q. 111:1-5 exhibits an opening curse, a condemnation of the subject's actions or status, and a reference to his eschatological punishment, along with that of his wife.

A typical Medinan diatribe occurs in Q. 2:6-20:

> 6. Indeed, the Disbelievers, whether thou warn them or thou warn them not it is all one for them; they believe not.
> 7. God sealed their hearts and on their hearing and their vision is a veil. Theirs will be an awful doom.
> 8. And of mankind are some who say: We believe in God and the Last Day, when they believe not.
> 9. They think to beguile God and those who believe, and they beguile none save themselves; but they perceive not.
> 10. In their hearts is a disease, and God increaseth their disease. A painful doom is theirs because they lie.
> 11. And when it is said unto them: Make not mischief in the earth, they say: We are only reformers.
> 12. Are not they indeed the mischief-makers? But they perceive not.
> 13. And when it is said unto them: believe as the people believe, they say: shall we believe as the foolish believe? are not they indeed the foolish? But they know not.
> 14. And when they fall in with those who believe, they say: We believe; but when they go apart to their devils they declare: Indeed, we are with you; indeed, we are only mockers.
> 15. God doth mock them, He prolongs them in their transgression, wandering.
> 16. These are they who purchase error at the price of guidance, so their commerce doth not prosper, neither are they guided.
> 17. Their likeness is as the likeness of one who kindleth fire, and when it sheddeth its light around him God taketh away their light and leaveth them in darkness, where they cannot see,
> 18. Deaf, dumb and blind; and they return not.
> 19. Or like a rainstorm from the sky, wherein is darkness, thunder and the flash of lightning. They thrust their fingers in their ears by reason of the thunder-claps, for

> fear of death, God encompasseth the disbelievers (in His guidance, His omniscience and His omnipotence).
> 20. The lightning almost snatches away their sight. As often as it flasheth forth for them they walk therein, and when it darkeneth against them they stand still. If God willed, He could destroy their hearing and their sight. Indeed, God is all-powerful over all things.

As is common in religio-political commentary, the utterance begins with the emphatic particle *inna* that introduces its premise. Verses 6-7 establish the two-part premise of the Disbelievers' obstinacy to belief and, in particular, the reason for their obstinacy: *khatama llāhu ʻalā qulūbihim wa-ʻalā samʻihim wa-ʻalā abṣārihim ghishāwatun* "God sealed their hearts and on their hearing and their vision is a veil." This premise serves the dual purpose of providing a starting point for the utterance's condemnation of the Disbelievers and reassuring the Prophet against the Disbelievers' rebukes. Verses 8-20 use manufactured speech to expand the premise and give examples of God's power over, and knowledge of, the Disbelievers. Verses 8 and 11 include contrived speech to demonstrate the hypocrisy of the Disbelievers; despite the Disbelievers saying *āmannā bi-llāhi wa-bi-l-yawmi l-ākhiri* "We believe in God and the Last Day," and *innamā naḥnu muṣliḥūn* "We are only reformers," God knows their true deception. Indeed, v. 14 includes two examples of contrived speech that contrast the public and private speech of the Disbelievers; in public, Disbelievers say *āmannā* "we believe," while in private they say *innamā naḥnu mustahziʼūn* "we are only mockers." By including these two examples of manufactured speech, the utterance both condemns the Disbelievers as hypocrites and highlights God's omniscience over them. Verse 15 establishes God's omnipotence over the Disbelievers, as *yamudduhum fī ṭughyānihim* "He prolongs them in their transgression."

Verse 17 begins the conclusion of the utterance with a series of examples of the Disbelievers' powerlessness before God. This type of example (*mathal*) syntax is common throughout the Qur'ān's religio-political commentary. The example in vv. 17-18 highlights

God's ability to take away the Disbelievers' senses, recalling the "veil" over their vision in v. 7, leaving them *ṣummun bukmun ʿumyun* "deaf, dumb, and blind." Verses 19-20 conclude the utterance with an example of a thunderstorm; like in vv. 19-20, *yakādu l-barqu yakhṭafu abṣārahum* "[t]he lightning almost snatches away their sight," leaving the Disbelievers temporarily blinded. Verse 20 ends with a reminder of God's omnipotence and omniscience over the Disbelievers and includes a concluding formulaic clausula that reemphasizes the premise of the utterance: *inna llāha ʿalā kulli shayʾin qadīr* "God is all-powerful over all things." Like other subgenres of religio-political commentary, diatribe exhibits an opening premise followed by a response to that premise, but, as is characteristic of diatribe, the premise and response condemn a community or an individual. Q. 2:6-20 exemplifies this structure, with vv. 6-7 establishing a premise, vv. 8-16 expanding the premise, and vv. 17-20 giving examples of the premise.

Conclusion

Religio-political commentary in the Qur'ān is an argumentative genre that establishes and responds to a variety of religious, political, and social premises. Using rhetorical techniques such as emphatic syntax, manufactured speech, rhetorical questions, and *qul* commands, religio-political commentary establishes an opening premise and uses the subsequent verses to comment upon that premise. While each conforms to this general structure, the genre's three subgenres of proclamation, response, and diatribe exhibit unique thematic and syntactic characteristics. These subgenres have distinct social functions, too: proclamation communicates norms, response, literally, responds to questions and events, and diatribe denounces opponents. Additionally, religio-political commentary occurs across both Meccan and Medinan literary corpora and at the levels of both the sura passage and the sura.

With 224 occurrences throughout the text, religio-political commentary is the Qur'ān's primary form of communication; there are 80 more examples of religio-political commentary than the second-most common Qur'anic communicative genre, that of exhortation. As will be discussed in the conclusion of this study, the prevalence in the Qur'ān of religio-political commentary, in conjunction with the relative lack of the prayer and creed genres, establish the Qur'ān as an argumentative, as opposed to liturgical, text. Before a discussion of the Qur'ān as a complete corpus is possible, however, its remaining communicative genres must be surveyed. We turn now to an analysis of its second-most common communicative genre, exhortation.

Chapter Three: Exhortation

Introduction

The second-most prevalent communicative genre in the Qur'ān is exhortation. At 144 total utterances, it comes in a close second to religio-political commentary's prominence in Qur'anic discourse. These two genres account for the vast majority of the Qur'ān's non-narrative genres, and, as will be discussed in the conclusion of this chapter, exhibit many rhetorical similarities. The present chapter will begin a discussion of the way exhortation can be described, including a note of caution concerning the use of terminology developed in Biblical criticism for defining the Qur'ān's exhortative utterances. With reference to the pre- and early-Islamic *khuṭbah* genre, it will proceed to argue that Qur'anic exhortation employs a tripartite vocative address (vocative particle, explicit addressee, and imperative verb or rhetorical question) in order to engage a public audience directly. Additionally, exhortation displays five subgenres (apocalyptic, legal, narrative, pious, and political) based on changes in content and addressee and is primarily a phenomenon of the Medinan literary corpus.

Terminology

The terms used to classify a literary genre necessarily shape the way in which that genre is understood; accordingly, the use of terminology specifically developed in the field of Biblical studies to classify genres in the Qur'ān imbues the Qur'anic counterparts with presupposed forms, styles, and social functions. For Qur'anic genres like exhortation, using Biblical studies terminology is not, at the outset, unreasonable. The use of form criticism in Biblical studies has an extensive history of debate and refinement, and many of the forms identified in the Biblical texts (i.e., sermons, parables, hymns) have become commonly recognized literary types in form

critical studies of the Bible.[97] Indeed, two prominent scholars have described the Qur'ān's overarching genre as "homiletic" and "liturgical," respectively.[98] These forms, however, carry the baggage of Biblical studies, too; as these genre classifications were developed to characterize Biblical texts with specific social contexts, the use of these classifications for the Qur'ān implies that comparable social contexts existed in the Qur'anic milieu. When these implications go unaccounted for in Qur'anic studies, there is a risk of importing unintended and possibly misleading or inapplicable connections to a Biblical *Sitz im Leben*.

Therefore, before we can identify an appropriate term with which to classify the Qur'ān's exhortatory material, we must determine the features that establish a text as "exhortatory"; only then can we assess the validity of any terminology imported from Biblical studies. The primary syntactic markers of Qur'anic exhortatory material are the vocative addresses of *yā* and *yā-ayyuhā* followed by an addressee that begin many verses and are common features of Qur'anic rhetoric. This syntax occurs at the beginning of verses in non-narrative contexts 144 times throughout the Qur'ān. Among the most recent and comprehensive studies of these Qur'anic vocatives, Karim Samji's *The Qur'ān: A Form-Critical History* observes that the Qur'ān uses introductory formulae to open specific genres of discourse.[99] With respect to the vocative addresses *yā* and *yā-ayyuhā*, Samji argues that they can introduce, depending upon the stated addressee, the wisdom genre and the proclamation genre.[100] In particular, he associates these introductory vocatives with the subgenres of admonition, code, sermon, and a variety of

[97] Martin J. Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism in Its Context* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). On form criticism in Qur'anic studies, see: Devin J. Stewart, "Wansbrough, Bultmann, and the Theory of Variant Traditions in the Qurʾān," in *Qur'ānic Studies Today*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth and Michael Sells (London: Routledge, 2016), 17-51.
[98] Reynolds, *Biblical Subtext*, 241; Neuwirth, "The Liturgical Qur'an."
[99] Samji, *Form-Critical*; on Qur'anic vocative addresses, see: Stewart, "Vocatives."
[100] Samji, *Form-Critical*, 130-174, 227-269.

regulatory forms. Samji does discuss "exhortation" as a subgenre of wisdom, but vocative addresses do not seem to play an integral role in its form.[101] Why is it, then, that we argue that introductory vocative addresses are the exhortation formula *par excellence*?

Because Samji analyzes only the vocative addresses, and not the following syntax of named addressee and imperative verb or rhetorical question, he does not fully appreciate the exhortative function of the vocative addresses. The Qur'ān's vocative particles *yā* and *yāayyuhā* are followed by an explicit addressee, in most cases communities such as *alladhīna āmanū* "those who believe" or *ahl al-kitāb* "People of the Book."[102] Additionally, of the 144 total vocative addresses, 118 are followed by an imperative verb or rhetorical question (111 by an imperative verb and seven by a rhetorical question).[103] In this way, Qur'anic vocatives exist within a tripartite syntactic structure: vocative particle, addressee, and imperative verb or rhetorical question.[104] When this structure is viewed as a single syntactic unit, it is clear that the

[101] Ibid., 151-152.
[102] A notable exception to this rule is the phrase *yā-layta* "O I wish!"
[103] Although different syntactic structures, I consider imperative verbs and rhetorical questions to have similar rhetorical force in the context of a Qur'anic exhortation. Naturally, an imperative verb commands the audience to perform, or refrain from, a specific action; common Qur'anic examples include, *āminū* "believe!" or *ittaqū* "fear!" Rhetorical questions, on the other hand, do not command a specific question; instead, they present to the audience a question to which there is a single, obvious answer. The following example is later in this study: *yā-ahla l-kitābi lima tuḥājjūna fī ibrāhīma wa-mā unzilati l-tawrātu wa-l-injīlu illā min ba'dihi* "O People of the Book, why do you argue about Abraham while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after him?" The implication of this rhetorical question is that the People of the Scripture should not argue about Abraham. Therefore, the question could be restated as an imperative directed at the People of the Book commanding them not to argue about Abraham: *yā-ahla l-kitābi lā tuḥājjū fi ibrāhīma…* "O People of the Book, do not argue about Abraham…" Because rhetorical questions can be reformulated as imperative verb constructions while retaining their general meanings, I have considered imperative verbs and rhetorical questions as constituting the same function in Qur'anic exhortations.
[104] There are three examples in which the vocative address is followed by *kutiba 'alaykum* "it is prescribed for you" or *lā yaḥillu* "not permitted." I have included these as examples of vocatives followed by imperative verbs because each phrase implies obligatory action (or inaction). That

vocative address (itself a vocative particle followed by an addressee) publicly identifies the addressee with the express purpose of directing her conduct, or *exhorting* her. That vocative addresses introduce a larger exhortation can only be seen when the addresses are viewed along with the imperative verbs and rhetorical questions that follow them.

A recent study by Nora K. Schmid has investigated the Qur'ān's use of the term *waʿẓ* "exhortation" and related forms.[105] Schmid argues that a diachronic reading of *waʿẓ* reveals a terminological evolution from "ethical exhortation" to "legal paraenesis."[106] Ostensibly, this meta-generic label can be used to describe the Qur'ān's communicative genre of exhortation, as this dissertation's presentation of Qur'anic exhortation similarly includes pious and legal subgenres. Schmid, however, astutely notes that "[e]xhortation and paraenesis serve as macro forms into which different literary forms are inserted," not as discrete literary forms themselves.[107] Indeed, a survey of all Qur'anic occurrences of the verb *waʿaẓa* and related forms shows their usage in four different communicative genres (religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict) and nine different subgenres. For this reason, *waʿẓ* is not an appropriate label for the Qur'ān's communicative genre of exhortation, as it appears to refer to a general exhortative *function* as opposed to a specific exhortative *form*.

Rather, the tripartite structure of the Qur'anic vocative address accords well with the genre of exhortation as developed in Biblical studies. Samji grounds his definition of exhortation in that of the *Forms of the Old Testament Literature Series*: "[a]n attempt at persuasion to do

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is, *kutiba ʿalaykum* has the same rhetorical force as a command to do that which is prescribed for the audience, while *lā yaḥillu* has the same rhetorical force of a prohibition.

[105] Nora K. Schmid, "From Ethico-Religious Exhortation to Legal Paraenesis: Functions of Qur'anic Waʿẓ," *Islamic Law and Society* 8 (2021): 317-351.

[106] Ibid., 349.

[107] Ibid., 321.

something right or to avoid doing what is wrong… [T]he nature of what is right is predetermined by what appears to be advantageous, as well as by the adherence to established customs, positive ethical standards, laws, commands, prohibitions, and instructions"[108] and, in particular, "[e]xhortation can be discerned by expressions of direct appeals at persuasion to or for persons, even in the grammatical forms of imperatives."[109] Qur'anic vocatives do just this; vocative particles are employed to appeal to a specific audience, and the actions of the audience are directed through a subsequent imperative verb or rhetorical question.

These vocative addresses open the exhortatory speech act, but they do not constitute the exhortation in its entirety. A shortcoming of the study of the formulaic language in the Qur'ān is the focus on the individual formulae instead of the ways in which the formulae interact with the surrounding text and contribute to the construction or a larger literary whole. Samji's *The Qur'ān: A Form-Critical History*, for example, catalogues the opening formulae of the Qur'ān's many genres, but it does not offer a structural analysis of these genres beyond these introductory formulae.[110] It is not enough to recognize that the Qur'ān's vocative addresses introduce the genre of exhortation; a study of Qur'anic genres must demonstrate how formulaic language signals a specific literary form with a specific social function, and, in a composite text like the Qur'ān, how specific genres can be identified and delimited in the text.

An Overview of Exhortation

Fortunately, the Qur'ān's use of exhortation in its narrative sections and the pre- and early-Islamic genre of the *khuṭbah* offer model forms with which the Qur'ān's non-narrative exhortations can be compared. In a large number of the Qur'ān's retellings of Biblical and extra-

[108] George W. Coats, *Exodus 1-18* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999), 161.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Samji, *Form-Critical*.

Biblical narratives, speech between a messenger and his community is constructed in the form of an exhortation. Throughout the Qur'ān's 44 narratives, there are over 600 instances of speech; that is, Qur'anic narratives contain over 600 occurrences of a character beginning and ending a speech act.[111] Of these occurrences, there are 150 examples of the exhortatory genre witnessed throughout the Qur'ān's non-narrative sections.[112] Around 25 percent of all narrative speech is in the form of an exhortation![113]

Narratives are especially important for understanding the original form of the Qur'anic revelation because they are literal exemplars of what the Qur'ān sees prophetic speech as constituting. What does it sound like, how is it structured, and what are the power-dynamics at play?[114] Accordingly, the Prophet, himself continuing the tradition of a messenger warning his community, would mirror his predecessors' speech in his revelation. In Q. 7:85-87, for example, Shu'ayb speaks to his community:

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[111] "Instances of speech" refers to Bakhtin's concept of the utterance discussed in "Chapter One: Introduction and Methodology," 12-13.

[112] The Qur'ān exhibits a similar ratio among its communicative genres: of the Qur'ān's 452 individual instances of communicative genres, 144, or nearly 32 percent, are exhortations.

[113] Until now, there has been little engagement with the similarities (or differences) between prophetic speech in the Qur'ān's narrative and non-narrative sections. This is unfortunate because the speech of the prophets in Qur'anic narratives offers a paradigm with which the Qur'ān's language more generally can be compared. As the communicative genre of exhortation demonstrates, both the form and the frequency of occurrences is comparable across narrative and non-narrative material. These similarities suggest that speech in Qur'anic narratives should be used as a foundation for understanding the conventions of speech in non-narrative sections.

[114] A comment on the similarity between Qur'anic exhortations embedded in and outside narrative contexts must be made. Their similarity in language and literary structure indicates that the Qur'ān speaks the language of a Biblical epoch, not merely the language of Biblical prophets. It is true that Moses, Abraham, Shu'ayb, and others speak in an exhortatory form, but so too does Pharaoh. Is this because the Qur'ān is implying that Pharaoh was a Messenger or holds virtues in his messages to his people? Certainly not. Rather, it evinces a self-conception of Qur'anic language as of a Biblical time and place, where protagonists and antagonists alike speak in a certain form and fashion, in a "Biblical vernacular." While the Prophet is carrying on a tradition of Biblical prophethood through the revelation of the Qur'ān, the language and form in which he is speaking is that of "Biblical speech," not specifically "Prophetic speech."

> 85. O my people, worship God; you have no deity other than Him. There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord. So fulfill the measure and weight and do not deprive people of their due and cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation. That is better for you, if you should be believers.
> 86. And do not sit on every path, threatening and averting from the way of God those who believe in Him, seeking to make it [seem] deviant. And remember when you were few and He increased you. And see how was the end of the corrupters.
> 87. And if there should be a group among you who has believed in that with which I have been sent and a group that has not believed, then be patient until God judges between us. And He is the best of judges.

Shu'ayb's speech begins in v. 85 with a three-part vocative address to his people: a vocative particle and stated addressee (*yā-qawmi*) followed by a series of imperative verbs that command his community to act piously (*u'budū llaha*, *awfū al-kayla*, *lā tabkhasū al-nāsa ashyā'ahum*, etc.). V. 86 continues with the commands to act piously, and these pious injunctions are followed by a conclusion in v. 87 that explains that God will act as judge between those who believe and those who do not (*fa-ṣbirū ḥattā yaḥkuma llāhu baynanā wa-huwa khayru al-ḥākimīn*). As shall be shown, the salient features of the tripartite vocative address and conclusion referring to God's omnipotence and omniscience (often expressed through references to God's eschatological judgment) are themselves the same conventions used by the Qur'ān to structure its own, non-narrative exhortations. The primary difference between the Qur'ān's narrative and non-narrative exhortations is length; because they are placed in a larger narrative retelling, narrative exhortations are generally shorter in verse length than their non-narrative counterparts.

A comparison to Q. 2:21-27, a pious exhortation, demonstrates the marked similarities between the Qur'ān's communicative genre of exhortation and exhortations embedded in narrative speech:

> 21. O mankind! worship your Lord, Who hath created you and those before you, so that ye may ward off (evil).

22. Who hath appointed the earth a resting-place for you, and the sky a canopy; and causeth water to pour down from the sky, thereby producing fruits as food for you. And do not set up rivals to God when ye know (better).
23. And if ye are in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto Our slave (Muhammad), then produce a surah of the like thereof, and call your witness beside God if ye are truthful.
24. And if ye do it not - and ye can never do it - then guard yourselves against the Fire prepared for disbelievers, whose fuel is of men and stones.
25. And give glad tidings (O Muhammad) unto those who believe and do good works; that theirs are Gardens underneath which rivers flow; as often as they are regaled with food of the fruit thereof, they say: this is what was given us aforetime; and it is given to them in resemblance. There for them are pure companions; there for ever they abide.
26. Indeed, God disdaineth not to coin the similitude even of a gnat. Those who believe know that it is the truth from their Lord; but those who disbelieve say: What doth God wish (to teach) by such a similitude? He misleadeth many thereby, and He guideth many thereby; and He misleadeth thereby only miscreants;
27. Those who break the covenant of God after ratifying it, and sever that which God ordered to be joined, and (who) make mischief in the earth: Those are they who are the losers.

The utterance opens with a similar tripartite vocative address to that of the exhortatory speech above; while the addressee is *al-nās* "mankind" instead of *qawmi* "my people," both vocative openings are followed by the same pious command *u'budū allāha* "worship God!" Verses 22-25 emphasize God's omnipotence and omniscience vis-à-vis the creation of the earth, the revelation of the Qur'ān, and eschatological judgment. The description of eschatological punishment and reward in vv. 24-25, in particular, echoes God's description as *khayru al-ḥākimīn* "the best of judges" in Q. 7:87 above. Verses 26-27 conclude the utterance with an example of God's power over disbelievers: God *yuḍillu* "misleadeth" the *al-fāsiqīn* "miscreants" and *al-khāsirūn* "losers." Despite displaying slight differences in content, Q. 2:21-27 and Q. 7:85-87 both adhere to conventions of exhortation, including opening vocative addresses, pious injunctions, and concluding references to God's omnipotence and omniscience.

Arabic orations, or *khuṭbah*s, provide another important comparison for the Qur'ān's exhortatory material. Tahera Qutbuddin has recently undertaken a comprehensive study of the pre- and early-Islamic Arabic genre of *khuṭbah*.[115] Qutbuddin notes that "the Qur'an adopted many of the stylistic features of the existing genre of oratory" and that "several sections of the Qur'an are in the form of a quasi-oration."[116] Indeed, several of *khuṭbah*'s rhetorical features such as direct address, the discussion of diverse themes, and concluding formulae are fundamental conventions of the Qur'anic genre of exhortation.[117] In this *khuṭbah* attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, for example, we see the same thematic and syntactic features as the above exhortation except for the imperative verbs being replaced with a rhetorical question to the addressee:

> '[O] Banū so-and-so, Banū 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Banū 'Abd al-Manāf!... If I were to tell you that horsemen were coming out at the foot of the mountain, would you believe me?' They replied, 'We have never known you to tell a lie.' Then he said, 'I am 'a warner to you in the face of a terrible doom. / *yā banī fulān, yā banī 'abd al-muṭṭalib, yā banī 'abd al-manāf!... a-ra'aytukum law akhbartukum anna khīlān takhruju bi-safḥi hādhā al-jabali, a-kuntum muṣaddiqiyya? qālū: mā jarrabnā 'alayka kadhiban, qāla: fa-innī nadhīrun lakum bayna yaday 'adhābin shadīd*''[118]

The oration begins with a series of vocative addresses and is immediately followed by a rhetorical question.[119] This opening conforms to the tripartite structure we see in Qur'anic

[115] Tahera Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oration: Art and Function* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).
[116] Ibid., 8.
[117] Ibid., 64.
[118] al-Ṭabarī, *Muḥammad At Mecca*, tr. W. Montgomery Watt and M. V. McDonald (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 89.
[119] Even though the audience verbally answers the question that it is directed at them, it is still a rhetorical question. The goal of the oration is for Muhammad to remind his audience of his trustworthiness and then utilize this trustworthiness as evidence for the veracity of his revelation; therefore, establishing his credibility is vital to the development of the oration. When Muhammad questions his audience, then, there is only one answer that allows for the logical completion of the oration: "Yes, you are trustworthy." Because the question has only one possible answer, it is a rhetorical question.

exhortations: vocative particle, named addressee, and imperative verb or rhetorical question. The *khuṭbah* concludes with an allusion to God's final judgment, the *'adhābin shadīdin* "terrible doom" that awaits those who disbelieve in Muhammad's mission.[120] In this sense, this *khuṭbah* and the previous example of Qur'anic narrative speech conform to the same opening and closing "bounds" (tripartite vocative address and reference to God's judgment). These two examples establish the genre conventions of an exhortation as containing a vocative opening, engaging the audience through imperative verbs or rhetorical questions, and concluding with a reference to God's judgment, and they may be used as templates with which to understand the Qur'ān's exhortatory form. The vocative addresses of *yā* and *yā-ayyuhā* that begin so many verses of the Qur'ān are not just formulae used in the creation of an orally composed text,[121] they are the beginning of a discrete genre of exhortation.

A catalog of the Qur'ān's employment of vocative addresses demonstrates 144 individual instances of the genre of exhortation throughout the corpus.[122]According to Nöldeke's categorization, exhortations are primarily a Medinan phenomenon, though not exclusively.[123] A structural outline of the genre of exhortation is as follows:

1. Direct audience engagement through a tripartite vocative address (vocative particle, addressee, imperative verb or rhetorical question)
2. Specific content dependent upon subgenre

[120] It is particularly interesting to note that the final phrase *nadhīrun lakum bayna yadā 'adhābin shadīdin* "a warner to you in the face of a terrible doom" is a quotation from Q. 36:46. How would the listening audience be able to differentiate between this "profane" *khuṭbah* with a Qur'anic reference and the types of Qur'anic exhortations we will now be discussing? That is certainly an open question and may require deeper discussions of performance in the context of the Prophet's speech.
[121] Bannister, *Oral-Formulaic*.
[122] For the complete catalog of exhortations in the Qur'ān, see the appendix.
[123] Nöldeke, *History*.

3. Conclusion often explicating God's eschatological punishment or reward or formulaic references to God's omnipotence and omniscience

The opening engagement with a public audience is the defining feature of the Qur'anic exhortation. The opening vocative formulas serve to begin speech by drawing the attention of a target audience. In the four-part framework of the Qur'anic utterance established in the introduction, the vocative address establishes the opening boundary, the beginning of communication. The subjects of address are diverse, and, as shall be demonstrated with specific examples, determine the specific subgenre of exhortation used. The primarily plural audiences indicate that the exhortation is a public performance intended for widespread consumption, and even those exhortations addressed to the Prophet himself seem to have a communal application of its message in mind.

This fundamental aspect of public proclamation establishes a twofold social function for the Qur'anic exhortation: the institution of the Prophet as a communal leader and the guidance of the actions of the community at large. One must imagine the impact of a single speaker, the Prophet, commanding and questioning a public gathering; implicit in the imperative verbs and rhetorical questions is the assumption that the Prophet has the authority to make his arguments and claims. The exhortation creates a power-dynamic in which the Prophet is superior in moral authority to the audience, but this power-dynamic has its limits. As will be shown, non-Believers, that is Christians, Jews, or pagans, are never the explicit subject of a legal exhortation. Why is this? This dissertation argues that it is because the Qur'ān does not conceive of the Prophet's authority as including legal restrictions on the actions of the non-Believers. Instead, they are primarily the subjects of pious and doctrinal exhortations.

Following the opening address is the specific content of the exhortation. Primarily on the basis of this content, I have divided the exhortations into the following subgenres: apocalyptic, narrative, doctrinal, pious, legal, and political. Each exhibits its own generic conventions, and each will be described in greater detail below, in turn.

Lastly, many exhortations end with a conclusion that refers to God's omnipotence and omniscience. This may occur through the listing of eschatological reward or punishments, concluding formulae including God's names, or anecdotes emphasizing God's role as Creator. These concluding sections establish the closing boundary of the exhortation and, therefore, the ending of the speech act. A discussion of each subgenre of exhortation follows.

Apocalyptic Exhortation

Apocalyptic exhortation is the least represented subgenre with only six total examples, four Meccan and two Medinan, averaging 11 verses in length. Its addressees include *al-nās*, *al-insān*, *alladhīna āmanū*, and *banī ādam*, and it never addresses explicitly Jewish or Christian audiences. The general structure includes an opening tripartite vocative address followed by pious injunctions, a description of an eschatological event, and a conclusion. Apocalyptic exhortations establish the imminence and certainty of an eschatological event in which mankind will be judged according to its deeds and beliefs, without specifying the time of its occurrence. The rhetorical function of apocalyptic exhortations, not unlike pious exhortations, are to persuade their audiences into belief and/or pious conduct, although they exclusively use the description of the Day of Judgment as a means to frighten their audiences into obedience. A unique feature of some apocalyptic exhortations is the prefacing of the opening vocative address with conditional syntax enumerating eschatological signs. Q. 84:1-25 is one of these Meccan examples:

1. When the heaven is split asunder
2. And attentive to her Lord in fear,
3. And when the earth is spread out
4. And hath cast out all that was in her, and is empty
5. And attentive to her Lord in fear!
6. O man, thou art working toward thy Lord a work which thou wilt meet (in His presence).
7. Then whoso is given his account in his right hand
8. He truly will receive an easy reckoning
9. And will return unto his folk in joy.
10. But whoso is given his account behind his back,
11. He surely will invoke destruction
12. And be thrown to scorching fire.
13. He verily lived joyous with his folk,
14. He verily deemed that he would never return (unto God).
15. Nay, but lo! his Lord is ever looking on him!
16. Oh, I swear by the afterglow of sunset,
17. And by the night and all that it enshroudeth,
18. And by the moon when she is at the full,
19. That ye shall journey on from plane to plane.
20. What aileth them, then, that they believe not
21. And, when the Qur'an is recited unto them, worship not (God)?
22. Nay, but those who disbelieve will deny;
23. And God knoweth best what they are hiding.
24. So give them tidings of a painful doom,
25. Save those who believe and do good works, for theirs is a reward unfailing.

Unlike the vast majority of exhortations, the vocative address in v. 6 is not the opening verse of the utterance! There is the possibility that v. 6 is a later addition to the sura, and that that is the source for the delayed vocative address, but its thematic resonance with the rest of the sura and its similar end-rhyme (*-i/īh*) to the apodosis of the opening conditional in v. 7 suggest that it is an original part of the utterance. Additionally, the vocative particle and stated addressee are not followed by an imperative verb or rhetorical question. Despite these structural peculiarities, the utterance exhibits generic conventions characteristic of apocalyptic exhortation: an explication of apocalyptic signs via conditional syntax in vv. 1-7, a vocative address in v. 6, and the descriptions of eschatological punishment and reward in vv. 8-25. Verses 16-19, too, include an oath series underscoring the inevitability of the Day of Judgment. Finally, the utterance's

emphasis on punishment, as opposed to reward, should be highlighted. Only one verse, v. 25, mentions eschatological reward, and there is little discussion of it beyond its description as *ajrun ghayru mamnūn* "a reward unfailing." The utterance's depiction of eschatological punishment, in contrast, extends across multiple verses and is variously called *sa'īr* "a scorching fire" and *'adhābin alīm* "a painful doom," further underscoring the subgenre's intent to scare its audience into proper conduct.

Q. 22:1-4 is an example of a Medinan apocalyptic exhortation:

> 1. O mankind, fear your Lord. Indeed, the convulsion of the [final] Hour is a terrible thing.
> 2. On the Day you see it every nursing mother will be distracted from that [child] she was nursing, and every pregnant woman will abort her pregnancy, and you will see the people [appearing] intoxicated while they are not intoxicated; but the punishment of God is severe.
> 3. And of the people is he who disputes about God without knowledge and follows every rebellious devil.
> 4. It has been decreed for every devil that whoever turns to him - he will misguide him and will lead him to the punishment of the Blaze.

Addressing mankind generally (*al-nās*), the exhortation begins with a tripartite vocative address commanding the audience to *ittaqū rabbakum* "fear your Lord." The reason for this command, it is soon revealed, is the *shay'un 'aẓīm* "terrible thing" that God has in store for mankind on the Day of Judgment. Verse 2, the specific eschatological content of the utterance, describes the Day of Judgment as time of social and mental upheaval, as even *kullu murḍi'atin 'ammā arḍa'at* "every nursing mother will be distracted from that [child] she was nursing." Verses 3-4 compose the utterance's conclusion, condemning *man yujādilu fī allāhi* "he who disputed about God" to the eschatological *'adhābi al-sa'īr* "punishment of the Blaze" and recalling the reference to *sa'īr* in the example above. This tripartite structure of audience engagement via vocative address, eschatological scene, and conclusion describing eschatological punishment is illustrative of the apocalyptic exhortation generally.

Narrative Exhortation

Narrative exhortations, not to be confused with exhortations that appear within Qur'anic narrative material, are extended utterances in which a single or series of Biblical or extra-Biblical narratives are recounted. There are eight total examples, two Meccan and six Medinan. Narrative exhortations average 10.5 verses in length. They are addressed to *alladhīna āmanū*, *ahl al-kitāb*, *banī isrā'īl*, *al-nabī*, *al-nās*. These addressees make sense as the recipients of narrative exhortations; appeals to Biblical and extra-Biblical narratives would only have an effect on those familiar with or invested in those stories, i.e., those familiar with Judeo-Christian tradition. Similar to the narrative subgenre of legitimating narrative, to be discussed in chapter four, narrative exhortations employ narrative material in order to support a premise or argument established at the beginning of the utterance. Just as apocalyptic exhortations use scenes of eschatological judgment to frighten their audiences into pious conduct or proper belief, narrative exhortations use narrative material to bolster the legitimacy of their arguments and, ultimately, persuade their audiences into pious conduct or belief. Q. 7:158-176 is an example of a narrative exhortation from the Meccan literary corpus:

> 158. Say (O Muhammad): O mankind! Indeed, I am the messenger of God to you all - (the messenger of) Him unto Whom belongeth the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. There is no God save Him. He quickeneth and He giveth death. So believe in God and His messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, who believeth in God and in His Words, and follow him that haply ye may be led aright.
> 159. And of the People of Moses there is a community who lead with truth and establish justice therewith.
> 160. We divided them into twelve tribes, nations; and We inspired Moses, when his people asked him for water, saying: Smite with thy staff the rock! And there gushed forth therefrom twelve springs, so that each tribe knew their drinking-place. And we caused the white cloud to overshadow them and sent down for them the manna and the quails (saying): Eat of the good things wherewith we have provided you. They wronged Us not, but they were wont to wrong themselves.

161. And when it was said unto them: Dwell in this township and eat therefrom whence ye will, and say "Repentance," and enter the gate prostrate; We shall forgive you your sins; We shall increase (reward) for the right-doers.
162. But those of them who did wrong changed the word which had been told them for another saying, and We sent down upon them wrath from heaven for their wrongdoing.
163. Ask them (O Muhammad) of the township that was by the sea, how they did break the Sabbath, how their big fish came unto them visibly upon their Sabbath day and on a day when they did not keep Sabbath came they not unto them. Thus did We try them for that they were evil-livers.
164. And when a community among them said: Why preach ye to a folk whom God is about to destroy or punish with an awful doom, they said: In order to be free from guilt before your Lord, and that haply they may ward off (evil).
165. And when they forgot that whereof they had been reminded, We rescued those who forbade wrong, and visited those who did wrong with dreadful punishment because they were evil-livers.
166. So when they took pride in that which they had been forbidden, We said unto them: Be ye apes despised and loathed!
167. And (remember) when thy Lord proclaimed that He would raise against them till the Day of Resurrection those who would lay on them a cruel torment. Lo! verily thy Lord is swift in prosecution and lo! verily He is Forgiving, Merciful.
168. And We have sundered them in the earth as (separate) nations. Some of them are righteous, and some far from that. And We have tried them with good things and evil things that haply they might return.
169. And a generation hath succeeded them who inherited the scriptures. They grasp the goods of this low life (as the price of evil-doing) and say: It will be forgiven us. And if there came to them (again) the offer of the like, they would accept it (and would sin again). Hath not the covenant of the Scripture been taken on their behalf that they should not speak aught concerning Allah save the truth? And they have studied that which is therein. And the abode of the Hereafter is better, for those who ward off (evil). Have ye then no sense?
170. And as for those who make (men) keep the Scripture, and establish worship - lo! We squander not the wages of reformers.
171. And when We shook the Mount above them as it were a covering, and they supposed that it was going to fall upon them (and We said): Hold fast that which We have given you, and remember that which is therein, that ye may ward off (evil).
172. And (remember) when thy Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their reins, their seed, and made them testify of themselves, (saying): Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea, verily. We testify. (That was) lest ye should say at the Day of Resurrection: Lo! of this we were unaware;
173. Or lest ye should say: (It is) only (that) our fathers ascribed partners to Allah of old and we were (their) seed after them. Wilt Thou destroy us on account of that which those who follow falsehood did?
174. Thus we detail the revelations, that haply they may return.

> 175. Recite unto them the tale of him to whom We gave Our revelations, but he sloughed them off, so Satan overtook him and he became of those who lead astray.
> 176. And had We willed We could have raised him by their means, but he clung to the earth and followed his own lust. Therefor his likeness is as the likeness of a dog: if thou attackest him he panteth with his tongue out, and if thou leavest him he panteth with his tongue out. Such is the likeness of the people who deny Our revelations. Narrate unto them the history (of the men of old), that haply they may take thought.

This extended utterance opens with vv. 158-159 that include the opening tripartite vocative address (with the imperative *āminū bi-llāhi wa-rasūlihi* "believe in God and His messenger" occurring after an initial emphatic declaration of the Muhammad's prophethood) and following argument: there is a contingent (*ummah*) among *qawmi mūsā* "the People of Moses" who *yahdūna bi-l-ḥaqqi wa-bihi ya'dilūn* "lead with truth and establish justice therewith." Verses 160-174 detail God's interactions with the People of Moses (perhaps synonymous with the Jewish community). The first three verses of this narrative section mention God's division of the People of Moses into twelve tribes and state that some eventually *ẓalamū* "did wrong" and *baddala… qawlan ghayra alladhī qīla lahum* "changed the word which had been told them for another saying." There were, however, a group among them who *yanhawna 'ani al-sū'* "forbade wrong" and were rescued by God; indeed, v. 168 states that some of the tribes were *al-ṣāliḥūn* "righteous" and v. 170 reinforces this notion. Verses 171-173 include another narrative episode in which some of the Children of Adam acknowledged God as their Lord as a reminder to the audience for the Day of Resurrection. Verses 174-176 conclude the narrative exhortation by disparaging *alladhīna kadhdhabū bi-āyātinā* "people who deny Our revelations." When seen as a complete unit, the utterance's narrative material corroborates the initial premise in v. 159 that there is indeed a righteous community among the People of Moses, for it recounts historical episodes when this was the case; the implication of this argument is that the "People of Moses"

among the Qur'ān's listening audience should behave in a like manner. The utterance's final statement, *fa-qṣuṣi l-qaṣaṣa la'allahum yatafakkarūn* "[n]arrate unto them the history (of the men of old), that haply they may take thought," encapsulates the rhetorical function of narrative exhortation as a genre: the use of narrative material to bolster a stated premise or argument.

Another example of narrative exhortation occurs in Q. 2:47-49:

> 47. O Children of Israel, remember My favor that I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds.
> 48. And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.
> 49. And [recall] when We saved your forefathers from the people of Pharaoh, who afflicted you with the worst torment, slaughtering your [newborn] sons and keeping your females alive. And in that was a great trial from your Lord.

The verses above are excerpted from the full utterance of Q. 2:47-61. The exhortation opens by commanding Children of Israel, *udhkurū* "remember" God's favor, an imperative verb with the additional connotation of "remembering" a story or event. The narrative body of the exhortation begins in v. 49 and continues through much of the remaining utterance. It recalls Pharaoh and his deeds and continues beyond this excerpt to discuss the actions of Moses. Each Biblical episode recounted in the exhortation is designed to remind the Children of Israel of God's favor and is therefore particularly connected with the opening "*udhkurū*" injunction. The utterance concludes in v. 61 with a reference to God's punishment of the Israelites that "reminds" the Children of Israel the consequences of denying God's favor: *wa-ḍuribat 'alayhim al-dhillatu wa-l-maskanatu wa bā'ū bi-ghaḍabin min allāhi* "and [the Israelites] were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from Allah."

Doctrinal Exhortation

The next subgenre of exhortation is the doctrinal exhortation. These exhortations are designed to clarify and settle theological disputes and to convince reticent believers that the

Prophet's message is divinely inspired. Accordingly, these exhortations are addressed to those communities who may hold theological views at odds with the Believing community: *al-nās, alladhīna āmanū, ahl al-kitāb, banū ādam, al-rasūl, al-kāfirūn*. An important feature of the doctrinal exhortation is the replacement of imperative verbs with rhetorical questions. While this is not a complete replacement, rhetorical questions are most commonly used in this subgenre. There are nine total examples, three Meccan and six Medinan, that average 4.22 verses in length. Q. 3:65-69 is as follows:

> 65. O People of the Scripture, why do you argue about Abraham while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after him? Then will you not reason?
> 66. Here you are - those who have argued about that of which you have [some] knowledge, but why do you argue about that of which you have no knowledge? And God knows, while you know not.
> 67. Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim [submitting to God]. And he was not of the polytheists.
> 68. Indeed, the most worthy of Abraham among the people are those who followed him [in submission to God] and this prophet, and those who believe [in his message]. And God is the ally of the believers.
> 69. A faction of the people of the Scripture wish they could mislead you. But they do not mislead except themselves, and they perceive [it] not.

As an example of a doctrinal exhortation, Q. 3:65-69 clarifies the religious allegiance of Abraham. It begins with an opening address to the People of the Book and engages them with a rhetorical question regarding their arguments concerning Abraham. Verses 67 and 68 provide the doctrinal content for the exhortation: Abraham was neither a Jew nor Christian, and the worthiest of Abraham are those who follow him and, presumably, Muhammad. Verse 69 serves as a conclusion, although, instead of referring to God's omnipotence, omniscience, or eschatological judgment, it returns to the futility of those who try to mislead with false accusations about Abraham.

Another doctrinal exhortation occurs in Q. 10:104-107:

> 104. Say (O Muhammad): O mankind! If ye are in doubt of my religion, then (know that) I worship not those whom ye worship instead of God, but I worship God Who causeth you to die, and I have been commanded to be of the believers.
> 105. And, (O Muhammad) set thy purpose resolutely for religion, as a *ḥanīf*, and be not of those who ascribe partners (to God).
> 106. And cry not, beside God, unto that which cannot profit thee nor hurt thee, for if thou didst so then wert thou of the wrong-doers.
> 107. If God afflicteth thee with some hurt, there is none who can remove it save Him; and if He desireth good for thee, there is none who can repel His bounty. He striketh with it whom He will of his bondmen. He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

Verse 104 opens with the standard vocative address, although it is prefaced with a *qul* command. The exhortation is addressed to the people at large (*al-nās*) and is one of the few examples that does not include an initial imperative verb or rhetorical question. Instead, the content of the doctrinal exhortation immediately follows the vocative address: an explication of the Prophet's belief in God. Verse 105 follows this doctrinal content with an admonishment to the Prophet to be *ḥanīfan*, an enigmatic term that Fred Donner suggests means "natural monotheist," while vv. 106-107 reassure the Prophet, imploring him *lā tad'u* "cry not."[124] The utterance ends with a formulaic reference to God as *al-ghafūru l-raḥīm* "the Forgiving, the Merciful." As a whole, the utterance conforms to the exhortatory structure of opening vocative address, specific doctrinal content, and formulaic conclusion.

Pious Exhortation

Pious exhortations show a marked increase in number, totaling 61 with nine Meccan and 52 Medinan occurrences and averaging 5.61 verses in length. These exhortations command general pious conduct from their audiences, to be contrasted with the specific actions and restrictions exhibited by legal exhortations. They are addressed to a wide array of audiences (including, *al-nās*, *alladhīna āmanū*, *al-nabī*, *banū isrā'īl*, *alladhīna ūtū al-kitāb*, *al-*

[124] Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2010), 258.

muddaththir, and *ʻibādī*) and often include images of eschatological reward and punishment. Their content, however, does not focus on the coming of eschatological judgment as does that of apocalyptic exhortations. Q. 35:3-4 is an example from the Meccan literary corpus:

> 3. O mankind! Remember God's grace toward you! Is there any creator other than Allah who provideth for you from the sky and the earth? There is no God save Him. Whither then are ye turned?
> 4. And if they deny thee, (O Muhammad), messengers (of God) were denied before thee. Unto God all things are brought back.

Verse 3 begins with a tripartite vocative address naming *al-nās* "mankind" as the intended audience; this short example includes both a general command towards piety (*udhkurū niʻmata allāhi ʻalaykum* "[r]emember God's grace toward you!" and a rhetorical question (*hal min khāliqin ghayru llāhi yarzuqukum min al-samā' wa-l-arḍi* "[i]s there any creator other than God who provideth for you from the sky and the earth?") as the third part of the tripartite address. The thrust of the utterance is this general remembrance of God, and, therefore, it is classified as a pious exhortation. Verse four concludes the utterance with a reference to God's inevitability: *wa-ilā allāhi turjaʻu al-umūr* "[u]nto God all things are brought back."

A Medinan example occurs in Q. 3:70-73:

> 70. O you who believe! Fear God and speak words of appropriate justice.
> 71. He will [then] amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys God and His Messenger has certainly attained a great attainment.
> 72. Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant.
> 73. [It was] so that God may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women and the men and women who associate others with Him and that God may accept repentance from the believing men and believing women. And ever is God Forgiving and Merciful.

The opening two verses of 33:70-73 command the Believers to fear God and speak words of justice while reminding them of the merits of obeying the Messenger. These types of command towards general pious conduct are particularly characteristic of the pious exhortation subgenre.

Verses 72 and 73 discuss giving *al-amānah* "the trust" to mankind as a test, and v. 73 completes the utterance with the formulaic concluding phrase *wa-kāna llāhu ghafuran raḥīman* "and ever is God Forgiving and Merciful." This type of concluding phrase occurs in many examples of Medinan exhortations in lieu of an extended discussion of God's power or eschatological judgment.[125]

Legal Exhortation

Legal exhortations are the second-most common subgenre of exhortation. They are addressed to *al-nās*, *alladhīna āmanū*, *al-nabī*, *nisā' al-nabī*, *al-muzzammil*, and they use imperative verbs to command or forbid specific actions. As previously mentioned, despite being 24 in number (no Meccan and 24 Medinan), none of the legal exhortations are addressed to an explicitly Jewish, Christian, or pagan audience. Legal exhortations are exclusively found in the Medinan corpus and average 3.71 verses in length. This relative brevity is related to the subgenre's social function of communicating legal regulations and is also witnessed in the communicative genre of edict, to be discussed in chapter five. Although some extend across a number of verses, many legal exhortations are only a single verse or two verses long and discuss only a single permitted or forbidden action. Q. 5:1 is an example of a legal exhortation:

> 1. O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts. Lawful for you are the animals of grazing livestock except for that which is recited to you [in this Qur'an] - hunting not being permitted while you are in the state of ihram. Indeed, God ordains what He intends.

In this short example, contracts are commanded to be fulfilled, permitted foods are listed, and hunting while in a state of *iḥrām* is forbidden. The exhortation is closed by a formulaic reference

[125] For an extended discussion of formulaic verses endings, see, Stewart, "Epithets."

to God's omnipotence and omniscience (*inna allāha yaḥkumu mā yurīd* [i]ndeed, God ordains what He intends) in a similar manner as the example of the pious exhortation.

A second Medinan legal exhortation occurs in Q. 33:49:

> 49. O ye who believe! If ye wed believing women and divorce them before ye have touched them, then there is no period that ye should reckon. But content them and release them handsomely.

The verse opens with the tripartite vocative address, although the imperative verb characteristic of the third part of the address (*matti'ūhunna* "content them") occurs after the conditional syntax of the legal content. The regulation concerns the consummation of a marriage and its relationship to divorce. The similarity of both this example and Q. 5:1 to the communicative genre of edict must be noted. The primary difference between these two examples and an example of edict is the opening vocative address.

Political Exhortation

The final subgenre of exhortation is the political exhortation. They are 36 in number, average 5.92 verses in length, and, like legal exhortations, occur primarily in the Medinan literary corpus. They are addressed to: *al-nās*, *alladhīna āmanū*, *ahl al-kitāb*, *al-rasūl*, *al-nabī*, and *banū ādam*. A political exhortation is one that comments directly on the current situation of the Prophet or the early Muslim community or engages in debate with a non-Believing community. Accordingly, they are relatively diverse in content, and the specific events to which they are referring are not always clear. The lone Meccan example occurs in Q. 7:27-30:

> 27. O Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you as he caused your parents to go forth from the Garden and tore off from them their robe (of innocence) that he might manifest their shame to them. Indeed, he seeth you, he and his tribe, from whence ye see him not. Indeed, We have made the devils protecting friends for those who believe not.
> 28. And when they do some lewdness they say: We found our fathers doing it and God hath enjoined it on us. Say: God, verily, enjoineth not lewdness. Tell ye concerning God that which ye know not?

> 29. Say: My Lord enjoineth justice. And set your faces upright (toward Him) at every place of worship and call upon Him, making religion pure for Him (only). As He brought you into being, so return ye (unto Him).
> 30. A party hath He led aright, while error hath just hold over (another) party, for lo! they choose the devils for protecting supporters instead of God and deem that they are rightly guided.

This utterance is primarily concerned with engaging with the *bānī ādama* "Children of Adam" and altering their conduct. Verse 27 enjoins the Children of Adam, *lā yaftinannakumu al-shayṭānu kamā akhraja abawaykum mina al-jannati* "[l]et not Satan seduce you as he caused your parents to go forth from the Garden." This subtle appeal to Biblical precedent legitimates the Qur'anic proclaimer's knowledge of Biblical history and establishes Satan's influence as a real and present threat. Verse 28 uses contrived speech, similar to the religio-political subgenres of response or diatribe, to criticize the *fāḥishah* "lewdness" of the Children of Adam. Indeed, both v. 28 and 29 include *qul* commands that introduce a response to the utterance's contrived speech. The utterance concludes with the statement that God "guided" (*hadā*) a group of the Children of Adam, while another group are in "error" (*al-ḍalālah*); this sentiment recalls the premise of the narrative exhortation Q. 7:158-176 above.

A Medinan example occurs in Q. 3:156-158:

> 156. O you who have believe! Do not be like those who disbelieved and said about their brothers when they traveled through the land or went out to fight, "If they had been with us, they would not have died or have been killed," so God makes that [misconception] a regret within their hearts. And it is God who gives life and causes death, and God is Seeing of what you do.
> 157. And if you are killed in the cause of God or die - then forgiveness from God and mercy are better than whatever they accumulate [in this world].
> 158. And whether you die or are killed, unto God you will be gathered.

The example above is excerpted from the full utterance of Q. 3:156-163. It is addressed to the Believers and discusses a common theme among the political exhortations: death in battle. After an initial chastisement via a negative imperative (*lā takūnū ka-lladhīna kafarū*), v. 156 refutes

the doubts of "those who disbelieved" and affirms that death in battle is virtuous and ordained by God. The utterance proceeds to discuss an instance in which the Prophet was *linta* "gentle" with his followers during, presumably, a battle. The utterance concludes in v. 163 with another formulaic reference to God's omniscience, *wa-allāhu baṣīrun bimā ya'malūn* "and God is Seeing of whatever they do."

Conclusion

As a whole, the communicative genre of Qur'anic exhortation mirrors the conventions of speech in the Qur'ān's Biblical narratives and the contemporary genre of the *khuṭbah*. When the Qur'ān's exhortations are viewed synchronically, it becomes clear that specific subgenres of exhortation are utilized in addresses to specific audiences. Narrative and doctrinal exhortations are primarily used with explicitly Jewish and Christian audiences, whereas these audiences are *never* issued a legal exhortation. Legal and political exhortations are particularly characteristic of the Medinan corpus, while the most general addressees of *al-nās* and *al-insān* are characteristic of the Meccan corpus. What unites all of the exhortations, however, is a common literary structure and an engagement with an audience in a public setting. Of all of the Qur'ān's genres, the exhortation is certainly the most explicitly communal.

This brings us to a comparison between exhortation and religio-political commentary, by far the two most prevalent communicative genres in the Qur'ān. Both genres and their subgenres are fundamentally concerned with communicating with their audiences in order to guide their beliefs and actions. Indeed, the sixth chapter of this present study will argue that religio-political commentary and exhortation (along with narrative and edict) make up the Qur'ān's "fundamental" communicative genres and are key in understanding the nature of the Qur'anic corpus. What, then, differentiates exhortation and religio-political commentary beyond the

specific genre conventions catalogued in this chapter? First and foremost, exhortation is a more consistently and explicitly public genre. That is, a fundamental characteristic of exhortation is the naming and interacting with the listening audience. This rhetorical function suggests that the genre of exhortation was being communicated in a social context in which the Qur'anic proclaimer had the perceived authority (religious, social, political, military, etc.) to command a listening public. Indeed, as Tahera Qutbuddin notes about the related genre of pre- and early-Islamic Arabic *khuṭbah*, "Arabic oration was delivered from a position of power. Its practitioners were leaders in the community."[126] This does not mean that religio-political commentary and its subgenres could not have been revealed in a similar social context, but exhortation is predicated upon it.

Second, the majority of exhortations engage with the Believing community (*alladhīna āmanū*) explicitly; over half, 89/144, of exhortatory utterances are addressed to the Believers. Exhortations take for granted the existence of a community of followers to which the Qur'anic proclaimer could preach. Religio-political commentary certainly engages with the Believing community too, but it does less explicitly and less exclusively; the entire subgenre of diatribe is dedicated to denouncing non-Believing communities! There are formal differences between exhortation and religio-political commentary, as well: 50 percent of examples of religio-political commentary include manufactured speech compared to 24.3 percent of examples of exhortation, and nearly 29.5 percent of religio-political commentary include the premise-*qul* command structure compared to 11.1 percent of examples of exhortation. The dissimilarities between exhortation and religio-political commentary should not be overstated, however. They both are

[126] Qutbuddin, *Oration*, 9-11.

rooted in the practice of public preaching and, as the two most common Qur'anic communicative genres, are fundamental to understanding the type of literary material contained in the Qur'ān.

Chapter Four: Narrative

Introduction

The communicative genre of narrative in the Qur'ān, while ranging in its content, conforms to specific thematic and syntactic conventions and occurs as three subgenres: foundational, legitimating, and punishment. Generally, Qur'anic narratives exhibit a tripartite literary structure including an introduction, an episode or a series of episodes, and a conclusion; an *idh* particle or repetitive syntactic device introducing narrative episodes, and quoted speech from the characters. There are 44 narratives throughout the Qur'ān, with the vast majority, 39, occurring in the Meccan literary corpus. Each narrative occurs as a foundational, legitimating, or punishment subgenre, of which there are eight, 23, and 13, respectively. Ostensibly, the Qur'ān's narratives are straightforward to define and catalogue, but the first step in understanding the Qur'ān's narrative communicative genre is establishing the difference between narrative material and a distinct narrative genre.

Terminology

The Qur'ān is filled with narrative material. Compared to any other type of Qur'anic discourse, its narrative material is the most easily identifiable because it contains Biblical characters, verbs in the perfect tense, chronologically sequential events, and introductory particles of time, including *idh*. Unfortunately, the prevalence of the Qur'ān's narrative material masks a fundamental problem: how does the Qur'ān differentiate between its narrative material and a specific narrative genre, complete with its own thematic and syntactic conventions?

In order to answer this question, the investigator must analyze the Qur'ān's narrative material alongside the verses preceding and following it. As discussed in the introductory chapter, boundedness is a fundamental component of delineating a genre, as it communicates the

beginning and end of a genre to the audience. Every Qur'anic communicative genre has specific thematic and syntactic conventions that establish its bounds. The problem of differentiating between narrative material and a distinct narrative genre arises when the formulae characteristic of narrative material are conflated with conventions that establish boundedness.

Scholars of the Qur'ān have long attributed specific formulae to the appearance of the Qur'ān's narrative genre.[127] The Qur'ān's narrative material is easily recognizable to a Western audience because it includes conventions similar to those of Western narratives: adverbs of time, simple past verbs, and embedded speech.[128] It is tempting, therefore, to recognize these features in the text of the Qur'ān and to assume the occurrence of a distinct narrative genre. Samji, in his chapter on the Qur'ān's narrative genre, lists the formulae, "*yasalūnaka*," "*idh*," and "*wa-dhkur*" (among others) as evidence of the genre's occurrence.[129] These formulae do occur in narrative contexts, but their occurrences are not enough to demonstrate the existence of a narrative genre, as they do not take boundedness into consideration.

The most comprehensive attempt at defining the Qur'ān's narrative material is Yehudit Dror's *The Linguistic Features of the Qur'anic Narratives*.[130] Employing William Labov's model of narrative construction, Dror argues that Qur'anic narratives have six component structural elements and exhibit four distinct structures: narratives composed of dialogues, mixed narratives composed of dialogues, direct speech, and sequences of events; narratives composed

[127] For an overview of scholary engagement with Qur'anic narrative, see: Muḥammad Aḥmad Khalaf Allāh, *al-Fann al-qaṣaṣī fī al-Qur'ān al-karīm* (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣrīyah, 1957); Bell, *Introduction*, 81; Yehudit Dror, *The Linguistic Features of the Qur'anic Narratives* (Zurich: LIT, 2016); Sinai, *Historical-Critical*, 138-150; Samji, *Form-Critical* 175-226; Neuwirth, *Late Antiquity*, 105-138.
[128] Dror, *Linguistic Features*, 7-11.
[129] Samji, *Form-Critical History*, 177-186.
[130] Dror, *Linguistic Features*.

of a few sequential events, and narratives without sequences of events.[131] Dror has done the field a great service with her definition and analysis of the Qur'ān's narrative material, but she does not differentiate between the occurrence of narrative material and the existence of a distinct narrative genre. As will be demonstrated below, Dror's criteria for narratives establish the existence of narrative material in the Qur'ān, but they cannot distinguish between narrative material occurring in a non-narrative genre and a distinct narrative genre.

Q. 61:2-9 and Q. 2:62-74 provide an illustrative example of the difference between the Qur'ān's narrative material and its distinct narrative communicative genre. Q. 61:2-9 is an example of the inclusion of narrative material in a non-narrative genre. It proceeds as follows:

> 2. O you who believe! Why say ye that which ye do not do?
> 3. It is most hateful in the sight of God that ye say that which ye do not.
> 4. Indeed, God loveth them who battle for His cause in ranks, as if they were a solid structure.
> 5. And (remember) when Moses said unto his people: O my people! Why persecute ye me, when ye well know that I am God's messenger unto you? So when they went astray God sent their hearts astray. And God guideth not the evil-living folk.
> 6. And when Jesus son of Mary said: O Children of Israel! Indeed, I am the messenger of God unto you, confirming that which was (revealed) before me in the Torah, and bringing good tidings of a messenger who cometh after me, whose name is the Praised One. Yet when he hath come unto them with clear proofs, they say: This is mere magic.
> 7. And who doeth greater wrong than he who inventeth a lie against God when he is summoned unto Al-Islam? And God guideth not wrongdoing folk.
> 8. Fain would they put out the light of God with their mouths, but God will perfect His light however much the disbelievers are averse.
> 9. He it is Who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it conqueror of all religion however much idolaters may be averse.

The narrative content of this section occurs in vv. 5-6. Each verse describes the past speech of Biblical characters and contains the opening formula, *wa-idh* "and when." According to Samji,

[131] Ibid., 7-11, 18-24.

for example, this is an example of the narrative genre because it contains a series of past episodes complete with the narrative *wa-idh* formula.[132]

Dror, on the other hand, employs a more comprehensive approach to the discernment of narrative material in the Qur'ān. According to Dror, Q. 61:5-6 above are a narrative "without sequences of events."[133] Dror comes to this conclusion by applying the six structural criteria of abstract, orientation, complicating actions, resolution, evaluation, and coda, to the relevant verses. For example, the orientation of the narrative "[h]elps the reader/listener to identify the time, place, persons, activity and situation," and occurs in v. 5 with the phrase, *wa idh qāla mūsā li-qawmihi* "[a]nd (remember) when Moses said unto his people."[134] The complicating actions, "realized by narrative clauses that are temporally-ordered and normally have a verb in the simple past," occur at the end of v. 5: *fa-lamma zāghū 'azāgha Allahu qulūbahum* "[s]o when they went astray God sent their hearts astray."[135] Each of the six criteria can be accounted for in a similar manner. It is important to note, however, that Dror is only concerned with Q. 61:5-6 and that the verses surrounding the narrative material (vv. 2-4, 6-9) are not considered in her analysis. This hinders her ability to see that the narrative material is framed within a larger genre.

If the preceding and following verses are taken into consideration, it becomes clear that Q. 61:2-9 is an example of narrative material embedded within an exhortation. As previously discussed, Qur'anic exhortations are introduced by a tripartite vocative address (vocative particle, addressee, imperative verb or rhetorical question). Q.61:2 fulfils this requirement with the statement, *yāayyuhā lladhīna āmanū lima taqūlūna mā lā taf'alūna* "O you who believe!

[132] Samji, *Form-Critical*, 175-176, 183.
[133] Dror, *Linguistic Features*, 24.
[134] Ibid., 7.
[135] Ibid.

Why say ye that which ye do not do?" This verse establishes the first boundary of the exhortation, and Q. 61:9 establishes the concluding boundary with its reference to God's power over his messenger: *huwa lladhī arsala rasūlahu bi-l-hudā wa-dīni l-ḥaqqi li-yuẓhirahu ʿalā l-dīni kullihi* "He it is Who hath sent his messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it conqueror of all religion." These two verses are examples of the boundaries of an exhortative utterance: an initial tripartite vocative address and a final appeal to God's omnipotence or omniscience. This type of inclusion of narrative material within another genre is not uncommon; there are seven other examples of narrative material embedded in exhortations alone. The frameworks presented by Samji and Dror, however, do not enable them to discern narrative material embedded within a larger genre.

Q. 2:62-74, in contrast, exemplifies narrative material in the Qur'ān that exists as its own genre:

> 62. Indeed, those who believe (in that which is revealed unto thee, Muhammad), and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabaeans - whoever believeth in God and the Last Day and doeth right - surely their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve.
> 63. And (remember, O Children of Israel) when We made a covenant with you and caused the mount to tower above you, (saying): Hold fast that which We have given you, and remember that which is therein, that ye may ward off (evil).
> 64. Then, even after that, ye turned away, and if it had not been for the grace of God and His mercy ye had been among the losers.
> 65. And ye know of those of you who broke the Sabbath, how We said unto them: Be ye apes, despised and hated!
> 66. And We made it an example to their own and to succeeding generations, and an admonition to the God-fearing.
> 67. And when Moses said unto his people: Indeed, God commandeth you that ye sacrifice a cow, they said: Dost thou make game of us? He answered: God forbid that I should be among the foolish!
> 68. They said: Pray for us unto thy Lord that He make clear to us what (cow) she is. (Moses) answered: Lo! He saith, Verily she is a cow neither with calf nor immature; (she is) between the two conditions; so do that which ye are commanded.

> 69. They said: Pray for us unto thy Lord that He make clear to us of what colour she is. (Moses) answered: Lo! He saith: Verily she is a yellow cow. Bright is her colour, gladdening beholders.
> 70. They said: Pray for us unto thy Lord that He make clear to us what (cow) she is. Indeed, cows are much alike to us; and Indeed, if God wills, we may be led aright.
> 71. (Mosses) answered: Lo! He saith: Verily she is a cow unyoked; she plougheth not the soil nor watereth the tilth; whole and without mark. They said: Now thou bringest the truth. So they sacrificed her, though almost they did not.
> 72. And (remember) when ye slew a man and disagreed concerning it and God brought forth that which ye were hiding.
> 73. And We said: Smite him with some of it. Thus God bringeth the dead to life and showeth you His portents so that ye may understand.
> 74. Then, even after that, your hearts were hardened and became as rocks, or worse than rocks, for hardness. For indeed there are rocks from out which rivers gush, and indeed there are rocks which split asunder so that water floweth from them. And indeed there are rocks which fall down for the fear of God. God is not unaware of what ye do.

Dror considers Q. 2:49-69 to be an example of a mixed narrative "composed of dialogues/direct speech and sequences of events."[136] It is unclear why her analysis of the narrative ends at v. 69, since the narrative material clearly continues through v. 73. Additionally, Dror connects the verses above to vv. 49-61 and considers v. 62 a part of the passage's narrative material. In a genre-critical study of this section, however, it becomes clear that v. 62 acts as the opening boundary of a new genre, the legitimating narrative, and is not to be connected with the sura's preceding narrative exhortation.[137]

The present study argues that this group of verses illustrates the conventions of the Qur'ān's narrative genre. Like Q. 61:5-6, Q. 2: 63-74 describe the past speech of Biblical

[136] Ibid., 22.
[137] Q. 2:62-74 is preceded by Q. 2:47-61, a narrative exhortation. Both utterances contain narrative material related to Moses, but, while Q. 2:62-74 exhibits the characteristic of a legitimating narrative, Q. 2:47-61 couches its narrative material in an exhortatory form. In our opinion, these two utterances were compiled alongside one another during the process of the Qur'ān's collection due to similarities in their narrative content. Nonetheless, they exist as distinct utterances and belong to different communicative genres: Q. 2:62-74 is a legitimating narrative and Q. 2:47-61 is a narrative exhortation.

characters and contain the opening formula, *wa-idh*. What elevates the present verses to an example of a narrative genre is their relationship with the verses preceding and following the narrative material. Q. 2:62 marks the opening boundary of the utterance for two reasons: it begins with in an introductory particle *inna* "indeed!" and presents the listening audience with statement of fact: *inna lladhīna āmanū wa-lladhīna hādū wa-l-naṣārā wa-l-ṣābi'īna man āmana bi-llāhi wa-l-yami l-ākhiri wa 'amila ṣāliḥan fa-lahum ajruhum 'inda rabbihim wa-lā khawfun 'alayhim wa-lā hum yaḥzanūn* "[i]ndeed, Those who believe (in that which is revealed unto thee, Muhammad), and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabaeans - whoever believeth in God and the Last Day and doeth right - surely their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve." Beginning with *inna*, the verse makes a specific religious argument: namely, "whoever believeth in God and the Last Day and doeth right" will receive a heavenly reward. This argument precedes the passage's narrative material and is not part of it. The closing boundary occurs at the end of the final verse. Much like the previously examined exhortation's closing boundary, v. 74 ends with a formulaic appeal to God's omniscience: *mā llāhu bi-ghāfilin 'ammā ta'malūn* "God is not unaware of what ye do."

While Q. 2:62 introduces an argument, vv. 63-74 use narrative material as evidence to legitimate this argument. In summary, Q. 2:53-74 discuss four occasions when the Ancient Israelites disobeyed God: *tawallaytum* "you turned away" from the covenant in vv. 63-64, *i'tadaw… fī as-sabti* "they broke the Sabbath" in vv. 65-66, disbelieved God's command to *tadhbaḥū baqaratan* "sacrifice a cow" in vv. 67-71, and *qasat qulūbukum* "your hearts hardened" in vv. 72-74. Despite the privileged communication of God and the Israelites, they disobey and questions his commandments. By juxtaposing the opening argument of expanded access to heavenly reward with the disobedience of the ancient Israelites, the passage undermines

any Jewish claim to superior communal status and, by extension, superior access to heavenly reward. This combination of argument and narrative evidence is a hallmark of the legitimating narrative subgenre. These examples demonstrate the pitfalls of not considering the context of the Qur'ān's narrative material; when the verses surrounding the narrative material in these examples are considered, it becomes clear that one exists within an exhortatory form while the other is bounded and legitimates the claim made in an introductory verse.

Compared to the works of Samji and Dror, a genre-critical analysis of the Qur'ān's narrative material reveals a distinct difference between narrative material and a distinct narrative genre. While narrative material is certainly abundant in the Qur'ān, the appearance of narrative material does not necessarily indicate the appearance of a narrative genre. Rather, the Qur'ān's narrative material must be analyzed alongside its preceding and following sections of text in the sura in order to determine the type of genre in which the narrative material is situated.

The choice of the term "narrative" to designate this communicative genre stems from the genre's tendency to recount a series of individual episodes. The Qur'ān's narrative genre has consistently been the object of Western scholarly attention, and recent scholars cataloguing the Qur'ān's various literary genres have labeled it as follows: narrative,[138] narrative form,[139] narrative register.[140] I have continued in this fashion by using the term narrative to describe the communicative genre. Beyond scholarly inertia, the term "narrative" encompasses singular events and extended sagas, and this is particularly relevant to the Qur'ān's variegated narratives. Furthermore, narrative is an umbrella term encompassing the subgenres of foundational,

[138] Neuwirth, "Structural features," 105-107; Ernst, *How to Read*, 69.
[139] Samji, *Form-Critical*, 193.
[140] Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an*, 128.

legitimating, and punishment narratives. Each occurrence of the narrative communicative genre falls into one of these three subgenres.

The two principal intra-Qur'anic terms used to refer to its narrative sections are *qaṣaṣ* and *ḥadīth*. When these terms are viewed through a genre-critical lens, however, it becomes clear that they refer only to the Qur'ān's narrative material and *not* to the Qur'ān's narrative communicative genre. The noun *qaṣaṣ* "narration" occurs six times in the Qur'ān: four times in the foundational narrative subgenre, once in a narrative exhortation, and once in a proclamation (that includes narrative material). Despite occurring in three communicative genres, each utterance in which *qaṣaṣ* is used contains narrative material. In its verbal form, *qaṣṣa/yaquṣṣu*, this relationship is less pronounced, as it only sometimes refers to narrative material. The noun *ḥadīth* occurs twenty-eight times in the Qur'ān, although only nine times meaning "narration" or "story." Like *qaṣaṣ*, this definition of *ḥadīth* is connected to the Qur'ān's narrative material and not its narrative genre, occurring both in narrative and religio-political commentary.

Comparable Late Antique Genres

While Qur'anic narratives should be, and have been, compared to their Biblical counterparts in the Old and New Testaments, a more appropriate analogue can be found in the late antique genre of Biblical paraphrase. Marianna Klar has recently catalogued Western scholarly engagement with the Qur'ān's narratives vis-à-vis their relationship with Judeo-Christian traditions. She notes that, "[r]ecent scholarship has replaced a search for straightforward parallels in narratives from the Judeo-Christian tradition with a growing trend for a re-evaluation of the Qur'an's contextual framework, and a rethinking of the references to other

literatures and religious traditions included therein."[141] This turn away from seeking a one-to-one correspondence between narrative traditions has been fruitful, particularly for the understanding of Qur'anic terminology, but it has not effectively approached similarities in genre.[142]

Gabriel Reynolds, however, has resisted this focus on Qur'anic narrative content and terminology and argued that Qur'anic narratives have more literary similarities to late antique exegetical genres than to the Judeo-Christian narratives themselves. In particular, he compares the Qur'ān's language to that of the late antique genre of homily: "the Qur'ān, much like a homilist, reports certain elements of the narratives, alludes to others, and skips others, since narrative is not the goal but only the means."[143] But, what is the "goal" that Reynolds argues that Qur'anic narratives are pursuing? He argues that the Qur'ān is primarily interested in "the degree to which its discourse on these [Biblical] characters and places might lead the reader to repentance and obedience."[144] That is, Qur'anic narratives are literary constructions designed to use their narrative content to produce specific audience reactions. In this way, the Qur'ān is more concerned with the interpretation and reception of its narrative material than the narrative retelling itself, and its narratives must be read as intentional reformulations of their Biblical antecedents.

Like Qur'anic narratives, the late antique genre of Biblical paraphrase combines narrative structure with the reformulation of the language and themes of a previously known narrative tradition. Biblical paraphrase "involves recasting of Scripture in different words, often with

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[141] Marianna Klar, "Qur'anic Exempla and Late Antique Narrative," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, ed. Muhammad Abdel Haleem and Mustafa Shah (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 128.
[142] Ibid., 137.
[143] Reynolds, *Biblical Subtext*, 233.
[144] Ibid., 239.

amplification or abbreviation of the original text" and can be "divided into two main categories: (1) prose paraphrase of scripture in commentaries or homilies, and (2) verse paraphrase of Scripture, which renders biblical passages in poetic language and metre."[145] These reformulations, too, often serve the function of "biblical exegesis."[146] Whereas late antique Biblical paraphrase often uses the New Testament as a source text, the Qur'ān more often appeals to the Old Testament. Despite this difference, however, both narrative genres creatively retell an existing narrative for a specific, often exegetical, purpose.

The Paraphrase of John's Gospel by the late antique poet Nonnus of Panopolis provides a useful illustration of how Biblical paraphrase, like Qur'anic narrative, refigures Biblical narratives to promote specific interpretive agenda. This text, written as an epic poem in the fifth-century CE, paraphrases the Gospel of John, rendering John's 21 chapters into 3660 hexameter lines.[147] Scott Fitzgerald Johnson has used John 9:39 and Nonnus' accompanying paraphrase as a case study for understanding Nonnus' paraphrastic technique.[148] In the Gospel of John 9:39, Jesus speaks to a blind man, saying, "[f]or judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."[149] Johnson renders Nonnus' paraphrase of this verse as follows: "… [I came], first, so that those who did not see the light of the unbeheld dawn, the blind, might regain their sight and gaze upon it with their eyes; Second, [so that] those

[145] Andrew Faulkner, "Paraphrase and Metaphrase," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation,* ed. Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 210.
[146] Ibid., 218.
[147] Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, "Nonnus' Paraphrastic Technique: A Case Study of Self-Recognition in John 9," in *Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis*, ed. Domenico Accorinti (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 267.
[148] Ibid.
[149] John 9:39 NIV.

who are keen-sighted become deserted by light."[150] Nonnus maintains the primary thematic thrust of the verse: namely, that Jesus came to give sight to the blind and take sight from those who can see. As Johnson notes, however, Nonnus infuses the verse with "light and dark imagery" by coupling sight with the ability (or inability) to see dawn's light.[151] Furthermore, the inclusion of light and dark imagery is no mere rhetorical flourish; Johnson argues that it is "firmly linked with salvation" and "[s]alvation is essentially revelation, and that revelation in Nonnus' vision is both creation and illumination."[152] This reformulation of John 9:39 in Nonnus' *Paraphrase* maintains the overall narrative structure and sequence of the original, but contains additions designed to emphasize a particular exegetical perspective.

Both late antique Biblical paraphrase and Quranic narratives reformulate Biblical narrative traditions in order to present a specific interpretive argument to the audience. For this reason, it is more prudent to compare Quranic narratives to late antique paraphrases (like those of Nonnus of Panopolis) and not the Biblical narratives themselves. As will be shown below, the Qur'ān's legitimating narrative subgenre is particularly concerned with reformulating Biblical and extra-Biblical narratives to bolster a previously stated argument. We turn now to the literary structure of the Qur'ān's narratives and a catalogue of its narrative subgenres.

An Overview of Narrative

As a communicative genre, narratives in the Qur'ān typically consist of a tripartite structure including an introduction, an episode or episodes, and a conclusion. An *idh* particle or similar repetitive syntactic device introduces narrative episodes, and quotations are attributed to the characters. Overall, there are 44 occurrences of the genre, 39 in the Meccan corpus and only

[150] Johnson, "Nonnus," 275.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.

five in the Medinan. Narrative is the longest communicative genre, averaging 52.86 verses in length.

As discussed above, a narrative's introductory and concluding elements are fundamental for establishing its boundedness. Of the 44 total occurrences, 42 have an introduction, and the form of these introductions are often related to the utterance's subgenre. Likewise, 40 of the 44 occurrences include a concluding verse or group of verses. Taken together, there are 39 occurrences that include both an introduction and a conclusion (tripartite), four that include an introduction or conclusion (dipartite), and only one with neither an introduction nor a conclusion. Introductions include disjointed letters, oaths, or declarations (among others) and conclusions often reflect on the preceding narrative episodes and invoke God's omniscience and omnipotence. The types of introductions and conclusions vary across subgenres, and each type will be discussed in its relevant section.

Additionally, 34 of the 44 examples use the syntactic particle *idh* to introduce narrative episodes. This particle, often translated as "remember when," has long been recognized as a salient feature of Quranic narratives.[153] It should be noted again, however, that the *idh* particle does not introduce the narrative genre; rather, it introduces the narrative material that occurs within the genre. Scholars such as Samji and Dror use its appearance to signal the occurrence of a narrative form in the Qur'ān, but this has the chief drawback of excluding non-narrative content from the narrative genre.[154] Because the Qur'ān's narrative genre generally includes a non-narrative introduction and because the *idh* particle introduces narrative content, using it to

[153] For a recent example, see: Samji, *Form-Critical*, 182-184.
[154] Ibid.; Dror, *Linguistic Features*, 25-31.

identify the beginning of a genre unintentionally divorces the narrative content from its all-important non-narrative introduction.

Foundational Narrative

Foundational narratives are the Qur'ān's first narrative subgenre, and they are characterized by introductory disjointed letters and extended narrative accounts of a single figure or event. They are primarily from the Meccan corpus. Their unique rhetorical function is the telling of a story. That is, foundational narratives establish a particular narrative account that can be reformulated in other parts of the Qur'ān for specific purposes. This fundamentally communicative, as opposed to persuasive, function of foundational narratives may imply an audience unfamiliar with their narrative content or, at least, unfamiliar with the Qur'ān's particular formulation of that content. Of the three subgenres of narrative, foundational narratives are the least concerned with making an explicit argument to the audience.

In total, there are eight foundational narratives, seven from the Meccan literary corpus and one from the Medinan. Seven of the eight include non-narrative introductions, and six include non-narrative conclusions. Accordingly, six may be considered to have a tripartite structure, one a dipartite structure, and one a singular structure, without non-narrative introduction or conclusion.[155] The average verse length of a foundational narrative is 64.38 verses. Five of the examples open with disjointed letters: *alif lām mīm ṣād*, *alif lām rā*, *kāf hā yā ʻayn ṣād*, *ṭā hā*, and *ṭā sīn mīm*.[156] The rate at which disjointed letters occur at the beginning of foundational narratives is significantly higher than those related to the other two subgenres.

[155] The singular structure occurs in Q. 7:1-28 and is the only example of this type among all Qur'anic narratives.
[156] Q. 7:1, 12:1, 19:1, 20:1, 28:1.

This is a particularly notable characteristic when viewed in light of the subgenre's function. Following each invocation of the disjointed letters is a reference to *al-kitāb*; Devin Stewart has argued that the disjointed letters, when read with the accompanying references to *al-kitāb*, "represent sacred writing in general and therefore symbolize Scripture."[157] This argument is further bolstered when introductory disjointed letters are recognized as a fundamental characteristic of foundational narratives. Unlike legitimating and punishment narratives (see below), they are straightforward retellings of Biblical narratives without the explicit exegetical arguments of legitimating narratives or the attempts to instill fear of punishment narratives. In this sense, foundational narratives are unadulterated narrative speech, as if from a divine record of the past, *al-kitāb*. The subgenre's introductory disembodied letters signal a "reading" from the heavenly *kitab*, and its relatively unadorned narrative content reflects such a direct conduit from a sacred text.

Foundational narratives are the only narrative subgenre that do not include extra-Biblical prophets as their subjects. In fact, Q. 19:1-74 is the only one of the eight narratives that includes extended discussions of multiple, chronologically unrelated Biblical prophets. This fact, combined with an average verse length of nearly 65 verses, creates extended narrations concerning a single character or episode.

An example of a foundational narrative occurs in Q. 12, *Sūrah Yūsuf*. For the sake of brevity, we will examine vv. 1-10:

> 1. Alif. Lam. Ra. These are verse of the Scripture that maketh plain.
> 2. Indeed, We have revealed it, a Recitation in Arabic, that ye may understand.
> 3. We narrate unto thee (Muhammad) the best of narratives in that We have inspired in thee this Qur'an, though aforetime thou wast of the heedless.
> 4. When Joseph said unto his father: O my father! Indeed, I saw in a dream eleven planets and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating themselves unto me.

[157] Stewart, "Mysterious Letters," 341.

> 5. He said: O my dear son! Tell not thy brethren of thy vision, lest they plot a plot against thee. Indeed, Satan is for man an open foe.
> 6. Thus thy Lord will prefer thee and will teach thee the interpretation of events, and will perfect His grace upon thee and upon the family of Jacob as He perfected it upon thy forefathers, Abraham and Isaac. Indeed, thy Lord is Knower, Wise.
> 7. Verily in Joseph and his brethren are signs (of God's Sovereignty) for the inquiring.
> 8. When they said: Verily Joseph and his brother are dearer to our father than we are, many though we be. Indeed, our father is in plain aberration.
> 9. (One said): Kill Joseph or cast him to some (other) land, so that your father's favour may be all for you, and (that) ye may afterward be righteous folk.
> 10. One among them said: Kill not Joseph but, if ye must be doing, fling him into the depth of the pit; some caravan will find him.

Verses 1-3 open the sura with a non-narrative introduction complete with the inclusion of disjointed letters. Verse 3 establishes the purpose of following verses as *naquṣṣu ʻalayka ʻaḥsana al-qaṣaṣi* "[narrating]… the best of narratives," further emphasizing the function of foundational narratives as the telling of a specific story. This brief introduction transitions into the narrative episodes in v. 4 with the insertion of the *idh* particle. This episode in which Joseph recounts his dream to his father initiates a series of narrative episodes centered on Joseph and his family that spans nearly 100 verses. After a brief non-narrative interjection in v. 7, another narrative episode is introduced by *idh* in v. 8. The sura continues in this fashion until v. 101. For reference, the last twelve verses of the sura read as follows:

> 100. And he placed his parents on the dais and they fell down before him prostrate, and he said: O my father! This is the interpretation of my dream of old. My Lord hath made it true, and He hath shown me kindness, since He took me out of the prison and hath brought you from the desert after Satan had made strife between me and my brethren. Indeed, my Lord is tender unto whom He will. He is the Knower, the Wise.
> 101. O my Lord! Thou hast given me (something) of sovereignty and hast taught me (something) of the interpretation of events - Creator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my Protecting Guardian in the world and the Hereafter. Make me to die muslim (unto Thee), and join me to the righteous.
> 102. This is of the tidings of the Unseen which We inspire in thee (Muhammad). Thou wast not present with them when they fixed their plan and they were scheming.
> 103. And though thou try much, most men will not believe.

104. Thou askest them no fee for it. It is naught else than a reminder unto the peoples.
105. How many a portent is there in the heavens and the earth which they pass by with face averted!
106. And most of them believe not in God except that they attribute partners (unto Him).
107. Deem they themselves secure from the coming on them of a pall of God's punishment, or the coming of the Hour suddenly while they are unaware?
108. Say: This is my Way: I call on God with sure knowledge. I and whosoever followeth me - Glory be to God! - and I am not of the idolaters.
109. We sent not before thee (any messengers) save men whom We inspired from among the folk of the townships - Have they not travelled in the land and seen the nature of the consequence for those who were before them? And verily the abode of the Hereafter, for those who ward off (evil), is best. Have ye then no sense? -
110. Till, when the messengers despaired and thought that they were denied, then came unto them Our help, and whom We would was saved. And Our wrath cannot be warded from the guilty.
111. In their history verily there is a lesson for men of understanding. It is no invented story but a confirmation of the existing (Scripture) and a detailed explanation of everything, and a guidance and a mercy for folk who believe.

The sura's narrative content ends in v. 101 with Joseph's apostrophic speech. Verses 102-107 provide a capstone to the preceding narrative, emphasizing the veracity of the account and noting the reluctance of the Prophet's community to heed his message. In response to this reluctance, v. 108 commands (*qul* "say!") the Prophet to reaffirm his knowledge and prophethood. Verses 109-111 conclude the sura by locating the Prophet among the previous messengers and, within the context of the preceding narrative, Joseph. The final line of Q. 12 again reinforces the primary function of a foundational narrative as expounding a narrative tradition to an audience: *mā kāna ḥadīthān yuftarā wa-lākin taṣdīqa lladhī bayna yadayhi wa-tafṣīla kulli shayʿin* "It is no invented story but a confirmation of the existing (Scripture) and a detailed explanation of everything."

Legitimating Narrative

Legitimating narratives employ a narrative episode or series of episodes to legitimate a specific Qur'anic claim. Rather than a specific theme or syntax, the fundamental characteristic of the subgenre is this literary structure. While primarily Meccan corpus revelations, they include

four Medinan examples. There are 23 total legitimating narratives (the most numerous narrative subgenre), but they are on average the shortest type of narratives in length at 38.35 verses on average. Additionally, because legitimating narratives are so numerous and are concerned with validating a particular argument, they display the widest variety of content among the three narrative subgenres.

Perhaps the defining feature of legitimating narratives is their introductions. While most Qur'anic narratives feature non-narrative introductions, *every* legitimating narrative includes one. This is not a mere literary flourish; a legitimating narrative's introduction contains a specific argument that the following narrative material seeks to substantiate. This facet of legitimating narratives underscores the importance of considering non-narrative material as fundamental pieces of the Qur'ān's narrative genre. If one does not couple the non-narrative introductions with the following narrative material, the argument of the narrative material remains invisible.

An example of a legitimating narrative occurs in 3:33-58:

> 33. Indeed, God preferred Adam and Noah and the Family of Abraham and the Family of Amram above (all His) creatures.
> 34. They were descendants one of another. God is Hearer, Knower.
> 35. (Remember) when the wife of Amram said: My Lord! I have vowed unto Thee that which is in my belly as a consecrated (offering). Accept it from me. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Hearer, the Knower!
> 36. And when she was delivered she said: My Lord! Indeed, I am delivered of a female - God knew best of what she was delivered - the male is not as the female; and indeed, I have named her Mary, and indeed, I crave Thy protection for her and for her offspring from Satan the outcast.
> 37. And her Lord accepted her with full acceptance and vouchsafed to her a goodly growth; and made Zachariah her guardian. Whenever Zachariah went into the sanctuary where she was, he found that she had food. He said: O Mary! Whence cometh unto thee this (food)? She answered: It is from God. God giveth without stint to whom He will.
> 38. Then Zachariah prayed unto his Lord and said: My Lord! Bestow upon me of Thy bounty goodly offspring. Indeed, Thou art the Hearer of Prayer.
> 39. And the angels called to him as he stood praying in the sanctuary: God giveth thee glad tidings of (a son whose name is) John, (who cometh) to confirm a word from God lordly, chaste, a prophet of the righteous.

40. He said: My Lord! How can I have a son when age hath overtaken me already and my wife is barren? (The angel) answered: So (it will be). God doeth what He will.
41. He said: My Lord! Appoint a token for me. (The angel) said: The token unto thee (shall be) that thou shalt not speak unto mankind three days except by signs. Remember thy Lord much, and praise (Him) in the early hours of night and morning.
42. And when the angels said: O Mary! Indeed, God hath chosen thee and made thee pure, and hath preferred thee above (all) the women of creation.
43. O Mary! Be obedient to thy Lord, prostrate thyself and bow with those who bow (in worship).
44. This is of the tidings of things hidden. We reveal it unto thee (Muhammad). Thou wast not present with them when they threw their pens (to know) which of them should be the guardian of Mary, nor wast thou present with them when they quarrelled (thereupon).
45. (And remember) when the angels said: O Mary! Lo! God giveth thee glad tidings of a word from him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (unto God).
46. He will speak unto mankind in his cradle and in his manhood, and he is of the righteous.
47. She said: My Lord! How can I have a child when no mortal hath touched me? He said: So (it will be). God createth what He will. If He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! and it is.
48. And He will teach him the Scripture and wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel,
49. And will make him a messenger unto the Children of Israel, (saying): Indeed, I come unto you with a sign from your Lord. Indeed, I fashion for you out of clay the likeness of a bird, and I breathe into it and it is a bird, by God's leave. I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I raise the dead, by God's leave. And I announce unto you what ye eat and what ye store up in your houses. Indeed, herein verily is a portent for you, if ye are to be believers.
50. And (I come) confirming that which was before me of the Torah, and to make lawful some of that which was forbidden unto you. I come unto you with a sign from your Lord, so keep your duty to God and obey me.
51. Indeed, God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path.
52. But when Jesus became conscious of their disbelief, he cried: Who will be my helpers in the cause of God? The disciples said: We will be God's helpers. We believe in God, and bear thou witness that we have surrendered (unto Him).
53. Our Lord! We believe in that which Thou hast revealed and we follow him whom Thou hast sent. Enrol us among those who witness (to the truth).
54. And they (the disbelievers) schemed, and God schemed (against them): and God is the best of schemers.
55. (And remember) when God said: O Jesus! Indeed, I am gathering thee and raising thee to Me, and am cleansing thee of those who disbelieve and am setting

those who follow thee above those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection. Then unto Me ye will (all) return, and I shall judge between you as to that wherein ye used to differ.
56. As for those who disbelieve I shall chastise them with a heavy chastisement in the world and the Hereafter; and they will have no helpers.
57. And as for those who believe and do good works, He will pay them their wages in full. God loveth not wrong-doers.
58. This (which) We recite unto thee is a revelation and a wise reminder.

This narrative can be divided into three sections: the argument (vv. 33-34), the narrative legitimation (vv. 35-57), and the conclusion (v. 58). As mentioned above, the argument of the legitimating narrative is the subgenre's defining feature, and it is presented in the first two verses of this passage. Verses 33-34 establish a prophetic lineage between Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of Amram; crucially, they are considered *dhurriyyatan* "descendants" of one another. The crux of the argument, however, is the relationship of the family of Amram to the rest of the "descendants." By connecting the family of Amram to established prophetic figures and families, Mary and, most importantly, Jesus are elevated to the same prophetic status. Whether Jesus' relationship to the Biblical prophetic tradition was in question or not, it is nonetheless intriguing to note that this example is one of only two Medinan occurrences of the narrative genre in the Qur'ān. Regardless, as the following narrative material makes clear, Mary and Jesus are the primary focus of the passage's introductory argument.

Verses 35-57 serve as the legitimating subgenre's second characteristic feature: narrative legitimation. Narrative legitimation consists of the inclusion of a narrative episode or a series of episodes that "legitimates" a previously stated argument. The narrative episodes that occur in these verses serve to answer the question: why is the family of Amram to be considered alongside Adam, Noah, and the family of Abraham? The narrative's first answer is that Mary was divinely favored. In v. 37, it is revealed that Mary was granted literal sustenance by God, and in vv. 42-43, the angels proclaim God's preference for her *'alā nisā'i al-'ālamīna* "above the

women of creation." The narrative then turns to Jesus, establishing his immaculate conception in vv. 45-48. In v. 49, Jesus performs a miracle by animating a clay bird and, he proclaims his message of Biblical confirmation *bi-āyatin min rabbikum* "with a sign from your Lord" in v. 50. Finally, God states to Jesus that He is "raising thee" in v. 55. Like the other members in the prophetic lineage, the family of Amram is shown to possess divine favor, miraculous ability, and prophetic message.

The example concludes in v. 58 with a non-narrative declaration about the preceding narrative material, declaring it *al-āyāti wa-l-dhikri al-ḥakīmi* "a revelation and a wise reminder." In this way, Q. 3:33-58 is divided into three distinct sections: an opening argument, a narrative legitimation, and a conclusion. While conclusions occur in all but two instances of legitimating narratives, the fundamental parts of the subgenre remain the opening argument followed by narrative legitimation.

Punishment Narrative

Punishment narratives employ cyclical series of divine warning and punishment to extract pious obedience from its audience. Of all of the Qur'ān's narrative subgenres, punishment narratives have received the most scholarly attention.[158] David Marshall, for example, has used the Qur'ān's changing use of punishment narratives to argue for changes in the Prophet's perceived authority in the earliest Muslim community.[159] Alford T. Welch has

[158] Two recent studies of punishment narratives have focused on Q. 26: Sidney H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 64-71; Michael Zwettler, "A Mantic Manifesto: The Sura of "The Poets" and the Qur'anic Foundations of Prophetic Authority," in *Poetry and Prophecy: The Beginnings of a Literary Tradition,* ed. James L. Kugel (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019), 75-119.

[159] David Marshall, *God, Muhammad and the Unbelievers: A Qur'anic Study* (London: Routledge, 1999).

explored the punishment narratives' formulaic features and literary structures.[160] Devin Stewart has recently applied a typological analysis to the Qur'ān's punishment narratives.[161] The subgenre of punishment narrative is characterized by introductory oaths, episodic compositions, and a particular focus on the extra-Biblical, Arabian prophetic tradition. The narrative episodes similarly depict the arrival of a messenger, the rejection of the messenger, and the destruction of the community. Through the repetition of these episodes, punishment narratives inspire awe and fear and seek to redirect their audience's behavior towards belief.

There are 13 punishment narratives in the Qur'ān, and they average 71.46 verses in length; this length may be attributed to their episodic narrative structure. They occur only in the Meccan literary corpus. 11 of the 12 narratives display a tripartite structure; only one of the 12 does not include a non-narrative introduction, and all 12 contain a conclusion. While occurring in only three of the introductions, it is important to note that punishment narratives are the only narrative subgenre that exhibit introductory series of oaths. Additionally, two are introduced by disjointed letters.

Narrative content in punishment narratives is episodic, and it utilizes "signal characters" to alert their audiences to the occurrence of the subgenre. In fact, the communities of ʻĀd and Thamūd and their messengers *only* occur as characters in punishment narratives. Narratives involving ʻĀd and Thamūd occur both individually and among narratives episodes involving Biblical communities and characters; nevertheless, they are only included in the punishment narrative subgenre. When the Qur'ān includes characters from these communities, then, they

[160] Alford T. Welch, "Formulaic Features of the Punishment-Stories," in *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'ān*, ed. by Issa J. Boullata (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 77-116.
[161] Devin J. Stewart, "Qurʾānic Punishment Stories and the Sermon within a Sermon: A Typological Investigation" (forthcoming).

signal to the audience that a punishment narrative is occurring. The communities of ʻĀd and Thamūd are not merely subjects of punishment narratives, they are thematic conventions specific to the subgenre.

An example of a punishment narrative occurs in Q. 51:1-60. An excerpt, vv. 24-46 read as follows:

> 24. Hath the story of Abraham's honoured guests reached thee (O Muhammad)?
> 25. When they came in unto him and said: Peace! he answered, Peace! (and thought): Folk unknown (to me).
> 26. Then he went apart unto his housefolk so that they brought a fatted calf;
> 27. And he set it before them, saying: Will ye not eat?
> 28. Then he conceived a fear of them. They said: Fear not! and gave him tidings of (the birth of) a wise son.
> 29. Then his wife came forward, making moan, and smote her face, and cried: A barren old woman!
> 30. They said: Even so saith thy Lord. Indeed, He is the Wise, the Knower.
> 31. (Abraham) said: And (afterward) what is your errand, O ye sent (from God)?
> 32. They said: Lo! we are sent unto a guilty folk,
> 33. That we may send upon them stones of clay,
> 34. Marked by thy Lord for (the destruction of) the wanton.
> 35. Then we brought forth such believers as were there.
> 36. But We found there but one house of those surrendered (to God).
> 37. And We left behind therein a portent for those who fear a painful doom.
> 38. And in Moses (too, there is a portent) when We sent him unto Pharaoh with clear warrant,
> 39. But he withdrew (confiding) in his might, and said: A wizard or a madman.
> 40. So We seized him and his hosts and flung them in the sea, for he was reprobate.
> 41. And in (the tribe of) ʻĀd (there is a portent) when we sent the barren wind against them.
> 42. It spared naught that it reached, but made it (all) as dust.
> 43. And in (the tribe of) Thamūd (there is a portent) when it was told them: Take your ease awhile.
> 44. But they rebelled against their Lord's decree, and so the thunderbolt overtook them even while they gazed;
> 45. And they were unable to rise up, nor could they help themselves.
> 46. And the folk of Noah aforetime. Indeed, they were licentious folk.

While this passage is only a portion of the full punishment narrative, vv. 24-46 provide an example of the subgenre's episodic structure. The first episode extends from vv. 24-37 and

concern Abraham's encounter with his angelic guests. Alluding to the destruction of a disbelieving community, the episode ends in v. 37 with the ominous statement, "[w]e left behind therein a portent for those who fear a painful doom." Following this initial episode, vv. 38-40 detail the destruction of Pharaoh and his army as they pursued Moses. In vv. 41-42, ʿĀd is destroyed by *al-rīḥa al-ʿaqīma* "the barren wind," and Thamūd is destroyed by a *al-ṣāʿiqatu* "the thunderbolt" in v. 44. Finally, v. 46 mentions the people of Noah and implies their similar, destructive fate. This episodic format, complete with similarly structured individual episodes, is a hallmark of punishment narratives.

Conclusion

The communicative genre of narrative is the Qur'ān's third-most common genre of discourse. The Qur'ān displays three distinct subgenres of narrative with three distinct social functions: foundational narratives *communicate* stories, legitimating narratives *substantiate* arguments with narrative evidence, and punishment narratives *intimidate* their audiences into pious conduct or proper belief. The Qur'ān's narrative genre is distinct, too, from the Qur'ān's narrative material. While narrative material occurs in other communicative genres, including religio-political commentary and exhortation, the genre of narrative displays distinct generic conventions, including opening and closing boundaries, that differentiate it from narrative material. With a survey of the Qur'ān's narrative genre completed, we turn now to a discussion of the Qur'ān's fourth-most common (and last "fundamental") communicative genre: edict.

Chapter Five: Edict

Introduction

The fourth and last *fundamental* communicative genre of Qur'anic discourse is that of edict.[162] The genre of edict in the Qur'ān is principally a legal genre, and 32 of the 34 total examples are from the Medinan literary corpus. The chapter opens with a discussion of the term "edict" as a genre classification and finds a useful analogue in the late antique Byzantine genre of imperial edict. The chapter proceeds to define a Qur'anic edict as a dipartite literary construction consisting of an opening mandate followed by a formulaic conclusion. The genre exhibits five subgenres dependent upon the content of the mandate: marital, doctrinal, political, social, and dietary. The conclusion of this chapter will discuss how an edict's short length and detailed regulatory content predisposed the genre to be appended to other genre forms, namely religio-political commentary and exhortation.

Terminology

The Qur'ān contains a wide array of legal content, diverse both in its topics and forms.[163] This variety presents a difficulty, however; as Joseph E. Lowry asks, "by what criteria can one recognize the passages in the Qur'an that were intended as legislative, or received by the original Qur'anic audience as legislative?"[164] In answering this question, Lowry lists several rhetorical strategies that the Qur'ān uses to introduce "legal obligations," including the use of imperative verbs, the verbs *aḥalla* "to make lawful" and *ḥarrama* "to make unlawful," inquiries by the

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[162] As will be further in the conclusion of this study, religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict are considered *fundamental* communicative genres and prayer and creed are considered *peripheral* communicative genres.
[163] For a recent survey of the Qur'ān's legal material, see: Joseph E. Lowry, "Law and the Qur'an," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, ed. Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 445-463.
[164] Ibid., 445.

Qur'anic audience, and conditional sentences with the indefinite pronoun *man*.[165] These rhetorical strategies certainly indicate subsequent legal material, but the present study asks a further question: what is the relationship between legal material and Qur'anic genre?

When considering Lowry's criteria for legal obligations vis-à-vis Qur'anic genre, it becomes clear that the Qur'ān's legal material exists in different communicative genres. In his examples of the Qur'ān's rhetorical strategies for introducing legal content, Lowry includes Q. 2:43 as an example of an imperative verb opening, Q. 2:221 as an example of a negative imperative opening, and Q. 4:127 as an example of an interrogative opening.[166] Each of these three examples, however, occurs in a different communicative genre: Q. 2:43 in exhortation, Q. 2:221 in edict, and Q. 4:127 in religio-political commentary. Law, therefore, is not a fundamental genre in the Qur'ān; rather, legal material is contained in different genres, particularly those of religio-political commentary, exhortation, and edict. Legal material must be read in the context of the communicative genre in which is employed, for different genres serve different social functions.

A comment must be made on the present study's definition of "legal" content or material. Lowry defines law in the Qur'ān as, "any passage that enjoins specific, repeatable conduct (that is not purely mental) on a reasonably identifiable person or persons likely to be aural recipients of the Qur'an."[167] In addition to the criterion of "specific" action posited by Lowry, I include *specialized* action in order to differentiate further legal from exhortative material. As defined in this study, exhortative action consists of general pious conduct, including belief, prayer, charity, etc. Legal action, in contrast, refers to the specific measures required to exhibit pious conduct.

[165] Ibid., 453-454.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Lowry, "Law," 447.

As seen in Q. 2:168-171, a pious exhortation, the Qur'anic audience is exhorted to act piously by eating only lawful foods:

> 168. O mankind! Eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.
> 169. He only orders you to evil and immorality and to say about God what you do not know.
> 170. And when it is said to them, "Follow what God has revealed," they say, "Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing." Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?
> 171. The example of those who disbelieve is like that of one who shouts at what hears nothing but calls and cries cattle or sheep - deaf, dumb and blind, so they do not understand.

For the purposes of this comparison, v. 168 is of note. The opening injunction, *kulū mimmā fī l-arḍi ḥalālan ṭayyiban* "eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good," exhorts the audience to adhere to certain dietary restrictions, i.e., food that is *halālan* and *ṭayyiban*, but it does not detail which food is considered "lawful" and "good." Why doesn't this exhortation include a list of acceptable foods? The answer is that the social function of this pious exhortation is to exhort its audience to general, pious conduct and not to explain the intricacies of that conduct; in this case, the general, pious conduct is obeying dietary restrictions. Compare this injunction with Q. 5:3, a dietary edict:

> 3. Forbidden to you are carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than God, and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you [are able to] slaughter [before its death], and those which are sacrificed on stone altars, and [prohibited is] that you seek decision through divining arrows. That is grave disobedience. This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion. But whoever is forced by severe hunger with no inclination to sin - then indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful.

Q. 5:3 complements the previous example by listing foods that are not "lawful" or "good," but, rather, *ḥurrimat* "forbidden." The list is extensive and specific, ranging from types of animal (*al-*

maytatu "carrion" and *al-khinzīri* "swine") to the manners in which the animal is killed (*al-munkhaniqatu* "that which is strangled" and *al-naṭīḥatu* "that which is gored by horns"). Unlike Q. 2:168-171, which exhorts adherence to an unspecified set of dietary restrictions, Q. 5:3 enumerates those restrictions in elaborate detail. This difference in presentation is rooted in contrasting social functions between the two genres. As an exhortation, Q. 2:168-171 seeks to encourage pious conduct while, as an edict, Q. 5:3 seeks to communicate the specific actions necessary to engage in pious conduct. That is, Q. 5:3 elaborates the specific and specialized actions necessary to fulfill the general action of adhering to dietary restrictions and is therefore considered to contain legal material. This type of specific and specialized legal content is characteristic of the genre of edict at large.

This discussion of law in the Qur'ān occurs in the chapter investigating edicts because, unlike religio-political commentary and exhortation, the fundamental social function of the genre of edict is the establishment of legal regulations. This legal function is expressed in both the genre's form and its content. Its brevity, dipartite literary structure of mandate and formulaic conclusion, and consistent concern for directing its audience's actions all serve the purpose of creating clear-cut legal norms. At an average of 3.62 verses in length, edict is the shortest of the Qur'ān's genres. This concision evinces a communicative, as opposed to persuasive, function. Rather than present their legislation alongside justifications for its enactment or the contexts of its revelation, edicts exhibit a straightforward literary structure of mandate plus formulaic conclusion.[168] A typical example of this structure occurs in Q. 5:96:

[168] Edicts generally do not include justifications or contexts for *the content of their legal regulations*. They do, however, include justifications for the *act of revealing legal guidance* to the believing community. This latter justification is often expressed through formulaic phrases such as *yurīdu allāhu li-yubayyina lakum…* "God wants to make clear for you…," etc.

> 96. Lawful to you is game from the sea and its food as provision for you and the travelers, but forbidden to you is game from the land as long as you are in the state of *iḥrām*. And fear God to whom you will be gathered.

The verse opens with the passive verbal phrase *uḥilla lakum* "[l]awful to you," establishing a legal mandate. The mandate concerns dietary restrictions while in a state of ritual purity, *ḥuruman*, and continues through the majority of the verse. The verse's final phrase is an example of a formulaic conclusion: *wa-ttaqū allāha lladhī ilayhi tuḥsharūn* "And fear God to whom you will be gathered." Over a quarter of Qur'anic edicts (9/34) end with references to fearing God, and these references serve to conclude the utterance. As will be seen in more detail below, this mandate and formulaic conclusion structure is a defining feature of Qur'anic edicts that establishes the genre's function of communicating legislation.

The genre of edict's content is overwhelmingly concerned with directing specific, specialized actions of its audience and is, therefore, considered legal. The previous chapters have shown that the Qur'ān's communicative genres, particularly religio-political commentary and exhortation, seek to direct the actions and beliefs of the Qur'anic audience, too. What differentiates the directives found in edicts from those found in examples of religio-political commentary and exhortation? The answer lies in the rhetorical function of the legal material in each genre. Contrast the communication of dietary restrictions in Q. 5:96 above with the legal exhortation in Q. 2:172-176:

> 172. O you who believe! Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you, and render thanks to God if it is (indeed) He Whom ye worship.
> 173. He hath forbidden you only carrion, and blood, and swineflesh, and that which hath been immolated to (the name of) any other than God. But he who is driven by necessity, neither craving nor transgressing, it is no sin for him. Indeed, God is Forgiving, Merciful.
> 174. Indeed, those who hide aught of the Scripture which God hath revealed and purchase a small gain therewith, they eat into their bellies nothing else than fire. God will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He make them grow. Theirs will be a painful doom.

> 175. Those are they who purchase error at the price of guidance, and torment at the price of pardon. How constant are they in their strife to reach the Fire!
> 176. That is because God hath revealed the Scripture with the truth. Indeed, those who find (a cause of) disagreement in the Scripture are in open schism.

Verse 172 recalls Q. 2:168 above and opens the utterance with a tripartite vocative address characteristic of the exhortation genre, commanding Believers to *kulū min ṭayyibāti mā razaqnākum* "[e]at of the good things wherewith We have provided you." The specific legal content of the exhortation occurs in v. 173: "carrion, and blood, and swineflesh, and that which hath been immolated to (the name of) any other than God" are forbidden unless one "is driven by necessity." Indeed, v. 173 is remarkably similar to Q. 5:96 both in its matter-of-fact communication dietary restrictions and its concluding formulaic reference to God. Whereas Q. 5:96 communicates its legal content in a single verse, the legal content of Q. 2:173 is couched within a more complex literary structure. Verses 174-176 follow the legal content of v. 173 with a denunciation of *alladhīna yaktumūna mā anzala llāhu mina l-kitābi* "those who hide aught of the Scripture which God hath revealed." The content that "those who hide…" were concealing was the dietary restrictions in v. 173, as is suggested by the denunciation's placement directly after the dietary restrictions and the ironic depiction of them as *mā ya'kulūna fī buṭūnihim illā l-nāra* "eat[ing] into their bellies nothing else than fire." The rhetorical goals of the inclusion of legal content of v. 173, then, are both to clarify the dietary restrictions incumbent upon the believing community *and* to undermine the actions of "those who hide aught of the Scripture which God hath revealed." The rhetorical goal of edicts, in contrast, is the communication of the legal regulations themselves. Any legal material witnessed in the Qur'ān must be viewed in light of the genre in which it is located.

Seen as a whole, edict's communication of specialized legal content, short average length, and mandate and formulaic conclusion structure imply both the Qur'anic proclaimer's

absolute legal authority over his audience and an expectation of his audience's obedience to an edict's legal regulations. At the risk of stating the obvious, it is worth noting that the fact that edicts communicate legal regulations without accompanying justification or context suggests that the Qur'anic proclaimer had the authority to enact those legal regulations. As shown above, edicts have a communicative as opposed to persuasive function; that is, they communicate legal content to an audience instead of persuading an audience of the legal content's value. Edicts, then, take for granted the Qur'anic proclaimer's legal authority over his audience, as there is no attempt to convince the audience of his authority to enact legislation. Similarly, edicts assume their audience's obedience to the communicated legislation. The primary implication of the Qur'anic proclaimer's use of his legal authority is that his legal authority had efficacy. Because edicts do not attempt to persuade their audience to follow the legal content therein, without an implicit expectation of obedience, edicts would be ineffective in directing the community's actions. Instead of commanding this obedience, edicts take it for granted; indeed, most edicts, like Q. 5:3 above, display non-imperative verb openings and do not attempt explicitly to command compliance to their legal content. For these reasons, I have labeled this genre "edict," since the term denotes a matter-of-fact pronouncement of a legal ruling with the expectation of obedience. Additionally, labeling the genre "edict" draws a comparison to the late antique legal genre of imperial edict, a comparison to which we will shortly turn.

Finally, two possible intra-Qur'anic labels for the genre of edict are *kitāb* and *adhān*. Each noun occurs only once throughout the corpus of edicts. Q. 8:68 declares *lawlā kitābun min allāhi sabaqa…* "[h]ad it not been for an ordinance of God which had gone before…," presumably referring to an edict that preceded the edict in the previous verse (*mā kāna li-nabiyyin an yakūna lahu asrā ḥattā yuthkhina fī al-arḍi* "[i]t is not for any prophet to have

captives until he hath made slaughter in the land."). Relatedly, Q. 2:187 refers to the contents of its marital edict as being *mā kataba llāhu lakum* "what God prescribed for you." Q. 9:3 includes the only occurrence of *adhān* "announcement" in the Qur'ān, referring to the contents of its political edict as *adhānun min allāhi wa-rasūlihi* "an announcement from God and his Messenger."

Comparable Late Antique Genre

Qur'anic edicts, as vehicles of the Qur'ān's legal content, participate in the matrix of late antique legal culture and share affinities with the genre of imperial edict. In the important recent work *The Qur'ān's Legal Culture*, Holger Zellentin convincingly argues that the Qur'ān and its audience participated in the broader legal culture of the late antique Near East.[169] He begins by asserting that "both the majority of the Qur'ān's laws as well as its integral legal dynamic and developments – including its partial self-abrogation known as *naskh* – can be related more precisely to the *nomos* and the *narrative* of Late Antiquity than hitherto established," with *nomos* being the laws themselves and *narrative* the justifications for these laws.[170] In placing the Qur'ān within a wider late antique legal discourse, Zellentin relies primarily upon the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, a late antique Christian legal treatise, as a point of comparison. In the view of this author, Zellentin successfully argues that "the Qurʾān endorses the distinct selection of (mostly biblical) laws also promulgated by the Didascalia, as well as the ritual law of the Didascalia's Judaeo-Christian group" and that "the Didascalia should be seen as a central source for any reconstruction of how Biblical law had been transformed from the times of the Israelites to that

[169] Holger Michael Zellentin, *The Qur'ān's Legal Culture: The Didascalia Apostolorum as a Point of Departure* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).
[170] Ibid., 18.

of the Qurʾān."[171] The Qur'ān and the *Didascalia Apostolorum,* at the very least, are participating in a shared Judeo-Christian legal heritage circulating in the late antique Near East.

If Zellentin is correct in arguing for this shared legal culture of laws and norms, however, what were the literary modes by which these laws and norms were communicated? As Zellentin rightly points out, despite the shared legal views between the Qur'ān and the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, their commonalities cannot be explained by simple textual transmission, for "the affinities between the Didascalia and the Qur'ān do not point to literary contact."[172] Indeed, as an example of the genre of church order, the *Didascalia Apostolorum* does not resemble the literary form of the Qur'anic edict; whereas the *Didascalia* is an extended legal treatise weaving apostolic narratives and legal material together, edicts are defined by short and specific legal mandates devoid of justifications or context.[173] To find a similar literary form, one must turn to the late antique legal genre of imperial edict.

By the time of the Qur'ān's revelation, law in the Near East was dominated by the Byzantine emperor.[174] In the early-mid sixth century CE, the emperor Justinian issued his *Corpus Juris Civilis,* an extensive legal treatise divided into three parts.[175] One of these parts is the Justinian Codex, a "harmonised and coherent collection of laws issued by emperors over the previous 400 years" and most relevant to the present study.[176] The laws found in the Justinian

[171] Ibid., 178, XIII.
[172] Ibid., 228.
[173] Ibid., 41-53.
[174] Jill Harries, "Roman Law and Legal Culture," in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Anqituity,* ed. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 789.
[175] Fred H. Blume, *The Codex of Justinian: A New Annotated Translation, with Parallel Latin and Greek Text,* ed. Bruce W. Frier, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), xcvii-cxx.
[176] Ibid., xcix.

Codex were compiled from various types of materials including letters, rescripts, and edicts.[177] Much like Qur'anic edicts, imperial edicts collected in the Justinian Codex "were general declarations without addressees" and serve as instructive comparisons to their Qur'anic counterparts. A typical example of an imperial edict occurs in the Justinian Codex's chapter on marriage:

> No one shall be permitted to contract marriage with a daughter, granddaughter, or great-granddaughter, and likewise with a mother, grandmother, or great-grandmother, and collaterally with a father's or mother's sister, one's own sister, her daughter, or her granddaughter through that daughter, and, moreover, a brother's daughter or his granddaughter through that daughter, and likewise, among relatives by marriage, a stepdaughter, stepmother, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, and all the rest forbidden by ancient legal principle (*jus antiquum*). We wish everyone to keep away from these (marriage partners).[178]

The content of this edict is straightforward: the prohibition of a variety of incestuous marriages. The edict's structure can be defined as an initial prohibition, *nemini liceat contrahere* "no one shall be permitted," an explication of the prohibition, and a brief conclusion, *a quibus cunctos volumnus abstinere* "we wish everyone to keep away from these (marriage partners)." This structure mirrors the mandate and formulaic conclusion structure witnessed in Qur'anic edicts; both structures consist of detailed legal regulations with short conclusions devoid of justifications or context. A particularly relevant Qur'anic analogue occurs in Q. 4:23-28:

> 23. Prohibited to you [for marriage] are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your father's sisters, your mother's sisters, your brother's daughters, your sister's daughters, your [milk] mothers who nursed you, your sisters through nursing, your wives' mothers, and your step-daughters under your guardianship [born] of your wives unto whom you have gone in. But if you have not gone in unto them, there is no sin upon you. And [also prohibited are] the wives of your sons who are from your [own] loins, and that you take [in marriage] two sisters simultaneously, except for what has already occurred. Indeed, God is ever Forgiving and Merciful.

[177] Ibid., cvi-cvii.
[178] Ibid., 1113.

> 24. And [also prohibited to you are all] married women except those your right hands possess. [This is] the decree of God upon you. And lawful to you are [all others] beyond these, [provided] that you seek them [in marriage] with [gifts from] your property, desiring chastity, not unlawful sexual intercourse. So for whatever you enjoy [of marriage] from them, give them their due compensation as an obligation. And there is no blame upon you for what you mutually agree to beyond the obligation. Indeed, God is ever Knowing and Wise.
> 25. And whoever among you cannot [find] the means to marry free, believing women, then [he may marry] from those whom your right hands possess of believing slave girls. And God is most knowing about your faith. You [believers] are of one another. So marry them with the permission of their people and give them their due compensation according to what is acceptable. [They should be] chaste, neither [of] those who commit unlawful intercourse randomly nor those who take [secret] lovers. But once they are sheltered in marriage, if they should commit adultery, then for them is half the punishment for free [unmarried] women. This [allowance] is for him among you who fears sin, but to be patient is better for you. And God is Forgiving and Merciful.
> 26. God wants to make clear to you [the lawful from the unlawful] and guide you to the [good] practices of those before you and to accept your repentance. And God is Knowing and Wise.
> 27. God wants to accept your repentance, but those who follow [their] passions want you to digress [into] a great deviation.
> 28. And God wants to lighten for you [your difficulties]; and mankind was created weak.

Much like the previous imperial edict, v. 23 opens the utterance with a prohibition: *ḥurrimat ʻalaykum* "prohibited to you." This prohibition extends throughout vv. 23-24 and includes remarkably similar prohibitions of incestuous marriage to those seen in the Justinian Codex example while adding qualifications concerning female slaves in vv. 24-25. The edict concludes with the shorter vv. 26-28 and includes the formulaic concluding phrase *yurīdu allāhu li-yubayyina lakum* "God wants to make clear to you." Q. 4:23-28 clearly demonstrates edict's characteristic mandate and formulaic conclusion structure, since the opening three verses mandate specific and specialized actions surrounding marriage and the final three verses provide a brief and formulaic conclusion.

Although the content of these two edicts is strikingly similar, it is their analogous forms that concern the present study. Both imperial and Qur'anic edict examples present short and

specific legal mandates without accompanying legal justifications or context. Accordingly, these two literary forms serve the same social function of communicating legal regulations to an audience. This comparison between imperial and Qur'anic edicts serves to supplement the important work done by Holger Zellentin on the Qur'ān's legal culture; although the Qur'ān's legal *content* displays undeniable affinities with the legal content of the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the Qur'ān's primary legal *literary form*, the edict, shares much more in common with late antique imperial edict than it does with a church order like the *Didascalia*. With this insight in mind, we now turn to an overview of the genre of edict in the Qur'ān and its five subgenres.

Overview of Edict

Qur'anic edicts constitute a genre primarily found in the Medinan literary corpus, and they are characterized by nominal or passive verb openings, legal content, and a mandate and formulaic conclusion structure. As previously established, the social function of edicts is to communicate legislation and, accordingly, scholars have placed this material in the Medinan corpus. Indeed, of the 34 total edicts in the Qur'ān, 32 are fully Medinan with one fully Meccan and another a composite of Meccan and Medinan verses.[179] Although many of the individual verses composing edicts are long and prosaic, the genre has the shortest average length of all communicative genres in terms of the number of verses, at 3.62 verses. Edicts can also be divided into five subgenres based on the edict's content: marital, doctrinal, political, social, and dietary.

Like all Qur'anic communicative genres, edicts display characteristic opening and closing boundaries. Unlike the genres of religio-political commentary and exhortation that can also contain legal material, edicts' openings are generally not emphatic and have few of the

[179] Nöldeke, *History*.

rhetorical and stylistic characteristics associated with oral performance in front of an audience. Despite the genre's matter-of-fact legal content, only one fourth of the 34 examples exhibit an emphatic opening of *qul* "say!" or *inna* "indeed!"; no edicts open with an identification of the intended addressee. Instead, the majority of edicts begin with a nonverbal or passive verbal sentence. This general lack of emphatic address, especially when viewed in the context of the edicts' often complicated legal content, suggest that edicts were not well-suited for memorization or extemporaneous public oration. As has already been seen in the previous examples of Qur'anic edict, the genre's specialized legal content creates long and prosaic verses that, while possibly delivered in a public oration, appear connected to their composition or dissemination in writing. In a legal context, too, it is necessary for laws to be specific and standardized to be effectively obeyed, and writing, as opposed to public speech and memorization, helps codify uniform legal regulations. Edicts' general lack of syntactic or stylistic markers of public address combined with their dense legal content suggest that writing played a larger role in its composition than in that of other Qur'anic communicative genres.

Turning back to the opening boundary of edicts, the majority of edicts begin with a nonverbal or passive verbal sentence. The two edicts presented above begin with the passive verb *ḥurrimat* "forbidden," and this verb, along with its opposite *uḥilla* "permitted," account for the beginnings of five edicts. These passive verbal openings contribute to the genre's brevity; generally speaking, edicts do not include introductions, instead beginning immediately with legal material. Similarly, the genre's most common opening, a nonverbal sentence, begins the utterance with legal mandates. These nominal openings can include *laysa*, *kāna*, *innamā*, *li-*, and the categorical negative *lā*, but also a definite noun like *al-ṭalāqu* "divorce" in Q. 2:229. By immediately entering into a legal discourse, edicts forgo introductory remarks in service of

presenting straightforward legal regulations. This lack of introductory remarks is reflected in the genre's larger dipartite literary structure: mandate plus formulaic conclusion.

Edicts exhibit a dipartite literary structure of mandate plus formulaic conclusion that establishes a legal mandate followed by a brief conclusion of stereotypical phrases. Of the 34 edicts, 33 display this dipartite structure; the only outlier, Q. 24:1-10, opens its sura, and this opening position may account for its tripartite structure. As discussed above, edicts forgo an introduction and begin immediately with legal content, or a "mandate." The mandate can occur in a single verse or extend across multiple verses. Following the legal mandate is a formulaic conclusion, a brief statement or series of statements without accompany justification or context for the preceding mandate. The three major forms of conclusion are: references to God's divine attributes, references to fearing God, and a variant of the phrase *yubayyinu llāhu āyātihi* "God makes clear his verses." Like many Medinan verses, the concluding verses of edicts often include formulaic references to God's divine attributes. Many of these types of conclusion begin with the emphatic phrase *inna llāha* "Indeed, God…" followed by divine names. Joseph Lowry has commented on the association of the Arabic root *ḥ-k-m* with the Qur'ān's legal material, and the divine name *ḥakīm* "the Wise" occurs throughout Qur'anic edicts' conclusions.[180]

The second-most common type of conclusion is reference to fearing God. The manner in which fear is invoked varies across the examples, but the primary Arabic root used is *w-q-y*. The final type of formulaic conclusion, a variant of the phrase *yubayyinu llāhu āyātihi* "God makes clear his verses," can be seen in Q. 4:26 above and helps underscore the social function of edicts to communicate specialized legal actions to its audience. Because edicts expound the specific actions fundamental to general, pious conduct, they are "making clear" the actions necessary for

[180] Lowry, "Law," 446.

the successful performance of pious actions. Together with the opening mandates, these formulaic conclusions are integral parts of the genre's literary structure. With a general overview of edicts completed, we now turn to a survey of its five subgenres: marital, doctrinal, political, social, and dietary.

Marital Edict

The subgenres of edicts are separated based on differences in content rather than form. More than one-third of edicts concern marital regulations, making them the most common subgenre of edict. There are 12 total marital edicts in the Qur'ān, all occurring in the Medinan literary corpus and averaging 5.08 verses in length. An edict is considered "marital" if it concerns the acts of marriage, divorce, sexual intercourse, or inheritance. An example occurs in Q. 2:236-237:

> 236. There is no blame upon you if you divorce women you have not touched nor specified for them an obligation. But give them [a gift of] compensation - the wealthy according to his capability and the poor according to his capability - a provision according to what is acceptable, a duty upon the doers of good.
> 237. And if you divorce them before you have touched them and you have already specified for them an obligation, then [give] half of what you specified - unless they forego the right or the one in whose hand is the marriage contract foregoes it. And to forego it is nearer to righteousness. And do not forget graciousness between you. Indeed God, of whatever you do, is Seeing.

The opening phrase *lā junāḥa ʿalaykum* "[t]here is no blame upon you" is a common edict opening reminiscent of the passive verb *uḥilla* "permissible" without as much legal force.[181] Verse 236 opens the utterance with a mandate about divorce: divorce before a marriage is consummated is allowed as long as compensation is given to the divorcée. The mandate continues in v. 237 with a qualification concerning the compensation owed. The utterance ends with a short formulaic conclusion in v. 237 including a characteristic reference to God's

[181] For a comparison of these terms, see: Lowry, "Law," 453-455.

attributes: *inna llāha bimā ta'malūna baṣīr* "[i]ndeed God, of whatever you do, is Seeing." The utterance does not include any justification or context for its legal rulings. Instead, Q. 2:236-237 sticks to the mandate plus formulaic conclusion structure that is characteristic of edicts generally.

Another marital edict occurs in Q. 2:187-188:

> 187. It is made lawful for you to go in unto your wives on the night of the fast. They are raiment for you and ye are raiment for them. God is Aware that ye were deceiving yourselves in this respect and He hath turned in mercy toward you and relieved you. So hold intercourse with them and seek that which God hath ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becometh distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then strictly observe the fast till nightfall and touch them not, but be at your devotions in the mosques. These are the limits imposed by Allah, so approach them not. Thus God expoundeth His revelation to mankind that they may be god-fearing.
> 188. And eat not up your property among yourselves in vanity, nor seek by it to gain the hearing of the judges that ye may knowingly devour a portion of the property of others wrongfully.

The utterance's marital mandate begins with the passive verb *uḥilla* "made lawful." The mandate proceeds to clarify the restrictions on sexual intercourse during *laylata al-ṣiyāmi* "the night of the fast." The legal content of v. 177 is followed by a formulaic conclusion reminding the audience why God has revealed these legal "limits" (*ḥudūd*): *la'allahum yattaqūna* "they they may be God-fearing." Verse 188 is a curious addition to what appears to be a self-contained marital edict in v. 177. It commands the audience to curb any duplicitous uses of their wealth, and, beyond the opening *wa-* conjunction, has no thematic or syntactic connection to the previous verse. Because v. 187 displays all the characteristics of a complete marital edict, it is the opinion of this author that v. 188 was not originally part of this textual unit and that v. 187 was revealed as its own utterance.

Doctrinal Edict

The second-most common subgenre of edict is that of the doctrinal edict. Doctrinal edicts seek to establish authoritative beliefs and tenets to which the audience should adhere. There are

seven in total, one Meccan and six Medinan, and average 2.71 verses in length. They cover a diverse array of subjects including the sacred months and the Hajj, or "pilgrimage." The Hajj is a particular focus of doctrinal edicts with four mentioning or alluding to the pilgrimage. Q. 2:197 is one of these examples:

> 197. Hajj is [during] well-known months, so whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein [by entering the state of ihram], there is [to be for him] no sexual relations and no wickedness and no disputing during Hajj. And whatever good you do - God knows it. And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of God. And fear Me, O you of understanding.

The utterance opens with a nominal sentence and the definite noun *al-ḥajju* "the Hajj." The mandate concerns when Hajj occurs, during *ashhurun maʿlūmātun* "well-known months," and forbids *rafath* "sexual relations," *fusūq* "wickedness," and *jidāl* "disputing" therein. The mandate is followed by a formulaic conclusion, this example including a reference to fearing God (*al-taqwā*) and a command to "fear me" (*wa-ttaqūni*). It is worth noting, too, that Q. 2:197 is the only example of an edict to include a vocative particle in its general exclamation *yā-ulī al-albāb* "O you of understanding."

Q. 9:36 is another doctrinal edict concerning the number of months:

> 36. Indeed, the number of the months with God is twelve months by God's ordinance on the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred: that is the right religion. So wrong not yourselves in them. And wage war on all of the idolaters as they are waging war on all of you. And know that God is with the god-fearing.

The edict begins with the emphatic particle *inna* "indeed" that introduces its doctrinal content: there are twelve months, four of which are *ḥurum* "sacred." This doctrinal mandate is followed by an admonishment *fa-lā taẓlimū fīhinna anfusakum* "do not wrong not yourselves in them" and a brief directive to *wa-qātilū l-mushrikīna kāffatan* "wage war on all of the idolaters." The

utterance ends with a final encouragement, declaring that *allāha ma'a al-muttaqīn* "God is with the god-fearing."

Political Edict

Political edicts account for seven of the 34 total edicts and average 4.86 verses in length. Their subjects of discourse include the relationships with People of the Book, captives and war booty, the Associators, and the Quraysh. The thread uniting the content of political edicts is their concern for guiding the actions of Believers with communities of non-Believers. The only Meccan political edict occurs in Q. 106:1-4:

> 1. For the accustomed security of the Quraysh –
> 2. Their accustomed security [in] the caravan of winter and summer –
> 3. Let them worship the Lord of this House,
> 4. Who has fed them, [saving them] from hunger and made them safe, [saving them] from fear.

The utterance opens with a prepositional phrase in v. 1 establishing the content of its mandate as *li-īlāfi quraysh* "[f]or the accustomed security of the Quraysh." The mandate continues through v. 2, qualifying the terms of the Quraysh's security, and v. 3, allowing that the Quraysh *ya'budū rabba hādhā l-bayt* "worship the Lord of this House." The formulaic conclusion at the end of v. 4 inverts the common convention of encouraging fear of God by guaranteeing the Quraysh freedom *min khawf* "from fear." Despite its Meccan categorization, Q. 106:1-4 conforms to edict's general structure of mandate plus formulaic conclusion.

An example of the more common Medinan political edict is Q. 5:33-34:

> 33. The only reward of those who make war upon God and His messenger and strive after corruption in the land will be that they will be killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet on alternate sides cut off, or will be expelled out of the land. Such will be their degradation in the world, and in the Hereafter theirs will be an awful doom;
> 34. Save those who repent before ye overpower them. For know that God is Forgiving, Merciful.

This political edict explicates the (worldly) punishments of *alladhīna yuḥāribūna llāha wa-rasūlahu* "those who make war upon God and His messenger." Verse 33 lists a variety of punishments, including death, crucifixion, the cutting off of hands and feet, and expulsion. Verse 34 offers a qualification for *alladhīna tābū* "those who repent" and concludes with a standard reference to God's epithets: *allāha ghafūrun raḥīm* "God is Forgiving, Merciful."

Social Edict

Five edicts regulate the interpersonal actions of their audience; these are the Qur'ān's social edicts. They only occur in the Medinan literary corpus and average a brief 1.2 verses in length. Social edicts regulate communal dining, rendering trusts, oaths, and communications with the Messenger, and they differ from political edicts insofar as their content addresses social interactions within the Believing community. Q. 24:61 is an illustrative example:

> 61. There is not upon the blind [any] constraint nor upon the lame constraint nor upon the ill constraint nor upon yourselves when you eat from your [own] houses or the houses of your fathers or the houses of your mothers or the houses of your brothers or the houses of your sisters or the houses of your father's brothers or the houses of your father's sisters or the houses of your mother's brothers or the houses of your mother's sisters or [from houses] whose keys you possess or [from the house] of your friend. There is no blame upon you whether you eat together or separately. But when you enter houses, give greetings of peace upon each other - a greeting from God, blessed and good. Thus does God make clear to you the verses [of ordinance] that you may understand.

Although Q. 24:61 is only a single verse long, it is full of the dense legal content characteristic of the wider edict genre. The utterance opens with the phrase *laysa ʿalā l-aʿmā ḥarajun* "[t]here is not upon the blind [any] constraint," a phrase similar to *lā junāḥa ʿalaykum* "[t]here is no blame upon you" seen in Q. 2:236 and repeated at the end of the verse. The verse clarifies the social situations in which various physically restricted populations may eat with other members of the community. Following this legal content is the utterance's formulaic conclusion. Q. 24:61

includes the phrase *yubayyinu llāhu lakumu l-āyāti* "God makes clear to you the verses," variants of which occur six times across all edicts.

A second social edict occurs in Q. 5:89:

> 89. God will not take you to task for that which is unintentional in your oaths, but He will take you to task for the oaths which ye swear in earnest. The expiation thereof is the feeding of ten of the needy with the average of that wherewith ye feed your own folk, or the clothing of them, or the liberation of a slave, and for him who findeth not (the wherewithal to do so) then a three days' fast. This is the expiation of your oaths when ye have sworn; and keep your oaths. Thus God makes clear to you His verses in order that ye may give thanks.

This one-verse social edict concerns the breaking of oaths and its required penalties. The topic of oaths is included within the social edict subgenre because oaths are a means to guarantee interpersonal arrangements between members of a community. Q. 5:89 requires one who breaks an oath *mā ʿaqqadtumu l-aymāna* "which ye swear in earnest" either to feed or clothe the poor, to free a slave, or to fast for three days. This mandate is followed nearly the same concluding formula seen in the social edict above: *ka-dhālika yubayyinu llāhu lakum āyātihi* "[t]hus God makes clear to you His verses."

Dietary Edict

The final subgenre of edict is the dietary edict. There are only three dietary edicts, and they, as their name suggests, concern the curbing of the community's eating habits. The occur only in the Medinan literary corpus and average 1 verse in length, the shortest of the Qur'ān's communicative subgenres. Q. 5:3 and Q. 5:96, discussed above, are two examples of dietary edicts.

Conclusion

Qur'anic edicts are a fundamentally legal genre. Nearly all edicts occur in the Medinan literary corpus and concern the marital, doctrinal, political, social, and dietary spheres of life in

the Qur'anic community. They exhibit a dipartite literary structure of mandate and formulaic conclusion; noticeably absent is the inclusion of legal justifications or contexts of their revelation. Accordingly, edicts have a communicative social function of conveying specific and specialized legal regulations to guide the actions of their audience. This social function combined with the genre's lack of rhetorical and stylistic evidence for public proclamation suggests that writing may have played an important role in its composition and dissemination.

Two final comments should be made about where edicts are found in the Qur'anic corpus. Aside from being mostly Medinan, they occur in only eight of the Qur'ān's 114 suras! In fact, only Q. 2, 4, 5, 9, and 24 contain more than one edict. It appears that during the process of the Qur'ān's collection, many edicts were compiled together in specific suras. Why was this the case? As will be explored in the concluding chapter, the Qur'ān combines multiple communicative genres together to create more complex composite genres. One of these composite genres, I will argue, is the legal treatise, an extended collection of edicts and other communicative genres containing legal material. Because edicts are a fundamentally legal genre, it makes sense that, when the Qur'anic compilers sought to create a complex legal genre, edicts were the primary source material. Therefore, individual edicts were arranged alongside one another to create a larger legal treatise, and these legal treatises occur in Q. 2, 4, 5, 9, and 24.

Additionally, edicts can be appended to, or sometimes inserted into, other communicative genres based on similarities in legal content. The Qur'ān certainly went through a complex process of collection and compilation, and an analysis of edicts' placements within the Qur'anic corpus can help elucidate this process. In particular, the dense legal content and prosaic style characteristic of edicts make them easily recognizable when they are attached to a non-edict utterance. Q. 2:219-224 is particularly illustrative of this phenomenon:

> 219. They question thee about strong drink and games of chance. Say: In both is great sin, and (some) utility for men; but the sin of them is greater than their usefulness. And they ask thee what they ought to spend. Say: that which is superfluous. Thus God maketh plain to you (His) revelations, that haply ye may reflect.
> 220. Upon the world and the Hereafter. And they question thee concerning orphans. Say: To improve their lot is best. And if ye mingle your affairs with theirs, then (they are) your brothers. God knoweth him who spoileth from him who improveth. Had God willed He could have overburdened you. God is Mighty, Wise.
> 221. Wed not idolatresses till they believe; for indeed, a believing bondwoman is better than an idolatress though she please you; and give not your daughters in marriage to idolaters till they believe, for indeed, a believing slave is better than an idolater though he please you. These invite unto the Fire, and God inviteth unto the Garden, and unto forgiveness by His grace, and makes clear His verses to mankind that haply they may remember.
> 222. They question thee (O Muhammad) concerning menstruation. Say: It is an illness, so let women alone at such times and go not in unto them till they are cleansed. And when they have purified themselves, then go in unto them as God hath enjoined upon you. Truly God loveth those who turn unto Him, and loveth those who have a care for cleanness.
> 223. Your women are a tilth for you (to cultivate) so go to your tilth as ye will, and send (good deeds) before you for your souls, and fear God, and know that ye will (one day) meet Him. Give glad tidings to believers, (O Muhammad).
> 224. And make not God, by your oaths, a hindrance to your being righteous and observing your duty unto Him and making peace among mankind. God is Hearer, Knower.

At first glance, Q. 2:219-224 appears to be a single utterance. Upon closer inspection, however, the passage is revealed to consist of two distinct utterances belonging to two distinct genres: v. 221 is a marital edict placed in the middle of the larger response of vv. 219-220, 222-224. Verses 219-220 open in typical response fashion; they use manufactured speech to present questions from the community and *qul* commands to answer them. The first two questions in v. 219 concern *al-khamri wa-l-maysiri* "strong drink and games of chance" and *mādhā yunfiqūna* "what they ought to spend," while the third in v. 220 concerns *al-yatāmā* "orphans." Each question is followed by an answer that begins with the *qul* "say!" imperative. Verse 221, despite being syntactically connected to the previous verse with the conjunction *wa-*, eschews this response

structure in favor of the detailed regulatory material common in edicts; in particular, the verse includes multiple mandates concerning marrying idolator women and even concludes with the formula *wa-yubayyinu āyātihi li-l-nāsi laʿallahum yatadhakkarūn* "He makes clear His verses to mankind that haply they may remember." Verses 222-224, however, revert to the response structure of vv. 219-220. Verse 222 begins with a question concerning *al-maḥīḍ* "menstruation" and follows it with an answer initiated by a *qul* command. Verses 223-224 complete the utterance with general admonishments towards pious conduct and the formulaic inclusion of God's names at the end of v. 224.

How does one make sense of the structure of these verses? When viewed through the genre-critical lens adopted in the present study, it is clear that Q. 2:221 is a marital edict that has been inserted in the middle of the response of Q. 219-220, 221-222. Not only are the literary structures of these two utterances distinct, the content of v. 221 is not particularly relevant to the preceding or following verses, and the verse is substantially longer than the verses in the surrounding response. This marital edict has presumably been placed within the response because of the response's legal content; as discussed above, the Qur'ān often consolidates its legal passages together into longer legal tracts. Despite the initial *wa-* conjunction in v. 221, it cannot be considered an original part of the surrounding utterance. This particular example hopefully demonstrates the efficacy of an understanding of Qur'anic genre in illuminating the Qur'ān's textual history. We turn now to a discussion of the communicative genres of prayer and creed.

Chapter Six: Prayer and Creed

Introduction

The final two communicative genres of the Qur'ān are prayer and creed. They are treated together because they are *peripheral* communicative genres; while prayer and creed exist as self-sufficient utterances like the previously discussed communicative genres, their small number of examples (six total) combined with their beginning or ending positions (within a sura or within the whole Qur'anic corpus) lead me to designate them as distinct from the *fundamental* genres of religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict. During this survey of prayer and creed, the chapter will discuss the concept of embedded genres, those genres referred to or contained within the Qur'ān's communicative genres. Finally, the implications of the distinction between fundamental and peripheral communicative genres for the understanding of Qur'anic genre as a whole will be further explored in the study's conclusion.

Prayer

Karim Samji writes that "the prayer genre abounds in the Qur'ān."[182] This sentiment has been echoed by numerous scholars, including Gerhard Böwering, and the work of Anton Baumstark and S.D. Goitein on Qur'anic prayer represent early Western forays into the application of form criticism to the Qur'ān.[183] Samji identifies seven different forms of prayer throughout the text.[184] The present study, in contrast, argues that there are only five occurrences of the prayer genre in the entire Qur'ān. How are these two views reconcilable?

[182] Samji, *Form-Critical*, 36.
[183] Gerhard Böwering, "Prayer," in *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Anton Baumstark, "Jüdischer und christlicher Gebetstypus im Koran," *Der Islam* 16 (1927): 229–248; S.D. Goitein, "Das Gebet im Qoran," PhD diss. (Universität Frankfurt am Main, 1923).
[184] Ibid., 54-82.

The answer lies in the distinction between *communicative* genres and *embedded* genres. To this point, the present study has been investigating the Qur'ān's communicative genres of discourse. Communicative genres are communicated as utterances, self-sufficient literary units that have opening and closing boundaries, and are the fundamental literary forms by which the Qur'ān communicates with its audience. It is prudent here to revisit the concept of the utterance, as being communicated as an utterance is what differentiates a communicative from an embedded genre. Utterances, a literary concept pioneered by Mikhail Bakhtin, are units of communication displaying opening and closing boundaries that represent the beginning and ending of a speech act. The specific opening and closing boundaries displayed by an utterance depend on the utterance's genre, but, like the opening and final closing of the mouth in an oration or the salutation and valediction of a letter, they serve to establish the beginning and ending of speech. Utterances can take the form of any number of speech genres; the Qur'ān, as we have seen, exhibits six of these genres: religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, edict, prayer, and creed. These six Qur'anic genres are considered communicative genres because they are complete units of speech communicated in bounded utterances.

Embedded genres, unlike communicative genres, are not communicated as utterances; instead, they are contained, or *embedded*, within a larger utterance.[185] Because the Qur'ān's six communicative genres are communicated as utterances, they are the smallest complete literary units of communication in the Qur'ān. Therefore, any material contained within a communicative genre is considered a constituent part of the larger communicative genre rather than its own genre form. When another genre is used or cited within a communicative genre,

[185] The use of the term "embedded" to describe non-communicative genre forms in the Qur'ān is inspired by Devin J. Stewart, "Notes on Embedded Texts and Reported Speech in the Qur'an" (Forthcoming).

then, the referenced genre is considered to be embedded within the larger communicative genre. In this way, communicative genres are the modes by which the Qur'ān communicates to its audience, and embedded genres are a rhetorical component of the communicative genre.

A particularly relevant example of a communicative genre containing an embedded genre occurs in Q. 38:35: *qāla rabbi ghfir lī wa-hab lī mulkan lā yanbaghī li-aḥadin min baʿdī innaka anta l-wahhāb* "He said, 'My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower.'" Samji describes this verse as a "Solomonic prayer" and notes its inclusion of the common prayer invocation *rabbi* "my lord."[186] Samji is certainly right to label this verse a prayer; it opens with an apostrophic invocation (*rabbi* "my lord), includes divine requests, refers to God in the second-person singular (*anta* "you), and concludes with a formulaic reference to relevant divine attributes (*innaka anta l-wahhāb* "Indeed, You are the Bestower").

This prayer exists within a larger narrative utterance, however. According to the classifications of the present study, the prayer in Q. 38:35 occurs within the larger legitimating narrative of Q. 38:1-66. Verses 30-40 contain a narrative sequence concerning Solomon:

> 30. And to David We gave Solomon. An excellent servant, indeed he was one repeatedly turning back [to God].
> 31. [Mention] when there were exhibited before him in the afternoon the poised [standing] racehorses.
> 32. And he said, "Indeed, I gave preference to the love of good [things] over the remembrance of my Lord until the sun disappeared into the curtain [of darkness]."
> 33. [He said], "Return them to me," and set about striking [their] legs and necks.
> 34. And We certainly tried Solomon and placed on his throne a body; then he returned.
> 35. He said, "My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower."
> 36. So We subjected to him the wind blowing by his command, gently, wherever he directed,
> 37. And [also] the devils [of jinn] - every builder and diver

[186] Samji, *Form-Critical*, 40.

38. And others bound together in shackles.
39. [We said], "This is Our gift, so grant or withhold without account."
40. And indeed, for him is nearness to Us and a good place of return.

The prayer in question occurs in v. 35. Verses 30-31 open the first narrative episode and describe Solomon and the *al-jiyād* "racehorses" incident, an enigmatic pericope that Heinrich Speyer and Gabriel Said Reynolds have noted bears resemblances to Deuteronomy 17:16, 1 Kings 5:6 and 10:26, 2 Kings 23:11, and Ecclesiastes 1:5.[187] The second Solomonic narrative episode begins in v. 34 and continues through v. 40. After *alqaynā ʿalā kursiyyihi jasadan* "We [God] placed on his throne a body," Solomon invokes the previously discussed prayer in v. 35 and asks for God's forgiveness. Ultimately, God answers Solomon's prayer in vv. 36-39, and v. 40 concludes the narrative sequence with a final extoling of Solomon: *wa-inna lahu ʿindanā la-zulfā* "indeed, for him is nearness to Us."

The prayer in Q. 38:35 is embedded in a narrative episode which is only a part of a larger Solomonic narrative sequence which is itself only a small part of the larger legitimating narrative utterance of Q. 38:1-66. Furthermore, the prayer is spoken by a narrative character, Solomon, and not God as proclaimed by the Prophet Muḥammad. While Samji is correct in identifying Q. 38:35 as an example of the prayer genre, the prayer is deeply embedded within a larger communicative genre. The Qur'ān is communicating with its audience in the form of a legitimating narrative and *not* a prayer; the prayer in Q. 38:35 is simply a rhetorical component of an overarching narrative utterance. When attempting to understand how the Qur'ān employs different genre forms to communicate with its audience, it is imperative to differentiate between communicative and embedded genres.

[187] Heinrich Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1961), 399; Reynolds, *Bible*, 692.

The penchant for prayers to be embedded within larger utterances in the manner above is the fundamental reason for the differences in treatment of the prayer genres in Samji's work and the present study. Indeed, of the fifty-four examples of prayer cited by Samji, thirty-three occur in narrative utterances, twenty in non-narrative utterances, and only one, Q. 1, occurs as a standalone prayer utterance. In total, the present study identifies only five prayers that exist as complete utterances (all other prayer forms in the Qur'ān are embedded within communicative genres). Unless noted, any further references to prayer refer to the communictive genre.

Terminology

The choice of "prayer" as a genre classification stems from the genre's propensity to address God, implicitly or explicitly.[188] In fact, prayer is the only communicative genre that communicates from the Qur'anic proclaimer to God instead of from the Qur'anic proclaimer to his audience. Additionally, prayers only occur at the beginning of the Qur'ān corpus (Q. 1), at the end of the Qur'ān corpus (Q. 113 and Q. 114), or at the beginning of a sura (Q. 35:1-2 and Q. 61:1). As will be discussed in more detail later, these are two initial signs that prayer is a Qur'anic genre fundamentally different than religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict.

The term *du'ā'* and related forms are used throughout the Qur'ān to refer to prayer. Prayer, Devin Stewart notes, "is one of the most prominent generic labels in the Qur'an and the topic of much meta-generic discourse."[189] None of the five occurrences of the communicative genre of prayer include this meta-generic label, however. Nonetheless, it can be assumed that the

[188] Coats, *Exodus*, 168.
[189] Stewart, "Approaching," 16.

Qur'ān's references to *du'ā'* refer to the five instances of prayer in the Qur'ān, prayers embedded in other communicative genres, and many other prayer forms that the Qur'ān has not preserved.

Overview of Prayer

Prayer in the Qur'ān is defined by implicit or explicit addresses to God, sustained end-rhyme, and placement at the beginning or end of the Qur'ān corpus or a sura. Additionally, it can be divided into the two subgenres of prayer of praise and prayer of protection. There are four Meccan and one Medinan example, and they average 4.2 verses in length. The opening bound of Qur'anic prayers are easy to determine because they all coincide with the beginning of a sura. Two examples begin with a praise formula (*al-ḥamdu li-llāhi* and *sabbaḥa li-llāhi*), two with a *qul* command, and one with the *basmala*. The examples' closing boundaries are similarly diverse, although both Q. 35:1-2 and Q. 61:1 conclude with the formulaic phrase *wa-huwa l-'azīzu l-ḥakīm* "and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

An essential convention of Qur'anic prayer is its implicit or explicit address to God. Three examples explicitly address God, either through the second-person masculine singular pronoun *iyyāka*, an imperative verb conjugated in the second-person masculine singular directed at God, or the verbal phrase *a'ūdhu bi-rabbi…* "I seek refuge in the Lord…" with "the Lord" as the indirect object. The other two examples implicitly address God with their opening exaltations of *al-ḥamdu li-llāhi* "Praise be to God" and *sabbaḥa li-llāhi* "Exalt God…", for God is the intended recipient of the verses' praise. Another salient characteristic of the prayer genre is its consistent end-rhyme. Unlike all other Qur'anic communicative genres, prayer displays a sustained end-rhyme scheme throughout each utterance. These end-rhyme schemes include *-īm/-īn, aC* , or *-ās* verse endings.

The most distinctive characteristic of prayer in the Qur'ān, however, is its placement at the beginning or end of the Qur'ān corpus or the beginning of a sura. Even though there are only five examples of prayer, the similarity between their placements in the Qur'ān are striking. Q. 1, *al-Fātiḥah* "the Opening," is the first sura in the Qur'ān. Q. 113 and Q. 114 are the last two suras in the Qur'ān. Q. 35:1-2 and Q. 61:1 are the opening verses of their respective suras. This phenomenon and its implications will be discussed in further detail below, alongside the Qur'ān's only example of creed, Q. 112. Finally, the Qur'ān exhibits two distinct subgenres of prayer: prayers of praise (3) and prayers of protection (2). These two subgenres are differentiated according to their content, as, rather straightforwardly, prayers of praise seek to exalt God while prayers of protection seek His divine protection.

Comparable Late Antique Genres

Much has already been written on Q. 1 and its resemblances to Christian prayer, most notably the Our Father prayer.[190] For this reason, the present study will instead focus on Q. 113, a prayer of protection, and its resemblances to the late antique genre of incantation bowl texts. The text of Q. 113 is as follows:

1. Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak
2. From the evil of that which He created
3. And from the evil of darkness when it settles
4. And from the evil of the blowers on knots
5. And from the evil of an envier when he envies."

This short prayer of protection begins with a *qul* "say!" command before proceeding to the content of the prayer. Like Q. 114, the prayer begins with a plea for security in v.1, *a'ūdhu bi-*

[190] Some examples include: Reynolds, *Bible*, 29; Angelika Neuwirth and Karl Neuwirth, "Sūrat al-Fātiḥa – 'Eröffnung' des Text-Corpus Koran oder 'Introitus' der Gebetsliturgie?," in *Text, Methode und Grammatik: Wolfgang Richter zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Walter Gross, Hubert Irsigler, and Theodor Seidl (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1991), 331-357.

rabbi l-falaq "I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak." The remainder of the verses, vv. 2-5, describe the agents against which protection is being requested: *sharri mā khalaq* "the evil of that which He created," *sharri ghāsiqin idhā waqab* "the evil of darkness when it settles," *sharri l-naffāthāti fī l-'uqad* "the evil of the blowers on knots," and *sharri ḥāsidin idhā ḥasad* "the evil of the envier when he envies." Considering the rest of the Qur'anic revelation, these references to magic in non-narrative contexts may seem out of place. When viewed in light of late antique incantation bowl texts, however, both these references and Q. 113 as a whole demonstrate clear apotropaic roots.

The phenomenon of incantation bowls, writing protective incantations on clay pottery, was relatively widespread across the ancient and late antique Near East.[191] According to Michael G. Morony, the texts written on these bowls "were a form of defensive, protective magic, sometimes, but not necessarily, against a particular curse or demon."[192] This example of an incantation bowl text is in Mandaic and appears in Edwin M. Yamauchi's *Mandaic Incantation Texts*:[193]

1. Repulsed
2. are all the curses and incantation of men and women,
3. of the boys and girls of my evil enemies
4. and all of my adversaries who make incantations in the night
5. and in the days from me, Anošay daughter of Mehindukt.

The incantation opens with a statement of protection. Instead of the request for protection from the Lord seen in Q. 113, this incantation bowl asserts that the following list of afflictions are

[191] Michael G. Morony, "Magic and Society in Late Sasanian Iraq," in *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, ed. Scott Noegel, et al. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 83.
[192] Ibid., 96.
[193] Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Mandaic Incantation Texts* (Ann Arbor: Cushing-Malloy, Inc., 1967), 163.

"repulsed" by the power of the incantation. Like Q. 113, the text lists a wide array of agents against which protection is asserted: "curses and incantations" from "my evil enemies and all of my adversaries who make incantations." Morony writes, "[a]lthough we do not actually have examples of the curses the incantation bowls were intended to counteract, the texts themselves refer to curses, knots, knocking, and the evil eye."[194] This incantation's seeking of protection from magical forces, and in particular knots, mirrors Q. 113 and its reference to "the evil of the blowers on knots." Another incantation bowl text is described, too, as "giv[ing] protection 'from the jealousy with which the evil eye of evil men are jealous,'" clearly reflecting Q. 113:5 and its inclusion of "the evil of an envier when he envies." Just like the prayers of protection in the Qur'ān, late antique incantation bowl texts seek to establish protection from evil forces through invocation or prayer.

Despite there being only five occurrences of the communicative genre of prayer in the Qur'ān, it is possible to establish specific genre conventions and subgenres. Qur'anic prayers are divided into prayers of praise and prayers of protection according to their content. Additionally, prayers address God, demonstrate a sustained rhyme scheme, and occur at the beginning or end of the Qur'ān corpus or beginning of a sura. We now turn our attention to the Qur'ān's final communicative genre, that of creed.

Creed

There is only one example of the communicative genre of creed in the Qur'ān, and it occurs in Q. 112. It is a matter-of-fact statement of specific tenets of belief devoid of its revelatory context. The Qur'ān does not include a meta-generic label clearly identifiable as

[194] Morony, "Magic," 99.

"creed." Q. 112 is considered to be a Meccan sura and, like prayer, exhibits a sustained rhyme scheme and is situated at the end of the Qur'ān corpus. The sura is as follows:

> 1. Say, "He is God, [who is] One,
> 2. God, the Eternal Refuge.
> 3. He neither begets nor is born,
> 4. Nor is there to Him any equivalent."

This short sura begins with a *qul* "Say" command opening. In each of its four verses, the sura establishes fundamental characteristics of God's nature: God is Allah, *aḥad* "One," *al-ṣamad* "the Eternal Refuge," "He neither begets nor is born," and He has no *kufuwan* "equivalent." In this way, Q. 112 is a brief and straightforward enumeration of the Qur'ān's conception of God.

Despite there being only one communicative genre example of creed in the Qur'ān, there are many examples of creed embedded within larger utterances. An embedded creed occurs in Q. 3:79-85:

> 79. It is not for a human [prophet] that God should give him the Scripture and authority and prophethood and then he would say to the people, "Be servants to me rather than God," but [instead, he would say], "Be pious scholars of the Lord because of what you have taught of the Scripture and because of what you have studied."
> 80. Nor could he order you to take the angels and prophets as lords. Would he order you to disbelief after you had been Muslims?
> 81. And [recall, O People of the Scripture], when God took the covenant of the prophets, [saying], "Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom and then there comes to you a messenger confirming what is with you, you [must] believe in him and support him." [God] said, "Have you acknowledged and taken upon that My commitment?" They said, "We have acknowledged it." He said, "Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses."
> 82. And whoever turned away after that - they were the defiantly disobedient.
> 83. So is it other than the religion of God they desire, while to Him have submitted [all] those within the heavens and earth, willingly or by compulsion, and to Him they will be returned?
> 84. Say, "We believe in God and in what was revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Descendants, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [submitting] to Him."
> 85. And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.

Q. 3:79-85 is a proclamation discussing Islam's conception of the prophetic office. The utterance exhibits all of the common conventions of religio-political commentary, including its premise and *qul* response rhetorical structure. Verses 79-83 compose the utterance's extended premise; this premise is succinctly established in the utterance's opening declaration in v. 79, "[i]t is not for a human [prophet] that God should give him the Scripture and authority and prophethood and then he would say to the people, "Be servants to me rather than God." After further explication of this premise in vv. 80-83, v. 84 begins with the characteristic *qul* command followed by an embedded creed: "Say, 'We believe in God and in what was revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Descendants, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [submitting] to Him.'" Like the example of a communicative genre creed in Q. 112, the embedded creed in Q. 3:84 begins with a *qul* command and proceeds to proclaim an extended statement of belief, in this case explicating the tenets of belief related to revelation and the prophets. This embedded creed serves as the proclamation's response to its opening premise of the proper role of the prophet; namely, that prophets are humans and only God is to be worshipped. These types of embedded creeds, like embedded prayers, occur much more frequently than their communicative genre counterparts throughout the Qur'ān.

As a creed, Q. 112 has many late antique Christian analogues, too; some scholars have even considered Q. 112 to be a direct response to the Nicaean Creed.[195] While this may be an apt connection, a better counterpart to Q. 112 may occur in a Syrian Christian creed found in the *Apostolic Constitutions*:[196]

[195] For a recent example, see: Reynolds, *Bible*, 937.
[196] J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: Continuum, 1972), 186.

> And I believe, and am baptized, in one unbegotten, only, true God, almighty, the Father of Christ, creator and framer of all things, from Whom are all things.

Like Q. 112, this baptismal creed establishes the fundamental aspects of God. What distinguishes this creed from the Nicaean creed and better aligns it with Q. 112 is its inclusion of "unbegotten" and "only" to describe God. This brief description of God matches remarkably well with Q. 112. God being *aḥad* "One" and without an *kufuwan* "equivalent" in Q. 112 correlate with the "one" and "only, true" God in the baptismal creed. The two creeds, also, both emphasize that God is "unbegotten." When seen together, it is clear that both Q. 112 and the above Christian text are both constructed in the form of a matter-of-fact statement of tenets of belief, or creed.

With only one example of creed in the Qur'ān, creed is the Qur'ān's least prevalent communicative genre. Like prayer, creed is few in number and located at the poles of the Qur'ān corpus. Also like prayer, creed is more consistently presented in the Qur'ān as an embedded genre than a communicative genre. Because of these similarities between prayer and creed, it is now necessary to discuss their significance as peripheral communicative genres.

Prayer and Creed as Peripheral Communicative Genres

Prayer and creed's small number of examples, drastic differences in form and content from the majority of other communicative genres, and placement at beginning and ending of the Qur'ān corpus suggest that these two genres should be viewed as distinct from the fundamental communicative Qur'anic genres of religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict. Combined, the Qur'ān contains six total examples of prayer and creed; compare this to the next most infrequent communicative genre, edict, with 34 examples. This paucity of examples is an initial sign that prayer and creed are fundamentally different genres than the rest of the communicative genres in the Qur'ān.

Secondly, unlike the communicative genres of religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict, prayer and creed serve clear liturgical functions. When viewed as a whole, the Qur'ān's four most common communicative genres record the attempts of the Qur'anic proclaimer to communicate, persuade, and guide the Qur'anic audience. Using a variety of rhetorical strategies ranging from premise-response structures, to pious injunctions, to narrative examples, to legal mandates, religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict all seek to directly engage with a listening (or, sometimes, reading) audience. Each utterance is a glimpse of a single episode of revelatory communication. Prayer and creed, in contrast, are not transcriptions of this process of revelation and communication, but are, instead, spoken acts of devotion consistent with a liturgical context. In fact, the prevalence of embedded prayers and creeds throughout the text and the *qul* command openings of three of the six total examples suggest that many or all of the examples of communicative genre prayers and creed were originally parts of religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, or edict utterances.

Their differences from the four fundamental communicative genres are further accentuated when looking at their placement in the Qur'ān corpus. Each example of prayer and creed occurs at the beginning or end of the Qur'ān or the beginning of a sura. This placement, in the context of their formal differences from religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict, indicate that the communicative genres of prayer and creed were only included alongside the rest of the Qur'ānic material once the general Qur'ān corpus was established. The function of prayer and creed, then, lies in its role in the corpus: to bookend the Qur'ān corpus. It is unclear whether this peripheral placement of prayers and creeds in a larger corpus follows established conventions of late antiquity, but it appears that the function of these genres is related to the Qur'ān as a collected corpus and not in recording the process of revelatory communication

exhibited by the four fundamental communicative genres. In this way, prayer and creed are both literally and figuratively *peripheral* communicative genres; their location in the corpus, differences in form from other communicative genres, and small number of examples establish them as a distinct group from religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict.

Chapter Seven: Composite Genres and Conclusion

Introduction

In a recent volume, Marianna Klar has compiled a group of literary studies of the Qur'ān that explore its "structural dividers."[197] The importance of such a volume is rooted in the presence in the Qur'ān of extended sura passages and long suras that exhibit complex and sometimes enigmatic literary compositions. The included studies investigate the ways in which thematic, syntactic, and stylistic markers can be used to divide these compositions into smaller textual units and, ultimately, discern their overarching literary structures more easily. The genre-critical analysis of the Qur'ān proposed in this dissertation is another method to identify structural divisions in the text. Until now, however, the present study has focused on the Qur'ān's communicative genres that compose its sura passages and shorter suras. This final chapter, in contrast, will demonstrate how an understanding of the Qur'ān's communicative genres, as units of communication cast as bounded utterances, can both help identify literary divisions in the Qur'ān's extended passages and longer suras and engender a better appreciation of these extended passages and suras as intentional and complex "composite genres." The chapter will conclude with a look forward to the ways in which this analysis of the Qur'ān's composite genres can be applied to the full Qur'anic text.

The Qur'ān's Composite Genres

The previous six chapters have focused on the Qur'ān's communicative genres, those cast as bounded utterances and representative of complete units of Prophetic speech, and, to a lesser extent, embedded genres, those found within communicative genres. Communicative genres, this study has argued, were the primary means of communication from the Qur'anic proclaimer to his

[197] Marianna Klar, ed., *Structural Dividers in the Qur'an* (Oxford: Routledge, 2021).

audience, and they exhibit six distinct genres: religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, edict, prayer, and creed. The present genre-critical analysis of the entire Qur'ān has revealed 452 individual utterances taking the form of one of these six genres and their constituent subgenres. Many of these utterances, however, have been compiled together with others to create longer literary compositions; indeed, 54 out of the Qur'ān's 114 suras are composed of multiple utterances collected together.[198] The first task of a genre-critical analysis of the Qur'ān, as presented in the preceding chapters, is to identify, catalogue, and analyze the Qur'ān's generic forms that comprise its passages and suras. The second task is to determine the ways in which these smaller generic forms are combined to create more complex genres.

As mentioned in chapter one, the Qur'ān exhibits three levels of generic organization: embedded, communicative, and composite. Embedded genres are those genres included or mentioned in the Qur'ān that do not exist as bounded utterances. These can include, but are not limited to, oaths, curses, parables, and many prayers and creeds. Communicative genres, the focus of the present study, are Qur'anic genres that are cast as bounded utterances and are, therefore, complete units of communication. The Qur'ān displays four fundamental communicative genres (religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict) and two peripheral communicative genres (prayer and creed).

The final level of generic complexity is that of the composite genre.[199] Composite genres in the Qur'ān consist of multiple communicative genres collected together to create complex literary compositions. Composite genres can include any combination of communicative genres,

[198] The following suras are composed of a single utterance: Q. 1, 12, 25, 30, 36-37, 43-44, 50-52, 54-56, 65, 67-72, 75-84, 86-114.
[199] This concept of "composite genres" is adapted from Mikhail Bakhtin's discussion of "secondary genres," in: Bakhtin, "Speech Genres," 61-63.

whether in type or number, as long as at least two total communicative genres are present. As will be shown in the structural analysis of Q. 3 below, composite genres themselves have multiple levels of generic complexity, and, and the present study classifies them as first-order, second-order, or third-order composite genres on the basis of the types of included genre. That is, first-order composite genres include multiple communicative genres, second-order composite genres include multiple first-order composite genres, and third-order composite genres include multiple second-order composite genres. As units of text, first-order composite genres exist as extended sura passages or suras, second-order composite genres exist as longer suras (such as Q. 3), and the only third-order composite genre is the Qur'anic corpus itself.

Composite genres in the Qur'ān are not haphazard collections, however; they are intentional literary compositions compiled on the basis of similarities in theme, syntax, or style. Just as communicative genres conform to specific genre conventions and exhibit particular social functions, so too do the Qur'ān's composite genres. For example, the first-order composite genre of *monograph*, of which Q. 3 contains two, is a collection of communicative genres all discussing a similar topic or theme. The first-order composite genre of *narrative exegesis*, in contrast, couples the communicative genre of narrative with a non-narrative communicative genre to establish a narrative account and then comment upon it. A *legal tract*, another first-order composite genre, collects multiple communicative genres that contain legal content together. The genre of Q. 3 as a whole, a *political treatise*, is a second-order composite genre that organizes multiple first-order composite genres to make a specific political argument. When the Qur'ān's extended compositions are viewed through a genre-critical lens, they are seen to conform to specific structures for specific purposes.

The genre of the play is a useful example to illustrate the relationship between these levels of generic complexity using a more commonly encountered genre of Western discourse. The foundation of a play is the direct speech of its characters, and these speeches, soliloquys, or dialogues can be viewed as a play's *communicative* genres. When multiple instances of these types of speech are concentrated in a single extended section, or "scene," a *first-order composite* genre is created. When multiple scenes are collected together to form an even longer section, an "act," a *second-order composite* genre is produced. Finally, the complete play itself, as a collection of individual instances of speech, scenes, and acts, is a *third-order composite* genre. In this way, a play is a complex and intentionally structured genre of discourse composed of multiple smaller generic forms, much like the Qur'ān.

A comprehensive catalog and analysis of the Qur'ān's composite genres is beyond the scope of the present study. It is necessary, however, to provide a case study of the some of the ways in which the Qur'ān combines its communicative genres to create more complex literary compositions. To this end, the remainder of the chapter provides a complete structural analysis of Q. 3, *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān*, and compares the results of this genre-critical investigation with recent scholarly attempts to classify the sura's literary structure.

Composite Genre Case Study: Q. 3, Sūrat Āl 'Imrān

Much of modern scholarly attention to the Qur'ān's most complex literary forms has centered on Q. 2-5, 8, and 9, the so-called "Medinan long suras."[200] Indeed, Angelia Neuwirth

[200] Recent treatments include: Michel Cuypers, *The Banquet: A Reading of the Fifth Sura of the Qur'an* (Miami: Convivium, 2009); Marianna Klar, "Text-Critical Approaches to Sura Structure: Combining Synchronicity with Diachronicity in Sūrat al-Baqara, Part One," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 19, no. 1 (2017), 1-38; Marianna Klar, "Text-Critical Approaches to Sura Structure: Combining Synchronicity with Diachronicity in Sūrat al-Baqara. Part Two," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 19, no. 2 (2017), 64-105; Nevin Reda, "The Poetics of Sūrat Āl 'Imrān's Narrative

has described them as "complex" literary forms that "cease to be neatly structured compositions but appear to be the result of a process of collection that we cannot yet reconstruct."[201] Of the Medinan long suras, Q. 3, *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān*, has been examined in four recent studies.[202] For this reason, the remainder of this chapter will present a genre-critical structural analysis of Q. 3 that catalogues and analyzes its component communicative and composite genres, and the results of this examination will be compared to those of the aforementioned studies. It will argue that Q. 3 is composed of 25 utterances exhibiting three different communicative genres (religio-political commentary, exhortation, and narrative), that these utterances are combined to form five total first-order composite genres displaying four distinct genres (proem, narrative exegesis, monograph, and epilogue), and that Q. 3, as a complete sura, exists as the second-order composite genre of political treatise. When all subgenres are considered, a total of 12 different genres can be identified within the text. A genre-critical structural outline of *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān* is as follows:

I. *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān*: vv. 1-200 (political treatise)
    1. Verses 1–32: God's omnipotence and omniscience (proem)
        1. vv. 1–13: The Book, the Disbelievers, Two Armies (proclamation)
        2. vv. 14–18: Reward for the Believers (proclamation)
        3. vv. 19–22: Islam as the Religion of God (proclamation)

Structure (Q 3)," in *Structural Dividers in the Qur'an*, ed. Marianna Klar (London: Routledge, 2021), 27-53.

[201] Neuwirth, "Structural features," 111.

[202] Raymond Farrin, *Structure and Qur'anic Interpretation: A Study of Symmetry and Coherence in Islam's Holy Text* (Ashland: White Cloud Press, 2014); Reda, "Poetics"; Neal Robinson, "Sūrat Āl ʻImrān and Those with the Greatest Claim to Abraham," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 6, no. 2 (2004), 1-21; Mathias Zahniser, "The Word of God and the Apostleship of ʿĪsā: A Narrative Analysis of Āl ʿImrān (3):33–62," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 37, no. 1 (1991), 77-112.

4. vv. 23–27: Those Who Were Given the Book (diatribe)
5. vv. 28–32: The Believers' relationship with the Disbelievers (proclamation)

2. Verses 33–63: narrative of the family of Amram (narrative exegesis)
    1. vv. 33–58: The family of Amram (legitimating narrative)
    2. vv. 59–63: Jesus' humanity (proclamation)
3. Verses 64–99: People of the Book (monograph)
    1. vv. 64: common beliefs of the People of the Book and the believers (political exhortation)
    2. vv. 65–69: Abraham (doctrinal exhortation)
    3. vv. 70–78: hypocrisy of the People of the Book (political exhortation)
    4. vv. 79–85: covenant of the prophets (proclamation)
    5. vv. 86–91: repentance (proclamation)
    6. vv. 92: righteousness through spending (proclamation)
    7. vv. 93–95: dietary restrictions and the Children of Israel (proclamation)
    8. vv. 96–99: The First House (proclamation)
4. Verses 100–180: Believers (monograph)
    1. vv. 100–101: not obeying Those Given the Book (political exhortation)
    2. vv. 102–109: unified community of Believers (pious exhortation)
    3. vv. 110–117: the Believers and types of People of the Book (proclamation)
    4. vv. 118–129: taking outsiders as intimates and battle (political exhortation)

5. vv. 130–148: general conduct of the Believers (pious exhortation)
6. vv. 149–155: battle (political exhortation)
7. vv. 156–163: death in battle (political exhortation)
8. vv. 164–171: death in battle (response)

5. Verses 181–200: God's omnipotence and omniscience (epilogue)
    1. vv. 181–199: Those Who Slay the Prophets (diatribe)
    2. vv. 200: perseverance (pious exhortation)

Before turning to a detailed assessment of Q. 3 and its component genres, a comparison of the present structural outline to those of recent studies of Q. 3 is in order. The outline above divides the Q. 3 into 25 textual units (communicative genres) that are grouped into five larger textual units (first-order composite genres) that are themselves organized as a full sura (second-order composite genre). Scholarly engagement with *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān*'s structure has concentrated primarily on the sura's mid-level textual units, what I label here "first-order composite genres." In a recent study, Nevin Reda has helpfully included her own structural outline of Q. 3 alongside those of Mathias Zahniser, Neal Robinson, and Raymond Farrin.[203] All four outlines begin by dividing *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān* into three, four, five, or seven large subsections, depending on the study.[204] These proposed subsections are, by and large, thematic units; that is, the verses that compose each section are grouped together based on similarities in content or addressee. While these large subsections roughly correspond in size to the five first-order composite genres in the structural outline above, they are not considered to constitute discrete literary genres.

[203] Reda, "Poetics."
[204] Ibid., 28, 37-38.

Reda's structural outline, in particular, merits further attention. In order to better understand Q. 3's complex structure, Reda turns to two compositional devices: *inclusio* and ring composition.[205] Reda defines *inclusio* as "lexical repetitions located close to the beginning and end of an expanse of text, thereby bracketing a distinct unit," a definition that accords well with the present study's understanding of an utterance's boundaries.[206] Unlike this study's definition of "boundary," however, Reda's *inclusio* are not associated with the beginning and ending of specific acts of speech. For Reda, Q. 3's use of *inclusio* creates three "panels": vv. 1-63, 64-99, and 100-200. Despite being three in number, these panels are remarkably similar in their delineation to the five first-order composite genres in the genre-critical structural outline above. I have divided Q. 3's first 63 verses into two first-order composite genres (vv. 1-32 a proem and vv. 33-63 a narrative exegesis). Although Reda considers vv. 1-63 to constitute a single thematic panel, she notes that "the panel also contains an introduction."[207] The primary difference between our outlines of *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān*'s first 63 verses is that my analysis considers the sura's introduction to be its own discrete textual unit and Reda's does not. The second panel in Reda's structural outline, vv. 64-99, exactly corresponds to my own. The relationship between Reda's third panel, vv. 100-200, and the present structural outline is similar to that of her first panel; whereas my outline differentiates vv. 100-180 (monograph) from vv. 181-200 (epilogue), Reda's considers vv. 100-200 to be a single panel while noting the existence of a concluding section.[208]

The structural similarities between outlines continue when examining the textual units that comprise these larger subsections. According to Reda, *inclusio* bracket both the sura's three

[205] Ibid., 27.
[206] Ibid, 29.
[207] Ibid., 30.
[208] Ibid., 31.

large "panels" and smaller textual units within these panels. Reda identifies 32 of these textual units throughout the sura's three panels; this is markedly similar in number to the 25 communicative genres noted in the present structural analysis. What's more, many of Reda's textual units are bracketed by thematic and syntactic markers identified in the present dissertation; the vocative address of *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū,* for example, begins each of the seven textual subunits in her third panel.[209] Despite not employing an explicitly genre-critical analysis, Reda's structural outline of Q. 3 largely matches one in which the sura's communicative and composite genres are considered. If Reda and I reach similar conclusions about the structure of Q. 3, what are the advantages of using a genre-critical analysis to examine the composition of the Qur'ān's suras?

The primary advantages of a genre-critical analysis of the Qur'ān's longer compositions are its ability to include all levels of textual unit (verse, passage, and sura) in a single methodological framework and explain similarities in theme, syntax, and style within the text. Studies of the Qur'ān's longer suras often privilege a particular textual scope; that is, their analyses focus on either the smaller textual units that form the larger sura or the larger sura itself. Even in studies that treat both literary scopes, the smaller units are usually only considered vis-à-vis their role in the larger literary whole. A genre-critical analysis of the Qur'ān, in contrast, can view all sizes of textual unit as existing as discrete generic forms *and* parts of larger literary constructions. In the outline of Q. 3 above, for example, vv. 100-101 are considered as an intentional and structured utterance in the communicative genre of political exhortation, the opening of a discrete first-order composite genre of monograph, and small part of the sura's

[209] Ibid., 33.

second-order composite genre of political treatise. Each level of the text at which vv. 100-101 operates (communicative, first-order composite, and second-order composite genres) is considered individually for its generic conventions and social functions and assigned a generic label; amorphous terms like "thematic unit" or "panel" are replaced with specific and defined genre labels that can be applied throughout the Qur'anic corpus. Rather than focusing on a particular scope of literary unit in the Qur'ān, genre-critical analyses like the one offered here apply the same terminology and methods throughout the text to comprehensively examine the Qur'ān's literary forms.

A genre-critical framework, too, offers an apparatus to not only notice thematic, syntactic, and stylistic similarities within the text but explain and contextualize their occurrences. In long passages or suras, a common analytical technique has been the division of the text into smaller units based on changes in theme; Reda, for example, in her analysis of Q. 3, "organize[s] the surah into three distinct panels, each with its own sub-theme."[210] The observation that distinct thematic units exist within a text is certainly helpful, but questions remain, including: are thematic units original and intentional subsections within a text or scholarly devices created to better comprehend the text's structure? Do thematic units display similarities in syntax and style alongside thematic similarities? How can one sura's thematic units be effectively compared to another's? When an extended passage or sura is seen as a collection of specific generic forms, these questions are more easily answered; divisions between genres can be correlated to divisions between discrete acts of speech, units of text can be analyzed for adherence to specific thematic, syntactic, and stylistic conventions and assigned specific rhetorical and social

[210] Ibid., 30.

functions, and any detected generic forms can be compared to examples of the same genre throughout the entire Qur'anic corpus.

Before turning to a detailed analysis of each of *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān*'s composite genres, a note on ring composition should be offered. In describing ring composition in the Qur'ān, Reda states, "segments of text revolve around the same topic or idea and are laid out in special patterns."[211] Reda argues that the Q. 3 contains 19 of these "segments of texts" organized in concentric rings to emphasize the sura's central theme of "the integrity of devotion to God."[212] Ring composition is not, in and of itself, incompatible with a genre-critical understanding of a sura's structure. Genre criticism adds, however, an important new wrinkle to the application of ring composition theory to the Qur'ān: the correlation of ring compositions subsections, or "segments of text," with the sura's component utterances. Rather than dividing a sura into thematic subsections, ring composition must account for the existing communicative and composite genres within each sura. These component genres, then, must be analyzed for their adherence to an overarching rhetorical organization like that suggested by ring composition theory.

With a comparison between the present structural outline of Q. 3 and that of Nevin Reda now completed, we turn to a detailed discussion of *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān*'s component genres.

Sūrat Āl 'Imrān's Communicative Genres

An analysis of *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān*'s 25 constituent Qur'anic utterances reveals three distinct communicative genres: religio-political commentary, exhortation, and narrative. More specifically, the sura contains the communicative subgenres of proclamation, diatribe, response,

[211] Ibid., 36.
[212] Ibid., 49.

political exhortation, pious exhortation, doctrinal exhortation, and legitimating narrative. Religio-political commentary is by far the most used communicative genre in Q. 3; it accounts for 14 out of the 25 total utterances. The present study argues that each of these utterances was revealed individually, as a complete unit of communication, and were subsequently combined to form *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān* in a secondary process of composition.

First-Order Composite Genres

These three types of communicative genre are compiled to form more complex composite genres in *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān*. There are five total composite genres contained in Q. 3, displaying four different generic forms: proem, monograph, narrative exegesis, and epilogue. There are two occurrences of the genre of monograph in *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān*. A monograph is an extended discourse that focuses on a single, general topic. The various portions of the monograph can differ in their specific content, but they all share a relation to a central theme; the two monographs in *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān* relate to the People of the Book and the community of Believers, respectively. Because this first-order composite genre is generally defined by its theme, many types of communicative genres may be used within it.

Secondly, *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān* exhibits the first-order composite genre of narrative exegesis. The genre of narrative exegesis is defined by the combination of a narrative communicative genre with another type of communicative genre that comments directly upon the content of the narrative. The sura exhibits the legitimating narrative of the family of Amram (vv. 33–58) immediately followed by a proclamation (vv. 59–63) discussing the humanity of Jesus, himself a descendant of Amram. These two disparate communicative genres work together to create a first-order composite genre in which a narrative is recounted and then subsequently commented upon.

The third composite genre is the proem. The proem is an introductory genre that may be characterized by disjointed letters, references to the *kitāb*, eschatological overtones, and an emphasis on God's omnipotence and omniscience. The term "proem" is used, as opposed to "introduction" to note this genre's introductory position in larger compositions, while emphasizing its distinctness from the following text. Mirroring the proem is the epilogue. The epilogue is a concluding genre that, much like the proem, turns the discussion back to the omnipotence and omniscience of God to signal the text's finale. In this way, the proem and the epilogue are related, and it is likely that if one can be identified in the text, so can the other. It is not clear whether these first-order composite genres were composed independently, before their inclusion in the larger structure of Q. 3, or whether they were created during the process of Q. 3's construction.

Second-Order Composite Genres

Sūrat Āl ʿImrān itself, as a complex composition of communicative and first-order composite genres, exists as a second-order composite genre; it is itself a compilation of individual first-order composite genres. In terms of its generic label, the sura is a political treatise. A treatise is a complex discussion of multiple topics, complete with a proem and epilogue, whose structure and length suggest an extensive editorial process. In the case of Q. 3, we have a treatise composed of five first-order composite genres: a discussion of the narrative of the family of Amram, a discussion of the People of the Book, and a discussion of the community of Believers, all framed by a proem and epilogue. The main thrust of the treatise is the relationship between the Believers and the People of the Book in a time of conflict, and it is for this reason that it is a political treatise. With an overview of the generic forms witnessed in *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān* completed, a breakdown of each composite genre is in order.

Proem

1. Verses 1–32: God's omnipotence and omniscience (proem)
    1. vv. 1–13: The Book, the Disbelievers, Two Armies (proclamation)
    2. vv. 14–18: Reward for the Believers (proclamation)
    3. vv. 19–22: Islam as the Religion of God (proclamation)
    4. vv. 23–27: Those Who Were Given the Book (diatribe)
    5. vv. 28–32: The Believers' relationship with the Disbelievers (proclamation)

Sūrat Āl ʿImrān's first first-order composite genre is composed of five communicative genres, all of which discuss an aspect of God's omnipotence of omniscience; all utterances are in the form of religio-political commentary. While general appeals to God's omnipotence and omniscience can be found throughout the utterances, more common are references to manifestations of these traits: God's revelations and eschatology. The revelations of God encompass both God's omnipotence and omniscience as the process of revelation to a prophet exemplifies His power and the guidance contained within the revelation exemplifies His knowledge. Likewise, discussions of eschatology serve to emphasize God's omnipotence in His ability to enact the Day of Judgment and His omniscience in His role as judge. These five utterances are compiled together to form a proem, or introduction, to the second-order composite genre of the treatise. Notably, the final utterance of the proem, vv. 28-32, discuses the main thrust of the remainder of the sura: the relationship between the Believers and non-believing communities.

Narrative Exegesis

1. Verses 33–63: narrative of the family of Amram (narrative exegesis)
    1. vv. 33–58: The family of Amram (legitimating narrative)

2. vv. 59–63: Jesus' humanity (proclamation)

The second first-order composite genre is a compilation of two distinct utterances: the first, an extended legitimating narrative of the family of Amram, specifically Mary and Jesus; the second, an assertion of Jesus' humanity couched in the form of religio-political commentary. It is clear that these two utterances were compiled together on the basis of thematic similarity, but they exhibit clear differences in structure. Unlike vv. 33–58, vv. 59–63 do not exhibit a narrative form, but rather assert Jesus' humanity in a declarative form commonly seen in religio-political commentary and its subgenres. It is equally clear that the content of these two units offers a break from that of the utterances found in the preceding proem; there are few, if any, assertions of God's omnipotence or omniscience in this second section. This second first-order composite genre, then, is a compilation of two utterances on the basis of their shared concern with the family of Amram, in particular Jesus; its formulation as a legitimating narrative followed by a related proclamation establishes its genre as narrative exegesis.

First Monograph

1. Verses 64–99: People of the Book (monograph)
    1. vv. 64: common beliefs of the People of the Book and the believers (political exhortation)
    2. vv. 65–69: Abraham (doctrinal exhortation)
    3. vv. 70–78: hypocrisy of the People of the Book (political exhortation)
    4. vv. 79–85: covenant of the prophets (proclamation)
    5. vv. 86–91: repentance (proclamation)
    6. vv. 92: righteousness through spending (proclamation)
    7. vv. 93–95: dietary restrictions and the Children of Israel (proclamation)

8. vv. 96–99: The First House (proclamation)

Sūrat Āl ʿImrān's third first-order composite genre, and the first of two monographs, is composed of eight distinct utterances, all of which relate to the People of the Book; there are five examples of religio-political commentary and three examples of exhortation. Those utterances that do not explicitly mention the People of the Book discuss topics intimately tied to the concerns of the People of the Book. For example, the fourth utterance, vv. 79–85, discusses the Prophetic Office and its role in Islam. Verse 84 states, "We believe in God, and in what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes, and in what was given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets from their Lord" (*āmannā bi-llāhi wa-mā unzila ʿalaynā wa-mā unzila ʿalā ibrāhīma wa-ismāʿīla wa-isḥāqa wa-yaʿqūba wa-l-asbāṭi wa-mā ūtiya mūsā wa-ʿīsā wa-l-nabiyyūna min rabbihim*), an embedded creed deeply resonating with the People of Book, as it includes the pivotal figures of both Judaism and Christianity. Additionally, the explicit direct address "O People of the Book!" (*yā-ahla l-kitāb*) can be found throughout the composite genre, and it is the only place in *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān* where this address is seen. These eight utterances are brought together to form the first-order composite Qur'anic genre of monograph, a collection of communicative genres differing in their specific content but all treating the central topic of the People of the Book.

Second Monograph

1. Verses 100–180: Believers (monograph)
    1. vv. 100–101: not obeying Those Given the Book (political exhortation)
    2. vv. 102–109: unified community of Believers (pious exhortation)
    3. vv. 110–117: the Believers and types of People of the Book (proclamation)

4. vv. 118–129: taking outsiders as intimates and battle (political exhortation)
5. vv. 130–148: general conduct of the Believers (pious exhortation)
6. vv. 149–155: battle (political exhortation)
7. vv. 156–163: death in battle (political exhortation)
8. vv. 164–171: death in battle (response)

The fourth first-order composite genre of *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān* is a monograph, a compilation of eight utterances all concerning the conduct of the believing community. It is composed of six exhortations and two examples of religio-political commentary. The first utterance (vv. 100-101) transitions from the previous monograph by discouraging the Believers from obeying the People of the Book, linking the genre's thematic focus, the Believers, with that of the previous monograph, the People of the Book. Like the previous monograph, this second monograph employs exhortative utterances beginning with vocative addresses, although the subjects of the addresses are the Believers (*yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū*). This specific vocative address is found outside of this monograph only in v. 200.

Epilogue

1. Verses 181–200: God's omnipotence and omniscience (epilogue)
    1. vv. 181–199: Those Who Slay the Prophets (diatribe)
    2. vv. 200: perseverance (pious exhortation)

The sura's final first-order composite genre, an epilogue, is a compilation of two utterances that emphasize an aspect of God's omnipotence or omniscience. Overall, this thematic content of the epilogue is similar to that of the proem. It uses eschatological references to highlight God's omnipotence and omniscience and declares that signs of His power are evident in creation. The

fifth, and final, first-order composite genre rounds out the sura as an epilogue and brings Q. 3 back to a consideration of God's omnipotence and omniscience.

Political Treatise

1. *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān*: vv. 1-200 (political treatise)
    1. vv. 1–32: God's omnipotence and omniscience (proem)
    2. vv. 33–63: narrative of the family of Amram (narrative exegesis)
    3. vv. 64–99: People of the Book (monograph)
    4. vv. 100–180: Believers (monograph)
    5. vv. 181–200: God's omnipotence and omniscience (epilogue)

Sūrat Āl ʿImrān, as a complete literary unit, exists as a compilation five first-order composite genres. This, by the definition of the present study, is a second-order composite genre; with respect to Q. 3's specific thematic discussions, the sura exhibits the second-order composite genre of political treatise. As previously mentioned, a treatise is an extended and complex discussion of a particular topic, complete with proem and epilogue. *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān* is considered to belong to the subgenre of political treatise because of the centrality of its political content: the relationship between the Believers and the People of the Book. The exact thematic relationship between the sura's component first-order composite genres is not entirely clear. The middle three genres (narrative exegesis and two monographs), however, all discuss issues intimately related to the People of the Book and the Believers: the narrative exegesis in vv. 33-63 emphasizes the family of Amram's connection with God alongside Jesus' humanity, the first monograph in vv. 64-99 directly addresses the People of the Book on topics including Abraham and dietary restrictions, while the second monograph in vv. 100-180 focuses on the Believers' relationship with the People of the Book and death in battle. Reda argues that vv. 33-63, here labeled as

belonging to the first-order composite genre of narrative exegesis, "illustrat[e] the importance of following prophets as a way of attaining God's grace and as a means of differentiating true believers from disbelievers," perhaps an implicit criticism of the People of the Book for not adequately following the Prophet Muhammad.[213] This "differentiation" between believers and disbelievers is reinforced throughout the rest of the sura: the conduct and beliefs of the People of the Book are criticized in the first monograph while the Believers are admonished to reject the People of the Book and maintain unity in the second. Whatever specific political argument the sura is making, the text begins with a proem, juxtaposes the community of the People of the Book with the community of Believers, and concludes with an epilogue, thereby making it the second-order genre of political treatise.

Conclusion

The analysis above of *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān* as a second-order composite genre of political treatise is a fitting conclusion to the present dissertation. Examining how the sura exists as a complex combination of communicative and composite generic forms allows us to reflect on the variety of genres witnessed in the Qur'ān and to look forward to the ways in which genre-critical analyses can be further applied to the text. This study has sought to demonstrate that the Qur'ān is a multi-genred text exhibiting three levels at which genre operates: embedded, communicative, and composite. Relying upon the work of literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, the study argues that the Qur'ān's communicative genres, in particular, exist as "bounded utterances," thematically and syntactically demarcated literary units, and represent complete instances of communication from the Prophet to his audience in time. In order to locate these utterances within the larger

[213] Ibid., 47.

Qur'anic text, the study establishes the criteria of thematic and syntactic coherence, boundedness, and the assignment of a social function.

In total, the Qur'ān contains 452 individual utterances occurring at the level of the single verse, sura passage, or whole sura, and they display six types of communicative genre: religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, edict, prayer, and creed. Each of these communicative genres displays its own generic conventions and social functions and can be divided into smaller subgenres for a total of 20 different kinds of communicative genre. This dissertation has also attempted to integrate the Qur'ān into late antiquity by comparing each of its communicative genres to a specific counterpart in the matrix of late antique Near Eastern literary traditions.

Furthermore, four of the Qur'ān's communicative genres (religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, and edict) should be considered *fundamental* communicative genres; that is, these four genres comprise that vast majority of Qur'anic material. Additionally, these forms are united in their recording of Prophetic preaching, the attempts of the Prophet to communicate, persuade, and guide the Qur'anic audience. The genres of prayer and creed, in contrast, are *peripheral* communicative genres because of their infrequent use throughout the text and their location at the beginning or end of the Qur'ān and select suras. They also do not detail instances of Prophetic preaching; rather, they are spoken acts of devotion consistent with liturgical contexts. The building blocks of Qur'anic speech, its fundamental communicative genres, are complete instances of communication recording the communal interactions between the Prophet and his audience in a variety of generic forms.

The Qur'ān's communicative genres, however, are only building blocks; despite existing as the original forms of Prophetic communication, they now largely exist as small and

undifferentiated parts of larger literary compositions, the suras. These larger compositions are what this study calls "composite genres," intentional collections of multiple communicative genres together to create complex literary wholes. Composite genres exhibit internal levels of complexity, as well; first-order composite genres are compilations of multiple communicative genres that occur largely at the levels of the sura passage and sura and second-order composite genres, like Q. 3 above, are compilations of multiple first-order composite genres that occur exclusively at the level of the sura. In the case of Q. 3, this study has demonstrated that the sura is a political treatise, a second-order composite genre that makes a specific claim about the relationship between the Believers and other communities. The Qur'anic corpus itself is the only example of a third-order composite genre.

Much work remains to be done to understand the Qur'ān's composite genres; the Qur'ān in its current form, a corpus of 114 chapters, exists primarily as a collection of these complex genres. The goal of this dissertation was to identify, catalogue, and analyze the smallest complete units of communication in the Qur'ān, its communicative genres. This has only laid the groundwork, however, for further research into how the Qur'ān combines its communicative genres to create more complex genres with more complex arguments. It is my hope that this study's examination of Q. 3 will serve as an example for the ways in which an understanding of the Qur'ān's communicative genres can inform a consideration of its longer compositions. But, given that 54 of the Qur'ān's 114 suras exist as composite genres, the work has only just begun.

Finally, it is necessary to compare the results of the present study with those of Karim Samji's *The Qur'ān: A Form-Critical History*.[214] As discussed in the introductory chapter, *Form-Critical* has provided the most comprehensive generic analysis of the Qur'ān to date, employing

[214] Samji, *Form-Critical*.

methods of form criticism as developed in Biblical studies to understand the Qur'ān's various literary forms. The first major point of comparison between *Form-Critical* and this dissertation is their generic classifications. Samji considers the Qur'ān to exhibit five major genres: prayer, liturgy, wisdom, narrative, and proclamation. The present study, in contrast, argues for six "communicative" genres: religio-political commentary, exhortation, narrative, edict, prayer, and creed. By-and-large, these terminologies overlap. The narrative and prayer genres use the same designations; Samji's wisdom and proclamation genres generally correspond to my genres of religio-political commentary, exhortation, and edict. Only liturgy does not have a clear analogue in the genres presented in this study, although the communicative genres of prayer and creed exhibit liturgical functions.

This similarity in generic classifications, however, masks fundamental differences in each study's approach to Qur'anic genre. Most important is each study's approach to the scopes of genre in the Qur'ān; while this dissertation argues for three scopes of Qur'anic genre (embedded, communicative, and composite) and that the Qur'ān's communicative genres represent the smallest complete and intentional forms of communication in the text, Samji's work does not present a framework for understanding the Qur'ān's differences in generic complexity. Instead, Samji surveys a wide range of forms that, according to my classification, can exist as either embedded or communicative genres, although many of his examples, like those of prayer discussed in chapter six, exist as embedded genres. The theoretical framework undergirding each study differs, too; while the present study's conception of genre is rooted in speech genre theory, *Form-Critical*'s is based on form criticism as developed in Biblical studies. Additionally, Samji's work focuses on the formulaic language that signals the beginning of the Qur'ān's genres; this dissertation, in contrast, considers the opening "boundaries" of the Qur'ān's

communicative genres, but is more concerned with a rhetorical treatment of the Qur'ān's genres as complete literary units across multiple verses.

In these ways, Samji's *The Qur'ān: A Form-Critical History* and the present dissertation present distinct contributions to the study of Qur'anic genre, and it is my belief that they should be read in conjunction. Whereas the present dissertation considers the Qur'ān's embedded, communicative, and composite scopes of generic discourse in light of speech genre theory and explores the Qur'ān's communicative genres as complex literary compositions representative of complete acts of Prophetic communication, Samji's work uses form criticism to explore the relationship between formulaic language and Qur'anic genre and, in contrast to the present dissertation's concentration on the Qur'ān's communicative generic forms, focuses much of its attention on those genres considered to be "embedded" according to this dissertation's framework. Looking forward, I hope that these two works will be considered unique and valuable contributions to an understanding of the Qur'ān's literary forms and that they will serve as the springboards for future investigations into the genres of Qur'anic discourse.

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Appendix

List of Qur'anic Passages in the Genre of Religio-Political Commentary (224):

a) Q. 2:
   a. vv. 1-20: The Disbelievers (diatribe)
   b. vv. 75-103: Children of Israel (diatribe)
   c. vv. 142-143: The Qiblah (response)
   d. vv. 144-152: The Qiblah, al-Masjid al-Ḥarām (response)
   e. vv. 159- 163: Repentance (proclamation)
   f. vv. 164-167: Disassociating (proclamation)
   g. vv. 177: Righteousness (proclamation)
   h. vv. 189-193: The New Moon, Entering Houses, Fighting (response)
   i. vv. 215-16: Spending and Fighting in the Way of God (response)
   j. vv. 217-18: Fighting in the Sacred Month (response)
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   l. vv. 243-245: Fleeing from Death (proclamation)
   m. vv. 258-260: Resurrection (proclamation)
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   n. vv. 181–199: Those who Slay the Prophets (diatribe)

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c) Q. 4:
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4. vv. 8-10: Injunction to be Just (pious)
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e) Q. 7:

1. v. 26: Clothing of Righteousness (pious)
2. vv. 27-30: Appeal for Proper Conduct of the Children of Adam (political)
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7. v. 64: Followers of the Messenger (pious)
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g) Q. 9:

1. vv. 23-27: Not Taking Disbelievers as Allies (political)
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3. vv. 34-35: Religious Scholars Who Devour Wealth (political)
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h) Q. 10:
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1. vv. 9-10: Private Conversation (pious)
2. v. 11: Listening to Commands in Assemblies (pious)
3. vv. 12-13: Private Consultation and Charity (pious)

t) Q. 59:
1. vv. 18-24: Injunctions to Piety (pious)

u) Q. 60:
1. vv. 1-7: Not Taking Enemies as Allies (pious)
2. vv. 10-11: Relations with Believing Women (legal)
3. v. 12: Accepting Pledge of Believing Women (political)
4. v. 13: Not Taking Those Who Anger God as Allies (pious)

v) Q. 61:
1. vv. 2-9: Fighting in the Way of God, Moses and Jesus (narrative)
2. vv. 10-13: Striving in the Way of God (pious)
3. v. 14: Being Supporters of God (narrative)

w) Q. 62:
1. vv. 9-11: Heeding Call to Prayer (pious)

x) Q. 63:
1. vv. 9-11: Spending in Way of God (pious)

y) Q. 64:
1. vv. 14-18: Wives and Children as a Trial (pious)

z) Q. 65:
1. vv. 1-12: Divorce Regulations (legal)

aa) Q. 66:
1. vv. 1-5: The Prophet and His Wives (political)
2. vv. 6-7: Protecting Selves against "The Day" (apocalyptic)
3. v. 8: Eschatological Reward (pious)
4. vv. 9-12: Wives of Noah and Lot, Wife of Pharaoh, Mary (narrative)

bb) Q. 73:
1. vv. 1-19: Prayer and Recitation at Night, Eschatological Punishment (pious)

cc) Q. 74:
1. vv. 1-30, 32-56: Commands the Messenger, Eschatological Judgment (pious)

dd) Q. 82:
1. vv. 1-19: Day of Recompense (apocalyptic)

ee) Q. 84:

1. vv. 1-25: Eschatological Judgment (apocalyptic)

ff) Q. 109:
1. vv. 1-6: The Disbelievers (doctrinal)

List of Qur'anic Passages in the Genre of Narrative (44):

a) Q. 2:
1. vv. 27-39: Submission of Angels to Adam, Satan (legitimating)
2. vv. 62-74: al-Baqarah (legitimating)
3. vv. 246-253: Children of Israel, Saul, David (legitimating)

b) Q. 3:
1. vv. 33–58: Family of ʿImrān (legitimating)

c) Q. 5:
1. vv. 109-120: Jesus and the Day of Judgment (foundational)

d) Q. 6:
1. vv. 71-94: Abraham (legitimating)

e) Q. 7:
1. vv. 1-25: Satan and the Fall of Adam (foundational)
2. vv. 59-157: Messengers and their Communities (punishment)

f) Q. 10:
1. vv. 62-95: Noah, Moses, and Pharaoh (legitimating)

g) Q. 11:
1. vv. 15-123: Multiple Prophets (punishment)

h) Q. 12:
1. vv. 1-111: Joseph (foundational)

i) Q. 14:
1. vv. 1-8: Moses (legitimating)
2. vv. 9-17: Noah, ʻĀd, and Thamūd (punishment)
3. vv. 28-52: Abraham (legitimating)

j) Q. 15:
1. vv. 1-48: Iblīs (legitimating)
2. vv. 49-85: Abraham, Lot, and Companions of the Thicket (punishment)

k) Q. 18:
1. vv. 1-29: Companions of the Cave (legitimating)
2. vv. 46-108: Moses, al-Khidhr, Dhū al-Qarnayn (foundational)

l) Q. 19:
1. vv. 1-74: Zachariah, Mary, Jesus, Abraham, Moses (foundational)

m) Q. 20:
1. vv. 1-79, 83-135: Moses, Adam (foundational)

n) Q. 21:
1. vv. 45-100: Multiple Prophets (legitimating)

o) Q. 23:
1. vv. 1-90: Noah, Moses, Mary, and Jesus (punishment)

p) Q. 26:
1. vv. 1-104: Moses and Abraham (legitimating)
2. vv. 105-227: Multiple Prophets (punishment)

q) Q. 27:
    1. vv. 1-58: Moses, David, Solomon, and Lot (legitimating)
r) Q. 28:
    1. vv. 1-70: Moses (foundational)
    2. vv. 76-84: Qarūn (legitimating)
s) Q. 29:
    1. vv. 1-44: Multiple Prophets (punishment)
t) Q. 31:
    1. vv. 1-27: Luqmān (legitimating)
u) Q. 34:
    1. vv. 1-21: David, Solomon, and Sheba (legitimating)
v) Q. 36:
    1. vv. 1-83: People of the Village (punishment narrative)
w) Q. 37:
    1. vv. 1-182: Multiple Prophets (punishment)
x) Q. 38:
    1. vv. 1-66: Noah, Lot, David and Solomon, Job, and Abraham (legitimating)
    2. vv. 67-88: Iblīs (legitimating)
y) Q. 40:
    1. vv. 1-55: Moses (legitimating)
z) Q. 43:
    1. vv. 1-89: Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (legitimating)
aa) Q. 44:
    1. vv. 1-59: People of Pharaoh (legitimating)
bb) Q. 46:
    1. vv. 13-35: ʻĀd and Jinn (punishment)
cc) Q. 51:
    1. vv. 1-60: Abraham, Moses, ʻĀd, Thamūd, Noah (punishment)
dd) Q. 54:
    1. vv. 1-55: Noah, ʻĀd, Lot, and Moses (punishment)
ee) Q. 68:
    1. vv. 1-52: Companions of the Garden (legitimating)
ff) Q. 71:
    1. vv. 1-28: Noah (foundational)
gg) Q. 79:
    1. vv. 1-46: Moses (legitimating)
hh) Q. 91:
    1. vv. 1-15: Thamūd (punishment)

List of Qur'anic Passages in the Genre of Edict (34):

a. Q. 2
    i. v. 158: Hajj Regulations (doctrinal)
    ii. vv. 180-182: Inheritance (marital)
    iii. vv. 185-186: Ramadan (doctrinal)
    iv. vv. 187-188: Sex while Fasting (marital)

v. vv. 194-196: Fighting in Sacred Months, Hajj (doctrinal)
vi. v. 197: Hajj Regulations (doctrinal)
vii. vv. 198-207: Hajj Regulations (doctrinal)
viii. v. 221: Marriage Regulations (marital)
ix. vv. 225-228: Divorce Regulations (marital)
x. vv. 229-235: Divorce and Marital Regulations (marital)
xi. vv. 236-237: Divorce Regulations (marital)
xii. vv. 238-242: Prayer and Divorce Regulations (marital)

b. Q. 4
   i. vv. 11-18: Inheritance and Sexual Regulations (marital)
   ii. vv. 23-28: Marriage Prohibitions (marital)
   iii. vv. 34-42: Marital Regulations (marital)
   iv. v. 58: Rendering Trusts (social)

c. Q. 5
   i. v. 3: Eating Restrictions (dietary)
   ii. v. 5: Relationships with People of the Book (political)
   iii. vv. 33-34: Punishment for Enemy Combatants (political)
   iv. v. 89: Oath Regulations (social)
   v. v. 93: Ex Post Facto Qualification (dietary)
   vi. v. 96: Food and *Iḥrām* (dietary)

d. Q. 8
   i. vv. 67-69: Captives and War Booty (political)

e. Q. 9
   i. vv. 1-16: Disassociation from the Associators (political)
   ii. vv. 17-22: Custodians of al-Masjid al-Haram (political)
   iii. v. 36: Establishing Months (doctrinal)
   iv. v. 37: Postponement of Months (doctrinal)

f. Q. 24
   i. vv. 1-10: Sexual Regulations (marital)
   ii. vv. 30-34: Personal Modesty and Marriage Regulations (marital)
   iii. v. 61: Disabilities and Dining (social)
   iv. v. 62: Communications with the Messenger (social)
   v. vv. 63-64: Communicating with the Messenger (social)

g. Q. 60
   i. vv. 8-9: “Those who drive out…” (political)

h. Q. 106
   i. vv. 1-4: The Quraysh (political)

List of Qur’anic Passages in the Genre of Prayer (5):

1. Q. 1:1-7 (praise)
2. Q. 35:1-2 (praise)
3. Q. 61:1 (praise)
4. Q. 113:1-5 (protection)
5. Q. 114:1-6 (protection)

List of Qur’anic Passages in the Genre of Creed (1):

1. Q. 112:1-4 (creed)