Reconsidering *Islām* and *Dīn* in the Medinan Qurʾan*

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Abstract

Though the study of early Islamic identity continues to be a debated field, quite a few scholars have of late suggested that the processes of articulating a clear-cut identity distinct from those of other faiths were complex and took some time, with the year 700 CE or thereabouts often offered as a possible date for the parting of the ways between Muslims, on the one hand, and other religious communities, on the other. Related to the issue of dating is the question of group nomenclature: what did the Arabian believers call themselves, what were they called by outsiders, and how did the different naming practices affect their possible sense of distinctiveness? This article deals with the words islām, muslimūn, *and* dīn *in the late layers of the Qurʾan and in the post-Qurʾanic evidence. I argue that in the Qurʾan, the word* al-islām *never specifies or names the religion of the believers and that the Qurʾanic word* (al-)dīn *is most naturally to be understood as "law" or "judgment," depending on the context, rather than "religion." Surveying the dated post-Qurʾanic documentary record, I suggest that the appearance of the reified sense of a distinct religion called Islam and its followers, called Muslims, should be dated no earlier than the early second/eighth century. Moreover, scholars have recently taken up the possibility of postprophetic additions in the Qurʾan, suggesting that verses such as 3:19 and 5:3 might contain such interpolations. However, my interpretation of the verses calls this suggestion into question.*

Introduction

According to social psychologists writing within the framework of social identity theory, people self-identify with groups that provide them aspects of *positive distinctiveness*.[1]

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1. Social identity theory was initiated by Henri Tajfel; see, e.g., his *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For other motives for identification with a group, see V. L. Vignoles, "Identity Motives," in *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, ed. S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, and V. L. Vignoles, 403–32 (New York: Springer, 2011). Vignoles notes (at 403) that "evidence suggests that people are motivated not only to see themselves in a positive light (the self-esteem motive), but also to believe that their identities are continuous over time despite significant life changes (the continuity motive), that they are distinguished from other people (the distinctiveness motive), that their lives are meaningful (the meaning motive), that they are competent and capable of influencing their environments (the efficacy motive),

That is to say, people affiliate and associate meanings with groups that provide positive and distinctive self- and social identities and, with them, enhanced self-esteem to their members. This works both ways: those who identify with a group draw on the groups' existing facets of positive distinctiveness to bolster their own self-esteem, but they also endeavor to shape and uphold that positive distinctiveness through and during their act of self-categorizing as part of the group, sometimes in new ways.[2]

One facet of *distinctiveness*, and often of positivity too, is calling the group by a *specific name*. Here, one should begin by noting that groups often have different endonyms (names used by the group members themselves) and exonyms (names used by outsiders): for instance, Muslim (endonym) versus Muhammadan, Saracen, or Ishmaelite (exonyms used at different stages of history by non-Muslims). It is the in-group endonyms that I am interested in here. The main question explored in this article is: when did Muslims begin to call themselves "Muslims" and their religion "Islam"? And even more importantly, are these words present, in their reified, proper-name senses, already in the Qurʾanic proclamation (regardless of when we want to date the different layers of the Qurʾanic text)? These appellations were clearly valuable to the in-group members, since Islam signifies the positive characteristic of obedience (to God, the prophet, and the law), the word Muslim being the active participle; these words are distinctive, too, since no other group in the religious milieu of the late antique Near East called itself by these or similar designations.

The Post-Qurʾanic Evidence

It might be appropriate to begin with the post-Qurʾanic sources to engage with the question of when the Arabian believers began to call their religion Islam and their group Muslims. For a long time after the death of the prophet Muḥammad in 11/632, the dominant endonym used was *muʾminūn*, "believers," with those believers who were part of the conquering armies also using *muhājirūn*, "settlers," to designate themselves.[3] However, though the name *muʾminūn* provided positive characteristics to the group, it most certainly did not offer distinctiveness.

In fact, the endonym *muʾminūn*, adopted by the prophet's community, was probably of Christian origin. Though the Arabic word *muʾmin*(*ūn*) is yet to turn up in any pre-Islamic inscription, cognate words in Ethiopic (*məʾəman*) and Syriac (*mhaymnē*) were designations that Christians around Arabia used for themselves before (and after) Islam. Indeed, the Arabic *muʾmin* appears to have been borrowed from the Ethiopic *məʾəman*,[4] probably in the sixth century when Ethiopian overlords reigned in south Arabia and launched raids on the north. The word *muʾmin*(*ūn*) is attested in the pre-Islamic poetical corpus, such as among

and that they are included and accepted within their social contexts (the belonging motive)."

2. Vignoles, "Identity Motives," 415–17.

3. For analysis of the dated evidence and group nomenclature, see also I. Lindstedt, "Who Is In, Who Is Out? Early Muslim Identity through Epigraphy and Theory," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 46 (2019): 147–246, at 190–194.

4. A. Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾan* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938), 70; W. Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Geʿez (Classical Ethiopic)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987), 24.

the poems of the Christian ʿAdī b. Zayd.[5] And naturally, during the Islamic era, Arabic-speaking and -writing Christians would continue calling themselves *muʾminūn*, among other things.[6]

The missing distinctive endonym is part of the debate on early Islamic identity formation, which was begun in earnest by the important study of Fred Donner.[7] Some scholars, including myself, have continued this line of thinking, suggesting that until around 700 CE, the social categories were in flux and some Jews and Christians joined the movement that deemed the west Arabian Muḥammad a prophet, perhaps without requiring them to jettison their earlier identities *qua* Jews and Christians.[8] The idea is that the rather general endonym *muʾminūn*, "believers," faciliated this process. Donner and his followers understand Islamic identity articulation as a slow process that took decades to unfold, rather than one that was accomplished toward the end of the life of Muḥammad.

I will next survey the first post-Qurʾanic occurrences of the words *islām* and *muslimūn*.[9] We can put aside the chronologically earliest example, since the inscription simply quotes the Qurʾan. This is the famous Dome of the Rock mosaic inscription dated to 72 AH, which quotes, among other verses, Qurʾan 3:19 (*inna al-dīn ʿinda allāh al-islām*).[10] Since I will argue in what follows that the meaning of this verse was not necessarily understood in the reified sense by the earliest believers, it cannot automatically be taken to refer to "Islam," with a capital letter, in the Dome of the Rock inscription either.

5. ʿAdī b. Zayd, *Dīwān ʿAdī b. Zayd al-ʿIbādī*, ed. M. J. al-Muʿaybid (Baghdad: Dār al-Jumhūriyya, 1965), 61. There are questions concerning the authenticity of the poetical corpus in general and ʿAdī's poems in particular, but see N. Sinai, *Rain-Giver, Bone-Breaker, Score-Settler: Allāh in Pre-Quranic Poetry* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 2019), 19–26, for optimistic remarks about the poems' authenticity.

6. See, e.g., R. Hoyland, "St Andrews MS14 and the Earliest Arabic *Summa Theologiae*," in *Syriac Polemics: Studies in Honour of Gerrit Jan Reinink*, ed. W. J. van Bekkum, J. W. Drijvers, and A. C. Klugkist, 159–72 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), at 161.

7. F. M. Donner, "From Believers to Muslims: Confessional Self-Identity in the Early Islamic Community," *Al-Abhath* 50–51 (2002–3): 9–53.

8. See the various presentations by S. J. Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet: The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); M. P. Penn, *Envisioning Islam: Syriac Christians and the Early Muslim World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Lindstedt, "Who Is In." Cf. also J. Tannous, *The Making of the Medieval Middle East: Religion, Society, and Simple Believers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), who rejects Donner's thesis but emphasizes the overlapping nature of the religious groups and the believers affiliating with those groups.

9. I should note that I am dealing with a specific historical context, that of the first–second/seventh–eighth centuries. The word *al-islām* naturally has had and has nowadays multifaceted meanings. For a discussion, see, e.g., N. Reda, "What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic in Christian Theological Schools," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 29 (2018): 309–29.

10. For the full text and analyses, see C. Kessler, "ʿAbd al-Malik's Inscription in the Dome of the Rock: A Reconsideration," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 102 (1970): 2–14; R. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1997), 696–99; E. Whelan, "Forgotten Witness: Evidence for the Early Codification of the Qurʾan," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118 (1998): 1–14; M. Milwright, *The Dome of the Rock and Its Umayyad Mosaic Inscriptions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

The following examples are more pertinent and show, in my opinion, that at the beginning of the second/eighth century, the names Muslims and Islam had started to be used within the group. Since they are attested in both monumental inscriptions and graffiti, it makes sense to assume that swaths of people, not just the elite, had adopted them. Granted, the exact process by which the group agreed on the name *muslimūn*, relegated *muʾminūn* to a secondary role, and discarded *muhājirūn* more or less entirely is unclear.[11] We do not know who instigated this name change, or when and where exactly they did so. The words *islām* and *muslimūn* appear in the Qurʾan, though rather infrequently and, as I argue in this article, always in the general sense of "obedience" and "those who obey." The words were, then, part of the meaningful religious parlance and vocabulary of the Arabian believers, but so were other important Qurʾanic terms such as *hudā*, "guidance," and *taqwā*, "God-consciousness," which, to entertain the counterfactual, might also have ended up as prominent words utilized to refer to the group and its religion.

In any case, as far as I know, the first dated reference to Islam as a name for the religion is evidenced in a graffito from Jabal Usays, Syria, dated to 119/737 (some fifty years later than the Dome of the Rock inscription). It begins: *rabbī allāh wa-dīnī al-islām*, "My Lord is God and my religion is Islam."[12] Contemporary Arabic papyri from Egypt mention the social category "the people of Islam" (*ahl al-islām*). The locution appears in a papyrus letter found at the Fayyūm oasis and dated by Petra Sijpesteijn to between 730 and 750 CE.[13] In the letter, Nājid b. Muslim, who was in charge of the Fayyūm province, gives *ʿAbd* Allāh b. Asʿad, who held a lower-level administrative position, instructions on the collection of the tax (*ṣadaqa*, *zakāt*).[14] The letter invokes *ahl al-islām* and, moreover, *ahl al-dīn al-islām al-dīn al-qayyim*, which is a rather awkward formulation but can be translated as "the people of the religion, Islam, the upright religion" or, supposing that the definite article before the first *al-dīn* in the phrase is a mistake and should be omitted, "the people of the religion of Islam, the upright religion."[15] In these instances it would be strained, in my opinion, to translate *dīn* as "law" or "judgment" and *islām* as "obedience," which is the meaning of these words in Qurʾanic Arabic, as I will argue later in this article.

The earliest extant reference to "Muslims" occurs in a graffito from Wādī al-Gharra, Jordan, dated to 107/725–26. In the text, the writer, Aqraf b. Murr b. Riḍā, rejects associating any other deities with God, ending his inscription with "Amen, O Lord of the Muslims, God" (*āmīn yā rabb al-muslimīn allāh*).[16] I suppose it would theoretically be possible to understand *rabb al-muslimīn* as "Lord of the obedient," but it should be noted that the word

11. See I. Lindstedt, "Muhājirūn," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., no. 2019–6, for a few examples of later usage.

12. M. al-ʿ*Ushsh*, "Kitabāt ʿ*arabiyya* ghayr manshūra fī Jabal Usays," *Al-Abhath* 17 (1964): 227–316, at 290–91.

13. P. Sijpesteijn, *Shaping a Muslim State: The World of a Mid-Eighth-Century Egyptian Official* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 312–15.

14. On these figures, see Sijpesteijn, *Shaping a Muslim State*, 124–51.

15. Sijpesteijn, *Shaping a Muslim State*, 314, ll. 8 and 17.

16. J. M. Karīm, "Naqsh kūfī yaʿūdu li-l-ʿaṣr al-umawī min janūb sharq al-Gharra," *Dirāsāt: al-ʿUlūm al-insāniyya wa-l-ijtimāʿiyya* 28, no. 2 (2001): 391–413.

pair *rabb al-muslimīn* does not occur in the Qurʾan, and *al-muslimīn* appears to refer here to a proper name of the group.

Another early instance can be found in the inscriptions from Quṣayr ʿAmra, built at the instigation of the (then) heir apparent al-Walīd b. Yazīd, who served as the caliph for one year and died in 126/744. We do not know the exact date of the building nor of the inscription, but Frédéric Imbert suggests that the paintings and inscriptions of Quṣayr ʿAmra were executed in 121 or 122 AH.[17] One of the inscriptions calls al-Walīd *walī* [*ʿa*]*hd al-muslimīn wa-l-muslimāt*, "the heir apparent of male and female Muslims,"[18] and according to my interpretation, the capital letter M is clearly warranted in the translation. A graffito from ʿAnjar, Lebanon, dated to 123/741 also attests to the rise of this word as an endonym. The text reads: "May God bless all Muslims and let them enter gardens of delight" (*ṣallā allāh ʿalā ʿāmmat al-muslimīn wa-adkhalahum jannāt*).[19]

The foregoing discussion has presented the earliest extant dated or datable pieces of documentary evidence on the matter. The only first/seventh-century text to mention *islām* or *muslimūn* is the Dome of the Rock inscription, and that is simply a Qurʾanic quotation. The evidence, in my opinion, indicates that we should date the adoption of the names "Muslims" and "Islam" to the beginning of the second/eighth century or sometime before that (if one is to suppose, as I think is sensible, that the inscriptions and papyri reflect earlier existing discourse rather than created new group nomenclature). Note that there is a variety of evidence of the endonym "believers" being used before this; it is not simply the case that the dated record is silent on the name that was used by the group.[20]

Given the state of the evidence, one is surprised to find out that there is near-consensus among modern researchers that the word "Islam," and perhaps "Muslims" too, appears already in the Medinan[21] stratum of the Qurʾan in the reified sense, naming a specific religion and its adherents. In particular, verses 3:19 and 5:3 are mentioned in this context, though some other Medinan verses are sometimes adduced as well (2:128, 2:131–32, 3:52, 3:83–85, 4:125, 5:111, 9:74, 22:78, and 61:7, of which some are dealt with in this article).[22]

17. F. Imbert, "Le prince al-Walīd et son bain: Itinéraires épigraphiques à Quṣayr Amra," *Bulletin des études orientales* 64 (2015): 321–63, at 359.

18. Imbert, "Le prince al-Walīd," 340.

19. S. Ory, "Les graffiti umayyades de ʿAyn al-Ǧarr," *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth* 20 (1967): 97–148, at 100.

20. See, e.g., Lindstedt, "Who Is In," 165, 184–86.

21. I use the conventional division into Meccan and Medinan here, although it has recently come under sustained criticism in scholarship; see, e.g., S. J. Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan: A Historical-Critical Study* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022). See also the contributions in volume 1 of M. A. Amir-Moezzi and G. Dye, eds., *Le Coran des historiens* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2019). It is naturally possible that the Qurʾanic verses that I am dealing with here are not Medinan but post-Medinan and postprophetic (though I do not think it is likely). I will come back to this question briefly in the conclusions.

22. For various interpretations, see, e.g., T. Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, ed. F. Schwally, G. Bergsträßer, and O. Prezl (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1909–38), 1:145; R. Blachère, trans., *Le Coran* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve & Larose, 1966), 79, 87; D. Z. H. Baneth, "What Did Muḥammad Mean When He Called His Religion 'Islam'? The Original Meaning of *Aslama* and Its Derivatives," *Israel Oriental studies* 1 (1971): 183–90; T. Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qurʾan: The Semantics of the Qurʾanic Weltanschauung* (Petaling Jaya: Islamic Book Trust, 2002), 249; A. A. Ambros, *A Concise Dictionary of Koranic Arabic* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004), 137; M. Sirry, *Scriptural Polemics:*

Juxtaposing this interpretation with the extant post-Qurʾanic evidence suggests two possible conclusions: (a) that the word Islam acquired this sense during the latest phase of the prophet's career but then lay dormant for circa 100 years before gaining ground as the primary designation for the group's religion; or (b) that the Qurʾanic verses in which the word appears in a concrete and specific sense are later interpolations.[23] My reading of the Qurʾanic evidence rejects both of these solutions, suggesting rather that *islām* can always be understood as "obedience," even in very late verses such as 5:3; hence, such Qurʾanic locutions are unlikely to be postprophetic interpolations.

General Observations on *Islām* and *Dīn* in the Qurʾan

I should begin by noting that the form IV verbal noun *islām*, and expressions derived from the verbal form, are not ubiquitous in the Qurʾan. The word *islām* appears eight times, the verb *aslama* twenty-two times, and the participle *muslim*, with inflections, forty-three times.[24] Even if they were to signal in-group belonging and religiosity, which I argue is not the case in Qurʾanic Arabic, they would not be the most common words to do so. They can be compared with words derived from the verb *āmana*, "to believe, to have faith," which occur around 800 times.[25] Clearly, *islām* would merely be an ancillary reference to the group and its aspects of belonging. Moreover, the fact that most commentators agree that the semantic shift from general "obedience" to the name "Islam" transpired during the late Medinan era (or whenever they want to date the key passages of the Qurʾan)[26] further diminishes the possible usage and function that the term might have had during the time of the proclamation of the Qurʾan.

The Qurʾan and Other Religions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 7, 90; G. Böwering, *Islamic Political Thought: An Introduction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 217; S. H. Nasr et al., eds., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: HarperOne, 2015), 276; N. Sinai, "Processes of Literary Growth and Editorial Expansion in Two Medinan Surahs," in *Islam and Its Past: Jahiliyya, Late Antiquity, and the Qurʾan*, ed. C. Bakhos and M. Cook, 106–22 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), at 84–85; idem, *The Qurʾan: A Historical-Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 128–29, 135–36, n. 58; F. M. Donner, "*Dīn*, *Islām*, und *Muslim* im Koran, " in *Die Koranhermeneutik von Günter Lüling*, ed. G. Tamer, 129–40 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019); M. D. Niemi, "Historical & Semantic Development of Dīn and Islām from the Seventh Century to the Present" (PhD diss., Indiana University, Bloomington, 2021). All agree that Islam with the uppercase initial appears in at least one of the Qurʾanic verses surveyed in this article. For a view that aligns to a degree with mine, see J. T. Lamptey [Rhodes], *Never Wholly Other: A Muslima Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 202–5; the author does not see the Qurʾanic word *islām* as denoting Islam, with an uppercase letter, though she does translate *dīn* as "religion," which I disagree with.

23. For a study arguing for postprophetic interpolation of these verses, see Donner, "*Dīn*," but this possibility is also raised by Sinai in "Processes of Literary Growth," 81.

24. E. M. Badawi and M. Abdel Haleem, trans., *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qurʾanic Usage* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 450.

25. Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary*, 50.

26. E.g., Niemi, "Historical & Semantic Development," 123, comments on verse 5:3: "Sūrat al-Mā'ida represents the climax of a process beginning with Sūrat al-Baqara in which God's diffuse and all-pervasive will is gradually crystallized into a fully distinct and self-conscious religion through the incredible hermeneutic insight and rhetorical skill of the Qurʾānic author."

As for the word *dīn*, it appears ninety-two times in the Islamic scripture.[27] The Qurʾanic discourse continues the pre-Islamic Arabic usage of *dīn*, as evidenced by the poetical corpus.[28] The basic significations of *dīn* in Qurʾanic Arabic are "judgment" and "law," with the former meaning dominating in the Meccan discourse, while the latter signification is often present in the Medinan corpus.[29] By "law," I mean not the modern notion of a canonized body of authoritative legal stipulations but a loose and living discursive juristic tradition, pertaining also to purity and worship, which was a rather common way to understand "law" in antiquity and late antiquity and which corresponds to the Jewish understanding of *halakha* (in Greek: *nomos*) and later Islamic understanding of *sharīʿa* (or *sharʿ*).

The meaning "judgment" is common in Qurʾanic eschatological contexts, often in passages of Meccan provenance. For example, the expression *yawm al-dīn*, "judgment day," appears thirteen times in the Qurʾan.[30] Similarly, in verse 24:25 the word means "judgment": "On that day, God will give them their judgment (*dīnahum*) according to [their] due (*al-ḥaqq*)." The meaning "law" is already present in the Qurʾanic passages that are conventionally (and, I contend, probably correctly) called Meccan. For example, 12:76 contains the expression *fī dīn al-malik*, "according to the king's law."[31] Since the eschatological urgency diminishes in the Medinan chapters of the Qurʾan while matters of legislation and this-worldly affairs rise in importance, the Medinan passages often utilize the word *dīn* in the sense of "law."[32]

27. For the occurrences, see H. E. Kassis, *A Concordance of the Qurʾan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 382–83.

28. See, e.g., ʿAdī b. Zayd, *Dīwān*, 52, who panegyrizes a certain king by noting: "you guide humankind and fulfill their needs: as regards the law/judgment (*al-dīn*), justice [i.e., you are just]; as regards benevolence, abundance [i.e., you give abundantly]" (*tahdī l-anāma wa-tuʿṭīhum nawāʾibahum fī l-dīni ʿadlan wa-fī l-iʿṭāʾi ighzārā*). Translating *nawāʾibahum* as "their needs" follows the suggestion of the editor of the *Dīwān*, 52, n. 16; however, as the editor notes, this word often means "misfortunes, disasters." In any case, the issue at hand here is the word *dīn*, which clearly means "law" or "judgment" in this context. There are instances where the meaning "worship" seems to obtain for *dīn*, but there is always the possibility that some of the poems are Islamic-era forgeries. See the discussion of other poems in Izutsu, *God and Man*, 241–46; M. Goudarzi, "Unearthing Abraham's Altar: The Cultic Dimensions of *Dīn*, *Islām*, and *Ḥanīf* in the Qurʾan," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 82, no. 1 (forthcoming in 2023).

29. See the discussion in Donner, "*Dīn*."

30. In verses 1:4, 15:35, 26:82, 37:20, 38:78, 51:12, 56:56, 70:26, 74:46, 82:15, 82:17, 82:18, and 83:11. This Qurʾanic expression is borrowed from the Syriac *yawmā d-dīnā*, "the day of judgment"; see E. I. El-Badawi, *The Qurʾān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions* (London: Routledge, 2014), 189–90.

31. However, Izutsu, *God and Man*, 245, notes that this phrase should be understood as "authority of" or "obedience to the king," suggesting that interpreting *dīn* as "law" here would be "reading into the Qurʾan a later conception that could only arise after the concept of *sharʿ* as 'religious law' had been well established." But this is hardly persuasive: it is completely possible that the Qurʾanic community of believers had the concept of law, though it might have differed from the later Islamic concept of *sharīʿa*/*sharʿ*. In fact, I think Izutsu's interpretation ("authority of" or "obedience to") is difficult to square with the rest of the verse. The poetic quotations of the phrase (*fī*) *dīn fulān* that Izutsu adduces (*God and Man*, 244–45) are, in my opinion, better interpreted as "someone's law" or "jurisdiction." Izutsu and I agree that there has been a habit to retroject to the Qurʾanic *dīn* meanings that did not obtain at the time of the prophet; for him, it is the signification "law" that is an anachronism, whereas for me, it is "religion" (which Izutsu is willing to allow for the Qurʾanic *dīn*).

32. However, the meaning "judgment" is also present in some Medinan instances, in my opinion. See, e.g., Q 3:24, where the context indicates this to be the intended signification. In this verse, the disbelievers are

Modern scholars usually suppose that the semantic broadening of the term to mean not only "the (religious) law" but also "(a/the) religion" occurred during the proclamation of the Qurʾanic revelations.[33] However, as I argue, all Qurʾanic passages are fully understandable by interpreting the word *dīn* as denoting "judgment" or (particularly in the Medinan passages) "law."[34] Note also that the plural form *adyān* never occurs in the Qurʾan;[35] one would assume it would, if one were to understand the word *dīn* as denoting "a religion."[36] In my opinion, translating the Qurʾanic expression *al-dīn* as "the religion" and *al-islām* as "Islam" retrojects these words' later significations to a time when they did not yet obtain.

Key Medinan Verses

In the following, I deal with the Medinan verses of crucial importance: those in which modern historians and other researchers most often perceive a reified Islam and translate *dīn* as "religion."[37] I will begin with verse 5:3, though that may be chronologically surprising since many commentators see it as a very late verse of the Qurʾan.[38] It is also the one in which interpreters are the most certain about a religion named Islam being mentioned. For instance, the authors of *The Study Quran* comment that in this verse, "*Islām* is widely considered to be used in the confessional sense of those who follow the religion revealed in the Quran through the Prophet Muhammad, rather than in the universal sense of submission to God that the terms *islām* and *muslim* have elsewhere in the Quran (see, e.g., 2:131; 3:19, 85)."[39] However, in my opinion, verse 5:3 is very easy indeed to align with my reading of

portrayed as claiming: "'The fire will only touch us for a certain number of days.' Their concoctions have misled them regarding their judgment! (*wa-gharrahum fī dīnihim mā kānū yaftarūn*)."

33. E.g., Niemi, "Historical & Semantic Development," 94–99, 104–23, who suggests that even some Meccan revelations employ *dīn* in the sense of "religion." In an important and comprehensive study, Goudarzi, "Unearthing Abraham's Altar," argues that the Qurʾanic *dīn* sometimes denotes "worship" or "service," understood in the context of cultic deeds associated with the veneration of God. Though this is an intriguing suggestion, and this meaning of *dīn* would fit some occurrences of the word (such as in Q 109) very well, in my opinion Goudarzi's interpretation is somewhat conjectural, and the evidence provided by him is open to diverging readings. Moreover, the Arabic lexica give also the meaning "habit, custom" for *dīn*, which could be the correct way of understanding the word *dīn* in Qurʾan 109. See E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863–93), s.v. *dīn*, who offers the following meanings in this connection: "custom," "habit," "business," "a way, course, mode, or manner, of acting, or conduct."

34. By and large, the intra-Qurʾanic semantic shift of *dīn* is, then, from "judgment" to "law," rather than from "judgment" to "religion," as is often assumed; see, e.g., Izutsu, *God and Man*, 240–41; Ambros, *Concise Dictionary*, 102. As I have noted, the meaning of "law" obtained already in the pre-Islamic Arabic poems, so I am suggesting not that this signification was developed during and through the Qurʾanic proclamations, but rather that the Qurʾan tapped into existing usages of the word *dīn*.

35. Sirry, *Scriptural Polemics*, 98.

36. For instance, in verse 9:33.

37. Donner, "*Dīn*," 132–35; Niemi, "Historical & Semantic Development," 119–23. For all occurrences of *al-dīn* and *al-islām* in the Qurʾan, see Kassis, *Concordance*, 382–83, 1079–81. I am not aware of any Qurʾanic instance that would clearly go against my interpretation of these words.

38. Blachère, *Coran*, 131; Nasr et al., *Study Quran*, 275.

39. Nasr et al., *Study Quran*, 276.

al-islām as "obedience" ("the universal sense," to borrow the expression of *The Study Quran*) and *dīn* as "law" because of the verse's other content, which is specifically legal. If verse 5:3 is considered a very late verse in the internal chronology of the Qurʾan (which in my view is a tenable suggestion), and if it can be argued that *al-islām* there refers to "obedience," the whole notion of the name "Islam" emerging during the Qurʾanic proclamation begins to fall apart. However, it is important to treat Qurʾan 5:3 in juxtaposition with other Medinan verses, which I presently intend to do.

Qurʾan 5:3

Verse 5:3 is very verbose.[40] Like the beginning of sura 5 as a whole, it is legal in nature, revolving around dietary legislation. The verse reads:

> You[41] are forbidden to consume carrion, blood, pork, anything dedicated to other than God, any [animal] strangled, hit or fallen, gored, or eaten by wild animals—unless you have slaughtered it [properly]—or anything sacrificed on idol stones (*al-nuṣub*). [Moreover, you are forbidden] to draw divining arrows (*al-azlām*)—that is a transgression. Today, those who reject (*kafarū min*)[42] your *dīn* have lost hope. Do not fear them; fear Me. Today I have perfected (*akmaltu*) your *dīn* for you, completed (*atmamtu*) My blessing upon you, and favored (*raḍītu*) *al-islām dīnan* for you. But if anyone is forced [to eat illicit food] because of hunger, not intending to sin, God is forgiving and merciful.[43]

The crux of the matter lies in the words *dīn* and *islām* and, in particular, the expression *al-islām dīnan*. As far as I know, the vast majority of the translators and scholars of the Qurʾan have taken the passage to mean "chosen/favored Islam as your religion."[44] The accusative of *dīnan* is understood as signifying "as *dīn*," that is to say, "in the role of *dīn*."

But is there another option in interpreting the accusative *dīnan*? Indeed there is. The word *dīnan* of Qurʾan 5:3 is what is known in the Arabic grammatical tradition as the *tamyīz* accusative, which has various usages of determining and limiting the predicate. In the case of verse 5:3, I contend that the accusative noun should be translated into English as "with respect to," "in/with regard to," or "as regards" (noun).[45] Hence, the key passage here

40. In this connection, it is pertinent to remark that Nicolai Sinai has put forward the intriguing, and in my opinion credible, interpretation that verse 5:3 consists of two distinct utterances combined during the later compilatory and editorial work; Sinai, "Processes of Literary Growth," 79–84. Be that as it may, the possible editorial processes as regards verse 5:3 do not really affect my interpretation of the crucial word pair *al-islām dīnan*.

41. All "you" and "your" pronouns in this verse are plural and refer to the believers.

42. Or perhaps "hide from."

43. All translations of the Qurʾan are my own, though I have consulted and benefited from M. A. S. Abdel Haleem's translation.

44. See, e.g., the various translations available here; R. Bell, trans., *Translation of the Qurʾān* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1937), 1:94; and the renderings of this verse in the scholarly literature referenced in this article.

45. See W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896–98), 2:122, for this sort of *tamyīz* accusative. There are naturally many different determining and limiting usages of the accusative noun in Arabic.

should be translated as "Today I have perfected your law for you, completed My blessing upon you, and favored obedience as regards law for you." Not only can the phrase be so understood if it were a disjointed Arabic locution, but, in fact, the content of verse 5:3 makes this reading preferable: everything in the verse that precedes and follows the passage under question is about dietary regulations—that is, law. Right after the divine locution noting that God has "favored obedience as regards law for you," the text adds: "but if anyone is forced [to eat illicit food] because of hunger, not intending to sin, God is forgiving and merciful." Obedience to the law is of great importance, but under the duress of hunger one can break the dietary regulations if one's intentions are good.

There are, in fact, quite a few similar *tamyīz* accusatives in the Qurʾan. For example, in verse 11:7, it is stated that God has created the universe "to test which one of you is best as regards deeds" (*li-yabluwakum ayyukum aḥsanu ʿamalan*). The following instances should also be considered in this connection: *ʿadlu dhālika ṣiyāman*, "the equivalent as regards fasting" (Q 5:95); *ishtaʿalā l-raʾsu shayban*, "the head has become glowing with grey hair" (Q 19:4); and *fajjarnā l-arḍa ʿuyūnan*, "We have caused the earth to burst with springs" (Q 54:12). Verses 3:85 and 4:125, discussed below, also contain such *tamyīz* accusatives. My rendering of the words *al-islām dīnan* as "obedience as regards law" is, then, not a resort to special pleading but quite ordinary in the context of Qurʾanic Arabic.[46]

Considering the widespread impression among modern scholars and translators that Qurʾan 5:3 refers to and indeed explicitly names a religion known as Islam, it might be informative to note what the classical exegete al-Ṭabarī has to say about the phrase *al-islām dīnan*. Stating explicitly that he is proffering his own opinion rather than quoting earlier authorities, he interprets the word pair as meaning "submission to My [that is, God's] command and holding onto My obedience according to what I have decreed for you of limits and ordinances" (*al-istislām li-amrī wa-l-inqiyād li-ṭāʿatī ʿalā mā sharaʿtu lakum min ḥudūdihi wa-maʿālimihi*).[47] The word *al-islām* is glossed with other words signifying "obedience" (*istislām*, *ṭāʿa*), while *dīn* is unmistakably understood in the framework of legal stipulations that God has decreed. Though classical scholars usually engaged with the text of the Qurʾan from the viewpoint of Islam's distinctiveness from and hegemony over other religious groups,[48] in this case I would contend that al-Ṭabarī offers a reading of the verse that is very sensible and, indeed, preferable in the context of Qurʾanic Arabic.

According to Nicolai Sinai's interpretation,[49] verse 5:3's passage "Today I have perfected your *dīn* for you, completed My blessing upon you, and favored *al-islām dīnan* for you" can

46. Cf. G. S. Reynolds, "Sourate 5: *Al-Māʾida* (la Table)," in *Le Coran des historiens*, ed. M. A. Amir-Moezzi and G. Dye, 2:203–35 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2019), at 209, who puts forward the following translation for *raḍītu lakum al-islām dīnan*: "J'ai agréé que la soumission [à Moi] soit votre obligation." Generally speaking, this conveys the same sense as my interpretation does, though Reynolds does not justify his translation or dwell on the syntax of the phrase *raḍītu lakum al-islām dīnan*, which cannot, strictly speaking, be rendered in the way he suggests.

47. Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, ed. A. al-Turkī (Cairo: Dār Hajar, 2001), 8:84.

48. See J. Smith, *A Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islām" as Seen in a Sequence of Qurʾān Commentaries* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975).

49. Sinai, "Processes of Literary Growth," 80–81.

be understood in two ways. Both interpretations put forward by him have some merit but, in my opinion, should ultimately be rejected. Sinai posits the following possibilities: (a) The section indicates that the revelation and the religion are now full and complete. If this is the case, Sinai suggests that the passage can be considered a postprophetic addition to the corpus of Qurʾanic revelations. (b) Alternatively, what has been made complete and perfect is in fact the dietary regulations of the believers. If this is the correct interpretation, then, according to Sinai, the verse articulates a facet setting the burgeoning Islam apart from other groups.

Of the two propositions, the first I would simply discard because it is based on the (in my opinion misguided) notion that equates *dīn* with "religion." However, I agree with Sinai's second suggestion in so far as it seems to me quite natural, in the context of verse 5:3 and sura 5 more generally, that the word *dīn* here falls under its usual Qurʾanic signification of "law," more particularly dietary law. However, it is unclear whether this constitutes a characteristic that would have definitely set the followers of the prophet apart from the Jews and Christians around (and, dare I say, among) them. After all, the content of Qurʾan 5:3 rehashes earlier Jewish and Christian notions about the dietary regulations that gentile believers should follow.[50] What is more, verse 5:5 explicitly notes that the prophet's community of believers can eat the food of the people of the book and vice versa. Naturally, if Sinai means that Qurʾan 5:3 draws a line between the gentile believers and gentile disbelievers, I agree with his analysis.

Qurʾan 3:83 and 3:85

Sura 3 consists, according to most classical and modern commentators, of material that predates sura 5.[51] Verses 3:83 and 3:85 align well with my general reading of the Qurʾanic evidence, though Qurʾan 3:85 includes a unique formulation, *ghayra l-islām*, which has led scholars to see "Islam" being contrasted with something other than it in the verse. The expression *dīn allāh* in verse 3:83 is completely understandable as "God's law." Verse 3:85 comments on 3:83; the expression in the former, *wa-man yabtaghi ghayra l-islām dīnan*, is similar to verse 5:3, where I have argued that *al-islām dīnan* signifies "obedience as regards law." Though Qurʾan 3:85 is often understood to refer to *al-islām* as the name of the religion,[52] I do not think this is the case. The word pair *ghayra l-islām* does not mean "something other than Islam"; rather, it signifies "something other than obedience," that is, "inobedience." I would thus translate the two verses as follows:

50. H. Zellentin, *The Qurʾān's Legal Culture: The Didascalia Apostolorum as a Point of Departure* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013); idem, "Judeo-Christian Legal Culture and the Qurʾan: The Case of Ritual Slaughter and the Consumption of Animal Blood," in *Jewish-Christianity and the Origins of Islam*, ed. F. del Río Sánchez, 117–59 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018); idem, *Law beyond Israel: From the Bible to the Qurʾan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), in particular 105–28.

51. Blachère, *Coran*, 75, dates Sura 3 to the years 624 and 625. Such preciseness is hardly possible in my opinion, but I agree that sura 5 comprises very late Medinan material.

52. E.g., Donner, "*Dīn*," 134, who understands the beginning of the verse as signifying "wer auch immer eine andere Religion als den Islam wünscht."

> 3:83: Do they aspire to something other than God's law (*a-fa-ghayra dīn allāh yabaghūna*)? Everyone in the heavens and the earth obeys Him (*lahu aslama*), either willingly or unwillingly. They will all return to Him.

> 3:85: Whoever aspires to inobedience in law (*wa-man yabtaghi ghayra l-islām dīnan*)—it will not be accepted from them, and they will be among the losers in the hereafter.

It should be noted that the phrase "whoever aspires to inobedience in law" is, in my interpretation, a sarcastic statement. Such sarcastic language sometimes appears in the Qurʾan: for example, verse 9:34 commands the prophet to *bashshir*, "give good tidings," of a painful chastisement to those who hoard mammon.

Qurʾan 61:7

If one were to subscribe to the notion that the Qurʾanic word *al-islām* often or sometimes denotes the name of the religion, Islam, the following verse, Q 61:7, could be taken to mean that the wrongdoers should be called (*yudʿā*) to this religion. However, here, too, *al-islām* translates effortlessly as "obedience."

> Who is more wrong (*aẓlam*) than those who invent lies about God while being summoned to obedience (*yudʿā ʿalā al-islām*)? God does not guide the wrongdoers (*al-ẓālimīn*).

"Those who do wrong" (*al-ẓālimīn*) often functions in the Qurʾan as a catchall category for people who transgress moral norms and legal regulations and fail to worship the one God.[53] Here as in other verses discussed in this article, *al-islām* appears to mean not only obedience to God but also obedience to the law, which verses 5:3 and 3:85 signal with the expression *al-islām dīnan*.

Qurʾan 3:19

Verse 3:19, like 5:3, is one of the instances in which many modern scholars and commentators perceive Islam with a capital letter.[54] However, I would venture the following translation of the verse:

> The law in the presence of God is obedience (*inna al-dīn ʿinda allāh al-islām*). Those who were given the scripture [before] did not disagree except only after they had been given knowledge, out of envy among themselves. If someone denies God's signs [or letters, *āyāt*], God is swift to take revenge.

Here, the beginning of the verse communicates a metaphorical signification: obedience

53. Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary*, 585.

54. E.g., Donner, "*Dīn*," 132–33; Niemi, "Historical & Semantic Development," 121. But cf. Nasr et al., *Study Quran*, 135: "*Islām* in this verse refers to submission to God even if it is not in the context of Islam as the specific religion revealed through the Quran."

to God is tantamount to living according to God's law, and vice versa. The word pair *ʿinda allāh* has multiple usages in the Qurʾan, and many might fit here too: "with God," "in the possession of God," "in the sight of God," "before God."[55] Whatever the exact meaning here of *ʿinda allāh*, it is clear that *al-dīn* is predicated by *al-islām*. In my opinion, it is possible to translate them with what I suggest are their normal meanings in Qurʾanic Arabic: *al-dīn* as "the law" and *al-islām* as "obedience."[56] The resulting translation in English is, admittedly, a bit awkward ("the law . . . is obedience"), but I would argue that the phrase is to be understood metaphorically: God's law signifies or includes the characteristic and requirement of obedience. Moreover, verse 3:20 notes that both the people of the book and gentiles can be obedient, so in that context, too, the idea that Qurʾan 3:19 articulates a distinct name, Islam, for a group distinct from Jews and Christians is mistaken.[57]

Similar metaphorical predicate phrases appear elsewhere in the Qurʾan. For instance, verse 9:28 states that "the associators are filth" (*al-mushrikūn najas*)—note that the passage does not say "the associators are filthy," using an adjective that would agree with the gender and number of the subject, but instead predicates "the associators" with the uncountable noun "filth." The famous verse 24:35 proclaims that "God is the light of the heavens and earth." In none of the examples cited here (3:19, 9:28, or 24:35) is the predicate phrase to be understood literally but rather as a metaphorical transfer of meaning between the two parts of the phrase. Phrases such as "God is light" and "the law is obedience" do not communicate propositions that should be taken literally; rather, they invite the reader/hearer to ponder the nature of God and His law using predicates that allude to and indicate what they might entail.

It seems to me that the rest of verse 3:19 is part and parcel of the Qurʾanic discourse on the law, though its exact meaning and point of contention are somewhat difficult to fathom. I would suggest that the verse is an example of the Qurʾanic message that rather than following the additions and concoctions of the people of the book (primarily Jews and Christians), the believers should follow the law in a gentile manner (*ḥanīfan*).[58] This is communicated in, for example, verse 4:125, which I discuss next.

55. Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary*, 649.

56. Similarly, G. S. Reynolds, *The Qurʾān and the Bible: Text and Commentary* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), 111–12: "With 'Islām' the Qurʾān presumably means 'submission' (the meaning of the Arabic term *islām*) and not Islam as a proper name (it was presumably verses such as this [3:19]—and 3:85, and 5:3—which led later Muslims to name their religion 'Islam')." However, Reynolds does not discuss the syntax, which, I admit, poses some problems if *islām* is understood as "obedience."

57. As also noted by W. M. Watt, *Companion to the Qurʾān* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1967), 47.

58. Zellentin, *Qurʾān's Legal Culture*, 10: "The 'gentile' self-identity of the Qurʾān is actually reflected in its use of the Arabic term *ḥanīf* to depict the original gentile form of worship, going back to Abraham."

Qurʾan 4:125

Verse 4:125 uses the verb *aslama*.[59] It reads:

> And who could do better as regards law (*wa-man aḥsanu dīnan*) than the one who submits his/her self to God as a doer of good (*aslama wajhahu li-llāh wa-huwa muḥsin*) and follows the word of Abraham as a gentile (*millat ibrāhīm ḥanīfan*)? God took Abraham as a close friend.

The meaning of the Qurʾanic word *milla* is much debated in scholarship. It stems from the Syriac *mellthē*, the basic meaning of which is "word." In the context of this article, we can gloss over the exact signification of *milla* and concentrate on the usages of *dīn* and *aslama*. Note that the word *dīnan* in the expression *man aḥsanu dīnan* is a *tamyīz* accusative similar in usage to those found in verses 5:3 and 3:85 (see also 11:7). In verse 4:125, the exemplary follower of the law is described as someone who submits to God, does good, and follows the *milla* of Abraham as a gentile. Here, Abraham, the "close friend" of God, features as a prototypical figure from the mythical past proffering an example for the gentile obedient believers around the prophet Muḥammad.

Qurʾan 22:78

Verse 22:78, though perhaps Meccan,[60] is intriguing since it contains the word *muslimīn* in a context that has made many suggest that it explicitly furnishes the name Muslims for the audience of the revelation.[61] However, the verb *sammā*, literally "to call, to name," which occurs in the verse, is semantically broad in Qurʾanic Arabic. As Matthew Niemi notes, the Qurʾan contains, for example, the phrase *ajal musammā*, which should be translated as "specified time."[62] It is not perhaps likely, therefore, that the verb *sammā* in Qurʾan 22:87 would mean "give a name" in a concrete manner. In my interpretation, the verse can be rendered as follows:

> Strive in God's way as He deserves. He has chosen you[63] and has not made the law (*al-dīn*) burdensome to you, because of the word (*milla*)[64] of your father Abraham. He[65] has called you obedient (*sammākum al-muslimīn*) before and in this [pericope].

59. While Donner, "*Dīn*," adduces Qurʾan 3:19, 3:85, and 5:3 as entailing a reified and distinct sense of Islam with a capital letter, he interprets verse 4:125 in the same way I do. He translates (p. 136) *man aḥsanu dīnan* in Qurʾan 4:125 as "wer ist besser im Dienst." But since the *dīnan* construction is grammatically the same in verse 5:3, what grounds are there for translating it in the latter instance as "als Religion" (p. 133)?

60. Blachère, *Coran*, 356, notes that the sura is a mixture of Meccan and Medinan materials.

61. See also the discussion in Donner, "*Dīn*," 138.

62. Niemi "Historical & Semantic Development," 118.

63. Throughout, the verse is addressed to the second-person plural.

64. Here, I would suggest interpreting the accusative *millata* as functioning as the "*motive and object* of the agent in doing the act, the *cause or reason* of his doing it"; Wright, *Grammar*, 2:121.

65. This can refer to either God or Abraham. See Donner, "*Dīn*," 139; Niemi "Historical & Semantic Development," 118.

> May the messenger be a witness over you and may you be witnesses over [all] the people. Uphold the prayer, give alms, and hold fast to God. He is your guardian—what an excellent guardian and helper!

It is rather straightforward to translate *al-dīn* as "the law" and *al-muslimīn* as "the obedient" here. As in verse 4:125, *dīn* and obedience are conceptually connected with the *milla* of Abraham. To what does the word "before" in "He has called you obedient (*al-muslimīn*) before and in this [pericope]" allude? I would tentatively suggest that it is an intra-Qurʾanic reference to verse 2:128, where Abraham and Ishmael pray to God to make them obedient (*muslimayn*) to God and to raise from their offspring (*dhurriyyatinā*) an "obedient nation" (*umma muslima*). This could be the "before," the earlier pericope mentioned in verse 22:78 (though that would require that 2:128 was promulgated earlier than 22:78). Be that as it may, the verse does not contain a grand disclosure of a new name for the group of believers following the Arabian messenger. Rather, like many other verses, it characterizes them as people who submit or should submit to God, His messenger, and the law.

Conclusions

I have noted at the beginning of this article that the names Islam and Muslims are absent from the first/seventh-century documentary record, though they become essential, indeed primary, appellations in the second/eighth century. Given this, it would be surprising to see the words *islām* and *muslimūn* being used in the Qurʾan in their reified connotations. If they were so used, it would make sense to assume that they are postprophetic interpolations to the Qurʾanic text. For example, Fred Donner suggests that the reified senses of *dīn* and *islām*, which he sees in some of the verses discussed in this article, belong to the *Gedankenwelt* of the late seventh or early eighth century. He argues that the bulk of the Qurʾan stems from the early seventh century, but small changes and interpolations could still have been made in the transmission of the text.[66]

But such interpolations of reified *dīn* and *islām* would have to be quite late, in my opinion, probably from the second/eighth century, and the Qurʾanic manuscript evidence appears to indicate that the Islamic scripture had already been codified and standardized by then.[67] Even revisionist scholars, such as Stephen Shoemaker, place the creation of the standard Qurʾanic text no later than the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 86/705),[68] during which the group's members still called themselves believers rather than Muslims according to the dated documentary evidence. As we have seen, the earliest extant examples of the endonyms Muslims and Islam are from the 100–110s/720–30s. As regards the Qurʾan, I have argued that it is best to understand the words *dīn*, *islām*, and *muslimūn* in their common significations ("law/judgment," "obedience," "the obedient") even in the latest stratum of

66. Donner, "*Dīn*," 139–40.

67. F. Déroche, *Le Coran, une histoire plurielle: Essai sur la formation du texte coranique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2019); M. van Putten, "'The Grace of God' as Evidence for a Written Uthmanic Archetype: The Importance of Shared Orthographic Idiosyncrasies," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 82 (2019): 271–88.

68. See Shoemaker's *Creating the Qurʾan* for a comprehensive discussion of the various pieces of evidence for the date of the Qurʾan.

the Qurʾan: verses such as 5:3 are completely understandable if one intreprets *dīn* and *islām* in their usual, rather than reified, senses. Moreover, the semantic shift of the Qurʾanic *dīn* is not from "judgment" to "religion," but from "judgment" to "law" (though, as I have argued, the meaning "law" appears to be present already in pre-Islamic poems).

My interpretation, then, also has a bearing on the date of the Qurʾanic text(s). If anachronisms such as the distinct appellations Islam and Muslims were present in the Qurʾan, a late codification or standardization of the Islamic scripture would be more plausible. But if, as I argue, at least these anachronisms are lacking, the scholars arguing for the late date of the bulk or some parts of the Qurʾan will have to provide other examples of postprophetic modifications and additions.[69]

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69. For such suggestions, see Shoemaker, *Creating the Qurʾan*, 230–58.

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