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**Lexical Layers vs Structural Paradigms in the Opening of Sūrat al-Baqara:
Typically Medinan Structures in Q 2, Q 3, and Some Shorter Medinan
Compositions***

Introduction: The Opening Sections of Q 2 and Q 3

In studies of Sūrat al-Baqara as a literary unity, vv. 1–39 have almost unanimously been described as the sura’s “introduction”.¹ Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī categorised them as such in his *Tadabbur-i Qurʾān*, first published in 1967.² Neal Robinson defined Q 2:1–39 as the sura’s “prologue”.³ In a 2001 article on the structure of the sura, David E. Smith referred to the first 39 verses of al-Baqara as establishing “the backbone upon which this surah is built”.⁴ Most recently, in 2017, Nevin Reda demarcated this part of al-Baqara as a discrete unit via the identification of an apparent inclusio

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¹ The main exception to this trend being synchronic analyses of the Qurʾān that utilise ring theory as their organising principle. Thus, for example, Raymond Farrin classifies Q 2:1–20.285–286 as Ring A / A’ of a concentrically ordered al-Baqara, Q 2:21–29.254–284 as Ring B / B’. See Raymond K. Farrin, “Surat al-Baqara: A Structural Analysis”, *Muslim World* 100 (2010).

² For an English translation of the first parts of Iṣlāḥī’s work, see Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, *Pondering over the Qurʾān*, vol. 1: *Tafsīr of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah and Sūrah al-Baqarah*, trans. Mohammad Saleem Kayani (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2006).

³ Neal Robinson, *Discovering the Qurʾan: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2003), 202, 203–206.

⁴ David E. Smith, “The Structure of al-Baqarah”, *Muslim World* 91 (2001): 124.

created by the repetition of the term *hudā* in vv. 2 and 38,⁵ going on to remark that the term *hudā* then functions as a *Leitwort* throughout the sura as a whole.

Despite this dual emphasis on the structural integrity of the opening verses of al-Baqara and on the function of Q 2:1–39 in contributing to the coherence of the sura as a literary unit, diachronic breakdowns of the sura suggest a number of alternative categorisations of this material.⁶ One particular diachronic perspective is provided by the Iranian scholar Mehdi Bazargan, who produced a detailed classification of the Qur’an in accordance with the mean verse length of its discrete textual blocks, a system by which his Block 1 contained the shortest verses within the corpus (or its earliest material), and his Block 194 the longest verses within the corpus (or its latest material). This system was analysed in a lengthy article by Behnam Sadeghi, who corroborated a basic developmental trajectory from shorter verses to longer via three separate groups of multivariate markers: if the Qur’an is rearranged into seven “phases” in accordance with the mean verse length of its textual blocks, Sadeghi’s three groups of multivariate markers were found to exhibit a similarly smooth pattern of variance.⁷

⁵ Reda observes what she takes to be a further central repetition of this concept in the presence of the term *muhtadin* in Q 2:16. See Nevin Reda, *The al-Baqara Crescendo: Understanding the Qur’an’s Style, Narrative Structure, and Running Themes* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2017), 78.

⁶ Thus Richard Bell highlighted a number of the verses of Q 2:1–29 as possibly forming disconnected scraps or later additions, with the Adam narrative in vv. 30–38, in his view, a composite textual block added to the sura as a fully formed set piece: “The story of Adam has come from different sources ... It has however probably been placed here as a whole, having already taken its shape at an earlier period.” See Richard Bell, *A Commentary on the Qur’ān*, vol. 1: *Surahs I–XXIV* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1991), 8–9. Theodor Nöldeke proposed a single divide between Medinan and Meccan material somewhat earlier, at the junction of vv. 20 and 21, with the text block vv. 1–20, to his logic, typical of the early Medinan material that makes up much of the remainder of the sura, while the topic of creation and the fall of man outlined in vv. 21–39 separated out these verses as typically Meccan for Nöldeke. See Theodor Nöldeke, Friedrich Schwally, Gotthelf Bergsträsser, and Otto Pretzl, *The History of the Qur’ān*, trans. Wolfgang H. Behn (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 141–142.

⁷ See Behnam Sadeghi, “The Chronology of the Qur’ān”, *Arabica* 58 (2011). For further discussion of Bazargan’s system see my “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).

The opening verses of al-Baqara Bazargan divides into three sections. He categorises vv. 1–20 as one unit, part of his Block 113; the longer mean verse length of vv. 21–29 then places this subsection into Bazargan’s Block 183; the Adam narrative in vv. 30–39, meanwhile, falls into Block 139. Taking this data to its logical extreme, this would suggest that vv. 1–20 form part of the very earliest layer of Sūrat al-Baqara, while vv. 21–29 are contemporary with much of the central, *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* section of the sura. Vv. 30–39, meanwhile, are similar in mean verse length to only one other textual block, namely, vv. 190–195, which instruct the believers to first “fight” and then “spend in God’s cause” (*qātilū fī sabīli llāh ... anfiqū fī sabīli llāh ...*).

Very recently, Nicolai Sinai has also speculated that the introduction to al-Baqara might contain diachronic layers, as Bazargan’s data suggests. More specifically, Sinai observes that the isolated letters and the statement “This is the Scripture” that open Sūrat al-Baqara are typical not of Medinan material but of suras that pre-date the hijra,⁸ while the marked similarities between Q 2:1–7 and the opening verses of Suras 27 and 31 are strongly indicative of the possibility that “the beginning of surah 2 recycles older Meccan material that was subsequently adapted to serve as the prelude to a Medinan surah”.⁹ It is worth pointing out that the very short mean verse length of vv. 1–5 in particular (48.82 transcription letters per verse, henceforth abbreviated “TLPV”), where the overlaps with Suras 27 and 31 are most pronounced, contribute significantly to the overall drop in mean verse length of Bazargan’s suggested text block Q 2:1–20 (with a mean verse length of 73.9 TLPV) when compared to the sura as a whole (which averages at 137.19 TLPV).¹⁰

⁸ An observation that was similarly made by Nöldeke, as Sinai points out, although Nöldeke nonetheless classifies Q 2:1–19 as early Medinan. See Nöldeke, *History*, 173, and Nicolai Sinai, *The Qur’an: A Historical-Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 100.

⁹ Sinai, *Qur’an*, 101. In his placing a shift to a more typically Medinan register at the precise juncture of vv. 20/21, Sinai is here relying upon Bazargan’s division of the corpus into diachronic blocks; the presence of the phrase “in their hearts is sickness” in Q 2:10 (cf. the Medinan suras Q 5, 8, 9, 22, 24, 33, 47, and the Medinan insertion Q 74:31) is taken as one specific indication that earlier material might here have been reworked, and not inserted verbatim into the sura.

¹⁰ For MVL information, see Table 26 below. All transcription figures were provided by Sinai via personal correspondence, and I would like to thank him for sending me a copy of the spreadsheet through which it was possible to make the necessary calculations; any subsequent mistakes are of course my own. Sinai

The matter of the lexical and phraseological overlaps between Q 2:1–7, 27:1–6, and 31:1–5 is, however, less straightforwardly indicative of any contemporaneity than it might at first seem. As is apparent in Table 1 below, a large number of elements of the middle Meccan Q 27:1–5 are echoed in the late Meccan Q 31:1–5;¹¹ a large number of elements of the late Meccan Q 31:1–6 are then echoed in the Medinan Q 2:1–8; and of all the repeated elements it is only the *inna lladhīna* opening formula of Q 27:4 and 2:6 that cannot be traced as having feasibly come to al-Baqara via the late Meccan Q 31:1–5.¹² As such, therefore, the trajectory of lexical development would appear to support a diachronic move from middle Meccan through late Meccan to Medinan much more than it would appear to indicate the later incorporation of Meccan material into a Medinan sura.¹³

describes his calculations as comprising “an electronic count of the mean verse length (henceforth: MVL) of all Qur’anic suras based on a transliteration of the Qur’an (according to the Kufan system of verse divisions) for which I am beholden to Prof. Hans Zirker”. He explains having “transformed all verse endings into pausal forms (by omitting brief vowels and *-un/-in*, changing the accusative ending *-an* to *-ā*, and omitting gemination) and counted all letters excluding hyphens and space characters”. See Sinai, “Inner-Qur’anic Chronology”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur’anic Studies*, ed. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem and Mustafa Shah (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

¹¹ Here and elsewhere I am following Nöldeke, *History*, in dividing the corpus into four approximate periods: early Meccan, middle Meccan, late Meccan, and Medinan.

¹² In more specific terms: as documented by Table 1, (i) there are 14 words that overlap between Sūrat an-Naml (Q 27) and Sūrat Luqmān (Q 31), plus the morphologically cognate parallels *al-ḥakīm/mubīn* and *li-l-mu’minīn/li-l-muḥsinīn*, so arguably 16 parallels in total; (ii) there are 9 words that overlap between Sūrat al-Baqara and Sūrat an-Naml; and (iii) there are 19 words that overlap between Sūrat al-Baqara and Sūrat Luqmān, plus the morphologically cognate parallels *li-l-muḥsinīn/li-l-muttaqīn*, and the matching *wa-mina l-nāsi man ...* opening formula transitioning both suras into their second paragraphs, in Q 31:6 and 2:8 respectively, so arguably 23 parallels in total.

¹³ Of course, within an understanding of the Qur’anic corpus as having been in constant oral circulation throughout the years of Muhammad’s ministry, there is no reason why its lexicon should move in diachronically directional steps. The fact remains, however, that in this particular instance this does appear to be the case.

Q 27:1–6	Q 31:1–6	Q 2:1–8
¹ <i>ṭā sīn ...</i>	¹ <i>alif lām mīm</i>	¹ <i>alif lām mīm</i>
<i>... tilka āyātu l-qurʾāni wa-kitābin mubīn</i>	² <i>tilka āyātu l-kitābi l-ḥakīm</i>	² <i>dhālika l-kitābu lā rayba fihi ...</i>
² <i>hudan wa-bušrā li-l-muʾminīn</i>	³ <i>hudan wa-raḥmatan li-l-muḥsinīn</i>	<i>... hudan li-l-muttaqīn</i>
³ <i>alladhīna yuqīmūna l-ṣalāta wa-yuʾtūna l-zakāt ...</i>	⁴ <i>alladhīna yuqīmūna l-ṣalāta wa-yuʾtūna l-zakāt ...</i>	³ <i>alladhīna yuʾminūna bi-l-ghaybi wa-yuqīmūna l-ṣalāta wa-mimmā razaqnāhum yunfiqūn</i>
<i>... wa-hum bi-l-ākhirati hum yūqinūn</i>	<i>... wa-hum bi-l-ākhirati hum yūqinūn</i>	⁴ <i>wa-lladhīna yuʾminūna bi-mā unzila ilayka wa-mā unzila min qablaka wa-bi-l-ākhirati hum yūqinūn</i>
	⁵ <i>ulāʾika ʿalā hudan min rabbihim wa-ulāʾika humu l-muflīḥūn</i>	⁵ <i>ulāʾika ʿalā hudan min rabbihim wa-ulāʾika humu l-muflīḥūn</i>
⁴ <i>inna lladhīna lā yuʾminūna bi-l-ākhirati zayyannā lahum aʿmālahum fa-hum yaʿmahūn</i>		⁶ <i>inna lladhīna kafarū sawāʾun ʿalayhim a-andhartahum am lam tundhirhum lā yuʾminūn</i>
⁵ <i>ulāʾika lladhīna lahum sūʾu l-ʿadhābi wa-hum fi l-ākhirati humu l-<u>aḥsarūn</u></i>	(cf. <i>ulāʾika ʿalā hudan min rabbihim wa-ulāʾika humu l-muflīḥūn</i>)	(cf. <i>ulāʾika ʿalā hudan min rabbihim wa-ulāʾika humu l-muflīḥūn</i>)
		⁷ <i>khatama llāhu ʿalā qulūbihim wa-ʿalā samʿihim wa-ʿalā abṣārihim ghishāwatun wa-lahum ʿadhābun ʿazīm</i>
⁶ <i>wa-innaka la-tulaqqā l-qurʾāna min ladun ḥakīmīn ʿalīm</i>		
	⁶ <i>wa-mīna l-nāsi man yashtarī ...</i>	⁸ <i>wa-mīna l-nāsi man yaqūlu ...</i>

Table 1: Lexical overlaps in the opening verses of Q 27, Q 31, and Q 2.¹⁴

The theory that Qurʾanic lexicon does indeed move in diachronically directional steps was recently raised in computerised form by Andrew Bannister, whose *Oral-Formulaic Study of the Qurʾan* posits a clear shift in language use between the Meccan and the Medinan parts of the

¹⁴ The presence of bold typeface in Table 1 indicates precise repetitions. Underline has been utilised to draw the reader's attention to morphologically parallel variants.

corpus, as defined by Theodor Nöldeke.¹⁵ Bannister tagged his computer database such that a label of either “Meccan” or “Medinan” was attached to any particular three-word sequence that occurred with more than 67% frequency in either Nöldeke’s Meccan or his Medinan Qur’an, and with less than 33% frequency in the other. From the data his search provided, Bannister concluded that the Meccan Qur’an consisted of 69.45% “predominantly Meccan”, 15.62% “predominantly Medinan”, and 14.93% “predominantly universal” formulae (the latter being formulae that show no discernible tendency to occur in one corpus rather than the other). The Medinan Qur’an, meanwhile, was found to be built of 0.53% “predominantly Meccan”, 90.95% “predominantly Medinan”, and 8.72% “predominantly universal” formulae. In other words, 90.95% of the language in the Medinan Qur’an was found to have a strong tendency to be more commonly utilised in the Medinan part of the corpus than in the Meccan, suggesting a more lexically coherent Medinan Qur’an than one might otherwise imagine to be the case, and a vague, but inarguably present, divide between the way the Meccan Qur’an and the Medinan Qur’an utilise language. Sadeghi’s findings, that the MVL of large Qur’anic textual blocks varied in parallel with each block’s use of three separate groups of multi-variate markers, also indicate a diachronic shift in language usage.¹⁶

A careful analysis of the specific language utilised in Q 2:1–7 in fact yields the following statistics: the discrete phrases that occur in vv. 1–7 of al-Baqara are nine times reflected in middle Meccan suras, 29 times reflected in late Meccan suras, and 46 times reflected in Medinan suras (including al-Baqara itself; see the data provided in Table 2 below). This analysis differed from that undertaken by Bannister on a number of fronts. First and foremost, the corpus was divided into all four of Nöldeke’s suggested stylistic phases, investigating the possibility of linguistic development

¹⁵ See Andrew G. Bannister, *An Oral-Formulaic Study of the Qur’an* (Lanham and Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2014), 143 and passim. Marianna Klar, “Review Article: An Oral-Formulaic Study of the Qur’an”, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 19, no. 1 (2017).

¹⁶ See Sadeghi, “Chronology”. Sadeghi provides a useful counterfoil in the example of Charles Dickens, whose works were subject to a similar analysis in 2002. See Tomoji Tabata, “Investigating Stylistic Variation in Dickens through Correspondence Analysis of Word-Class Distribution”, in *English Corpus Linguistics in Japan*, ed. T. Saito, J. Nakamura, and S. Yamasaki (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), and the discussion of this study in Sadeghi, “Chronology”, 285–286.

across the Meccan side of the Qur’anic corpus in addition to any difference between the Meccan and the Medinan phases of Muhammad’s prophetic career. In addition, the analysis was carried out on phrases of variable length, and not merely three-word sequences. Finally, due to this being a hand-crafted analysis, it was possible to adjust a number of phrases to encompass near parallels or expansions that the computer would not automatically observe. Thus, for instance, the expression *alladhīna yu’minūna bi-l-ghayb*, although in itself a Qur’anic *hapax*, is arguably formulaically and theologically parallel to such phrases as *alladhīna yakhshawna rabbahum bi-l-ghayb* (Q 21:49, 35:18, 67:12), *man khashiya l-rahmāna bi-l-ghayb* (Q 36:11, 50:33), *li-ya’lama llāhu man yakhāfuhu bi-l-ghayb* (Q 5:94) or even *li-ya’lama llāhu man yanşuruhu wa-rusulahu bi-l-ghayb* (Q 57:25), which occur in four middle Meccan, one late Meccan, and two Medinan suras.¹⁷ Another Qur’anic *hapax* specific to al-Baqara, the verse closer *hudan li-l-muttaqīn*, has a number of parallels in such expressions as *hudan wa-bushrā li-l-mu’minīn* or *hudan wa-rahmatun li-l-mu’minīn* (both Q 27). The Qur’anic expression *bi-l-ākhirati hum yūqinūn* only occurs at three junctures of the corpus (Q 27:3, 31:4, and 2:4), in the three sura openers that exhibit such a striking degree of lexical overlap. This expression should however almost definitely be counted alongside the rhythmically parallel phrase *bi-l-ākhirati hum kāfirūn*, which has a further three late Meccan attestations, in Q 11, 12, and 41 (see Table 2 below).

¹⁷ In Q 19:61, moreover, the term *ghayb* occurs with reference to God’s promise of paradise to His servants: *jannāti ‘adnīni llatī wa’ada l-rahmānu ‘ibādahu bi-l-ghaybi innahu kāna wa’duhu ma’tiyā*. In this latter verse, *bi-l-ghayb* would seem to occupy a similar philological field to the *bi-l-ghayb* of the middle Meccan verses Q 21:49, 36:11, 50:33, and 67:12, the late Meccan verse Q 35:18, and the Medinan verse Q 5:94.

Discrete Qur'anic phrase	Middle Meccan suras	Late Meccan suras	Medinan suras
<i>al-kitābu/-i lā rayba fīhi</i>	–	2 (Q 10:37, 32:2)	1 (Q 2:2)
<i>hudan li-l-muttaqīn</i>	–	–	1 (Q 2:2, <i>hapax</i>)
<i>hudan (wa- ...) li-l- ...</i>	2 (Q 27:2.77)	9 (Q 7:52.203, 10:57, 12:111, 16:64.89.102, 31:3, 45:20)	5 (Q 2:2.97, 3:96.138, 5:46)
<i>yu'minūna bi-l-ghayb</i>	–	–	1 (Q 2:2, <i>hapax</i>)
<i>khashiya/khāfa/našara/āmana + bi-l-ghayb</i>	4 (Q 21:49, 36:11, 50:33, 67:12)	1 (Q 35:18)	3 (Q 2:3, 5:94, 57:25)
<i>yuqīmūna l-šalāta wa-mimmā razaqnāhum yunfiqūn</i>	–	–	2 (Q 2:3, 8:3)
<i>wa-lladhīna yu'minūna bi-mā unzila ilayka wa-mā unzila min qablīka</i>	–	–	3 (Q 2:4, 4:162, 5:59)
<i>bi-l-ākhirati hum yūqinūn</i>	1 (Q 27:3)	1 (Q 31:4)	1 (Q 2:4)
<i>(bi-l-ākhirati hum kāfirūn)</i>	–	3 (Q 11:19, 12:37, 41:7)	–
<i>ulā'ika 'alā hudan min rabbihim</i>	–	1 (Q 31:5)	1 (Q 2:5)
<i>ulā'ika humu l-muflīhūn</i>	1 (Q 23:102)	4 (Q 7:8.157, 30:38, 31:5)	6 (Q 2:5, 3:103, 9:88, 24:51, 59:9, 64:16)
<i>inna lladhīna kafarū</i>	–	2 (Q 40:10, 41:41)	16 (Q 2:6.161, 3:4.10.90.91.116, 4:56.167.168, 5:36, 8:36, 22:25, 47:32.34, 98:6)
<i>sawā'un 'alayhim a-andhartahum am lam tundhirhum lā yu'minūn</i>	1 (Q 36:10)	–	1 (Q 2:6)
<i>khatama + 'alā + qalb</i>	–	3 (Q 6:46, 42:24, 45:23)	1 (Q 2:7)
<i>khatama + 'alā + sam'</i>	–	1 (Q 45:23)	1 (Q 2:7)
<i>'alā + bašr + ghishāwa</i>	–	1 (Q 45:23)	1 (Q 2:7)
<i>wa-lahum 'adhābun 'azīm</i>	–	1 (Q 45:10)	4 (Q 2:7, 3:176, 16:106, ¹⁸ 24:23)
Total occurrences	9	29	46

Table 2: The diachronic scatter of the lexicon of Q 2:1–7.

¹⁸ Although Q 16 is normally considered to be a Meccan surah, I am here following Angelika Neuwirth's suggestion that vv. 106–109, among other passages within Q 16, constitute Medinan insertions into a Meccan sura. See Angelika Neuwirth, *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 301. For a corroboration of the Medinan provenance of a number of the verses of Q 16 (though not specifically of v. 106), see Sinai, *Qur'an*, 126–127 and 134–135, n. 49 and n. 50.

The findings of this small scale, hand-crafted analysis would seem to support Bannister's basic discovery. The lexical or theological constructs and phrases of Q 2:1–7 occur a total of 46/84 times in Medinan suras (55%), 29/84 times in late Meccan suras (35%), 9/84 times in middle Meccan suras (11%), and not at all in any of the early Meccan suras (0%).¹⁹ The overall Meccan/Medinan split (38 occurrences vs 46 occurrences, 45% vs 55%) is not as pronounced here as in the conclusions to Bannister's study, however, and it is crucial to note that Bannister's hypothesis that there is some sort of lexical rupture between two stylistic sides of a corpus is not evidenced here.²⁰ What appears in its place is the suggestion of a steady drift in lexical usage from middle Meccan through late Meccan to Medinan.

Another important observation is the degree to which the Medinan-specific language here exposed far outstrips the single reference to *alladhīna fī qulūbihim maraḍ* in Q 2:10 taken by Sinai as a direct indication that, if the opening of al-Baqara were indeed to contain earlier material, this material must have been reworked. Indeed, the widespread presence of Medinan-specific expressions (thus *alladhīna yuqīmūna l-ṣalāta wa-mimmā razaqnāhum yunfiqūn* in Q 2:3 and *alladhīna yu'minūna bi-mā unzila ilayka wa-mā unzila min qablīka* in 2:4) and Medinan-heavy expressions (thus the precise phrases *ulā'ika humu l-muflihūn* in Q 2:5, *inna lladhīna kafarū* at 2:6, and *wa-lahum 'adhābun 'aẓīm* at 2:7), are not suggestive, in my view, of the re-population of a Meccan framework with Medinan themes, but of a Medinan composition along quasi-formulaic lines. In spite of the high degree of lexical overlap between the openings of Q 27, 31, and 2, the language of Q 2:1–7 is predominantly Medinan in flavour. This questions the extent to which mean verse length can reliably be employed as a criterion for ascertaining the original provenance of

¹⁹ In the final pages of his volume, Bannister suggests, as one among a number of possible questions for future scholars, breaking the corpus down into additional developmental stages. The emphasis of his own volume, however, is on exploring the evidence for, and the possible rationale behind, a Meccan/Medinan divide. See, e.g., Bannister, *Oral-Formulaic Study*, 144–146 and *passim*.

²⁰ Bannister concludes that “a computerized analysis of the Qur'an's use of formulaic diction demonstrates that one can at the very least divide the qur'anic suras quite neatly into two groups based on their use of formulaic language.” See Bannister, *Oral-Formulaic Study*, 145; cf. Klar, “Review Article”, 108–109.

verses currently situated in Medinan suras.²¹ I would also propose that the two categories of “Meccan” or “Medinan” language, and “Meccan” or “Medinan” structures, be utilised with some caution. While there is evidence of a definite lexical and stylistic drift across the trajectory of the Qur’an’s development, both sides of the corpus are at the same time categorised by a striking lack of homogeneity. The example of the opening verses of Q 2 demonstrate that the Qur’an could, and apparently did, utilise Meccan language and structures for Medinan purposes, and this rhetorical feature can blur the precision of any chronological lines we might try to draw between the Meccan and the Medinan sides of the corpus.

Another interesting phenomenon is evident, moreover, in the repetition of opening and closing phrases throughout the first 39 verses of al-Baqara. These would appear to connect the initial verses of the sura to a wider literary fabric that extends as far as the end of the sura’s introduction. The repeated opening and closing phrases in the first 39 verses of al-Baqara have been listed in Table 3 below.

²¹ Note Sadeghi’s insistence that such statistical methods are only reliable if applied to large expanses of text. Thus, e.g., Sadeghi, “Chronology”, 237, 284, and the discussion on 286–287. See also Klar, “Text-Critical Approaches. Part Two”, 77–79.

Q 2:1–39	Link created by
v. 3 v. 4	<i>alladhīna yu`minūna bi-...</i> <i>wa-lladhīna yu`minūna bi-...</i>
v. 5 v. 16	<i>ulā`ika ...</i> <i>ulā`ika ...</i>
v. 5 v. 27 v. 39	<i>... ulā`ika humu l-muflīhūn</i> <i>... ulā`ika humu l-khāsirūn</i> <i>... ulā`ika aṣḥābu l-nāri hum fihā khālidūn</i>
v. 6 v. 39	<i>inna lladhīna kafarū ...</i> <i>wa-lladhīna kafarū ...</i>
v. 7 v. 10	<i>... wa-lahum `adhābun `aẓīm</i> <i>... wa-lahum `adhābun alīmun bi-mā kānū yakdhibūn</i>
v. 8 v. 9	<i>... wa-mā hum bi-mu`minīn</i> <i>... wa-mā yash`urūn</i>
v. 11 v. 13 v. 14	<i>wa-idhā qāla lahum ...</i> <i>wa-idhā qāla lahum ...</i> <i>wa-idhā ...</i>
v. 12 v. 13	<i>a-lā innahum humu l-muṣṣidūna wa-lākin lā yash`urūn</i> <i>... a-lā innahum humu l-sufahā`u wa-lākin lā ya`lamūn</i>
v. 20 v. 29	<i>... inna llāha `alā kulli shay`in qadīr</i> <i>... wa-huwa bi-kulli shay`in `alīm</i>
v. 21 v. 29	<i>... rabbakumu lladhī khalaqakum ...</i> <i>huwa lladhī khalaqa lakum ...</i>
v. 23 v. 31	<i>... in kuntum ṣādiqīn</i> <i>... in kuntum ṣādiqīn</i>
v. 25 v. 39	<i>... hum fihā khālidūn</i> <i>... hum fihā khālidūn</i>
v. 30 v. 34 v. 35 (v. 36 v. 38)	<i>wa-idh qāla ...</i> <i>wa-idh qulnā ...</i> <i>wa-qulnā ...</i> <i>... wa-qulnā ...)</i> <i>qulnā ...</i>

Table 3: Verse-initial and verse-final repetitions in Q 2:1–39.

Some of the verse-initial and verse-final repetitions listed in Table 3 are best described as section-unifying repetitions. The serial repeated openers *alladhīna yu`minūna bi-...* and *wa-lladhīna yu`minūna bi-...* in vv. 3 and 4, for example, are parallel statements of the type identified

by scholars such as Robinson as indicative of incipient closure.²² The repeated *wa-idhā* openers of vv. 11, 13, and 14, meanwhile, like the repeated *wa-idh qulnā* / *wa-qulnā* / *qulnā* openers of vv. 30, 34, 35, and 38 (and cf. the verse-medial occurrence in v. 36), reflect a wider tendency for discrete sections of Qur'anic discourse to feature openers that recur at sporadic intervals.²³ The repetition of the rhetorical structure of v. 12 (*a-lā innahum humu l-mufsidūna wa-lākin lā yash'urūn*) in the closer of v. 13 (*a-lā innahum humu l-sufahā'u wa-lākin lā ya'lamūn*) provides further coherence to the text block Q 2:8–16; a similar statement can be made about the serial repeated closers *wa-mā hum bi-mu'minīn* and *wa-mā yash'urūn* in vv. 8 and 9.

Other repetitions, however, would appear to serve a punctuatory function. The *ulā'ikas* of vv. 5, 16, 27, and 39, for instance, mark the borders of the text units Q 2:1–5, 8–16, 26–27, and 1–39. The verse-initial references to the disbelievers in vv. 6 and 39 (first *inna lladhīna kafarū* and then *wa-lladhīna kafarū*) occur as the final statements of the text groups comprised of vv. 1–7 and vv. 1–39. The recurrence of the closing formula *wa-lahum 'adhābun 'azīm* (v. 7) in v. 10's *wa-lahum 'adhābun alīmun bi-mā kānū yakdhibūn* anticipates the presence of a major caesura at the *wa-mina l-nāsi man* formula that occurs at vv. 7/8,²⁴ while a minor structural border within the text block Q 2:8–16 is created by the shift to the *wa-idhā qīla lahum* formula at vv. 10/11. The termination of the text unit vv. 8–20 is marked by the closing phrase *inna llāha 'alā kulli shay'in*

²² See the discussion in Klar, “Text-Critical Approaches. Part I”, 13 and the further references provided on p. 32, n. 33. For an example of repeated closers, see the example of Q 5:106 (*innā idhan la-mina l-āthimīn*) and Q 5:107 (*innā idhan la-mina l-ẓālimīn*), as adduced by Neal Robinson, “Hands Outstretched: Towards a Re-reading of Sūrat al-Mā'ida”, *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2001): 6. For an example of repeated openers see the example of Q 18:109 (*qul ...*) and 110 (*qul ...*), as cited in Marianna Klar, “Re-examining Textual Boundaries: Towards a Form-Critical Sūrat al-Kahf”, in *Islamic Studies Today: Essays in Honor of Andrew Rippin*, ed. Majid Daneshgar and Walid A. Saleh (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 235.

²³ This has previously been illustrated by Robinson with reference to the frequent recurrence of the phrase *mā unzila* throughout vv. 59–68 of Sūrat al-Mā'ida (Q 5). See Robinson, “Hands Outstretched”, 6. See also Mathias Zahniser's discussion of the opening formula *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* throughout Sūrat Āl 'Imrān (Q 3): A. H. Mathias Zahniser, “Major Transitions and Thematic Borders in Two Long Sūras: *al-Baqara* and *al-Nisā*”, in *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'ān*, ed. Issa J. Boullata (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 30 and 34.

²⁴ As will become clear below, this phrase is frequently utilised as a Qur'anic paragraph opener.

qadīr; a very similar *khātima* occurs at the end of the text unit vv. 21–29, which closes *wa-huwa bi-kulli shay’in ‘alīm*. The description of paradise as eternal in v. 25 (*hum fihā khālidūn*) anticipates a thematic shift to a discussion of God’s parables at vv. 25/26, along with a concurrent pronominal shift from the second person singular/plural to the third person singular/plural. The description of the sojourn in the fire as eternal in v. 39 (*hum fihā khālidūn*) marks the end of al-Baqara’s introduction. On the basis of these repetitions, paragraphs and sub-paragraphs (or sections) can be proposed in Q 2:1–39 as follows (Table 4).

Paragraph (§)	Section	Verses	Opens	Closes
1	I	v. 1	(<i>alif..</i>)	(... <i>mīm</i>)
	II	vv. 2–5	(<i>dhālika l-kitābu ...</i>)	<i>ulā’ika ... wa-ulā’ika humu l-muflihūn</i>
	III	vv. 6–7	<i>inna lladhīna kafarū ...</i>	... <i>wa-lahum ‘adhābun ‘azīm</i>
2	IV	vv. 8–16	<i>wa-mīna l-nāsi man ...</i>	<i>ulā’ika ...</i>
	V	vv. 17–20	(<i>mathaluhum kamathali lladhī ...</i>)	... <i>inna llāha ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr</i>
3	VI	vv. 21–25	<i>yā-ayyuhā l-nāsu ...</i>	... <i>wa-hum fihā khālidūn</i>
	VII	vv. 26–27	(<i>inna llāha ...</i>)	... <i>ulā’ika humu l-khāsirūn</i>
	VIII	vv. 28–29	(<i>kayfa takfurūna ...</i>)	... <i>wa-huwa bi-kulli shay’in ‘alīm</i>
4	IX	vv. 30–33	<i>wa-idh ...</i>	(... <i>wa-mā kuntum taktumūn</i>)
	X	vv. 34–38	<i>wa-idh ...</i>	(... <i>wa-lā hum yaḥzanūn</i>)
	XI	v. 39	<i>wa-lladhīna kafarū ...</i>	... <i>ulā’ika ... hum fihā khālidūn</i>

Table 4: Paragraphs and sub-paragraphs (sections) in Q 2:1–39.²⁵

The nature and the degree of what appears to be precise, structurally-informed repetition in the opening verses of Sūrat al-Baqara is remarkable.²⁶ Despite the presence of, for example, two

²⁵ Repeated phrases are presented in Table 4 and all subsequent tables without parentheses. Material presented in parentheses is not repeated elsewhere within the passage or sura in question.

²⁶ Robinson, “Hands Outstretched”, 7–8, discusses the structuring force of what may be a related rhetorical technique: the utilisation of “parallel introductions”, which Robinson describes as a device that “involves effecting a transition by employing roughly parallel statements at the beginning of two consecutive

la'allakum closers and four verses that terminate *wa-hum/fa-hum lā ...* in Sūrat al-Naml,²⁷ or the many *inna llāha ...* closers of Sūrat Luqmān,²⁸ a similar feature is not in evidence in either Q 27 or Q 31. Repeated openers and closers are not spaced across the openings or the bodies of these suras such as to provide added emphasis to discernible thematic shifts.

A similar phenomenon is, however, noticeable in the opening 32 verses of Sūrat Āl 'Imrān. The repeated phrases that unify the sura's introduction include *lā ilāha illā huwa*, which occurs at v. 2, and is extended to *lā ilāha illā huwa l-'azīzu l-ḥakīm* in vv. 6 and 18. The grammatical structure *ulū l-albāb* of v. 7 is echoed in the *li-ulī l-abṣār* of v. 13, and in the *wa-ulū l-'ilm* of v. 18. The structural unit that is thereby created (Q 3:2–18) is then extended by the repetition in v. 20 of the closer to v. 15, *wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-'ibād*, a phrase that is furthermore echoed in v. 30's *wa-llāhu ra'ūfun bi-l-'ibād*. These are the only three occurrences of this *bi-l-'ibād* structure in the sura, and the expression *wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-'ibād* is in fact unique to Q 3. The precise formulation *lā ilāha illā huwa l-'azīzu l-ḥakīm* in vv. 6 and 18 is also attested only in the opening verses of Q 3, and the same can be said of the expression *yawmun lā rayba fihi*, which occurs both in v. 9 and in v. 25, while being absent from the rest of the Qur'anic corpus.²⁹ The fact of these unusual phrases occurring in such relatively close sequence at the beginning of Q 3 cannot be coincidental; the most likely explanation is that there is in Q 3:1–32 a deliberate compositional technique at play.

sections." See Robinson, "Hands Outstretched", 8. As Robinson observes, this device was previously identified with reference to the New Testament by the American Biblical scholar, G. H. Guthrie. For G. H. Guthrie and his work, see Robinson's n. 12 on p. 18.

²⁷ For *la'allakum ...* see Q 27:7 and 27:46; for *wa-hum/fa-hum lā ...* see Q 27:18, 24, 50, 85.

²⁸ See Q 31:12, 16, 18, 23, 26, 27, 28, 34, and cf. also the opening of v. 34.

²⁹ It should, however, be pointed out that there are three attestations of the expression *yawmu l-qiyāmati lā rayba fihi* (Q 4:87, 6:12, and 45:26) and a further occurrence of the expression *yawmu l-jam'i lā rayba fihi* (42:7). The concept is not unique to Q 3, it is merely the precise wording here that is distinctive.

Q 31–32	Link created by
v. 2 v. 6 v. 18	... <i>lā ilāha illā huwa l-ḥayyu l-qayyūm</i> ... <i>lā ilāha illā huwa l-‘azīzu l-ḥakīm</i> ... <i>lā ilāha illā huwa ... lā ilāha illā huwa l-‘azīzu l-ḥakīm</i>
v. 4 ³⁰ v. 5	<i>inna ...</i> <i>inna ...</i>
v. 4 v. 10 (v. 12 (v. 19 v. 21	<i>inna lladhīna kafarū bi-āyāti llāhi ...</i> <i>inna lladhīna kafarū ...</i> <i>qul li-lladhīna kafarū ...)</i> <i>... wa-man yakfur bi-āyāti llāhi ...)</i> <i>inna lladhīna yakfurūna bi-āyāti llāhi ...</i>
v. 6 v. 7	<i>huwa lladhī ...</i> <i>huwa lladhī ...</i>
v. 7 v. 13 (v. 18	... <i>ulū l-albāb</i> ... <i>li-ulī l-abṣār</i> ... <i>wa-ulū l-‘ilm ...)</i>
v. 8 v. 9 (v. 16	<i>rabbanā</i> <i>rabbanā ...</i> ... <i>rabbanā ...)</i>
v. 12 v. 15 v. 26 v. 29 v. 31 v. 32	<i>qul ...</i> <i>qul ...</i> <i>qul ...</i> <i>qul ...</i> <i>qul ...</i> <i>qul ...</i>
v. 15 v. 20 v. 30	... <i>wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-‘ibād</i> ... <i>wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-‘ibād</i> ... <i>wa-llāhu ra’ūfun bi-l-‘ibād</i>
v. 19 v. 21	... <i>man yakfur bi-āyāti llāhi ...</i> <i>inna lladhīna yakfurūna bi-āyāti llāhi ...</i>
v. 26 v. 29	... <i>‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr</i> ... <i>‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr</i>

Table 5: Verse-initial and verse-final repetitions in Q 31–32.

As with the introduction to Q 2, some of the Q 3 repetitions would seem to unify, rather than to demarcate, sections of discourse. The repeated verse-initial *innas* of vv. 4 and 5, for instance, which are followed by the repeated verse-initial *huwa lladhīs* of vv. 6 and 7 and then by the repeated verse-initial *rabbanās* of vv. 8 and 9, could plausibly indicate incipient closure within

³⁰ Like many others before me, I am here following the Damascene verse division in placing a break after the word *al-furqān*. For a recent discussion of this position see, e.g., Sinai, *Qur’an*, 37, n. 43.

a wider text unit that runs from vv. 1–9. The repeated verse-initial *quls* of vv. 12, 15, 26, 29, 31, and 32 might serve to first anticipate and then consolidate the final section of the introduction, which could accordingly be argued to run from vv. 26–32. In ascertaining the paragraphs of Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān, however, the reader must navigate between three strong, overlapping indications of closure: the repeated *rabbānā/qul* statements in vv. 8–9 and vv. 31–32; the apparent presence of an *inclusio* around the phrase *lā ilāha illā huwa* spanning vv. 2–18; and the near-matched closers *wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-‘ibād* / *wa-llāhu ra‘ūfun bi-l-‘ibād* at vv. 15, 20, and 30. The repeated openers *inna lladhīna kafarū/yakfurūna (bi-āyāti llāh)* in vv. 4, 10, and 21 are also suggestive of the presence of paragraph breaks at these particular junctures, and the triple occurrence of the *ulū l-albāb* / *li-ulī l-abṣār* / *wa-ulū l-‘ilm* construct at vv. 7, 13, and 18 might also possess structural significance. The rhetorical flow of Q 3:1–32 is thus regularly punctuated by the presence of a repeated element suggesting cohesion, but also indicating the possibility of either opening or closure. As a consequence, the sense of inter-connection in Q 3:1–32 is very strong, but clear thematic paragraphs bordered by structural repetitions are not in evidence here. While the borders of the paragraphs in Q 2:1–39 were relatively easy to define purely on thematic grounds (Q 2:1–7 introduce the sura; Q 2:8–20 describe those who do not truly believe; Q 2:21–29 contrast the fate of the believers with that of the disbelievers; Q 2:30–39 tell the story of Adam), this is not the case for the paragraphs in Q 3:1–32.

The possibilities for the division of Q 3:1–32 demonstrate a degree of flexibility.³¹ There is more than one way of rationalising the text, especially if this is done along intuitive lines. Indeed,

³¹ In a Qur’an translation first published in the middle of the twentieth century, the Indian intellectual ‘Abdul Majīd Daryābādī (1892–1977) placed his section borders at Q 3:9/10.20/21.30/31. See ‘Abdul Majīd Daryābādī (trans.), *The Glorious Qur’an: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2001). Some ten years later, Rudi Paret divided Āl ‘Imrān at Q 3:9/10.13/14.17/18.22/23.25/26.27/28.29/30.30/31. See Rudi Paret (trans.), *Der Koran* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1979). In the twenty-first century, meanwhile, Muhammad Abdel Haleem suggested paragraph breaks at Q 3:1/2.9/10.13/14.17/18.20/21.25/26.27/28.32/33. See M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (trans.), *The Qur’an* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). It is especially worthy of note that both Abdel Haleem and Paret interpret Q 3:18 as the opener to a fresh paragraph, the repetition of *lā ilāha illā huwa* in vv. 2 and 18 apparently indicating, for these two scholars, parallel textual units. There would, however, appear to be a

initially there would seem to be a strong case for counting the sura's introduction as running solely from v. 1 to v. 18, where the inclusio created by the repetition of the formula *lā ilāha illā huwa* comes to a close; in a 1991 study, Zahniser proposed Q 3:1–18 as the first of the sura's subsections.³² The following verse, however, Q 3:19, has as its *khātima* the phrase *fa-inna llāha sarī'u l-ḥisāb*, which recurs at the very close of the sura, in its penultimate verse (Q 3:199), suggesting that v. 19 has some structural importance. The allusion to those who disbelieve in God's signs (*alladhīna kafarū / man yakfur / alladhīna yakfurūna*, all of which are followed by *bi-āyāti llāhi*), meanwhile, occurs at vv. 4, 19, and 21, with wider references to the disbelievers (*alladhīna kafarū / kāfiratun / al-kāfirīn*) in vv. 10, 12, 13, 28, and 32; the expression *yawmun lā rayba fīhi*, as previously mentioned, is present in v. 25 as well as v. 9; the closer *wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-'ibād* terminates vv. 15 and 20, with *wa-llāhu ra'ūfun bi-l-'ibād* at v. 30. Subsequent to the cessation of multiple repeated elements at v. 30, vv. 31 and 32 are then rhetorically connected by their matched *qul* openers; Q 3:33 (*inna llāha ṣṭafā ādama ...*) introduces a sizeable thematic section ("Jesus material") that runs to the close of v. 59. The closing words of v. 32 (*fa-inna llāha lā yuḥibbu l-kāfirīn*) mark the end of a heavy emphasis on the disbelievers (*al-kāfirīn*, cf. vv. 4, 10, 12, 13, 19, 21, 28, and 32), who do not recur again within the sura until v. 52, alluding to the disbelief (*al-kufr*) that was prevalent among Jesus's community. This root is not sufficiently commonplace in Āl 'Imrān for its eight introductory manifestations to be structurally or thematically insignificant.

A coherent introductory unit that runs from v. 1 to v. 32 therefore seems more plausible than a shorter unit running only to the close of the last *lā ilāha illā huwa* and *ulū l...* repeated elements in v. 18. Within this, Q 3:1–32 can be broken down into twelve component sections: v. 1, vv. 2–3, 4–5, 6–7, 8–9, 10–13, 14–18, 19–20, 21–25, 26–28, 29–30, and 31–32. Among these sections, there is a strong argument for the overall cohesion of vv. 1–9 (§ 1; see Table 6 below), which feature four references to God's "sending down" (*nazzala/anzala* at vv. 3 and 7) and two references to

strong counter-argument that Q 3:2.18 forms an inclusio, comparable on some level to the inclusio in Q 2:40.47.122 (*yā-banī isrā'īla dhkurū nī'matiya llatī an'amtu 'alaykum*) or the sura-encompassing inclusio of Q 61:2.10.14 (*yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū*). For further examples see "Text-Critical Approaches. Part Two", 87 and 102, n. 67.

³² See A. H. Mathias Zahniser, "The Word of God and the Apostleship of 'Isā: A Narrative Analysis of Āl 'Imrān (3) 33–62", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 37 (1991): 84–85.

God's "signs" (*āyāt* at vv. 4 and 7), and which transforms its description of *alladhīna fī qulūbihim zayghun* in v. 7 into a plea to *lā tuzigh qulūbanā* in v. 9.³³ There is similarly evidence for the thematic cohesion of vv. 10–20 (§ 2): vv. 10, 12, 13, and 19 are connected through four references to those who disbelieve (*kafarū/yakfur/kāfiratun*); the sins (*dhunūbihim*) of v. 11 are mirrored in the sins (*dhunūbanā*) of v. 16; and vv. 19 and 20 are united by four references to *islām*. The arguments for the lexical cohesion of vv. 21–32 (§ 3) are less robust, perhaps, but the repeated *qul* statements of vv. 26, 29, 31, and 32, along with the return to v. 25's discussion of *yawmin lā rayba fīhi* in v. 30's allusion to *yawma tajidu kullu nafsin mā 'amilat min khayrin*, create a degree of audible coherence.

³³ The same phenomenon was observed by Neal Robinson in his 2005 study of *Sūrat al-Mā'ida* and may be more prevalent in Medinan material than was hitherto acknowledged. See Neal Robinson, "Hands Outstretched: Towards a Re-reading of *Sūrat al-Mā'ida*", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2001), especially 8 and 10, where Robinson highlights, inter alia, the translation of Q 5:32's *fasādin fī l-arḍ* into Q 5:33's *fī l-arḍi fasādan*, while emphasising the mirror quality of Q 5:64: *wa-qālātī l-yahūdu yadu llāhi maghlulatun ghullat aydihim wa-lu'inū bi-mā qālū*. A recent publication termed such devices, occurring in Hebrews, 1 Corinthians, and a number of other Biblical texts, "microchiasms". See Timothy Milonovich, *Beyond What is Written: The Performative Structure of 1 Corinthians* (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 17, adducing John Paul Heil, *Worship in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011), see especially 7–8.

Paragraph (§)	Section	Verses	Opens	Closes
1	I	v. 1	(<i>alif...</i>)	(... <i>mīm</i>)
	II	vv. 2–3	<i>allāhu lā ilāha illā huwa l-ḥayyu l-qayyūm</i>	(... <i>wa-anzala l-furqān</i>)
	III	v. 4	<i>inna lladhīna kafarū bi-āyāti llāhi ...</i>	(... <i>wa-llāhu ‘azīzun dhū ntiqām</i>)
		v. 5	<i>inna llāha lā yakhfā ...</i>	(... <i>wa-lā fi l-samā’</i>)
	IV	v. 6	<i>huwa lladhī ...</i>	... <i>lā ilāha illā huwa l-‘azīzu l-ḥakīm</i>
v. 7		<i>huwa lladhī ...</i>	... <i>illā ulū l-albāb</i>	
V	v. 8	<i>rabbānā ...</i>	(... <i>innaka anta l-wahhāb</i>)	
	v. 9	<i>rabbānā ...</i>	... <i>li yawmin lā rayba fīhi inna llāha lā (yukhlifu l-mī‘ād)</i>	
2	VI	vv. 10–13	<i>inna lladhīna kafarū ...</i>	... <i>li-ulī l-abṣār</i>
	VII	vv. 14–15	(<i>zuyyina li-l-nāsi ...</i>)	... <i>wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-‘ibād</i>
		vv. 16–18	enjambéd with the preceding	... <i>wa-ulū l-‘ilmi ... lā ilāha illā huwa l-‘azīzu l-ḥakīm</i>
VIII	vv. 19 v. 20	(<i>inna l-dīna ‘inda llāhi ...</i>) (<i>fa-in ḥājjūka ...</i>)	... <i>fa-inna llāha sarī‘u l-ḥisāb</i> ... <i>wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-‘ibād</i>	
3	IX	vv. 21–25	<i>inna lladhīna yakfurūn ...</i>	... <i>li-yawmin lā rayba fīhi ...</i>
	X	v. 26	<i>qul ...</i>	... <i>innaka ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr</i>
		vv. 27–28	(<i>tūliju l-layla fi l-nahāri ...</i>)	(... <i>wa-ilā llāhi l-maṣīr</i>)
	XI	v. 29	<i>qul ...</i>	... <i>wa-llāhu ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr</i>
v. 30		(<i>yawma tajidu kullu nafsin ...</i>)	... <i>wa-llāhu ra’ūfun bi-l-‘ibād</i>	
XII	v. 31	<i>qul ...</i>	... <i>wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīm</i>	
	v. 32	<i>qul ...</i>	... <i>fa-inna llāha lā (yuḥibbu l-kāfirīn)</i>	

Table 6: Paragraphs and sub-paragraphs (sections) in Q 3:1–32.

The second of Āl ‘Imrān’s sections (§ 1.2, vv. 2–3), preceded by the disjointed letters *alif lām mīm* (§ 1.1, v. 1), contains the same *lā ilāha illā huwa* formula that closes the first verse of its fourth section (§ 1.4, vv. 6–7), and the last verse of its seventh section (§ 2.2, vv. 14–18). The third of its component sections (§ 1.3, vv. 4–5) then opens with a reference to those who do not believe in God’s signs, *inna lladhīna kafarū bi-āyāti llāhi*, a formula which reoccurs with minor variants at the

beginning of both Section VI (§ 2.1, vv. 10–13) and Section IX (§ 3.1, vv. 21–25). Indeed, allusions to the disbelievers unite Sections IV, VI, VIII, IX, X, and XII of the Introduction, making up the Introduction’s final words: *fa-inna llāha lā yuḥibbu l-kāfirīn*. There is, moreover, a small degree of echo between the opening of vv. 4 and 5 (*inna lladhīna* recurs as *inna llāha*), and further assonance is created when the declaration *inna llāha ...* returns as a closer to Sections V (*inna llāha lā yukhlifu l-mī‘ād*) and XII (*fa-inna llāha lā yuḥibbu l-kāfirīn*), and as a section-medial closer within Section VIII (*fa-inna llāha sarī‘u l-ḥisāb*, v. 19).

The fourth and fifth sections (§ 1.4, vv. 6–7; § 1.5, vv. 8–9) consist of two pairs of matched statements: *huwa lladhī* from v. 6 returns to open v. 7, while *rabbānā* from v. 8 returns to open v. 9. Section III further contains, as the *khātima* to v. 6, a recurrence of the closing clause of v. 2 (§ 1.2, vv. 2–3), anticipating the more complex structure of v. 18 (the final verse of § 2.2, vv. 14–18). The closing phrase of v. 7, meanwhile, introduces the first of the sura’s references to “those possessed of”, here *ulū l-albāb*, a grammatical construct that will close both the sixth (§ 2.1, vv. 10–13) and the seventh (§ 2.2, vv. 14–18) of the sura’s sections. The fifth section (§ 1.5, vv. 8–9), forming the last verse group in Āl ‘Imrān’s first paragraph, contains no repeated openers or closers to connect it to the wider fabric of the Introduction, but is clearly attached to the preceding material by the above-mentioned inversion *alladhīna fī qulūbihim zayghun | lā tuzigh qulūbanā* in vv. 7 and 9. The paragraph’s closing reference to *yawmin lā rayba fīhi* (v. 9) also anticipates the twin references to first *yawmin lā rayba fīhi* (v. 25) and then *yawma tajidu kullu nafsin mā ‘amilat min khayrin* (v. 30) in the Introduction’s third and final paragraph (vv. 21–32), while its *inna llāha* construct connects Section V to Sections III (*inna llāha lā yakhfā*, v. 5), VIII (*fa-inna llāha sarī‘u l-ḥisāb*, v. 19), and XII (*fa-inna llāha lā yuḥibbu l-kāfirīn*, v. 32).

Āl ‘Imrān’s second paragraph (vv. 10–20) is then formed of a further three of the Introduction’s component sections: Sections VI to VIII. Section VI opens with the same reference to *alladhīna kafarū* that opened Section III (§ 1.3, vv. 4–5), and anticipates the *alladhīna yakfurūna* that will open § 3 (vv. 21–32); that the disbelievers are a recurring theme within the Introduction is shown by their presence at vv. 4, 10, 12, 13, 19, 21, 28, and 32. Section VI then closes with the second of the sura’s references to those “possessed of”, here *li-ulī l-abṣār*, echoing the *ulū l-albāb* of v. 7 that closed Section IV, and anticipating the verse-medial *ulū l-‘ilmi* of v. 18 that will close Section VII. Indeed, the seventh section (§ 2.2, vv. 14–18) may have no distinguishing opener (the opening

statement, *zuyyina li-l-nāsi ḥubbu l-shahawāti*, does not recur elsewhere within the Introduction or, indeed, within the Qur’anic corpus), but this sub-paragraph closes with both the dual repetition of the *lā ilāha illā huwa* refrain of vv. 2 and 6, and with the *ulū l-‘ilm* that echoes the closing statements of § 1.4 (v. 7) and § 2.1 (v. 13). It also contains an occurrence in v. 15 of the formula *wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-‘ibād* that will be repeated in v. 20 (§ 2.3, vv. 19–20) and echoed in v. 30’s *wa-llāhu ra’ūfun bi-l-‘ibād* (§ 3.3, vv. 29–30). Āl ‘Imrān’s second paragraph then closes with Section VIII (vv. 19–20), a thematic cluster describing the state of submission or surrender to God (with four occurrences of the *s-l-m* root) that features two of the section’s recurring closers: *fa-inna llāha sarī‘u l-ḥisāb* at v. 19 (cf. § 1.3, § 1.5, and § 3.4) and *wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-‘ibād* at v. 20 (cf. § 2.2 and § 3.3).

Sections IX–XII of Āl ‘Imrān’s Introduction combine in order to form its third paragraph (vv. 21–32). Section IX opens with a reference to *alladhīna kafarū*, echoing the opening statement of Sections III and VI (vv. 4 and 10).³⁴ It then closes with an allusion to *yawmin lā rayba fīhi*, connecting Section IX with Section V (§ 1.5, vv. 8–9). Section X (§ 3.2, vv. 26–28) opens with a command to *qul* (cf. the opening to § 3.4 and § 3.5). Its opening verse, moreover, closes with the statement *innaka ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr*, anticipating the opening to Section XI (§ 3.3, vv. 29–30), whose initial verse then closes with the near-identical declaration *wa-llāhu ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr*. Section XI terminates with the closing formula *wa-llāhu ra’ūfun bi-l-‘ibād* (echoing the *wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-‘ibād* of § 2.2, v. 15, and § 2.3, v. 20), indicating the presence of a minor structural break between vv. 30 and 31. This impression is consolidated by the sense of structural coherence and closure that is created by the twin *qul* openers of vv. 31 and 32 (Section XII).³⁵ The final closer to

³⁴ This tendency for paragraph-medial statements to recur with increasing structural weight (v. 4 occurs in the middle of Āl ‘Imrān’s first paragraph, while vv. 10 and 21 mark the beginning of Āl ‘Imrān’s second and third paragraphs) reflects a pattern that was foreshadowed by the twin occurrence of the *wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-‘ibād* refrain, which occurs once in the middle of Āl ‘Imrān’s second paragraph (in v. 15), before bringing that paragraph to a close at the end of v. 20.

³⁵ Daryābādī’s apparent hypothesis that the second and third subsections of Āl ‘Imrān are sealed by the near-repetition, in vv. 20 and 30, of the closer *wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-l-‘ibād* in the phrase *wa-llāhu ra’ūfun bi-l-‘ibād* is not without merit, but there is no evident logic in the matched *rabbānā* openers of vv. 8 and 9 indicating closure (which he seems to concede), yet the matched *qul* openers of vv. 31 and 32 not

Section XII (*fa-inna llāha lā yuḥibbu l-kāfirīn* in v. 32) connects § 3.4 to prior iterations of the *inna llāha ...* formula in v. 5 (§ 1.3, vv. 4–5), v. 9 (§ 1.5, vv. 8–9), and v. 19 (§ 2.3, vv. 19–20).

Sūrat al-Baqara and Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān therefore exhibit a similar literary feature: the presence of introductory sections with strongly repetitive unifying and structuring elements. While the punctuatory purpose of the lexical and phraseological repetitions of Q 3:1–32 is less superficially transparent than those of Q 2:1–39, a careful analysis yields a number of short paragraphs, each somehow connected – by their opening, by internal elements, or by their close – to the paragraphs that precede or follow. Looking through the Medinan portion of the Qur’anic corpus, moreover, it can be observed that a number of the shorter suras that are taken to have been revealed post-hijra would appear to be structured in the same fashion: a number of interconnected paragraphs whose outset, termination, and central sections are marked by strategically placed lexical and phraseological repetitions. The main body of this article will look at these suras in more detail.

Paragraphing Medinan Suras (Q 48, 49, 57, 58, 60, 61, and 66)

Sūrat al-Faṭḥ (Q 48)

The first of the short Medinan suras to be analysed for the purposes of the present study is Sūrat al-Faṭḥ (Q 48). Its twenty-nine verses contain a high number of lexical echoes and repetitions. There is the suggestion of an encompassing inclusio in the reflection of the initial *innā fataḥnā laka faṭḥan mubīnā* in the closers first to v. 18 (*wa-athābahum faṭḥan qarībā*) and then to v. 27 (*dhālika faṭḥan qarībā*). The final words of the sura, meanwhile (*wa-ajran ‘aẓīmā*, v. 29), are a repetition of the closing words of v. 10 (*ajran ‘aẓīmā*) and reflect the verse-medial *ajran ḥasanān* of v. 16. The sura is similarly united by its references to the straight path (*ṣirāṭan mustaqīmā*; see vv. 2 and 20), to God’s reassurance (*al-sakīna*; vv. 4 and 18), and to imagery related to hands (see vv. 10, 20, and 24). Sūrat al-Faṭḥ is, at the same time, regularly punctuated by a series of *wa-kāna llāhu ...* closers (vv. 4, 7, 14, 19, 21, 24, and 26), which further contribute to its stylistic unity.

performing a similar function. Moreover, while vv. 31 and 32 might serve as an introduction to the next section of the sura on purely thematic grounds, it seems more convincing to posit the final *khātima* of this verse cluster (*fa-inna llāha lā yuḥibbu l-kāfirīn*) as sealing a dominant introductory *Leitwort* centring around the term *al-kāfirīn* (cf. Q 3:4.10.21.28.32).

Q 48	Link created by
v. 1 v. 18 v. 27	... <i>fathān mubīnā</i> ... <i>fathān qarībā</i> ... <i>fathān qarībā</i>
vv. 1–2 vv. 8–9	<i>innā ... li-...</i> <i>innā ... li-...</i>
v. 2 v. 11 v. 14 v. 29	<i>li-yaghfira laka llāhu ...</i> ... <i>fa-staghfir lanā ...</i> ... <i>yaghfiru li-man yashā'u ... wa-kāna llāhu ghafūran raḥīmā</i> ... <i>minhum maghfiratan wa-ajran 'aẓīmā</i>
v. 2 v. 20	... <i>wa-yahdiyaka širāṭan mustaqīmā</i> ... <i>wa-yahdiyakum širāṭan mustaqīmā</i>
v. 4 v. 24 v. 28	<i>huwa lladhī anzala ...</i> <i>wa-huwa lladhī kaffā ...</i> <i>huwa lladhī arsala ...</i>
v. 4 v. 18 v. 26	... <i>anzala l-sakīnata ...</i> ... <i>fa-anzala l-sakīnata ...</i> ... <i>fa-anzala llāhu sakīnatahu ...</i>
v. 4 v. 11 (v. 12 v. 12 v. 18 v. 26	... <i>fī qulūbi l-mu'minīna ...</i> ... <i>fī qulūbihim ...</i> (... <i>lan yanqaliba l-rasūlu wa-l-mu'minūna ...</i>) ... <i>fī qulūbikum ...</i> ... <i>fī qulūbihim ...</i> ... <i>fī qulūbihim ...</i>
v. 4 v. 7 (v. 11 v. 14	... <i>wa-li-llāhi junūdu l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi ...</i> <i>wa-li-llāhi junūdu l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi ...</i> (... <i>fa-man yamliku lakum mina llāhi shay'an ...</i>) <i>wa-li-llāhi mulku l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi ...</i>
v. 4 v. 7 v. 14 v. 19 v. 21 v. 24 v. 26	... <i>wa-kāna llāhu 'alīman ḥakīmā</i> ... <i>wa-kāna llāhu 'azīzan ḥakīmā</i> ... <i>wa-kāna llāhu ghafūran raḥīmā</i> ... <i>wa-kāna llāhu 'azīzan ḥakīmā</i> ... <i>wa-kāna llāhu 'alā kulli shay'in qadīrā</i> ... <i>wa-kāna llāhu bi-mā ta'malūna baṣīrā</i> ... <i>wa-kāna llāhu bi-kulli shay'in 'alīmā</i>
v. 5 v. 17 v. 25	<i>li-yudkhila l-mu'minīna wa-l-mu'mināti jannātin ...</i> ... <i>yudkhilhu jannātin ...</i> ... <i>li-yudkhila llāhu fī raḥmatihī man yashā'u ...</i>
v. 5 v. 17 (v. 18	... <i>jannātin tajrī min taḥtihā l-anhāru ...</i> ... <i>jannātin tajrī min taḥtihā l-anhāru ...</i> (... <i>idh yubāyi'unaka taḥta l-shajarati ...</i>)
(v. 5 v. 6	... <i>wa-yukaffira 'anhum sayyi'ātihim ...</i> ... <i>l-ẓānnīna bi-llāhi ẓanna l-saw'i ('alayhim dā'iratu l-saw'i ... wa-sā'at maṣīrā)</i>

v. 12	... wa-ḡanantum ḡanna l-saw'i ...
v. 10	inna lladhīna yubāyi'ūnaka innamā yubāyi'ūna llāha ...
v. 18	... idh yubāyi'ūnaka ...
(v. 10)	... yadu llāhi fawqa aydīhim ...)
v. 20	... wa-kaffa aydiya l-nāsi 'ankum ...
v. 24	wa-huwa lladhī kaffa aydiyahum 'ankum wa-aydiyakum 'anhum ...
v. 10	... fa-sa-yu'tihi ajran 'azīmā
v. 16	... yu'tikumū llāhu ajran ḡasanān ...
v. 29	... minhum magḡfiratan wa-ajran 'azīmā
v. 11	sa-yaqūlu laka l-mukhallafūna mina l-a'rābi ... qul ... bal ... bal ...
v. 15	sa-yaqūlu l-mukhallafūna ... qul ... fa-sa-yaqūlūna bal ... bal ...
v. 16	qul li-l-mukhallafīna mina l-a'rābi ...
v. 14	... man yashā'u ... man yashā'u ...
v. 25	... man yashā'u ...
(v. 27)	... in shā'a llāhu ...)
v. 15	... ilā magḡānima li-ta'khudhūhā ...
v. 19	wa-magḡānima kathīratan ya'khudhūnahā ...
v. 20	... magḡānima kathīratan ta'khudhūnahā ...
v. 16	... yu'adhḡhibkum 'adhāban alīmā
v. 17	... yu'adhḡhibhu 'adhāban alīmā
v. 18	la-qad raḡiya llāhu ...
v. 27	la-qad ṡadaqa llāhu ...
v. 20	wa'adākumu llāhu ...
v. 29	... wa'ada llāhu ...

Table 7: The unifying elements of Q 48.

In a way that is reminiscent of the opening verses of Q 3, Sūrat al-Fatḡ breaks into lexically and thematically defined sections whose overlapping repetitions do not immediately suggest the possibility of further clustering into overarching paragraphs. If the sura is analysed section by section, it can be seen that Section I (vv. 1–3) contains the first of the sura's *innā ... li...* declarations (for the second, see vv. 8–9), and the first of its references to victory (*fataḡnā/fatḡan*; see vv. 1, 18, and 27). Two short, paronomastic statements (*innā fataḡnā laka fatḡan mubīnā*, v. 1, and *wa-yanṡuraka llāhu naṡran 'azīzā*, v. 3) can be argued to mark the extremities of this unit and to indicate its status as a discrete section of the sura.

Section II (vv. 4–7) then opens with the first of the sura's *huwa lladhī* openers (see vv. 4, 24, and 28), and the first of its references to the *sakīna* bestowed upon the believers by God (see vv. 4, 18, and 26). The section is bordered by two references to God's ownership of "the hosts of the heavens and the earth" (*wa-li-llāhi junūdu l-samāwāti wa-l-arḡdi*) in vv. 4 and 7 (cf. v. 14) and by

harmonising closers (*wa-kāna llāhu ‘alīman ḥakīmā* and *wa-kāna llāhu ‘azīzan ḥakīmā*) to these same two verses (cf. vv. 14, 19, 21, 24, and 26). The preponderance of the term “evil” (*sayyi’ātihim / ḡanna l-saw’i / dā’iratu l-saw’i / sā’at maṣīrā*) in this section (see vv. 5 and 6; cf. the recurrence of *ḡanna l-saw’i* in v. 12) suggests a degree of thematic unity to its central verses. It should nonetheless be noted that Sūrat al-Faḥ as a whole is distinguished by a high occurrence of repeated terms and phrases. For clarity, the most common of these have been tabulated in Table 8 below. With reference to Section II, note the return of v. 5’s concept of God’s causing His chosen ones to “enter” His rewards (*li-yudkhila l-mu’minīna wa-l-mu’mināti jannātin*) in vv. 17 (*yudkhilhu jannātin*) and 25 (*li-yudkhila llāhu fī raḥmatihī man yashā’u*). The same verb is used to describe the promised entry into the Sacred Mosque in v. 27: *la-tadkhulunna l-masjida l-ḥarāma*. The *d-kh-l* root thus connects Sections II, VI, VIII, and IX of the sura. Similarly, it should be observed that the sura twice, and in identical terms, makes reference to the gardens that await the believers (*jannātin tajrī min taḥtihā l-anhāru*; vv. 5 and 17), thereby forging a further connection between Sections II and VI. Other links are catalogued in Table 8 below.

Recurring term, phrase, or root	Occurs in verses belong to section ...									
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
<i>fath</i>	1.1						18		27	
<i>gh-f-r</i>	2			11. 14.14						29
<i>h-d-y</i>	2						20			28
<i>ṣirāṭ mustaqīm</i>	2						20			
<i>n-ṣ-r</i>	3.3						22			
<i>al-sakīna</i>		4					18	26		
<i>q-l-b</i>		4		11. 12.12			18	26		
<i>al-samāwāt wa-l- arḍ</i>		4.7		14						
<i>d-kh-l</i>		5				17		25	27	
<i>jannāt tajrī min taḥtiḥā l-anhār</i>		5				17				
<i>s-w-ʾ</i>		5. 6.6.6		12						
<i>ʿdh-b</i>		6		14		16.161 7.17		25.25		
<i>yubāyīʿūna</i>			10.10				18			
<i>yad</i>			10.10				20	24.24		
<i>ajr</i>			10			16				29
<i>al-mukhallafūna</i>				11	15	16				
<i>m-l-k</i>				11.14						
<i>man yashāʾ</i>				14.14				25	(27)	
<i>maghānim</i>					15		19.20			
<i>waʿada</i>							20			29
<i>al-masjid al- ḥarām</i>								25	27	

Table 8: The recurring vocabulary of Q 48.

Section III (vv. 8–10) of Sūrat al-Fath opens with the second of the sura's *innā ... li...* declarations (for the first, see vv. 1–2). There is, therefore, an argument for positing that the caesura between Sections II and III amounts to a major section break, demarcating the inception of a fresh paragraph. As is evident in Table 8, above, the recurring vocabulary of Section III looks

forward to the rest of the sura rather than backwards to the sections that preceded it. Section III's reference to swearing allegiance (*inna lladhīna yubāyi'ūnaka innamā yubāyi'ūna llāha*, v. 10), for instance, returns in v. 18 (*idh yubāyi'ūnaka tahta l-shajarati*; note also the use of *taht* in this phrase so close to the *min tahtihā* of the preceding description of paradise). The use of imagery related to hands (*yadu llāhi fawqa aydihim*, v. 10), too, returns in v. 24 (*wa-huwa lladhī kaffa aydiyahum 'ankum wa-aydiyakum 'anhum*). The section closer (*fa-sa-yu'tīhi ajran 'azīmā*, v. 10), meanwhile, is reflected in the middle of v. 16 (*yu'tikum llāhu ajran ḥasanan*), and in the final words of the sura (*wa'ada llāhu lladhīna āmanū wa-'amilū l-ṣāliḥāti minhum maghfiratan wa-ajran 'azīmā*, v. 29). This strengthens the argument for proposing Section III as the opening section of § 2.

Section IV (vv. 11–14) introduces particulars to do with “those who were left behind” (*al-mukhallafūna*), a subject that continues into Sections V and VI. The second and third of the sura's references to God's forgiveness, meanwhile (*fa-staghfir lanā* in v. 11; *yaghfiru li-man yashā'u* in v. 14; cf. vv. 2 and 29), form a terminological inclusio around Section IV. Section IV then closes with the phrase *wa-kāna llāhu ghafūran raḥīmā* (v. 14), recalling the closers of vv. 4 and 7, and anticipating the closers of vv. 21, 24, and 26. That Sections V (v. 15) and VI (vv. 16–17) are both lexically and thematically connected to the preceding section is made clear by their reference to the *mukhallafūn* of Section IV. Indeed, the phrase *al-mukhallafūna mina l-a'rābi* that opens Section IV (see v. 11) is repeated verbatim in the first verse of Section VI (see v. 16). The “wage” (*ajr*) that closes Section III (see v. 10) similarly recurs mid-verse (and mid-section) in Section VI (see v. 16), anticipating the third occurrence of this concept at the very close of the sura (see v. 29). The final two verses of Section VI, meanwhile, display near-parallel closers: *yu'adhdhibkum 'adhāban alīmā* (v. 16) and *yu'adhdhibhu 'adhāban alīmā* (v. 17). This adds coherence to this section of the sura (cf. the parallel closers of Q 2:8.9), but also suggests the possibility of closure (cf. the parallel closers of Q 57:26.27). Incipient closure is similarly intimated by the thrice repeated grammatical structure of the opening of v. 17 (*laysa 'alā l-a'mā ḥarajun wa-lā 'alā l-a'raji ḥarajun wa-lā 'alā l-marīḍi ḥarajun*) and by the positive/negative contrast of its close (*wa-man yuṭi'i llāha wa-rasūlahu yudkhillhu jannātin tajrī min tahtihā l-anhāru wa-man yatawalla yu'adhdhibhu 'adhāban alīmā*). The cognate paronomasia of v. 17 (*yu'adhdhibhu 'adhāban*), like the cognate paronomasia of vv. 1 and 3, might be worthy of further note.

Section VII (vv. 18–23) is distinguished by the introduction of a new pattern of repeated openers within Sūrat al-Faṭḥ: the phrase *la-qad raḍiya llāhu* that opens v. 18 anticipates the *la-qad ṣadaqa llāhu* opener of v. 27. Section VII is also characterised by a shift in focus away from those who were left behind and towards the believers. The subject of the spoils of battle (*maghānim*), a term that was alluded to in passing in Section V (see v. 15), occurs twice in Section VII (at vv. 19 and 20). The spoils are here collocated with other charged terms from earlier in the sura: the *bay‘a* (v. 18; cf. v. 10), the *sakīna* (v. 18; cf. v. 4), the *fath* (v. 18; cf. v. 1), the mention of guidance (*wa-yahdiyakum*, v. 20; cf. *wa-yahdiyaka*, v. 2), and the *ṣirāṭ mustaqīm* (v. 20; cf. v. 2). That the disbelievers will find no protector nor helper (*lā yajidūna waliyyan wa-lā naṣirā*, v. 22) is potentially significant: this is the only occurrence of the *n-ṣ-r* root in the sura outside of the declaration *wa-yanṣuraka llāhu naṣran ‘azīzā* in v. 3. Some of these terms will, moreover, recur in the closing verses of the sura: Section X refers again to God’s guidance (*huwa lladhī arsala rasūlahu bi-l-hudā*), His forgiveness (*maghfira*), and His reward (*ajr*). God’s promise of spoils (*wa‘adaku llāhu maghānima kathīratan*, v. 20) in Section VII is, meanwhile, a lexical precursor to the broader promise made in the final words of the sura (*wa‘ada llāhu lladhīna āmanū wa-‘amilū l-ṣāliḥāti minhum maghfiratan wa-ajran ‘aẓīmā*, v. 29). Although there is no repeated closer marking the end of the section in v. 23, that verse in itself exhibits repetition in its twin references to *sunnat allāh*.

Section VIII (vv. 24–26) is both thematically and lexically connected to Section VII: it continues the sura’s discussion of battle reminiscences, repeating (and expanding) the image of God’s control over the hands of the combatants (*wa-kaffa aydiya l-nāsi ‘ankum*, v. 20, returns as *wa-huwa lladhī kaffa aydiyahum ‘ankum wa-aydiyakum ‘anhum* in v. 24). The *sakīna* of v. 18, moreover, recurs in v. 26. Three things nonetheless mark vv. 24–26 of Sūrat al-Faṭḥ as a discrete section. First, its borders, like the borders of Section II, are marked by a terminological inclusio: the closer to v. 24 (*wa-kāna llāhu bi-mā ta‘malūna baṣīrā*) is echoed in the closer to v. 26 (*wa-kāna llāhu bi-kulli shay’in ‘alīmā*). Second, it opens *wa-huwa lladhī*, echoing the opening of Section II (see v. 4). Third, it introduces the first of the sura’s references to the Sacred Mosque (*al-masjid al-ḥarām*, see v. 25), a subject that will continue in Section IX.

The transformation of the Section VII formula *la-qad raḍiya llāhu* (v. 18) in the opener to Section IX (*la-qad ṣadaqa llāhu*, v. 27) marks the onset of both a new section and a new paragraph

within Q 48 (see Table 9 below). Although the designation of minor and major caesura within this essay will remain to some degree tentative, the caesura between § 3 and § 4, like the caesura between § 1 and § 2, is characterised by two clear textual features. Both are marked by the repetition of a distinctive opening formula: the *innā ... li ...* that open §§ 1 and 2 is here replaced by the opening *la-qad raḍiya/ṣadaqa llāhu* in §§ 3 and 4. Both are similarly categorised by the presence of a terminological inclusio at the point at which a major caesura is being posited: the *wa-li-llāhi junūdu l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi wa-kāna llāhu ‘alīman/‘azīzan ḥakīmā* of vv. 4 and 7 becomes *wa-kāna llāhu bi-mā ta‘malūna baṣīrā / bi-kulli shay’in ‘alīmā* in vv. 24 and 26. Section IX contains the second of the sura’s references to the Sacred Mosque (*al-masjid al-ḥarām*, see v. 27), bringing the problem alluded to in v. 25 to a satisfactory resolution. It closes, meanwhile, with the third and last of the sura’s references to the recent victory, here presented in identical lexical terms to the reference in v. 18 (*fathān qarībā*) but in a clear echo of the opening verse of the sura: *innā fataḥnā laka fathān mubīnā*. The terminological links between Sections I, VII, VIII, and IX are abundantly clear.

Section X (vv. 28–29), like Section II before it, opens *huwa lladhī*. Its closer, *ajran ‘azīmā*, echoes the closer of Section III. In addition to its mention of the reward (*ajr*, cf. vv. 10 and 16), it contains references to God’s guidance (*al-hudā*, cf. vv. 2 and 20), to God’s promise (*wa‘ada llāhu*, cf. v. 20), and to God’s forgiveness (*maghfira*, cf. 2, 11, and 14). Section X thus brings together the structural features of Sections II and III, along with the themes raised in Sections I, IV, and VII. The posited structure of three paragraphs (vv. 1–7, 8–17, and 18–29) that further subdivide into ten sections (vv. 1–3 and 4–7; 8–10, 11–14, 15, and 16–17; 18–23, 24–26, 27, and 28–29) distributes the lexical and structural repetitions of Sūrat al-Faḥ such that they fall into a discernible and logically justifiable order.

Paragraph (§)	Section	Verses	Opens	Closes
1	I	vv. 1–3	<i>innā fataḥnā laka fathān mubīnā li...</i>	<i>(wa-yanṣuraka llāhu naṣran ‘azīzā)</i>
	II	vv. 4–7	<i>huwa lladhī anzala ... wa-li-llāhi junūdu l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi wa-kāna llāhu ‘alīman ḥakīmā</i>	<i>wa-li-llāhi junūdu l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi wa-kāna llāhu ‘azīzan ḥakīmā</i>

2	III	vv. 8–10	<i>innā ... li-...</i>	<i>... fa-sayu'tihi ajran 'aẓīmā</i>
	IV	vv. 11–14	<i>sa-yaqūlu laka l- mukhallafūna mina l-a'rābi ... qul ... bal ... bal ...</i>	<i>... wa-kāna llāhu ghafūran raḥīmā</i>
	V	v. 15	<i>sa-yaqūlu l-mukhallafūna ... qul ... bal ... bal ...</i>	<i>(... bal kānū lā yafqahūna illā qalilā)</i>
	VI	vv. 16–17	<i>qul li-l-mukhallafīna ...</i>	<i>... yu'adhdhibkum 'adhāban alīmā ... yu'adhdhibhu 'adhāban alīmā</i>
3	VII	vv. 18– 23	<i>la-qad raḍiya llāhu ...</i>	<i>sunnata llāhi ... li-sunnati llāhi ...</i>
	VIII	vv. 24– 26	<i>wa-huwa lladhī kaffā ... wa- kāna llāhu bi-mā ta'malūna baṣīrā</i>	<i>... wa-kāna llāhu bi-kulli shay'in 'alīmā</i>
4	IX	v. 27	<i>la-qad ṣadaqa llāhu ...</i>	<i>... faṭḥan qarībā</i>
	X	vv. 28– 29	<i>huwa lladhī arsala ...</i>	<i>... minhum maghfīratan wa- ajran 'aẓīmā</i>

Table 9: Paragraphs and sub-paragraphs (sections) in Q 48.

Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt (Q 49)

Repeated openers and closers similarly structure *Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt* (Q 49). The eighteen verses of this sura contain two strong indicators of thematic unity. There are four references to those who fear God: a simple recommendation in vv. 1, 10, and 12 (*wa-ttaqū llāha*) is expanded into a description of the glorious status of the most God-fearing (*atqākum*) in v. 13. The concept of true belief, meanwhile, alluded to in the *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* vocative opening to vv. 1, 2, 6, 11, and 12, in the references to the “believers” (*al-mu'minūn*) in vv. 9 and 10, and in the references to “belief” (*īmān*) in vv. 7 and 11, is addressed in a more abstract manner in vv. 14–15 and 17, where the misguided professions of faith made by the Bedouin are contrasted with the genuine state of belief as defined by God. There is also a small suggestion of an *inclusio* in the reflection of v. 7's allusion to *law yuṭī'ukum* and *fī qulūbikum* in v. 14's reference to *fī qulūbikum* and *wa-in tuṭī'ū*.

Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt nonetheless divides into two main paragraphs at vv. 12/13, where a string of *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* openers gives way to a wider address to *yā-ayyuhā l-nās*. Its various repetitions, moreover, break it up into ten short sections. Section I (v. 1) opens *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* and closes *inna llāha samī'un 'alīm*. Its initial command to “fear God” (*ittaqū llāha*)

anticipates later references to fear of God in vv. 10 (*wa-ttaqū llāha*), 12 (*wa-ttaqū llāha*), and 13 (*inna akramakum ‘inda llāhi atqākum*). Although Section II (vv. 2–5) is thematically connected to the preceding verse – its description of those who raise their voices above that of the Prophet (*tarfa‘ū aṣwātakum*, v. 2; cf. *alladhīna yaghuḍḍūna aṣwātahum* in v. 3 and *alladhīna yunādūnaka* in v. 4) being an expansion of the category “those who behave in a forward manner in the presence of God and His Messenger” (*tuqaddimū bayna yadayi llāhi wa-rasūlihi*) alluded to in Section I – the presence of a second *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* vocative address in v. 2 nonetheless creates a minor separation at this juncture of the sura. The repetition of the same *inna lladhīna* grammatical construction at the onset of vv. 3 and 4 creates further auditory unity in Section II, whose closure is marked by the second of the sura’s double divine epithets: *inna llāha samī‘un ‘alīm* (v. 1) is here transformed into *wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīm* (v. 5), marking the close of the second section.

Q 49	Link created by
v. 1 v. 2 v. 6 v. 11 v. 12	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>
v. 1 v. 10 v. 12 (v. 13)	<i>... wa-ttaqū llāha ...</i> <i>... wa-ttaqū llāha ...</i> <i>... wa-ttaqū llāha ...</i> <i>(... inna akramakum ‘inda llāhi atqākum ...)</i>
v. 1 (v. 5) (v. 8) v. 9 v. 12 v. 13 v. 14 v. 18	<i>... inna llāha samī‘un ‘alīm</i> <i>(... wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīm)</i> <i>(... wa-llāhu ‘alīmun ḥakīm)</i> <i>... inna llāha yuḥibbu l-muqsiṭīn</i> <i>... inna llāha tawwābun raḥīm</i> <i>... inna llāha ‘alīmun khabīr</i> <i>... inna llāha ghafūrun raḥīm</i> <i>inna llāha ya‘lamu ...</i>
v. 3 v. 4	<i>inna lladhīna yaghuḍḍūna aṣwātahum ...</i> <i>inna lladhīna yunādūnaka min warā‘i l-ḥujurāti ...</i>
v. 7 v. 11 v. 15 (v. 17)	<i>... ulā’ika humu l-rāshidūn</i> <i>... fa-ulā’ika humu l-zālimūn</i> <i>... ulā’ika humu l-ṣādiqūn</i> <i>(... in kuntum ṣādiqīn)</i>
v. 9	<i>wa-in ... fa-in ... fa-in ...</i>
v. 14 v. 16 v. 17	<i>... qul ...</i> <i>qul ...</i> <i>... qul ...</i>

Table 10: Unifying elements in Q 49.

The third of the sura’s *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* addresses marks the beginning of Section III (vv. 6–8), whose borders are suggested by twin references to immorality (*fāsiq* in v. 6; *fusūq* in v. 7; cf. the recurrence of the term *fusūq* in v. 11). V. 7 is also characterised by the first of the sura’s *ulā’ika humu l-...* closers (see also vv. 11 and 15), anticipating the short and enjambed v. 8 that brings this section of the sura to a close with a *wa-llāhu ‘alīmun ḥakīm* closer that echoes the *wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīm* closer at the end of Section II (see v. 5). Section IV (vv. 9–10) is then distinguished by three conditionals beginning with *in* (in v. 9) and by three references to “making things right” (*aṣliḥū baynahumā ... fa-aṣliḥū baynahumā ... fa-aṣliḥū bayna akhawaykum*). The command to “fear God” that occurred in the first verse of the sura is repeated in the last verse of

Section IV: *wa-ttaqū llāha inna llāha samī'un 'alīm* (v. 1) returns as *wa-ttaqū llāha la'allakum turhamūn* (v. 10). As we shall see, this command recurs one further time at the close of Section VI, the final section of this paragraph (see v. 12).

Section V (v. 11) is bordered by both a *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* opener and *ulā'ika humu l-...* at its close. The third of the sura's references to immorality (*fusūq*; cf. vv. 6 and 7) creates a lexical link between Sections III and V. Together with the parallel *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* openers that distinguish Sections I, II, III, V, and VI, this suggests the presence of a single paragraph encompassing vv. 1–12 of the sura. That Section VI (vv. 10–12) coheres with the preceding sections of the sura is indicated by three factors: its matching *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* opener, its echo of the closers of vv. 1 and 9 in its final words (*inna llāha tawwābun raḥīm*), and its command to “fear God”, paralleling identical commands in vv. 1 and 10.

Paragraph (§)	Section	Verses	Opens	Closes
1	I	v. 1	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū</i> ...	<i>...wa-ttaqū llāha inna llāha samī'un 'alīm</i>
	II	vv. 2–5	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū</i> ...	<i>... wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīm</i>
	III	vv. 6–8	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū</i> ...	<i>... ulā'ika humu l-rāshidūna</i> <i>... wa-llāhu 'alīmun ḥakīm</i>
	IV	vv. 9–10	<i>wa-in ... fa-in ... fa-in ...</i>	<i>... wa-ttaqū llāha</i> <i>(la'allakum turhamūn)</i>
	V	v. 11	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū</i> ...	<i>... fa-ulā'ika humu l-ẓālimūn</i>
	VI	v. 12	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū</i> ...	<i>... wa-ttaqū llāha inna llāha tawwābun raḥīm</i>
2	VII	v. 13	<i>yā-ayyuhā l-nāsu ...</i>	<i>... inna llāha ghafūrun raḥīm</i>
	VIII	v. 14	<i>(qālati l-a'rābu āmannā ...)</i>	<i>... inna llāha 'alīmun khabīr</i>
	IX	v. 15	<i>(innamā l-mu'minūna ...)</i>	<i>... ulā'ika humu l-ṣādiqūn</i>
	X	vv. 16–18	<i>qul ... qul ...</i>	<i>inna llāha ... wa-llāhu baṣīrun bi-mā ta'malūn</i>

Table 11: Paragraphs and sub-paragraphs (sections) in Q 49.

§ 2 then opens with a contrasting vocative address: the wider-reaching *yā-ayyuhā l-nāsu*. That the shift in vocative indicates the presence of a larger caesura at this juncture is reinforced by the introduction of new key terms in the final five verses of the sura. The verb *aslamnā* in v. 14

returns as *aslamū* and *islāmakum* in v. 17, while *wa-llāhu ya‘lamu mā fi l-samāwāti wa-mā fi l-arḍi* in v. 16 connects with *inna llāha ya‘lamu ghayba l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi* in v. 18. Section breaks within § 2 are indicated by the twin *inna llāha* closers of vv. 13 and 14, and again by the *ulā’ika humu l...* closer of v. 15, mirroring the closers of Sections III and V. The tenth and final section of the sura is distinguished by parallel *qul* commands in vv. 16 and 17 and by the suggestion of an *inclusio* in vv. 16 (... *wa-llāhu ya‘lamu mā fi l-samāwāti wa-mā fi l-arḍi ...*) and 18 (*inna llāha ya‘lamu ghayba l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi ...*). The closer to v. 17 (*in kuntum ṣādiqīn*) refers back to the closer to Section IX (*ulā’ika humu l-ṣādiqīn*, v. 15), while the allusions to *aslamū* and *islāmakum*, also in v. 17, connect Section X to the preceding Section VIII (v. 14). The declaration in v. 17 that “He has guided you to belief” (*hadākum li-l-īmāni*) creates a final link in the “true believers” theme that runs through the sura as a whole (cf. vv. 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15).

Sūrat al-Ḥadīd (Q 57)

The twenty-nine verses of Sūrat al-Ḥadīd can be argued to fall into eleven sections: vv. 1–6, 7–11, 12–15, 16, 17–18, 19, 20–21, 22–24, 25–26, 27, and 28–29. Although these eleven sections are held together by a number of recurring themes and *Leitwörter*, repeated openers and closers group them into four paragraphs (vv. 1–6, 7–21, 22–27, and 28–29).

Paragraph (§)	Section	Verses	Opens	Closes
1	I	vv. 1–6	<i>... lahu mulku l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi ...</i>	<i>lahu mulku l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi ... (wa-huwa ‘alīmun bi-dhāti l-ṣudūr)</i>
2	II	vv. 7–11	<i>āminū bi-llāhi wa-rasūlihi ... lahum ajrun kabīr</i>	<i>man dhā lladhī yuqriḍu llāha qarḍan ḥasanan fa-yuḍā’ifahu lahu wa-lahu ajrun karīm</i>
	III	vv. 12–15	<i>yawma ... yawma ...</i>	<i>fā-l-yawma ...</i>
	IV	v. 16	<i>(a-lam ya’ni ...)</i>	<i>... wa-kathīrun minhum fāsiqūn</i>
	V	vv. 17–18	<i>i’lamū anna ...</i>	<i>... wa-aqraḍū llāha qarḍan ḥasanan yuḍā’afu lahum wa-lahum ajrun karīm</i>
	VI	v. 19	<i>wa-lladhīna āmanū bi-llāhi wa-rusulihī ...</i>	<i>(.... ulā’ika aṣḥābu l-jahīm)</i>

	VII	vv. 20–21	<i>i‘lamū annamā ...</i>	<i>... u‘iddat li-lladhīna āmanū bi-llāhi wa-rusulihī dhālika faḍlu llāhi yu‘tīhi man yashā’u wa-llāhu dhū l-faḍli l-‘aẓīm</i>
3	VIII	vv. 22–24	<i>(mā aṣāba min muṣibatīn fī l-arḍi ...)</i>	<i>... fa-inna llāha huwa l-ghaniyyu l-ḥamīd</i>
	IX	vv. 25–26	<i>la-qad arsalnā ...</i>	<i>wa-la-qad arsalnā ... wa-kathīrun minhum fāsiqūn</i>
	X	v. 27	<i>thumma qaḥḥaynā ... wa-qaḥḥaynā ... wa-ātaynāhu ...</i>	<i>... fa-ātaynā lladhīna āmanū minhum ajrahum wa-kathīrun minhum fāsiqūn</i>
4	XI	vv. 28–29	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ttaqū llāha wa-āminū bi-rasūlihī ...</i>	<i>... wa-anna l-faḍla bi-yadi llāhi yu‘tīhi man yashā’u wa-llāhu dhū l-faḍli l-‘aẓīm</i>

Table 12: Paragraphs and sub-paragraphs (sections) in Q 57.

As can be discerned from the data presented in Table 13 below, the first section (vv. 1–6) of the sura is loosely defined by multiple repetitions of the expression “heavens and earth” (vv. 1, 2, 4, 5; cf. also v. 10) and by multiple descriptions of God introduced by the word *huwa* (“He”; vv. 1, 3, 4, 6; cf. also vv. 9 and 24). The opener to v. 2 (*lahu mulku l-samawāti wa-l-arḍi*) is indeed repeated verbatim as the opener to v. 5, thereby producing an inclusio. The presence of the phrase “heavens and earth” in the first verse of the sura, however, coupled with the grammatical construct *wa-huwa*, used to introduce a description of God as mighty and wise, nonetheless serves to connect v. 1 very firmly to the verse group consisting of vv. 2–5. The sixth verse similarly sits outside the inclusio that is formed by the verbatim repetition of *lahu mulku l-samawāti wa-l-arḍi* while remaining connected to the wider verse group via its use of a statement beginning with *wa-huwa*, here referring to God as *‘alīmun bi-dhāti l-ṣudūr*. There is, moreover, an argument for interpreting the *yūlijū ... wa-yūlijū ...* structure of v. 6 as possessing the auditory potential to announce incipient closure of a textual unit, similar to the repeated segment *alladhīna yu‘minūna bi- ...* in Q 2:2.3 and the repeated *huwa lladhīs* and *rabbānās* of Q 3:6.7 and 8.9.³⁶ The closer to v. 2 (*wa-huwa ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr*), meanwhile, has a partial echo in the closer to v. 3 (*wa-huwa bi-kulli shay’in ‘alīm*),

³⁶ A similar argument will be made with regard to the repeated *rabbānās* of Q 60 and the repetition of the phrase *ḍaraba llāhu mathalan li-lladhīna ...* in Q 66.

while the closer to v. 4 (*wa-llāhu bi-mā taʿmalūn baṣīr*) will be reflected in the closer to v. 10 (*wa-llāhu bi-mā taʿmalūn khabīr*), the penultimate verse of Section II.

The introduction of the repeated opener “Believe in God and His Messenger” (*āminū bi-llāhi wa-rasūlihi*) in v. 7 suggests a shift to a new structural unit within Sūrat al-Ḥadīd at the end of v. 6. Although this command to “Believe in God and His Messenger” is not repeated in precise terms elsewhere in the sura, it is clearly reflected in the opener to v. 8, “Why do you not believe in God, when the Messenger ...” (*wa-mā lakum lā tuʿminūna bi-llāhi wa-l-rasūlu ...*), as well as in the opening verses of what will be argued to be Sections VI (*wa-lladhīna āmanū bi-llāhi wa-rusulihi*, v. 19) and XI (*yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ttaqū llāha wa-āminū bi-rasūlihi*, v. 28) of the sura. It is therefore proposed that v. 7 introduces both the second section and the second paragraph of Sūrat al-Ḥadīd. A thematic shift away from God’s lordship of the heavens and earth (see vv. 1, 2, 4, and 5) is indicated by the introduction of a new *Leitwort* at this point. Vv. 7 and 10 are distinguished by five iterations of the verb *anfaqa* (“to spend”), while the dominant *Leitwort* of Section I (*al-samawāti wa-l-arḍ*; see vv. 1, 2, 4, and 5) occurs only once, in v. 10 (*wa-mā lakum allā tunfiqū fī sabīli llāhi wa-li-llāhi mīrāthu l-samawāti wa-l-arḍi ...*), to connect God’s status as the owner of the “heavens and earth” with the command to “spend”. That vv. 8 and 10 exhibit parallel openers (*wa-mā lakum ... wa-mā lakum ...*) suggests a further degree of internal cohesion to Section II of the sura.

Although the references to spending cease at the close of v. 10 and, as was observed above, the closer to v. 10 (*wa-llāhu bi-mā taʿmalūn khabīr*) is a partial repetition of the closer to v. 4 (*wa-llāhu bi-mā taʿmalūn baṣīr*), this does not appear to indicate that v. 10 acts as the end of this structural unit. Both vv. 7 and 11 terminate with a description of the reward that awaits the believers: *lahum ajrun kabīr* (v. 7) returns as *lahu ajrun karīm* (v. 11; cf. *lahum ajrun karīm* at v. 18). Section II (vv. 7–11), like Section I (vv. 1–6) before it, is therefore distinguished by the presence of a terminological ring. The entirety of v. 11 (*man dhā lladhī yuqriḍū llāha qarḍan ḥasanan wa-yuḍāʿifahu wa-lahu ajrun karīm*), meanwhile, posited as the last statement of Section II, is echoed in the closer to v. 18 (*wa-qarḍū llāha qarḍan ḥasanan yuḍāʿafu lahum wa-lahum ajrun karīm*). Sections II and V of Sūrat al-Ḥadīd, therefore, display parallel closers.

Q 57	Link created by
v. 1	... mā fī l-samawāti wa-l-arḍi ...

v. 2	<i>lahu mulku l-samawāti wa-l-arḍ ...</i>
v. 4	<i>... al-samāwāti wa-l-arḍa ...</i>
v. 5	<i>lahu mulku l-samawāti wa-l-arḍ ...</i>
v. 10	<i>... mīrāthu l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi ...</i>
v. 1	<i>... wa-huwa l-‘azīzu l-ḥakīm</i>
v. 2	<i>... wa-huwa ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr</i>
v. 3	<i>huwa l-awwal ... wa-huwa bi-kulli shay’in ‘alīm</i>
v. 4	<i>huwa lladhī ... wa-huwa ma‘akum ayna mā kuntum ...</i>
v. 6	<i>... wa-huwa ‘alīmun bi-dhāti l-ṣudūr</i>
v. 9	<i>huwa lladhī ...</i>
(v. 12)	<i>... dhālika huwa l-fawzu l-‘azīm)</i>
v. 24	<i>... fa-inna llāha huwa l-ghaniyyu l-ḥamīd</i>
v. 4	<i>... wa-llāhu bi-mā ta‘malūn baṣīr</i>
v. 10	<i>... wa-llāhu bi-mā ta‘malūn khabīr</i>
v. 21	<i>... wa-llāhu dhū l-faḍli l-‘azīm</i>
v. 23	<i>... wa-llāhu lā yuḥibbu kulla mukhtālin fakhūr</i>
v. 28	<i>... wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīm</i>
v. 29	<i>... wa-llāhu dhū l-faḍli l-‘azīm</i>
v. 6	<i>yūliju ... wa- yūliju ...</i>
v. 7	<i>... wa-anfiqū ... wa-anfaqu ...</i>
v. 10	<i>... allā tunfiqū ... man anfaqa ... mina lladhīna anfaqu ...</i>
v. 8	<i>wa-mā lakum ...</i>
v. 10	<i>wa-mā lakum ...</i>
v. 7	<i>... lahum ajrun kabīr</i>
v. 11	<i>... lahu ajrun karīm</i>
v. 18	<i>... lahum ajrun karīm</i>
(v. 27)	<i>... fa-ātaynā lladhīna āmanū minhum ajrahum ...)</i>
v. 7	<i>āminū bi-llāhi wa-rasūlihi ...</i>
(v. 8)	<i>wa-mā lakum lā tu‘minūna bi-llāhi wa-l-rasūlu ...)</i>
v. 19	<i>wa-lladhīna āmanū bi-llāhi wa-rusulihi ...</i>
(v. 21)	<i>... u‘iddat li-lladhīna āmanū bi-llāhi wa-rusulihi ...)</i>
(v. 28)	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ttaqu llāha wa-āminū bi-rasūlihi ...)</i>
v. 9	<i>... mina l-ḡulumāti ilā l-nūri ...</i>
v. 12	<i>... yas‘ā nūruhum bayna aydihim ...</i>
v. 13	<i>... min nūrikum ... fa-ltamisū nūran ...</i>
v. 19	<i>... lahum ajruhum wa-nūruhum ...</i>
v. 28	<i>... lakum nūran tamshūna bihi ...</i>
v. 11	<i>man dhā lladhī yuqriḍū llāha qarḍan ḥasanan wa-yuḍā‘ifahu wa-lahu ajrun karīm</i>
v. 18	<i>... wa-qraḍū llāha qarḍan ḥasanan yuḍā‘afu lahum wa-lahum ajrun karīm</i>
v. 12	<i>yawma ...</i>
v. 13	<i>yawma ...</i>
v. 15	<i>fa-l-yawma ...</i>
v. 16	<i>... wa-kathīrun minhum fāsiqūn</i>
v. 26	<i>... wa-kathīrun minhum fāsiqūn</i>
v. 27	<i>... wa-kathīrun minhum fāsiqūn</i>

v. 17	<i>i'lamū anna llāha ...</i>
v. 20	<i>i'lamū annamā l-ḥayātu l-dunyā ...</i>
v. 21	<i>... dhālika faḍlu llāhi yu'tīhi man yashā'u wa-llāhu dhū l-faḍli l-'aẓīm</i>
v. 29	<i>... wa-anna l-faḍla bi-yadi llāhi yu'tīhi man yashā'u wa-llāhu dhū l-faḍli l-'aẓīm</i>
v. 25	<i>la-qad arsalnā ...</i>
v. 26	<i>la-qad arsalnā ...</i>

Table 13: Repeated elements in Q 57.

The presence of three parallel openers in vv. 12–15 (v. 12: *yawma ...*; v. 13: *yawma ...*; v. 15: *fa-l-yawma*) suggests the existence of a separate section (Section III) that centres around this term. Further coherence to Section III is provided by three occurrences of the *Leitwort* “light” (*nūr*) in vv. 12 and 13 (cf. the allusion to God’s bringing the disbelievers from the darkness into the light in v. 9 and the promises of God-given light in vv. 19 and 28). While there are no repeated openers or closers marking a border between Sections III (vv. 12–15) and IV (v. 16), the possibility that a new section starts at v. 16 could be indicated by the echo of the acknowledged section opener *a-lam tara* in its initial words: *a-lam ya’ni* (see Table 12, above).³⁷ The first occurrence of the *wa-kathīrun minhum fāsiqūn* closer within Sūrat al-Ḥadīd, meanwhile, at the end of v. 16 (cf. vv. 26 and 27), coupled with the first occurrence of the *i'lamū anna* opener at the onset of v. 17 (cf. v. 20), raises the likelihood of there being a small structural border between vv. 16 and 17, marking the close of Section IV (v. 16) and the opening of Section V (vv. 17–18). The closer to Section V (... *wa-aqraḍū llāha qarḍan ḥasanan yuḍā'afu lahum wa-lahum ajrun karīm*, v. 18) is a partial inversion of the closer to Section II (*man dhā lladhī yuqriḍu llāha qarḍan ḥasanan fa-yuḍā'ifahu lahu wa-lahu ajrun karīm*, v. 11). Indeed, the presence of both a male and a female referent in v. 18 (*inna l-muṣṣaddiqīna wa-l-muṣṣaddiqāti*) recalls the opening of v. 12, where the appearance of both male and female believers (*yawma tarā l-mu'minīna wa-l-mu'mināti*) is described; it is clear that Sections II, III, and V of the sura are related. Section VI (v. 19), meanwhile, opens *wa-lladhīna*

³⁷ For other possible verse-initial *a-lam tara/yaraw* variants cf. Q 2:107, 5:40, 9:63.70.78.104, 14:9, 22:70, 23:105, 36:60, 64:5, 75:37, 77:16.20.25, 78:6, 90:8, 93:6, 94:1, 96:14, and 105:2. Note that the *a-lam ya'tikum* of Q 64:5, for instance, occurs just outside of a potential inclusio formed of the phrase *mā fi l-samāwāti wa-mā fi l-arḍi* in vv. 1 and 4 (with minor variations; cf. also v. 3, where we are told that God *khalaqa l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍa bi-l-ḥaqqi*). The question *a-lam nashraḥ laka ṣadrak* in Q 94:1, meanwhile, is clearly a section opener, falling as it does at the very outset of a sura.

āmanū bi-llāhi wa-rusulihī, reflecting the first words of Section II (v. 7) and anticipating the closer to Section VII (v. 21). There are, moreover, references to reward (*ajr*) and to light (*nūr*) in v. 19, echoing references throughout the preceding Sections II, III, and V (see vv. 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 18), and anticipating the recurrence of both terms at the very close of the sura: “reward” in v. 27 and “light” in v. 28.

Section VII (vv. 20–21), whose opener *i‘lamū annamā* (v. 20) recalls the opener to Section V (v. 17), would also appear to be a part of what I would consider to be the sura’s second paragraph. V. 21 contains a reference to “those who believe in God and His Messenger” (*alladhīna āmanū bi-llāhi wa-rusulihī*), echoing the command of v. 7 and the implied rebuke of v. 8 (both in Section II), and reflecting the opener to Section VI (*wa-lladhīna āmanū bi-llāhi wa-rusulihī*, v. 19). The collocation of God and His Messenger in v. 21, meanwhile, recurs at the very close of the sura, where the believers are commanded to fear God and believe in His Messenger (*ittaquū llāha wa-āminū bi-rasūlihī*) in v. 28 (Section XI). This phrase is then followed by the closer to Section VII, *dhālika faḍlu llāhi yu‘tīhi man yashā’u wa-llāhu dhū l-faḍli l-‘aẓīm* (v. 21), which anticipates the final words of the sura itself (*wa-anna l-faḍla bi-yadi llāhi yu‘tīhi man yashā’u wa-llāhu dhū l-faḍli l-‘aẓīm*, v. 29). The presence of a major caesura between vv. 21 and 22 therefore seems eminently plausible, and I would posit Sections II–VII (vv. 7–21) as together comprising § 2 of Sūrat al-Ḥadīd.

The opener to Section VIII (*mā aṣāba min muṣibatīn fi l-arḍi*) contains no audible echo to other section openers with Q 57.³⁸ In fact, this three-verse section of the sura displays few

³⁸ It should however be noted that the phrase *mā aṣāba min muṣibatīn fi l-arḍi* occurs as *mā aṣāba min muṣibatīn illā bi-idhni llāhi* at Q 64:11, where it would seem to anticipate the close of Sūrat al-Taghābun’s second paragraph. The relative lack of repeated openers and closers in Sūrat al-Taghābun placed it outside of the focus of this study. While the closer to v. 1 (*wa-huwa ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr*) of Q 64 is reflected in the closer to v. 11 (*wa-llāhu bi-kulli shay’in ‘alīm*), and the closer to v. 2 (*wa-llāhu bi-mā ta‘malūna baṣīr*) is partially transformed in the closer to v. 8 (*wa-llāhu bi-mā ta‘malūna khabīr*), only the closer of v. 8 would appear to fall at a structurally significant juncture of the sura, anticipating as it does a shift to *yawma*, and a believers/disbelievers diptych, in vv. 9–10. There is a further suggestion of an echo between the opener to v. 12 (*wa-aṭī‘ū llāha*) and the first words of v. 16 (*fa-ttaquū llāha*), but these two statements probably reside in parallel, the first sandwiched between the verse that opens *mā aṣāba min muṣibatīn illā bi-idhni llāhi* (see also Q 57:22) and the statement *allāhu lā ilāha illā huwa* (see also Q 2:255, 3:2, 4:87, 20:8, 27:26) and the

distinguishing features. The return to *huwa* (v. 24) and *wa-llāhu* (v. 23) nonetheless bears a faint echo of the clustered *huwas* of Section I (vv. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6; cf. also v. 12), and the *wa-llāhus* that occur towards the close of Sections I (see v. 4), II (thus v. 10), VII (v. 21), VIII (v. 23), and then twice at the very end of the sura, in vv. 28 and 29 of Section XI. The cumulative weight of these markers suggest that they may serve a minor structural function here, enabling Section VIII to serve as an authoritative introduction to the sura's third paragraph. Section IX then consists of two parallel *la-qad arsalnā* statements, the second of which closes with the second of the sura's declarations that "many of them are sinners" (*kathīrun minhum fāsiqūn*; see vv. 16, 26, and 27). The four occurrences of the verb *arsalnā* in vv. 25–26 adds to the sense that Section IX functions as a discrete section of the sura. The last section of § 3 is then made up of v. 27, which again mentions God's messengers (*rusulinā*), closes with a further iteration of the allegation that "many of them are sinners" (*kathīrun minhum fāsiqūn*; see vv. 16, 26, and 27). Although the topic of Section X continues the theme of past prophets initiated in Section IX, the lack of any *arsalnā* statements in Section X, coupled with the presence of two *qaffaynā* statements (followed, arguably, by two *ātaynā* statements; see Table 13) in v. 27, suggests that the parallel *kathīrun minhum fāsiqūn* declarations at the close of vv. 26 and 27 mark the presence of a minor followed by a major caesura.

There is a clear topic shift between the recurrence of the *wa-kathīrun minhum fāsiqūn* closer in v. 27 (see also vv. 16 and 26) and the *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* command to fear God and believe in His Messenger (cf. vv. 7, 8, and 19) in v. 28. Vv. 25–27 discuss episodes from the narrative past (Noah, Abraham, and Jesus), while vv. 28–29 recap the sura's main directives (fear God,

second following on from the initial vocative of v. 14 and anticipating the reference to making God a good loan which He will then multiply in v. 17 (see also Q 57:11,12, and cf. Q 2:245, 5:12, 73:20). That Q 64 is replete with material that occurs elsewhere within the Qur'anic corpus was observed already by Bannister, *Oral-Formulaic Study*, 166–167 and 189, who provides a verse-by-verse statistical analysis of the recurrence of three-word sequences throughout the sura without, however, providing any detail of the phrases involved or where they recur. Sinai, meanwhile, remarks on the sura's relatively short MVL and proposes that Q 64 is "at most a very early post-hijrah proclamation in which some key doctrinal traits of the Medinan Qur'an first begin to come into view". See Sinai, *Qur'an*, 207. As Sinai observes, Nöldeke and Schwally, who provide a very brief treatment of Q 64, also remark on the sura's similarity to the Meccan side of the corpus. See Nöldeke, *History*, 151.

believe in His Messenger, walk by God’s light, and remember that it is He who bestows His bounty upon whom He wills; cf. vv. 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 19, and 21). It seems distinctly plausible, therefore, to propose a further paragraph division in Sūrat al-Ḥadīd at the juncture of vv. 27/28, where the example of past prophets, § 3, gives way to a return to the themes of § 2, thus opening § 4. That vv. 28–29 represent a discrete paragraph, concluding the sura, is made clear by the presence of various elements in the final two of al-Ḥadīd’s twenty-nine verses. First, this section of the sura opens with an isolated vocative, *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū*, in itself an indication of a new structural unit. Secondly, this vocative is followed by an expansion of the initial command to believe in God and His Messenger (see v. 7, and cf. vv. 8 and 19). Thirdly, the allusion to God’s light in v. 28 recalls prior references to God’s light in vv. 9, 12, 13, and 19. Finally, the reiteration of the theme of God’s bounty (cf. v. 21 at the close of § 2), with the verbatim repetition of the phrases *yu’tīhi man yashā’u* and *wa-llāhu dhū l-faḍli l-‘aẓīm*, add to the preceding elements in order to bring the sura to a sense of climactic closure.

Sūrat al-Mujādala (Q 58)

A comparable pattern of recurrences can be seen in the twenty-two verses of Sūrat al-Mujādala (Q 58), which divide into thirteen sections: vv. 1, 2–3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9–10, 11, 12–13, 14–17, 18–19, and 20–22. Despite the degree of lexical chaining that is created between vv. 1 and 2 by the presence of an *inna llāha* construction in both of their *khātimas* (see Table 16 below), the isolated occurrence of references to God’s ability to “hear” in v. 1 (*qad samī‘a llāhu ... wa-llāhu yasma‘u ... inna llāha samī‘un baṣīr*) distinguishes v. 1 as a discrete section of al-Mujādala’s first paragraph (vv. 1–6). This is then followed by Section II (vv. 2–3), which consists of two verses with near-parallel openers (*alladhīna yuḏāhirūn* returns as *wa-lladhīna yuḏāhirūn*), and by Section III (v. 4), a single verse with two sentences beginning with *fa-man lam*. The closer of Section II (*wa-llāhu bi-mā ta‘malūna khabīr*, v. 3) is echoed in the closer of Section V (*wa-llāhu ‘alā kulli shay’in shahīd*, v. 6), duplicated in the closer of Section IX (*wa-llāhu bi-mā ta‘malūna khabīr*, v. 11), and inverted in the closer of Section X (*wa-llāhu khabīrun bi-mā ta‘lamūn*, v. 13). The closer of Section III (*wa-li-l-kāfirīn ‘adhābun alīm*, v. 4) then has an echo in the closer of Section IV (*wa-li-l-kāfirīn ‘adhābun muhīn*, v. 5).

The following two sections of Q 58 are difficult to classify. The presence of statements about “those who oppose God and His Messenger” (*inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu*) in vv. 5 and 20 (cf. also the variant *man ḥādda llāha wa-rasūlahu* in v. 22), coupled with the repetition of the declaration *yawma yab’athuhumu llāhu jamī’an* in vv. 6 and 18, is superficially suggestive of the presence of a dominant ring structure to Sūrat al-Mujādala. This structure could, moreover, be argued to encompass a further ring consisting in three occurrences of the phrase *a-lam tara* in vv. 7, 8, and 14, arranged around a central address to those who believe (*yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū*, in vv. 9, 11, and 12).

v. 5	<i>inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu ...</i>
v. 6	<i>yawma yab’athuhumu llāhu jamī’an ...</i>
v. 7	<i>a-lam tara ...</i>
v. 8	<i>a-lam tara ...</i>
v. 9	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>
v. 11	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>
v. 12	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>
v. 14	<i>a-lam tara ...</i>
v. 18	<i>yawma yab’athuhumu llāhu jamī’an ...</i>
v. 20	<i>inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu ...</i>

Table 14: The superficial attractions of a ring structure within Q 58.

As will become clear in what follows, however, there are a number of strong arguments against the dominance of such a structure in paragraphing Q 58. The clear thematic shift to the matter of private conversations in v. 7 (*najwā*; cf. vv. 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12) suggests the presence of a discrete paragraph that runs from vv. 7–13. This overrides any implication that there might be a caesura at the change to *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* openers in v. 9, or that vv. 7–10 and 14–17 might reside together to the structural exclusion of vv. 9–13.³⁹ The fact that the second occurrences of both the *inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu* (v. 20) and *yawma yab’athuhumu llāhu*

³⁹ In a recent article, Nevin Reda raises the possibility of ring structures occurring alongside or within linear structures. It should, however, be noted that, in contrast to the scheme I am utilising above, it is Reda’s inclusios that are lexically defined, while her rings are thematic. See Nevin Reda, “The Poetics of Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān’s Narrative Structure (Q 3)”, in *Structural Dividers in the Qur’an*, ed. Marianna Klar (Routledge: Abingdon, 2021).

jamī'an (v. 18) opening formulae occur within an alternative structure contrasting the fate of “party of Satan” (v. 19) with the rewards that await the “party of God” (v. 22), meanwhile, gainsays the presence of a further caesura, either at the second *yawma yab'athuhumu llāhu jamī'an* (v. 18) or at the second *inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu* (v. 20). The slight suggestion of an echo between the closer to v. 6 (*wa-llāhu 'alā kulli shay'in shahīd*) and the closer to v. 7 (*inna llāha bi-kulli shay'in 'alīm*) adds an element of coherence between the two paragraphs but is insufficient to outweigh the shift to *a-lam tara* openers in v. 7. The twin references to “God and His Messenger” in vv. 4 and 5 (*allāhu wa-rasūlahu*; cf. vv. 4, 5, 13, 20, and 22), however, coupled with the near-matching closers to these same two verses (*wa-li-l-kāfirīn 'adhābun alīm* in v. 4 returns as *wa-li-l-kāfirīn 'adhābun muhīn* in v. 5) indicate that Sections IV and V of Q 58 (vv. 5 and 6) should be appended to the preceding paragraph. I would therefore posit a first paragraph consisting of five sections (vv. 1, 2–3, 4, 5, and 6) and spanning the first six verses (vv. 1–6) of Sūrat al-Mujādala.

Paragraph (§)	Section	Verses	Opens	Closes
1	I	v. 1	<i>qad sami'a llāhu ...</i>	<i>... inna llāha sami'un baṣīr</i>
	II	vv. 2–3	(<i>lladhīna yuḏāhirūna minkum ...</i>)	<i>... wa-llāhu bi-mā ta'malūna khabīr</i>
	III	v. 4	(<i>fa-man lam yajid</i>)	<i>... wa-li-l-kāfirīna 'adhābun alīm</i>
	IV	v. 5	<i>inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu ...</i>	<i>... wa-li-l-kāfirīna 'adhābun muhīn</i>
	V	v. 6	<i>yawma yab'athuhumu llāhu jamī'an ...</i>	<i>... wa-llāhu 'alā kulli shay'in shahīd</i>
2	VI	v. 7	<i>a-lam tara ...</i>	<i>... inna llāha bi-kulli shay'in 'alīm</i>
	VII	v. 8	<i>a-lam tara ...</i>	(<i>... fa-bi'sa l-maṣīr</i>)
	VIII	vv. 9–10	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>	(<i>... fa-l-yatawakkali l-mu'minūn</i>)
	IX	v. 11	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>	<i>... wa-llāhu bi-mā ta'malūna khabīr</i>
	X	vv. 12–13	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>	<i>... wa-llāhu khabīrun bi-mā ta'malūn</i>
3	XI	vv. 14–17	<i>a-lam tara ...</i>	<i>... ulā'ika aṣḥābu l-nāri hum fīhā khālidūn</i>

	XII	vv. 18–19	<i>yawma yab‘athuhumu llāhu jamī‘an ...</i>	<i>... ulā’ika hizbu l-shayṭāni a-lā inna hizba l-shayṭāni humu l-khāsirūn</i>
	XIII	vv. 20–22	<i>inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu ...</i>	<i>... ulā’ika hizbu llāhi a-lā inna hizba llāhi humu l-muflīhūn</i>

Table 15: Paragraphs and sub-paragraphs (sections) in Q 58.

The second of al-Mujādala’s paragraphs (vv. 7–13) similarly divides into five sections. Section VI (v. 7) opens *a-lam tara*, anticipating the opening of Sections VII (v. 8) and XI (v. 14, the opening verse of § 3). It then closes with the statement *inna llāha bi-kulli shay’in ‘alīm*, echoing the closing statement of Section V (*wa-llāhu ‘alā kulli shay’in shahīd*, v. 6). Section VII (v. 8) also opens *a-lam tara*. In addition to its reference to private conversations (*najwā*; cf. vv. 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12), it contains the phrase *bi-l-ithmi wa-l-‘udwāni wa-ma’ṣiyati l-rasūli* that re-occurs verbatim in Section VIII (vv. 9–10). The continuation of these two lexical clusters beyond the shift to *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* openers at v. 9 create a sense of thematic and auditory coherence between vv. 9–10 and the preceding textual block.

Section IX (v. 11) again opens *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū*. Although v. 11 is unique among the verses of § 2 in not dealing directly with the subject of *najwā*, this seems an insufficient reason to propose a thematic rupture at this juncture. The twofold repetition of *idhā qīla* within the boundaries of this verse suggest a certain degree of self-sufficiency, making this appear to be a topically related aside to the surrounding discussion. The closer to v. 11, *wa-llāhu bi-mā ta‘lamūna khabīr*, moreover, is a verbatim repetition of the closer to v. 3, a partial echo of the closer to v. 6, and a prefigured inversion of the closer to v. 13 (*wa-llāhu khabīrun bi-mā ta‘lamūn*). There is a substantial quantity of structural glue cementing Section IX (v. 11) in with its surroundings. The final *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* of the sura (v. 12) then introduces the last part of § 2, Section X (vv. 12–13). The closer to v. 13, *wa-llāhu khabīrun bi-mā ta‘lamūn*, is of course a reflection of the closer to v. 11, while the section as a whole is connected to the wider sura via its mention of private conversations (*idhā nājaytumu l-rasūla*, v. 12) and its command to the believer to “obey God and His Messenger” (*wa-aṭī‘ū llāha wa-rasūlahu*, v. 13; cf. vv. 4, 5, 20, and 22). The echo of the statement *qaddamū bayna yaday najwākum ṣadaqatan* (v. 12) in v. 13’s *tuqaddimū bayna yaday najwākum ṣadaqatin* nonetheless creates cohesion within Section X itself.

Q 58	Link created by
v. 1	<i>sami'a ... yasma'u ... sami'un ...</i>
v. 1	<i>... inna llāha sami'un baṣīr</i>
v. 2	<i>... wa-inna llāha la-ʿafuwwun ghafūr</i>
v. 7	<i>... inna llāha bi-kulli shay'in ʿalīm</i>
v. 12	<i>... fa-inna llāha ghafūrun raḥīm</i>
(v. 19)	<i>... a-lā inna ḥizba l-shayṭāni humu l-khāsirūn)</i>
(v. 20)	<i>inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu ulā'ika fi l-adhallīn)</i>
v. 21	<i>... inna llāha qawīyyun ʿazīz</i>
(v. 22)	<i>... a-lā inna ḥizba llāhi humu l-mufliḥūn)</i>
v. 2	<i>alladhīna yuzāhirūna ...</i>
v. 3	<i>wa-lladhīna yuzāhirūna ...</i>
v. 3	<i>... wa-llāhu bi-mā taʿmalūna khabīr</i>
v. 6	<i>... wa-llāhu ʿalā kulli shay'in shahīd</i>
v. 11	<i>... wa-llāhu bi-mā taʿlamūna khabīr</i>
v. 13	<i>... wa-llāhu khabīrun bi-mā taʿlamūn</i>
v. 4	<i>fā-man lam ... fā-man lam ...</i>
v. 4	<i>... dhālika li-tu'minū bi-llāhi wa-rasūlihi ...</i>
v. 5	<i>... inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu ...</i>
v. 13	<i>... wa-aṭī'ū llāha wa-rasūlahu ...</i>
v. 20	<i>... inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu ...</i>
v. 22	<i>... man ḥādda llāha wa-rasūlahu ...</i>
v. 4	<i>... wa-li-l-kāfirīn ʿadhābun alīm</i>
v. 5	<i>... wa-li-l-kāfirīn ʿadhābun muhīn</i>
v. 16	<i>... fa-lahum ʿadhābun muhīn</i>
v. 5	<i>inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu ...</i>
v. 20	<i>inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu ...</i>
v. 6	<i>yawma yab'athuhumu llāhu jamī'an ...</i>
v. 18	<i>yawma yab'athuhumu llāhu jamī'an ...</i>
v. 6	<i>... wa-llāhu ʿalā kulli shay'in shahīd</i>
v. 7	<i>... inna llāha bi-kulli shay'in ʿalīm</i>
v. 7	<i>a-lam tara ...</i>
v. 8	<i>a-lam tara</i>
v. 14	<i>a-lam tara</i>
v. 7	<i>... mā yakūnu min najwā ...</i>
v. 8	<i>... ʿani l-najwā ... wa-yatanājawna bi l-ithmi wa-l-ʿudwāni wa-maʿṣiyati l-rasūli ...</i>
v. 9	<i>... idhā tanājaytum fa-lā tatanājaw bi l-ithmi wa-l-ʿudwāni wa-maʿṣiyati l-rasūli ... wa-tanājaw ...</i>
v. 10	<i>innamā l-najwā ...</i>
v. 12	<i>... idhā najaytumu ... fa-qaddimū bayna yaday najwākum ṣadaqatan ...</i>
v. 13	<i>... an tuqaddimū bayna yaday najwākum ṣadaqātin ...</i>
v. 9	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>
v. 11	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>
v. 12	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>

v. 11	... <i>idhā qīla ... wa-idhā qīla ...</i>
v. 11	... <i>yafsaḥi llāhu lakum ...</i>
v. 15	<i>a'adda llāhu lahum ...</i>
v. 17	... <i>hum fihā khālidūn</i>
v. 22	... <i>khālidīna fihā</i>
v. 17	... <i>ulā'ika aṣḥābu l-nāri ...</i>
v. 19	... <i>ulā'ika ḥizbu l-shayṭāni ...</i>
v. 20	... <i>ulā'ika fi l-adhallīn</i>
v. 22	... <i>ulā'ika kataba fi qulūbihimu l-īmāna.... ulā'ika ḥizbu llāhi ...</i>
v. 18	... <i>humu l-kādhībūn</i>
v. 19	... <i>ulā'ika ḥizbu l-shayṭāni a-lā inna ḥizba l-shayṭāni humu l-khāsirūn</i>
v. 22	... <i>ulā'ika ḥizbu llāhi a-lā inna ḥizba llāhi humu l-muflīḥūn</i>

Table 16: Repeated elements in Q 58.

Sūrat al-Mujādala's third paragraph (vv. 14–22) consists of a diptych contrasting the fate of those who side with the people who have incurred God's wrath and the end of those who truly believe in God and the Last Day. This third paragraph further divides into three sections. Section XI (vv. 14–19) opens with the formula *a-lam tara*, duplicating the openers of Sections VI and VII. This verse group contains a number of repeated openers and closers. Thus v. 16 closes *fa-lahum 'adhābun muhīn*, echoing the closers to vv. 4 and 5. V. 17 closes *hum fihā khālidūn*, anticipating the description of paradise as somewhere the believers will remain forever (*khālidīna fihā*, v. 22), in the final verse of the sura. This statement of permanence is, moreover, prefaced by the declaration *ulā'ika aṣḥābu l-nāri*. As is demonstrated in Table 16, the term *ulā'ika* occurs at five points within Q 58, once each in vv. 17, 19, and 20, and twice in v. 22. The presence of a minor structural break between vv. 17 and 18 therefore seems very plausible.

Section XII (vv. 18–19) opens with the second occurrence of the formula *yawma yab'athumu llāhu jamī'an* (cf. v. 6 = § 1.5). V. 18 then closes *humu l-kādhībūn*, anticipating the closely matched closers of vv. 19 and 22, which describe first those who side with the people who have incurred God's wrath and then those who truly believe in God and the Last Day with the formula: "Those are the party of Satan/God. Are the party of Satan/God not the ones who lose/prosper?" (*ulā'ika ḥizbu l-shayṭāni/llāhi a-lā inna ḥizba l-shayṭāni/llāhi humu l-khāsirūn/l-muflīḥūn*). The first occurrence of this formulation is followed by the second appearance of the statement *inna lladhīna yuḥāddūna llāha wa-rasūlahu* (v. 20), which was argued to open the fourth section of the sura's opening paragraph. Here again, therefore, I would propose a minor

structural break and a shift to the final section of the sura (and fourth section of § 3), Section XIII (vv. 20–22).

Sūrat al-Mumtaḥana (Q 60)

The thirteen verses of *Sūrat al-Mumtaḥana* (Q 60) consist of five sections (vv. 1–3, 4–7, 8–9, 10–12, and 13) that would seem to fall into three paragraphs, all bordered by matching openers: *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* in vv. 1, 10, and 13. The subject of allies unites the sura as a whole. This is introduced as a theme in v. 1 (*yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū lā tattakhidhū ‘aduwwī wa-‘aduwwakum awliyyā’a*), only to return in v. 9 (*wa-man yatawallahum fa-ulā’ika humu l-ẓālimūn*) and v. 13 (*yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū lā tatawallaw qawman ...*), while the same word, but with the sense of “turning away”, occurs in v. 6 (*wa-man yatawalla*). *Sūrat al-Mumtaḥana* also contains several references to the related concepts of enmity (‘*d-w*’; see vv. 1, 2, 4, 7) and friendship (*w-d-d*; see vv. 1, 2, and 7). God’s profound knowledge of mankind, meanwhile, is alluded to in v. 1 (*wa-ana a’lamu bi-mā akhfaytum wa-mā a’lantum*) and again in v. 10 (*allāhu a’lamu bi-īmānihinna*). Vv. 2 and 12 both make reference to paired body parts (*aydiyahum wa-alsinatahum* in v. 2; *bayna aydihinna wa-arjulihinna* in v. 12), forging an audible link between these two sections of the sura. Vv. 3 and 12 both allude to the fate of the believers’ children (*lan tanfa’akum arḥāmukum wa-lā awlādukum* in v. 3; *wa-lā yaqtulna awlādahunna* in v. 12). The theme of forgiveness (v. 4: *la-astaghfiranna laka*; v. 5: *wa-ghfir lanā*; v. 7: *wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīm*; v. 12: *wa-staghfir lahunna llāha inna llāha ghafūrun raḥīm*) creates a further connection between vv. 4, 5, 7, and 12.

Q 60	Link created by
v. 1 v. 10 (v. 11 v. 13)	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i> <i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i> <i>yā-ayyuhā l-nabiyyu ...</i> <i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>
v. 1 v. 2 v. 4 v. 7	<i>... ‘aduwwī wa-‘aduwwakum ...</i> <i>in yathqafūkum yakūnū lakum a’dā’an ...</i> <i>... wa-badā baynanā wa-baynakumu l-‘adāwatu ...</i> <i>... lladhīna ‘adaytum minhum ...</i>
v. 1 v. 2 v. 7	<i>... tulqūna ilayhim bi-l-mawaddati ... tusirrūna ilayhim bi-l-mawaddati ...</i> <i>... wa-waddū ...</i> <i>... yaj’ala baynakum wa-bayna lladhīna ‘adaytum minhum mawaddatan ...</i>
v. 1	<i>... lā tattakhidhū ‘aduwwī wa-‘aduwwakum awliyyā’a ...</i>

v. 6	... wa-man yatawalla ...
v. 9	... wa-man yatawallahum ...
v. 13	... lā tatawallaw qawman ...
v. 1	... tu'minū bi-llāhi ...
v. 4	... tu'minū bi-llāhi ...
v. 1	... fī sabīlī ... fa-qad ḍalla sawā'a l-sabīl
v. 1	... wa-ana a'lamu ...
v. 10	... allāhu a'lamu ...
(v. 1	... in kuntum ...)
v. 2	in yathqafūkum ...
(v. 10	... fa-in 'alimtumūhunna ...)
v. 11	wa-in fātakum ...
v. 2	... aydiyahum wa-alsinatahum ...
v. 12	... aydihinna wa-arjulihinna ...
v. 3	... yawma l-qiyāmati ...
v. 6	... wa-l-yawma l-ākhirā ...
v. 12	... al-ākhirati ...
v. 3	... wa-llāhu bi-mā ta'malūna baṣīr
v. 7	... wa-llāhu qadīrun wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīm
v. 10	... wa-llāhu 'alīmun ḥakīm
v. 4	qad kānat lakum uswatun ḥasanatun ...
v. 6	la-qad kāna lakum fihim uswatun ḥasanatun ...
v. 4	... rabbanā ...
v. 5	... rabbanā ... rabbanā ...
v. 4	... la-astaghfiranna laka ...
v. 5	... wa-ghfir lanā ...
v. 7	... wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīm
v. 12	... wa-staghfir lahunna llāha inna llāha ghafūrun raḥīm
v. 6	... fa-inna llāha huwa l-ghaniyyu l-ḥamīd
v. 8	... inna llāha yuḥibbu l-muqsiṭīn
v. 12	... inna llāha ghafūrun raḥīm
v. 8	lā yanḥākumu llāhu 'ani lladhīna lam yuqātilūkum fī l-dīni ...
v. 9	innamā yanḥākumu llāhu 'ani lladhīna qātalūkum fī l-dīni ...
v. 10	yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū idhā jā'akumu l-mu'minātu ...
v. 12	yā-ayyuhā l-nabiyyu idhā jā'aka l-mu'minātu ...
v. 10	... mā anfaqū ... mā anfaqtum ... mā anfaqū ...
v. 11	... mā anfaqū ...

Table 17: Repeated elements in Q 60.

The first of Sūrat al-Mumtaḥana's sections (vv. 1–3) commences with the repeated opener *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* (see also vv. 10 and 13, and cf. v. 11). The recurrence of the concept of enmity ('*d-w*) in vv. 1, 2, and 7 creates a link between Sections I (vv. 1–3) and II (vv. 4–7), while the

return to the theme of wrongful friendship in v. 9 (*wa-man yatawallahum fa-ulā'ika humu l-ẓālimūn*; cf. *lā tattakhidhū 'aduwwī wa-'aduwwakum awliyyā'a* in v. 1) provides a bracket encompassing Sections I (vv. 1–3) and III (vv. 8–9). That there is nonetheless a minor caesura at vv. 3/4 and 7/8 is indicated by a number of textual features. The near-repeated openers of vv. 4 and 6 (*qad kānat lakum uswatun ḥasanatun* and *la-qad kāna lakum fihim uswatun ḥasanatun*) create a sense of structural unity within Section II (vv. 4–7). The subsequent near-repeated openers of vv. 8 and 9 (*lā yanḥākumu llāhu 'ani lladhīna lam yuqātilūkum fī l-dīni* and *innamā yanḥākumu llāhu 'ani lladhīna qātalūkum fī l-dīni*) then forge a bracket around Section III (vv. 8–9). The three repeated *rabbānās* in vv. 4–5, meanwhile, the first two of which serve to open prayers directed to God by Abraham, are comparable to the repeated elements of Q 2:4.5, Q 3:8.9, Q 3:31.32 (and, as we shall see Q 66:10.11) in indicating the imminent closure of a thematic unit – with the unit in question in the case of Q 60 revolving around the motif of the “good example” (*uswatun ḥasanatun*) that is provided by Abraham and his companions. Vv. 8 and 9 are similarly united by the transformation of the phrase *wa-lam yukhrijūkum min diyārikum* (v. 8) into *wa-akhrajūkum min diyārikum* (v. 9), both reflecting the reference to the expulsion of the Prophet and his co-religionists (*yukhrijūna l-rasūla wa-īyyākum*) in v. 1 and creating a further band encompassing the first of Sūrat al-Mumtaḥana's paragraphs (vv. 1–9). Repeated closers mark the ends of Section I (*wa-llāhu bi-mā ta'malūna baṣīr*, v. 3) and Section II (*wa-llāhu qadīrun wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīm*, v. 7), while the close of Section III is characterised by the statement *fa-ulā'ika humu l-ẓālimūn* (v. 9). Although this phrase does not occur elsewhere in Sūrat al-Mumtaḥana, its function as a section closer in Q 2:5.16.27.39, 49:7.11.15, and 58:17.19.20.22.22, as discussed in earlier sections of this essay, does indicate that it might possess paradigmatic force as a generic indicator of closure.

The onset of § 2 (Section IV; vv. 10–12) is denoted by the repetition of the vocative address *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* (see also vv. 1 and 13, and cf. v. 11). References to emigrating female believers (*al-mu'mināt*; vv. 10 and 12) and to the former wives of believers (*azwājikum/azwājuhūm*, v. 11), along with allusions to what was spent in bride-gifts for both of these categories of women (*mā anfaqū*; vv. 10 and 11), produce thematic cohesion. The presence of a vocative address to the Prophet (*yā-ayyuhā l-nabiyyu*) in v. 12 might be argued to yield a minor caesura at this juncture of the sura, but the near-repetition of the phrase *idhā jā'akumu l-mu'minātu* (v. 10) in v. 12's *idhā jā'aka l-mu'minātu* places vv. 10 and 12 in parallel in a similar fashion to the twin references to the

“good example” (*uswatun ḥasanatun*) provided for the believing community by Abraham in vv. 4 and 6. § 2 (Section IV; vv. 10–12) is sealed by the near repetition of the closer to v. 7 (*wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīm*) in the closer to v. 12 (*inna llāha ghafūrun raḥīm*). The close of v. 7 is also significant, however, in its twin reference to forgiveness: the *inna llāha ghafūrun raḥīm* closer is prefaced by the statement *wa-staghfir lahunna llāha*. This hearkens back to vv. 4 and 5 in addition to v. 7 (see Table 17 above).

The last of Sūrat al-Mumtaḥana’s paragraphs (§ 3 = Section V = v. 13) consists of a single *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* declaration. Although this paragraph is made up of a single verse, the return to the theme of friendship (*lā tatawallaw qawman*; cf. vv. 1, 6, and 9), prevalent in § 1, and the departure from the themes of female believers (*al-mu’mināt*), the former wives of believers (*azwājikum/azwājuhūm*), and what was spent in bride-gifts (*mā anfaqū*) that are dominant in § 2 (see vv. 10–12), suggest that the vocative opener that marks the onset of this verse does indeed demarcate the beginning of a short, concluding paragraph to the sura itself.

Paragraph (§)	Section	Verses	Opens	Closes
1	I	vv. 1–3	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>	<i>... wa-llāhu bi-mā ta’malūna baṣīr</i>
	II	vv. 4–7	<i>qad kānat lakum uswatun ḥasanatun ...</i>	<i>la-qad kāna lakum fihim uswatun ḥasanatun wa-llāhu qadīrun wa-llāhu ghafūrun raḥīm</i>
	III	vv. 8–9	<i>lā yanḥākumu llāhu ‘ani lladhīna lam yuqātilūkum fī l-dīni wa-lam yukhrījūkum min diyārikum ...</i>	<i>innamā yanḥākumu llāhu ‘ani lladhīna qātalūkum fī l-dīni wa-akhrājūkum min diyārikum ... (... fa-ulā’ika humu l-ẓālimūn)</i>
2	IV	vv. 10–12	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>	<i>yā-ayyuhā l-nabiyyu inna llāha ghafūrun raḥīm</i>
3	V	v. 13	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>	<i>(... ka-mā ya’isa l-kuffāru min aṣḥābi l-qubūr)</i>

Table 18: Paragraphs and sub-paragraphs (sections) in Q 60.

*Sūrat al-Şaff (Q 61)*⁴⁰

After an initial statement in praise of God (*sabbaḥa li-llāhi mā fi l-samawāti wa-mā fi l-arḍ*, v. 1; cf. the initial invocations of Q 57, 59, 62, and 64), *Sūrat al-Şaff* (Q 61), like *Sūrat al-Mumtaḥana*, contains three matching vocative addresses directed at the community of believers (*yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū*) in vv. 2, 10, and (marking the close of the sura) v. 14. Multiple references to God's messengers, past and present, create a thematic link between vv. 5, 6, 9, and 11 (see Table 19 below). Twin allusions to God's path (*sabīlihi / sabīli llāhi*) form a connection between vv. 4 and 11. The sura also mentions the example of Jesus (*ʿisā bnu maryama*) in both v. 6 and v. 14.

⁴⁰ Sinai casts a question mark over the Medinan dating of Q 61, explaining that “given that surah 61 lacks any references to the Believers' expulsion, it is not inconceivable that the text preceded, or was at least roughly contemporaneous with, the hijrah” (Sinai, *Qur'an*, 196). Sinai also remarks on the sura's relatively short MVL of 100.14 TLPV (Sinai, *Qur'an*, 195). For a further discussion of the reliability of MVL as a dating tool for small expanses of text, see below.

Q 61	Link created by
v. 2 v. 10 v. 14	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i> <i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i> <i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>
v. 2 v. 3	<i>... li-ma taqūlūna mā lā taf'alūn</i> <i>... an taqūlū mā lā taf'alūn</i>
v. 2 v. 5	<i>... li-ma ...</i> <i>... li-ma ...</i>
v. 4 v. 11	<i>... fī sabīlihi ...</i> <i>... fī sabīli llāhi ...</i>
v. 5 v. 6 (v. 14	<i>wa-idh qāla mūsā ...</i> <i>wa-idh qāla 'īsā bnu maryama ...</i> <i>... ka-mā qāla 'īsā bnu maryama ...)</i>
v. 5 v. 6 v. 9 v. 11	<i>... annī rasūlu llāhi ilaykum ...</i> <i>... innī rasūlu llāhi ilaykum ... wa mubashshiran bi-rasūlin ...</i> <i>huwa lladhī arsala rasūlahu ...</i> <i>tu'minūna bi-llāhi wa-rasūlihi ...</i>
v. 5 v. 7	<i>... wa-llāhu lā yahdī l-qawma l-fāsiqīn</i> <i>... wa-llāhu lā yahdī l-qawma l-ẓālimīn</i>
v. 8 v. 9	<i>... wa-law kariha l-kāfirūn</i> <i>... wa-law kariha l-mushrikūn</i>
v. 13 v. 14	<i>... naṣrun mina llāhi ...</i> <i>... kūnū anṣāra llāhi ... man anṣārī ilā llāhi ... naḥnu anṣāru llāhi ...</i>

Table 19: Repeated elements in Q 61.

The sura can nonetheless be divided into six sections on the basis of its repeated openers and closers (see Table 20 below). The opening verse, like the detached letters at the beginning of Q 2 and Q 3, would appear to reside in parallel to the repeated elements that go on to structure the material that follows, and has been designated as Section I. The repeated *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* openers in vv. 2, 10, and 14 then mark the beginning of Sections II, V, and VI, while Sections IV and V feature the repeated formula *wa-idh qāla* at their onset (see vv. 5 and 6). Although the serial repeated openers of Sūrat al-Mumtaḥana were argued to create two discrete sections of Q 60:4–7 and 8–9, here the recurrence of the *wa-llāhu lā yahdī l-qawma l-fāsiqīn/l-ẓālimīn* in vv. 5 and 7 has been taken as suggestive of a minor caesura at the juncture of vv. 5/6. The reflection of the closer to v. 8 (*wa-law kariha l-kāfirūn*) in the closer to v. 9 (*wa-law kariha l-mushrikūn*) adds further coherence to the text unit Q 61:6–9 and can be read as suggestive of imminent closure (cf. Q 2:4,5, 3:8,9 and 31:32, 48:16,17, 57:26,27).

The clustering of repeated elements in vv. 5 and 6 (*wa-idh qāla ...*), 5 and 7 (*wa-llāhu lā yahdī l-qawma ...*), and 8 and 9 (*wa-law kariha ...*), coupled with a change in theme in vv. 10–13, which describe the “bargain” (*tijāra*) being offered to the believers by God, and the presence of a vocative address in v. 10 (*yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū*; cf. vv. 1 and 14), indicates that Sections II, III, and IV of Sūrat al-Şaff comprise a single paragraph (§ 2: vv. 2–9). § 3 (vv. 10–13) consists of a single section (Section V) with a *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* opener at its onset, and makes reference to God’s Messenger (v. 11; cf. vv. 5, 6, and 9) and to the importance of following God’s path (v. 10; cf. v. 4). Its allusion to God’s help (*naşrun mina llāhi*, v. 13) anticipates the three references to God’s helpers (*anşāra llāhi* and *man anşārī ilā llāhi*) in v. 14 but the presence of the phrase *wa-faḥun qaribun* within its closer (cf. the three structural *fathan mubīnā/qaribā* of Q 48:1.18.27 discussed above),⁴¹ when viewed alongside the presence of the last of the sura’s *yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū* openers in v. 14, creates a strong argument for laying out v. 14 as a separate section (Section VI) and, indeed, a separate paragraph (§ 4), within the sura.

⁴¹ It should perhaps be noted that vv. 4 and 13 are highlighted by Bannister as places where the formulaic density of Q 61 (“the most formulaic sura in the Qur’an”) dips. Building on the earlier research of Richard Bell, and drawing attention to the rhyme change in v. 4 and the switch to a second person address in v. 13, he tentatively posits that both verses are later interpolations. See Bannister, *Oral-Formulaic Study*, 164–166.

Paragraph (§)	Section	Verses	Opens	Closes
1	I	v. 1	(<i>sabbaḥa li-llāhi ...</i>)	(... <i>wa-huwa l-‘azīzu l-ḥakīm</i>)
2	II	vv. 2–4	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>	(... <i>ka-annahum bunyānun marṣūṣ</i>)
	III	v. 5	<i>wa-idh qāla ...</i>	... <i>wa-llāhu lā yahdī l-qawma l-fāsiqīn</i>
	IV	vv. 6–9	<i>wa-idh qāla ...</i> ... <i>wa-law kariha l-kāfirūn</i>	... <i>wa-llāhu lā yahdī l-qawma l-ẓālimīn</i> ... <i>wa-law kariha l-mushrikūn</i>
3	V	vv. 10–13	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>	(... <i>wa-faṭḥun qaribun wa-bashshiri l-mu’minīn</i>)
4	VI	v. 14	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>	(... <i>fa-aṣḥabū ẓāhirīn</i>)

Table 20: Paragraphs and sub-paragraphs (sections) in Q 61.

Sūrat al-Taḥrīm (Q 66)

The twelve verses of *Sūrat al-Taḥrīm* (Q 66) are characterised by their frequent use of vocative openers. Two instances of *yā-ayyuhā l-nabiyyu* (vv. 1 and 9) bracket three *yā-āyyuhā lladhīna* openers: *yā-āyyuhā lladhīna āmanū* in vv. 6 and 8 and *yā-āyyuhā lladhīna kafarū* in v. 7. Rather than flanking the sura as a whole, however, as we saw in both Q 60 and 61, the repeated initial vocative address of *Sūrat al-Taḥrīm* (*yā-ayyuhā l-nabiyyu*) anticipates a final dual exemplum proposed by God: *ḍaraba llāhu mathalan li-lladhīna kafarū*, in v. 10, and *ḍaraba llāhu mathalan li-lladhīna āmanū*, in v. 11. There is therefore an echo of the three central vocative addresses in the sura’s penultimate verses, with “those who believe” (*alladhīna āmanū*) in vv. 6, 8, and 11, and “those who disbelieve” (*alladhīna kafarū*) in vv.7 and 10 (see Table 21 below). It is also noteworthy that the references to the communities of past prophets (here the wives of Noah, Lot, and Pharaoh, in addition to Mary, the daughter of ‘Imrān) in *Sūrat al-Taḥrīm* occur not in the middle of the sura, as we saw again in Q 60 and 61, but in its final verses (vv. 10–12). The sura is also atypical of the Medinan oratory suras investigated in the course of this essay in containing a number of repeated openers but no repeated closers.

Q 66	Link created by
v. 1	<i>yā-ayyuhā l-nabiyyu ...</i>
v. 6	<i>yā-āyyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>
v. 7	<i>yā-āyyuhā lladhīna kafarū ...</i>
v. 8	<i>yā-āyyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>
v. 9	<i>yā-ayyuhā l-nabiyyu ...</i>
(v. 10	<i>ḍaraba llāhu mathalan li-lladhīna kafarū ...)</i>
(v. 11	<i>ḍaraba llāhu mathalan li-lladhīna āmanū ...)</i>
v. 2	<i>... aymānikum ...</i>
v. 8	<i>... wa-bi-aymānihim ...</i>
v. 4	<i>in tatūbā ilā llāhi ...</i>
v. 8	<i>... tūbū ilā llāhi tawbatan naṣūḥan ...</i>
v. 4	<i>... wa-l-malā'ikatu ba'da dhālika ḡahīr</i>
v. 6	<i>... malā'ikatun ...</i>
v. 5	<i>'asā rabbuhu in ṭallaqakunna ...</i>
v. 8	<i>... 'asā rabbukum an yukaffira 'ankum sayyi'ātikum ...</i>
v. 5	<i>... qānitātīn ...</i>
v. 12	<i>... al-qānitīn</i>
v. 6	<i>... malā'ikatun ghilāḡun ...</i>
v. 9	<i>... wa-ghluḡ 'alayhim ...</i>
v. 10	<i>ḍaraba llāhu mathalan li-lladhīna kafarū ...</i>
v. 11	<i>ḍaraba llāhu mathalan li-lladhīna āmanū ...</i>

Table 21: Repeated elements in Q 66.

It is possible to posit three principal paragraphs within Sūrat al-Taḥrīm (see Table 22 below). § 1 (vv. 1–5) is marked at its opening by a *yā-ayyuhā l-nabiyyu* vocative address. Its references to the Prophet's wives (*azwāj*, see vv. 1, 3, and 5) provide a degree of lexical coherence to its five verses, despite the changes from second to third person address at the junctures of vv. 2/3 and again at 3/4. The return of the adjective *qānitāt*, one of the terms utilised within the idealised description of Muslim wives in v. 5, in the verse-final as well as sura-final reference to Mary as *mina l-qānitīn*, suggests a further degree of structural importance to this loose thematic unit.

§ 2, meanwhile (vv. 6–8), consists of three references to the afterlife, first the fire that awaits the disbelievers (vv. 6–7) and then the gardens of paradise. Its three verses are marked by three vocative addresses *yā-āyyuhā lladhīna āmanū/kafarū/āmanū*, which anticipate, to some degree, the examples coined by God for the disbelievers (*alladhīna kafarū*) and the believers (*alladhīna āmanū*) in vv. 10 and 11 (§ 3). The reference to the harsh angels of v. 6, however,

hearkens back to the angels who are the Prophet's supporters in v. 4 (§ 1), as does the wording of v. 8 (*tūbū ilā llāhi tawbatan naṣūḥan*; cf. *in tatūbā ilā llāhi*). The phrase "it may be that his/your Lord will ..." (*‘asā rabbuhu/rabbukum ...*) also forges a connection between § 2 and § 1, this time between vv. 5 and 8. The second of Sūrat al-Taḥrīm's paragraphs therefore occupies a transitional position between §§ 1 and 3.

The second direct address to the Prophet (*yā-ayyuhā l-nabiyyu*, v. 9; cf. v. 1) opens the third of the sura's paragraphs (§ 3, vv. 9–12). There is a small degree of terminological correspondence between the warning delivered to the disbelievers and the hypocrites (*al-kuffāra wa-l-munāfiqīna*) in v. 9 and the exemplum provided in v. 10 (*ḍaraba llāhu mathalan li-lladhīna kafarū*). The final words of the sura, meanwhile, in their description of Mary as *mina l-qānitīn*, echo the allusion to the "better wives" of v. 5 as *qānitāt*. It should be noted, however, that there is no direct lexical link between the Prophet's wives (*azwāj*) of vv. 1–5 and the wives of Noah, Lot, and Pharaoh (*imrāʿat ...*) in vv. 10–11. A further terminological link is formed between the description of the angels of v. 6 (the opening verse of § 2) as "harsh" (*ghilāẓ*) and the command to the Prophet to be "harsh" with the hypocrites and the disbelievers (*wa-ghluẓ ‘alayhim*) in v. 9 (the opening verse of § 3). The opening verses of §§ 2 and 3, therefore, like the closing verses of §§ 1 and 3, are characterised by the presence of a repeated lexical marker.

Paragraph (§)	Section	Verses	Opens	Closes
1	I	vv. 1–5	<i>yā-ayyuhā l-nabiyyu ...</i>	<i>qānitātīn ... (wa-abkārā)</i>
2	II	v. 6	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...malā'ikatun ghilāzun ...</i>	<i>(...wa-yaf'alūna mā yu'marūn)</i>
	III	v. 7	<i>yā-āyyuhā lladhīna kafarū ...</i>	<i>(... innamā tujzawna mā kuntum ta'malūn)</i>
	IV	v. 8	<i>yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū ...</i>	<i>(... innaka 'alā kulli shay'in qadīr)</i>
3	VI	v. 9	<i>yā-ayyuhā l-nabiyyu ... wa-ghluḡ 'alayhim ...</i>	<i>(... wa-ma'wāhum jahannamu wa-bi'sa l-maṣīr)</i>
	VII	v. 10	<i>ḍaraba llāhu mathalan li-lladhīna kafarū ...</i>	<i>(... wa-qīla dkhulā l-nāra ma'a l-dākhilīn)</i>
	VIII	vv. 11–12	<i>ḍaraba llāhu mathalan li-lladhīna āmanū ...</i>	<i>... wa-kānat mina l-qānitīn</i>

Table 22: Paragraphs and sub-paragraphs (sections) in Q 66.

Disputed Cases: The Question of Q 22:1–10 and Q 98

In the opening pages of this essay, it was demonstrated that the introductions to Q 2 and 3 contain a high frequency of repeated elements, notable among them recurring verse-openers and *khātīmas*, and that many of these occur at structurally significant junctures of the two suras. Similar patterns can be identified in the opening ten verses of Sūrat al-Ḥajj (Q 22). Two sections of text which open *yā ayyuhā l-nās* and close *'adhābi l-sa'īr* / *'adhāba l-ḥarīq* are interlaced with two passages that open *wa-mina l-nāsi man yujādilu fī llāhi bi-ghayri 'ilm*, “And among the people are some who dispute about God without knowledge” (with *wa-mina l-nāsi man* also opening the next section of the sura, at Q 22:11). The statement *dhālika bi-...* (“That is because”) then occurs in both v. 6 and v. 10, while vv. 7 and 10 exhibit near-matched closers: *wa-anna llāha yab'athu man fī l-qubūr* (“God raises those who are in the graves”) and *wa-anna llāha laysa bi-zallāmin li-l-'abīd* (“God does not wrong His servants”). The parallel closers to vv. 4 and 9 (*'adhābi l-sa'īr* / *'adhāba l-ḥarīq*) are anticipated by the closer to v. 2: *wa-lākina 'adhāba llāhi shadīd*, “God’s punishment is harsh”. A comparable observation can be made about the closers to vv. 3, 5, and 6, all of which include the word *kull*, “every” or “all”: an initial *wa-yattabi'u kulla shayṭānin marīd* (“he follows many a rebellious satan”) returns as the more closely parallel *wa-anbatat min kulli zawjin bahīj* (“it

brings forth many a delightful kind [of plant]”) and *wa-annahu ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr* (“He is endowed with power over all things”).

Q 22:1–10	Link created by
v. 1	<i>yā-ayyuhā l-nās ...</i>
v. 5	<i>yā-ayyuhā l-nās ...</i>
(v. 2	<i>... wa-lākina ‘adhāba llāhi shadīd)</i>
v. 4	<i>... ‘adhābi l-sa‘īr</i>
v. 9	<i>... ‘adhāba l-ḥarīq</i>
v. 3	<i>wa-mina l-nāsi man yujādilu fī llāhi bi-ghayri ‘ilm</i>
v. 8	<i>wa-mina l-nāsi man yujādilu fī llāhi bi-ghayri ‘ilm ...</i>
(v. 3	<i>... wa-yattabi‘u kulla shayṭānin marīd)</i>
v. 5	<i>... wa-anbatat min kulli zawjin bahīj</i>
v. 6	<i>... wa-annahū ‘alā kulli shay‘in qadīr</i>
v. 6	<i>dhālika bi- ...</i>
v. 10	<i>dhālika bi- ...</i>
v. 7	<i>... wa-anna llāha yab‘athu man fī l-qubūr</i>
v. 10	<i>... wa-anna llāha laysa bi-ḡallāmin li-l-‘abīd</i>

Table 23: Verse-initial and verse-final repetitions in Q 22:1–10.

Repeated lexicon within the opening of Q 22 makes it clear that this textual block forms a single thematic whole: mention is twice made of “the Hour” (*al-sā‘a*, in vv. 1 and 7), twice of the eschatological “day” (*yawma*, in vv. 2 and 9), and twice of the fact that none of this is in any “doubt” (*rayb*, vv. 5 and 7). The fact that God will resurrect mankind is also stated twice (*al-ba‘th / allāha yab‘athu*, in vv. 5 and 7). Despite this coherence in subject matter, however, the vocatives (*yā-ayyuhā l-nāsu*) in vv. 1 and 5 can be argued to introduce two main paragraphs, both of which contain the lengthy opening phrase *wa-mina l-nāsi man yujādilu fī llāhi bi-ghayri ‘ilm*, “And among the people are some who dispute about God without knowledge” (vv. 3 and 8; cf. also v. 11).⁴² In the second of al-Ḥajj’s opening paragraphs, this opening phrase is flanked by two *dhālika*

⁴² Note the heavy presence in the opening verses of Q 22 (vv. 3, 8, and 11) of the *wa-mina l-nāsi man* opening formula we saw evidenced in the introductions to Q 2 and Q 31, and the usage of the phrase *li-yawmin lā rayba fīhi* in Q 3:9:25, recalling the *kitāb lā rayba fīhi* of al-Baqara’s and al-Sajda’s introductions (thus Q 2:2 and Q 32:2), and the *yawma l-jam‘i lā rayba fīhi* of al-Shūrā’s opening sequence (thus Q 42:7). Both of these elements would appear to possess particular sura-opening weight. It is also worthy of note, in this regard, that the expression *allāhu lā ilāha illā huwa l-ḥayyu l-qayyūmu* that opens Q 3:2 occurs in its entirety in the Throne Verse (Q 2:255). Similarly, Q 22:8 is a precise citation of part of Q 31:20, while Q 22:10 reappears in exact terms both in Q 3:182 and in Q 8:51 (cf. the observation made by Robinson with regard to Q 5:9, 35:7, and 48:29 in “Hands Outstretched”, 4). When considered alongside the fact that the opening five verses of

bi-... wa-anna llāha ... statements (vv. 6–7 and v. 10). The reference to God’s punishment (*wa-lākinna ‘adhāba llāhi shadīd*) that closes the first of the sura’s sections (vv. 1–2) returns to terminate its second and sixth sections (vv. 3–4 and vv. 8–9), thereby connecting the initial *yā-ayyuhā l-nāsu* declaration with the two *wa-mina l-nāsi man yujādilu fī llāhi bi-ghayri ‘ilmin* panels. The two opening paragraphs of Q 22 are therefore structured first A-B (§ 1), then A'-C-B'-C' (§ 2), with overlapping closers further connecting A, B, and B' in §§ 1 and 2 (corresponding to Sections I, II, and V), and C and C' in § 2 (corresponding to Sections IV and VI). The section-internal echo of *kull* in the closers to vv. 3, 5, and 6 (see Table 23, above), meanwhile, along with the repeated references to “the Hour” (vv. 1 and 7), “the Day” (vv. 2 and 9), and the absence of any “doubt” (vv. 5 and 7), add further coherence to al-Ḥajj’s introductory section.

Paragraph (§)	Section	Verses	Opens	Closes
1	I	vv. 1–2	<i>yā-ayyuhā l-nāsu ...</i>	(... <i>wa-lākinna ‘adhāba llāhi shadīd</i>)
	II	vv. 3–4	<i>wa-mina l-nāsi man yujādilu fī llāhi bi-ghayri ‘ilmin ...</i>	... <i>‘adhābi s sa’ir</i>
2	III	vv. 5	<i>yā-ayyuhā l-nāsu ...</i>	(... <i>wa-anbatat min kulli zawjin bahīj</i>)
	IV	vv. 6–7	<i>dhālika bi-...</i>	... <i>wa-anna llāha yab‘athu man fī l-qubūr</i>
	V	vv. 8–9	<i>wa mina l-nāsi man yujādilu fī llāhi bi ghayri ‘ilmin ...</i>	... <i>‘adhāba l ḥarīq</i>
	VI	v. 10	<i>dhālika bi-...</i>	... <i>wa-anna llāha laysa bi-ḡallāmin li-l ‘abīd</i>

Table 24: Paragraphs and sub-paragraphs (sections) in Q 22:1–10.

Sūrat al-Baqara are heavily reminiscent of Q 27:1–6 and Q 31:1–5, it begins to seem likely that some Qur’anic phrases did carry an additional paradigmatic charge, making them especially suitable as sura-openers. Whether this suggests that Q 2 predated Q 3, and that both Q 3 and Q 5 were in circulation prior to the composition of Q 22, remains to be ascertained. The differences in MVL between Q 3, Q 8, and Q 22 are certainly not suggestive of any definitive directionality in those particular terms.

What we have so far identified as a distinctively Medinan structural pattern is clearly visible in the first ten verses of Sūrat al-Ḥajj. Like the opening verses of Sūrat al-Baqara, however, the Medinan provenance of Sūrat al-Ḥajj has been disputed. Nöldeke considers the bulk of the sura to stem from the late-Meccan period, singling out vv. 25–41, 58–60, 67, and 77–78 as Medinan passages and describing v. 17, too, as Medinan insertions,⁴³ a position that has recently been defended by Sinai.⁴⁴ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) reports in his *Itqān* the views of a number of authorities who also consider the sura to be of mixed origin. In contrast to Nöldeke, however, al-Suyūṭī presents the majority position as one in which the sura is predominantly Medinan.⁴⁵ Although al-Suyūṭī provides no consensus as to the provenance of individual verses, one position cited by al-Suyūṭī identifies vv. 52–55 (*wa-mā arsalnā min qablīka ...*) as the only Meccan verses in the sura, designated as “al-Suyūṭī A” in Table 25 below.⁴⁶ He also, however, cites an anonymous opinion describing the pericope that opens in v. 19 (*hādhāni khaṣmāni khtaṣamū fī rabbihim ...*) as the only Medinan passage in an otherwise Meccan sura.⁴⁷ This position has been designated as “al-Suyūṭī B” in Table 25 below.

Bazargan, meanwhile, assesses the sura as consisting of material from two blocks, Block 124 and Block 153, with vv. 18–29 and 42–69 falling into the former, and vv. 1–17, 30–41, and 70–78 into the latter.⁴⁸ The verses in Block 124 have a slightly longer MVL than passages in Q 17, 24, and 7, and a slightly shorter MVL than passages in Q 6, 29, and 34. The verses in Block 153, meanwhile, have a slightly longer MVL than passages in Q 62, 3, and 63, and a slightly shorter MVL than

⁴³ Nöldeke, *History*, 172–173.

⁴⁴ Sinai, *Qur’an*, 127–130. This statement of support will be addressed in more detail below.

⁴⁵ See Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān*, edited by Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūṭ (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla Nāshirūn, 2008), 39. Note that al-Suyūṭī also cites several authorities claiming the sura to be wholly Medinan.

⁴⁶ See al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 39.

⁴⁷ See al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 39. The report to which al-Suyūṭī alludes on p. 39 is provided in full on p. 33, where the Medinan passage is described as consisting of three verses in total, and the report is ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās as cited in Abū Ja‘far al-Naḥḥās’s volume *al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh*.

⁴⁸ See the chart supplied in Sadeghi, “Chronology”, 234.

passages in Q 3, 7, and 59.⁴⁹ A rough designation of Block 124 as potentially late Meccan, and of Block 153 as plausibly Medinan, thus seems defensible.

Authority	Q 22 verse groups, with grey shading indicating material of later provenance									
Nöldeke	1–16	17	18–24	25–41	42–57	58–60	61–66	67	68–76	77–78
al-Suyūṭī A	1–51				52–55	56–78				
al-Suyūṭī B	1–18		19–21	22–78						
Bazargan	1–17		18–29		30–41	42–69				70–78

Table 25: Various proposals for the diachronic division of Q 22, with grey shading indicating material of later provenance.

There is evidently no agreement on the dating of the opening verses of Q 22, with half of the authorities cited above indicating that this material is Meccan (or shorter in MVL), and the other half declaring that this material is Medinan (or longer in MVL). Although Nöldeke dismisses a suggestion made in the *tafsīr* literature that vv. 1ff. might allude to specific historical events that occurred post-hijra, he does not explain why this pericope must consequently be considered to be late Meccan.⁵⁰ Al-Suyūṭī refers the reader to the presence of many statements contained in the *asbāb al-nuzūl* literature that endorse a Medinan origin for the majority of its verses, but he provides no rationale for the various views he cites regarding the identification of the sura's Meccan layer.⁵¹ One might assume that Bazargan's assessment, based as it is on relative MVL alone, that vv. 1–17 are longer in MVL than other sections of the sura forms a reliable piece of evidence. Sinai, however, who assesses the validity of Nöldeke's hypothesis of the breaking up of Sūrat al-Ḥajj and finds it to be persuasive,⁵² notes that the MVL of vv. 1–16, 18–24, 42–57, 61–66, and 68–76 are on average lower, at 95.07 TLPV, than the MVL of vv. 17, 25–41, 58–60, 67, and 77–78,

⁴⁹ See, again, the chart supplied in Sadeghi, "Chronology", 234.

⁵⁰ Nöldeke, *History*, 172–173.

⁵¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 39. He does nonetheless express support for the majority position that Q 22 is a mixed sura.

⁵² Sinai, *Qur'an*, 127–130.

which have an average of 119.33 TLPV.⁵³ The decision to include or divorce certain verses from their immediate surroundings (Bazargan’s division of the sura into blocks differs from Nöldeke’s at vv. 17, 25–29, 58–60, 67, and 70–76) would therefore seem to be enough to change the MVL of the sura’s passages to late Meccan or Medinan almost at will.⁵⁴ Behnam Sadeghi, in his 2011 article “The Chronology of the Qur’ān: A Stylometric Research Program”, is insistent on the fact that “the corroboration offered by statistical methods involves average characteristics of long texts or large aggregates of short texts, not small units of text in isolation.”⁵⁵ Indeed, Sadeghi explains that “where I identify one group of texts as having come after another, this claim holds only in an average sense; it does not mean that every text in one group came after every text in the other group.”⁵⁶ The matter of the MVL of Q 22:1–16 would appear to be a case in point. The question, then, is whether MVL is ever a useful tool in discerning the provenance of discrete passages within Medinan suras.

Table 26, below, shows the MVL statistics for the various suras under discussion in the present essay.⁵⁷ If one looks at the three parallel sura openers with which this essay began (Q 2:1–5, 27:1–6, and 31:1–5), it is apparent that Sūrat al-Baqara’s overall status as a Medinan sura with a correspondingly high overall MVL (137.19 TLPV) is not reflected in the MVL of its opening five verses (48.82 TLPV). The addition of the transcription letters of Q 2:6–7 to the MVL count does not significantly alter this situation, increasing the MVL of al-Baqara’s first paragraph to a mere 56.29 TLPV. As was demonstrated above, however (see Table 2), the language of Q 2:1–7 is overwhelmingly Medinan. Its lexical or theological constructions and phrases tend to re-occur most often (55%) in other Medinan suras, less often (35%) in late Meccan suras, rarely (11%) in

⁵³ Sinai, *Qur’an*, 130.

⁵⁴ Sadeghi, describing Bazargan’s methodology in dividing the entire corpus into 194 blocks, explains that Bazargan was “guided by considerations of thematic unity, rhyme patterns, [and] historical information”. Bazargan does not provide any justification for his placement of individual pericope borders. See Sadeghi, “Chronology”, 232. For a description of Bazargan’s approach, see also Klar, “Text-Critical Approaches. Part Two,” 65–66.

⁵⁵ Sadeghi, “Chronology”, 237.

⁵⁶ Sadeghi, “Chronology”, 237–238.

⁵⁷ See n. 10 above.

middle Meccan suras, and not at all (0%) in early Meccan suras. The problem would seem to reside in what Sadeghi refers to as the difference between *accuracy* and *precision* in the application of statistical methods to the Qur'an.⁵⁸ It is both *precise* and *accurate* to describe the opening verses of Sūrat al-Baqara as sharing a number of lexical overlaps with the opening verses of Sūrat al-Naml and Sūrat Luqmān. If one tries to increase one's field of precision, however, it then becomes *inaccurate* to describe the opening verses of Sūrat al-Baqara as Meccan in provenance. Similarly, it is both *precise* and *accurate* to categorise the expression *inna lladhīna kafarū* (again, see Table 2 above) as a predominantly Medinan turn-of-phrase. It would, however, be *inaccurate* to conclude from this diachronic drift that it is possible to draw concrete lines between a Meccan and a Medinan use of language in this regard. As Sadeghi points out, "increasing precision is a long-term goal".⁵⁹ Difficulties arise when a transitional stage of the process of *refining* our understanding of the provenance of discrete blocks of Qur'anic material ("Medinan suras contain, on average, longer verses than Meccan suras", for example, or "the expression *inna lladhīna kafarū* tends to occur in Medinan suras") becomes a rigid tool for *discerning* the provenance of discrete blocks of Qur'anic material.

⁵⁸ Sadeghi explains: "Once divided, the text becomes smaller, and its analysis more vulnerable to sampling error, leading to loss of precision in reordering. The number of phases displaying concurrent smoothness may be reduced, leading one to confirm less of the chronological sequence than one might do otherwise. Loss of precision, however, is not loss of accuracy. 'Stanford University is on earth' may be less precise than 'Stanford University is in California', but it is no less accurate. In sum, reliance on meaning at the stage of segmentation does not fundamentally prejudice the final chronology nor make it less accurate, even though it may entail loss of information and make it less precise." Sadeghi, "Chronology", 237.

⁵⁹ Sadeghi, "Chronology", 238.

Qur'anic textual block		MVL (= mean verse length) counted in transcription letters per verse
pan-corpus sura-opening paradigm	Q 2:1-5	48.82
	Q 27:1-6	49.83
	Q 31:1-5	33.8
Medinan suras: first paragraphs	Q 2:1-7	56.29
	Q 3:1-9	89.78
	Q 22:1-4	85.25
Medinan suras: introductions	Q 2:1-39	96.13
	Q 3:1-32	111.22
	Q 22:1-10	113.3
Medinan suras in their entirety, as unitary wholes	Q 2 (286 verses)	137.19
	Q 3 (200 verses)	111.66
	Q 22 (78 verses)	102.54
	Q 48 (29 verses)	130.97
	Q 49 (18 verses)	124.61
	Q 57 (29 verses)	129.69
	Q 58 (22 verses)	137.59
	Q 60 (13 verses)	179.31
	Q 61 (14 verses)	100.14
	Q 66 (12 verses)	138.33
Q 98 (8 verses)	74.38	

Table 26: MVL statistics for a number of Qur'anic textual blocks.

A close analysis of the lexicon of Q 3:1-9 and 22:1-4 is beyond the confines of this study and must be postponed to a later date. Nonetheless, it can immediately be observed from the second section of Table 26 that the MVL of these two passages count in at a closely parallel 89.78 and 85.25 TLPV. The parts of the suras that I am designating their introductions (Q 3:1-32 and 22:1-10) also contain verses of similarly comparable lengths: 111.22 and 113.3 TLPV, respectively.⁶⁰ This can be seen in the third section of Table 26 above. It is apparent that neither Q 3:1-32 nor 22:1-10 exhibit the overall drop in mean verse length that is perceptible within the first 39 verses of Sūrat al-Baqara: the 301 transcription letters of Q 3:7 and the 435 transcription letters of Q 22:5 do much to push the introductions to Āl 'Imrān and al-Ḥajj into more typically Medinan territory (with the relatively short MVL of later passages within Q 22 subsequently pushing the MVL of the sura as a

⁶⁰ It is intriguing to note that Bazargan, similarly, places his Block 153 (Q 22:1-17.30-41.70-78) in the close vicinity of his Block 154 (Q 3:2-32.181-200). See the table provided in Sadeghi, "Chronology", 233-234.

whole down to a more typically late Meccan 102.54 TLPV). It nonetheless seems clear that all three suras show a comparable drift from shorter verses through to longer as they progress through their opening sections. The relatively short MVL of Q 3:1–9 and 22:1–4 are quite plausibly evidence, therefore, not of any contemporaneity with Q 45 (84 TLPV), Q 30 (87.2 TLPV), or Q 40 (89.2 TLPV), but of their status as sura introductions.

The short mean verse length of Sūrat al-Bayyina (Q 98; 74.38 TLPV) has given rise to similar discussions. Although the traditional sura lists reflect an almost exclusive understanding of Q 98 as stemming from the Medinan period,⁶¹ Bazargan places the sura in its entirety in his Block 99,⁶² while Sinai adds to any consideration of its remarkably short mean verse length the added detail that “the reference to ‘purified sheets’ (*ṣuḥuf muṭahharah*) in Q 98: 2 has its only close parallels in surahs that are undeniably Meccan”.⁶³ Vv. 1 and 6 of Sūrat al-Bayyina do, however, display near-matched openers: *lam yakuni lladhīna kafarū min ahli l-kitāb wa-l-mushrikīn* becomes *inna lladhīna kafarū min ahli l-kitāb wa-l-mushrikīn*. That the first paragraph closes at the end of v. 5 is further indicated by the presence of matched *wa-mā* openers in vv. 4 and 5. Matched *fāṣilas* link vv. 1 and 4, vv. 3 and 5; near-parallel openers and near-parallel closers link vv. 6 and 7 (*inna lladhīna kafarū ... ūlā’ika hum sharru l-bariyya* becomes *inna lladhīna āmanū ... ūlā’ika hum khayru l-bariyyah*); vv. 6 and 8 are linked by the repetition of *khālīdīna fihā* in both verses. The close of each paragraph is marked by the presence of *dhālika* in their final clausulae: *wa-dhālika dīnu l-qayyima* in v. 5 returns as *dhālika li-man khashiya rabbahu* in v. 8.

⁶¹ Al-Suyūṭī cites the *Kitāb al-nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh* of Abū Ja‘far al-Naḥḥās (d. 338/950), the *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa* of al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), and the *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān* of Abū ‘Ubayd (d. 224/838) in identifying Q 98 as Medinan. See al-Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 34, 36. Nöldeke mentions the existence of a more ambivalent position on the provenance of Q 98. See Nöldeke, *History*, 49 and also 61.

⁶² See Sadeghi, “Chronology”, 235. Bazargan’s Block 98 consists of two passages from Sūrat Maryam (Q 19:2–33.41–74) and his Block 100 is made up of the opening of Sūrat Luqmān (Q 31:2–11). See Sadeghi, “Chronology”, 233.

⁶³ Sinai, *Qur’an*, 131.

Q 98	Link created by
v. 1 v. 6	<i>lam yakun alladhīna kafarū min ahli l-kitāb wa-l-mushrikīn ...</i> <i>inna lladhīna kafarū min ahli l-kitāb wa-l-mushrikīn ...</i>
v. 1 v. 4	<i>... al-bayyina</i> <i>... al-bayyina</i>
v. 3 v. 5	<i>... qayyima</i> <i>... al-qayyima</i>
v. 4 v. 5	<i>wa-mā tafarraqa</i> <i>wa-mā umirū ...</i>
v. 5 v. 8	<i>... wa-dhālika dīnu l-qayyima</i> <i>... dhālika li-man khashīya rabbahu</i>
v. 6 v. 7	<i>inna lladhīna kafarū ... ūlā'ika hum sharru l-bariyya</i> <i>inna lladhīna āmanū ... ūlā'ika hum khayru l-bariyya</i>
v. 6 v. 8	<i>... khālidīna fihā ...</i> <i>... khālidīna fihā abadan ...</i>

Table 27: Unifying elements in Q 98.

Sūrat al-Bayyina thus displays structural parallels with the opening of Q 2, 3, and 22, and with other shorter Medinan suras such as Q 48, 49, 57, 58, 60, 61, and 66. When coupled with the fact of its only consisting of eight verses and the singularity of its focus (contrasting the fate of *alladhīna kafarū min ahli l-kitāb wa-l-mushrikīn* with that of the believers, cf. Q 2:1–7), these distinguishing structural features suggest that the uncharacteristically short mean verse length of Q 98 might in fact indicate that this should be read as an isolated Medinan sura-opener rather than a Medinan sura in its own right.

Conclusions

This article initially set out to establish whether the remarkably short mean verse length of Q 2:1–7 (56.29 TLPV), coupled with the noticeable lexical overlaps between these verses and the opening verses of the middle Meccan Q 27 and the late-Meccan Q 31, indicated the presence of older material within a Medinan sura. A careful inspection of the precise language of Q 2:1–7 revealed the lexicon of al-Baqara's opening verses to be predominantly Medinan. Its discrete phrases, including such statements as *alladhīna yu'minūna bi-mā unzila ilayka wa-mā unzila min qablika* and *wa-lahum 'adhābun 'azīm*, were found to be reflected 46 times in Medinan suras, 29 times in late-Meccan suras, 9 times in middle Meccan suras, and not at all in the earliest stratum of the corpus. While the verses of Q 2:1–7 utilised vocabulary, verse lengths, and structural paradigms

that are evidenced in Meccan suras, they frequently did this in a way that is also typical of Medinan Qur'anic material.

The wider tendency of the verses of al-Baqara's introduction to contain repeated opening or closing formulae, especially at what would appear to be structurally significant junctures of the sura's introduction, also seemed remarkable. The phrase *ulā'ika 'alā hudan min rabbihim wa-ulā'ika humu l-muflihūn*, for example, which occurs in the opening verses of both Sūrat al-Baqara (at Q 2:5) and Sūrat Luqmān (at Q 31:5), is reflected at one further location of Sūrat Luqmān: Q 31:6 terminates with the related clausula, *ulā'ika lahum 'adhābun muhīn*. Sūrat al-Baqara (Q 2), in contrast, contains three subsequent *ulā'ika* statements in its introduction alone: *ulā'ika lladhīna shtarawu l-ḍalālata bi-l-hudā* in v. 16, *ulā'ika humu l-khāsirūn* in v. 27, and *ulā'ika aṣḥābu l-nāri hum fihā khālidūn* at the very close of the introduction, in v. 39. Similar observations were made regarding, for example, the repeated phrases *inna lladhīna kafarū* (see vv. 6 and 39, and cf. v. 28), *wa-lahum 'adhābun 'aẓīm* (v. 7; cf. v. 10), *in kuntum ṣādiqīn* (see vv. 23 and 31), and *wa-hum fihā khālidūn* (see vv. 25 and 39).

A comparable phenomenon was then found to be apparent in the introduction to Sūrat Āl 'Imrān (Q 3:1–32), with the phrase *lā ilāha illā huwa*, for instance, occurring in vv. 3, 6, and twice in v. 18, *wa-llāhu baṣīrun/ra'ūfun bi-l-'ibād* terminating vv. 15, 20, and 30, and the expression *inna lladhīna kafarū bi-āyāti llāhi* falling at the opening of vv. 4, 10, and 21 (with further echoes in vv. 12 and 19). Indeed, it was possible to posit the entirety of Q 3:1–32 as being united around the dominant *Leitwort* *kāfir/kafarū*, culminating in v. 32's final statement: *fa-inna llāha lā yuḥibbu l-kāfirīn*.

The body of this article, therefore, was dedicated to an investigation of the use of repetition within the Medinan stratum of the Qur'anic corpus. Seven of the Medinan oratory suras (Q 48, 49, 57, 58, 60, 61, and 66) were found to exhibit a similar literary feature of apparently targeted, widespread phraseological repetition, not merely in their introductory sections but throughout their lengths. Sūrat al-Faṭḥ (Q 48), for example, can be represented as consisting of four paragraphs with matched openers (*innā ... li ...* at the onset of §§ 1 and 2; *la-qad raḍīya/ṣadaqa llāhu* at the onset of §§ 3 and 4). Other repetitions (*huwa lladhī* in vv. 4, 24, and 28, for instance, or *ajran 'aẓīmā* in vv. 10 and 29) mark the presence of further, minor caesura. Similarly, a terminological *inclusio* surrounds the sura as a whole, with the opening statement *fataḥnā laka*

fathān mubīnā echoed in the reference to *fathān qarībā* near its close (v. 27). Further terminological inclusions (*wa-li-llāhi junūd al-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi wa-kāna llāhu ‘azīzan ḥakīmā* at vv. 4 and 7, for instance, and *wa-kāna llāhu bi-...* at vv. 24 and 26) reinforce the boundaries of internal sections within the broader, sura-wide structure. The patterns of lexical recurrence within Sūrat al-Fath, meanwhile, were profitably utilised in order to map the thematic landscape of the sura, as was illustrated in Table 8 above. References to *q-l-b*, for example, occur once in Q 48:4.18.26, thus in Sections II, VII, and VIII of the sura, but three times in Q 48:11.12 (Section IV). The trilateral root *gh-f-r*, meanwhile, is represented in Sections I (v. 2), IV (once in v. 11 and twice in v. 14), and X (v. 29), where the sura’s closing statement, *minhum maghfīratan wa-ajran ‘azīmā* was argued to comprise the final bracket of a second inclusio encompassing the sura as a whole. Comparable structures are discernable in Q 49, 57, 58, 60, 61, and 66.

The layering of lexical and phraseological repetitions at thematically significant junctures would appear to have been a compositional technique that had a substantial presence in certain parts of the Medinan Qur’an. In the section entitled “Disputed Cases: The Question of Q 22:1–10 and Q 98”, moreover, similar patterns of lexical repetition were identified in the opening verses of Q 22, argued by some to be of Meccan origin, and in Q 98, attributed to both the Meccan and the Medinan phases of Muhammad’s ministry. This raises the possibility that the presence of overlapping instances of wide-spaced phraseological repetition, especially where this occurs at the beginning or the end of verses, might be taken as an indication that material of disputed origin might in fact be Medinan.

To sound a note of caution, however, this feature was not evident across the entirety of the Medinan stratum of the corpus. Nor was its absence from the three strata previously identified as Meccan empirically proven.⁶⁴ It seems likely that, rather than uncovering evidence of a stylistic rupture between two sides of a corpus, further research will reveal that Qur’anic style developed in a continuum, with such early Meccan literary features as cognate paronomasia (e.g., *fa-akhadhahum akhdhatan rābiya* in Q 69:10), terminological inclusio (e.g., *al-ḥāqqah / mā l-ḥāqqah / wa-mā adrāka mā l-ḥāqqah / ... / wa-innahu la-ḥaqqu l-yaqīn* in Q 69:1–3.51), and grammatical parallelism (e.g., *fa-ammā man ūtiya kitābahu bi-yamīnihi fa-yaqūlu ... wa-ammā man ūtiya*

⁶⁴ For how lexical repetitions support the structure of the middle Meccan Sūrat al-Kahf, for instance, see Klar, “Re-examining Textual Boundaries”.

kitābahu bi-shimālihi fa-yaqūlu ... in Q 69:18.25) extending seamlessly into the close-set and targeted repetitions of Q 2:1–39, Q 3:1–32, Q 22:1–10, and Q 48, 49, 57, 58, 60, 61, 66, and 98.

Even within this small subset of supposedly Medinan suras, moreover, there is stylistic variation. The overlapping inclusios of Q 3:1–32 and the presence of an underlying ring structure to Q 58 are a far cry from the straightforward thematic paragraphing of Q 2:1–39 or of Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt (Q 49), for example. Likewise, some suras were found to exhibit repeated openers and closers (Q 48, for example, or Q 57), while others (Q 61, for example, or Q 66) display repetition only at the beginnings of their thematic units. The bare-bones repetitions of suras that rely heavily on vocative addresses to provide structure (Q 60, for example, and Q 61) may speak to a slightly different rhetorical pattern altogether, one that is more heavily inclusio-based. There is a variety of ways of classifying this material, and a certain flexibility in the erection of the boxes and categories in which we place stylistic features, and the suras that exhibit them, continues to be necessary.

Indeed, without in any way wishing to disturb the forward momentum created by recent developments in the field, I would argue that caution remains a desideratum in all attempts to date Qur’anic material to a certain stylistic period. It was demonstrated in the opening pages of this essay that Medinan suras may have utilised Meccan language and Meccan stylistic paradigms for Medinan purposes.⁶⁵ This should prevent us from drawing misleading conclusions from Sinai’s tentative observation that the opener to Sūrat al-Baqara, a series of isolated letter followed by the statement *dhālika l-kitāb* (Q 2:1–2), is more typically Meccan than Medinan.⁶⁶ A large question mark has also been placed over the feasibility of MVL as a diagnostic tool for discerning the provenance of small blocks of text.⁶⁷ Upon closer inspection, the relatively short verses of Q 2:1–7 were found to be not entirely dissimilar to the relatively short verses of Q 3:1–9.⁶⁸ The accepted fact

⁶⁵ See also the conclusions to my 2017 essay “Text-Critical Approaches to Sura Structure. Part Two”, 86, where, with particular reference to Q 2:244–245, I posit the blending of the familiar with the unfamiliar as a deliberate compositional technique in the later suras.

⁶⁶ Sinai, *Qur’an*, 101.

⁶⁷ Again, see Klar, “Text-Critical Approaches to Sura Structure. Part Two”, 78–79, where a similar conclusion is drawn with regard to Q 2:244–245.252.254.

⁶⁸ Indeed, if the 301 transcription letters of Q 3:7 are removed from the equation, the MVL of Q 3:1–6.8–9 drops down to an even more closely comparable 63.38.

that “over time the style of the Qur’ān, as represented by verse length, changed gradually – indeed not only gradually but also monotonically, *i.e.* irreversibly in one direction,”⁶⁹ should not invite the conclusion that all short verses must therefore be Meccan in origin (or, indeed, all long verses Medinan).

A further blurring of boundaries is occasioned by the fact that a small handful of al-Baqara’s opening phrases only occur in the context of the first few verses of Q 2, Q 27, and Q 31 (*i.e.*, *bi-l-ākhirati hum yūqinūn* and *ulā’ika ‘alā hudan min rabbihim*; the expression *yuqīmūna l-ṣalāta wa-mimmā razaqnāhum yunfiqūn* similarly is only attested in the first verses of Q 2 and in v. 3 of Q 8). This suggests that certain phrases are utilised in the Qur’an solely with a sura-introductory function, a function that transcends considerations of period or of style. In his 2011 article on Qur’anic chronology, Behnam Sadeghi removes from his analysis Bazargan’s Blocks 2–16, which largely consist of the introductions of suras that are traditionally dated to be early. He does this partly on the basis that “Meccan introductory sections are characterized by a distinctive stylistic register”.⁷⁰ It seems eminently plausible that a similar feature might be evident more widely throughout the corpus.

Our current criteria for describing a sura (or a pericope) as early Meccan, middle Meccan, late Meccan, or Medinan, would undoubtedly benefit from refinement. Certainly, as was found to be the case with Q 2:1–7, 22:1–10, 61, 64, and 98 during the pages of the current essay, should the data not fit comfortably into present categories of what constitutes a Meccan or a Medinan text, then a closer investigation of the present categories is in order. Although broad trends can be identified, Qur’anic lexicon, structure, and rhetoric do not tend to move in straight developmental lines. Increasing precision will only be achievable as a long-term goal if we are careful to maintain scrupulous levels of accuracy in the interim conclusions we draw along the way.

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⁶⁹ Sadeghi, “Chronology”, 215.

⁷⁰ Sadeghi, “Chronology”, 287. Sadeghi is here explaining his decision to omit Bazargan’s Group 1, which largely consists of the introductions of suras, from his statistical analysis.

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