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WHAT THE RELIGIONS NAMED IN THE QUR'ĀN CAN TELL US ABOUT THE EARLIEST UNDERSTANDING OF "ISLAM"

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Humanities

By

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2012
Wright State University

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

June 20, 2012

      I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Micah David Collins ENTITLED What the Religions Named In The Qur'an Can Tell Us About The Earliest Understanding of "Islam" BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Masters of Humanities.

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ABSTRACT

Collins, Micah. M.A. Humanities Department, Masters of Humanities Program, Wright State University, 2012. What The Religions Named In The Qur'ān Can Tell Us About The Earliest Understanding of "Islam".

Both Western studies of Islam as well as Muslim beliefs assert that the Islamic holy text, the Qur'ān, endeavored to inaugurate a new religion, separate and distinct from the Jewish and Christian religions. This study, however, demonstrates that the Qur'ān affirms a continuity of beliefs with the earlier revealed texts that suggest that the revelations collected in the Qur'ān did not intend to define a distinct and separate religion. By studying the various historical groups named in the Qur'ān – such as the *Yahūd*, *Ṣabī'ūn*, and *Naṣārā* – we argue that the use of the term "islam" in the Qur'ān relates more to the general action of "submission" to the monotheistic beliefs engaged in by existing Jewish and Nazarene communities within Arabia. To ascertain the religious approach of the Qur'an, this thesis surveys the historical-critical approaches already applied to Historical Jesus Research, and discusses why these methodologies can and should be applied to the study of Islamic Origins. Through this research, a picture emerges of the socio-religious contexts of Muhammad that was consistent with the bulk of the Biblical religious communities named within the Qur'ān, rather than in contrast with them. This research situates itself in a broader study of the "Historical Muhammad" and Islamic Origins. Its conclusions lend to some of the Revisionist approaches and theories of the earliest religious orientation of Muhammad's community.

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Thesis Statement

Islam is a religion regarded as having a strong heritage within the Judeo-Christian Biblical and prophetic tradition. Both Western studies of Islam as well as Muslim beliefs assert that the Islamic holy text, the Qur'ān, endeavored to inaugurate a new religion, separate and distinct from the Jewish and Christian religions. As we will find in this study, however, the Qur'ān affirms a continuity of beliefs with the earlier revealed texts (the Jewish scriptures and the "Gospel") that suggest that the revelations collected in the Qur'ān did not intend to define a distinct and separate religion. In fact, the Qur'ān asserts that the numerous biblical prophets it mentions should have "no distinction" (3.84) made between them and it instructs its Arabian audience to accept the scriptures still "between your hands" (e.g. 5.43), a reference to the Torah and the Gospel.

A question we will confront in this study is how the term "Islam" is understood in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān does use the term "Islam" as a general term for "obeying" or "submitting," though not, as we argue, to designate a religion, distinct and identifiable from Judaism and a group we will identify as "Nazarenes" (*Naṣārā*). By studying the various historical groups named in the Qur'ān – such as the *Yahūd*, *Ṣabī'ūn*, and *Naṣārā* – we argue that the use of the term "islam" in the Qur'ān relates more to the general action of "submission" to the monotheistic beliefs engaged in by existing Jewish and Nazarene communities within Arabia. These existing Jewish and Nazarene communities in Arabia formed part of the audience of Muhammad's oration of the revelations, demonstrating that Muhammad's prophetic messages were intended to continue earlier traditions, rather than set forth a new religion.

This study endeavors to understand more about the activity of Muhammad ibn `Abd'ullāh (ca. 570/571 – 632 CE), and the meaning of "Islam," by reviewing the historical sources on the religious groups specifically named in the Qur'ān, in order to establish the context of the Qur'ān, and thereby more appropriately elucidate its intended meaning to its original audience. As we will see, the view that the Qur'ān was inaugurating a new religion is one which the Qur'ān itself repeatedly and unequivocally rejects. Scholars of Islam, nevertheless, differ widely as to how we should view the historical Muhammad, his activity and community, particularly since we have such a limited number of early sources. This study, therefore, will begin by reviewing the arguments made in the secondary research, broadly grouped into two categories of "Traditionalist" acceptance of traditional Islamic sources and "Revisionist" critical analysis (and usually partial rejection), of traditional sources. In how they approach the primary sources, these scholars follow what Judith Koren and Yehuda D. Nevo describe as "two distinct paths" in their "Methodological Approaches to Islamic Studies."[1] In order to determine which approach might produce the most reliable results, this study will consider how the historical methodologies applied in Historical Jesus Research can be applied to assessing historical probabilities, within what Revisionist scholar Herbert Berg terms "Islamic Origins."[2] This thesis therefore endeavors to understand more about the activity of a more historical Muhammad, through reviewing the historical sources on the religious groups specifically named in the Qur'ān. The premise asserted is that while scholars seek to understand the historical Muhammad, and to contrast this understanding with the Traditionalist narrative, there is simply not enough *early* material with which to construct a historically-probable biography of Muhammad from the material itself.

Therefore, we can do better to understand the historical Muhammad by understanding the context and setting he was placed in, and those religious communities which were addressed by name in the Qur'ān which Muhammad orated. After obtaining a better understanding of the groups named in the Qur'ānic audience, this thesis will conclude by looking at how early sources, including the Qur'ān, describe Muhammad's activity and his community in relation to existing faiths. In doing this, the sources will indicate that he saw "Islam" as a basic religious activity, which we will see that the Qur'ān describes as secondary to "faith" itself. Furthermore, we will look at an early source which will indicate a basic unity between Muhammad's followers and the Jews of Medina.

In Chapter 1 this study will examine how the study of Christian Origins and the Historical Jesus evolved over a number of scholarly "Quest" periods. It will examine how certain historical criteria were developed thereby and how these can be applied to the study of Islamic Origins. This survey will set the stage for the review in Chapter 2. This second chapter will discuss some of the approaches Traditionalist and Revisionist scholars have used in Islamic Studies. By doing this, we will see that there seems to be a similar trajectory between critical research in Islamic Studies and the approach of Historical Jesus Research. This is important in that it helps us understand *how* to approach studying issues related to the Historical Muhammad, his historical community and the historical religious groups named in the Qur'ān. All of this will lend to an emerging critical understanding of what the Qur'ān originally meant by "Islam" and how it seems to have seen itself in relation to the religious communities which it addressed. To this end, Chapter 3 will directly apply the historical-critical methodologies developed in Jesus Research. Following in the footsteps of some Revisionist scholars of Islam, it

will assess the religious milieu of the Qur'ānic audience – those communities mentioned by name in the Qur'ān – with a preference for early sources, or sources which pre-date the Qur'ān itself. This will be for the purposes of gaining insight into how these communities were understood by third party sources, as well as the Qur'ān, for the purposes of framing the context of the Qur'ānic conversation on these groups and their doctrines. This leads, ultimately, to the overarching thesis concerning how the Qur'ān itself describes Muhammad's activity, "Islam," as a basic religious activity, secondary to "faith." It will furthermore lend to what we will see from the sources in chapter 4, that there was a stronger connection than is typically thought today, between Muhammad's followers and the monotheistic faiths named in the Qur'ānic audience.

The survey of the religious groups named in the Qur'ān will lead us to an assessment, in Chapter 4, which will look directly at how the Qur'ān itself describes "Islam." Besides the Qur'ān, another useful source, the *Constitution of Medina,* is recorded within the late *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh,* the traditional name for biographies of Muhammad, hereafter simply referred to as the "Sīrah" account. While this account is a late source, it seems – as it purports to record a historical treaty of sorts – to have been widely attested. This study will then look at the two recensions of the author Ibn Isḥāq's (d. ca. 767) *Sīrah* which record versions of this document (around two centuries after Muhammad). The purpose of this analysis will be to examine how the *Constitution* describes Muhammad's community in relation to the Jews of Medina, as such relationships can tell us something about how Muhammad viewed his own religious activity. This thesis will also examine the debate in secondary literature over the terminology used therein; terminology which, some have argued, seems to indicate that

Muhammad's followers and the Jews of Medina formed a single *Ummah* (*Ummat^{an} Wāḥidat^{an}*)*,* a term used in the Qur'ān and elsewhere to describe a single "religious community."

The purpose for which these topics will be addressed is to demonstrate that "Islam" in the Qur'ān describes a general monotheistic, religious *activity,* and was not yet used to designate a new and separate religion. This is particularly significance in light of the Qur'ān's apparent concern with reiterating this point several times. The Qur'ān explains that it brought nothing new (41.43; 42.13; 46.9; 46.10, *et al.*), but was a "reminder" (15.6; 15:10; 36:10) to people familiar with Biblical stories, of the Torah that was with them, "between your hands" (e.g. 5.43), as we will see. Similarly then, the purpose of this study is to demonstrate that Muhammad's movement, in its earliest form, seems to have not yet seen itself as entirely distinct and separate from existing monotheistic faiths. Though the issue of Muhammad's own religious orientation itself is much larger than what a study of this length can possibly answer conclusively (addressing any possible objection), this work is a contribution situated within that broader conversation of the relationship of Muhammad and his community to other monotheistic, Biblical, faiths.

Chapter 1: How Historical Jesus Research Can Help Us Assess the Historical Religious Milieu of the Qur'ān and Muhammad's Islam

In order to better understand the groups named in the Qur'ān, and thereby have a better picture of how the Qur'ān understood Muhammad's activity and "Islam," it benefits us greatly to examine how historical-critical approaches to the "historical Jesus" have

already refined useful criteria for assessing historical probability. As we will see, "Islamic Origins" scholar Herbert Berg explains that scholars of the historical Jesus and scholars of the historical Muhammad (and his historical community) "are engaged in seemingly similar activities" and could benefit from comparing and evaluating methods and theories in their respective fields.

Like Historical Jesus Research, while this study prefers earlier sources to those penned later, it does not approach those early materials with assumptions of the scripture conforming to ideas and theological doctrines which demonstrably emerged much later.

In Historical Jesus Research, when Jesus speaks of "the Kingdom of Heaven," or when he is thought to be the Messiah by a character in the Gospel narratives, the critical scholar does not ask what these terms mean to Christianity today, or even in the second century CE. It instead asks what these terms would have meant to Jews situated in first century Palestine. Similarly, when the Qur'ān speaks of the verbal *aslama,* or its *maṣdar* verbal noun of *Al-Islam*, or even of the religious group termed *Naṣārā,* the question for the critical scholar is not what later Muslims thought was the meaning and religious identity behind those words, the question is how might these have been understood by the original Qur'ānic audience, and does the phrasing of our earliest sources in fact conform to ideas laid out in later ones. It is therefore necessary to say a few words concerning ideas about what history is, within the context of the study of history, and how we might try to approach the study of it in a more critical manner.

To begin with, in seeking to understand any religion in its infancy, or its sociohistorical context, one must seek to distinguish between a *historically probable* religious figure and the religious figure as they have emerged in the later discourse of

faith and theology. E. H. Carr explains in his *What Is History*[3] that Leopold von Ranke's (1795 – 1886) famous principle of *wie es eigentlich gewissen* (what really happened),[4] is impossible to ever ascertain. Ranke's doctrine was known as Positivism, where "facts" were thought to have been established, and conclusions subsequently were derived therefrom, as one would imagine from the term's drawing on the *scientific* concept of positivism. Interpreting "what really happened," eternally depends on the biases of all involved in the transpiring and recording of events as they were perceived.[5]

Throughout much of human history, the study of history itself was not regarded as important. Vivian Hunter Galbraith explains that medieval education completely ignored the study of history.[6] Robin George Collingwood explained that history as we know it is, in fact, only the study of thought and the reconstruction of thought within the mind of the historian. Collingwood explained that "there is no history except the history of human life, and that, not merely as life, but as rational life, the life of thinking beings."[7]

Thomas Spencer Jerome writes in his article, "The Case of the Eyewitnesses: 'A lie is a lie, even in Latin," that "the human mind is not primarily an organ by which man determines the real objective truth of things and gives utterance to it, but is rather a tool by which one accomplishes one's desires."[8] Our question, however, will not be "what really happened?" but "what can we determine with a high degree of probability from the sources?" A study then which seeks to assess historical *probabilities*, and not simply survey, anthropologically, the religious customs and beliefs of a people, should make use of sources both within and outside of that tradition: relying on neither one exclusively (as both will reflect a different bias). At the same time preference should be given to sources closest to the events which they describe. We must understand this, going forward, as in

researching "Islamic Origins," scholars are often guilty of imposing assumptions *about* history on their reading of the primary sources.

In understanding an approximation, or probable account, of the historical context of early Islam, one must begin by drawing primarily from what the relatively early text of the Qur'ān says, about any topic, preferably in its Arabic. For the ease of allowing the reader a consistent means of reference, however, this study will cite the widely-used Yusuf Ali English translation by default. Where it is helpful to discuss differences, we will use other translations or work from the Arabic directly.[9]

For the purposes of framing the context of the Qur'ānic conversation on the groups and their doctrines named in the Qur'ān (and how they relate to Muhammad's "Islam"), this study will employ the methodologies of Historical Jesus Research, which will be outlined in the following section. While there are differences between the figures of the historical Jesus and the historical Muhammad, and certainly, therefore, differences between these and the historical Qur'ānic religious audience, it is useful to utilize similar methodologies in determining historical probabilities. Herbert Berg explains that "scholars of the historical Jesus and scholars of the historical Muhammad are engaged in seemingly similar activities, but they rarely look to each other to compare and evaluate their methods and theories." Both are beset by similar problems when "both sets of scholars approach the texts with assumptions shared by the believers."[10]

Berg further observes that in both camps, scholars often "overtly or covertly" embed their research and conclusions with theological bias.[11] He notes, however, that while there are far fewer scholars endeavoring to assess probabilities of what may be called a "Historical Muhammad," and while they "have less sophisticated methodologies

than their counterparts," their strength lies in the fact that "for the most part their conclusions are less theological."[12] While both camps have much to teach one another, such cross-disciplinary-pollination is precluded by the fact that "Christian origins scholars, particularly those who quest after the historical Jesus, are unaware of the work on the historical Muhammad."[13] This work will thus attempt to improve upon the common approaches to Islamic history, by employing the methodologies of Historical Jesus Research, consistent with Berg's recommendation.

The Historical-Critical "Quest"

The "Quest for the Historical Jesus,"[14] was named for Albert Schweitzer's groundbreaking 1906 work, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus.* It was intertwined with eighteenth century European Enlightenment. Prior to this, the question of a differentiated, *historical* Jesus would have been, in the words of James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, in *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*, "a strange proposition."[15] In this, the "Pre-Quest" Era, there was simply *no quest* for a historical Jesus, nor any other Christian Testament figure. The Jesus of Christian theology was the assumed Jesus of history, just as the Muhammad of theology is assumed by Traditionalists in the Muslim world to be the Muhammad of history. Contradictions between Gospel accounts were seen as part of a harmonic total Gospel vision.[16] In the perception of scholars of this period, "there was no need to go searching for Jesus when he could be easily found in the Gospels."[17] This is the assumption commonly shared in the Muslim world, regarding both Muhammad, as well as the interactions with the religious groups, as described in the *Sīrah* biography. These events, for the most part absent from the Qur'ān, are assumed to *be* history "as it really

happened." We must, therefore, be careful when examining earlier sources, such as the Qur'ān, so that we do not inadvertently graft ideas and interpretations onto things therein which are not explicitly stated, or which cannot be corroborated by earlier sources.

A more careful historical-critical approach began to emerge with the "Old Quest" or "First Quest." Since Schweitzer, this has generally been considered to have been inaugurated by Hermann Reimarus in 1778.[18] James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy explain, however, that "this is not quite accurate," as such modern era thinkers as Benedict Spinoza, Isaac La Peyrere, Richard Simon, Thomas Woolston, Peter Annet and Thomas Morgan laid the groundwork for what would eventually emerge as the mature historical-critical method."[19]

Reimarus argued for a distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith,[20] explaining that Jesus "was born a Jew and intended to remain one."[21] This Jesus saw himself as a herald of a coming "kingdom of God" but this phrase indicated "the usual meaning" that would have been understood "amongst Jews of his time" as a Messianic kingdom.[22] In surveying the religious groups named in the Qur'ān, therefore, our primary concern should be an assessment of "the usual meaning" of related terms on the eve of Muhammad's activity.

With the opening of Günther Bornkamm's work *Jesus of Nazareth* (1960), the position of the following "New Quest" era (1953-1985) was cemented: "No one is any longer in the position to write a life of Jesus" as any sort of biographical narrative.[23] Bornkamm explained that this "is inherent in the nature of the sources,"[24] owing in part to the fact that "we possess no single word of Jesus and no single story of Jesus, no matter how incontestably genuine they may be, which do not contain at the same time the

confession of the believing congregation or at least are embedded therein."[25] We can

discuss "occurrence and events" in the life Jesus, based upon assessed *probabilities*, but

not anything approaching a biography, as the Gospel narratives purport to be.[26] Harald

Motzki explains a similar realization:

> At present, the study of Muhammad, the founder of the Muslim community, is obviously
> caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, it is not possible to write a historical biography of
> the Prophet without being accused of using the sources uncritically, while on the other
> hand, when using the sources critically, it is simply not possible to write such a
> biography.[27]

This study accepts that there are severe limitations to constructing a historical biography

of Muhammad. For that reason it instead seeks to gain insight *into* the historical

Muhammad *through* a survey of the religious communities which the Qur'ān addresses,

rather than addressing the historical Muhammad directly. This study, therefore, will

challenge the Traditionalist narrative, based on early dating of a source and other criteria

(which will be delineated in this chapter), that increase a given passage's probable

historicity. It will employ historical-critical methodologies, in order to ascertain

probabilities of what might lie behind religious narrative. Just as a scholar of Jesus

Research endeavors to understand the "historical" Jesus in the context of first century

Roman Judaea and Galilee, rather than in the context of later Christian doctrine,[28] this

study will approach the historical religious groups named in the Qur'ān in a manner that

tries to ascertain how they would have been understood in Late Antiquity. Understanding

this is key to framing the approach of this study of the religious and sectarian

communities named within the Qur'ān. Since, as we have seen, "it is not possible to write

a historical biography"[29] of Muhammad, according to Motzki, without relying on a relatively uncritical reading of very late sources, we can gain some of our most historically-probable information on Muhammad through a critical assessment of the communities which the Qur'ān addresses by name. By understanding this significant portion of his audience in a more historical light, we may be able to understand the historical Muhammad in a way that we otherwise could not.

Methodology for Assessing Probability Regarding the Qur'ānic Religious Milieu

In the same manner as the approach which we are to take in this study, Historical Jesus Research seeks to describe the sectarian environment which Jesus was situated in by employing sources such as Philo, Pliny or Josephus or the Dead Sea Scrolls, in assessing a historically-probable Jesus.[30] Later resources are considered as well, but an emphasis is placed upon those sources which *predate* the activity of Jesus. Sources from the Christian canon may potentially hold some clues, but nothing therein is taken at face value, and these texts are not given more weight than third party sources, or archeology. If we are to understand the "Islamic Origins," then we must also seek to better understand the religious groups named in the Qur'ān. We must, furthermore, approach assessment of these groups in a similar way as Historical Jesus Research, looking foremost at what these religious groups, and third parties, say about them; not simply relying on the Qur'ān for our information on them.

Bart Ehrman lays some of the ground-rules for such an endeavor. He explains that we should be highly skeptical of any sources written more than a century after Jesus, and here too, we will regard sources emerging well after Muhammad as more suspect than earlier accounts.[31] Ehrman notes that such sources as the Christian Gospels are employed simply because they "are the only sources available." Ehrman explains "a few very basic methodological principles" in approaching material from a historical-critical perspective and "reconstructing a past event." First, he explains, "historical sources that are closest to an event have a greater likelihood of being accurate than those that are further removed." Moreover, "as an event gets discussed, and reports of it circulate, there are greater opportunities for it to be changed, until," finally, he explains "just about everyone gets it wrong."[32] Thus, Ehrman concludes that "the less time has elapsed in the transmission process, the less time there is for alteration and exaggeration" and thus, "the earliest sources should be especially valuable."

Ehrman explains that while Jesus is described in "numerous ancient sources," which are in some cases "independent of one another," on the other hand "there are obvious historical problems" with these sources, such as the fact that they are "not disinterested accounts, by impartial observers, written near to the events which they describe." Instead, they were written by those professing faith, "who had a vested interest in what they said about him, who were writing a long time after him, 35-65 years." Moreover, Ehman notes, "none of these authors were an eye-witness," and in their composing of the Gospel narratives, they were addressing "different audiences with different needs" – these being "writings produced by believes, for believers, to produce belief" – and thereby conforming the telling of their accounting of Jesus's life to the

contexts and beliefs of their respective communities.[33] As much as this is true of the

communities from which the Gospels emerged, it is even more the case with those which

developed the *Sīrah* and *ḥadīth* genres, more than a century and a half after the events

which they purported to describe.

At the same time, Ehrman notes that any detective will attest to the fact that even

eye-witness accounts, written shortly after the events which they describe, are not

guarantees of accuracy.[34] "Even if these authors had been eyewitnesses," he explains,

"we would still have to examine their testimonies carefully." This is because "the needs

of their audiences affected the way they told these stories."[35] He similarly explains that

each Gospel narrative is a separate story – a separate testimony – and that the

amalgamation of these oral traditions set to pen, in effect creates a *fifth* narrative,

different from each of the four composing it.[36] Thus, even if we could authenticate early

records in Islamic history as originating with the authors who their chains of narrations

claim, this would in no way guarantee that what was reported was actually "true."

Secondly, Ehrman explains that methodologically, "we should be alert to later

developments in the tradition that have affected our sources," including "theological

views" about Jesus "that develop *after* his death." Commenting on the lateness of the

Gospel attributed to John, in which a theologically "divine" and "exalted" character of

Jesus appears, Ehrman explains that "our question as historians is not whether or not the

things Jesus says about himself in the Gospel of John are true. The question is whether

the things that Jesus says of himself in John are the things that the historical Jesus

actually said." We cannot, of course, assess "what really happened," only what probably

happened. Related to this, Ehrman explains, the third rule is to beware of the bias found

in each individual author. These three basic rules can be applied to "every historical figure that you are trying to establish from antiquity."[37]

In addition to these rules, Ehrman notes that all of the historical criteria used in Historical Jesus Research can be boiled down to three essential criteria. These can be applied "any tradition" or any source, whether earlier or later, on the historical Jesus, in reconstructing what a historical figure probably said or did. The first is the "Criterion of Independent Attestation," or of "Multiple Attestation." This, however, does not prove that the tradition multiply attested *is* authentic, just that it is *more likely* to be authentic, in that – for certain – it is older than the multiple sources that attest to it; thus bringing us back to the value of the earliest sources. "For that reason," Ehrman explains, "our first criteria has to be supplemented by others."[38]

The "Criterion of Multiple Attestation" holds that a passage is more likely to go back to Jesus if it has been preserved in two or more sources which are *independent* of each other; not drawing from one another, or a common source.[39] When two or more *independent* sources present similar or consistent accounts, the tradition likely pre-dates the sources. John Meier writes in *A Marginal Jew* that "The criterion of multiple attestation focuses on those saying or deeds of Jesus that are attested in more than one *independent* literary source and/or in more than one literary form or genre."[40] Furthermore Meier explains that "the force of this criterion is increased if a given motif or theme is found in both literary sources and different literary forms."[41] John Dominic Crossan writes in *The Historical Jesus* that this "Plural Attestation in the first stratum pushes the trajectory back as far as it can go with at least formal objectivity."[42]

Second, the "Criterion of Dissimilarity" can be understood in the analogy of a court witness. Ehrman explains that, "sometimes a witness has a vested interest in the outcome of a trial. Is the witness distorting, or even fabricating testimony for reasons of their own?" Taken by itself, however, something being dissimilar only argues for its probability; the inverse is not necessarily true. That is, just because something fits with the tradition does not necessarily make it untrue, it is only more suspect than something which is dissimilar and had less likelihood of being preserved had it not been true. It is thus not as useful for showing what Jesus *didn't* say as it is for showing what it is likely Jesus *did* say.

In addition and related to the "Criterion of Dissimilarity," one of the most important criteria is the "Criterion of Embarrassment," which is a "heightened form of the criterion of dissimilarity."[43] This approach maintains that a Traditionalist narrative would not have preserved an account or narration that embarrassed or overtly conflicted with the historical dogma at the period of documentation unless the widespread attestation of the accounts made the stories impossible to disown. Thus, such an account has a higher degree of probability for being historically reliable by virtue of the fact that they were recorded *in spite* of what they recorded.

A crucified Messiah figure would hardly fulfill Jewish expectations, yet all early accounts of Jesus maintain his crucifixion. This indicates that crucifixion was so widely known that the authors had to confront this reality and create a narrative that explained this problematic incident in the context of a theology that was literarily adapting to these undesirable circumstances.[44] The other side of this and the "Criterion of Dissimilarity" is that of determining and scrutinizing solitary accounts which conform too *closely* to a

known agenda of the author.[45] There are some examples so extreme, that this criterion *can* be used to demonstrate what Jesus *did not* say. For instance, Ehrman cites three times in the Gospel attributed to Mark, where Jesus predicts that he must go to Jerusalem, be rejected, be crucified and rise from the dead. As well, in the Johannite account, Jesus claims to be coequal with God; a view which is simply unparalleled in the earlier Synoptic accounts, and reflects a theology emerging much later.[46]

Third is the "Criterion of Contextual Credibility," understanding Jesus' own context, to better understand which traditions are more probably descended from him. While this study makes use of the other two aforementioned criteria, the research itself emanates from this "Criterion of Contextual Credibility." Ehrman explains that "for ancient documents, reliable traditions must conform to the historical and social contexts to which they relate." Thus, he continues, "sayings, deeds and experiences of Jesus have to be plausibly situated in the historical context of first century Palestine," from what we know of that context from third party sources, "in order for them to be trusted." More specifically, however, this criterion is typically used as a negative criterion. If anachronistic, this argues *against* the probable historicity of a tradition. We can thus say with a fair degree of probability that "any saying or deed that does not make sense in this context is automatically suspect," and might well have been fabricated to conform to later ideas.[47] All other criteria, Ehrman explains, reel from these three. For a more detailed discussion of these criteria, the reader should refer to *Bart D. Ehrman's The New Testament: A Historical Introduction To The Early Christian Writings, Third Edition* (2003), and Barnes Tatum's *In Quest of Jesus: Revised and Enlarged Edition* (1999). These will be the criteria which we will employ in determining historical-probability

relative to the religious communities named in the Qur'ān, as well as phrases related to these communities (and their interaction with Muhammad), in the *Constitution of Medina.*

We have looked at the idea of what history itself is, and how the question of "what really happened" is beyond the scope of our assessment. Instead of taking a positivist approach, we will assess probabilities, employing existing methodologies from Historical Jesus Research. We have looked at the evolution of Quest for the Historical Jesus, over various periods or "eras" in which the field has evolved. We have seen that scholars of Historical Jesus and Historical Muhammad research are often beset with similar problems in assessing probabilities, and that the methodological solutions employed in the criteria of Historical Jesus Research, as laid out by Ehrman, can serve as useful for the assessment of the early period of Muhammad's followers. By looking at the scholarship on Early Islam, or "Islamic Origins" as Berg terms it, we will see that the critical research follows a similar trajectory as that of Historical Jesus Research.

Chapter 2: The Traditionalist and Revisionist Scholarship on Islam

Before examining the religious milieu on the eve of Islam, restricting ourselves only to those communities mentioned by name within the Qur'ān, the reader should be made generally aware of the scholarship from the two previously-noted, dominant approaches in Islamic Studies today. These are what Judith Koren and Yehuda D. Nevo call the "Traditionalist" and "Revisionist" schools.[48] Koren and Nevo argue that the Traditionalist school "tends not to discuss questions of methodology,"[49] save for some *responses* to Revisionism,[50] but instead analyzes "along the lines of accepted Muslim scholarship,"

and accepts "most semantic elements" of linguistic analysis along the lines of "classical

Muslim scholarship, so that modern methods of linguistic enquiry are unnecessary, and

may be disregarded as irrelevant."[51] Traditionalism is concerned primarily – exclusively

in many cases – with the study of actual wording of primary sources (e.g. the Bible or

Qur'ān), maintaining that the correct understanding of the *source* itself implies the

correct interpretation of the events referenced in said texts.[52] Revisionism, on the other

hand, is often characterized by its use of methodologies similar to those employed in

Historical Jesus Research.

The Traditionalist approach generally accepts or engages in some degree of

defense for the methodology of scholarship in the Muslim world. This methodology is

known as `ulūm al-ḥadīth*, often translated as the "sciences" of *Ḥadīth* (oral tradition later

set to pen); though the term `ilm* (pl. `ulūm*), simply meant "knowledge," prior to the

modern era. Such works focus on responding to criticisms that Muslim scholarship lacks

a critical methodology for determining authenticity amongst *aḥādīth* (s. *ḥadīth*). The

Traditionalist response to this sort of criticism would initiate from Fazlul Rahman (1919-

1988), and continue with individuals such as Wael Hallaq (born 1955).[53]

Traditionalist scholarship, however, is concerned more with documenting *how*

things are in the Muslim world, not *how they were* when Muhammad walked the Earth.

Uri Rubin explains that he is simply not concerned with asking "'what really happened'

in Muhammad's times." Rather, he deals with the "manner in which the texts tell the

story," how these accounts evolved and how their development tells us something about

their respective communities.[54]

The Shī`ah developed an independent tradition of their own, finding literary form only in the tenth century.[55] Morteza Mutahhari attempts to present such a treatment, focused instead on the Shī`ī *Jurisprudence and its Principles*.[56] Within this work, Mutahhari acknowledges that the concept of deriving religious law from *aḥādīth* is "generally recognized" as originating with Abū `Abdullāh Muhammad ibn Idrīs Shāfi`ī (767 - 820 CE); a matter he also cites as attested to by the historian and father of sociology, Ibn Khaldūn.[57] He claims that "perhaps" Shāfi`ī was simply the "first person to write one [complete] book about all the issues." Others, he is certain, "must have" written less comprehensive works, but he nevertheless admits that if they did, such works remain unknown.[58] The earliest record of this fully-matured Islamic theology, however, can be traced back to Al-Shāfi'ī, around a century and a half after Muhammad.

Annemarie Schimmel, acting in the capacity of an anthropologist of religion, concludes that "'the quest for the historical Muhammad' is, as numerous studies of his life show, a seemingly impossible undertaking."[59] Her work is far from an attempt to construct a realistic biography of Muhammad. Instead, she seeks to follow on Tor Andrae's *Die person Muhammads in lehre und glaube seiner Gemeinde* (1918), in depicting the role of the *character* Muhammad in "Islamic piety."[60] Schimmel comments however, that over time Muhammad himself emerged as the "borders" which defined "Islam as a religion."[61]

Over time, Schimmel asserts, the historical personality of Muhammad had "almost disappeared behind a colorful veil of legends and myths; the bare facts were commonly elaborated in enthusiastic detail, and were rarely if at all seen in their historical perspective."[62] Schimmel concludes that the Qur'ān is the only source to

actually have emerged contemporary to Muhammad, and that there are but "allusions"[63] to the historical Muhammad or his *Ummah,* therein. As the "raw material" for the later *Sīrah* accounts derives from "very early" *maghāzi* battle narrations, Schimmel decides, "the charisma of a true religious leader can be better recognized from such legends than from the dry facts of his life."[64]

Schimmel demonstrates that it is not without irony however, that "veneration of the Prophet and the interest in even the smallest details of his behavior and his personal life *grew in the same measure as the Muslims were distanced from him in time…* adding even the most insignificant details (thus, that he had only seventeen white hairs in his beard)."[65] She explains about the *ḥadīth* literature genre that "the *ṣaḥīḥān*[66] are so highly esteemed in Muslim circles that Bukhārī's *ṣaḥīḥ* was often regarded as second in importance only to the Koran."[67] In assessing the historically-probable religious groups of the Qur'ān, it is important to not impose the interpretations of the later Islamic theology onto our assessment of these communities or what the Qur'ān says about them. Moreover, while Schimmel notes that we can only find "allusions" to the Historical Muhammad in the Qur'ān, our solution will not be to resort to later theological sources, but to instead dig deeper into the context of Muhammad, known by who the Qur'ān names as significant religious communities in its audience.

Revisionist Methodologies

Koren and Nevo explain the methodological approach of Revisionism in Islamic Studies as a skeptical attitude towards *any* written source, saying "a written source – any written source – cannot tell us 'what really happened'."[68] Instead, Revisionists' "preferred method is to crosscheck against external evidence: other contemporary accounts (which

may, taken together, cancel out the personal biases and defects of any single author), and even better, non-written remains from the period in question."[69] Written sources should always be suspected of author and transcriber bias, as "the very act of writing distorts 'what really happened' by reducing it to a series of words, thus imposing on it an order, linearity, and sequentiality which the events described may not have had."[70] Koren and Nevo explain further that "a writer who was demonstrably working within the framework of an accepted version of history will, even unconsciously, alter older texts in ways that accord with that view… embellishing and explaining, or adding, subtracting, or substituting a word, a phrase or a gloss here and there."[71]

Harald Motzki adds that "every historian knows… [the] informative value of the kind of sources termed traditions is blurred by several limitation." This is because "Traditions are subjective due to their choice of what they mention and what not." Furthermore, he explains that such traditions "put facts into a certain perspective, sequence and connection; and they use *topoi* or even create facts which have never existed or not in the manner that they describe them."[72]

Ernest Renan commented on this notion, well before Motzki. In his article "Muhammad and the Origins of Islam," we find the poignant reminder that "religions do not recall their infancy any more than an adult remembers the history of his childhood and the successive stages of development of his consciousness; mysterious chrysalides, they appear in broad daylight only in the perfect maturity of their forms."[73] Renan asks, "Is it right that science should forego explaining how the earth was formed because the phenomena that are responsible for the state in which we find it are no longer apparent in our days on a grand scale?" Just as none would accept such a premise, Renan argues that

we must not dismiss the importance of studying the formative phenomenon responsible for the emergence of new religious movements and identities.[74]

In *The Eye of the Beholder,* Uri Rubin cites as a counter-example to his own research, Josef Horovitz's attempt to pinpoint the earliest dating for the emergence of a legendary Muhammad, distinct from the historical Muhammad of the *Sīrah* accounts.[75] More recently Rudolf Sellheim, the Professor of Oriental Studies at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt (from 1956-1995), published a literary analysis of Ibn Isḥāq's *Sīrah* accounts. Rubin agrees with Sellheim that the *Sīrah* is a "very clear-cut" differentiation between the creation of a literary character and the historical Muhammad.[76] Instead, when one hears that "Muhammad did…" or "Muhammad said…" they are generally making reference to biographical details found in the *Sīrah* which were later unconsciously read onto the Qur'ān, which itself typically makes no such biographical statements.

Sellheim refines three major stages in the literary development of the story of Muhammad's life, each represented in a different literary "layer" or "*schicht*." The "ground layer" is the most authentic, according to Sellheim, containing traditions which lead towards "actual events." Next there is the "first layer," in which the legendary image of Muhammad blends evidently from reconfigured Jewish, Christian and Persian material. Finally, there is the "second layer" in which political interests of various Islamic groups "manipulate" and are "embedded" within the text. While difficult, Revisionist scholarship argues that the historical Muhammad or the events and communities in his historical context can essentially be excavated from these literary strata, even if what is excavated is only a tiny fragment. When we are to employ later sources of the *Sīrah* and

ḥadīth genres, the critical scholar must employ criteria such as those used in Historical Jesus Research, to unpack and extrapolate probable details from the "ground layer."

Modern Analysis of the *Ḥadīth* Literature

Just as the Quest for the Historical Jesus began to formulate around Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, historical-critical scholarship on Islamic Studies took root around the same time. Such studies paid particular attention to the emergence and codification of Islamic law or *Sharī`ah*, in the second century after Muhammad. Ignáz (Yitzhaq) Yehudah Goldziher's (1850 – 1921) in his *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law* marks the beginning of historical-critical scholarship on the origins of extra-Qur'ānic Sharī`ah and the preeminence of *āḥadīth*, in Muslim practice and theology.[77] Goldziher argued that the body of *ḥadīth* literature was better looked at "as a historical source for the theological and legal debates of the early centuries of Islam than as a source for the life of Muhammad and the early Muslim community."[78] Daniel Brown summarizes Goldziher's views, in his *A New Introduction to Islam,* saying that Ignaz Goldziher wrote that "*ḥadīth* did not reflect the life of the Prophet, but rather the beliefs, conflicts and controversies of the first generations of Muslims".[79]

Koren and Nevo deem Goldziher to be "source-critical" as he argues that "that the data on the Umayyad period in the Muslim sources probably do not derive from the times to which they are ascribed." These sources, he argued, "do not faithfully transmit historical information, but are *literary* creations based on a transmission history (*isnads*) whose validity remains doubtful."[80] Goldziher explained "The *ḥadīth* will not serve as a document of the infancy of Islam, but rather as a reflection of the tendencies which

appeared in the community during the more mature stages of its development."[81] Brown

thus concludes that "*ḥadīth* reflects historical reality, to be sure, but it is the historical

reality of the Umayyad and early Abbasid empires, not seventh-century Arabia."[82] Thus,

much of what is popularly understood as the prevailing Islamic view on certain matters,

or even attitudes towards groups named in the Qur'ān (or even the meaning of the term

"Islam"), are a reflection of later attitudes and tendencies, emerging much later than

Muhammad himself.

Goldziher surmises that Islam as we know it "is the product of various influence

that had affected its development as an ethical world view and as a system of law and

dogma before it reached its definitive, orthodox form."[83] He concludes that the great

majority of the Prophetic *ḥadīth* constitute evidence," internal to the literature, that they

are "not of Muhammad's lifetime," in spite of their claims. Instead, they bear the imprint

of "the legal and doctrinal controversies of the two centuries after his death," that do not

reflect Muhammad's own era.[84] Externally there are those "dogmatic development[s] of

Islam," which "took place under foreign influences." Goldziher tells us that this

transpired during the 'Abbāsid caliphate showing the "adaptation of Persian political

ideas."[85]

In Mecca, Goldziher says, Muhammad announced ideas, sermons and orations

which "did not yet establish a new religion; though they created a religious mood,"

nourishing a "world view that was devout but not amenable to precise definition, and

whose forms and doctrines showed as yet no fixed outline."[86] There were a variety of

expressions of piety but "there was as yet no body of rules to determine the form, time,

and extent of these activities."[87] Far from discounting Muhammad or Islam, Goldziher is

quick to point out that "none of this diminishes" either, nor "the relative value of his religious achievement." Similarly, Goldziher did not buy into earlier polemic attempts to reduce Muhammad to a plagiarist. He responded to such characterizations, saying that, "When the historian of civilization appraises the effect of an historical phenomenon, the question of originality does not claim his principal attention."[88]

Following Goldziher, Joseph Schact (1902 – 1969) insisted that insofar as legal *ḥadīth* are concerned, they must be approached with the assumption of fabrication until proven otherwise. Like Goldziher, he informs us that the "great majority of traditions" attributed to Muhammad, are in fact "documents not of the time to which they claim to belong, but of the successive stages of development of doctrines during the first centuries of Islam."[89] In the early Abbāsid period (founded in 750 CE), "polemical encounters" increasingly led to a quest to justify laws implemented by the Caliphate. Schacht argues that the demand for prophetic *ḥadīth*, "even before al-Shāfi`ī, and certainly after him," would ensure their abundant supply, whether factual or fabricated.[90] Schact's research so thoroughly documented these matters, that the C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs; G. Lecomte comment, in their entry of "Sharī`ah", in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* that all subsequent Sharī`ah scholarship has been a response to Schact, whether attempting to refute, qualify, or confirm and further his research.[91]

Critical scholarship like that of Goldziher and Schact have begun to influence emerging, progressive scholarship from the Muslim world as well. Asma Barlas, in her *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān* seeks to demonstrate how so many in the Muslim world would come to read the Qur'ān in a manner that justified existing patriarchy and inequality. Barlas argues that "numerous

scholars have pointed out" the fact that "inequality and discrimination derive not from the teachings of the Qur'ān but from the secondary religious texts, the *Tafsīr* (Qur'ānic exegesis) and the *Aḥādīth* (s. *ḥadīth*) (narratives purportedly detailing the life and praxis of the Prophet Muhammad)."[92]

Barlas urges that "we need, therefore, to examine who has read the Qur'ān historically, how they have read it – that is, how they have chosen to define the epistemology and methodology of meaning, hence certain ways of knowing (the realm of hermeneutics) – and the extratextual contexts in which they have read it."[93] This is as much the case with reexamining and unreading patriarchal assumptions in Qur'ānic *Tafsīr* – which is Barlas's primary concern – and unreading assumptions made about what Muhammad, what the Qur'ān itself, meant by "Islam" and what the context of its religious declarations and proposals for reformation were within. Such a fresh reading and re-examination can do as much to "reform and renew" our understanding of how the Qur'ān views women, but also how the Qur'ān views the religious communities it addresses itself to.

The Qur'ān is thus given layers of meaning in the practice of historical Islam, through the aforementioned genre of commentaries and super-commentaries known as *tafāsir* (s. *tafsīr*).[94] John Burton explains that over the generations, "ancient *tafsīr* became itself part of that past actuality now attached to the contents of the Quran, with the consequence that came to be regarded as beyond question or doubt." By way of this consequence, it was granted "a creative license to participate in the building of the sacred law of Islam," the *Sharī`ah*, and ultimately orthodox Muslim theology, including popular perceptions of the identities of the religious groups named in the Qur'ān.[95]

Should a general negative statement be made about "those who turn away," (a term conjugated from the *hūd* root, which we will examine more closely beginning on page 37) for instance, or "those who go astray," *mufassirīn* (Qur'ānic exegetes) have, traditionally given these passages polemic, and anti-Jewish interpretations (and in some cases, translations). This is important to note, in that these readings of the Qur'ān represent later attitudes, and not those directly noted in the Qur'ān itself. These layers of interpretation are embedding not only in all subsequent translations of the Qur'ān – thus making any published English translation insufficient – but also is embedded in the *way* that Muslims typically read, and are taught to read, the Qur'ānic Arabic itself.

Like Schimmel, Barlas notes that "the further the Prophet was distanced in real time from Muslims, the more they seem to have wanted to draw him closer in narrative time through the medium of *Aḥādīth*."[96] That is, not only did *ḥadīth* collections not emerge in documentable form for a century and a half after Muhammad, but many of the most culturally self-justifying *Aḥādīth* emerge in greater number as time goes on, just as Schact famously contended in saying that "[t]he more perfect the isnad, the *later* the tradition," implying "widespread fabrication" not only of the *ḥadīth* but of the *isnād*.[97] Schact aptly demonstrated that "isnads tend to grow backwards,"[98] a clue that the chains of narration were simply being fabricated to give religious authority to later ideas, politics and polemic, once people simply knew what preferred chains to fabricate.

Further complicating the issue of using *Aḥādīth* as historical sources, is that fabricated *Aḥādīth* became so widely known, that many traditional sources number them in the hundreds of thousands; by far outnumbering those *Aḥādīth* regarded as accurate, even according to Traditionlist methodologies of grading *asānīd* (plural of *isnād*). By the

time of Muhammad al-Bukhari's (810–870 CE) authoritative compilation, Barlas notes that he alone had "reputedly accumulated 600,000" *Aḥādīth*.[99] She comments that there are *Aḥādīth* "on virtually every topic, even an anti-*ḥadīth* *ḥadīth*!"Gautier Junyboll notes that "the danger of contradictions and inconsistencies" in such reports, led the *sahābah* (companions) of Muhammad to discourage reports of *Aḥādīth*,[100] a term used in the Qur'ān (31.6) for what Yusuf Ali translates as "idle tales" (*lahwal ḥadīth*). The Qur'ān also asks "in what *ḥadīth* after this will they believe?" (7.185; 77.50, see also 45.6 for similar wording), though Yusuf Ali here prefers to translate "*ḥadīth*" as "Message" (in *both* examples). This translation seems theologically driven, as the standard term for "message" in the Qur'ān is "*Risālah*," and accordingly we see the earlier example that Yusuf Ali has translated *ḥadīth* as "tales." The Qur'ān seems aware of an existing concept of *ḥadīth*, and is responding to it, in these examples. It asks which other *ḥadīth* would one follow, and states that the Qur'ān is "the best *ḥadīth*," because it purports to be the *ḥadīth* of God *and* because that *ḥadīth* is "in the form of a Book" (39.23).[101]

It would thus seem that critical scholarship in Islamic Studies – and, increasingly, even amongst Muslim scholars of Islamic Studies – a similar trajectory is being follows, as that which Historical Jesus Research has in many ways taken. This thus confirms the soundness of approaching the study at hand in a manner that applies the criteria for determining probable authenticity, employed in Historical Jesus Research. We will thus avoid the problems inherent to basing a study off of *aḥādīth* by simply avoiding them, whenever possible, in preference of earlier sources. When they are to be usefully applied, they must be critically examined according to our criteria *and* should only be used in corroborating earlier sources on the subjects which they corroborate.

John Wansbrough and the Sectarian Milieu

Though some of the conclusions of Goldziher, Schact and other critical scholars have begun to take root amongst some progressive Muslim scholars, a more recent figure remains exceedingly controversial. One of the most well-known examples of Revisionism, Koren and Nevo cite John Wansbrough (1928 – 2002), who they call "the main practitioner of source-critical analysis of the Koran." Wansbrough argued that beyond the late authoring of the *ḥadīth* genre, "different collections" of the Qur'ān itself "could have grown up in different geographical areas" and "in different *sectarian communities*... separated either by differing belief or different locations, or both."[102] Herbert Berg, in his "The Implications of, and Opposition to, the Methods and Theories of John Wansbrough" asserts that the works of Wansbrough are the "most significant contributions made to the study of Islamic origins" since both Goldziher and Schact.[103] Berg surmises that "Muslim and most non-Muslim scholars work within essentially the same framework: one which reads the literature of early Islam as history."[104] Wansbrough, on the other hand, "has demonstrated that what these sources provide is not history *per se*, but salvation history."[105]

Many of the scholars regarded as "Revisionist" by Koren and Nevo were themselves students of Wansbrough. Michael Cook is one example, which Koren and Nevo note expands on the work of Schact, arguing that *asānīd* are "inadmissible as proof of historicity" of *aḥādīth* and that "traditions have to be dated on external criteria," such as those of the "Third Quest" research, which we will employ.[106] Another of

Wansbrough's students is Patricia Crone, cited by Koren and Nevo as a major

Revisionist, who penned her most well-known work, *Hagarism: The Making of the*

Islamic World, with Cook.[107] Crone has focused much of her work on examining third

party sources, both on early accounts of Muhammad's community and successors, and

also on third party sources documenting Arabian trade, which often conflict with the

Traditionalist picture of Mecca as a major center of such activity in the period of Late

Antiquity.[108] Just as a more-historical look at Meccan trade can potentially tell us more

about "Islamic Origins," so too can a similar survey of the historical sources on the sects

named in the Qur'ān.

Since Wansbrough's controversial approach, a number of Revisionist scholars

have emerged, employing an array of approaches found in Historical Jesus Research.

Sebastian Brock is noted by Koren and Nevo as part of the Revisionist school for his

application of third party, Syriac works which describe the conquest of the Levant, and

yet do not differentiate the invaders from their Jewish allies.[109] S. Thomas Parker is

included as part of this school for his archaeological works on the Byzantine *limes*

arabicus. His survey of archaeological sites has argued for some of the most startling

positions, that many of the supposed Muslim *conquests* were actually the result of Arab

acquisitions of abandoned and nearly abandoned Byzantine and Persian settlements and

fortifications.[110] Interpretations of the Qur'ānic language as a form of Aramaic have been

advanced by scholars such as the aforementioned Author Jeffrey and Christoph

Luxenberg, who have explored alternate Aramaic readings of the Qur'ān with an

emphasis on Semitic cognates.[111]

To some, perhaps the most controversial Revisionist positions of Wansbrough's view that Muhammad's community saw themselves not as followers of a new or distinct religion, but as a competing interpretation of Judaism. We see similar conclusions from Shelomo Dov Goitein (1900–1985), and Qumran scholar Chaim Rabin (1915–1996), whom Wansbrough cites as scholarly precedent for his own theories of a Jewish sectarian basis for Muhammad's activity.[112] An analysis of this argument is beyond the scope of this study, which focuses instead on the orientations of those communities named in the Qur'ān itself. This much larger question of Muhammad's own orientation is somewhat more complicated, as we will see, and simply cannot be addressed in a study of this length. This study, however, is conducive to potentially answering that much larger question elsewhere.

Criticism of Wansbrough

Robert Serjant, in his review of Wansbrough's *Quranic Studies* (1977)*,* seems offended by Wansbrough's emphasis on a Jewish sectarian nature of the Qur'ān. He suggests that Wansbrough's research is "disguised polemic seeking to strip Islam and the Prophet of all but the minimum of originality."[113] Berg links Serjeant's castigation of Wansbrough with his belief that Wansbrough has overlooked "the vital Arabian element" in the Qur'ān.[114] Such references can be found in *Qur'ānic Studies,* where Wansbrough argues *against* the attempt of some *aḥādīth* to link clearly Jewish customs with "pagan Arab practice."

> A flagrant tendency discerned by [George] Vajda in the *ḥadīth* literature was the transposition of anti-Jewish elements of Islamic prescription into the category of superseded Jāhilī custom. One example was designation of `Ashūrā' not as

Jewish, but as an ancient Arabian practice. Others were abolition of the custom of public lamentation at funeral processions and of abstention from sexual intercourse during menstruation, both identified with pagan Arab practice.[115]

We will see more about the connection of the fast of `Āshūrā’ to Judaism and the fast of Yom Kippur on page 45. It would seem that Wansbrough did not so much "overlook" the argument of the "vital Arabian element" as he did disagree with that conclusion. It is the position of this study that arguments for the "originality" of Muhammad's message, must be seen as antithetical to statements of the Qur'ān itself, that Muhammad was merely carrying on the legacy of Jewish prophets and that he in fact brought "nothing" new that was not revealed before (Qur'ān 4.26; 17.77; 39.65). Similarly, statements of the "Arabian" element ignore that there were in fact Arabian manifestations of Judaism in this period (and today), which differed in many ways from Western perceptions of a homogeneous and theologically orthodox Ashkenazi Judaism we are most familiar with.[116]

Serjant's criticism, and perhaps sensitivity, grows out of a response to the long history of scholars who primarily sought to identify Jewish source material in the Qur'ān itself – from Ibn Kammūna (c. 1215–1285) to Abraham Geiger (1810 – 1874) – for the purposes of discrediting Muhammad and his movement. This, however, seems to preoccupy many objections to Wansbrough's thesis. We cannot, however, allow this sensitivity to end the conversation altogether. Bruce Lincoln comments on the study of religion in general, that: "When one permits those whom one studies to define the terms in which they will be understood… one has ceased to function as historian or scholar. In that moment, a variety of roles are available: some perfectly respectable (amanuensis,

collector, friend and advocate), and some less appealing (cheerleader, voyeur, retailer of import goods). None, however, should be confused with scholarship."[117]

William Graham's argument, in his review of *Quranic Studies*,[118] "rests on the assumption that Wansbrough's historical reconstruction of early Islam requires a massive conspiracy," which is presented as an inconceivable scenario.[119] This argument was further developed by Cornells Versteegh who imagines that "one needs a conspiratorial view of the Islamic tradition, in which all scholars are assumed to have taken part in the same conspiracy to suppress the real sequence of events."[120] This view, however, assumes that there was an early consensus on the *Sīrah* biography. The primary source of the *Sīrah,* Ibn Isḥāq was, in actuality, so vehemently opposed by his Medinian contemporary Mālik ibn Anas (c. 711 – 795), of the Mālikī *maẓhab* (legal school in Islam), that the latter referred to him as a "*dajjāl min dajājalah*" (the greatest of imposters); a term which is also used for an "Anti-Christ" or false-prophet.[121] Berg articulates a basic response to Versteegh's argument, saying that "If the choice were simply between historicity and conspiracy, the former would certainly seem more plausible." These, however, "are not the only two choices," Berg explains; "When the traditions of Islam began to be recorded around 800 C.E., it was done in a manner that the Muslims of that time believed, or needed to believe, that the events had been. And in so doing, the beliefs became 'facts.'"[122]

"Salvation history," Berg asserts, "even in the guise of 'scientific' history, is literature."[123] As such, he asserts, the methodology of "Higher Criticism" – form criticism, redaction criticism, and literary criticism – are appropriate, and even necessary for the study of history as it relates to Islamic origins.[124] In Berg's soon to be published

work "The Study of Islamic Origins Redux," written after his response to the four above critiques, he evaluates Fred Donner's recent critiques of some of Wansbrough's arguments.[125] Donner, he explains "may appear" to be "quite radical, accepting at least in part, various points made by Geiger, Hirschfeld, Bell, Wansbrough, Crone, and Cook;" however, he relies too heavily on Traditionalist, late narrations.[126] The two agree, however, "that early believers were (monotheistically) ecumenical." Berg says that "although upsetting to some… one might compare it to the claim that very early Christians saw themselves as Jews and shared their synagogues."[127]

In conclusion, Rahman explains in his *Major Themes of the Qur'ān*, that his interest lies only in "allow[ing the Qur'ān] to speak for itself."[128] In the sections that follow, this study will allow the Qur'ān to do just that, leaving aside, as much as possible *Sīrah* and *ḥadīth* literature, and when employing it, doing so using Ehrman's "three essential criteria" of Historical Jesus Research.[129] Thus, when the Qur'ān itself speaks of religious communities, we will examine those communities as they existed in the early and pre-Islamic era. We will avoid references to the *ḥadīth* genre as our source for identifying these groups, as references to religious communities are therein defined through the lens of tradition. We will not, however, disregard the *ḥadīth* genre as a source of information altogether. We must instead accept only sources for which probability can be ascertained through the aforementioned criteria.

One characteristic of the Traditional Islamic narrative, as it relates to the religious groups named in the Qur'ān, is that each seems to be clearly delineated and differentiated, one from the other. This study will demonstrate these groups were probably not so distinct. Similarly, the Jews of Medina (or simply, the Jews in the

Qur'ānic audience in general), are defined by their theology in ways that make it seem that several *different* Jewish sects were being referred to and addressed, all part of a vibrant and diverse Jewish community in Arabia, just slightly after the decline of the Jewish Ḥimyarite Empire of Yemen (110 BCE – 520s CE).

Christians too, as a general and broad group, are traditionally thought to be one, homogeneous audience of the Qur'ān, grouped under the single name "*Naṣārā*." Instead, there seems to be evidence in the Qur'ān of polemic references to doctrinally orthodox forms of Christianity[130] as polytheism (*shirk*), as well as to a more narrowly-defined heretical Judaic sect of Nazarenes, which the Qur'ān calls *Naṣārā*. In amalgamating these two groups into one we do our understanding the religious milieu of the Qur'ān (and thus our understanding of the Qur'ān itself), a great disservice.

Having thus surveyed the historical-critical approaches already applied to Historical Jesus Research, and the Traditionalist and Revisionist approaches dominant in scholarship on Islamic Studies today, the reader now has an understanding of the terms of the discussion. In the next chapter, we will look at those religious groups specifically named in the Qur'ān as significant constituents of its audience. As noted from the outset, all of this is to gain a better understanding of Muhammad's activity and the historical context of the Qur'ān, by examining what we can determining as probable about those groups named within the Qur'ān. Therefore, we will not approach these groups based simply on what the Qur'ān says about them, but neither will we disregard what it says about them. Instead, we will look at the Qur'ānic references to these groups in the context of what other historical sources say about them, so that we can gain a better understanding of history through understanding this audience.

Chapter 3: The Religious Milieu of the Qur'ānic Audience

This section will look at the religious and sectarian groups named in the Qur'ān, namely the *Yahūd*, *Ṣabī'ūn*, *Naṣārā*, *Majūs* and *Mushrikīn*. In analyzing these groups, this thesis will focus on the "Criterion of Contextual Credibility," explained in the first chapter of this study, as part of a broader assessment of the *context* of Qur'ānic "Islam."[131] This "Criterion of Contextual Credibility" maintains that "ancient documents, reliable traditions must conform to the historical and social contexts to which they relate," relative to Jesus, in the case of his research, "plausibly situated in the historical context of first century Palestine."[132] So too, then, must such documents and traditions, relative to Muhammad, be "plausibly situated" in the context of seventh century Arabia. By better situating these groups in their historical context, we hope to gain insight into the Qur'ān own meaning of "Islam" and a better approximation of its religious perspective.

One cannot adequately grasp this socioreligious context when the accounts that describe the communities of Muhammad's day were penned much later than the events which they describe. To ascertain this context then, we must employ the "Criterion of Contextual Credibility" with Ehrman's other two criteria: "Criterion of Multiple Attestation" as well as the "Criterion of Dissimilarity," and the related heightened form, the "Criterion of Embarrassment."

The religious groups named by the Qur'ān are relatively few, when compared with the religions known to have been practiced in the Middle East in Late Antiquity. Manicheanism, for instance, is not mentioned by name. This is surprising considering

that it was one of the largest world religions at the time; that it originated in Persia around 240 CE and had not yet declined by Muhammad's day. At its height, Manicheanism spread from the Roman Empire to China, and still, the Qur'ān does not to mention it.

The Qur'ān names twenty-five prophets, nearly all of which are positively identified by Islamic tradition as having Biblical equivalents, but Zarathustra (Zoroaster) is not mentioned, nor is Mani. The religions named by the Qur'ān do include the priestly Zoroastrian "*Majūs*" (Magians), but they are always grouped with polytheists (*mushrikūn*). The other religious groups named in the Qur'ān are Jews (*Yahūd*), Nazarenes (*Naṣārā*), and the enigmatic "Sabians" (*Sābi'ūn*). Who the Qur'ān *does not* address can perhaps tell us as much as who it *does* address.

We see these groups mentioned in the Qur'ān also mentioned in the pre-Islamic era. A famous Persian inscription differentiated between Middle Eastern *Kristīyan* (Christians) and *Naṣārā* (Nazarenes)*,* just as it has been customary for Arabian Christians to refer to themselves as *Masīḥīyyīn,* rather than *Naṣārā.* This famous inscription of the Zoroastrian high priest (*mobadan mobad*) Kirtīr, under the Sassanid Emperor Bahrām II (276-293 CE), comments on the *Yahūd* (Jews), *Shamān* (Buddhists[133]) *Brāhman* (Hindus), *Naṣārā* (Nazarenes), and *Kristīyan* (Christians) as a separate group, as well as a group of *Makdag* (Immersers) and *Zandak* (Manichaeans), who had been the target of religious persecution. This inscription might serve as a reliable archeological source due to the fact that it is an engraving of a historical event, rather than a literary composition, or theological treatise. As a third-party source, it does not set out to delineate a division between *Kristīyan* and *Naṣārā* sects for any apparent purpose. Neither is its purpose to argue that there is tolerance and pluralism in Sassanid Persia, in which case we might

suspect exaggeration of sectarian diversity but instead to mention what would have been understood by all who read it as widely-known, and in some cases, detested religions and sects which there would be little reason to embellish the numbers and identities. These sorts of archeological inscriptions are thus given considerable weight. The religious communities are listed on the inscription in the order in which Kirtīr opposed them:

> The Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Nazarenes, Christians, Baptizers and Manicheans were smashed in the empire, their idols destroyed, and the habitations of the idols annihilated and turned into abodes and seats of the gods.[134]

In contrast to those groups named as active within the Middle East in Late Antiquity, what should stand out is that those religious communities selected in the Qur'ān are deliberately restricted only to Biblical communities. The *Yahūd*, *Naṣārā* and "*Makdag*" (immersers), referenced by the likely self-designation of *Ṣabī'ūn* (and *ḥunafā*,[135] as we will see), seem to be the only parties to which the Qur'ān addresses in a positive light. Apart from these named religious communities in the Qur'ānic audience, are the admonitions of the Magi listed alongside the *Mushrikīn* (generally translated as "polytheists"), and *Kāfirīn*. The latter is a cognate term used in a Jewish context for apostates or "concealers" (*kōferīm*). This is significant since the religious communities which the Qur'ān addresses in a positive light are groups which made use of Hebrew scriptures, as we will see.

The term "*kāfir*" is a cognate with the Hebrew "*kōfer,*" meaning in both languages "one who covers," but in Judaism referring specifically to an apostate Jew.[136] Tractate *Rosh Hashanah* 17a refers to an apostate as a *kōfer ba'Torah*; in *Pesaḥīm* 168b we find reference of *kōfer ba'ikkar*, "he who denies the fundamentals." Later, Maimonides would

make use of the term *kōfer* with some frequency, throughout his *Mishnah Torah,* fully

aware of its link to the Arabic *kāfir*, as most of his own writings were in Judeo-Arabic.

This term *kāfir* is central to Qur'ānic religious discourse. The Qur'ānic meaning

of *kāfir* can be seen in its use as "tilling" of the soil, indicating "covering." We read in

Sūrat al- Ḥadīd, of a similitude of "how rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight

(the hearts of) the tillers (*kūffāra*); soon it withers…" (57.20). The identical term is used

elsewhere for the *kāfirīn* as religious *disbelievers* (5.57; 9.73; 9.120; 48.29; 66.9; et al.

are some exact examples where even all vowels are shared). The prolific use of the term

"*kāfir*" occurs 289 times in the Qur'ān in the verbal *kafaru* form, typically rendered as "to

disbelieve." It is found 129 times as the participle "*kāfirūn*" meaning "disbelievers," and

27 times as the noun *kāfir* rendered "disbeliever" as well as four times as the adjective

"disbeliever." It is found once as the participle "*kāfirāt*" also meaning "disbelievers."

There are dozens of other references in which it is found in verbal form, as well as in

related references to the noun of "disbelief" (*kufr*).

In calling people towards belief (*īmān*), the Qur'ān consistently makes use of this

term, presenting the polarities of belief (*īmān*) and disbelief (*kufr*) throughout. On one

hand we have the Believer or "Mu'min" (also a cognate with the Hebrew term "*Mā'mīn*")

who embodies the Qur'ānic religious ideal. On the other hand, we have the Disbeliever,

or "*kāfir*" who the Qur'ān rails against continuously, even with an entire short *Sūrah*

named "*Sūrat al-Kāfirūn*." That these terms are being employed within the Qur'ānic

discourse on Biblical prophets, their followers, and adversaries, means that we should

consider their meaning in the context of the monotheistic traditions which the Qur'ān is

addressing. Indeed, we find the Jewish meaning of "apostate" used in the Qur'ān for

kāfirīn as well. *Sūrat al-Furqān* (25) notes in 'ayah 52, "Therefore listen not to the *kāfirīn*, but strive against them with the utmost strenuousness" and continues, in conclusion of the *Sūrah*, in 'ayah 77, to explain that "My Lord does not care for you or your prayers. You have rejected the truth, so sooner or later, a punishment will come" (25.77).[137] Furthermore, we read in *Sūrat al-Baqarah* that the Qur'ān regards the *kāfir* to be a grade of one amongst the *Ahl al-Kitab* (People of the Book), not simply a polytheist: "Neither those who disbelieve (*kafarū*) among the *Ahl al-Kitāb* nor the polytheists (*Al-Mushrikūn*)" (2.105).

It is clear from the *'ayah* in *Sūrat al-Furqān* (25.77) that the Qur'ān is saying that the *kāfirīn* pray to the same Lord that Muhammad prays to – the Biblical God – but that God does not care for them or their prayers because of their rejection of the truth. This is a clear distinction from someone who simply does not believe at all. Terms like this, even while they are widely used in Islamic discourse today, must be examined in their Qur'ānic and pre-Qur'ānic context, and must not simply be taken at the post-Qur'ānic face value of later Islamic theology. Similarly, references in the Qur'ān that are taken to mean "Jews" must be looked at carefully. Do these references always say "Jews" (*al-Yahūd*), or do they sometimes refer to a conjugated verb that simply shares the same *hūd* root as "*yahūd*" without being that formulation? Are they thus assumed by later theology to be references to "Jews" even when the Qur'ān does not say this directly in Arabic in every case?

Polemic Translations of "Those Who Turn" as "Jews"

Regarding Qur'ānic reference to Jews, we see that in many cases, the Yusuf Ali translation, as well as all others, presumptively translates the conjugated verb "to turn" (*hadū, hudnā,* etc) as "Jews," rendering it the same as translators do with the actual Arabic term for Jews, "Al-Yahūd." More often than not, conjugations of *hūd* are employed as a verb, not as a sectarian or religious self-designation. One bizarre exception in the Qur'ān, is the form *Hūdān*, the exact term the Qur'ān uses for the prophet Hūd in Arabic occurrences of Chapter 11 of the Qur'ān, *Sūrat Hūd* (as we will see), and not for Jews. Throughout the whole of the Qur'ān, derivations from the *hūd* root, are employed *both* in a positive and negative light to describe those who turn *towards* God as well as those who turn *away*. We see reference to "those who turn" being used for both those who turn towards God, as in the case of the Children of Israel at Sinai, as well as, conversely, "those who turn" away from the straight path, as we will see below.

A source attributed to the *Ahl al-Bayt* (Muhammad's family), which we can determine as probable based on the "Criterion of Embarrassment," indicates that this etymology was acknowledged during the Classical period of the Islamic *Ummah*. In a *ḥadīth* from the *imāmī* partisans (*shī`ah*) we find an explanation attributed of Ja`far al-Ṣādiq, the sixth Shi`ite *imām* (and great-great-great grandson of Muhammad)*.* When asked, "Why are the people of Moses called 'Yahūd'," he relayed that this refers to the Qur'ānic attribution to the Children of Israel, "Verily, we turn unto You" (*innā hudnā ilayka*) from *Sūrat al-A`arāf* (7.156).[138] We see examples of the term for "those who turn" being used positively (5.69), and also neutrally (22.17). In *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 2.111; 2.135; 2.140 "*Hūdān*" is translated as Jews, yet in *Sūrah Hūd* 11.50; 11.58 the exact same

word is translated as the proper-name Hūd. In certain passages, however, we see this strange term translated as "Jews," by Yusuf Ali, Pickthal, Shakir and all English translators,[139] when it seems instead to be using the term *hūd* generally, to indicate those who have *turned away* from correct practice.[140]

In 5.44 we see that the Torah itself is said to still be with the listeners, uncorrupted and consultable; a Torah "wherein there is Guidance and Light" (*fīhā Hudā^{an} wa Nūr^{un}*).[141] Here there seems to be a play on words as in the earlier "*innā hudnā ilayka*" ("Verily we turn unto You," 7.156) where "Guidance" (*Hudā^{an}*) is a play on words with the term for Jews (*yahūd*). It could perhaps even be argued that *every* time the word is being used to describe the behavior of individuals it is a play on words, where the *Bani Isra'il* are said to be *turners* towards God at Sinai (as we have seen already) and those whom the Qur'ān is castigating for *turning* away are being referenced as *turning from* their religion of Judaism, or the *Hudā^{an}* which the Qur'ān says is in the Torah.

Various Sectarian Expressions of Judaism

To fully understand Judaism in the Middle East during Muhammad's life, we must first understand that Judaism in the Second Temple Era, and even later, was not one religious group but many. As we will see, the Jewish communities in the Qur'ān, in the time of Muhammad, appear to be part, or an outgrowth, of the known expressions of Judaism leading up to the period of Late Antiquity. We should thus examine those Diaspora Jewish groups which were known to have been active in Arabia at that time. The Second Temple sectarian activity seems to influence some of the theological divisions we find in Qur'ānic addresses to the Jews in Muhammad's audience. As such, each of the main Second Temple Era sects deserves some attention here before discussing just how the

Qur'ān addresses ideas, and key identifications of each. In better understanding the Jewish groups in the Qur'ānic audience, we will better understand the religious context of the Qur'ān itself and what it meant by "Islam."

Before investigating who the Qur'ān referred to as "Jews," we must understand what Judaism teaches a "Jew" is. Were "Jews" simply "Judeans," or did the term have a religious meaning and definition? In the context of Rabbinic Judaism, the Talmud is clear that the term "*Yehūdī*" refers to a pure monotheist (*Megīllah* 12b-13a). Tractate *Megillah* explains that this is why Mordeccai, a Benjaminite, was called a Jew, when he was *not* of the tribe of Judah (*Esther* 2.5). Interestingly, the Talmud does *not* suggest that he was so-called due to being from Judea, which might otherwise be assumed.

Judah was thus named *Yehūdah*, the Torah teaches, because his mother "Praised God" through, and because of, giving birth to her sons.[142] As early as the middle of the second century BCE, the Jewish author of the third book of the Oracula Sibyllina addressed the "chosen people," saying "*every* land is *full* of you and every [island of the] sea,"[143] which seems to support the Talmudic religious definition, rather than the regional meaning of the term. The most diverse witnesses, such as Strabo, Philo, Seneca, the Lukan author of the Christian *Luke-Acts* scroll,[144] Cicero, and Josephus, all mention large Jewish populations in the cities of the Mediterranean basin.[145]

Josephus mentions as many as 8,000 Jews from Rome as siding with a party in a lawsuit. This would indicate a surprisingly sizable Jewish population.[146] According to his records, the Jewish population was greatest in the Levant, Babylonia and next in Antioch, and Damascus. In Damascus the smallest of the list – 10,000 to 18,000 Jews – were said to have been massacred in a single insurrection. This too gives some indication of the

possible size of the total Jewish population in Damascus and the regions more heavily populated than it.[147] Philo set the number of Jews in Egypt alone as high as one million.[148] Similarly, he tells us that the Jewish community of Alexandria accounted for 40% of the city during the first century CE *before* the Diaspora.[149]

Judaism, in the Second Temple Era was extremely diverse, with many variations of law and doctrine. Josephus gives the clearest exposition on the sects specific to Judea, which he calls three *"philosophies"* of Judaism. His Roman audience, who knew of different philosophical schools such as the Cynics, Stoics, and Epicureans, was being encouraged to think of Jews in a positive and intellectual light; as a nation of philosophers, divided into clearly definable schools "who had different opinions concerning Jewish actions," with clear theological and political boundaries. These were "the Pharisees, another the sect of the Sadducees, and the other the sect of the Essenes."[150] In Egypt we know of a somewhat Hellenized form of Judaism, even an Essene-like group called the *Theraputae*, which Philo nonetheless distinguishes from the Judean Essenes, and which Josephus does not mention.[151]

Hasmonean Dynastic Origins

To understand the origins of Second Temple Era sectarianism, we must go back to the aftermath of the famous Maccabean rebellion, commemorated in the festival of Chanukah. Two decades after his brother Judah Maccabee defeated the Seleucid army (165 BCE), during the revolt, Simon Maccabee arranged for a national assembly to proclaim himself high priest, military commander and perpetual leader of the Jewish nation. Subsequent to this self-coronation, he passed rule to his son John Hyrcanus (his

reign began in 134 until his death in 104 BCE); in so doing, he established the Hasmonean Dynasty. Hyrcanus, and his successor Alexander Jannaeus (103 BCE– 76 BCE), transformed the peasant bands of militias of the Maccabeean era into a national army which thereafter carried out a policy of territorial expansion to Samaria, Galilee and many cities east of the Jordan River.[152] What had begun as a peasant uprising degraded into the establishment of a mundane dynasty of self-appointed high priests, from which the Sadducees emerged.[153]

Many of the rebels undoubtedly joined with the conviction that they were fighting a revolution of divine, even Messianic promise.[154] These rebels are generally referenced under the name *Ḥasīdīm*.[155] The notion that the Pharisees and the Essenes emerged from the *Ḥasīdīm* of the Maccabean era has been a dominant conclusion in the Twentieth Century thinking, continuing up to the present day. The list of scholars who maintain this view is seemingly endless.[156]

The *Ḥasīdīm* had fought shoulder to shoulder with the forerunners of the Hasmonean Dynasty against the Seleucid armies, to regain Jewish freedom, apparently in the conviction that the restoration of a theocratic monarchy and priestly tradition were imminent. Yet, the high priesthood had always been occupied by a Tzadōqite,[157] and while the Hasmoneans were a priestly family, they were not Tzadōqites.[158] Some have thus, erroneously supposed that the Sadducees, rendered in later Hebrew as *"Tzeduqīm"* derived the name of their party from the name *"Tzadōq."* Frederick Fyvie Bruce regards this as highly unlikely due to the Sadducees making their debut as supporters of the Hasmonaean high priests. Bruce therefore suggests that *"Sadducees"* is a Hebraization of the Greek word *sundikoi* ("syndics," or "members of the council") and that the name

marks them out as the representatives of the Hasmonaeans. Though they themselves came to associate the word with the Hebrew term for "righteous,"[159] this is a separate issue from *"Tzadōq"* as a proper noun, which we will see is pertinent to the Essene sect. The Sadduceees, as it were, or rather their Diaspora ideological heirs, may well have had a profound connection to the Medinan Jewish community.

The Ḥimyarite Empire of Yemen as It Relates To Islamic Origins

If the conclusions of some modern scholars are correct, what happened to the sectarian descendants of the Sadducees may be of paramount significance to understanding what Wansbrough terms "the sectarian milieu" of Muhammad's time, place and activity. The Ḥimyarite Kingdom of Yemen, an empire dating from 110 BCE, was converted to a form of Judaism in the fifth century CE. Theirs was the dominant empire in the Ḥijāz until the sixth century (525 CE),[160] only shortly before Muhammad lived (ca. 570/571 – 632 CE). Uri Rubin comments that "the Anṣār" – the Medinan "helpers" – of Muhammad's movement were "said to have been descendants of those Jewish rabbis" of the time of the Jewish ruler of Yemen, Tubān As`ad Abū Karib (390–420 CE).[161] Indeed, we find numerous references to the *Anṣār al-Yahūd* (Jewish helpers), in the Ḥadīth literature, and even extensive and fantastic tales of magic-filled Jewish conversion stories of the Jewish Ḥimyarite ruler, Tubā.[162] There is, indeed, no dispute with Traditionalist Muslim accounts that the *Anṣār* composed one of the primary groups of Muhammad's followers, though the Jewish identity of the *Anṣār* is not claimed in all late narrative accounts of the *Sīrah* and *ḥadīth* genres.

There are very few primary sources on the Ḥimyarites. We do not even know a complete list of their rulers. The definition of "Sadducees" that is sometimes applied to the Ḥimyarite Jews is also problematic. Many groups, who held to a Torah-based, non-rabbinic tradition, would certainly not have used the name "Sadducee" to describe themselves, and it is unlikely that the Ḥimyarites did either. There are, however, numerous contemporary sources that describe them as being Jews, yet we find them completely, and perplexingly, absent from rabbinic writings. This could indicate that they were seen as a non-rabbinic, and marginal sect. The *Sīrah* of Ibn Isḥāq, in recension by Ibn Hishām and Ṭabarī, explains that the Ḥimyarites themselves claimed to be a direct descendant of the Second Commonwealth, which would indicate the origins of the Sadduceean-Herodian claim by modern scholars.[163] Whether or not this claim is historical is beyond our ability to positively determine.

Haim Z'ew Hirschberg explains, in his *Encyclopaedia Judaica* entry, that the Ḥimyarites made their way to the Holy Land. This is evidenced by tombs uncovered in 1936, in Beit She`arīm near Haifa, probably dating to the third century CE.[164] The inscription on the tombs describes them, in Greek, as the "people of Ḥimyar." In the late *Sīrah* account, we read from Ibn Hishām, "at this Ḥimyar agreed together to join his religion and this was the origin of Judaism in the Yemen."[165] The *Sīrah* account is confirmed, regarding their Jewish identity, in that this inscription tells us one was named "Menah[em], Elder of the Congregation,"[166] and by the fact that the inscription contains both an engraving of a *menōrah* and a *shōfar*, directly beside the inscription.

Were the Ḥimyarites actually Sadduceean Jews (in ideological descent) as scholars such as Joseph Adler conclude?[167] While this is a fairly common modern

conclusion about them, it is far from clear. On his way back from Medina, then called Yathrib, where the *Sīrah* account claims Tubā was converted to Judaism, he was said to have been escorted by Jewish *aḥbār* (s. *ḥabr*), a term which we will see, is the cognate with the Rabbinic "*Ḥaberīm*."[168] We further read that the two *aḥbār* destroyed the Yemenite idol Ri`ām.[169]

It is noted in the *Sīrah* that Tubā was proselytized to by a *ḥabr*, saying, "there came to me a learned scholar of Qurayẓah, a *ḥabr*, to whom, by your life, *Al-Yahūd* accorded primacy." This *ḥabr*, presumably a rabbinic Jew, instructed Tubā to, "remove yourself from a settlement which is preserved for the prophet of Mecca from Quraysh, a divinely guided one." According to the story, Tubā then "left them to God, for whose forgiveness I hope on the Day of Judgment, from the stoked-up flames of *Jahannam* [Heb: *Gehinnōm*]. I left behind at Yathrib for him a man from my community for this prophet. I left a person of *great merit* whom people *praised* (*rabbi muḥammadi*)."[170]

Rabbi Ben Abrahamson, consultant for the Israeli Sanhedrin Rabbinic Court on Islamic matters, notes that "The latter term is *rabbi muhammadi*, in Arabic, which could be taken as presaging the coming of the Prophet Muhammad."[171] This *Sīrah* account being late, we cannot determine that this phrasing actually predated Muhammad. It does, however, tell us that the contemporaries of Ibn Isḥāq presumably told this story in an effort to tie the phrasing to Muhammad and a Ḥimyarite Jewish expectation of him, as we will see.

We find references to the Ḥimyarites, in Islamic accounts, as *Ahl al-Tawḥīd* (the People of Unity), a term generally reserved exclusively for Muslims in the Ḥadīth literature.[172] The story of Abraha, the Ethiopian Aksumite Christian viceroy in Yemen (d.

553 CE), and his military invasion of the Ḥijāz, against the Quraysh of Mecca,[173] is recounted in the Qur'ān, as the Year of the Elephant (570 CE). He was said to have sought to destroy the Ka`bah, whereas the Ḥimyarites were actually said to have revered it, and been the first to place the *kiswah* covering around it.[174] The Ḥimyarite Jews were well-known for their resistance to the Aksumite conversion efforts.[175] The references to this battle in the Qur'ān, in *Sūrat al-Fīl*, might thus be even more relevant if part of its audience had a connection to the Ḥimyarites.

We read that "The Meccan temple was first dressed as a mark of honor by Tobba the Ḥimyarite when he Judaized."[176] Muhammad himself was said to have maintained this tradition by importing Yemeni cloth for the fabric of the *kiswah*.[177] In fact, even by the 9th century, the *kiswah* was said to be annually changed to a red cloth on the 10th of Muḥarram (`Āshūrā'), said in *aḥādīth* to correspond to the Jewish 10th of Tishrei, Yom Kippur.[178]

All of this provides much deeper insight into the wide-spread influence of the Ḥimyarite Jews on the region, leading up to Muhammad's activity. This helps situated that Qur'ānic message within a large audience of post-Ḥimyarites Jews, rather than within a small audience of scattered Jews, as is often presumed. If the Ḥimyarites (and post-Ḥimyarites) of this audience were not Sadducees, the strong evidence for their rabbanism might be found in their association with the *Aḥbār*, as noted, in the *Sīrah* account. Let us now take a look at the Pharisaic origins of these *Aḥbār*.

The Emergence of Pharisees

In reaction to the Hasmonean consolidation of religious and political power, most

Ḥasīdīm seem to have emerged as Pharisees. Josephus claims that in his youth he studied

with all three "philosophies," purporting to have mastered the wisdom taught by each,

then finally settled on joining the Pharisees.[179] Josephus explains, "they follow the

conduct of reason, and what that prescribes as good to them they do," and also "pay

respect to such as are in years, nor are they so bold as to contradict them."[180] He explains

further that they had become extremely popular with the masses, and were "able to

greatly persuade the body of the people." Popular customs like "divine worship, prayers

and sacrifices," were performed according to their direction, insomuch that the cities gave

great attestations to them on account of their entire virtuous conduct, both in the actions

of their lives and their discourse also."[181]

Josephus indicates that when John Hyrcanus (reigned 134 – 104 BCE, died 104

BCE) broke with the Pharisees, the Kingdom was governed by "the laws which [the

Pharisees] had set up for the people."[182] Thus, Josephus continues, "the Pharisees handed

down to the people certain regulations from earlier generations which are not written in

the laws of Moses," known as the "Oral Torah."[183] Though less concerned with issues of

Tzadōqite lineage than the Essenes, the Pharisees were just as committed to the Torah

and *Mitzvōt* (Biblical Commandments) as the rule of law for Judean society as a whole.[184]

In order to achieve this, the Torah had to be interpreted in such a way that the social,

economic and religious aspects of life were appropriately and contextually addressed in a

manner that could popularly be seen as relevant, all the more so after the destruction of

the Temple in 70 CE.

As noted on page 38, with regards to the *hūd* verb, in translation and in exegesis, the Qur'ān is interpreted as making reference to Jews, with no differentiation between Jewish sects. In actuality, reference is made to the Pharisee-descended *Ḥaberīm* by name, as well as to other Jewish sects, specified by doctrine. In traditional *tafsīr,* the following *'ayah* (5.44) is said to refer to "rabbis and the doctors of law," almost as if a verbatim Christian rendering of the Greek *nomikos* and *nomodidascalos*.[185] The Arabic, however, does not draw from the Greek, but from Hebrew. This is further made clear by the transliteration scheme employed by the Arabic; with foreign words typically composed of all long vowels. In this *'ayah* it is necessary to take a fresh look at the Arabic and translate anew, as all translations incorrectly render both the verbal "*hadū*" as well as glossing over the significance of *al-Aḥbār*. Its phrasing helps to elucidate the context of sectarian debates in the Qur'ānic context.

> It was We who revealed the Torah: therein was Guidance (*Hudā^{an}*) and Light. By its standard have been judged *those who turn* (*hādū*); by the prophets who bowed to God's will; by the rabbis and *ḥaḅers* (*al-Aḥbār*); for to them was entrusted the protection of God's Book, and they were witnesses thereto. Therefore fear not men, but fear Me, and sell not my signs for a miserable price. If any do fail to judge by what God has revealed, they are *kāfirūn*. (5.44)

The term *Yahūd,* the Arabic word for "Jews," is not employed in this *'ayah*. Instead, we see a list of various groups operating within a Jewish context: *those who turn*, presumably, *those who turn away*; the prophets who *judge by the Torah*. Thus, we know these are not just any prophets, but *Biblical* prophets; the rabbis and *ḥabr* or *ḥabar*; and finally those who *do not* judge by the "standard" of the Torah are called *kāfirūn* here.

What the reader will thus notice, now with the understanding that *hadu* is not a synonym for *Yahūd* but rather for *deviant* sectarians who *turn away* from the Torah, is that neither the prophets, nor the rabbis and *aḥbar* are noted here as *hadū.* Thus, the *hadū* group seems to reference a disapproved sectarian heresy, while the prophets are listed along *with* the rabbis and this associated group of *ḥabrs,* who are no more being denigrated than the prophets, mentioned immediately before them.[186]

Who were these *ḥabrs*? Charles Cutler Torrey, in *The Jewish Foundation of Islam*,[187] and Author Jeffery, in *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*,[188] argue that this term *Aḥbar* in its singular *Ḥabr* is nothing short of the Talmudic term for the Pharisaic *Ḥaber* (a colleague, intellectual companion).[189]A Talmudic proverb says, "Your *ḥaber* has a *ḥaber*, and your *ḥaber*'s *ḥaber* has a *ḥaber*; your words will thus circulate and become public" (*Babā Batrā* 38b; `*Arakīn* 16a). The rabbis urgently recommend study in company of a *ḥaber*, asserting that only in this way can knowledge be acquired (*Berakōt* 63b; *Nedarīm* 81a); therefore, if necessary, one should even expend money for the purpose of acquiring a *ḥaber* (*Avōt d'Rabbī Natan* 8.3). Rabbi Ḥanīnā declared that, while he had learned much from his masters, he had learned more from his *Ḥaberīm* (*Ta`anīt* 7a). This term, *ḥaber*, became synonymous with the Pharisees, and this is the context of the Qur'ānic reference to *Aḥbār.* The fact that the Qur'ān groups these *Aḥbar* with the prophets, and does not cite them synonymously with "those who turn [away]," is a key point that is commonly glossed-over.

The Essenes "in every town"

One of the sects we see *doctrinally* referenced in the Qur'ān is the Essenes (*Essaioi* in

Greek),[190] with whom Goetien, Rabin and Wansbrough associated Muhammad's

movement with. As noted on page 41, this group originally emerged out of the ashes of

post-Maccabaean expectations. The term "Essenes" seems to have been used by outsiders

more than as a self-designation. Thus, it should not surprise us that we do not find the

sect referenced by name in the Qur'ān. Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, however, do seem

to identify their community as the `Ossīm ha'Torah, the "do-ers of the Torah" (1QpHab

8:1). This notion of *Ma`asei Torah* is supported by the phrase *meqtzat ma`aseh ha'Torah*

which is found within 4Q398,[191] in juxtaposition to the "Covenant Breakers" who they do

not regard as Jews.[192]

These "doer of the Torah" purported the formation of a community, and

alternative "nation," headed by a "legitimate," priestly theocracy, personified in a

"Righteous Teacher" (*Moreh Tzedeq*). They divorced themselves from Jerusalem and

established their utopian ideal as at least one known ascetic community near the Dead

Sea; and as we will see, other locations as well. They seem to have believed themselves

called by God, in the words of Isaiah," In the wilderness prepare the way of the

LORD."[193]

The earliest evidence about the location of the community derives from Philo of

Alexander (ca. 35-45 C.E.), who speaks of them in two different writing. He describes

them in his *Hypothetica* as living and working together in numerous communities in

which they shared property, even clothing.[194] They communally assembled in orderly

rows of youngest to oldest, for prayer. According to Philo, they held to an allegorical interpretation of the Torah.[195]

While we tend to think of the Qumran Community as the whole of the Essenes, Philo additionally writes in *Every Good Man is Free,*[196] there were over 4,000 Essenes in Syria. He states therein that they live in numerous villages and avoid large cities. Additionally, Pliny noted that Essenes live on the western shore of the Dead Sea above Engeddi. In addition to Philo's claim that thousands of Essenes resided in various small villages, the Essenes mentioned by Pliny were not located at the site of Qumran adjacent to caves where some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered.[197] Though the *Community Rule* makes no mention of women or children, and though many sources of Antiquity point to an ascetic celibacy of many, Josephus describes *another* division of Essenes who married.[198]

Like Philo, Josephus claims in *The Jewish War*, that there were *many* Essenes in *every* town, not just in one centralized communal location. In addition to echoing similar claims about their communities, he claims that they lived very long lives, dressed in white, never being given a new garment or pair of sandals until the previous had worn out completely. They faced the East at dusk and dawn, in meditation, and had their own court comprised of no less than 100 members.[199] The picture we get from the Ancient sources is remarkably consistent with the pertinent Dead Sea Scrolls literature, in particular the self-description of the community in *Serekh Ha'Yaḥad* (Community Rule 1QS), leading nearly all scholars to accept that the communities of the Essenes of Dead Sea Scrolls are one and the same.[200]

Doctrinally, we find that the Qur'ānic admonition against a group of Jews believing in fatalism (5.64) is a view known *only* in Jewish history to have ever been associated with the Essenes according to Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews* 13.172). Isidore Epstein writes that the Essenes "held to a rigid predetermination, which denied man all freedom of action and effort."[201] While this views seems to be somewhat exaggerated (in light of passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls, e.g. 1QH; 1QS 3-4, *et al.*), were the Qur'ānic admonition to apply to a sect of Jews other than those descended from Diaspora-Essenes, it would be a sect otherwise unknown.[202] This is certainly not to suggest that Muhammad encountered "Essenes" as they existed in the Second Temple Era, but it would lend credence to the notion of survival of a sect that descended from an Essene Diaspora.

Jewish Sects After The Fall of Jerusalem and into Late Antiquity

If there were Diaspora Essenes, we do have some clues as to possible identities of some of their sectarian fragmentations. Epiphanius of Salamis (ca. 310–320 – 403 CE) tells of a group which still existed during his lifetime which he called "Ossaeans" (Gk. *Ossaioi*). This happens to be an alternative spelling of "Essenes" given by Philo (*Hypothetica* 11:1-18), which argues for the similar name being more than coincidence. Epiphanius, however, differentiated these from the Essenes, whom he erroneously regarded as Samaritans rather than Jews (a view which no one holds today). Epiphanius claimed that the Essene sect was *also* still in existence during his lifetime. Norman Golb argues that the Ossaeans were probably of Essenic origins, saying, "the Essenic hostility to the Pharisaic order of sacrifice may well have given rise to an 'Ossaean'... ban on sacrifice,

and these same Essenic remnants would have been attracted to the vegetarianism of the [later] Elchasaites," an offshoot of the Ossaeans.[203] While Golb is idiosyncratic in some of his conclusions, Gerard Luttikhuizen, in his *The Revelation of Elchasai: Investigations Into The Evidence For A Mesopotamian Jewish Apocalypse of the 2nd Century and Its Reception by Judeo-Christian Propagandists*, as well as A.J.H. Wilhelm Brandt, in his *Die Judischen Baptismen*, also agree with Golb that the rendering "Ossean" is an equivalent of "Essene," and that the figure Elchasai was a Jewish reformer, operating within the context of an Essene type of Judaism.[204] This is particularly significant, since the cosmonogy of the Qur'ān and later Sufism has a considerable amount in common with Elchasaite beliefs. This is most striking in their views of Jesus as a sort of primordial cosmic "Adam" figure.

L. E. Toombsa argues that a *variety* of sects emerged from the Essenes, after the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Qumran site. Toombsa writes, in *Barcosiba and Qumrân,* that "Assuming that the Qumrân Community were Essenes, Essenism may still be regarded, even after Qumrân, as a widespread phenomenon with many varied modes of expression, of which the Community at Qumrân was but one." The Essenes thus "did not come into existence when the buildings at Qumrân were erected, nor [did they] perish with their destruction,"[205] a view which Golb argues at considerable length.[206]

Epiphanius, writing in the fourth century CE (c. 378), tells us of a figure named "Elxais,"[207] or "Elchasai," who led an offshoot of Jews called Ossaeans that were "of those that came before [Elxai's] time and during it." The Ossaeans "originally came from Nabataea, Ituraea, Moabitis and Arielis, the lands beyond the basin of what sacred scripture called the Salt Sea," in Arabia, the Hijāz.[208] Epiphanius writes that Elxais or

Elchasai "joined the Ossaeans."[209] He explains that Elchai lived in "the time of Emperor Trajan, after the advent of the Savior,"[210] saying "he was of Jewish origin and his ideas were Jewish." We can thus conclude that the Elchasaite Ossaeans were not seen as a sect of Christianity in spite of their veneration of Jesus as a human prophet, much like the Islamic view.[211]

The Sabians (*Sābi'ūna Ḥunafā'*)

The Ossaeans were referenced by the term "Sabians" (*Sobiai*) by the Early Church Fathers.[212] This is of particular interest, as the Qur'ān explains that "those who believe" and Jews "who turn" towards God, as well as an elusive group called *Sabians*, and Nazarenes along with the Magi and "polytheists" or "Mushrikīn" will be judged between, by God, on the Day of Resurrection (22.17). As we will see, Muhammad and his followers were referred to by this name of "*Ṣāba'īyūn*" too, though this is rarely reflected in English translations of the *Sīrah,* which consistently renders it "Muslims."

Arab writers after around 832 CE typically identify a group of star and planet worshipping polytheists as Sabians. This late view is undoubtedly the source of Maimonides' confusion on the matter as well.[213] The Qur'ānic Sabians, however, are a group which is *never* associated with polytheism or *shirk*, and *never* even so much as once critiqued within Muhammad's oration of the Qur'ān. Furthermore, in later accounts attributed nevertheless to early Muslims, we read numerous claims about the *Ṣāba'īyūn* which are significantly dissimilar to later ideas. Ziyād ibn `Abīhi (d. 672 CE), the governor of Iraq during the first Umayyad Caliph Mu`āwīyah ibn 'Abī Sufyān (602 – 680 CE) explains that" the Sabians believe in the prophets and prayed five times daily."[214]

We read from `Abdul al-Zanād (d. 747 CE) that: "The Sabians are from Kutha[215] in Iraq, they believe in the prophets, fast 30 days in a year, and pray 5 times daily towards Yemen."[216] Hasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728 CE) wrote of the Sabians: "They read the *Zabūr*" the Biblical *Ketuḫīm* "and pray in the direction of the *qiblah*."[217] Al-Baṣrī also wrote that the Sabian religion "resembled the Magians" by which it would seem he meant Zoroastrians, also commenting that they "worshipped angels."[218] Qatadah ibn Di`amah (d. 736 CE) wrote more specifically that "The Sabians worshipped angels, read *Zabūr*, prayed five ritual prayers." In addition he writes that they "pray towards the sun."[219]

Mujāhid ibn Jarīr claimed that (d. 722 CE), "the Sabians have no *distinctive* religion but it is somewhere between Judaism and Magianism."[220] Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 728-732 CE) who was originally from Persia wrote that "the Sabians believe in *lā ilāha ill-Allāh*… though they do not have canonical law,"[221] similar, it would seem, to Epiphanius' commentary on the Ossaeans. Al-Suddī (d. 745 CE) also wrote that "The Sabian religion is between Judaism and Magianism."[222] Ibn Abī Nujayh (d. 749 CE) wrote as well that "The Sabians were between Judaism and Magianism."[223]

According to Atā ibn Abī Rabah (d. 732 CE), "the Sabians live in Sawād and they are not identical with either the Magians, Nazarenes, or Jews."[224] Ibn Jurayī (ca. 8th century CE) also wrote that "the Sabians are in Sawād and are [somewhere] between the Magians, Christians, or Jews." Ibn Jurayī also commented that the *mushrikīn* opponents of Muhammad described Muhammad himself as a Sabian, saying unequivocally: "He is a Sabian."[225]

`Awza' (d. 773 CE) observed similar to our previous sources that these *Zabūr*-believing "Sabians are between Judaism and *Naṣārā*."[226] Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 767 CE) too,

the founder of the Ḥanafī school or *maẕhab* wrote of this, that "the Sabians read *Zabūr* and [they] are between Judaism and *Naṣārā*."[227] Mālik ibn Anas (d. 795 CE), the founder of the Mālikī *maẕhab* contends, however, that "the Sabians are between Judaism and Nazarenism and they have no [unique] scriptures."[228]

Ibn Jurayi noted the *mushrikīn* polytheists were known to call Muhammad and his *Sahābah* (Companions) Sabians, noting also, in several *ḥadīth* references, that "these are the Sabians."[229] Though some sources describe them as between Zoroastrianism and Judaism, we find other sources that say they were between normative Judaism and what we will see was quasi-Jewish Nazarenism. In both cases, a Judaic orientation is the constant. We also find the previously noted reports that they followed the *Zabūr* which was at least part of the Jewish canon, if not all of it.

Indeed, nearly all reports classify them as either sect between Nazarenism and Judaism or between Judaism and Zoroastrianism, but few are as clear about the matter as that of the Imām of Baghdad, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855 CE), who wrote decisively that "the Sabians are a sect of *Naṣārā* or of Judaism,"[230] though he was apparently not certain *which* they belonged to.

The Sabians were apparently mentioned in connection with the Ossaeans by Hippolytus,[231] Epiphanius[232] and Origen.[233] Each mentions the book of the aforementioned "Ossaean prophet," Elchasai, which was used by several sects and in particular by his Elchasaite followers. The *Book of Elchasai* did not apparently found a new religion or sect self-designated by the term "Elchasaitism," but was instead dedicated to the "*Sobiai*," the same term Hippolytus referred to the Ossaeans sect as, meaning "those who have been ritually immersed."

The sect was still said to have existed at the time Ibn Al-Nadīm wrote

the *Fihrist* in the tenth century (987-988 CE). He tells us that these *Mughtasilah*

(immersers) were numerous in the marsh regions which we would even later find the

Mandaean community as well. Ibn Al-Nadīm's *Mughtasilah* Sabians were said to have

been founded by one *al-Ḥasai'ḥ* (El-Chasai) who had a disciple named Shimūn, the

Arabic of Simeon (or *Shim`ōn* in Hebrew).[234] We must bear all of this in mind we read

the numerous references that Muhammad and his followers were initially known

themselves as "Sabians," just like those enigmatically commented on in passing, within

the Qur'ān (2.62; 5.69; 22.17). Tor Andrae tells us the following:

> Mohammed's followers were frequently – and precisely in the historically valuable
> tradition of the old stories of the prophet's war-like expeditions – called "Sabians" by his
> opponents... It is in the highest degree improbable that the tradition of this nickname has
> no real foundation. So we may take it that in Mecca it was clear that the teachings of
> Mohammed had a certain relationship with that of the Sabians.[235]

Whatever that relationship was, it was apparently so strong that Muhammad and his

followers were frequently referred to by this name, with not a single refutation of this

claim recorded from them in response even by late compilers of such stories. This argues

strongly for their historical-probability according the criteria which we are employing (as

outlined on pages 12-16). Joel Kraemer, as well, associates the Sabians with the

Ḥanīfiyyah, an ambiguous term widely used synonymously with Muhammad's

community, even still today. "From what has been shown to this point" Kraemer says, "it

seems clear that the *Ḥanīfiyyah* was not an invention of Islam, but was rather a very

lively and active movement among Arab tribes in the *jahilīyyah*." Particular attention

must be paid to Kraemer's further comment that "There are good reasons for concluding

that it was also known as the religion of the *Ṣabī'ūn*, and there is evidence that the two terms were identical."[236] If this is the case, then the similar passing mention of the *ḥunafā'* (s. *ḥanīf*) might have simply been self-designations of the same community, if not Muhammad's own movement, as so many sources seem to indicate.

Indeed, in the early *ḥadīth* and *sīrah* sources, *Ṣābī'* is also used as a synonym of *muslim*, just like *ḥanīf*. About to visit Muhammad, `Umar says he is going to visit "Muhammad, this *sābī'*." Kramer notes that after accepting Islam, `Umar is described, saying: "*qad saba'a*," meaning "he was made a Sabian."[237] The Banū Hawāzin called the Muslims at Ḥunayn "*al-Subbā'*" as well.[238] We see in translation of the *Sīrah* of Ibn Isḥāq, that Ibn Ḥishām's recension describes Muhammad's followers as Sabians. We read *sabawta* which is generally mistranslated as "you became a Muslim" and *al-Subbā'* also mistranslated as "the Muslims."[239] Not limited to these examples, we read "*saba'nā, saba'nā*," translated as "we became Muslims!"[240]

In a tradition recorded by Ibn Ḥazm (994 – 1064), the prophet Abraham himself is said to have been sent by God to the Sabians to make their shortcomings right by *al-ḥanīfiyyah al-samḥah*. Ibn Ḥazm explains that "in those times they were called *ḥanīfīn*." There were a remnant of them in his day, in Ḥarrān, "but they are very few." In other words, the tradition recorded by Ibn Ḥazm says precisely that *sābī* and *ḥanīf* were the same and that Sabaeanism was in fact the religion of Abraham mentioned in the Qur'ān.[241]

Rabī`ah ibn `Abbād al-Daylī, who later became a follower of Muhammad, said: "I saw the Messenger of God with my own eyes in the marketplace of Żū al-Majāz, saying, 'O people, say *Lā ilaha ill-Allāh* (there is no deity but God), and you will prosper.' He

was going through the alleyways of the market, and the people were gathering around him. I did not see anyone saying anything, and he did not stop saying, 'O people, say *Lā ilaha ill-Allāh* and you will prosper.' Behind him there was a man with a squint and a handsome face, and his hair in two braids, saying, 'He is a Sabian and a liar.' I asked, 'Who is this?' They said, 'Muhammad ibn `Abdullāh, who is saying that he is a Prophet.' I asked, 'Who is this who is denouncing him?' They said, 'His paternal uncle Abu Lahab.'"[242]

We thus see that "Sabian" was not simply a general term, but was a group that had clear practices with which it was identified, with only slight variation, by Muslim writers over the course of centuries. We know that the Qur'ān does not provide any critique of the Sabians, while it does note they receive reward in the Hereafter. We further see that even after the Muslim religious identity and designation emerged, Muslim sources reported accounts of Muhammad and his followers being referred to as Sabians, a name which the Early Church Fathers associated with a form of Ossaeanism. Having addressed the vast array of sources on the Sabians, and having clarified the orientation of this group, we must consider the identity of the Qur'ānic *Naṣārā*. The *Naṣārā* are the last of the Abrahamic faiths mentioned in the Qur'ān; a group typically assumed to simply be doctrinally orthodox forms of Christianity.

The Identity of the Qur'ānic Nazarenes: A Broken Off Branch

As we have seen several references claiming that "the Sabians read [the Biblical] *Zabūr* and are between Judaism and *Naṣārā*," and as we have also seen that the Early Christian heresiographers commented on a very similar sect known as "*Sobiai*," it would seem that

many of those who the Qur'ān addresses itself to were from competing Judaic sects. As we will see, this is furthermore the case with regards to the term *Naṣārā*, which appears throughout the Qur'ān in reference to followers of Jesus. This term, however, is clearly distinguished from doctrinally orthodox forms of Christianity (*Kristīyan*) in the Sassanid era inscription of Kirtīr, which we have already seen.[243] We will also see that the Qur'ān distinguishes the theology of the *Naṣārā* from that of doctrinally orthodox forms of Christianity which fit Christianity's self-descriptions and creedal definitions.

The term *Naṣārā* is a variant pronunciation of the Aramaic, *naṣrāye* (singular: *naṣrāya*), which was the *lingua franca* of the educated in the Middle East leading up to, and during, the life of Muhammad.[244] Sidney Harrison Griffith writes in *The Church In the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims In The World*, that though "there is some controversy about its etymology and exact significance," there is no question that "the modern scholarly consensus is that it is simply the Arabic form of the name 'Nazoreans' or 'Nazarenes'." With this consensus in mind, the only question then remains, who was this group which was distinguished from Christianity by the Persians?

Epiphanius says that the Nazarene designation was later appropriated by a group of "heretics," who he claims believed some things in common with the Christians – that Jesus is the Messiah and the son of God, etc. – but differ from them greatly in that they "follow the Law of the Jews."[245] Epiphanius is, according to François de Blois, in his *Naṣrānī (Ναζωραῖος) and ḥanīf (ἐθνικός): Studies on the Religious Vocabulary of Christianity and of Islam,* "the earliest datable author to use the name Nazoraean to designate a specific Christian sect." De Blois nevertheless states that these differentiated terms of "Nazarenes" and "Christians" were referenced "as two apparently separate

communities a hundred years before Epiphanius in three Middle-Persian inscriptions set up, around the end of the third century, by the Zoroastrian high priest Kirdir,"[246] as we have seen. In the Qur'ān, this distinction seems to have been made to specify the Nazarenes known by Epiphanius, Jerome and Augustine of Hippo.[247]

David Sim writes, in his *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, "The Nazarenes are first mentioned by Epiphanius who records that they upheld the Torah, including the practice of circumcision and Sabbath observance (*Panarion* 29:5.4; 7:2, 5; 8:1-7), read the Hebrew scriptures in the original Hebrew."[248] The Nazarenes are clearly distinguished from doctrinally orthodox forms of Christianity only decades later than Epiphanius by Jerome (ca. 347 –420 CE), the son of Eusebius and the translator of the Latin Vulgate, as well as by Augustine of Hippo (354 –430 CE). The latter tells us very little besides mentioning that "those who, calling themselves Nazarene Christians" continue "to the present day"; indicating the existence of a group who called themselves Nazarenes, who the Christian heresiographers claim sought recognition amongst Christianity.[249]

More elucidating is Jerome, who in a correspondence to Augustine, refers to the Nazarenes as both "preaching of the gospel of Christ," yet remaining "believing Jews," who "do well in observing the precepts of the Law." This includes, he has heard, "offering sacrifices" and "circumcising their children" as well as "keeping the Jewish Sabbath, as all the Jews have been accustomed to do." [250] Like Cerinthus (ca. 100 CE) and the mythic Ebion before them, Jerome faults them only for "this one error, that they mixed up the ceremonies of the Law with the Gospel of Christ, and professed their faith in that which was new, without letting go what was old."[251] This key difference singles

the Nazarenes out from normative Christianity in practice. We will see shortly, however, that the Qur'ān differentiates the *Naṣārā* by theology as well.

People of the Gospel

A peculiarity of Qur'ānic reference to the *Naṣārā* is the reference to the textual Gospel as a single scripture. The term is not used to indicate "good news," as in the Greek Christian Testament. That term is "Bashar," a cognate with the Hebrew "Basar." The term *bashar* is used throughout the Qur'ān to indicate "good news" in a general sense. Rather the *Injīl* referenced in the Qur'ān is a straightforward transliteration of "Evangel" Scripture, and yet only one version is referenced, just as we should expect in relation to the historical Nazarene sect. The Qur'ānic phrase "People of the Gospel" (*Ahl al-Injīl*), is a peculiar formulation, related to the subject of the Qur'ānic *Naṣārā*. The more common phrase, "People of the Book" (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) occurs fifty-four times in the Qur'ān. While the latter seems to refer to Nazarenes and Jews, there is no indication within the Qur'ān itself that this includes communities which had abrogated the *Jewish* Bible, or *Tanakh* (4.153). Indeed, within the context of Judaism, the phrase "People of the Book" predates the Qur'ān in usage as a self-identification.[252] There are instances, however, where the term refers to an array of different sects, including, apparently at least one party who did not attest to the ideal Oneness of God (3.63).[253] Within the Qur'ān, in only one instance do we find the designation of "People of the Gospel" (*Ahl al-Injīl*) (5.47), who are told in the very next *'ayah* that the *singular* Gospel only "confirmed the Book that is already between your hands."[254] This may have been a reference to the singular Hebrew account

used by the Ebionites and Nazarenes according to Jerome, Origen and other Church Fathers, as we will see.

As this ʿayah refers to a Book confirmed, "already" between their hands, this cannot refer to the Qur'ān or a Gospel account, as it is a confirmation, already in written form "between your hands," which precludes reference to the Qur'ānic oration that had not yet been written as a textual collection (*muṣ'ḥaf*). This also tells of a specifically Nazarene understanding of the singular Gospel, which was used by the Nazarenes, instead of the plural, canonical Gospels (5.48).[255] This is, of course, immediately preceding the statement regarding the Torah still being "right in front of them (between their hands)"[256] (5.46), which no English translation chooses to render in this phrase's literal usage in Arabic.

Commenting on the common Arabic use of the phrase, Alfred Felix Landon Beeston writes that "every student of Arabic knows that *bayna yaday*" interpreted "means purely and simply 'in front of.'"[257] Instead, Yusuf Ali translates it "confirming the scripture that *came before it*, and guarding it in safety," rendering "*bayna yadahi*" as "what came before." Shakir and Pickthal also render this as "what came before." This conveys the idea of a perceived legitimate scripture was already in their possession, and is a theological contrast with later exegesis that the Torah was denounced by the Qur'ān as hopelessly corrupted. The latter is a view which we simply do not find in the Qur'ān anywhere. This is also a theological contrast with many forms of Christianity at the time, which did not view the Tanakh as authoritatively. We thus read of the Nazarenes that "They use not only the New Testament but the Old Testament as well, as the Jews do."[258]

Nazarenes and the Virgin Birth

One of the most significant differences between the well-known Jamesean Ebionites –
who are not referred to in the Qur'ān – and the Nazarenes, was the issue of the Virgin
Birth. Jerome tells us that the Nazarenes "believe that Messiah, the Son of God, was born
of the Virgin Mary."[259] The Qur'ān employs similar tact in stating the "The similitude of
Jesus before God is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: 'Be'
(*Kun*) and he was" (3.59).

The Christo-Messianology of the *Revelation of Elchasai* an Ossaean-Sabaean
work, conceives of the Messiah as a primordial angel of giant dimensions. This vivid,
even Gnostic concept, recalls *Shi'ur Ḳomah* and *Adam Qadmon,* which reincarnates in
various generations, like the Avatars of Indian tradition.[260] We thus read from
Epiphanius, the following "Ossaean" doctrine:

> They confess Christ in name, believing that he is a creature, and that he appears
> time and again, and that for the first time he was formed in Adam and puts on and
> off Adam's body, whenever he wishes. He is called Christ, and the Holy Spirit,
> with a female shape, is his sister. Both of them… are ninety-six miles long and
> twenty-four miles wide... (30.3.3)

Similar to this concept of a primordial, angelic Messiah, the Qur'ān, draws on the use of
"Logos" by the Johannite Gospel and the Jewish philosopher Philo alike; referring to
Jesus as the "Word" of God. "O Mary, God gives you *good news* (*yubashshiruki*) in a
word *from* Him (*bikalīmatin minhu*), whose name is the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary"
(3.45). We see this as well in the *'āyah* "The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, was a

messenger of God, and His word (*kalīmatuhu*) which He spoke (*al-qāhā*) to Mary, and a Spirit *from* Him (*ruḥun minhu*)" (4.171).[261]

Related to this relationship between Zakarīyā (the father of John the Baptist), and Mary, we see a similar relationship set up between John (*Yaḥya*) and Jesus. John is called a "confirming truth" and is "in a Word from God" (*bikalimatin mina Allah*) similar to the phraseology related to Jesus (3.39). This normalizing of Christian ideas about Jesus would seem to have much in common with Elchasaite attitudes towards Jesus.

Qur'ānic Designations Regarding the Nazarenes as Quasi-Jewish and Hebraic

Based upon what we know about the Nazarenes and their beliefs, and what we will see in this section – that they read the Bible in Hebrew, including their Gospel account, that they held to Jewish law, and even (as we will see) that they had a very different idea of the Trinity than that of "the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" – we should then be able to identify them as, or distinguish them from, the Qur'ānic references to the *Naṣārā*. First of all, we are told in the Qur'ān that they believe in some form of "Trinity." The Qur'ān denounces this view that the Nazarenes shared with Christianity, saying "Verily, it is disbelief (*kafara*) to say that God is the third of three (*Allāha thālitu thalāthat*[in])." (5.73)

The Qur'ān thus instructs them to: "Say not 'Three', it is better for you" (*wa-la taqūlū thalāthat*[un] *intahu khayr*[ān] *lakum*), denouncing all forms of Trinitarianism, or any division of the absolute unity of God. This Trinity of the *Naṣārā*, however, is described differently than the Christian Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are told that in this Trinity it is *Mary*, rather than the Holy Spirit, who plays a feminine role (5.116). This might indicate that the Qur'ānic author either knew surprisingly little about Christianity, which

Muhammad's community would have encountered not only in Arabia, but during their purported years as refugees in Abyssinia (614 – 615 CE), as some have suggested. It might, otherwise, indicate that the Qur'ān was simply not dealing with a traditional form of Christianity, and instead, perhaps that the *Naṣārā* were one and the same as the Nazarene heretics.

Jerome claims on several occasions that he had access to a copy of the singular "Gospel according to the Hebrews," which he claimed the Nazoraeans read "in Hebrew," and from which he quotes a several passages, as others did before him. One passage of this singular Gospel is quoted three times by Jerome, and twice by his predecessor Origen. Neither Papias, Irenaeus, Eusebius, or Epiphanius believed that Matthew was originally written in Greek.[262] Whether or not this is true is irrelevant to the fact that it was believed to have been true. We read from Jerome that "in the Gospel written according to the Hebrews which the Nazoraeans read the lord says: Just now my mother, the Holy Spirit, lifted me up."[263] Here then, we see that the character of Jesus, in this singular Gospel, associates his mother with the Holy Spirit, or perhaps even vice versa. As noted, Origen gives the same quotation, again from the "Gospel according to the Hebrews," phrasing it as "Just now my mother, the Holy Spirit, lifted me up… and brought me to the great mountain Thabor."[264]

This is confirmed by another quotation which Jerome brings from "the Gospel which the Nazoraeans read, written in the Hebrew language," an account of Jesus' baptism that relays "it came to pass when the lord came up out of the water, the whole fount of the Holy Spirit descended upon him and rested over him and said to him: My son (...), you are my first-begotten son that reigns forever." De Blois thus asserts that the

Qur'ānic Nazarenes "are accused of believing in an anthropomorphic trinity precisely of the type that Jerome attributed to the Nazoraeans in Palestine, a trinity consisting of god, his son the Christ, and Christ's mother, which is precisely what we find the Qur'ān saying the Nazarenes believe in (5.116). Thus, the name and the doctrines agree."[265] With this in mind, it is quite possible that the Qur'ānic, "Naṣārā" were the quasi-Jewish, heretical sect by that name. Having looked closely at the practices and doctrines of those groups named in the Qur'ān, and addressed as monotheistic and Biblical in nature, we must now turn our attention to those others in the Qur'ānic audience: the polytheists or *mushrikīn*.

Who Were the Qur'ānic *Mushrikīn*?

One of the religious categories in the Qur'ān which receives the least inquiry is the *mushrikīn*. In the Qur'ān, the term *shirk* is related to the plural stem, fourth active participle, *mushrikūn*, which is most literally rendered as "associators" or contextually "polytheists." We may literally translate *shirk* as "associationism," but this occurs in such a manner only twice in the Qur'ān, in the manner that the entry suggests should perhaps more accurately be rendered *ishrāk* (31.13; 35.14). Normally, it is used as "association" in the Qur'ān, "in the passive, not the factive sense of the term."[266]

The term *shirk* occurs five times in the Qur'ān (31.13; 34.22; 35.14; 35.40 and 46.4). In its verb-form we find *ashraka* as a reference to the "associating" of "partnership" explicitly or more often implicitly with God. Such uses occur 71 times in the Qur'ān (e.g. 2.96; 3.64; 4.36; 6.1; 7.33; 9.3; 10.18). Forms of the active participle *Mushrik*, occur 49 times (e.g. 2.105; 2.135; 2.221; 3.67; 3.95; 6.14; 6.79). In *Sūrat al-*

Baqarah, we see a clear distinction made between the *Ahl al-Kitāb* and the *Mushrikīn*, when it says, "Neither those who disbelieve (*kafarū*) among the *Ahl al-Kitāb* nor *Al-Mushrikūn*" (2.105). This makes it clear that the *mushrikīn* are separate from the *Ahl al-Kitāb*, whereas the *kāfirīn* are a grade of disbelievers from the *Ahl al-Kitāb* (as we have seen on pages 35-36).

The Qur'ān, however, is clear that this "shirk" does not simply refer to the worship of stone statues, but also those who take scholars of religion, monks, or religious lawyers as lords in practice by following their doctrines, or rulings on what is lawful when it is contrary to the law or doctrines prescribed by God's revelation (9.31).

Additionally, we find numerous polytheistic Nabataean sites in the Ḥijāz, such as *Madā'in Ṣāliḥ*, from the Al-`Ulā sector near Medina. These sites are interestingly situated on preceding sites of the `Ad and Thamūd cultures referenced in the Qur'ān, from which the Nabataeans apparently derived their stone-cutting knowledge.[267] It would not be an understatement to comment that the Qur'ān is focused on the `Ad and Thamūd, in its addressing polytheists. One needs look no further than references to the Nabataean trinity in the Qur'ān: "Have you reflected on Al-Lāt and Al-`Uzzā, and Manāt, the third [of the three]?" (53.19-20).

According to Herodotus, the ancient Arabians "believe in no other gods except Dionysus and the Heavenly Aphrodite; and they say that they wear their hair as Dionysus does his, cutting it round the head and shaving the temples. They call Dionysus, Orotalt; and Aphrodite, Alilat."[268] In the Qur'ān, Al-Lāt is mentioned along with al-`Uzzā and Manāt in *Sūrah* 53.19-23. The tribe of `Ad of `Iram of the Pillars is also mentioned in

Sūrah 89.5-8, and archaeological evidence from `Iram show numerous inscriptions devoted to her for the protection of a tribe by that name.[269]

There is another inscription of a god "Hubal" which appears just once in a Nabataean inscription.[270] This reference is along with the gods *Ẓu al-Sharā,* possibly an indication of the role of this deity, not the name, as the term *Ẓu* is a typical Qur'ānic designation meaning "possessor of." In this same Nabataean inscription, we find reference to *Manawatu*. It has been suggested that Hubal "may actually have been a Nabataean," but the reality is more likely the Hubal, references in *Ḥadīth* literature, was simply a different name than the Qur'ān used, much the same as we see with *Ẓu al-Sharā*.[271] Manāt was one of the three chief goddesses of Mecca, probably known by the cognate name *Manawat* to the Nabataeans of Petra, who was considered the wife of Hubal and equated her with the Greco-Roman goddess Nemesis. According to Grunebaum in *Classical Islam*, the Arabic name of Manāt is the linguistic counterpart of the Hellenistic Tyche, *Dahr*, or "Time" who snatches away life.[272]

Other references to the *mushrikīn* of the Qur'ānic audience are more ambiguous, indicating that the Qur'ān might not have seen a distinction between Nabataean polytheists and Trinitarian Christians. There is, as Gez Hawting argues, considerable evidence for this, including within the Qur'ānic references to the *mushrikīn* itself.[273] We read that "God does not forgive that anything should be associated with him… whoever associates anything with God, he devises indeed a great sin" (4.48). As well, "whoever associates partners with God, then God has forbidden to him the Garden, and his abode is the fire" (5.72). The very next *'ayah* clarifies that those who commit this *shirk* are in fact Trinitarians, about whom the Qur'ān says: "Certainly they disbelieve who say, 'Surely

God is the Trinity (the third of Three)'; and there is no god but One God" (5.73). We can thus conclude that the Qur'ān is concerned with two classes of polytheists, those of a traditional, Nabataean strain, and polemic references to Trinitarian *Kristiyan* of a doctrinally orthodox strain.

Having examined in depth, all of the religious communities mentioned by name in the Qur'ān, we can now see a picture begin to emerge of the socio-religious contexts of Muhammad. From what the Qur'ān says itself, we see strong evidence that the Qur'ān's religious orientation was not one purporting to found a new, or separate religion; a fact which, we will see, it repeats at length. How then does the Qur'ān describe the activity of "Islam," which we so often think of as the *proper noun* of the scripture's religion? Furthermore, if Muhammad viewed his community as separate from existing ones, is this reflected, or refuted by the controversial wording of the *Constitution of Medina*? These are the questions which we will address in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: What Did Muhammad Mean by *Islam*?

We have looked at the sects referenced by name and doctrines in the Qur'ān. We have seen that the Qur'ān asserts that it was bringing nothing new (41.43; 42.13; 46.9; 46.10, *et al.*), but was a "reminder" (15.6; 15:10; 36:10) to people familiar with Biblical stories, of the Torah that was with them, "between your hands" (e.g. 5.43). If Muhammad was not bringing a new religion, according to the Qur'ān, but working within the framework of existing traditions, as some argue, then what did he mean by the term "Islam?"

The term *Muslim* is used throughout the Qur'ān to indicate the practice of numerous prophets and their followers. It is the active participle of the verb *aslama,*

which *Islam* is the infinitive. That is, *Al-Islam,* mentioned eight times in the Qur'ān is the source of the verb *aslama,* mentioned twenty-two times. It is conjugated as a verb, throughout the Qur'ān, making it clear that the term is not used as a noun, and further that the Qur'ān did not speak of *Al-Islam* as a proper noun, but as a reference to an activity, or religious behavior. A.J. Wensinck explains in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* entry "Muslim," that the term "has been adopted, as a noun or adjective or both together," though this is a later usage than how it is employed in the Qur'ān itself.[274]

The term is the infinitive or "verbal noun," known as the *maṣdar* or "source" of verbal conjugation. The phrasing of "Al-Islam" is the way in which the verb *aslama* is referred to in a sentence where it is a verbal activity being referenced. A more literal, yet cumbersome, *verbal noun* translation would thus be "the act of submitting." The definition of "submitting" itself is somewhat contextually derived from Qur'ānic usage of the term.[275] Etymologically, the root refers to a variety of meanings associated with peace, completion, and wholeness, like its Hebrew cognate root.[276]

When the Qur'ān makes use of the term "Muslim," it does so in a way that describes earlier religious figures and their followers as being "Muslim." We read in *Sūrat Āli-ʿImrān* that Jesus' disciples tell Jesus, "We believe in God; and you be our witness that we are *muslims* (*wa-shahad bi-anna muslimūn*)" (3.52, also see 5.111). The Shakir translation even makes it a point to translate this, more accurately, as "submitting ones." Similarly, *Sūrat al-Baqarah* describes Abraham, his sons, as well as Jacob and his sons as "*muslims*" or "submitting ones" (2.132-133). This would seem to describe their activity, in both cases, rather than their adherence to a later doctrinal identity.

In addition to the term "Muslim," we find another, more prominent self-designation in the Qur'ān, and in early references from Muhammad's followers. That term, *Mu'min*, is an Arabic term usually rendered as "believer," and a cognate of the Hebrew *Mā'mīn*. The Qur'ānic level of the *Mu'minīn* or what the Sufi Shaykh Bawa Muhaiyaddeen (d. 1986) calls "Īmān Islam" (the Islam of "Iman" or "Faith") is higher than the state of Islam.[277] The Qur'ān thus describes the activity of *Muslimīn* (p.) and that of *Mu'minīn* (p.), with *Mu'minīn* always ranked at a higher state. The practice of the verbal *Islam* is the bare minimum; *Īmān* (belief, or faith; Bawa Muhaiyaddeen translates this as "certitude"), for which we are to strive. Carl Ernst explains this matter in his *Following Muhammad:*

> The Arabic term Islam itself was of relatively minor importance in classical theologies based on the Qur'ān. If one looks at the works of theologians such as the famous al-Ghazali (d. 1111), the key term of religious identity is not Islam but Īmān (faith), and the one who possesses it is the Mu'min (believer). Faith is one of the major topics of the Qur'ān; it is mentioned hundreds of times in the sacred text. In comparison, Islam is a less common term of secondary importance; it only occurs eight times in the Qur'ān. Since, however, the term Islam had a derivative meaning relating to the community of those who have submitted to God, it has taken on a new political significance, especially in recent history.[278]

This dichotomy between *Islam* and *Īmān* can be found throughout later commentary by Muslim scholars noting *tiers* of religious observance in the Qur'ān. The most often cited Qur'ānic distinction is noted from *Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt*. Because of its importance, and the wide range of translations given it, this will be rendered directly from the Arabic.[279]

> The `Ārāb[280] say they believe (*tū'minū*) Say: You do not believe; but rather [you should] say, "We submit;" (*aslamnā*) for the act of believing (*al-Īmānu*) has not yet found its way

into your hearts. But if you obey God and His Messenger, he will not allow you to lose any of your actions: for God is Forgiving, Merciful. (49.14)

Here we see unequivocally that the Qur'ān distinguishes between a lower tier of *Islam* and a higher *Īmān.* But who are these *mu'minīn*? Are they only the spiritual elite from amongst Muhammad's followers? According to the Qur'ān itself, *mu'minīn* are *not* restricted to the community of the Qur'ān, but may be found amongst the faithful *Ahl al-Kitāb*. Again, because of some gloss-over in translations, the passage will be rendered from the Arabic.

> You are a good (*khayra*) *Ummah,* raised up for humankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and believe (*tū'minūna*) in God; and if [all] the *Ahl al-Kitāb* believed (*amana*) it would have been better for them; from them are *al-Mu'minūn* and [yet] more of them (*aktharu humu*) are lawless individuals (*al-fāsiqūna*) [than those who are *Mu'minūn*]. (3.110)

The Qur'ān acknowledges that the state of some from the *Ahl al-Kitāb* is beyond the state of *Islam*, and is in fact the state of *Īmān*, even while they are not indicated here as Muhammad's followers, and the implication is that they are not. The Qur'ān itself tells us, in the case of *Īmān*, that the *Mu'min* must not only believe in the Oneness of God, and submit to the minimum regulations of the Qur'ān for *Muslimīn*, but must additionally accept previous revelations of the *Kitāb Allāh* (as we will see below); those Biblical accounts which the Qur'ān calls upon the listener to "remember" so many times. In *Sūraht Al-Nisā'* we read the following proof text:

> O you who believe (*Yā 'ayyuhā al-lażīna 'Āmanū*)! Believe in God, and His Messenger, and the Book (*al-Kitāb*) which He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Book (*al-Kitāb*) which He sent down to those before, and whosoever disbelieves in God, His

Angels, His Books (*Kutubihi*), His Messengers and the Last Day, then indeed he has strayed far away. (4.136)

Thus we see that those who *believe* (*al-lażīna 'Āmanū*), the *Mu'min* (*Believers*) must believe in the Oneness of God, in his Messenger, and in "the Book" or Bible "sent down to those before." Speaking on the distinction between *īmān* and *islam,* the *Encyclopædia of Islam* acknowledges that claims that "in the Ḳur'ān the terms islam and iman are synonymous" are at the very least "an exaggeration."[281] "The Ḳur'ān (XLIX, 14 and 17, and still more IX, 74) evokes an explicit profession of *Islam* which is in no way a guarantee against the sin of *kufr*, and has no saving value unless it is the expression of faith [*imān*]."[282] Further, the Musnad of Ibn Ḥanbal, which states: "*islam* is external, faith belongs to the heart."[283] We read a corroborating view from the quite famous *Ḥadīth Jibrīl.* While it is from later-documented oral traditions, we may regard it as having doctrinal elements of probability (in terms of reflecting early beliefs of Muhammad's *Ummah*).

> While we were one day sitting with the Messenger of God there appeared before us a man dressed in extremely white clothes and with very black hair. No traces of journeying were visible on him, and none of us knew him. He sat down close by the Prophet, rested his knee against his thighs, and said, "O Muhammad! Inform me about Islam." The Messenger said, "*Islam* is that you should testify that there is no deity save God and that Muhammad is His Messenger, that you should perform the prayer, pay the alms, fast during Ramaḍān, and perform the pilgrimage to the House if you can find a way to it." The man said, "You have spoken truly." We were astonished at his thus questioning him and telling him that he was right, but he went on to say, "Inform me about *Īmān* (faith)." He answered, "It is that you believe in God and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and in the Last Day, and in fate, both in its good and in its evil aspects." He said, "You have spoken truly." Then he [the man] said, "Inform me about *Iḥsān*."[284] He answered, "It is that you should serve God as though you could see Him, for though you

cannot see Him yet He sees you"… Thereupon the man went off. I waited a while, and then he said, "O `Umar, do you know who that questioner was?" I replied, "God and His Messenger know better." He said, "That was Gabriel. He came to teach you your way.'"[285]

The *Ḥadīth Jibrīl* serves a clear purpose in articulating a newly formed Islamic theology and the requirements thereof. Besides this literary function, however, the *ḥadīth* preserves the original differentiation between the two statuses, as well as the mystical state of *Iḥsān* (excellence) beyond them. That the *Mu'minīn* were not subject to the same role as the lower, general *Muslimīn*, is indicated by the Qur'ān rhetorically asking why the *Mu'minīn* would come to Muhammad with questions which they already have the answers to in the Bible. In the following *'ayah*, we read a surprising confirmation that the Torah which the Qur'ān claims to accept and confirm was not a previous version to a later corruption, but was in fact the Torah which "they have" in the present, just as we saw in 5.46 with the phrasing "*bayna yadahi*." All English translations, including Yusuf Ali's agree on this.

> And why do they approach you for wisdom *while they have the Torah* (*wa`indahumu al-Tawratu*), in which is the Wisdom of God; yet even after that, they turn away. For they are not Believers (*Mu'minīn*)." (5.43)

The *Mu'minīn*, the Qur'ān tells us, must by definition accept previous revelations (49.14). Muhammad's role was only as a reminder to "remember" what had already been revealed. We see that true Believers do not waver from their faith in the Torah (5.43). In the very next *'ayah* (5.44), we read that this Torah, which "they have" (*`indahumu*), not one which once existed but was later corrupted, is Qur'ānically regarded as a Holy text, (as previously mentioned in this study), "wherein there is guidance and Light" (*fīhā Hudā^{an} wa Nūr^{un}*), a play on words, as noted in our related discussion on page 38, as the

term "guidance" here is similar in Arabic to the word "Jew" (*Yahūdī*), and its *hūd* root. Had this not been enough, we find the following example from later-documented *Ḥadīth* oral narrations, that Muhammad revered the *Sefer Torah* as it existed in his time. Contrary to later views and *tafāsir,* there is absolutely no indication that Muhammad viewed the Torah as having been corrupted in his day. We read the following illustrative example, from Abū Dāwūd who narrated in his collection the following tradition, which we may regard as highly-probable based on the "Criterion of Embarrassment."

> A group of Jews invited the Messenger of God to a house. When he came, they asked him: O Abū Qāsim, one of our men committed adultery (*zinā*) with a woman, what is your judgment against him? So they set down a cushion and asked the Messenger of God to set on it. Then the Messenger of God proceeded to say: bring me the Torah. When they brought it, he removed the pillow from underneath him and placed the Torah on it and said: "I believe in you and in the one who revealed you," then said: bring me one of you who have the most knowledge. So they brought him a young man who told him the story of the stoning.[286]

Naturally this Ḥadīth is rejected by most Muslim `*ulamā'* (scholars) today, as it is dissimilar and theological embarrassment to the mainstream; the very attributes that strengthen its probability from a historical-critical perspective.[287] We can see then that the Qur'ān seems to have a view of "Islam" that is, as Berg and Donner agree: "monotheistically ecumenical."[288]

We have seen not only that the verb "*aslama*" and its *maṣdar* "Al-Islam" were used in the Qur'ān to describe religious activity. We have further seen that the Qur'ān asserts it was bringing nothing new (41.43; 42.13; 46.9; 46.10, et al.), but was a "reminder" (15.6; 15:10; 36:10) to people familiar with Biblical stories, of the Torah that was with them, "between your hands" (e.g. 5.43). We also see that the Qur'ān describes

the dichotomy between *Islam* and *Īmān* and throughout later commentary by Muslim

scholars noting tiers of religious observance in the Qur'ān, in which *Īmān* is always

ranked higher than the activity of Islam. We see that the Qur'ān states that some of the

Ahl al-Kitāb are *Mu'minīn* (3.110), a higher level than simply that of *Muslimīn* (49.14).

Those who believe (*al-laẓīna 'Āmanū*), the *Mu'min* (Believers) must believe in the

Oneness of God, in his Messenger, and in "the Book" or Bible "sent down to those

before" (4.136). We similarly read that those who have the Torah are admonished for

approaching Muhammad for wisdom (5.43). We further read *aḥādīth*, albeit rare ones,

which both conform to these statements of the Qur'ān, and which our Criteria – laid out

at the beginning of this study – elucidate the probability of, due to their theological

dissimilitude. It can therefore be seen as highly probable that the earliest meaning of

"Islam" was one not limited to Muhammad's community, but an activity that could occur

within other communities. If that is the case, then we might find further evidence for this

in the *Constitution of Medina (Ṣaḥīfat al-Madīnah)*, which purports to be an early

document from Muhammad's lifetime.

   How the *Constitution of Medina* can help us understand Muhammad's "Islam"

Besides the Qur'ān, which may have been treated with a degree of reverence in oral

transmission beyond what we typically find in the Ḥadīth genre, the *Sīrah* account

purports to preserve Muhammad's *Constitution of Medina,* with the Jews of Medina. As

our concern with the *Constitution* is here restricted to Muhammad's understanding of

"Islam," we benefit from looking at how the term "ummah" is used therein. If others

besides Muhammad's followers were regarded as part of "one ummah" with Muslims,

then this casts the discussion of what "Islam" meant to Muhammad in a fairly unorthodox light, that might also lend to Revisionist theories.

In his "Ummah in the Constitution of Medina," a work which addresses the use of the phrase *Ummat$^{\bar{a}n}$Wāḥidat$^{\bar{a}n}$* (One Ummah), in the *Sīrah* account of the *Constitution of Medina,* Frederick Denny writes that "there is no simple formula for defining the term *ummah* in the Qur'ān, as it covers a variety of realities." Thus, he argues, "when we speak of the *ummah* concept in the Qur'ān, we must distinguish which *ummah* concept we mean."[289] Denny notes that the term took on a later "exclusiveness" not implied in the Qur'ān or *Constitution*. The Qur'ān, he notes, refers to *umam* (pl.) for "more general cases" of peoples, nations (though not in the modern sense of the nation-state). He notes that it was a later "development in its meaning" to singularly indicate the emerging Muslim community or "nation" exclusively.

Within the Qur'ān, we cannot definitively find a single instance where the term refers to Muhammad's community only, for the simple fact that we do not know precisely to whom Muhammad was addressing the relevant Qur'ānic orations. Was it to a *masjid* full of his followers? Perhaps. Was it after some momentous event, linked with a public speech or *khutbah*? This too could be the case. Or perhaps, some portions of the Qur'ān could have been addressed generally to the Medinan community, which later *aḥadīth* accounts unanimously claim Muhammad led.

To begin with, it must be addressed that the study of the *Constitution of Medina* is largely an endeavor of Traditionalist scholarship. Revisionists bluntly conclude that a document surviving only from recensions of Ibn Isḥāq, dating two centuries after Muhammad, cannot be trusted as even remotely historical, just as Historical Jesus

Research has concluded about sources that are far-removed from events which they claim to record. Uri Rubin, in his "The 'Constitution of Medina' Some Notes," explains that the *Constitution* was separated out from the *Sīrah* by Julius Wellhausen (1844 – 1918), who "divided the document into articles," in a division followed by Arent Wensinck, Montgomery Watt and Rubin himself. While acknowledging some "problems" with the "Constitution," Rubin accepts it generally, though this is not unlike his general acceptance of the *Sīrah* and *Ḥadīth* genres.

This particular section of the *Sīrah,* however, may have been treated with slightly more reverence than most narrations, as it purports to be a legal document, and one which we might imagine was widely known. More importantly the content of the text seems to pre-date the remainder of the *Sīrah* account theologically. That we see only a few points of discrepancy between Ibn Hishām and Ṭabārī indicates that the two of them were fairly careful in their recensions. While this cannot demonstrate to us how Ibn Isḥāq himself would have handled it, a full century and a half after Muhammad, we can reason that he likely recorded a fairly well-known document, which we should have expected his critics, such as imām Mālik (whose criticism we have previous mentioned, on page 31), to have accused him of errantly documenting, had it differed from the document as it would have then exist.

While it is not enough to determine that the document has been dutifully preserved, it is more than we can say about any other portion of the Sīrah and for that reason, our findings in the document should be weighed slightly heavier than a general *ḥadīth* account might otherwise be. Denny then goes too far in saying that "Ibn Isḥāq preserved this ancient document," while nevertheless acknowledging it "does not appear

in any other historical source," than his *Sīrah*. Even though Ibn Isḥāq describes it as a "document," in fact "it seems to consist of separate documents from differing times in Medina, edited together in the form preserved in the Sīrah."[290]

As we have seen, the Qur'ān does not employ the term "Ummah" to refer simply to a secular nation-state as we now imagine when reading translations of "nation"; such an idea would be anachronistic. Instead, the term "nation" had the meaning of a cultural, even religious consistency. Josephus could thus refer to the Judean people as a *phyle*, a term which he and others used to refer to ancient nations, indicating a "type."[291] This appears to be along the lines of the Qur'ān's usage of this already well-known Hebrew term – *Umah* – linked in both languages with the term for "mother." This indicates the underlying concept of a united "family" within such a conceptualization of community.

P.J. Bearman; Th. Bianquis; C.E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel; W.P. Heinrichs, in the entry on "Umma", in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, acknowledge that the term "is possibly derived from Hebrew ummah,"[292] citing Josef Horovitz's linking of the term to its identical Hebrew cognate. While the term's usage in pre-Qur'ānic Hebrew is not in dispute, the entry cites Arthur Jeffrey, who notes that this was of wide-spread use in other Semitic languages as well, both Aramaic and Akkadian. In each of those respective languages, however, the cognates are related though not identical, as in Hebrew, where the terms are the same.[293]

The aforementioned authors of the entry on "Ummah" in the *Encyclopædia of Islam* suggest that in the Qur'ān itself, "*umma* usually refers to communities sharing a common religion," thus making the *Constitution's* inclusion of Jews particularly troublesome for later theological developments.[294] The *Encyclopædia of Islam* notes the

Qur'ānic reference to Abraham, Ishmael and their progenies as "a people submissive (*umma muslima*) to You" (2.128), yet clarifies that in the Qur'ān this did not yet have the connotations a separate religious community from modes of faith pre-dating Muhammad; "it is erroneous to imbue it with the kind of meaning the phrase would later have, after Islam had become institutionalised and Kur'ānic references such as this – however authoritative – had become historically reified."[295] The sense of the term, as it is employed in later Islamic theology, derives from the ḥadīth genre,[296] according to the *Encyclopædia of Islam*, such as in the example of "On Resurrection Day there will be, finally, seventy *ummas*, (of which) we [i.e. the Muslims] shall constitute their last and their best."[297] This later use and meaning of the term *Ummah*, found in the *ḥadīth* genre, should not be anachronistically imposed on earlier uses of the term.

One of the most likely confirmations of authenticity of at least portions of the *Constitution* is dissimilarity with developed Islamic ideas. In the words of Wellhausen: "No later falsifier writing under the Umayyads or Abbasids would have included non-Muslims in the *ummah*, would have retained the articles against [the Arab] Quraysh, and would have given Muhammad so insignificant a place." Furthermore, Wellhausen notes that the literary "style is archaic," and in terms of self-identification of Muhammad's followers, the document makes "use of 'believers' instead of 'Muslims' in most articles."[298]

Rubin notes that unlike the clarity with which the Muslims are described in the Constitution, "the Jews... are less easy to identify." One reason for the obscurity, is a controversy between Sprenger and Wellhausen (followed by Wensinck), about whether "*Yahūd Bānī...*" such-and-such tribe referred to Jewish converts, ala Ḥimyarite influence.

Wellhausen and Wensinck thought that this could not possibly have been the case, as they imagined that Jewish converts from traditional Arab tribes must have been "too insignificant to be mentioned." We, of course, have absolutely no data from the time in Medina that could tell us this. Judging from the widespread Ḥimyarite conversion to Judaism, however, it is not at all implausible to imagine Sprenger's scenario.

Still, Rubin notes that "Jews who formed nearly half the population of Medina" should not be expected to have been "totally excluded from a document designed to make Medina an indivisible unity." This, of course, assumes that proselytes amongst their ranks, or descendants of proselytes would have been enumerated differently from those from more ancient Jewish lines. Indeed, apart from the major Jewish tribes noted in the *Sīrah* material – Banū Qurayẓah, Qaynūqā' and Naḍīr – Al-Samhūdī notes the Jewish population of Medina simply as "al-Nās" (the people), and "*jumm`ah min al-Yahūd*" (mixed groups of Jews[299]).[300]

Rubin believes, however, that the phrase "*Yahūd Bānī…*" ("Jews of the Children/Tribe of…") in fact "refers to nameless Jewish groups," who were not part of the greater tribes, that were named in the *Sīrah* account.[301] "The reason why these groups lost their distinct tribal organization is, of course, most important," Rubin explains, "but it remains beyond the scope" of his study. Rubin thus assumes that such tribal divisions of Jews represented the normative Jewish experience in Arabia. As we do not have a single source from the era being described, nor – especially – from sources from the Jewish community in Arabia at this time, we should not at all be so quick to assume that these large tribal divisions represented mainstream Medinan Jewry. This is particularly so when, in fact, as the aforementioned scholars have all noted, the *Constitution* does not

address itself to those large tribes, but to what would literarily seem to indicate a Jewish mainstream that was not tribally affiliated.[302] It may then be that Jewish tribes in the *Sīrah* account represent pre-existing tribal divisions, descending from previous mass Ḥimyarite conversion.

Rubin notes that the term "Ummah" in the *Constitution,* "must be examined according to its meaning in the Quran, where, in most relevant cases, it has a pure religious connotation."[303] If this is the case, the inclusiveness of Jews as "One Ummah" with Muhammad's followers would be quite telling. In spite of the Qur'ānic precedent of the phrase *Ummat^ān Wāḥidat^ān*, Rubin asserts that this *must* have been "devoid of any religious connotation,"[304] following suit with Wellhausen.[305] This is, however, unsupported by the text itself, and reflects Traditionalist views that later Islamic ideas of distinction between Muhammad's community and the existing Jewish population was clearly delineated, simply because the later traditions say so. Rubin acknowledges that "none" of the "assumptions" of scholars like Wellhausen,[306] Denny[307] and Gil,[308] which maintain that Muhammad actually meant for the Jews of Medina to constitute a "sub-ummah,"[309] are actually reflected in the wording of the text.

In Article 1, of the *Constitution,* the expression "*Ummat^ān Wāḥidat^ān*" is used to refer specifically to Muhammad's followers and the Jewish population of Medina outside of the three large tribes of Banū Qurayẓah, Qaynūqā' and Naḍīr. The phrase occurs nine times,[310] however, within the Qur'ān itself, *to refer to Muhammad's followers*. Rubin acknowledges that "in all cases with no exception" this locution "denotes people united by a common *religious* orientation, in contrast to people divided by different kinds of faith."[311] One such example from the Qur'ān is *Sūrah* 23.52, which is translated by

Shakir and Pickthal as meaning nothing short of "One Religion." The Yusuf Ali version takes more creative license, rendering it "a single Brotherhood."

Later occurrences of the term *ummah* to refer to Jews and Muhammad's followers alike differ. In article 25 the Ibn Isḥāq version reflects a similar inclusiveness of Jews, *"Umma ma`a,"* or "with" Muhammad's followers, whereas the *later* attributed to Abu 'Ubayd differs in indicating an *ummah* "from" (*min*).[312] Serjeant surmises that the later Abu 'Ubayd text is "defective,"[313] but Rubin doubts it,[314] as the Arabic formulation seems literarily closer to the "Quranic style." Rubin explains further that, "an attempt at reshaping the original text of the document is reflected in Ibn Isḥāq's version of article 25… in this version the Jews are declared to be '*ummatun ma`a l-Mu'minīn*'." The replacement of the original "*min*" by the term "*ma`a*" is obviously designed to stress that the "*Mu'minūn*" are distinct *from* the Jews, exclusively representing the Muslims."[315]

Montgomery Watt (1909 – 2006) sees it as reasonable enough that this all reflects an early understanding of *Jews as believers*,[316] saying "there is some justification for thinking that at some period during the first year or so at Medina... Muhammad contemplated a religious and political arrangement which would give a measure of unity but would not demand from the Jews any renunciation of their faith or acceptance of Muhammad as a prophet with a message for them."[317] For confirmation of this, Watt cites *Sūrah* 3.64, which seems to tell of just such an agreement. As we have seen in this section already, the Qur'ān seems to indicate that the term "believer" encompasses a type of Jew, Nazarene or Sabaean (2.62; 5.69). What is striking, however, is that the Qur'ān does not abrogate this *'ayah*, nor was the *Constitution* ever itself revised in this passage, to be recorded in a later, amended form.

Article 25 of the *Constitution* defines Jews as *Mu'minūn* (believers) point blank. Rubin explains, "This attribute stands for a special position granted to the Jews within the new umma wahida,"[318] noting, of course, that "Jews as Mu'minūn were entitled to complete protection." The Qur'ān, explains that *Mu'minūn* are to be afforded "*amn*" (security) (6.82; 24.55). Rubin concludes that "it is clear now that within the *umma wahida* which separated all monotheistic groups of Medina from other people, the Jews were given the position of 'umma of believers'."[319] Preferring the Abu Ubayd version of "*ummah min*," however, Rubin decides that there must have been divisions amongst types of Believers in this *Ummat^{ān} Wāḥidat^{ān}*. We must also not forget that in terms of literary usage within the Qur'ān and consistent with all later commentary, the Qur'ānic "Mu'min" is universally regarded as a *higher* designation than "muslim."

Denny asks, "why are the believers distinquished [sic] from the Muslims?"[320] To deal with this problem, some Traditionalist scholars like Serjeant, have proposed novel interpretations of "Mu'min" as meaning only "one guaranteed *aman* or security." This is, however, never once how the term is employed in the Qur'ān, which argues strongly against Serjeant's proposal.[321] In fact, in the *Constitution* itself, the term *Mu'minīn* occurs twenty-four times, whereas the term *muslim* occurs only three, which Denny acknowledges is "approximately the proportion to be found in the Qur'ān."[322] Serjeant's hypothesis, while potentially useful for sorting out the theological embarrassment, ignores how the term is contextually employed in the Qur'ān itself, how it has been used *since* in the Muslim world as well, or how its cognate form has been used in Hebrew as *Mā'mīn.* As Rubin argues:

This preponderance of Mu'min(-un) may indicate an early date for much of the Constitution, before muslim was used as the name for the followers of Muhammad, or at least before it gained a clear technical sense limited to the followers of Muhammad. Of course, it had a deep religious sense before the time of the Constitution, describing the human approach to God prescribed in the Revelation."[323]

The debate on Article 25, more than anything else, highlights the pains scholars must go to in order to explain these embarrassing passages. Rubin comments, "The fact that article 25 of the 'Constitution' recognizes the Jews as an 'umma of believers' created a grave dogmatic problem for scholars of later Islam."[324] While variants of this article occur, there is no variant of the Article 1, *Ummat^{ān} Wāḥidat^{ān}* reference; which is so problematic that it must be deleted altogether from later versions, thus arguing strongly for its probability.

We have looked how the Qur'ān itself uses the verb *aslama*, and its infinitive *Al-Islam*. We have seen that long before Muhammad, Jesus's disciples (3.52, also see 5.111), Abraham, his sons, as well as Jacob and his sons were all described as "muslims" or "submitting ones" (2.132-133), indicating that their religious activity was regarded as "Islam" in spite of it having no connection to Muhammad, his Sunnah or the Qur'an, none of which existed yet. This would seem to indicate quite clearly that the Qur'an itself did not yet conceive of a separated "Muslim" identity, which adherents belonged to by forsaking other paths, religious traditions, scriptures, or the like, in favor of Muhammad and the Qur'ān. We might thus conclude that this view and practical definition of Islam, is one that seems to have emerged later than the Qur'ān itself.

Within the Qur'ān, we find a more prominent self-designation for Muhammad's followers – *Mu'min* – an Arabic term usually rendered as "believer," and a cognate of the

Hebrew *Mā'mīn*. We have seen that the Qur'ān admonishes those who it does not yet

regard as "those who believe," to say nothing more than that they are Muslims (49.14).

Finally, we find within the text of the *Constitution of Medina*, that this term "believer" is

still used with the same frequency that it appears in the Qur'ān, as the primary self-

designation for Muhammad's followers. We also see in this *Constitution* that

Muhammad's followers and the Jews of Medina were regarded by Muhammad as

constituting a single *ummah*, a term used in the Qur'an to indicate a religious community.

Conclusion

We have looked at the idea of what history itself is, and how the question of "what really

happened" is beyond the scope of our assessment. We have surveyed the historical-

critical approaches already applied to Historical Jesus Research, and discussed why these

methodologies can and should be applied to the study of Islamic Origins. We have

similarly surveyed the Traditionalist and Revisionist approaches dominant in scholarship

on Islamic Studies today. We have looked at those religious groups specifically named in

the Qur'ān as significant constituents of its audience. All of this gave us a better

understanding of the Muhammad's activity and the historical context of the Qur'ān –

essential to Ehrman's criteria for determining historical probability – by examining what

we can determining as probable about those groups named within the Qur'ān. Having

examined all of the religious communities mentioned by name in the Qur'ān, a picture

began to emerge of the socio-religious contexts of Muhammad. The Qur'ān itself

explains that it was not purporting to found a new or separate religion. Instead, the

Qur'an uses the verb *aslama*, and its infinitive *Al-Islam* to describe a general religious

activity of monotheists well before Muhammad, and typically associated with existing faiths long before him.

Historical Jesus Research tells us that "sayings, deeds and experiences of Jesus have to be plausibly situated in the historical context of first century Palestine," from what we know of that context from third party sources, "in order for them to be trusted." We can thus say with a fair degree of probability that "any saying or deed that does not make sense in this context is automatically suspect," and might well have been fabricated to conform to later ideas.[325] This then should also be applied equally to, relative to the historical context of the religious, religious milieu of Arabia in Late Antiquity, and specifically to the groups which the Qur'ān describes as its audience.

If we accept what the Qur'ān says about itself, that it is not establishing anything new, then we must understand it within the framework of traditions it addresses itself to. While this is not a controversial position in and of itself, the implications for Traditionalists have been that Muhammad was reviving a long-lost mode of Abrahamic worship, whereas the evidence we have seen, from the Qur'ān as well as from studying the context, is the orientation of the Qur'ān was ecumenical, inviting competing doctrinal forms of Judaism, as well as heretical forms that had broken from Judaism to recalibrate to a view that would separate them from Christianity. It addressed itself to normative Christianity, and Nabatean "*mushrikīn,*" polytheists; as well as to the Nazarenes with their Trinity of God the Father, Jesus and Mary, and the Sabians, which Church heresiographers and fairly early Muslim sources alike identify as having a Judaic orientation; and to a doctrinal array of competing Jewish sects.

As we have learned from Historical Jesus Research, evidences compiled in such an investigation simply cannot lead to a biographical narrative, such as what the *Sīrah* purports. There is very little that we can "know" for certain about Muhammad, and we must instead be content to assess *probabilities*. Instead of trying to reconstruct a biography of Muhammad, it is the intention of this work to have provided the reader with a better understanding of "Islamic Origins," through a detailed survey of the religious groups which the Qur'ān mentions by name. While we can never write a true "biography" of Muhammad, we can better understand his historical activity, by understanding the context of those groups named in his audience. Having presented what was known about the doctrines and practices of these groups, this study has thus offered insight into a key aspect of the Qur'ānic context, which thus affords better understanding of the Qur'ān itself.

Endnotes

[1]Judith Koren; Nevo, Yehuda D., "Methodological Approaches to Islāmic Studies," *Der Islām,* 68 (1991): 87-107

[2] Berg notes that "very few scholars of early Islam use the term 'Islamic origins.'" Herbert Berg; Rollins, Sarah. "The historical Muḥammad and the historical Jesus: A comparison of scholarly reinventions and reinterpretations." *Studies in Religion* 37, no. 2 (2008): 282

[3]Edward Hallet Carr, *What is History,* (Vintage: 1967)

[4] Leopold von Ranke, "Preface: Histories of the Latin and Germanic Nations from 1494-1514", in Stern, The Varieties of History, p.57

[5] Edward Hallet Carr, *What Is History,* (London: Penguin, 1961, 1987), 3

[6] Vivian Hunter Galbraith, *Historical Research in Medieval England*, (University of London: 1951)

[7]Robin George Collingwood, *The Idea of History: With Lectures 1926-1928*, (Oxford University Press: 1994[1946]), 115

[8] Thomas Spencer Jerome, "The Case of the Eyewitness: "A lie is a lie, even in Latin", *The Historian As Detective*.

[9]When necessary, ambiguous terms can be elucidated through cognates in dominant languages of the document's time and region. The name of the prophet "Hūd" or a verb - *hūdna, hadū, et al* - being translated as "Jews", in numerous instances throughout the Qur'ān, for example.

[10] Berg, *Historical*, 271

[11]*ibid.* 272

[12]*ibid.* 271

[13]*ibid.* 272

[14] W. Barnes Tatum delineates these phases of scholastic evolution in his *In Quest of Jesus,* as eras of academic "Jesus Scholarship" broken into five distinct "Quest" periods, which can help us understand the evolving approach to determining probable historicity in Jesus Research.
For a full treatment of these periods, see W. Barnes Tatum, *In Quest of Jesus: Revised and Enlarged Edition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999)

[15]James K. Beilby; Eddy, Paul R. The Historical Jesus: Five Views (IVP Academic: 2009), 10

[16] Beilby 10

[17]*ibid.* 11

[18] Albert Schweirtzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Profess from Reimarus to Wrede*, trans. W. Montgomery (New York: Collier/Macmillian, 1968), 26

[19] Bielby 11

[20] Reimarus, 64

[21]*ibid.* 71

[22]*ibid.* 124

[23] Gunther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazarth*, trans. Irene and Fraser McLuskey and James Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 13

[24] Bornkamma, 9

[25]*ibid.*, 14

[26]*ibid.* 24-25

[27] Cited in Solomon Alexander Nigosian, *Islām: Its History, Teaching, and Practices* (Indiana University Press: 2004) 6

[28] John P. Meier. *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, Law and Love.* (Yale University Press: 2009) 6

[29] Nigosian, 6

[30] Géza Vermès, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels.* (Fortress Press: 1981) 12; Markus N. A. Bockmuehl .*The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*. (2001: Cambridge University Press) 160

[31] Bart D. Ehrman, *Historical Jesus. 'Historical Criteria.'* Lecture 9 (The Teaching Company: 2000)

[32]Michael Standford, *The Nature of Historical Knowledge*, (Blackwell, Oxford: 1986)

[33]*ibid.*

[34]Ehrman, *Historical Jesus.*Lectures 1-4

[35]*ibid.*.Lectures 9

[36] Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*. (HarperCollins: 2005)

[37]*ibid.*

[38]*ibid.*

[39] Ed Parish Sanders; Davies, Margaret, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (SCM Press: 1989) 323

[40] Meier, 175

[41]*ibid.*

[42] John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (HarperOne: 1993) xxxiii. This however, must be distinguished from "Independent Attestation", as – for example – Matthew and Luke both use Mark's Gospel as a source. Thus if there is a story present in all these three Gospels is in fact attested in only Mark, a *single* independent source. Instead, if something could be traced to both Mark and John, or a non-Canonical work like Thomas, then this would be "Multiple Attestation." Ehrman, *Historical Jesus*.

[43] Brian Han Gregg, *The Historical Jesus and the Final Judgment Sayings in Q*, Volume 2 (Mohr Siebeck Tübingen, Germany: 2006) 30

[44] F. L. Cross, ed. "Jesus Christ." *The Oxford dictionary of the Christian church*. (New York: Oxford University Press. 2005)

[45]Robert W. Funk; Hoover, Roy; Jesus Seminar. *The Five Gospels*. (Harper SanFrancisco. 1993), 21

[46] Ehrman., Lecture 10

[47]*ibid.*

[48]Judith Koren; Nevo, Yehuda D., "Methodological Approaches to Islāmic Studies," *Der Islām,* 68 (1991): 87-107

[49]Koren; Nevo, 88

[50]They cite the example of Richard Martin, *Approaches to Islām in Religious Studies*, (Tucson, Arizona University: 1985)

[51]Koren; Nevo, 89

[52]Within Shī`īsm the view is essentially the same, relative to the differences in Shī`īsms, today the prevailing approach being `*Uṣūlī*, theology and practice. In all cases, the Islām of Muḥammad, or in the case of Shī`īsm, of his family, the *Ahl al-Bayt* as well, is assumed to coincide with contemporary practices, dogmas and theology.

[53] C.E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel; W.P. Heinrichs; G. Lecomte, entry "Sharī`ah", *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Vol. 9, San-Sze, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 323

[54] Uri Rubin. *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muḥammad As Viewed By The Early Muslims.* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995) 1

[55]*Encyclopedia of Islām*, "Sharī`ah" 323

[56] Morteza Mutahhari, *Jurisprudence and its Principles* (Elmhurst, 1983)

[57]Rubin 23

[58]*ibid.*

[59]*ibid.*, 10

[60] Schimmel, 7

[61] Commenting to this effect, she cites that "Muslims will allow attacks on Allāh; there are atheists and atheistic publications, and rationalist societies; but to disparage Muḥammad will provoke from even the most 'liberal' sections of the community a fanaticism of blazing vehemence." Schimmel 3-4

[62]*ibid.*, 6

[63]*ibid.*, 9

[64]*ibid.*

[65]Schimmel, 32, emphasis my own.

[66] The two *ṣaḥīḥ* collections of *Muslim* and *Bukhārī*

[67]*ibid.*, 27; Perhaps the most telling example of this runaway train of embellishments is *Al-Kitāb ash-Shifā' fī ta'rīf Huqūq al-Muṣṭafā* written by Qadī `Iyad. Basing his work off of Tirmidhī, this text quickly became held in such esteem that to even possess a physical copy was to be protected by a talisman, that if "found in a house… will not suffer any harm, and a boat in which it is, will not drown [sic]; when a sick person reads it or it is recited for him, God will restore his health." *ibid.*, 33 endnote 38

[68] Koren; Nevo 89

[69]*ibid.* 90

[70]*ibid.*

[71]*ibid.*

[72]Harald Motzki. *The Biography of Muḥammad: The Issue of the Sources.* (Boston: Brill, 2000), 171

[73] Ernest Renan, "Mohammad and the Origins of Islam" *Revue des Deux-Mondes* (December 1851)

[74]*ibid.* 1024

[75] Rubin, 2; citing Josef Horovitz, "Zur Muḥammadlegende," *Der Islām* 5 (1914), 41-53

[76] Rubin, 2

[77]Ignaz Goldziher. *Introduction to Islāmic Theology and Law.* (Princeton University Press, 1981). vii

[78]Ignaz Goldziher *Muslim Studies.*2 vols. Edited by S. M. Stern and translated by C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971) 19; cited in Herbert Berg, *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* vol. 9-1 (1997): 4

[79]Daniel Brown, *A New Introduction to Islām* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2003) 90; In reference to: 1890 *Muhammedanische Studien* (translated into English in 1973 as *Muslim Studies*).

[80] Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies Vol. 2* (State University of New York Press, Aldine Publishing Co., 1973), 18

[81]*ibid.*

[82]Brown 90

[83]*ibid.* 4

[84]Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 126.

[85] Goldziher, *Introduction* 4

[86]*ibid.* 8-9

[87]*ibid.* 9

[88]*ibid.* 5

[89] For Schact, Shāfi`ī is thus, the "master architect of Islāmic Law"[89] though he did not intend to found a distinct school. *ibid.* 4, 6

[90]*Encyclopedia of Islām*, "Sharī`ah" 323

[91]*ibid.*

[92] Barlas, 3

[93] Barlas, 5

[94] Mahmoud Ayoub, *The Quran and its Interpreters, Vol 1.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984, 3

[95] Barlas, 38

[96]*ibid.* 43

[97] Joseph Schact. "A Revaluation of Islāmic Tradition."*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1949): 147. Emphasis mine.

[98]*ibid.*

[99] Francis Edwards Peters, *A Reader on Classical Islam.* Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994, 222

[100] Gautier Junyboll, *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature: Discussion in Modern Egypt.* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), 5

[101] Wiebke Walther, *Woman in Islam.* Montclair, NJ: Abner Schram, 1981, 22

[102]*ibid.*

[103]Berg, "The Implications of, and Opposition to, the Methods and Theories of John Wansbrough", 4

[104]*ibid.* 48

[105]*ibid.*

[106]Koren; Nevo 97

[107]*ibid.* 98

[108]*ibid.* 99

[109]*ibid.* 99

[110]*ibid.* 101

[111] Though he is far from the first to do so, drawing from the work of Author Jeffreys, Luxenberg has taken this research to a new level.

[112] Rippin 3

[113]Robert Serjeant. Review of *Qur'ānic Studies: Sources and Methods of scriptural Interpreation* by John Wansbrough and *Hagarism: The Making of the Islāmic* World by Patricia Crone and Michael Cook. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic society* (1978): 76

[114]*ibid.*

[115] John Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation.* (Prometheus Books: 2004), 183

[116] Such statements compare Muḥammad's activity to many expressions of Judaism known in the West today, but not to those found in Yemeni, Iraqi and Persian Jewish communities, nor to those known to have existed in Arabia from the Second Temple Era through Late Antiquity.

[117] Bruce Lincoln. "Theses on Method."*Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 8 (1996): 227

[118] William A. Graham "Review of John Wansbrough's Qur'ānic Studies," in *Journal of American Oriental Society*, 100:2: 140

[119]Rahman, *Approaches,* 201

[120]Cornells Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur'ānic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: Brill 1993), 48

[121] Al-Yāqūt, *Mu`jam al-Udabā'*, vol. 2 (Cairo, 1935-38), 400; cited in Ahmed Barakat, *Muḥammad and the Jews* (New Delhi : Vikas: 1979), 11

[122] Berg, *Historical Muhammad,* 499

[123]*ibid.* 492

[124] Wansbrough 1987, 12, 22; Berg 500

[125] Herbert Berg, personal communication, September 11, 2011

[126]*ibid.*

[127]*ibid.*

[128] Rahman, *Major Themes,* vx

[129] In spite of the problems attached to them, however, Harald Motzki adds another dimension to the discussion that precludes us from simply disregarding *any* consultation of the *Sīrah* and *ḥadīth* genres across the board. He explains that "The mere fact that *aḥādīth* and *asānid* were forged must not lead us to conclude that *all* of them are fictitious or that the genuine and the spurious cannot be distinguished with some degree of certainty."Wilferd Madelung, The Succession to Muḥammad (Cambridge University Press: 1997), xi.Emphasis mine.

[130] That is, forms accepted by the variety of recognized Christian sects as being part of Christianity, and not those groups rejected by the Church Fathers as heretical, and non-Christian. This further means those doctrinally orthodox forms of Christianity that conformed to the various creeds which Christianity determined for itself as its own borders of self-description.

[131] Ehrman's "three essential criteria" are explained on pages 13-14.

[132] Ehrman, *Historical Jesus.* Lecture 10

[133]The word "shaman" is thought to derive from the Buddhist term *shramana*, a recluse, ascetic, or monk.

[134]Peter Schafer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, (Princeton University Press: 2007), 117

[135] The translation of this term is itself something of a controversy amongst scholars.

[136] The derivation of *kāfir* (كافر) from *kōfer* (כופר) follows a similar pattern that we find with *vav* changing into the Arabic *alif,* such as in *shalōm* (שלום) to *salām* (سلام). This likely originated from Hebrew being pronounced in Arabic from a written text, as the Hebrew *vav* (ו) in Hebrew, looks identical to the Arabic *alif* (ا), even though clearly quite different.

[137] 'Ayah 77 is rendered differently than Yusuf Ali's translation, so as to avoid his cumbersome use of double negatives: "My Lord is not uneasy because of you if ye call not on Him: But ye have indeed rejected (Him), and soon will come the inevitable (punishment)!"

[138]*Bihār al-Anwār* (53, 5)

[139] This has its origins in late polemical *tafsīr* exegesis, rather than in the literal meaning of the words.

[140] Neither the *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* nor concordances of the Qur'an make any mention of this term, nor do they distinguish it from the typical reference of *Al-Yahūd*. Later exegeses explain through *ḥadīth* genre that these references were to *Al-Yahūd*. In Modern Arabic, and even in references to "Jews" in *ḥadīth* literature (except in relation to *tafsīr*) no Arab refers to Jews by conjugations of this verb.

[141] We will discuss this passage further in the next chapter.

[142] The root is thus first explained as being from praise (*odeh* אודה) of God (יהוה).

[143]Sibyllines 3.271; compare with I Maccabees 15

[144] The Gospel attributed to Luke always being paired, in ancient copies, with the Acts of the Apostles.

[145]Strabo fragment 6, cited by Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* Book 14, Chapter 7, paragraph 2; Philonis Alexandrini *In Flaccum* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939) 7; Seneca, fragment 41-43, in Augustine, *City of God* (*De Civitate Dei*), 6. 10; Acts 2. 9-11; Josephus, *Jewish War* (*Bellum Judaicum*) Book 2. Chapter 16, paragraph 4; Book 7, Chapter 3, paragraph 3

[146]*Antiquities of the Jews* 2.80

[147]*Jewish War,* Book 2, Chapter 20, paragraph 2; Book 7, Chapter 8, paragraph 7

[148] Philo, *In Flaccum*, paragraph 6

[149]*ibid,* paragraph 8. To judge by the accounts of wholesale massacres in 115, the number of Jewish residents in Cyrenaica, at Cyprus, and in Mesopotamia must also have been large. In Rome itself, at the commencement of the reign of Augustus, there were over 8,000 Jews: this is the number that escorted the envoys who came to demand the deposition of Archelaus. Finally, if the sums confiscated by the propretor Flaccus in 62 represented actually the tax of a didrachma per head for a single year, the inference may be safely drawn that in Asia Minor the Jewish population numbered 45,000 males, or a total of at least 180,000 persons (Cicero, "Pro Flacco," 28, paragraph 68).

[150]*The Jewish War*, 13:5. Josephus additionally tells us of a "forth philosophy", which he blanketly regarded as the Zealots, which seems to be less of a philosophy or even sect, and more of a political orientation that crossed sectarian boundaries. Josephus implies a much wider base for the Zealots in the *"banditry"* of the *"hoi polloi." Antiquities of the Jews*, 20.255-56.The Zealots and their later Sicarri offshoot are beyond the scope of this discussion.

[151] Philo writes this (ca. 10 CE.) in *De vita contemplativa* ("On the contemplative life")

[152] Richard Hanson*, Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus.* (Trinity Press International: 1999), 23

[153]*ibid.*, pp. 22

[154] 2 Maccabees 8:23

[155] All inquiries into the *Chasidim* begin with the three references in 1 and 2 Maccabees, to the *Asidaioi*. John Kampen,. *Hasideans*. (Society of Biblical Literature: 1980),32

[156] Abraham Geiger took exception to the important role which Frankel had ascribed to the Essenes in Second Temple Judaism. For him, the name *"Chasidim"* was employed for only a brief period at the height of the Maccabean revolt. However, Geiger, like Frankel, finds the roots of the Essenes in the soil of the Chasidim. Wellhausen accepted and advanced the argument that the origins of both the Pharisees and the Essenes with the Chasidim (Wellhausen, *Pharisaer und Sadducaer*, 77-80). He claimed that the hypothesis that the Chasidim were the forerunners of the Pharisees had a high degree of probability, citing their connection with the Scribes in 1 Maccabees 7 as evidence. Graetz understood the Essenes to be the form which the Chasidim took after the Maccabean revolt (Heinrich Graetz, *"Geschichte der Juden von den altesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart,"* 4th ed. (Leipzig: Oskar Leiner, 1888), 3:1:83-84), with the Pharisees arising out of a division among the Proto-Essenes (Kampen, 34). All of this would seem corroborated by the Talmudic references to the "*Ḥasīdīm Rishōnīm*" (there are twenty-eight such references in the Talmud and other *Midrashim*) and their pietistic behavior.

[157]*Tzadōq* was a high priest in the time of David (2 Samuel 20:25) and Solomon (1 Kings 4:4); a son of Ahitub, of the line of Eleazar (2 Samuel 8:17; 1 Chronicles 24:3.).

[158] It is in 1st Chronicles I Chronicles 5:30-34 [A. V. 6:4-8]; comp. 6: 35-38 [A. V. 6:50-53] that we first find an attempt to trace the genealogy of *Tzadōq* back to Eleazar, the third son of Aaron, rather than to Abiathar (his contemporary), who is regarded as a descendant of Eli.In all scriptural references, *Tzadōq* is mentioned before Abiathar. Either *Tzadōq* himself or his grandson was the ruler of the Aaronites *kohenīm* (I Chronicles 27:17). Jerusha, the mother of Jotham, is apparently termed the daughter of *Tzadōq* to emphasize her noble lineage, since her father may have been a descendant of the first *Tzadōq* (II Kings 15:33; II Chronicles 27:1).

[159] Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *New Testament History* (Galilee/Doubleday: 1983), 74

[160]Jacob Adler, "The Jewish Kingdom of Ḥimyar (Yemen): Its Rise and Fall," *Midstream*, (May/June 2000 Volume 46 No. 4)

[161] Rubin 45

[162] Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The History of Al-Tabari: The Sasanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids, and Yemen (Tabari//History of Al-Tabari/Ta'rikh Al-Rusul Wa'l-Muluk)*, (State Univ of New York Pr: 1999), 170

[163] Al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, Volume V, "Holders of Power after Ardashir b. Babak" SOAS edition, 187

[164] Haim Z'ew Hirschberg, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Second Edition, Vol. 9 "Ḥimyarites" (Macmillan Reference: 2006), 122

[165] *Fa-aṣfaqat `inda ẓālika Ḥimyar `alā dīnihi fa-min hunālika wa`an ẓālika kāna aṣlu l-yahūdīyyah bi-l-Yaman*, Alfred Felix Landon Beeston, *Judaism and Christianity in pre-Islamic Yemen* (1984). In J. Chelhod (Ed.), *Le peuple yéménite et ses racines* (1 ed.) (pp. 271-78). Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 278; quoting Tabari 1, 27f.

[166] On the discovery of the tombs in Bait-She'arim, see the extensive work of Haim Ze'ev Hirschberg, *Israel in Arabia: Vie History of the Jews In Hedjaz and Ḥimyar*, (Tel Aviv: Byalik, 1946), 53-7

[167] Joseph Adler, "The Jewish Kingdom of Ḥimyar (Yemen): Its Rise and Fall," Midstream, Volume 46 (May/June 2000), No. 4

[168] Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, Beirut 1957, s.v. "Ri`ām"

[169] Judaism and Christianity in pre-Islamic Yemen, 278; Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī Bashā, Cairo 1924, 12; Tabari 2, 109 (1, 905)

[170] This story from the *Sīrah* was also appropriated by the Shī`ah under Shaykh al-Sadūq (d. ca. 991 CE), in his *Kamaaluddin waTamaamun Ni'ma* (Perfection of faith and completion of divine favor). The account is found in the translation of Sayyid Athar Husain S.H. Rizvi, in Chapter Eleven, "Regarding the report of Tubba," on page 178. English translation pending publication. Manuscript obtained by the author on March 15th 2012.

[171] Ben Abrahamson, *Yosef Dhu Nuwas, a Sadducean King with Sidelocks*, Excerpt give through personal communication, December 15, 2011

[172] Why then, if the Ḥimyarites were Sadduccees, and the most antithetical of Jewish positions from Qur'ānic theology, would there exist later hadith accounts attributing to Muḥammad claims that they were Ahl al-Tawhid? This could have more to do with their opposition to the Axium Kingdom of later ruler Abraha al-Ashram, and only conveniently that they were monotheistic Jews. Therefore, this neither proves, nor disproves the Sadduceean-orientation theory.

[173] Walter W. Müller, "Outline of the History of Ancient Southern Arabia," in Werner Daum (ed.), *Yemen: 3000 Years of Art and Civilisation in Arabia Felix.* (Umschau-Verlag: 1987).

[174] Thomas Patrick Hughes, *A Dictionary Of Islam: Being A Cyclopaedia Of The Doctrines, Rites, Ceremonies, And Customs, Together With The Technical And Theological Terms, Of The Muhammadan Religion* (Nabu Press: 2011), 280

[175] The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* explains that "Philostorgios, a church scribe who recounts this, admits that Christian propaganda in Himyar was received with great opposition on the part of the Jews... the attempts by the Christian Abyssinians to conquer Himyar opened the eyes of its inhabitants to the dangers threatening the independence of their land from the Christians, and drew them closer to Judaism and Jewish ideas, which posed no political threats." *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Second Edition, Vol. 9 "Ḥimyarites", 122.

[176] We find reflections on this popular belief in the *Personal narrative of a pilgrimage to al-Madinah & Meccah, Volume 2* by Richard Francis Burton, Sir Richard Francis Burton, Lady Isabel Burton 212-13. It is mentioned in Abu'l-Walid Muḥammad ibn al-Azraqi, *Akbar Makka* (ed. F. Wustenfeld, Leipzig 1858) pp 84, but this, like so much of Islamic origins mythology, originates from Al-Tabari or Ibn Hishām, in their recensions of Ibn Isḥāq's *Sīrah* account. Al-Tabari, 1, 904, p. 169 Tubba' As'ad Abu Karib is said to have been the first to cover the Ka`bah with Yemeni *ma`āfīrī* cloth. Yemen was traditionally famed for its textiles and according to H. Lammens, in "Le culte des bétyles et les processions religieuses chez les Arabes préislamiques," 130-32, 138-42, Arabia had an ancient tradition of covering sacred houses with cloth or materials. Some sources even indicate that the pyramids were covered with shimmering, gold-colored silk cloth.

[177] Bosworth, 213

[178] Tubba's coming to Mecca and his designs against the Ka`bah are dealt with in detail by al-Tabari's recension of Ibn Ishaq's *Sīrah* account. Al-Azraqi also attests that his story derives from Ibn Ishaq, who while we must approach cautiously, would seemingly have little reason to fabricate something so embarrassing as Jewish origins of the *kiswah*. Bosworth, 214

[179] With regards to the Essenes, however, he apparently studied with them only through the very beginning of the initiation process, under a teacher named Bannus. Tessa Rajak, in her *Josephus*, suggests no more than about three months of training in each group for Josephus. She claims that this was a common Greek

practice to study with each group for about three months, in order to gain an understanding of each, before either undergoing conversion or returning home. Tessa Rajak. *Josephus.* (Duckworth Publishers: 2002) 34-36

[180] *Antiquities of the Jews*, 18.1

[181] *ibid.*

[182] *Antiquities of the Jews* 12.296

[183] *ibid.* 13. 297

[184] Hanson, 26

[185] e.g. Luke 2:40-52. In *Post-Biblical History of the Jews: From The Close of the Old Testament*, Morris Jacob Raphall comments "these lawyers are always mentioned in contradistinction to the Pharisees and Sadducees; consequently they cannot have belonged to either of these two sects; that probably they obtained the designation "lawyer," because their studies were altogether limited to the written Law, whereas the Pharisees chiefly devoted themselves to the study of the traditions" 148; Peter Beer, also, in his *History, Doctrines, and Opinions of all Religious Sects among the Jews* (*Geschichte Lehren und Meinungen aller Religiosen Sekten der Juden*) vol. 1, 125 contends that the *nomikos* and *nomodidascalos* mentioned in the Christian Testament are in fact the predecessors to the Karaites.

[186] If *Aḥbār* means "rabbis", as some *mufassirīn* suggest, then why does this 'ayah say *Rabbanīyyūn and Aḥbār*. Why say "rabbis and rabbis"?

[187] Charles Torrey, in *The Jewish Foundation of Islam,* (New York, Jewish Institute of Religion Press, 1933), 34

[188] Author Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān* (Brill, 2007), 49-50

[189] In typical Ashkenazi pronunciation this is said as *chaver.*

[190] The Aramaic equivalent *Hesi'īm* known from Eastern Aramaic texts has been suggested. Joseph Barber Lightfoot, "On Some Points Connected with the Essenes," *St. Paul's epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: a revised text with introductions, notes, and dissertations*, (London, Macmillan Publishers: 1875).

[191] Fragments 14-17 2.3

[192] If we can, however, identify amongst those texts documents of an Essene-sectarian nature, then this would logically demonstrate the cache to have originated from the sect. In his *The Wars of the Jews* (2.137–138) Josephus mentions a three year probation period for all who would seek admission into the Essene community that we can compare with the description in the Qumran Rule of the Community (1QS; at least two years plus an indeterminate initial catechetical phase, 1QS VI).

[193] *ibid.*, 25

[194] *Hypothetica* 11.1-18

[195] Joan Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism*, (Eerdmans Pub.: 1997), 16-17

[196] Philo, *Every Good Man Is Free*, paragraphs 75-91

[197] Engeddi is described as being physically below the place where the Essenes lived.

[198] Taylor, 20

[199] *ibid.*, 18

[200] There are many fringe ideas about the Essenes that are beyond the scope of this discussion. Norman Golb, while an excellent scholar on the Essenes from third party sources, is outside of the general, almost unanimous consensus that the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran site belong to the Essenes. Rachel Elior's belief that the Essenes never existed is another idea which will be regarded here as more of an interesting argument, than one that scholars generally take seriously. We will therefore operate from some basic assumptions about the Essenes, which are generally accepted: First, that the Essenes were associated with the site at Qumran; second, that the Essenes lived in "every city" and numbered in the thousands outside of Qumran, and third, that the Dead Sea Scrolls cache is associated with the Essene community. This general view of academia on this matter is being taken as a given here since the views of the Dead Sea Scrolls sectaries match the Essenic views closely enough that they either belong to them, or they belong to a group which Second Temple historians bizarrely never mentioned and yet also strangely seem to have numerous ideas in common with the Essenes.

[201] Isidore Epstein, *Judaism* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), 103

[202] Complicating this subject are the numerous apparent references in the Qur'ān to a sort of fatalistic view, such as in 3.26.

[203]While the Essenes are generally not associated with vegetarianism before the records of the Ossaeans, we find allusions to it in the scrolls: "They shall atone for sins without the flesh of holocausts and the fat of sacrifice and prayer shall be an acceptable fragrance of righteousness" (1QS 9) Pending the rebuilding of the Temple by the group's anticipated *Mashīachayīm* (the dual Mashīach Ben Yosef and Mashīach Ben Davīd), the *Yachad* or "community" would constitute a "sanctuary of human beings" (1.6) and adherence to the *mitzvōt* would substitute for sacrifices (1QS 1.6-7; 8.9-10; 9.3-6, particularly line 5; Hos 14.3; Ps 141.2) without any deficiency (1QS 8.6-10). D. Dimant, "4QFlorilegium and the Idea of the Community as Temple," in *Hellenica et Judaica* (Hommage a V. Nikiprowetzky). edited by A. Caquot, et al. (Leuven, 1986) 165-89. Cited in Norman Golb 45-46 "The Qumran Covenanters and the Later Jewish Sects."*The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Jan., 1961), 38-50

[204]Brandt seeing the baptismal rites as originating in southern Babylonia, believed that "Elchasai had directed his proclamation to Jews, in fact to Ossean (= Essene, cff. pp. 114ff) Jews. At a later time, he tried to win over Ebionites." Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, *The Revelation of Elchasai* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1985), 12

[205]L. E. Toombsa, *Barcosiba and Qumrân*. "New Testament Studies" (1957), 4: 65-71 Cambridge University Press

Published online by Cambridge University Press 05 Feb 2009, 1.Epiphanius seems to distinguish between Samaritan "Essenoi" and Jewish "Ossaioi," and it may be that by his own time the surviving Essenes had branched off into a few subsects; at all events, various writers have shown that there must be a close connection between the "Ossaioi" and the earlier Essenes, in either event, he describes the Ossaeans as Jewish, not Samaritan. Norman Golb *The Qumran Covenanters* 45-46

[206] One of the more reasonable, and precedented of Golb's arguments, he poignantly discusses the popular image of the Essenes as having suddenly disbanded around the Jewish revolt and the destruction of Qumran. "Were these Essenic sectarians then massacred, or did they suddenly assimilate? Indeed, that such a view can be proposed in the face of the abundant evidence to the contrary is baffling in the extreme. To do this we should simply have to discard as worthless or irrelevant all the statements in the early heresiographic literature pointing to the existence of Essenic and other sectarian Jewish communities after the destruction of the Second Jewish Commonwealth… The Essenes are mentioned as still thriving in a community near the Dead Sea by Dio Chrysostom (end of the first century) and are briefly referred to by Hegesippus. We have quite a full account of them in the Philosophumena of Hippolytus." *ibid.*

[207]Hippolytus renders it as *Elchasai*, Origen as *Helkesai*, Epiphanius as *Elxai* or *Elkessai*, Epiphanius further informs us (" Haer.," 19.2) that the name meant the "Hidden Power." The evidence for both the Qumran site and the linguistic variation of *Ossaioi* can be found in a detailed discussion of Stephen Goranson's, *Others and Intra-Jewish Polemic as Reflected in Qumran Texts*, as well as *In The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, edited by Peter W. Flint and James VanderKam, with a focus on the linguistic discussion in VanderKam's essay therein. 534-551

[208]Panarion. 1.19

[209]*ibid.*19.1.4

[210]*ibid.* 19.1.4

[211] Still, Epiphanius says that "he did not live according to the Law" (19.1.5),[211] which may reference an allegorical approach to the Torah, rather than any actual deviation from *Halakhah*, which Epiphanius fails to note. Or it may be that Epiphanius is trying to defame him as a hypocrite, in spite of his "of Jewish origin" and having "Jewish ideas".

[212] Luttikhuizen 12

[213] In spite of his numerous comments about his misidentified Sabians, Maimonides concedes that he knows very little about them, e.g. "If the religious rules of the Sabians and the events of those days were known to us, we should be able to see plainly the reason for most of the things." (*Guide for the Perplexed*: Part 3: Chapter L)

[214] It is unlikely that they prayed at five distinct prayer times, as the Qur'ān references three Jewish prayer times, and the Shī`ah maintained these as the three times of prayer. This reference, however, is a Sunni source, and reflects what was possibly a later division of prayer times. Gündüz 23

[215] Kutha is an ancient city of Sumer on right of eastern branch of the Upper Euphrates, approximately 25 miles northeast of ancient Babylon.

[216]*ibid.* 25

[217] As we have seen in several examples from early Muslim sources, the Sabians were said to have had a scripture called the *Zabūr*, which the Qur'ān associates with David, and which in some interpretations is

thought to have been the whole of the *Tanakh* or Jewish canon. Christian apologist Karl Gottlieb Pfander suggested that the Qur'ān's reference to *Zabūr* actually refers to the third division of the Hebrew Scriptures, known as the Writings or *Ketuvim*, of which David's Psalms or *Tehillim* were a part, as were the various stories and chronicles *of* David and the empire stemming from him.[217]

[218]*ibid.* 23

[219]*ibid.*

[220]*ibid.* Emphasis my own.

[221]*ibid.*

[222]*ibid.* 28

[223]*ibid.*

[224]*ibid.* 23

[225] Gündüz 23

[226]*ibid.* 25

[227]*ibid.*

[228]*ibid.*

[229]*ibid.*

[230]*ibid.*

[231]*Ref.* 9.13-17 and 10.29

[232]*Haer.* 19 and 30

[233]ap. Euseb. *HE* VI 38

[234] Wilhelm Brandt. *Elchasai.* (Leipzig , 1912) 44-48 and 115ff discusses the relationship of the Osseans, commented on by later Christian authors as heretical and Jewish in origins See Daniel Chwolsohn. *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus.* (St. Petersburg: Buchdruckerei der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1856). ii. 543. ff; 232.

[235] Andrae 108

[236] Kraemer 13

[237]*ibid.*

[238] cf. Wellhausen, Reste, pp. 236 ff.

[239]From the *Sīrah* of Ibn Isḥāq, in recension by Ibn Ḥishām. 225, 229; also 997; *sabawta*, "you became a Muslim", p. 300; *al-subbaa'* "the Muslims"; 835; these references are cited in Joel L. Kraemer. *Israel Oriental Studies, Volume 12.* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 1992), 13.

[240]*ibid.* 841

[241] Joel L. Kraemer. *Israel Oriental Studies, Volume 12.* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 1992). 14

[242] Reported by Imām Aḥmad, 15448

[243] Widely referenced in numerous Secondary sources, the translation here is taken from *Jesus in the Talmud*, 117

[244] For a discussion on the wide-spread Aramaic use throughout the Middle East, see: Chul-hyun Bae, "Aramaic as a Lingua Franca During the Persian Empire (538-333 B.C.E.)" (Journal of Universal Language 5, March 2004). 1-20; for a specific discussion on Aramaic as the *lingua franca* of the Hijaz in Late Antiquity, see Christoph Luxenberg, *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran - A Contribution to the Decoding of the Koran.* (Berlin: Verlag Hans Schiler. 2007)

[245]François de Blois writes in his *Naṣrānī (Ναζωραῖος) and ḥanīf (ἐθνικός): Studies on the Religious Vocabulary of Christianity and of Islam,* 2

[246]Francois De Blois, "Naṣrānī (Ναζωραῖος) and ḥanīf (ἐθνικός): Studies on the Religious Vocabulary of Christianity and of Islam," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and AfricanStudies* 65 (2002): 1-30.

[247] Petri Luomanen "Nazarenes" in A companion to second-century Christian "heretics" 279

[248]David C. Sim writes, in his *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism* 1998 p182

[249]Augustine. On Baptism, Against the Donatists (Book VII), Chapter 1, Verse 1. Translated by J.R. King and revised by Chester D. Hartranft. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fath

[250] Letters of St. Augstine: Letters LVI to LXXV, with Jerome's answers.

[251]*ibid.* Another scholar writes, "The Nazarenes were distinct from the Ebionites," and "in fact, we have found that it is possible that there was a split in Nazarene ranks around the turn of the first century," a split which "was either over a matter of christological doctrine or over leadership of the community. Out of this split came the Jamesean Ebionites, who can scarcely be separated from the Nazarenes on the basis of

geography, but who can be easily distinguished from the standpoint of Christology." Ray Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*. (Magnas, Jerusalem, 1988). 108.

[252] Moshé Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority* (Harvard University Press, 1997).

[253] This 'ayah indicates by "sawā'in baynanā wa baynakum" at least two parties. As the 'ayah deals with *tawhid*, the term *baynakum* can only refer to those deviating from the Qur'ānic ideal; obviously the Nazarenes who had absorbed Christian ideas about Trinitarianism.

[254] This is a quite literal translation of "*muṣaddaqān limā bayna yadayhi mina al-kitāb*."

[255] Papias of Hierapolis (ca.125-150 CE), who wrote that "Matthew put together (or in some manuscripts, "wrote") the sayings (*logia*) in the Hebrew dialect and each one translated them as he was able."Eusebius of Caesarea (c. AD 263–339) quotes Heggesippus (ca. 110-180 CE) the Nazarene quotes "some passages from the Gospel according to the Hebrews and from the Syriac [Aramaic], and some particulars from the Hebrew tongue." (Ecclesiastical History 4.22) Epiphanius writes that the Ebionites and Nazarenes alike "have the Gospel according to Matthew in its entirety in Hebrew… in the Hebrew alphabet, as it was originally written." (*Panarion* 29.9.4)

[256] Translation mine.

[257] Alfred Felix Landon Beeston, *Journal of Semitic Studies*Semitic Studies (1982) 27(1): 108-112,

[258] *ibid.* 29.7.2

[259] Letter 75 Jerome to Augustine

[260] Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, *The Revelation of Elchasai* 30, 3, 2-3; Panerian 53, 1, 8

[261] We see as well that the often mistranslated passage "... And she who guarded her chastity: We breathed into her *from* our Spirit (*fanafakhnā fiyhā min ruḥinā*) and We made her and her son a sign for the Nations" (21.91), says nothing at all about a Mary wearing a shirt that was breathed through, or an Angel breathing pregnancy into her, and other such invented interpolations which later *mufassirīn,* such as Tafsir Ibn Kathir, concoct in their infusion of later Orthodox dogmas (*wa-l-atiy aḥsanat farjahā fanafakhnā fiyhā min ruḥinā wa-ja`alnā hā wābnahāāyatan lil`ālamiyna*).

[262] Bart Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium*, (Oxford University Press, 1999), 43

[263] Jerome, in Esaiam 40,9 (K/R 224)

[264] De Blois, 15 cites this from Origen, *In Johannem* 2, 12 (K/R 126); Similarly *Hom.* in Jer. 15,4 (K/R 126); See also Jerome in Micah 7.6 (K/R 208); id., in *Hiez.* 16,13 (K/R 226)

[265] De Blois, 15

[266] C.E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel; W.P. Heinrichs; G. Lecomte, entry "Shirk", *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Vol. 9, San-Sze, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 485

[267] "ICOMOS Evaluation of Al-Hijr Archaeological Site (Madâin Sâlih) World Heritage Nomination".World Heritage Center.Retrieved 2009-09-16. whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/1293.pdf

[268] Hesiode Theogony Histories III:38 (Herodotus) ΟΥΡΑΝΊΗΝ ἈΦΡΟΔΊΤΗ ἈΛΙΛΆΤ / ἈΛΙΤΤΑ אוראניה אפרודיטה אפַלַוַדַתה אפַּר أورانيا آفروديته آپريديته اللات. This passage elucidates the reason for the Biblical prohibition against shaving the sides of the head (Leviticus 19.27).

[269] John F. Healey. "4". *The Religion of the Nabataeans: A Conspectus. Religions in the Graeco-Roman World*. 136. (Boston: Brill), 111. In the same vein, the trading center of the *Rubu-l-Khali*, in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, was originally named `Ubar (later as `Erum). `Erum became known to Western literature with the translation of The Book of *One Thousand and One Nights*. The Qur'ān references it always with the surviving city of *Thamūd*, likely a place inhabited by other members of the `Ad tribe. Defying the warnings of the prophet Hūd, God was said to have destroy the city, driving it into the sands (89.6-13). The traditional narrative maintains, as Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar writes in *Muḥammad: The Holy Prophet*, that "About four hundred years before the birth of Muḥammad one 'Amr ibn Lahya ibn Harath ibn 'Amru l-Qays ibn Thalaba ibn Azd ibn Khalan ibn Babalyun ibn Saba, a descendant of Qahtan and King of the Ḥijāz, more usually called Amr ibn Luhayy, had put an idol called Hubal on the roof of the Ka`bah. This was one of the chief deities of the Quraysh before Islam." A late fourth century CE date is suggested for this, but there is really no pre-Islamic record of such a figure or these events. According to the narrative, however, Maxime Rodinson explains that Luhayy was said to have travelled to Syria, bring back at least the goddesses `Uzza' and Manat, amalgamating Al-Lat with Hubal. Maxime Rodinson, *Mohammed*, 1961, translated by Anne Carter, (1971), 38-49

[270] Corpus Inscriptiones Semit., vol. II: 198; Jaussen and Savignac, Mission Archéologique en Arabie, I (1907) pp.169f

[271] Maxime Rodinson, *Mohammed,* 1961, translated by Anne Carter, 1971, 38-49

[272] G. E. von Grunebaum. *Classical Islam: A History 600 A.D. - 1258 A.D.* (Aldine Publishing Company: 1970) 24

[273] The Qur'ān, while seemingly recognizing the religion of the *Majūs*, groups them with the *mushrikīn*, who Hawting has already identified as anti-Pauline polemic references.

[274] A.J. Wensinck, "Muslim," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition,* Vol. VII (Brill: 1992), 688

[275] This definition does not derive from the root, nor etymology of the term "Islam," but from a practice called *taṣrīf*, whereby one word used in an 'ayah of the Qur'ān, is compared to a different word used in a similarly-phrased 'ayah. "Islam" is thus given the definition of "Submission" by the correlation of "Islam" (3.83) with "*Yasjudu*" (Prostration).

[276] Dictionary listing for *Siin* roots derived from Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (Educa Boos /AES: 2003)

[277] Muhammad Raheem Bawa Muhaiyaddeen, *The Four Steps to Pure Iman* (Fellowship Press, 2004)

[278] Carl Ernst, *Following Muḥammad*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 63

[279] Each translator takes pains to add contextualizing to "Arab" by saying "the desert Arabs" (Yusuf Ali), "the wandering Arabs" (Pickthal) or even "the dwellers of the desert" (Shakir), when no such qualifying description is present in the Arabic. Furthermore, where this passage says that they should say "we submit", this is often phrased as such, with no explanation that the verbal "aslamna" is being used, which said translators elsewhere translate as "Islam" or even "to practice Islam" and so on.

[280] This term is typically rendered "desert Arabs". However, though Arabic would maintain that there is no plural for Arab, this fits exactly within the six irregular plural patterns of Qur'ānic Arabic, which seem to derive from Ethiopian Ge`ez. With that in mind, I have chosen to leave the term intact, and untranslated.

[281] E. van Donzel; B. Lewis and Ch. Pellat; Assisted by C. Dumont; G.R. Hawting; M. Paterson; also C.E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel; B. Lewis and Ch. Pellat; Assisted by C. Dumont and M. Paterson, entry on "Islam" *Encyclopædia of Islam Second Edition*, Vol. 4, Iran-Kha, 170-177

[282] *ibid.* 171

[283] Cited in the aforementioned entry from the *Encyclopædia of Islam*; iii, 134; cf. A. J. Wensinck, op. cit., 23, cited in *ibid.*

[284] *Iḥsān* represents the highest spiritual state of the mystic.

[285] Cited in numerous well-known sources, e.g. *Bukhārī*: Volume 6, Book 60, *ḥadīth* 300; *Muslim*: 1st *ḥadīth*

[286] Book 38.4434.

[287] Traditionalists focus their contentions with this narration, on a transmitter Hishām ibn Sa'ad Al-Madanī. These later contentions notwithstanding, Hāfith Ibn Hajr (1372 – 1448) says about him in his *Taqrīb*, that he was "Honest" though had "mistakes, and delved into Shī'ism." While many polemicists detest him, Abu Zura'ah said, "His status is honesty" and Al-`Ijlī said, "His traditions are permitted, and are *Hasan al-Ḥadīth*" meaning "sound" or "good traditions", a ranking of Traditionalist Ḥadīth classification. *Tahrīr Taqrīb* (Mu'assasat al-Risālah 1997), Entry 7294

[288] Herbert Berg, personal communication, September 11, 2011

[289] Frederick Mathewson Denny, "Ummah in the Constitution of Medina." *JNES* 36 (1977): 39

[290] Denny 1

[291] Josephus uses the term twelve times. Once he famously refers to Christians with this designation (*Antiquities* 18.3.3), but other times he refers to Jews by the term (*JewishWar* 3.354; 7.327), and even refers to gender with the term, and a "swarm" of locusts.

[292] P.J. Bearman; Th. Bianquis; C.E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel; W.P. Heinrichs, entry on "Umma", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. 10, Tā'-U[..], (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 859

[293] Josef Horovitz, *Jewish proper names and derivatives in the Koran* (in HUCA, ii (1924), repr. Hildesheim 1964)

[294] Encyclopaedia of Islam, "Umma", 862

[295] *ibid.*

[296] *ibid.*

[297] *ibid.,* 863

[298] Cited by M. Watt, in Muḥammad at Medina, 225

[299] Phrasing taken from U. Rubin, "The Constitution of Medina' — Some Notes", Studia Islamica 62 (1985), 9-10.

[300] Samhudi, 1, 114-116. Cf. Watt, 192 ff;
[301] Rubin 9
[302] *ibid.*
[303] Rubin 12
[304] *ibid.* 12
[305] Wellhausen, 131; also Wensinck, 52 and Watt, 241
[306] 134
[307] 44
[308] 63-65
[309] Denny, 44
[310] 11.213; 5.48; 10.19; 11.118; 16.93; 21.92; 23.52; 42.8; 43.33.
[311] Rubin 13
[312] Abu 'Ubayd's version has also been preserved in Ibn al-Athir, 1, 68, as indicated in Serjeant, 11, 40, note 41.
[313] 2,9
[314] 14
[315] Rubin 20
[316] Watt 200
[317] *ibid.* 201
[318] Rubin 15
[319] Rubin 16
[320] Denny 43
[321] *ibid.* 43
[322] *ibid.*
[323] *ibid.*
[324] Rubin 16.
[325] *ibid.*

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