

# Sana'a manuscript

The **Sana'a palimpsest**, dubbed Ṣanʿāʾī 1, is one of the oldest Quranic manuscripts in existence.<sup>[1]</sup> Part of a sizable cache of Quranic and non-Quranic fragments discovered in Yemen during a 1972 restoration of the Great Mosque of Sana'a, the manuscript was identified as a palimpsest Quran in 1981. It is written on parchment, and comprises two layers of text (see palimpsest). The upper text largely conforms to the standard 'Uthmanic Quran, whereas the lower text contains many variants to the standard text. A partial reconstruction of the lower text was published in 2012,<sup>[2]</sup> and a further reconstruction on unspecified principles was published in 2016. A radiocarbon analysis has dated the parchment to before 671 AD with a 99% accuracy.<sup>[3]</sup>

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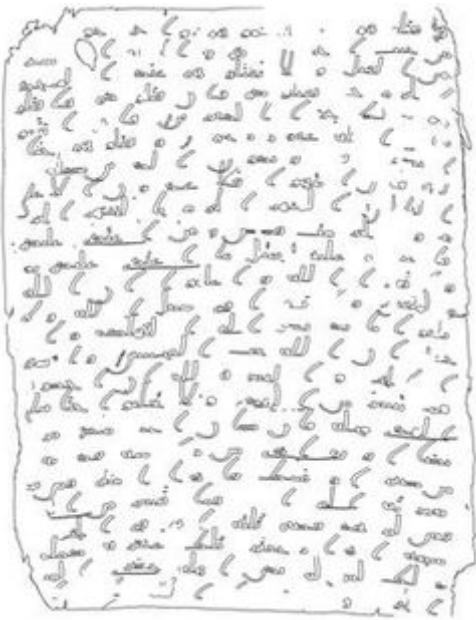
## History

### Discovery

In 1972, construction workers renovating a wall in the attic of the Great Mosque of Sana'a in Yemen came across large quantities of old manuscripts and parchments, many of which were deteriorated. Not realizing their significance, the workers gathered up the documents, packed them away into some twenty potato sacks, and left them on the staircase of one of the mosque's minarets.<sup>[4]</sup>



Recto side of the Stanford '07 folio. The upper text covers Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).265-271.



The lower text of the above folio, recovered through X-Ray Fluorescence Imaging at Stanford University. The lower text covers Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).191-196.

Qadhi Isma'il al-Akwa', then the president of the Yemeni Antiquities Authority, realized the potential importance of the find. Al-Akwa' sought international assistance in examining and preserving the fragments, and in 1979 managed to interest a visiting German scholar, who in turn persuaded the West German government to organize and fund a restoration project.<sup>[4]</sup> The preserved fragments comprise Quranic and non-Quranic material.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Restoration project

Restoration of the fragments began in 1980 under the supervision of the Yemeni Department for Antiquities. It was funded by the Cultural Section of the German Foreign Ministry.<sup>[2]</sup> The find includes 12,000 Quranic parchment fragments. All of them, except 1500–2000 fragments, were assigned to 926 distinct Quranic manuscripts as of 1997. None is complete and many contain only a few folios apiece.<sup>[2]</sup> "Albrecht Noth (University of Hamburg) was the director of the project. Work on the ground began in 1981 and continued through the end of 1989, when the project terminated with the end of funding. Gerd R. Puin (University of Saarland) was the director beginning with 1981. His involvement came to an end in 1985, when Hans-Caspar Graf von Bothmer (University of Saarland) took over as the local director. Bothmer left Ṣan'ā' in the following year, but continued to run the project from Germany, traveling to the site almost every year.

Beginning in 1982, Ursula Dreibholz served as the conservator for this project, and worked full time in Ṣan'ā' until the end of 1989. She completed the restoration of the manuscripts. She also designed the permanent storage, collated many parchment fragments to identify distinct Quranic manuscripts, and directed the Yemeni staff in the same task. The manuscripts are located in the House of Manuscripts, the Dār al-Makḥṭūṭāt (DAM), in Ṣan'ā', Yemen. After 1989, Bothmer would visit the collection periodically. In the winter of 1996–7, he microfilmed all of the parchment fragments that have been assigned to distinct Quranic manuscripts. Of the remaining 1500–2000 fragments, he microfilmed a group of 280. The microfilms are available in Ṣan'ā' in the House of Manuscripts.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Contents of the manuscript

The manuscript is a palimpsest, meaning the parchment was written over once (the "lower" text), then its text was erased, and then it was written over a second time (the "upper" text) with this process potentially being repeated over time with the same parchment. In the Sana'a palimpsest, both the upper and the lower text are the Qur'an written in the Hijazi script. Both of them appeared to have been part of a complete manuscript of the Qur'an. The upper text is almost identical with the modern Quran in use and was written sometime during the end of the 7th or the beginning of 8th-century AD.<sup>[6]</sup>

The lower text contains some differences from the standard text.<sup>[a]</sup> It is believed to have been written sometime between 632–671 AD. The parchment upon which the lower codex is written has been radiocarbon dated with 99% accuracy to before 671 AD, and 75% probability from before 646 AD. However, it contains sura At-Tawba, which was recited by Muhammad in 632 AD.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Lower text

The lower text was erased and written over, but due to the presence of metals in the ink, the lower text has resurfaced, and now appears in a light brown color.<sup>[7]</sup> A number of reasons may have led to the erasure of the lower text: some pages of the codex may have been destroyed or worn out, thereby requiring the production of a new codex, for which the already available parchment was used. (This was a common practice in ancient times. When enough of a manuscript's writing wore off—ink does not bond to parchment like it does to paper—all of the writing was washed off to make the expensive parchment usable for a new text. This was an ancient way of recycling.) Alternatively, the standardization of the Quranic text by 'Uthmān may have led to the non-standard lower text becoming obsolete, and thereby erased.<sup>[8]</sup>

The manuscript that was discovered, however, is not complete. About 80 folios are known to exist: 36 in Yemen's Dār al-Makhṭūṭāt (House of Manuscripts),<sup>[2]</sup> 4 in private collections (after being auctioned abroad),<sup>[7]</sup> and 40 in the Eastern Library of the Grand Mosque in Sana'a.<sup>[9]</sup> Many of the folios in the House of Manuscripts are physically incomplete (perhaps due to damage),<sup>[10]</sup> whereas those in private possession<sup>[7]</sup> or held by the Eastern Library are all complete.<sup>[9]</sup> These 80 folios comprise roughly half of the Quran.

The lower text of the folios in the House of Manuscripts and those auctioned abroad were published in March 2012, in a long essay by Behnam Sadeghi (Professor of Islamic Studies at [Stanford University](#)) and Mohsen Goudarzi (PhD student at [Harvard University](#)).<sup>[2]</sup> Prior to that, in 2010, Behnam Sadeghi had published an extensive study of the four folios auctioned abroad, and analyzed their variants using textual critical methods.<sup>[7]</sup> The German scholar Elisabeth Puin (lecturer at [Saarland University](#)), whose husband was the local director of the restoration project until 1985, has also transcribed the lower text of several folios in five successive publications.<sup>[11][12][13][14]</sup> The lower text of the folios in the Eastern Library has not been published yet.

Within each sura, the surviving lower text presents the same verses as the standard Qur'an and in exactly the same order. For example, the Sana'a codex omits the *basmala* before sura 9.<sup>[15]</sup> The lower text has no vowel marks and rarely uses diacritical marks for distinguishing consonants. Some of the variants between the lower text and the standard Qur'an are provided by Sadeghi and Goudarzi below.<sup>[16]</sup>

Location	Visible Traces	Reconstruction	Standard Text
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).191 Stanford folio, recto, l. 4, p. 44	ح / بعد (لو) كم	حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ	حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).191 Stanford folio, recto, l. 5, p. 44	د لك جزا الكفرين	ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ	كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).192 Stanford folio, recto, l. 5, p. 44	انتھو	إِنَّتَهُو	انْتَهُو
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).193 Stanford folio, recto, l. 6, p. 44	حتا	حَتَّا	حَتَّى
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).193 Stanford folio, recto, l. 7, p. 44	و يكون الدين كله [لله]	و يَكُونُ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ	وَيَكُونُ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).194 Stanford folio, recto, l. 10, p. 44	و من اعتدى	وَمَنْ اعْتَدَى	فَمَنْ اعْتَدَى
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).194 Stanford folio, recto, l. 11, p. 44	فا عد / و	فَاعْتَدُوا	فَاعْتَدُوا
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).194 Stanford folio, recto, l. 11, p. 44	ما اعتدى عليكم به	مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ بِهِ	مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).196 Stanford folio, recto, l. 17, p. 44	فما تستسر من الهدى	فَمَا تَسْتَسِرُّ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ	فَمَا اسْتَسِرَّتْ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).196 Stanford folio, recto, l. 17, p. 44	ولا تحلفوا	وَلَا تَحْلِفُوا	وَلَا تَخْلِفُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).196 Stanford folio, recto, l. 18, p. 44	فان كان احد منكم	فَإِنْ كَانَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ	فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).196 Stanford folio, recto, l. 19, p. 45	فدية	فِدْيَةٌ	فَفِدْيَةٌ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).196 Stanford folio, recto, l. 20, p. 45	من صدم او نسك	مِنْ صِیَامٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ	مِنْ صِیَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).209 David 86/2003 folio, recto, l. 5, p. 46	من [ب]عد (ما ح) كم ال (هد) [ی]؛	مَنْ بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَكُمْ الْهُدَى	مَنْ بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَكُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).210 David 86/2003 folio, recto, l. 6, p. 46	هل د//طر (و ن) الا ان (ب)ا (ب)كم الله	هَلْ تَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ اللَّهُ	هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).211 David 86/2003 folio, recto, l. 9, p. 46	الععب	الْعِغَابِ	الْعِغَابِ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).213 David 86/2003 folio, recto, l. 12, p. 46	فا // (س)ل الله	فَإَرْسَلْنَا	فَبَعَثْنَا
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).213 David 86/2003 folio, recto, l. 13, p. 46	ل (بحكموا) من الناس	لِيَحْكُمُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ	لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).213 David 86/2003 folio, recto, l. 15, p. 46	ال (ب)بت	الْبَيِّنَاتُ	الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَعْثًا بَيْنَهُمْ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).214 David 86/2003 folio, recto, l. 17, p. 46	ا (حسب)تم	أَحْسِبْتُمْ	أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).214 David 86/2003 folio, recto, l. 17, p. 46	ا [ل]د س [م]س [هـ]لكم	الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ	الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).214 David 86/2003 folio, recto, l. 18, p. 47	السا	الْبُسَاءِ	الْبُسَاءِ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).215 David 86/2003 folio, recto, l. 20, p. 47	(ب)سا لو دك	يَسْأَلُونَكَ	يَسْأَلُونَكَ

Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).217 David 86/2003 folio, recto, l. 25, p. 47	عَنْ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَعَنْ قَتْلِ فِيهِ عن ا ل(س)هر ا لحر (م) [و] ع(ن) هل فـ[د]ه	عَنْ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَعَنْ قَتْلِ فِيهِ	عَنْ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالِ فِيهِ
Quran 2 (al-Baqarah).217 David 86/2003 folio, recto, l. 26, p. 47	؛ /- [و] (ص) [د] ع /-؛	[17]وَصَدُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ	وَصَدُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرُ بِهِ
Quran 11 (Hūd).105 Folio 4, recto, l. 1, p. 51	ا (لا) م ا { }-؛	إِلَّا مَنْ أَدْنَى لَهُ	إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ
Quran 11 (Hūd).122 Folio 4, verso, l. 4, p. 52	ا / / (مع) [ك] / { }-؛	إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُنْتَظِرُونَ	إِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُونَ
Quran 8 (al-Anfāl).2 Folio 4, verso, l. 12, p. 52	ف(ر) فب	فَرَقْتُ	وَجَلْتُ
Quran 8 (al-Anfāl).2 Folio 4, verso, l. 13, p. 52	ا ب(ب)ا	ءَايَأْتُنَا	ءَايَأَتْهُ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).122 Folio 22, recto, l. 3, p. 62	ما [ك]ا ن	مَا كَانَ	وَمَا كَانَ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).122 Folio 22, recto, l. 4, p. 62	من كل ا مه	مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ	مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).124 Folio 22, recto, l. 9, p. 62	و ا د ا ا ن ر ل ب	وَإِذَا أَنْزَلْتُ	وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلْتُ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).125 Folio 22, recto, l. 12, p. 62	فى قلوبهم ر حس	فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ رِجْسٌ	فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).125 Folio 22, recto, l. 13, p. 62	ر حر ا الى ر حس[ه]م	رِجْزاً إِلَى رِجْسِهِمْ	رِجْساً إِلَى رِجْسِهِمْ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).125 Folio 22, recto, l. 13, p. 62	و ما نوا و هم ف(س)ف[و] ن	وَمَا تَوْأَمَهُمْ فُلْسِفُونَ	وَمَا تَوْأَمَهُمْ كُفْرُونَ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).126 Folio 22, recto, l. 13, p. 62	ا [و] / / ن ر و	أَوْ لَا يَرَوُ	أَوْ لَا يَرَوْنَ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).126 Folio 22, recto, l. 15, p. 62	و لا ب(ب) د ك ر و ن	وَلَا يَتَنَكَّرُونَ	وَلَا هُمْ يَتَنَكَّرُونَ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).127 Folio 22, recto, l. 15, p. 62	و ا د ا ا [ن]ر (ا)ب	وَإِذَا أَنْزَلْتُ	وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلْتُ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).127 Folio 22, recto, l. 16, p. 62	هل نر سنا	هَلْ يَرِنَّا	هَلْ يَرِنُكُمْ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).127 Folio 22, recto, l. 17, p. 62	فا ب[ص]ـ(ر) ف(و) ا	فَانصَرَفُوا	ثُمَّ انصَرَفُوا
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).127 Folio 22, recto, l. 17, p. 62	فصر ف الله	فَصَرَفَ اللَّهُ	صَرَفَ اللَّهُ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).127 Folio 22, recto, l. 17, p. 62	د لك ب(ا)ب///[م] (ف) و م لا يفعهون ن	ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ	بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).128 Folio 22, recto, l. 18, p. 62	و لعد حا كم	وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ	لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).128 Folio 22, recto, l. 18, p. 62	ر سول مـ(ك)م	رَسُولٌ مِنْكُمْ	رَسُولٌ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).128 Folio 22, recto, l. 19, p. 63	عر نر (ع) [ب]ـ(ه) ما عسكم	عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ	عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).129 Folio 22, recto, l. 20, p. 63	فا / / (ب)و ل و ا [ع]ـ(ب)ك	فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا عَنْكَ	فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا
Quran 9 (al-Tawbah).129 Folio 22, recto, l. 21, p. 63	ا لد ي لا ا [ه]ه الا هو	الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ	لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

Quran 19 (Maryam).2 Folio 22, recto, l. 24, p. 63	ر ح[ح]ه	رَحْمَةٍ	رَحْمَتٍ
Quran 19 (Maryam).3 Folio 22, recto, l. 25, p. 63	ا د ن ا د ی ر ب ک ر ک[ر] ن ا	إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ <b>زَكَرِيَّا</b>	إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ
Quran 19 (Maryam).4 Folio 22, recto, l. 25, p. 63	و فل ر ی	<b>وَقَالَ رَبِّي</b>	قَالَ رَبِّ
Quran 19 (Maryam).4 Folio 22, recto, l. 26, p. 63	و فل ر ی ا س عل ا ل ر ا س س ا	وَقَالَ رَبِّي اشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْئًا	قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَأَسْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْئًا
Quran 19 (Maryam).4 Folio 22, recto, l. 26, p. 63	و لم ا ک ن ر ب ب(د) ع ا ک	<b>وَلَمْ أَكُنْ بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ</b>	<b>وَلَمْ أَكُنْ بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ</b>
Quran 19 (Maryam).5 Folio 22, recto, l. 27, p. 63	و ح(د)ب ا ل م و ل م ن و [ر] ا ی	و خِفْتُ الْمَوْلَى مِنْ وَرَائِي	<b>وَإِنِّي</b> خِفْتُ الْمَوْلَى مِنْ وَرَائِي
Quran 19 (Maryam).7 Folio 22, verso, l. 2-3, p. 63	{(د) و ه س ا ل ک ع ل م ا ر ک ا ○ و س ر ن ه } ----- {(ه) م ن ف ب(ل) س د//م ا	{(بَزَكَرِيَّا إِنَّا) قَدْ وَهَبْنَا لَكَ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا ○ وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ (بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ) لَمْ [18] نَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا	بَزَكَرِيَّا إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ اسْمُهُ يَحْيَى لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا
Quran 19 (Maryam).8 Folio 22, verso, l. 3-4, p. 63	ا // ب(د)و ن ل ی (ع)ل م } ----- { ل[ک]ر ع ن ا	أَنِّي يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ (وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عَتِيًّا	أَنِّي يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ <b>وَكَاذِبٌ أَمْرًا</b> <b>عَاقِرًا</b> وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عَتِيًّا
Quran 19 (Maryam).9 Folio 22, verso, l. 5, p. 63	و لم ب ک س ا ی	<b>وَلَمْ تَكْ شَايَ</b>	<b>وَلَمْ تَكْ شَيْئًا</b>
Quran 19 (Maryam).11 Folio 22, verso, l. 7, p. 64	{(ب)م ح ر ح	{(ب)م خ ر ج	<b>فَخَرَجَ</b>
Quran 19 (Maryam).11 Folio 22, verso, l. 7, p. 64	ا (و) ح(ی) ا ل(ب)ه م	أَوْحَى إِلَيْهِمْ	<b>فَأَوْحَى إِلَيْهِمْ</b>
Quran 19 (Maryam).12 Folio 22, verso, l. 8, p. 64	و علمه ا ل(ح)ک م	<b>وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ الْخُكْمَ</b>	<b>وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْخُكْمَ صَبِيًّا</b>
Quran 19 (Maryam).13 Folio 22, verso, l. 9, p. 64	ح ن ا	حَنَانًا	<b>وَحَنَانًا</b>
Quran 19 (Maryam).14 Folio 22, verso, l. 10, p. 64	و لم ب ک	<b>وَلَمْ يَكُنْ</b>	<b>وَلَمْ يَكُنْ</b>
Quran 19 (Maryam).15 Folio 22, verso, l. 10, p. 64	و علمه ا ل س ل م	وَعَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	وَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِ
Quran 19 (Maryam).19 Folio 22, verso, l. 15, p. 64	ل ن ه ب	<b>لَنَهَبِ</b>	<b>لَأَهَبِ</b>
Quran 19 (Maryam).21 Folio 22, verso, l. 17, p. 64	و ه و ع ل// (ه) ه(ب)س	<b>وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ هَيِّنٌ ○</b>	هُوَ عَلَى هَيِّنٍ
Quran 19 (Maryam).21 Folio 22, verso, l. 18, p. 64	و [ا] م ر ا م ق ص ا	وَأَمْرًا مُقْضِيًّا	<b>وَكَانَ</b> أَمْرًا مُقْضِيًّا
Quran 19 (Maryam).22 Folio 22, verso, l. 18, p. 64	ف ح م ل ب	فَحَمَلَتْ	<b>فَحَمَلَتْهُ</b>
Quran 19 (Maryam).23 Folio 22, verso, l. 19, p. 64	ف ل م// ا ح ا ه ا ل م ح ص	<b>فَلَمَّا</b> أَجَاءَهَا الْمَخْضُ	فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ
Quran 19 (Maryam).23 Folio 22, verso, l. 20, p. 65	ف ل ه د ا ل(ب)و [م]	قِيلَ هَذَا <b>الْيَوْمَ</b>	قِيلَ هَذَا
Quran 19 (Maryam).24 Folio 22, verso, l. 20-21, p. 65	هـ[د] بها م ن ح ن ه// ا ل ا ن ح ر ی	فَقَدْ نَهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَا/بَا مَلَكُ/ أَلَّا [19] تَخْرُنِي	فَقَدْ نَهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَلَّا تَخْرُنِي
Quran 19 (Maryam).26 Folio 22, verso, l. 23, p. 65	و د// [ی] ع(ب)ا ○	وَقَرَى عَيْنًا ○	وَقَرَى عَيْنًا

Quran 19 (Maryam).26 Folio 22, verso, l. 24, p. 65	صَوْمًا	صَوْمًا وَصُمْتًا	ص-و [ما] [و صم]ـا
Quran 19 (Maryam).26 Folio 22, verso, l. 24, p. 65	فَلَنْ أَكَلِمَ	لَنْ أَكَلِمَ	لن ا كلم
Quran 19 (Maryam).27 Folio 22, verso, l. 25, p. 65	فَأَنْتَ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا	فَأَنْتَ قَوْمَهَا	؛// [ب-]ت فو [مها] ا
Quran 19 (Maryam).27 Folio 22, verso, l. 25, p. 65	لَعَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ	لَعَذَابُ أَتَيْتَ	لعد ا تبت
Quran 19 (Maryam).28 Folio 22, verso, l. 26, p. 65	مَا كَانَ أَبُوكَ أَمْرًا سَوْءَ	مَا كَانَ أَبُوكَ أَبًا سَوْءَ	ما كا (ن) ا نو [ك-]ا (ا نا) // [و] ا
Quran 12 (Yūsuf).19 Folio 31, recto, l. 4-5, p. 71	وَجَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ	و {جاءت} عَلَيْهِ بَغْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ	و {-----} {علب-} // بع [ص]ا (ا) [س]ا / ؛
Quran 12 (Yūsuf).19 Folio 31, recto, l. 6, p. 71	قَالَ	وَقُلْ	و قل
Quran 12 (Yūsuf).19 Folio 31, recto, l. 7, p. 71	وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ	وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ	و (ا) ل[له] عل[م] بم(ا) يفعلون
Quran 12 (Yūsuf).28 Folio 31, verso, l. 4, p. 72	قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِنَ كَيْدِكُنَّ	قُلْ إِنَّهُ كَيْدُكُنَّ	قل ا [ه] [ك-]ند كن
Quran 12 (Yūsuf).30 Folio 31, verso, l. 5, p. 72	نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ	نِسْوَةٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ	نسو (ه) م ا (هل) المد [د-]يه
Quran 12 (Yūsuf).30 Folio 31, verso, l. 5-6, p. 72	أَمْرَأْتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرْوَدُ فَتَلْقَاهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا	؛{أَمْرَأْتُ الْعَزِيزِ} قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا [20]فَتَلْقَاهَا	؛{-----} / {د-س}ع(د) [ها] [ح-]ب [د-]ا
Quran 12 (Yūsuf).31 Folio 31, verso, l. 7, p. 72	فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ	فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ مَكْرَهُنَّ	فلما سم[ع] / مكر [ه]ن
Quran 12 (Yūsuf).31 Folio 31, verso, l. 8, p. 72	وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكًا	وَجَعَلَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكًا	و {ح-}ل / ل[ه] / [ه] / (مك-) //
Quran 37 (al-Şāffāt).15 Folio 28, recto, l. 1, p. 102	وَقَالُوا إِن هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ	وَقُلُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ	و قلو ا هدا {-----} // نس
Quran 37 (al-Şāffāt).19 Folio 28, recto, l. 4, p. 102	فَإِذَا هُمْ يَنْتَظِرُونَ	فَإِذَا هُمْ مُحْضَرُونَ	فا دا ا ه[م] مح(ض-)ر /
Quran 37 (al-Şāffāt).22 Folio 28, recto, l. 6, p. 102	احْشَرُوا	إِبْعَثُوا	ا ب-ع(د)وا
Quran 37 (al-Şāffāt).22 Folio 28, recto, l. 6, p. 102	الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ	الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا	{ ط-} // [م-]وا
Quran 37 (al-Şāffāt).23 Folio 28, recto, l. 8, p. 102	صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيمِ	صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيمِ	صر بط ا (لح)حم
Quran 37 (al-Şāffāt).25 Folio 28, recto, l. 9, p. 103	لَا تَتَصَرَّوْنَ	لَا تَتَلَصَّرُونَ or لَا تَتَلَصَّرُونَ	لا تـصـصـرو //
Quran 37 (al-Şāffāt).27 Folio 28, recto, l. 10, p. 103	وَأَقْبَلَ	فَأَقْبَلَ	فا (د)بل
Quran 37 (al-Şāffāt).48 Folio 28, verso, l. 3, p. 103	وَعِنْدَهُمْ	عِنْدَهُمْ	ع(د-) [د] هم
Quran 37 (al-Şāffāt).50 Folio 28, verso, l. 4, p. 103	عَلَى	عَلَا	علا
Quran 37 (al-Şāffāt).54 Folio 28, verso, l. 7, p. 103	هَلْ	فَهَلْ	فهـل
Quran 37 (al-Şāffāt).56 Folio 28, verso, l. 8, p. 103	لِثَرْبَيْنِ	لِثَعْبَيْنِ	ل(ث-ع)و س



Quran 37 (al-Şāffāt).58 Folio 28, verso, l. 9, p. 103	و ما نحن	وَمَا نَحْنُ	أَفَمَا نَحْنُ
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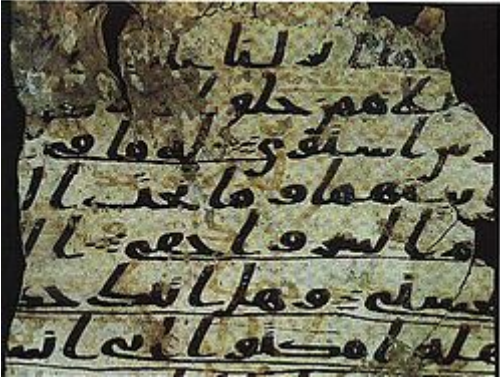
The page numbers refer to the edition by Sadeghi and Goudarzi.<sup>[2]</sup> In their edition, a reliably read but partially visible letter is put in parentheses, while a less reliably read letter is put inside brackets. A pair of forwarding slashes mark an illegible area on the folio, while braces indicate a missing part of the folio. The list here does not include all the spelling variants. (Note: In the above table, parentheses or brackets are left out if they appear at the very beginning or end of a phrase, to avoid text alignment issues. Braces or forward slashes are preserved in all instances, but with the insertion of extra semicolons that help preserve text alignment.)

Islamic tradition has described that other than the standard Uthmanic Qur'an there existed two more codices: that of Ibn Mas'ud and Ubayy b. Ka'b. Before the Sana'a manuscript, no codex other than Uthmanic had ever been found. And while certain traditions describe these two alternative codices, they don't report on the exact text. Sadeghi and Goudarzi say that the Sana'a codex contains both similarities to the codex of Ibn Mas'ud as well as differences. There is an overlap between the variants of Ibn Mas'ud and the Sana'a manuscript, but there are variants in Ibn Mas'ud not found in Sana'a and vice versa.<sup>[21]</sup> Additionally, the Sana'a manuscript puts sura Tawba after sura Anfal, whereas Ibn Mas'ud's codex did the opposite.<sup>[15]</sup>

## Media coverage

Puin, and his colleague Graf von Bothmer have published only short essays on the Şana'a find. In a 1999 interview with Toby Lester, the executive editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* website, Puin described the preserved fragments by the following:

So many Muslims have this belief that everything between the two covers of the Quran is Allah's unaltered word. They like to quote the textual work that shows that the Bible has a history and did not fall straight out of the sky, but until now the Quran has been out of this discussion. The only way to break through this wall is to prove that the Quran has a history too. The Sana'a fragments will help us accomplish this.<sup>[4]</sup>



A fragment showing part of Surat Ta-Ha

Puin claimed that the Yemeni authorities want to keep work on the Şana'a manuscripts "low-profile".<sup>[4]</sup>

In 2000, *The Guardian* interviewed a number of academics for their responses to Puin's remarks, including Dr Tarif Khalidi, and Professor Allen Jones, a lecturer in Koranic Studies at Oxford University. In regard to Puin's claim that certain words and pronunciations in the Koran were not standardized until the ninth century, *The Guardian* reported:

Jones admits there have been 'trifling' changes made to the Uthmanic recension. Khalidi says the traditional Muslim account of the Koran's development is still more or less true. 'I haven't yet seen anything to radically alter my view,' he says. [Jones] believes that the San'a Koran could just be a bad copy that was being used by people to whom the Uthmanic text had not reached yet. 'It's not inconceivable that after the promulgation of the Uthmanic text, it took a long time to filter down.'<sup>[22]</sup>



The article noted some positive Muslim reaction to Puin's research. Salim Abdullah, director of the German Islamic Archives, affiliated to the [Muslim World League](#), commented when he was warned of the controversy Puin's work might generate, "I am longing for this kind of discussion on this topic."<sup>[22]</sup>

Based on interviews with several scholars, Sadeghi and Goudarzi question Puin's claims regarding Yemeni suppression of research on the manuscripts and Puin's statement that the Yemenis did not want others to know that work was being done on them. For instance, they note that in 2007 [Sergio Noja Nosedá](#) (an Italian scholar) and [Christian Robin](#) (a French archaeologist) were allowed to take pictures of the Sana'a palimpsest. They write that according to Robin, his colleagues were "granted greater access than would have been possible in some European libraries."<sup>[23]</sup> They report a similar view from Ursula Dreiholz, the conservator for the restoration project, who describes the Yemenis as supportive.<sup>[23]</sup> They quote Dreiholz as saying that the Yemenis "brought school children, university students, foreign delegations, religious dignitaries, and heads of state, like François Mitterrand, Gerhard Schröder, and Prince Claus of the Netherlands, to see the collection."<sup>[23]</sup>

Sadeghi and Goudarzi conclude:

Although the Yemeni authorities' openness proved a boon to scholarship, they were to be punished for it. The American media amplified the erroneous words of G. Puin, purveying a narrative that belittled Yemen and misrepresented the work done there. The Arab press, in turn, exaggerated the American story. The outcome was a media discourse in Yemen borne of three stages of misrepresentation. This embarrassed the Yemeni authorities responsible for the House of Manuscripts, and the Head of the Antiquities Department had to defend before Parliament the decision to bring in the foreigners.<sup>[23]</sup>

## See also

- [Early Quranic manuscripts](#)
- [Codex Parisino-petropolitanus](#)
- [Topkapi manuscript](#)
- [Samarkand Kufic Quran](#)
- [History of the Quran](#)
- [Criticism of the Quran](#)
- [Historiography of early Islam](#)
- [Textual criticism](#)
- [Gerd R. Puin](#)

## Notes

- ↑ For example, in Sura 2, verse 87, the lower text has *wa-qaffaynā 'alā āthārihi* whereas the standard text has *wa-qaffaynā min ba'dihi*

## Sources

- [Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012](#), p. 8.
- [Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012](#).
- [Sadeghi & Bergmann 2010](#), p. 353.
- [Lester 1999](#).

5. Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012, p. 9.
6. Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012, p. 7.
7. Sadeghi & Bergmann 2010.
8. Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012, p. 27.
9. Hamdoun 2004.
10. Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012, p. 37.
11. Puin 2008.
12. Puin 2009.
13. Puin 2010.
14. Puin 2011.
15. Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012, p. 26.
16. Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012, pp. 41-129.
17. Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012, p. 47. According to Sadeghi & Goudarzi's fn. 118, "The traces [after 'an] match sabīlihi." According to next footnote, "The phrase wa-kufrun bihi is not present immediately [after sabīlihi]. Either it is missing or it (or a smaller phrase such as wa-kufrun) is written at the beginning of the line, before wa-ṣaddun."
18. Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012, p. 63. The hypothetical interpolation of texts for the missing parts in this and the next row are based on Sadeghi & Goudarzi's fn. 216 and 218.
19. Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012, p. 65. The hypothetical interpolation of text for the illegible part is based on Sadeghi & Goudarzi's fn. 229.
20. Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012, p. 72. The reconstructed text here is based on suggestions in Sadeghi & Goudarzi's fn. 279 and 281.
21. Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012, p. 19-20.
22. Taher 2000.
23. Sadeghi & Goudarzi 2012, p. 36.

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## External links

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- [Codex Şan‘ā’ – Inv. No. 01-27.1: Mid-1st Century Of Hijra \(http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Text/Mss/soth.html\)](http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Text/Mss/soth.html), *Islamic Awareness*
  - [Early Qur’anic Manuscripts \(http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Text/Mss/\)](http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Text/Mss/), *Islamic Awareness*
  - [The UNESCO Restoration Project \(http://portal0.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=37916&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html\)](http://portal0.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=37916&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)
  - [Islamic Collections from the Museum \(http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001168/116850e.pdf\)](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001168/116850e.pdf), (pdf) UNESCO
  - ["A Qur’an written over the Qur’an – why making the effort?" \(http://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/mom/2012\\_01\\_mom\\_e.html\)](http://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/mom/2012_01_mom_e.html)
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