Codices of the Quran:-

Many Muslims assume that the Qur'an is superior to all other Scriptures. They say that since the Qur'an is the Word of Allah, therefore Allah has preserved it perfectly from the time of Muhammad to the present. Or, they may also suggest, since Allah has perfectly preserved the Qur'an without the slightest blemish, therefore Allah demonstrates that the Qur'an is the Word of Allah. Wonderfully, they may continue, even though Allah has allowed the previous Scriptures like the Bible to be corrupted, He has perfectly safeguarded the purity of the Quranic text by enabling the early Muslim community both to write it and memorize it as soon as Gabriel conveyed it to Muhammad. And He will safeguard it always. Previous Scriptures, now corrupted and superseded by the Qur'an, have become irrelevant. The Qur'an alone judges all other Scriptures and cannot be judged by them.

Generally Muslims have accepted that the Qur'an, perfectly edited by Muhammad and Gabriel prior to Muhammad's death, was transmitted perfectly through the mediation of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, the first three successors of Muhammad. When in the reign of Uthman, Arabic dialectical differences increased as the Muslim empire expanded, Uthman had a new recension of the Qur'an prepared by Muhammad's secretary, Zaid ibn Thabit, in the Quraish dialect, the dialect of Muhammad, and sent it to the Islamic Empire's centers of Kufah, Basrah, Damascus and Mecca. At the same time, he ordered the destruction of all other existing copies. All copies today depend on this standard official text of Uthman.

The problem with this version of many Muslims regarding the collection and transmission of the Qur'an is the vast amount of evidence from good Muslim sources that conflicts with it. Here we limit our discussion to one segment of the evidence, namely, the fact that prior to the recension of Uthman, other Qur'an collectors and reciters had engaged in preparing their own Qur'an codices. Of these we refer to two individuals: Abdullah ibn Mas`ud and Ubai ibn Ka`b.

1. Before Uthman's Qur'an was sent to Kufah, the people of Kufah used a Qur'an prepared by Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, a servant and Companion of Muhammad, one of the earliest reciters of the Qur'an, and one of the four persons to whom Muhammad guided his followers to learn the Qur'an. He claimed that he had learned about 70 surahs directly from Muhammad. Since he was considered an authority on the Qur'an and lived in Kufah, it is not surprising that he refused to give up his copy of the Qur'an in favour of Uthman's copy and that the Kufans supported his decision.

Islamic source materials reveal significant differences between Uthman's text and text of Ibn Mas`ud. Ibn Mas`ud's text even omits Surahs 1, 113 and 114.1 Jeffery's collection of his variant readings occupies 89 pages of his book!2

2. A second of the four reciters of the Qur'an singled out by Muhammad as the best teachers of the Qur'an was Ubai ibn Ka`b. He served as a secretary for Muhammad in Medina and eventually compiled his own pre-Uthmanic text of the Qur'an which spread especially in Syria. Many of his variant readings agree with those in Ibn Mas`ud's text. His compilation is especially distinguished by the addition of two extra surahs, a distinction which was shared also by the codex of Ibn Abbas, the renowned Quranic commentator. These surahs in translation read:

O Allah, we seek your help and ask your forgiveness,
and we praise you and do not disbelieve in you.
We separate from and leave who sin against you. **(al-Khal', `Separation')**

O Allah, we worship you and to you we pray and prostrate
and to you we run and hasten to serve you.
We hope for your mercy and we fear your punishment.
Your punishment will certainly reach the unbelievers **(al-Hafd, `Haste')**3

From the above evidence alone, it is obvious that many variant readings from pre-Uthmanic collections of the Qur'an continued to exist even after Uthman's order that they be destroyed.

Would it surprise the reader of Yusuf Ali's Translation and Commentary of the Holy Qur'an, as it did this reader, that Yusuf Ali refers to a variant reading in Ubai ibn Ka`b's codex of the Qur'an which reads: "... and he

is a father to them"? With this addition, Qur'an 33:6 would read:

The Prophet is closer
To the believers than
Their own selves,
And he is a father to them
And his wives are
Their mothers...

Why does Yusuf Ali cite this variant? Is it possible that he sees this variant as an improvement? Moreover, why does he refer to different Qur'an readings, however small, in Notes 2666 and 2948

In fairness to Yusuf Ali's edition of the Qur'an, references should be made to Abul Ala' Mawdudi's "Introduction" to this edition (pp. 21-43), particularly to the sections "Compilation" and "Differences and Dialects", which include a discussion on variant readings in the Qur'an. After reading this, however, one is still left with the difficulty of resolving the tension between this text's acknowledged existence of Quranic variations vs. this same text's assertion that none can have any doubt whatsoever regarding its authenticity and immunity and purity from any and every kind of addition or omission or alteration, for there is nothing so authentic in the whole human history as this fact about the Qur'an that it is the same Qur'an that was presented by the Holy Prophet to the world.5

Finally, the point is simply this: A Muslim who insists that the text of the Qur'an has been perfectly and flawlessly transmitted during and from the time of Muhammad to the present, with no shadow of doubt regarding the purity of its text, is obviously free to do so, if he so chooses. If he has decided to ignore or casually dismiss evidence to the contrary, who is to stop him? Yet, in such a case, could at least his better informed fellow Muslims help him see the problems connected with the compilation and transmission of the Quranic text as Islamic source materials reveal them? And, further, could they encourage him to avoid proving the superiority of the Qur'an over other Scriptures on the basis of the perfection of the Quranic text and its transmission vs. the defects of the text and the transmission of other Scriptures? The histories of both the Bible and the Qur'an reflect problems of text and transmission. The sooner both Muslims and Christians realize this, the better their opportunity for more honest communication on issues of faith between them.

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1 Ali Dashti, Twenty Three Years, tr. F.R C. Bagley, Allen and Unwin, London, discusses the reason on pp. 148-149.

2 Arthur Jeffery, Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an, Brill, Leiden, 1937.

3 Ahmed von Denffer, `Ulum al Qur'an, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1985, p. 48.

4 A. Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur'an, 2nd edition, American Trust Publications, 1977, pp. 1104, 822, 893.

5 Ibid., p. xxxv. The recent English translation (The Holy Qur'an, King Fahd Holy Qur'an Printing Complex), much dependent upon Yusuf Ali's English edition, omits Yusuf Ali's references to the variant readings and Mawdudi's "Introduction". Why?

Kashshi, Marifat al naqilin = Kitba al Rijal, abridged by
Muhammad b. al Hasan al Tusi as Ikhtiyar Marifat ar Rijal
Kulayni, al Kafi, vol 1 p 99

Subhu al Salih, Mabahith fi ulum al Quran,
[3] Zarkashi, al Burhan fi ulum al Quran, vol 1 p 235, 237-38
256, 258

Suyuti, al Itqan fi ulum al Quran, vol 1 p 212-13, 216

Ahmad b. Hanbal, vol 1 p 57

Tirimidhi, Sunan, vol 4 p 336-37

al Hakim al Naysaburi, al Mustadrak,
[5] Quran Chapter II Verse 106

another spoke of verses that Allah substituted for uthers.[6] Early

[6] Quran Chapter XVI Verse 101

Muslims reportedly used to recall verses of the revelation they did not find in the new scripture. They were however, aware thatthose passages were deliberately excluded by the Prophet, sincethe Muslims frequently referred to them as what "abrogated"(nusikha), "lifted" (rufi'a), "caused to be forgotten" (unsiya), or "dropped't (usqita).[7] The concept of abrogation of the revela-

[7] Abu Byad, al Naskih wa'l mansukh fi l Quran an al Karim, ed. John Burton (Cambridge 1987), p 6

Muhasibi, Fahm al Quran an wa manih ed. H. Quwwatli (in the collection of al Aql wa fahm al Quran [n.p., 1971] p 261-502) p 399 (quoting Anas b. Malik), 400 and 408 (quoting Amr b. Dinar) 403 (quoting Abd al Rahman b. Awf), 405 (quoting Abu Musa al Ashari), 406

Tabari, Jami al Bayan, vol 3 p 472-74, 476, 479-80

Ibn Salama, al Nasikh wa l mansukh, p 21 (quoting Abd Allah b. Masud)

Suyuti, al Durr al manthur, vol 5 p 179 (quoting Ubayy b. Kab)

(naskh al Quran) apparently referred originally to those parts that were not included by the Prophet in the scripture.[8] Later,

[8] Abu Ubayd, al Naskih, p 6
Bayhaqi, Dalail al Nubuwwa, vol 7 p 154 (where it is argued that the Prophet never put the Quran together since there was always the expectation that some verses might be abrogated and some later modification was thus in-evitable in any collection of the Quran put together during his lifetime. Underlying this argument is the assumption that the abrogated verses had to be physically removed from the scripture.)

Zarkashi, vol 2 p 30 (the first interpretation of the concept of naskh)

The "recorders of the revelation"-

[10] Ibn Sa'd, Kitab al Tabaqat al Kabir, vol 3 p 211, 281

Ibn Abi Dawud, Kitab al Masahif, p 10

Ibn Babawayh, Kamal ad Din, p 31-32

Bayhaqi, Dalail, vol 7 p 147-8

Zarkashi, vol 1 p 262

Ibn al Hadid, Sharah of Nahj al Balagha. vol 1 p 27

Ibn Juzayy, al Tashil li ulum al tanzil, vol 1 p 4

Suyuti, Itqan, vol 1 p 202

Ibrahim al Harbi, Gharib al hadith, vol 1 p 270

Many people had memorized

[11] Bayhaqi, Dalail, vol 7 p 154

Zarkashi, vol 1 p 235, 262

Suyutim Itqan, vol 1 p 202

Ahmad al Naraqi, Manahij al ahkam, p 152

If two documents are in contradiction, the first thing to do is ascertain whether the contradictions can be explained adequately. And if not, then we must conclude that one of the two documents is false.

As you well know, going to the sources of the Qur'an is much more difficult than one would usually assume, as we have so little data with which to use. In another paper (The problems with Sources of Islam) I have dealt with the problems which exist when confronted by the dearth of material on the sources of the Qur'an, so I won't repeat those arguments here.

Suffice it to say, that the only real source we have for the Qur'an is the book itself, and what Muslim Traditions tell us concerning how that book came to be created. Because of their late compilations (200-300 years after the event), and the contradicting documentation which we now possess prior to 750 C.E., I find it difficult to consider either of them as valid or authentic as source material.

For argument's sake, let us assume that the traditions are correct. In other words, I will take the position of current orthodox Muslim scholarship and presume that the Qur'an was compiled in the years 646-650 C.E., from material which originated with the man Muhammad before his death in 632 C.E.

It is from this premise that I will attempt to respond to the question of whether the Qur'an can claim to be the final and most perfect revelation of God's word to humanity.

The Arabic word 'Qur'an' is derived from the root 'qara'a', which means "to read" or "to recite."

For those who like statistics, you may be interested to know that the Qur'an consists of 114 chapters (suras), made up of 30 parts, 6,616 verses (ayas), 77,943 words, and 338,606 letters. According to Islamic scholars 86 of the suras were revealed in Mecca, while 28 suras were revealed at Medina. Yet, as portions of some suras were recited in both places, you will continue to find a few of the scholars still debating the origins for a number of them. The suras vary in length and are known by a name or title, which are taken from the general theme of that sura, or a particular subject, person or event mentioned in it. This theme may not necessarily appear at the beginning of the sura, however.

Each verse or portion of the sura is known as an 'aya', which means "miracle" in Arabic. Muhammad claimed that the Qur'an was his sole miracle, though the Qur'an did not exist in its written form during his lifetime. In fact much of the controversy concerning the chronology of the Qur'an can be blamed on the fact that he was not around to verify its final collation. But more about that later. To begin with, let's start with the question of revelation: how does Islam understand this concept, and could their view on it be one of the reasons we don't see eye-to-eye concerning our two scriptures?

Because Allah is so transcendent and unapproachable, revelation in Islam is simply one-way: from God to humanity, via the prophets. While each prophet supposedly fulfilled his mission by producing a book, the final revelation, and therefore the most important, according to Muslims, is that given to the final prophet Muhammad: the Qur'an.

The Qur'an, Muslims believe, is an exact word-for-word copy of God's final revelation, which are found on the original tablets that have always existed in heaven. Muslims point to sura 85:21-22 which says "Nay this is a glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved." Islamic scholars contend that this passage refers to the tablets which were never created. They believe that the Qur'an is an absolutely identical copy of the eternal heavenly book, even so far as the punctuation, titles and divisions of chapters is concerned (why modern translations still can't agree what those divisions are is evident when trying to refer to an aya for comparison between one version and another).

According to Muslim tradition, these 'revelations' were sent down (Tanzil or Nazil) (sura 17:85), to the lowest of the seven heavens at the time of the month of Ramadan, during the night of power or destiny ('lailat al Qadr') (Pfander, 1910:262). From there it was revealed to Muhammad in instalments, as need arose, via the angel Gabriel (sura 25:32). Consequently, every letter and every word is free from any human influence, which gives the Qur'an an aura of authority, even holiness, and must be revered as such.

Left unsaid is the glaring irony that the claim for nazil revelation of the Qur'an, comes from one source alone, the man to which it was supposedly revealed, Muhammad. There are no outside witnesses before or at the time who can corroborate Muhammad's testimony; nor are miracles provided to substantiate his claims.

In fact, the evidences for the authority of God's revelation, which the Bible emphatically produces are completely absent in the Qur'an, namely, that the revelation of God must speak in the name of God, Yahweh, that the message must conform to revelation which has gone before, that it must make predictions which are verifiable, and that the revelation must be accompanied by signs and wonders in order to give it authority as having come from God. Because these are missing in the case of the prophet Muhammad and of the Qur'an, for those of us who are Christians, it seems indeed that it is the Qur'an and not the Bible which turns out to be the most human of documents.

Yet, Muslims continue to believe that the exact Arabic words which we find in the Qur'an are those which exist eternally on the original stone tablets, in heaven. This, according to them, makes the Qur'an the "Mother of books" (refer to sura 43:3). Muslims believe there is no other book or revelation which can compare. In fact, in both suras 2:23 and 10:37-38 we find the challenge to, "Present some other book of equal beauty," (a challenge which we will deal with later).

This final revelation, according to Islam, is transcendent, and consequently, beyond the capacity for conjecture, or criticism. What this means is that the Qur'an which we possess today is and has always been final and pure, which prohibits any possibility for verification or falsification of the text.

Because Allah is revered much as a master is to a slave, so his word is to be revered likewise. One does not question its pronouncements any more than one would question a masters pronouncements.

What then are we to do with the problems which do exist in the Qur'an? If it is such a transcendent book, as Muslims claim, then it should stand up to any criticism. Yet, what are we to do with the many contradictions, the factual errors and bizarre claims it makes? Furthermore, when we look more carefully at the text that we have in our possession today, which is supposedly that of Uthman's final codification of the Qur'an, compiled by Zaid ibn Thabit, from a copy of Hafsah's manuscript, we are puzzled by the differences between it and the four co-existing codices of Abdullah Masoud, Abu Musa, and Ubayy, all of which have deviations and deletions between them.

Another problem concerns its very pronouncements. Because of its seeming transcendency we may not question its content, much of which, according to Muslim Tradition, originates from the later Medinan period of Muhammad's life (the last 10 years), and so consists of basic rules and regulations for social, economical, and political structures, many of which have been borrowed from existing legal traditions of the Byzantine and Persian cultures, leaving us with a seventh-ninth century document which has not been easily adapted to the twentieth century.

The Collation, or Collection of the Qur'anic Text

The Periods of Revelation
The Method of Collection

Zaid's Collection
Competing Collections

The Standardisation of One Text
The Missing Verses

Sura 33:23
The Verse on Stoning

The Variations Between the Codices

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud's Codex
Ubayy Ka'b's Codex

Conclusions on the Collation of the Qur'anic Text

The Abrogation of Qur'anic Verses

Codices of the Quran:- 291206

It is estimated that there were at the very beginning of 'Islam' about 26 versions of the Quran which belonged to the different companions of Muhammad. These existed before the Quran was put in a canonised version by Uthman who destroyed all others. The most important ones were written by several of Muhammad's companions: Ibn Mas'ud; Ubai bin Kalb;Ali; Abu Bakr; al Ash'ari; al Aswad. When Uthman b Affan canonised the Madinan Codex, he ordered all the others to be destroyed.
Among the oldest Qurans in existence are the Samarqand Codex in the Tashkent Library in Uzbekstan and the Topkapi Codex in the Topkapi museum in Istanbul, Turkey. Both are written in the Kufic script without diacritical marks. There are some 1700 textual differences between them and the current versions of the Quran! It is extremely important to point out that almost all of these manuscripts and documents are neither dated nor do they have details of their place of origin making it very difficult to pinpoint their time and source.

1. ABDULLAH IBN MAS'UD: AN AUTHORITY ON THE QUR'AN TEXT.

No study of the early transmission of the Qur'an would be complete without an analysis of the contribution of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, one of the most prominent of Muhammad's companions. He was one of his earliest disciples and we are told that he was "the first man to speak the Qur'an loudly in Mecca after the apostle" (Ibn Ishaq, Sirat Rasulullah, p.141). Throughout Muhammad's twelve years of mission at Mecca and until his death at Medina some ten years later Ibn Mas'ud applied himself very diligently to learning the Qur'an by heart. There is much evidence to show that he was regarded by Muhammad himself as one of the foremost authorities on the Qur'an, if not the foremost, as appears from the following hadith:

Narrated Masruq: Abdullah bin Mas'ud was mentioned before Abdullah bin Amr who said, "That is a man I still love, as I heard the Prophet (saw) saying, 'Learn the recitation of the Qur'an from four: from Abdullah bin Mas'ud - he started with him - Salim, the freed slave of Abu Hudhaifa, Mu'adh bin Jabal and Ubai bin Ka'b". (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 5, p.96)

The same tradition in the other great work of hadith also specifically mentions that Muhammad "started from him" (Sahih Muslim, Vol. 4, p.1312), showing that he was deliberately mentioned first, indicating that Muhammad regarded him as the foremost authority on the Qur'an. Among others mentioned is Ubayy ibn Ka'b who, as we have already seen, also compiled a separate codex of the Qur'an before it was destroyed by Uthman.

It is significant to find no mention of Zaid ibn Thabit in this list which shows quite conclusively that Muhammad regarded Ibn Mas'ud and Ubayy ibn Ka'b as far better read in the Qur'an than him. In another hadith we find further evidence of Ibn Mas'ud's prominence in respect of his knowledge of the Qur'an:

Narrated Abdullah (bin Mas'ud) (ra): By Allah other than Whom none has the right to be worshipped! There is no Sura revealed in Allah's Book but I know at what place it was revealed; and there is no verse revealed in Allah's Book but I know about whom it was revealed. And if I know that there is somebody who knows Allah's Book better than I, and he is at a place that camels can reach, I would go to him. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 6, p.488).

In a similar tradition we read that he added to this that he had recited more than seventy surahs of the Qur'an in Muhammad's presence, alleging that all Muhammad's companions were aware that no one knew the Qur'an better than he did, to which Shaqiq, sitting by, added "I sat in the company of the Companions of Muhammad (may peace be upon him) but I did not hear anyone having rejected that (that is, his recitation) or finding fault with it" (Sahih Muslim, Vol. 4, p.1312).

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud obviously had an exceptional knowledge of the Qur'an and, as Muhammad himself singled him out as the first person to whom anyone should go who wished to learn the Qur'an, we must accept that any codex compiled by him would have as much claim to accuracy and completeness as any other. That he was one of the companions who did in fact collect the Qur'an apart from Zaid ibn Thabit cannot be disputed. Ibn Abi Dawud devotes no less than nineteen pages of his work on the compilation of the Qur'an manuscripts to the variant readings found between his text and that of Zaid which was ultimately the one standardised by Uthman (Kitab al-Masahif, pp. 54-73).

Having become a Muslim before even Umar, the second Caliph of Islam, Ibn Mas'ud had been on the hijrahs to both Abyssinia and Medina and was one of the highly regarded muhajirun who had followed Muhammad from Mecca. He participated in both the Battles of Badr and Uhud and his close association with the Prophet of Islam and prestige in the knowledge of the Qur'an resulted in his codex of the Qur'an being accepted as the standard text of the Muslims at Kufa before the recension done by Uthman. His reaction to Uthman's order that all codices of the Qur'an other than Zaid's should be burnt is most informative.

2. IBN MAS'UD'S REACTION TO UTHMAN'S DECREE.

When Uthman sent out the order that all codices of the Qur'an other than the codex of Zaid ibn Thabit should be destroyed, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud refused to hand over his copy. Desai openly speaks of "Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ud's initial refusal to hand over the compilation" (The Quraan Unimpeachable, p.44), but Siddique, in his article, prefers to leave the impression that no such objection from the distinguished companion of Muhammad ever took place, saying instead, "There is no indication that he ever objected to the 'text of Hafsah' during the entire Caliphate of Umar" (Al-Balaagh, op.cit., p.1). But why should he have raised any objection to Zaid's codex at that time? His own codex had become well-established at Kufa while Zaid's had receded into relative obscurity, simply being retained by the Caliph without any attempt whatsoever to establish it as the standard text for the Muslim community.

It was only when this codex suddenly came into prominence and was decreed to be the official text during Uthman's reign that Ibn Mas'ud found his codex being threatened. He immediately refused to hand it over for destruction and we are told by Ibn al-Athir in his Kamil (III, 86-87) that when the copy of Zaid's text arrived for promulgation at Kufa as the standard text, the majority of Muslims there still adhered to Ibn Mas'ud's text. It must be quite obvious to any objective scholar that, just as Zaid had copied out a codex for Abu Bakr, so Ibn Mas'ud simultaneously compiled a similar codex and, given the latter's exceptional knowledge of the Qur'an, his text must be considered to be as accurate and reliable as that of Zaid. The two codices were of probable equal authority and reliability.

Because there are a wealth of evidences of differences between the two, however, and as it was Zaid's text that became the standardised text after Uthman's recension and the only one used to this day in the Muslim world, it is intriguing to find Muslim writers trying to play down and minimise the importance of Ibn Mas'ud's codex.

Desai claims that "his copy contained notes explanations as well. His copy was for his personal use, not for the use of the Ummah at large" (op.cit., p.45). No evidence is given for this claim. One of the great deficiencies in Desai's booklet is the almost total lack of documentation in respect of the factual allegations the author makes. Virtually nowhere do we find a reference to the traditional chapter and verse. The reader is expected to presume that the facts he alleges are well-founded. Desai leaves no room in his booklet for references by which a student can check whether the contents are factually reliable.

In fact it is well known that Ibn Mas'ud's codex, far from being for his personal use only, was widely used in the region where he was based and, just as Ubayy ibn Ka'b's codex became the standard text Syria before Uthman's recension, so Ibn Mas'ud's likewise became the standard text for the Muslim ummah in and around Kufa in Iraq (Ibn Abi Dawud, Kitab, p. 13).

Ahmad Von Denffer likewise attempts to minimise the importance of the other codices, saying of Ubayy ibn Ka'b's codex that "it was a mushaf for his own personal use, in other words, his private notebook" and goes on to say of all the other codices that these "personal notebooks became obsolete and were destroyed" (Ulum al-

Qur'an, p.49). It is virtually impossible to understand how whole manuscripts of the Qur'an, carefully transcribed and widely used in the various provinces, can be reduced to the status of "personal notebooks", least of all how such codices could have become "obsolete" at any time.

Muslim writers resort to such strange reasonings solely because they are determined to maintain the declared textual perfection of the Qur'an as it stands today to the last dot and letter. As this text is only a revision and reproduction of the codex of just one man, Zaid ibn Thabit, they have to circumvent the fact that other equally authoritative codices of single companions existed and that all of them, Zaid's included, differed in many key respects. Thus the text of Zaid has become elevated to "official" status right from the time of its compilation, the other texts have been downgraded to the status of "personal notebooks", and the argument runs that they were destroyed because they differed from one another without any consideration for the fact that Zaid's own codex likewise differed from each of them in turn.

There are solid evidences to show why Abdullah ibn Mas'ud at first refused to hand over his codex for destruction. While Desai claims that it was only because he attached sentimental value to his compilation (p.45) and Siddique states that there was no difference between his text and Zaid's, we find, in fact, that it was precisely because the great companion of Muhammad considered his own text to be superior to and more authentic than Zaid's that he was angered at Uthman's decree. Before Hudhayfah had ever gone to Uthman to call upon him to standardise a single text of the Qur'an, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud had some sharp words with him and reacted to his proposal that the different readings in the various provinces should be suppressed.

Hudhaifah said "It is said by the people of Kufa, 'the reading of Abdullah (ibn Mas'ud)', and it is said by the people of Basra, 'the reading of Abu Musa'. By Allah! If I come to the Commander of the Faithful (Uthman), I will demand that they be drowned". Abdullah said to him, "Do so, and by Allah you will also be drowned, but not in water". (Ibn Abi Dawud, Kitab al-Masahif, p.13).

Hudhaifah went on to say, "0 Abdullah ibn Qais, you were sent to the people of Basra as their governor (amir) and teacher and they have submitted to your rules, your idioms and your reading". He continued, "0 Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, you were sent to the people of Kufa as their teacher who have also submitted to your rules, idioms and reading". Abdullah said to him, "In that case I have not led them astray. There is no verse in the Book of Allah that I do not know where it was revealed and why it was revealed, and if I knew anyone more learned in the Book of Allah and I could be conveyed there, I would set out to him". (Ibn Abi Dawud, Kitab al-Masahif, p.14).

Modern writers such as Siddique and others maintain that the only differences between the recitations of the text and the reading of each companion (qira'at) were in pronunciations and dialectal expressions, yet it is once again obvious that what Hudhayfah had in mind was the elimination of the actual written codices being used by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud and the others - you cannot drown a verbal recitation - and it was this proposal which so angered Ibn Mas'ud and which proves that the differences in reading were in the texts themselves. In other traditions we find clear evidences that he regarded Zaid's knowledge of the Qur'an, and therefore his written codex of the text, as inferior to his. After all, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud had become a Muslim at Mecca before Zaid was even born and he had enjoyed years of direct acquaintance with Muhammad while the early portions of the Qur'an were being delivered before Zaid ever accepted Islam.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, "I recited from the messenger of Allah (saw) seventy surahs which I had perfected before Zaid ibn Thabit had embraced Islam". (Ibn Abi Dawud, Kitab al-Masahif, p.17).
"I acquired directly from the messenger of Allah (saw) seventy surahs when Zaid was still a childish youth - must I now forsake what I acquired directly from the messenger of Allah?" (Ibn Abi Dawud, Kitab al-Masahif, p.15).

In another source we find that, when Uthman's order came for the destruction of the other codices and the uniform reading of the Qur'an according to Zaid's codex alone, Ibn Mas'ud gave a khutba (sermon) in Kufa and declared:

"The people have been guilty of deceit in the reading of the Qur'an. I like it better to read according to the recitation of him (Prophet) whom I love more than that of Zayd Ibn Thabit. By Him besides Whom there is no god! I learnt more than seventy surahs from the lips of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him, while Zayd Ibn Thabit was a youth, having two locks and playing with the youth". (Ibn Sa'd, Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir, Vol. 2, p.444).

In the light of all these traditions, which can hardly be discounted, the evasive explanations of modern Muslim writers cannot be accepted. Abdullah ibn Mas'ud clearly resisted Uthman's order, not because of sentiment as Desai suggests, but clearly because he sincerely believed that his text of the Qur'an, gained firsthand from Muhammad himself, was more authentic than the text of Zaid. This conclusion cannot seriously be resisted by a sincere student of the history of the Qur'an text and its initial compilation.

It is also quite clear that the differences in reading were not confined to forms of dialect in pronunciation but in the actual contents of the text itself. An examination of some of these textual differences will show just how extensive those variant readings really were.

3. THE VARIANT READINGS IN IBN MAS'UD'S CODEX.

One of the anomalies recorded in respect of Ibn Mas'ud's text is that it is said to have omitted the Suratul-Fatihah, the opening surah, and the mu'awwithatayni, the two short surahs with which the Qur'an ends (Surahs 113 and 114). The form of these surahs has some significance - the first is purely in the form of a prayer to Allah and the last two are "charm" surahs, being recommended incantations of refuge with Allah which Muslims should recite as protection against sinister forces and practices. One tradition states that Ubayy ibn Ka'b was at one time challenged with the suggestion that Ibn Mas'ud had made certain negative statements about these surahs and he replied that he had asked Muhammad about them and was informed that they were a part of the revelation of the Qur'an and should be recited as such (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 6, p.472).

The possibility that Ibn Mas'ud may have denied that these three surahs were a part of the Qur'an vexed early Muslim historians. The well-known Iranian philosopher and historian Fakhruddin ar-Razi, who wrote a commentary on the Qur'an titled Mafatih al-Ghayb ("The Keys of the Unseen") and who lived in the sixth century of Islam (1149-1209 AD) gave some attention to this problem and sought to prove that the allegations were unfounded.

Imam Fakhruddin said that the reports in some of the ancient books that Ibn Mas'ud denied that Suratul-Fatiha and the Mu'awwithatayni are part of the Qur'an are embarrassing in their implications... But the Qadi Abu Bakr said "It is not soundly reported from him that they are not part of the Qur'an and there is no record of such a statement from him. He omitted them from his manuscript as he did not approve of their being written. This does not mean he denied they were part of the Qur'an. In his view the Sunnah was that nothing should be inscribed in the text (mushaf) unless so commanded by the Prophet (saw) ... and he had not heard that it had been so commanded". (as-Suyuti, Al-Itqan fii Ulum al-Qur'an, p.186).

Another Muslim historian, an-Nawawi, in his commentary on the Muhaththab said that the Fatihah and the two "charm" surahs were unanimously regarded by the Muslims as part of the Qur'an and that what had been said about Ibn Mas'ud was false and unjustified (as-Suyuti, Al-Itqan, p.187). The famous dogmatic Muslim scholar Ibn Hazm likewise rejected the suggestion that Ibn Mas'ud had omitted these surahs from his codex:

Ibn Hazm said in the Muhalla, "This is a lie attributed to Ibn Mas'ud. Only the reading of Asim from Zirr is authentic and in that are both the Fatiha and Mu'awwithatayni". (as-Suyuti, Al-Itqan fii Ulum al-Qur'an, p.187).

The record goes on to say that Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani however, in his commentary on the Sahih of al-Bukhari (his famous Fath al-Baari), accepted these reports as sound, quoting authorities who stated that Ibn Mas'ud would not include the two "charm" surahs in his manuscript as Muhammad had, to his knowledge, only commanded that they be used as incantations against evil forces. He regarded the isnad (the chain of transmitters) for this record as totally sound and attempted to harmonise the conflicting records instead, suggesting that Ibn Mas'ud accepted the Fatiha and "charm" surahs as genuinely revealed but was reluctant to inscribe them in his written text.

As Uthman ordered all the codices of the Qur'an other than Zaid's to be destroyed and as Ibn Mas'ud was eventually compelled to hand his over for elimination, it cannot be determined whether the three relevant surahs were actually included in his codex or not. If they were omitted, the reason is either that he was unaware that Muhammad had expressly stated that they were part of the Qur'an text (as alleged by Ubayy) or, less probably, that Ibn Mas'ud had actually determined that they were not part of the actual kitabullah, the Book of Allah, and that the other companions had assumed they were because they had come to Muhammad in the same form as the other surahs of the Qur'an.

When we come to the rest of the Qur'an, however, we find that there were numerous differences of reading between the texts of Zaid and Ibn Mas'ud. As mentioned already the records in Ibn Abi Dawud's Kitab al-Masahif fill up no less than nineteen pages and, from all the sources available, one can trace no less than 101 variants in the Suratul-Baqarah alone. We shall mention just a few of the differences here in illustration of the nature of the variations between the texts.

1. Surah 2.275 begins with the words Allathiina yaakuluunar-ribaa laa yaquumuuna - "those who devour usury will not stand". Ibn Mas'ud's text had the same introduction but after the last word there was added the expression yawmal qiyaamati, that is, they would not be able to stand on the "Day of Resurrection". The variant is mentioned in Abu Ubaid's Kitab Fadhail al-Qur'an (cf. Nöldeke, Geschichte, 3.63; Jeffery, Materials, p.31). The variant was also recorded in the codex of Talha ibn Musarrif, a secondary codex dependent on Ibn Mas'ud's text, Taiha likewise being based at Kufa in Iraq where Ibn Mas'ud was based as governor and where his codex was widely followed (Jeffery, p.343).

2. Surah 5.91, in the standard text, contains the exhortation fasiyaamu thalaathati ayyaamin' - "fast for three days". Ibn Mas'ud's text had, after the last word, the adjective mutataabi'aatin, meaning three "successive" days. The variant derives from at-Tabari (7.19.11 - cf. Nöldeke, 3.66; Jeffery, p.40) and was also mentioned by Abu Ubaid. This variant reading was, significantly, found in Ubayy ibn Ka'b's text as well (Jeffery, p.129) and in the texts of Ibn Abbas (p.199) and Ibn Mas'ud's pupil Ar-Rabi ibn Khuthaim (p.289).

3. Surah 6.153 begins Wa anna haathaa siraatii - "Verily this is my path". Ibn Mas'ud's text read Wa haathaa siraatu rabbakum - "This is the path of Your Lord". The variant derives again from at-Tabari (8.60.16 - cf. Nöldeke 3.66; Jeffery, p.42). Ubayy ibn Ka'b had the same reading, except that for rabbakum his text read rabbika (Jeffery, p.131). The secondary codex of Al-A'mash, mentioned by Ibn Abi Dawud in his Kitab al-Masahif (p.91), also began with the variant wa haathaa as in the texts of Ibn Mds'ud and Ubayy ibn Ka'b

(Jeffery, p.318). Ibn Abi Dawud also adds a further variant, suggesting that Ibn Mas'ud read the word siraat with the Arabic letter sin rather than the standard sad (Kitab al-Masahif, p.61).

4. Surah 33.6 contains the following statement about the relationship between Muhammad's wives and the believers: wa azwaajuhuu ummahaatuhuu - "and his wives are their mothers". Ibn-Mas'ud's text added the words wa huwa abuu laahum - "and he is their father". The variant was also recorded by at-Tabari (21.70.8 - cf. Nöldeke 3.71; Jeffery p.75). This variant was likewise recorded in the codices of Ubayy ibn Ka'b (Jeffery, p.156) as well as those of Ibn Abbas (p.204), Ikrima (p.273) and Mujahid ibn Jabr (p.282), except that in these three cases the statement that Muhammad is the father of the believers precedes that which makes his wives their mothers. In the codex of Ar-Rabi ibn Khuthaim, however, where the variant also occurs, it is placed in the same position in the text as in the codices of Ibn Mas'ud and Ubayy (p.298). The considerable number of references for this variant reading argue strongly for its possible authenticity over and against its omission in the codex of Zaid ibn Thabit.

These four examples are of texts where the variant consisted of the inclusion of extra words or clauses not found in Zaid's codex and, in each case, the variant is supported by inclusion in other codices, notably those included in Ubayy's text. The majority of variants, however, relate to consonantal variants in individual words or different forms of these words. In some cases whole words were omitted, such as in Surah 112.1 where Ibn Mas'ud omitted the word qul - "say" as did Ubayy ibn Ka'b (Fihrist S.26 Z.26 - cf. Nöldeke 3.77; Jeffery, pp. 113 and 180).

In other cases the variant related to the form of a word which also slightly altered its meaning, as in Surah 3.127 where Ibn Mas'ud and Ubayy both read wa saabiquu ("be ahead") for wa saari'uu ("be quick") in the standard text (cf. Nöldeke, 3.64; Jeffery, pp. 34 and 125).

In yet other cases one single word might be added not affecting the sense of the text, as in Surah 6.16 where once again both Ibn Mas'ud and Ubayy recorded the same variant, namely yusrifillaahu - "averted by Allah" - for the standard yusraf - "averted" (recorded from Maki's Kitab al-Kasf, cf. Nöldeke, 3.66; Jeffery, pp. 40 and 129).

These are but a small selection of the hundreds of variant readings between the texts of Ibn Mas'ud and Zaid giving a rough idea of the kind of differences that existed between their codices. They do serve, however, to show that these differences in their readings were not purely dialectal or confined to the pronunciation of the text as is conveniently suggested by writers like Siddique who are bound to the popular dogma "one text, no variants", but rather radically affected the contents of the text itself. The extent of the variant readings between all the codices in existence at the time of Uthman before he singled out that of Zaid to be the preferred text at the expense of the others is so great - they fill up no less than three hundred and fifty pages of Jeffery's Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an - that one can understand why the others were ordered to be destroyed.

Far from the Qur'an being universally accepted in a standard form there were, on the contrary, vast differences in the texts distributed in the various provinces. Uthman's action brought about the standardisation of a single text for the whole Muslim world - it was not a perpetuation of an already existing unity - and Zaid's codex, which from the evidences we have considered had no greater claim to authenticity than Ibn Mas'ud's, was simply arbitrarily chosen as the standard text because it was close at hand in Medina, had been compiled under official supervision, and had not become the accepted or rival text of any one province like some of the others before Uthman's decree. Before closing this chapter let us give some attention to the other great compiler of the Qur'an, Ubayy ibn Ka'b.

4. UBAYY IBN KA'B - MASTER OF THE QUR'AN RECITERS.

Among the authorities on the Qur'an other than Abdullah ibn Mas'ud the most well known was Ubayy ibn Ka'b. There are two very interesting hadith relating to his prominence as an expert on the Qur'an text, the first reading as follows:

Affan ibn Muslim informed us ... on the authority of Anas ibn Malik, he on the authority of the Prophet, may Allah bless him; he said: The best reader (of the Qur'an) among my people is Ubayyi ibn Ka'b. (Ibn Sa'd, Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir, Vol. 2, p.441).
In consequence he became known as Sayyidul-Qurra - "the Master of the Readers". Umar himself, the second Caliph of Islam, confirmed that he was in fact the best of all the Muslims in the recitation of the Qur'an (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 6, p.489). The second hadith in this respect reads as follows:

Anas b. Malik reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said to Ubayy b. Ka'b: I have been commanded to recite to you the Sura (al-Bayyinah), which opens with these words Lam yakunal-lathinna kafaruu. He said: Has he mentioned to you my name? He said: Yes, thereupon he shed tears of joy. (Sahih Muslim, Vol. 4, p.1313). himself especially obliged to commit parts of the Qur'an to Ubayy but these two traditions do serve to show how highly regarded he was as an authority on the Qur'an. Nonetheless his codex also contained a vast number of readings which varied from Zaid's text and, as we have already seen, these readings often agreed with Ibn Mas'ud's text instead. The addition of the word mutataabi'aatin in Surah 5.91, which we have already seen was recorded by at-Tabari as part of the codex of Ibn Mas'ud, was independently attributed to Ubayy as well (Ibn Abi Dawud, Kitab al-Masahif, p.53). His order of Surahs, in some ways similar to Zaid's, was nonetheless different at many points (as-Suyuti, Al-Itqan fii Ulum al-Qur'an, p.150).

Some examples of instances where he agreed with Ibn Mas'ud and differed in turn from Zaid (there were in fact a very large number which could be mentioned) are the following:

1. For the standard reading wa yush-hidullaaha in Surah 2.204 he read wa yastash-hidullaaha (cf. Nöldeke 3.83; Jeffery, p.120).

2. He omitted the words in khiftum from Surah 4.101 (cf. Nöldeke 3.85; Jeffery, p.127).

3. He read mutathab-thibiina for muthabthabiina in Surah 4.143 (cf. Jeffery, p.127).

There are a number of cases where whole clauses differed in his text. In Surah 5.48, where the standard text reads wa katabnaa 'alayhim fiiha - "and We inscribed therein for them (the Jews)" - the reading of Ubayy ibn Ka'b was wa anzalallaahu alaa banii Isra'iila fiiha - "and Allah sent down therein to the Children of Israel" (cf. Nöldeke 3.85; Jeffery, p.128).

From Abu Ubaid we find that, whereas Surah 17.16 in the standard text reads amarnaa mutrafiihaa fafasaquu, Ubayy read this clause ba'athnaa akaabira mujri-miihaa fdmakaruu (cf. Nöldeke 3.88; Jeffery, p.140).

One can go on and on to show how vastly Ubayy's text, like Ibn Mas'ud's and all the others, is said to have differed from Zaid's text which ultimately became standardised as the official reading of the Qur'an, but these examples serve once again to show that the variant readings were in the contents of the text itself and not just in niceties of pronunciation and recitation as many modern Muslim writers choose to assume.

There is a very interesting record of a whole verse which was found in Ubayy's text and which is not found today in Zaid's text which we shall consider in the next chapter. We cannot close on Ubayy, however, without giving some consideration to two extra surahs which we are told belonged to his codex. We are informed that, whereas Ibn Mas'ud omitted the two "charm" surahs from his codex, Ubayy included two extra surahs, al-Hafd (the Haste) and al-Khal' (the Separation) (as-Suyuti, Al-Itqan, p.152-153). The narrative continues by stating that Abu Ubaid said:

"Written in the text of Ubayy ibn Ka'b were the Fatihal-kitab (the Opening Surah) and the Mu'awwi-thatayni (the Charm Surahs) and Allahumma innaa nasta'iinka (the opening words of Suratul-Khal' meaning 'O Allah, we seek your help') and Allahumma ayyaaka na'budu (the opening words of Suratul-Hafd meaning 'O Allah, we worship you')". (as-Suyuti, Al-Itqan fii Ulum al-Qur'an, p.153).

Suyuti goes on to give the full text of these two surahs, stating that they were also found in the codex of Ibn Abbas following the reading of both Ubayy and Abu Musa who also recorded them (Al-Itqan, p.154). Both surahs are similar to the Suratul-Fatihah, containing prayers to God for forgiveness and declarations of faith, praise, service and trust in his mercy. We are told that these are the supplications which Muhammad occasionally offered at his morning prayers after recitation of other surahs, being described as "the preserved suratal-quunut (chapters of humble obedience toward God) in the surahs respectively titled al-Khal' and al-Hafd" (as-Suyuti, Al-Itqan, p.527).

It is intriguing to consider that, in their likeness to the Suratul-Fatihah (which extends to their length also - the Fatihah has seven verses while the other two have been set out in three and six verses respectively - cf. Nöldeke, Geschichte 2.35), they were regarded as of equal authority from different stand-points by Ibn Mas'ud and Ubayy respectively. The former had none of them in his codex, the latter all three! It seems that Muhammad himself used them interchangeably and that some of his companions were uncertain whether they should be recorded as part of the written kitabullah, especially as each one constitutes a prayer of supplication in the words of the believers and worshippers in contrast to the rest of the Qur'an where Allah is always made to be the speaker.

We have, in this chapter, given some consideration to the codices of the two most prominent authorities on the Qur'an to show how considerably they differed from the codex of Zaid ibn Thabit and how uncertain much of the Qur'an text was when it was first compiled after the death of Muhammad. We could also go on to consider the numerous other codices that are recorded as having been transcribed before Uthman's decree that they should be burnt, but let it suffice to say that in each of these as well there were large numbers of variant readings which have been preserved. (Uthman was able to blot out the written codices in which they were recorded, he was unable to erase them from the memories of those who had recorded them).

In fact one should not speak so much of the readings in Zaid's text as the "standard" readings and of the others as "variant" readings as though the latter were the exception. The truth is that, between all the codices that existed in the early days of Islam ibn Mas'ud's, Zaid's, Ubayy's, Abu Musa's, etc. there were a wealth of differences and Zaid's readings qualify just as readily as the others do. In his case his qira'at became standardised as the only readings allowable in the Muslim world and copies of his codex were distributed to replace the others in popular use purely to establish a uniform reading of the Qur'an text.

The Qur'an as it has come down through the centuries is not the single text without any variants that has been divinely preserved without so much as a dispute regarding even one letter as Muslim writers conveniently choose to believe. Rather it is simply but one form of it as it existed during the first two decades after Muhammad's death, the compilation of but one man, Zaid ibn Thabit, and commissioned for the Muslim world

as the only text to be accepted, not by divine decree, but by the arbitrary discretion of yet another single individual, Uthman ibn Affan.

The popular sentiment of the Muslims that the Qur'an has, right from the beginning, been preserved without the slightest variation in a single text would carry weight if it could be shown that this was the only text accepted by the whole Muslim community from the time of Muhammad himself.

The records of the Qur'an's compilation in the heritage of Islam, however, show convincingly that there were a whole number of different codices in vogue during the first generation after Muhammad's demise and that these all varied considerably from one another. The adoption of a single text came only twenty years after his death and only through the unilateral choice of one of the varying codices as the standard text at the expense of the others. The universally accepted text of the Qur'an in the Muslim world is not so much the mushaf of Muhammad but rather the mushaf of Zaid ibn Thabit, and its unchallenged authority today has come about, not through divine decree or preservation, but by the imposition of one man acting on his own initiative against the many other codices of equal authority which he summarily consigned to the flames.

THE QUR'AN
An Introduction by Theodor Nöldeke

The Qur'an (Kor'an) is the foundation of Islam. It is the sacred book of more than a hundred millions of men, some of them nations of immemorial civilization, by all of whom it is regarded as the immediate word of Allah. And since the use of the Qur'an in public worship, in schools and otherwise, is much more extensive than, for example, the reading of the Bible in most Christian countries, it has truly been described as the most widely-read book in existence. This circumstance alone is sufficient to give it an urgent claim on our attention, whether it suit our taste and fall in with our religious and philosophical views or not. Besides, it is the work of Muhammad, and as such is fitted to afford a clue to the spiritual development of that most successful of all prophets and religious personalities. It must be owned that the first perusal leaves on a European an impression of chaotic confusion, - not that the book is very extensive, for it is not quite so large as the New Testament. This impression can in some degree be modified only by the application of a critical analysis with the assistance of Arabian tradition.

To the faith of the Muslims, as has been said, the Qur'an is the word ofAllah, and such also is the claim which the book itself advances. For except in sura i. - which is a prayer for men - and some passages where Muhammad (vi. 104,114; xxvii. 93; xlii. 8), or the angels (xix. 65; xxxvii. 164 sqq.), speak in the first person without the intervention of the usual imperative "say" (sing. or pl.), the speaker throughout is Allah, either in the first person singular, or more commonly the plural of majesty, "we." The same mode of address is familiar to us from the prophets of the Old Testament; the human personality disappears, in the moment of inspiration, behind the God by whom it is filled. But all the greatest Hebrew prophets fall back speedily upon the unassuming human "I"; while in the Qur'an the divine "I" is the stereotyped form of address.

Muhammad, however, really felt himself to be the instrument of Allah; this consciousness was no doubt brighter at his first appearance than it afterwards became, but it never entirely forsook him. We might therefore readily pardon him for giving out, not only the results of imaginative and emotional excitement, but also many expositions or decrees which were the outcome of cool calculation, as the word of Allah, if he had only attained the pure moral attitude which in an Isaiah or a Jeremiah fills us with admiration after the lapse of ages.

The rationale of revelation is explained in the Qur'an itself as follows: In heaven is the original text ("the mother of the book," xliii. 3; "a concealed book," lv. 77; "a well-guarded tablet," lxxxv. 22). By a process of "sending down" (tanzil), one piece after another was communicated to the Prophet. The mediator was an angel, who is called sometimes the "Spirit" (xxvi. 193), sometimes the holy Spirit (xvi. 104), and at a later time "Gabriel" (ii. 91). This angel dictates the revelation to the Prophet, who repeats it after him, and afterwards proclaims it to the world (lxxxvii. 6; etc.). It is plain that we have here a somewhat crude attempt of the Prophet to represent to himself the more or less unconscious process by which his ideas arose and gradually took shape in his mind.

It is no wonder if in such confused imagery the details are not always self-consistent. When, for example, this heavenly archetype is said to be in the hands of an exalted "scribe" (lxxx. 13 sqq.), this seems a transition to a quite different set of ideas, namely, the books of fate, or the record of all human actions - conceptions which are actually found in the Qur'an. It is to be observed at all events, that Muhammad's transcendental idea ofAllah, as a Being altogether above the world, excludes the thought of a direct intercourse between the prophet andAllah.

It is an explicit statement of the Qur'an that the sacred book was revealed ("sent down") by Allah, not all at once, but piecemeal and gradually (xxv. 34). This is evident from the actual composition of the book, and is confirmed by Muslim tradition. That is to say Muhammad issued his revelations in fly-leaves of greater or less extent. A single piece of this kind was called either, like the entire collection, qur'an, i.e., "reading," or rather "recitation"; or kitab, i.e., "writing"; or sura, which is the late-Hebrew shura, and means literally "series."

The last became, in the lifetime of Muhammad, the regular designation of the individual sections as distinguished from the whole collection; and accordingly it is the name given to the separate chapters of the existing Qur'an. These chapters are of unequal length. Since many of the shorter ones are undoubtedly complete in themselves, it is natural to assume that the longer, which are sometimes very comprehensive, have arisen from the amalgamation of various originally distinct revelations. This supposition is favored by the numerous traditions which give us the circumstances under which this or that short piece, now incorporated in a larger section, was revealed; and also by the fact that the connection of thought in the present suras often

seems to be interrupted. And in reality many pieces of the long suras have to be severed out as originally independent; even in the short ones parts are often found which cannot have been there at first. At the same time we must beware of taking this sifting operation too far - as I now believe myself to have done in my earlier works, and as Sprenger in his great book on Muhammad also sometimes seems to do.

That some suras were of considerable length from the first is seen, for example, from xii., which contains a short introduction, then the history of Joseph, and then a few concluding observations, and is therefore perfectly homogeneous. In like manner, xx., which is mainly occupied with the history of Moses, forms a complete whole. The same is true of xviii., which at first sight seems to fall into several pieces; the history of the seven sleepers, the grotesque narrative about Moses, and that about Alexander "the Horned," are all connected together and the same rhyme runs through the whole sura. Even in the separate narrations we may observe how readily the Qur'an passes from one subject to another, how little care is taken to express all the transitions of thought, and how frequent clauses are omitted, which are almost indispensable.

We are not at liberty, therefore, in every case where the connection in the Qur'an is obscure, to say that it is really broken, and set it down as the clumsy patchwork of a later hand. Even in the old Arabic poetry such abrupt transitions are of very frequent occurrence. It is not uncommon for the Qur'an, after a new subject has been entered on, to return gradually or suddenly to the former theme - a proof that there at least separation is not to be thought of. In short, however imperfectly the Qur'an may have been redacted, in the majority of cases the present suras are identical with the originals.

How these revelations actually arose in Muhammad's mind is a question which is almost as idle to discuss as it would be to analyze the workings of the mind of a poet. In his early career, sometimes perhaps in its later stages also, many revelations must have burst from him in uncontrollable excitement, so that he could not possibly regard them otherwise than as divine inspirations. We must bear in mind that he was no cold systematic thinker, but an Oriental visionary, brought up in crass superstition, and without intellectual discipline; a man whose nervous temperament had been powerfully worked on by ascetic austerities, and who was all the more irritated by the opposition he encountered, because he had little of the heroic in his nature.

Filled with his religious ideas and visions he might well fancy he heard the angel bidding him to recite what was said to him. There may have been many a revelation of this kind which no one ever heard but himself, as he repeated it to himself in the silent of the night (lxxiii. 4). Indeed the Qur'an itself admits that he forgot some revelations (lxxxvii. 6). But by far the greatest part of the book is undoubtedly the result of deliberation, touched more or less with emotion and animated by a certain rhetorical rather than poetical glow. Many passages are based upon purely intellectual reflection. It is said that Muhammad occasionally uttered such a passage immediately after one of those epileptic fits which not only his followers, but (for a time at least) he himself also, regarded as tokens of intercourse with the higher powers. If that is the case, it is impossible to say whether the trick was in the utterance of the revelation or in the fit itself.

How the various pieces of the Qur'an took literary form is uncertain. Muhammad himself, so far as we can discover, never wrote down anything. The question whether he could read and write has been much debated among Muslims, unfortunately more with dogmatic arguments and spurious traditions than authentic proofs. At present, one is inclined to say that he was not altogether ignorant of these arts, but that from want of practice he found it convenient to employ someone else whenever he had anything to write. After the emigration to Medina (A.D. 622) we are told that short pieces - chiefly legal decisions - were taken down immediately after they were revealed, by an adherent whom he summoned for the purpose; so that nothing stood in the way of their publication. Hence it is probable that in Mecca, where, as in a mercantile town, writing was commoner than in Medina, a place of agriculture, he had already begun to have his oracles committed to writing.

That even long portions of the Qur'an existed in written form from an early date may be pretty safely inferred from various indications, especially from the fact that in Mecca the Prophet had caused insertions to be made, and pieces to be erased, in his previous revelations. For we cannot suppose that he knew the longer suras by heart so perfectly that he was able after a time to lay his finger upon any particular passage. In some instances, indeed, he may have relied too much on his memory. For example, he seems to have occasionally dictated the same sura to different persons in slightly different terms. In such cases, no doubt, he may have partly intended to introduce improvements; and so long as the difference was merely in expression, without affecting the sense, it could occasion no perplexity to his followers. None of them had literary pedantry enough to question the consistency of the divine revelation on that ground. In particular instances, however, the difference of reading was too important to be overlooked.

Thus the Qur'an itself confesses that the unbelievers cast it up as a reproach to the Prophet that Allah sometimes substituted one verse for another (xvi. 103). On one occasion, when a dispute arose between two of his own followers as to the true reading of a passage which both had received from the Prophet himself, Muhammad is said to have explained that the Qur'an was revealed in seven forms. In this dictum, which perhaps is genuine, seven stands, of course, as in many other cases, for an indefinite but limited number. But one may imagine what a world of trouble it has cost the Muslim theologians to explain the saying in accordance with their dogmatic beliefs. A great number of explanations are current, some of which claim the authority of the Prophet himself; as, indeed fictitious utterances of Muhammad play throughout a conspicuous part in the exegesis of the Qur'an. One very favorite, but utterly untenable interpretation is that the "seven forms" are seven different dialects.

When such discrepancies came to the cognisance of Muhammad it was doubtless his desire that only one of the conflicting texts should be considered authentic, only he never gave himself much trouble to have his wish carried into effect. Although in theory he was an upholder of verbal inspiration, he did not push the doctrine to its extreme consequences; his practical good sense did not take these things so strictly as the theologians of later centuries. Sometimes, however, he did suppress whole sections or verses, enjoining his followers to efface or forget them, and declaring them to be "abrogated." A very remarkable case is that of the two verses in liii., when he had recognized three heathen goddesses as exalted beings, possessing influence with Allah. This he had done in a moment of weakness, to win his countrymen by a compromise which still left Allah in the highest rank. He attained his purpose indeed, but was soon visited by remorse, and declared the words in question to have been inspirations of the Evil One.

So much for the abrogated readings; the case is somewhat different when we come to the abrogation of laws and directions to the Muslims, which often occurs in the Qur'an. There is nothing in this at variance with Muhammad's idea of Allah. Allahis to him an absolute despot, who declares a thing right or wrong from no inherent necessity, but by His arbitrary fiat. This Allah varies His commands at pleasure, prescribes one law for the Christians, another for the Jews and a third for the Muslims; nay, He even changes His instructions to the Muslims when it pleases Him. Thus, for example, the Qur'an contains very different directions, suited to varying circumstances, as to the treatment which idolaters are to receive at the hands of believers. But Muhammad showed no anxiety to have these superseded enactments destroyed.

Believers could be in no uncertainty as to which of the two contradictory passages remained on force; and they might still find edification in that which had become obsolete. That later generations might not so easily distinguish the "abrogated" from the "abrogating" did not occur to Muhammad, whose vision, naturally enough, seldom extended to the future of his religious community. Current events were invariably kept in view in the revelations. In Medina it called for the admiration of the Faithful to observe how often Allah gave them an answer to a question whose settlement was urgently required at the moment. The same naiveté appears in the remark of the Caliph Uthman about a doubtful case: "If the Apostle of Allah were still alive, methinks there had been a Qur'an passage revealed on this point." Not infrequently the divine word was found to coincide with the advice which Muhammad had received from his most intimate disciples. "Umar was many a time of a certain opinion," says one tradition, "and the Qur'an was then revealed accordingly."

The contents of the different parts of the Qur'an are extremely varied. Many passages consist of theological or moral reflections. We are reminded of the greatness, the goodness, the righteousness of Allah as manifested in Nature, in history, and in revelation through the prophets, especially through Muhammad. Allah is magnified as the One, the All-powerful. Idolatry and all deification of created beings, such as the worship of Christ as the Son of God, are unsparingly condemned. The joys of heaven and the pains of hell are depicted in vivid sensuous imagery, as is also the terror of the whole creation at the advent of last day and the judgment of the world.

Believers receive general moral instruction, as well as directions for special circumstances. The lukewarm are rebuked, the enemies threatened with terrible punishment, both temporal and eternal. To the skeptical the truth of Islam is held forth; and a certain, not very cogent, method of demonstration predominates. In many passages the sacred book falls into a diffuse preaching-style, others seem more like proclamations or general orders. A great number contain ceremonial or civil laws, or even special commands to individuals down to such matters as the regulation of Muhammad's harem. In not a few, definite questions are answered which had actually been propounded to the Prophet by believers or infidels. Muhammad himself, too, repeatedly receives direct injunctions, and does not escape an occasional rebuke. One sura (i.) is a prayer, two (cxiii., cxiv.) are magical formulas. Many suras treat of a single topic, others embrace several.

From the mass of material comprising the Qur'an - and the account we have given is far from exhaustive - we should select the histories of the ancient prophets and the saints as possessing a peculiar interest. The purpose of Muhammad is to show from these histories how God in former times had rewarded the righteous and punished their enemies. For the most part the old prophets only serve to introduce a little variety in point of form, for they are almost in every case facsimiles of Muhammad himself. They preach exactly like him, they have to bring the very same charges against their opponents, who on their part behave exactly as the unbelieving inhabitants of Mecca. The Qur'an even goes as far as to make Noah contend against the worship of certain false gods, mentioned by name, who were worshipped by the Arabs of Muhammad's time.

In an address which is put in the mouth of Abraham (xxvi. 75 sqq.), the reader quite forgets that it is Abraham, and not Muhammad (or Allah Himself), who is speaking. Other narratives are intended rather for amusement, although they are always well seasoned with edifying phrases. It is no wonder that the godless Quraishites thought these stories of the Qur'an not so interesting as those of Rostam and Ispandiar related by Nadr the son of Harith, who, when travelling as a merchant, had learned on the Euphrates the heroic mythology of the Persians. But the Prophet was so exasperated by this rivalry that when Nadr fell into his power after the battle of Badr, he caused him to be executed; although in all other cases he readily pardoned his fellow countrymen.

These histories are chiefly about Scripture characters, especially those of the Old Testament. But the deviations from the Biblical narratives are very marked. Many of the alterations are found in the legendary anecdotes of the Jewish Aggada and the New Testament Apocrypha; but many more are due to misconceptions such as only a listener (not the reader of a book) could fall into. The most ignorant Jew could never have mistaken Haman (the minister of Ahasuerus) for the minister of Pharaoh, or identified Miriam the sister of Moses with Mary (=Miriam) the mother of Christ.

In addition to such misconceptions there are sundry capricious alterations, some of them very grotesque, due to Muhammad himself. For instance, in his ignorance of everything outside Arabia, he makes the fertility of Egypt - where rain is almost never seen and never missed - depend on rain instead of the inundations of the Nile (xii. 49). The strange tale of "the Horned" (i.e., Alexander the Great, xviii. 82 sqq.) reflects, as has been lately discovered, a rather absurd story, written by a Syrian in the beginning of the sixth century; we may believe that the substance of it was related to the Prophet by some Christian. Besides Jewish and Christian histories, there are a few about old Arabian prophets. In these he seems to have handled his materials even more freely than in others.

The opinion has already been expressed that Muhammad did not make use of written sources. Coincidences and divergences alike can always be accounted for by oral communications from the Jews who knew a little and Christians who knew next to nothing. Even in the rare passages where we can trace direct resemblances to the text of the Old Testament (comp. xxi. 105 with Ps. xxxvii. 29; i. 5 with Ps. xxvii. 11) or the New (comp. vii. 48 with Luke xvi. 24; xlvi. 19 with Luke xvi. 25), there is nothing more than might readily have been picked up in a conversation with any Jew or Christian.

In Medina, where he had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with Jews of some culture, he learned some things out of the Mishna, e.g., v. 35 corresponds almost word for word with Mishna Sanh. iv. 5; compare also ii. 183 with Mishna Ber. i. 2. That these are only cases of oral communication will be admitted by anyone with the slightest knowledge of the circumstances. Otherwise we might even conclude that Muhammad had studied the Talmud; e.g., the regulation as to ablution by rubbing with sand, where water cannot be obtained (iv. 46), corresponds to a Talmudic ordinance (Ber. 15a). Of Christianity he can have been able to learn very little even in Medina; as may be seen from the absurd travesty of the institution of the Eucharist in v. 112 sqq. For the rest, it is highly probable that before the Qur'an no real literary production - anything that could be strictly called a book - existed in the Arabic language.

In point of style and artistic effect, the different parts of the Qur'an are of very unequal value. An unprejudiced and critical reader will certainly find very few passages where his aesthetic susceptibilities are thoroughly satisfied. But he will often be struck, especially in the older pieces, by a wild force of passion, and a vigorous, if not rich, imagination. Descriptions of heaven and hell, and allusions to Allah's working in Nature, not infrequently show a certain amount of poetic power. In other places also the style is sometimes lively and impressive, though it is rare indeed that we come across such strains of touching simplicity as in the middle of xciii.

The greater part of the Qur'an's message is decidedly prosaic; and so indeed is its style. Of course, with such a variety of material, we cannot expect every part to be equally vivacious, or imaginative, or poetic. A decree about the right of inheritance, or point of ritual, must necessarily be expressed in prose, if it is to be intelligible. No one complains of the civil laws in Exodus or the sacrificial ritual in Leviticus because they want the fire of Isaiah or the tenderness of Deuteronomy. But Muhammad's mistake consists in persistent and slavish adherence to the semi-poetic form which he had at first adopted in accordance with his own taste and that of his hearers. For instance, he employs rhyme in dealing with the most prosaic subjects, and thus produces the disagreeable effect of incongruity between style and matter.

It has to be considered, however, that many of those sermonizing pieces which are so tedious to us, especially when we read two or three in succession (perhaps in a very inadequate translation), must have had a quite different effect when recited under the burning sky and on the barren soil of Mecca. There, thoughts about God's greatness and man's duty, which are familiar to us from childhood, were all new to the hearers - it is hearers we have to think of in the first instance, not readers - to whom, at the same time, every allusion had a meaning which often escapes our notice. When Muhammad spoke of the goodness of the Lord in creating the clouds, and bringing them across the cheerless desert, and pouring them out on the earth to restore its rich vegetation, that must have been a picture of thrilling interest to the Arabs, who are accustomed to see from three to five years elapse before a copious shower comes to clothe the wilderness once more with luxuriant pastures. It requires an effort for us, under our clouded skies, to realize in some degree the intensity of that impression.

The fact that scraps of poetical phraseology are specially numerous in the earlier suras, enables us to understand why the prosaic mercantile community of Mecca regarded their eccentric townsman as a "poet," or even a "possessed poet." Muhammad had to disclaim such titles, because he felt himself to be a divinely-inspired prophet; but we too, from our standpoint, shall fully acquit him of poetic genius. Like many other predominantly religious characters, he had no appreciation of poetic beauty; and if we may believe one anecdote related of him, at a time when everyone made verses, he affected ignorance of the most elementary prosody.

Hence the style of the Qur'an is not poetical but rhetorical; and the powerful effect which some portions produce on us is gained by rhetorical means. Accordingly the sacred book has not even the artistic form of poetry; which, among the Arabs, includes a stringent meter as well as rhyme. The Qur'an is never metrical, and only a few exceptionally eloquent portions fall into a sort of spontaneous rhythm. On the other hand, the rhyme is regularly maintained; although, especially in the later pieces, after a very slovenly fashion. Rhymed prose was a favorite form of composition among the Arabs of that day, and Muhammad adopted it; but if it imparts a certain sprightliness to some passages, it proves on the whole a burdensome yoke.

The Muslims themselves have observed that the tyranny of the rhyme often makes itself apparent in derangement of the order of words and in the choice of verbal forms which would not otherwise have been

employed, e.g., an imperfect instead of a perfect. In one place, to save the rhyme, he calls Mount Sinai Sinin (xcv. 2) instead of Sina (xxiii. 20); in another Elijah is called Ilyasin (xxxvii. 130) instead of Ilyas (vi. 85, xxxvii. 123). The substance even is modified to suit the exigencies of rhyme. Thus the Prophet would scarcely have fixed on the usual number of "eight" angels round the throne of God (lxix. 17) if the word thamaniyah, "eight" had not happened to fall in so well with the rhyme. And when lv. speaks of "two" heavenly gardens, each with "two" fountains and "two" kinds of fruit, and again of "two" similar gardens, all this is simply because the dual termination (-an) corresponds to the syllable that controls the rhyme in that whole sura. In the later pieces, Muhammad often inserts edifying remarks, entirely out of keeping with the context, merely to complete his rhyme. In Arabic it is such an easy thing to accumulate masses of words with the same termination, that the gross negligence of the rhyme in the Qur'an is doubly remarkable. One may say that this is another mark of the Prophet's want of mental training and incapacity for introspective criticism.

On the whole, while many parts of the Qur'an undoubtedly have considerable rhetorical power, even over an unbelieving reader, the book, aesthetically considered, is by no means a first-rate performance. To begin with what we are most competent to criticize, let us look at some of the more extended narratives. It has already been noticed how vehement and abrupt they are where they ought to be characterized by epic repose. Indispensable links, both in expression and in the sequence of events, are often omitted, so that to understand these histories is sometimes far easier for us than for those who learned them first, because we know most of them from better sources. Along with this, there is a great deal of superfluous verbiage; and nowhere do we find a steady advance in the narration.

Contrast, in these respects, "the most beautiful tale," the history of Joseph (xii.), and its glaring improprieties, with the story in Genesis, so admirably executed in spite of some slight discrepancies. Similar faults are found in the non-narrative portions of the Qur'an. The connection of ideas is extremely loose, and even the syntax betrays great awkwardness. Ananclоutha are of frequent occurrence, and cannot be explained as conscious literary devices. Many sentences begin with a "when" or "on the day when," which seem to hover in the air, so that the commentators are driven to supply a "think of this" or some ellipsis. Again, there is no great literary skill evinced in the frequent and needless harping on the same words and phrases; in xviii., for example, "till that" (hatta idha) occurs no fewer than eight times.

Muhammad, in short, is not in any sense a master of style. This opinion will be endorsed by any European who reads through the book with an impartial spirit and some knowledge of the language, without taking into account the tiresome effect of its endless iterations. But in the ears of every pious Muslim such a judgment will sound almost as shocking as downright atheism or polytheism. Among the Muslims, the Qur'an has always been looked on as the most perfect model of style and language. This feature of it is in their theology the greatest of all miracles, the incontestable proof of its divine origin. Such a view on the part of men who knew Arabic infinitely better than the most accomplished European Arabist will ever do, may well startle us. In fact, the Qur'an boldly challenged its opponents to produce ten suras, or even a single one, like those of the sacred book, and they never did so. That, to be sure, on calm reflection, is not so very surprising.

Revelations of the kind which Muhammad uttered, no unbeliever could produce without making himself a laughing-stock. However little real originality there is in Muhammad's doctrines, as against his own countrymen he was thoroughly original, even in the form of his oracles. To compose such revelations at will was beyond the power of the most expert literary artist; it would have required either a prophet or a shameless impostor. And if such a character appeared after Muhammad, still he could never be anything but an imitator, like the false prophets who arose about the time of his death and afterwards. That the adversaries should produce any sample whatsoever of poetry or rhetoric equal to the Qur'an is not at all what the Prophet demands. In that case he would have been put to shame, even in the eyes of many of his own followers, by the first poem that came to hand.

Nevertheless, it is on such a false interpretation of this challenge that the dogma of the incomparable excellence of the style and diction of the Qur'an is based. The rest has been accomplished by dogmatic prejudice, which is quite capable of working other miracles besides turning a defective literary production into an unrivaled masterpiece in the eyes of believers. This view once accepted, the next step was to find everywhere the evidence of the perfection of the style and language. And if here and there, as one can scarcely doubt, there was among the old Muslims a lover of poetry who had his difficulties about this dogma, he had to beware of uttering an opinion which might have cost him his head. We know of at least one rationalistic theologian who defined the dogma in such a way that we can see he did not believe in it (Shahrastani, p. 39).

The truth is, it would have been a miracle indeed if the style of the Qur'an had been perfect. For although there was at that time a recognized poetical style, already degenerating to mannerism, a prose style did not exist. All beginnings are difficult; and it can never be esteemed a serious charge against Muhammad that his book, the first prose work of a high order in the language, testifies to the awkwardness of the beginner. And further, we must always remember that entertainment and aesthetic effect were at most subsidiary objects. The great aim was persuasion and conversion; and, say what we will, that aim has been realized on the most imposing scale.

Muhammad repeatedly calls attention to the fact that the Qur'an is not written, like other sacred books, in a strange language, but in Arabic, and therefore is intelligible to all. At that time, along with foreign ideas, many foreign words had crept into the language, especially Aramaic terms for religious conceptions of Jewish and Christian origin. Some of these had already passed into general use, while others were confined to a more limited circle. Muhammad, who could not fully express his new ideas in the common language of his countrymen, but had frequently to find out new terms for himself, made free use of such Jewish and Christian

words, as was done, though perhaps to a smaller extent, by certain thinkers and poets of that age who had more or less risen above the level of heathenism.

In Muhammad's case this is the less wonderful, because he was indebted to the instruction of Jews and Christians whose Arabic - as the Qur'an pretty clearly intimates with regard to one of them - was very defective. Nor is it very surprising to find that his use of such words is sometimes as much at fault as his comprehension of the histories which he learned from the same people - that he applies Aramaic expressions as incorrectly as many uneducated persons now employ words derived from the French. Thus, furqan means really "redemption," but Muhammad (misled by the Arabic meaning of the root frq, "sever, decide") uses it for "revelation." Milla is properly "word," but in the Qur'an "religion." Illiyun (lxxxiii. 18,19.) is apparently the Hebrew name of God, Elyon, "the Most High"; Muhammad uses it of a heavenly book (see S. Fraenkel, De vocabulisin antiquis Arabum carminibus et in Corano peregrinis, Leyden 1880, p. 23.). So again the word mathani is, as Geiger has conjectured, the regular Arabic plural of the Aramaic mathnitha, which is the same as the Hebrew Mishna, and denotes, in Jewish usage, a legal decision of some of the ancient Rabbins. But in the Qur'an "the seven Mathani" (xv. 87) are probably the seven verses of sura i., so that Muhammad appears to have understood it in the sense of "saying" or "sentence" (comp. xxxix. 24).

Words of Christian origin are less frequent in the Qur'an. It is an interesting fact that of these a few have come over from the Abyssinian, such as hawariyun, "apostles"; maida, "table," and two or three others; these all make their first appearance in the suras of the Medinan period. The word shaitan, which was borrowed, at least in the first instance, from the Abyssinian, had probably been already introduced into the language. Sprenger has rightly observed that Muhammad makes a certain parade of these foreign words, as of other peculiarly constructed expressions; in this he followed a favorite practice of contemporary poets. It is the tendency of the imperfectly educated to delight in out-of-the-way expressions, and on such minds they readily produce a remarkably solemn and mysterious impression. This was exactly the kind of effect that Muhammad desired, and to secure it he seems even to have invented a few odd vocables, as ghislin (lxix. 36), sijjin (lxxxiii. 7,8), tasnim (lxxxiii. 27), and salsabil (lxxvi. 18). But, of course, the necessity of enabling his hearers to understand the ideas which they must have found sufficiently novel in themselves, imposed tolerably narrow limits on such eccentricities.

The constituents of our present Qur'an belong partly to the Mecca period (before A.D. 622), partly to the period commencing with the emigration to Medina (from the autumn of 622 to 8th June 632). Muhammad's position in Medina was entirely different from that which he had occupied in his native town. In the former he was from the first the leader of a powerful party, and gradually became the autocratic ruler of Arabia; in the latter he was only the despised preacher of a small congregation. This difference, as was to be expected, appears in the Qur'an. The Medina pieces, whether entire suras or isolated passages interpolated in Meccan suras, are accordingly pretty broadly distinct as to their contents, from those issued in Mecca.

In the great majority of cases there can be no doubt whatever whether a piece first saw the light in Mecca or Medina; and, for the most part, the internal evidence is borne out by Muslim tradition. And since the revelations given in Medina frequently take notice of events about which we have pretty accurate information, and whose dates are at least approximately known, we are often in a position to fix their date with, at any rate, considerable certainty; here again, tradition renders valuable assistance. Even with regard to the Medina passages, however, a great deal remains uncertain, partly because the allusions to historical events and circumstances are general rather than particular, partly because traditions about the occasion of the revelation of the various pieces are often fluctuating, and often rest on misunderstanding or arbitrary conjecture. But, at all events, it is far easier to arrange in some sort of chronological order the Medina suras than those composed in Mecca.

There is, indeed, one tradition which professes to furnish a chronological list of all the suras. But not to mention that it occurs in several divergent forms, and that it takes no account of the fact that our present suras are partly composed of pieces of different dates, it contains so many suspicious or undoubtedly false statements that it is impossible to attach any great importance to it. Besides, it is a priori unlikely that a contemporary of Muhammad should have drawn up such a list; and if any one had made the attempt, he would have found it almost impossible to obtain reliable information as to the order of the earlier Meccan suras. We have in this list no genuine tradition, but rather the lucubrations of an undoubtedly conscientious Muslim critic, who may have lived about a century after the emigration.

Among the revelations put forth in Mecca there is a considerable number of (for the most part) short suras, which strike at every attentive reader as being the oldest. They are in an altogether different strain from many others, and in their whole composition they show the least resemblance to the Medina pieces. It is no doubt conceivable - as Sprenger supposes - that Muhammad might have might have returned at intervals to his earlier manner; but since this group possesses a remarkable similarity of style, and since the gradual formation of a different style is on the whole an unmistakable fact, the assumption has little probability; and we shall therefore abide by the opinion that these form a distinct group. At the opposite extreme from them stands another cluster, showing quite obvious affinities with the style of the Medina suras, which must therefore be assigned to the later part of the Prophet's work in Mecca.

Between these two groups stand a number of other Meccan suras, which in every respect mark the transition from the first period to the third. It need hardly be said that the three periods - which were first distinguished by Professor Weil - are not separated by sharp lines of division. With regard to some suras, it may be doubtful whether they ought to be reckoned amongst the middle group, or with one or the other of the extremes. And it is altogether impossible, within these two groups, to establish even a probable chronological arrangement of the

individual revelations. In default of clear allusions to well-known events, or events whose dates can be determined, we might indeed endeavor to trace the psychological development of the Prophet by means of the Qur'an, and arrange its parts accordingly. But in such an undertaking one is always apt to take subjective assumptions or mere fancies for established data.

Good traditions about the origin of the Meccan revelations are not very numerous. In fact, the whole history of Muhammad previous to his emigration is so imperfectly related that we are not even sure in what year he appeared as a prophet. Probably it was in A.D. 610; it may have been somewhat earlier, but scarcely later. If, as one tradition says, xxx. 1 sqq. ("The Romans are overcome in the nearest neighboring land") refers to the defeat of the Byzantines by the Persians not far from Damascus, about the spring of 614, it would follow that the third group, to which this passage belongs, covers the greater part of the Meccan period. And it is not in itself unlikely that the passionate vehemence which characterizes the first group was of short duration. Nor is the assumption contradicted by the tolerably well-attested, though far from incontestable statement, that when Umar was converted (A.D. 615 or 616) xx., which belongs to the second group, already existed in writing. But the reference of xxx. 1 sqq. to this particular battle is by no means so certain that positive conclusions can be drawn from it. It is the same with other allusions in the Meccan suras to occurrences whose chronology can be partially ascertained. It is better, therefore, to rest satisfied with a merely relative determination of the order of even the three great clusters of Meccan revelations.

In the pieces of the first period the convulsive excitement of the Prophet often expresses itself with the utmost vehemence. He is so carried away by his emotions that he cannot choose his words; they seem rather to burst from him. Many of these pieces remind us of the oracles of the old heathen soothsayers, whose style is known to us from imitations, although we have perhaps not a single genuine specimen. Like those other oracles, the suras of this period, which are never very long, are composed of short sentences with tolerably pure but rapidly changing rhymes. The oaths, too, with which many of them begin, were largely used by the soothsayers. Some of these oaths are very uncouth and hard to understand, some of them perhaps were not meant to be understood for indeed all sorts of strange things are met within these chapters.

Here and there Muhammad speaks of visions, and appears even to see angels before him in bodily form. There are some intensely vivid descriptions of the resurrection and the last day, which must have exercised a demonic power over men who were quite unfamiliar with such pictures. Other pieces paint in glowing colors the joys of heaven and the pains of hell. However, the suras of this period are not all so wild as these; and those which are conceived in a calmer mood appear to be the oldest. Yet, one must repeat, it is exceedingly difficult to make out any strict chronological sequence. For instance, it is by no means certain whether the beginning of xcvi. is really what a widely circulated tradition calls it, the oldest part of the whole Qur'an. That tradition goes back to the Prophet's favorite wife Aisha; but as she was not (yet) born at the time when the revelation is said to have been made, it can only contain at the best what Muhammad told her years afterwards, from his own not very clear recollection, with or without fictitious additions. Aisha, moreover, is by no means very trustworthy and, besides, there are other pieces mentioned by others as the oldest. In any case xcvi. 1 sqq. is certainly very early.

According to the traditional view, which appears to be correct, it treats a vision in which the Prophet receives an injunction to recite a revelation conveyed to him by the angel. It is interesting to observe that here already two things are brought forward as proofs of the omnipotence and care of Allah; one is the creation of man out of a seminal drop - an idea to which Muhammad often recurs; the other is the then recently introduced art of writing, which the Prophet instinctively seizes on as a means of propagating his doctrines. It was only after Muhammad encountered obstinate resistance that the tone of the revelation became thoroughly passionate. In such cases he was not slow to utter terrible threats against those who ridiculed the preaching of the unity of Allah, of the resurrection and of the judgment. His own uncle, Abu Lahab, had somewhat brusquely repelled him, and in a brief special sura (cxi.) he and his wife are consigned to hell. The suras of this period form almost exclusively the concluding portions of the present text. One is disposed to assume, however, that they were at one time more numerous, and that many of them were lost at an early period.

Since Muhammad's strength lay in his enthusiastic and fiery imagination rather than in the wealth of ideas and clearness of abstract thought on which exact reasoning depends, it follows that the older suras, in which the former qualities have free scope, must be more attractive to us than the later. In the suras of the second period the imaginative glow perceptibly diminishes; their is still fire and animation, but the tone becomes gradually more prosaic. As the feverish restlessness subsides, the periods are drawn out, and the revelations as a whole become longer. The truth of the new doctrine is proved by accumulated instances of Allah's working in nature and history; the objections of opponents, whether advanced in good faith or in jest, are controverted by arguments; but the demonstration is often confused or even weak. The histories of the earlier prophets, which had occasionally been briefly touched on in the first period, are now related sometimes at great length.

There is one piece of the Qur'an belonging to the beginning of this period, if not to the close of the former, which claims particular notice. This is i., the **"Lord's Prayer"** of the Muslims, and beyond dispute the gem of the Qur'an. The words of this sura, which is known as al-fatiha ("the opening one"), are as follows:

1) In the name of Allah, the compassionate Compassioner. 2) Praise be (literally "is") to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, 3) the compassionate Compassioner, 4) The Sovereign of the day of judgment. 5) Thee do we worship, and of Thee do we beg assistance. 6) Direct us in the right way; 7) in the way of those to whom Thou hast been gracious, on whom there is no wrath, and who go not astray.

The thoughts are so simple as to need no explanation; and yet the prayer is full of meaning. It is true that there is not a single original idea of Muhammad's in it. Several words and turns of expression are borrowed directly

from the Jews, in particular the designation ofAllah as the "Compassioner," Rahman. This is simply the Jewish Rahmana, which was a favorite name for God in the Talmudic period. Muhammad seems for a while to have entertained the thought of adopting al-Rahman as a proper name of God, in place of Allah, which was already used by the heathens.1 This purpose he ultimately relinquished, but it is just in the suras of the second period that the use of Rahman is specially frequent. It was probably in the first sura also that Muhammad first introduced the formula, "In the name of Allah," etc. It is to be regretted that this prayer must lose its effect through too frequent use, for every Muslim who says his five prayers regularly - as most of them do - repeats it no less than twenty times a day.

The suras of the third Meccan period, which form a pretty large part of our present Qur'an, are almost entirely prosaic. Some of the revelations are of considerable extent, and the single verses also are much longer than in the older suras. Only now and then a gleam of poetic power flashes out. A sermonizing tone predominates. The suras are very edifying for one who is already reconciled to their import, but to us at least, they do not seem very well fitted to carry conviction to minds of unbelievers. That impression, however, is not correct, for in reality the demonstration of these longer Meccan suras appeared to have been peculiarly influential for the propagation of Islam. Muhammad's mission was not to Europeans, but to a people who, though quick-witted and receptive, were not accustomed to logical thinking, while they had outgrown their ancient religion.

When we reach the Medina period it becomes, as has been indicated, much easier to understand the revelation in their historical relations, since our knowledge of the history of Muhammad in Medina is tolerably complete. In many cases the historical occasion is perfectly clear, in others we can at least recognize the general situation from which they arose, and thus approximately fix their time. There remains, however, a remnant, of which we can only say it belongs to Medina.

The style of this period bears a pretty close resemblance to that of the latest Meccan period. It is for the most part pure prose, enriched by occasional rhetorical embellishments. Yet even here there are many bright and impressive passages, especially in those sections which may be regarded as proclamations to the army of the faithful. For the Muslims, Muhammad has different messages. At one time it is a summons to do battle for the faith; at another, a series of reflections on recently experienced success or misfortune, or a rebuke of their weak faith; or an exhortation to virtue, and so on. He often addresses himself to the "doubters," some of whom vacillate between faith and unbelief, others make a pretense of faith, while others scarcely take the trouble to do even that. They are no consolidated party, but to Muhammad they are all equally vexatious, because, as soon as danger has to be encountered, or a contribution is levied, they all alike fall away.

There are frequent outbursts, ever increasing in bitterness against the Jews, who were very numerous in Medina and its neighborhood when Muhammad arrived. He has much less to say against the Christians, with whom he never came closely in contact; and as for the idolaters, there was little occasion in Medina to have many words with them. A part of the Medina pieces consists of formal laws belonging to the ceremonial, civil and criminal codes; or directions about temporary complications. The most objectionable parts of the whole Qur'an are those which treat of Muhammad's relations with women. The laws and regulations were generally very concise revelations, but most of them have been amalgamated with other pieces of similar or dissimilar import, and are now found in very long suras.

Such is an imperfect sketch of the composition and internal history of the Qur'an, but it is probably sufficient to show that the book is a very heterogeneous collection. If only those passages had been preserved which had a permanent value for the theology, the ethics or the jurisprudence of the Muslims, a few fragments would have been amply sufficient. Fortunately for knowledge, respect for the sacredness of the letter has led to the collection of all the revelations that could possibly be collected, the "abrogating" along with the "abrogated," passages referring to passing circumstances as well as those of lasting importance. Everyone who takes up the book in the proper religious frame of mind, like most of the Muslims, reads pieces directed against long obsolete absurd customs of Mecca just as devoutly as the weightiest moral precepts - perhaps even more devoutly, because he does not understand them so well.

At the head of twenty-nine of the suras stand certain initial letters, from which no clear sense can be obtained. Thus, before ii., iii., xxxi., xxxii. we find ALM (Alif Lam Mim), before xl.-xlvi. HM (Ha Mim). At one time I suggested that these initials did not belong to Muhammad's text, but might be the monograms of possessors of codices, which, through negligence on the part of the editors, were incorporated in the final form of the Qur'an; but now I deem it more probable that they are to be traced to the Prophet himself, as Sprenger and Loth suppose. One cannot indeed admit the truth of Loth's statement, that in the proper opening words of these suras we may generally find an allusion to the accompanying initials; but it can scarcely be accidental that the first words of the great majority of them (in iii. it is the second verse) contains the word "book," "revelation," or some equivalent. They usually begin with: "This is the book," or "Revelation (`down sending') of the book," or something similar. Of suras which commence in this way only a few (xviii., xxiv., xxv., xxxix.) lack the initials, while only xxix. and xxx. have the initials and begin differently.

These few exceptions may easily have proceeded from ancient corruptions; at all events they cannot neutralize the evidence of the greater number. Muhammad seems to have meant these letters for mystic reference to the archetype text in heaven. To a man who regarded the art of writing, of which at the best he had but a slight knowledge, as something supernatural, and who lived amongst illiterate people, an A B C may well have seemed more significant than to us who have been initiated into the mysteries of this art from our childhood. The Prophet himself can hardly have attached any particular meaning to these symbols; they served their purpose if they conveyed an impression of solemnity and enigmatical obscurity. In fact, the Qur'an admits that it contains many things which neither can be, nor were intended to be, understood (iii. 5). To regard these letters as

ciphers is a precarious hypothesis, for the simple reason that cryptography is not to be looked for in the very infancy of Arabic writing.

If they are actually ciphers, the multiplicity of possible explanations at once precludes the hope of a plausible interpretation. None of the efforts in this direction, whether by Muslim scholars or by Europeans, have led to convincing results. This remark applies even to the ingenious conjecture of Sprenger that the letters KHY'S (Kaf He Ye Ain Sad) before xix. (which treats of John and Jesus, and, according to tradition, was sent to the king of Abyssinia) stand for "Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judaeorum." Sprenger arrives at this explanation by a very artificial method; and besides Muhammad was not as simple as the traditionalists, who imagined that the Abyssinians could read a piece of the Arabic Qur'an. It need hardly be said that the Muslims have from old applied themselves with great assiduity to the decipherment of these initials, and have sometimes found the deepest mysteries in them. Generally, however, they are content with the prudent conclusion that God alone knows the meaning of these letters.

When Muhammad died, the separate pieces of the Qur'an, notwithstanding their theoretical sacredness, existed only in scattered copies; they were consequently in great danger to being partially or entirely destroyed. Many Muslims knew large portions by heart, but certainly no one knew the whole; and a merely oral propagation would have left the door open to all kinds of deliberate and inadvertent alterations. Muhammad himself had never thought of an authentic collection of his revelations; he was usually concerned only with the object of the moment and the idea that the revelations would be destroyed unless he made provision for their safe preservation, did not enter his mind. A man destitute of literary culture has some difficulty in anticipating the fate of intellectual products.

But now, after the death of the Prophet, most of the Arabs revolted against his successor, and had to be reduced to submission by force. Especially sanguinary was the contest against the prophet Maslama, an imitator of Muhammad commonly known by the derisive diminutive Musailima (i.e., "Little Maslama"). At that time (A.D. 633) many of the most devoted Muslims fell, the very men who knew most Qur'an pieces by heart. Umar then began to fear that the Qur'an might be entirely forgotten, and he induced the Caliph Abu Bakr to undertake the collection of all its parts. The Caliph laid the duty on Zaid, the son of Thabit, a native of Medina, then about twenty-two years of age, who had often acted as amanuensis to the Prophet, in whose service he is even said to have learned the Jewish letters.

The account of this collection of the Qur'an has reached us in several substantially identical forms, and goes back to Zaid himself. According to it, he collected the revelations from copies written on flat stones, pieces of leather, ribs of palm-leaves (not palm-leaves themselves), and such like material, but chiefly "from the breasts of men," i.e., from their memory. From these he wrote a fair copy, which he gave to Abu Bakr, from whom it came to his successor Umar, who again bequeathed it to his daughter Hafsa, one of the widows of the Prophet. This redaction, commonly called al-suhuf ("the leaves"), had from the first no canonical authority; and its integral arrangement can only be conjectured.

The Muslims were as far as ever from possessing a uniform text of the Qur'an. The bravest of their warriors sometimes knew deplorably little about it; distinction on that field they cheerfully accorded to pious men like Ibn Mas'ud. It was inevitable, however, that discrepancies should emerge between the texts of professed scholars, and as these men in their several localities were authorities on the reading of the Qur'an, quarrels began to break out between the levies from different districts about the true form of the sacred book. During a campaign in A.H. 30 (A.D. 650-1), Hudaifa, the victor in the great and decisive battle of Nehawand - which was to the empire of the Sasanians what Gaugamela was to that of the Achaemenidae - perceived that such disputes might become dangerous, and therefore urged on the Caliph Uthman the necessity for a universally binding text.

The matter was entrusted to Zaid, who had made the former collection, with three leading Quraishites. These brought together as many copies as they could lay their hands on, and prepared an edition which was to be canonical for all Muslims. To prevent any further disputes, they burned all the other codices except that of Hafsa, which, however, was afterwards destroyed by Marwan, the governor of Medina. The destruction of the earlier codices was an irreparable loss to criticism; but, for the essentially political object of putting an end to the controversies by admitting only one form of the common book of religion and of law, this measure was necessary.

The result of these labors is in our hands; as to how they were conducted we have no trustworthy information, tradition being here too much under the influence of dogmatic presuppositions. The critical methods of a modern scientific commission will not be expected of an age when the highest literary education for an Arab consisted in (the) ability to read and write. It now seems to me highly probable that this second redaction took this simple form: Zaid read off from the codex which he had previously written, and his associates, simultaneously or successively, wrote one copy each to his dictation. These, I suppose, were the three copies which, we are informed, were sent to the capitals Damascus, Basra and Kufa, to be in the first instance standards for the soldiers of the respective provinces. A fourth copy would doubtless be retained at Medina. Be that as it may, it is impossible now to distinguish in the present form of the book what belongs to the first redaction from what is due to the second.

In the arrangement of the separate sections, a classification according to contents was impractical because of the variety of subjects often dealt with in one sura. A chronological arrangement was out of the question, because the chronology of the older pieces must have been imperfectly known, and because in some cases passages of different dates had been joined together. Indeed, systematic principles of this kind were altogether

disregarded at that period. The pieces were accordingly arranged in indiscriminate order, the only rule observed being to place the long suras first and the shorter towards the end, and even that was far from strictly adhered to. The short opening sura is so placed on account of its superiority to the rest, and two magical formulae are kept for sort of protection at the end; these are the only special traces of design. The combination of pieces of different origin may proceed partly from the processes of the codices from which Zaid compiled his first complete copy, partly from Zaid himself. The individual suras are separated simply by the superscription "In the name of God, the compassionate Compassioner," which is wanting only in the ninth. The additional headings found in our text (the name of the suras, the number of verses, etc.) were not in the original codices, and formed no integral part of the Qur'an.

It is said that Uthman directed Zaid and his associates, in cases of disagreement, to follow the Quraish dialect; but, though well attested, this account can scarcely be correct. The extremely primitive writing of those days was quite incapable of rendering such minute differences as can have existed between the pronunciation of Mecca and that of Medina.

Uthman's Qur'an was not complete. Some passages are evidently fragmentary; and a few detached pieces are still extant which were originally parts of the Qur'an, although they have been omitted by Zaid. Amongst these are some which there is no reason to suppose Muhammad desired to suppress. Zaid may easily have overlooked a few stray fragments, but that he purposely omitted anything which he believed to belong to the Qur'an is very unlikely.

It has been conjectured that in deference to his superiors he kept out of the book the names of Muhammad's enemies, if they or their families came afterwards to be respected. But it must be remembered that it was never Muhammad's practice to refer explicitly to contemporary persons and affairs in the Qur'an. Only a single friend, his adopted son Zaid (xxxiii. 37), and a single enemy, his uncle Abu Lahab (cxi.) - and these for very special reasons - are mentioned by name; and the name of the latter has been left in the Qur'an with a fearful curse annexed to it, although his son had embraced Islam before the death of Muhammad, and although his descendants belonged to the high nobility. So, on the other hand, there is no single verse or clause which can be plausibly made out to be an interpolation by Zaid at the instance of Abu Bakr, Umar or Uthman. Slight clerical errors there may have been, but the Qur'an of Uthman's contains none but genuine elements - though sometimes in very strange order.

It can still be pretty clearly shown in detail that the four codices of Uthman's Qur'an deviated from one another in points of orthography, in the insertion or omission of a wa ("and"), and such like minutiae; but these variations nowhere affect the sense. All later manuscripts are derived from these four originals.

At the same time, the other forms of the Qur'an did not at once become extinct. In particular we have some information about the codex of Ubai. If the list which gives the order of its suras is correct, it must have contained substantially the same materials as our text; in that case Ubai must have used the original collection of Zaid. The same is true of the codex of Ibn Mas'ud, of which we also have a catalogue. It appears that the principle of putting the longer suras before the shorter was more consistently carried out by him than by Zaid. He omits i. and the magical formulae of cxiii. and cxiv. Ubai, on the other hand, had embodied two additional short prayers, whose authenticity I do not now venture to question, as I formerly did. One can easily understand that differences of opinion have existed as to whether and how far formularies of this kind belonged to the Qur'an. Some of the divergent readings of both these texts have been preserved, as well as a considerable number of other ancient variants. Most of them are decidedly inferior to the received readings, but some are quite as good, and a few deserve preference.

The only man who appears to have seriously opposed the general introduction of Uthman's text is Ibn Mas'ud. He was one of the oldest disciples of the Prophet, and had often rendered him personal service; but he was a man of contracted views although he is one of the pillars of Muslim theology. His opposition had no effect. Now when we consider that at that time there were many Muslims who had heard the Qur'an from the mouth of the Prophet, that other measures of the imbecile Uthman met with the most vehement resistance on the part of the bigoted champions of the faith, that these were still further incited against him by some of his ambitious old comrades, until at last they murdered him, and finally that in the civil wars after his death the several parties were glad of any pretext for branding their opponents as infidels - when we consider all this, we must regard it as a strong testimony in favor of Uthman's Qur'an that no party - that of Ali not excepted - repudiated the text formed by Zaid, who was one of the most devoted adherents of Uthman and his family, and that even among the Shiites we detect but very few marks of dissatisfaction with the Caliph's conduct in this matter.

But this redaction is not the close of the textual history of the Qur'an. The ancient Arabic alphabet was very imperfect; it not only lacked marks for the short, and in part even for the long vowels, but it often expressed several consonants by the same sign, the forms of the different letters, formerly clearly distinct, having become by degrees identical. So, for example, there was but one character to express B,T,Th and in the beginning and in the middle of words N and Y(I) also. Though the reader who was perfectly familiar with the language felt no difficulty, as a rule, in discovering which pronunciation the writer had in view, yet as there were many words which admitted of being pronounced in very different manners, instances were not infrequent in which the pronunciation was dubious. This variety of possible readings was at first very great, and many readers seem to have actually made it their object to discover pronunciations which were new, provided they were at all appropriate to the ambiguous text. There was also a dialectic license in grammatical forms, which had not as yet been greatly restricted.

An effort was made by many to establish a more refined pronunciation for the Qur'an than was usual in common life or in secular literature. The various schools of "readers" differed widely from one another; although for the most part there was no important divergence as to the sense of words. A few of them gradually rose to special authority, and the rest disappeared. Seven readers are generally reckoned chief authorities, but for practical purposes this number was continually reduced in process of time; so that at present only two "reading styles" are actually in use - the common style of the Hafs and that of Nafi, which prevails in Africa to the west of Egypt.

There is, however, a very comprehensive masoretic literature in which a number of other styles are indicated. The invention of vowel sounds, of diacritic points to distinguish similarly formed consonants, and of other orthographic signs, soon put a stop to arbitrary conjectures on the part of the readers. Many zealots objected to the introduction of these innovations in the sacred text, but theological consistency had to yield to practical necessity. In accurate codices, indeed, all such additions, as well as the titles of the suras, etc., were written in colored ink, while the black characters profess to represent exactly the original of Uthman. But there is probably no copy quite faithful in this respect.

The correct recitation of the Qur'an is an art difficult of acquisition to the Arabs themselves. Besides the artificial pronunciation mentioned above, a semi-musical modulation has to be observed. In these things also there are great differences between the various schools.

In European libraries, besides innumerable modern manuscripts of the Qur'an, there are also codices or fragments of high antiquity, some of them probably dating from the first century of the Flight. For the restoration of the text, however, the works of ancient scholars on its reading and modes of writing are more important than manuscripts, which, however elegantly they may be written and ornamented, proceed from irresponsible copyists. The original, written by Uthman himself, has indeed been exhibited in various parts of the Muhammadan world. The library of the India Office contains one such manuscript, bearing the subscription: "Written by Uthman the son of Affan." These, of course, are barefaced forgeries, although of very ancient date; so are those which profess to be from the hand of Ali, one of which is preserved in the same library. In recent times the Qur'an has been often printed and lithographed both in the East and West.

Shortly after Muhammad's death certain individuals applied themselves to the exposition of the Qur'an. Much of it was obscure from the beginning; other sections were unintelligible apart from a knowledge of the circumstances of their origin. Unfortunately those who took possession of this field are not very honorable. Ibn Abbas, a cousin of Muhammad's, and the chief source of the traditional exegesis of the Qur'an, has, on theological and other grounds, given currency to a number of falsehoods; and at least some of his pupils have emulated his example. These earliest expositions dealt more with the sense and connection of the whole verses than with the separate words. Afterwards, as the knowledge of the old language declined, and the study of philology arose, more attention began to be paid to the explanation of vocables. A good many fragments of this older theological and philological exegesis have survived from the first two centuries of the Flight, although we have no complete commentary of this period.

Most of the expository material will perhaps be found in the very large commentary of the celebrated Tabari (A.D. 839-923), of which an almost complete copy is in the Viceregal library at Cairo. Another very famous commentary is that of Zamakhshari (A.D. 1075-1144), edited by Nassau-Lee, Calcutta 1859; but this scholar, with his great insight and still greater subtlety, is too apt to read his own scholastic ideas into the Qur'an. The favorite commentary of Baidawi (died A.D. 1286) is little more than an abridgement of Zamakhshari's.

Thousands of commentaries on the Qur'an, some of them of prodigious size,2 have been written by Muslims; and even the number of those extant in manuscripts is by no means small. Although these works contain much that is useless or false, yet they are invaluable aids to our understanding of the sacred book. An unbiased European can no doubt see many things at a glance more clearly than a good Muslim who is under the influence of religious prejudice; but we should still be helpless without the exegetical literature of the Muhammadans.

Even the Arab Muslim of the present day can have but a very dim and imperfect understanding of the Qur'an, unless he has made a special study of its exegesis. For the great advantage, boasted by the holy book itself, of being perspicuous to everyone, has in the course of thirteen centuries vanished. Moreover, the general belief is that, in the ritual use of the Qur'an, if the correct recitation is observed, it is immaterial whether the meaning of the words be understood or not.

A great deal remains to be accomplished by European scholarship for the correct interpretation of the Qur'an. We lack, for example, an exhaustive classification and discussion of all the Jewish elements in the Qur'an; a praiseworthy beginning has already been made in Geiger's youthful essay, "Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?" We lack especially a thorough commentary, executed with the methods and resources of modern science. No European language, it would seem, can even boast of a translation which completely satisfies modern requirements. The best are in English, where we have the extremely paraphrastic, but for its time admirable, translation of Sale (repeatedly printed), that of Rodwell (1861), which seeks to give the pieces in chronological order and that of Palmer (1880), who wisely follows the traditional arrangements. The introduction which accompanies Palmer's translation is not in all respects abreast of the most recent scholarship. Considerable extracts from the Qur'an are well translated in E.W. Lane's Selections from the Kur-an.

Besides the commentaries on the whole Qur'an, or on special parts and topics, the Muslims possess a whole literature bearing on their sacred book. There are works on the spelling and right pronunciation of the Qur'an,

works on the beauty of its language, on the number of its verses, words and letters, etc.; nay, there are even works which would nowadays be called "historical and critical introductions." Moreover, the origin of Arabic philology is intimately connected with the recitation and exegesis of the Qur'an. To exhibit the importance of the sacred book for the whole mental life of the Muslims, would be simply to write the history of that life itself; for there is no department in which its all-pervading, but unfortunately not always salutary, influence has not been felt.

The unbounded reverence of the Muslims for the Qur'an reaches its climax in the dogma (which appeared at an early date through the influence of the Christian doctrine of the eternal Word of God) that this book, as the divine Word, i.e., thought, is immanent in God, and consequently "eternal" and "uncreated." That dogma has been accepted by almost all Muhammadans since the beginning of the third century. Some theologians did indeed protest against it with great energy; it was, in fact, too preposterous to declare that a book composed of unstable words and letters, and full of variants, was absolutely divine. But what were the distinctions and sophisms of the theologians for, if they could not remove such contradictions, and convict their opponents of heresy?

The following works may be specially consulted: Weil, Einleitung in den Koran, 2nd. ed., 1878; Th. Nöldeke, Geschichte des Qorans, Göttingen, 1860; and the Lives of Muhammad by Muir and Sprenger.

Notes:

1. Since in Arabic also the root rhm signifies `to have pity,' the Arabs must have at once perceived the force of the new name.

2. See... the commentary of Khalaf,. He had a 100-volume commentary of the Qur'an edited, the largest of many books of this sort, of which we have knowledge.

Reference: Nöldeke, Theodor. "The Qur'an," Sketches from Eastern History. Trans. J.S. Black. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1892.

Writings of Theodor Nöldeke
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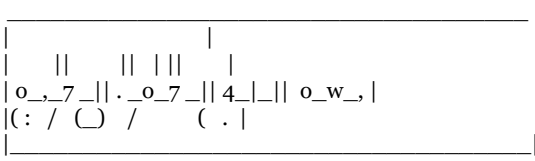

Early Debates on the Integrity of the Quran (Part I)

[This article is written by **Professor Hossein Modarresi** from Princeton University, NJ]

This short article attempts to shed some light on the origins of the Sunnite-Shi'ite controversies on the integrity of the text of the Quran. The development of these debates in the first Islamic centuries represents an interest example of how ideas evolved in the early period through sectarian disputes, as well as contacts and communication between various Muslim sects and schools of thought. Despite severe mistrust, various factors existed to facilitate the give and take among different sects. Most prominent was a group of hadith transmitters who frequented different sectatrian camps and, thereby, introduced much of each sect's literature to the others. Often confusion on the part of these "bipolar" narrators of hadith helped "naturalize" segments of one sect's literature into that of another sect.

This was particularly true in Shi'ism, many of transmitters heard hadith from both Shitite and Sunnite sources, and later misattributed much of what they had heard.[1] The early Shi'ite

[1] Kashshi, Marifat al naqilin = Kitba al Rijal, abridged by Muhammad b. al Hasan al Tusi as Ikhtiyar Marifat ar Rijal p 590-91, where Shadhan b. Khalil al Naysaburi askes the celebrated hadith transmitter, Abu Ahmad Muhammad b. Abi Umayr al Azdi, who heard from bothe Shi'ite and Sunnite sources, why he never quoted any Sunnite hadith to his tudents in his works. He answered, that he deliberately avoided that since he found many

of the Shi'ites studied both Shi'ites and Sunnites traditions, but later confused and ascribed Sunnite material to the Shi'ites sources and vice versa.

mutakallimun also quoted statements from the Sunnite sources in their polemics against the Sunnites as argumentum ad hominem. But from the mid 3rd/9th century onward, it was common for some Shi'ite authors and traditionisls to attribute a Shi'ite origin to this material, since it was thought that whatever the companions of the Imams and early Shl'ite mutakallimun said or wrote, even what they used in their polemics, necessarily represented the views and statements of the Imams.[2] This assumption led to the introduction of much alien material into Shi'ite thought.

[2] Kulayni, al Kafi, vol 1 p 99
Subhu al Salih, Mabahith fi ulum al Quran, p 134

Many of these early interchanges were forgotten over time. Hence it was not known that many of the ideas that were later labeled as Sunnite, Shi'ite, or the like were originally held by a different group or, at least in the early period before the sects took on their final shape, were shared by various mainstream elements of Islamic society. The question of the integrity of the Uthmanic text of the Qur-an and the controversies surrounding it are a prime example of that phenomenon. The central issue in these debates was whether the Uthmanic text comprehended the entire body of material that was revealed to the Prophet, or whether there had been further material that was missing from the Uthmanic text. In the following pages, we shall examine the Sunnite-Shi'ite interchanges on this question.

* * * * *

The evidence in the text of the Qur'an itself as well as in hadith indicates that the Prophet compiled a written scripture for Islam during his own life-time, most likely in his first years in Medina.[3] He reportedly continued until the end of his life to

[3] Zarkashi, al Burhan fi ulum al Quran, vol 1 p 235, 237-38 256, 258
Suyuti, al Itqan fi ulum al Quran, vol 1 p 212-13, 216

personally instruct the scribes where to insert new passages of the revelation in the scripture.[4] There are also indications that

[4] Ahmad b. Hanbal, vol 1 p 57
Tirimidhi, Sunan, vol 4 p 336-37
al Hakim al Naysaburi, al Mustadrak, vol 2 p 229

parts of earlier revelations were not included in the scripture. One verse in the Quran acknowledges the absence of a part of revelation which was abrogated or "caused to be forgoeten, [5]

[5] Quran Chapter II Verse 106

another spoke of verses that God substituted for uthers.[6] Early

[6] Quran Chapter XVI Verse 101

Muslims reportedly used to recall verses of the revelation they did not find in the new scripture. They were however, aware that those passages were deliberately excluded by the Prophet, since the Muslims frequently referred to them as what "abrogated" (nusikha), "lifted" (rufi'a), "caused to be forgotten" (unsiya), or "dropped't (usqita).[7] The concept of abrogation of the revela-

[7] Abu Byad, al Naskih wa'l mansukh fi l Quran an al Karim, ed. John Burton (Cambridge 1987), p 6
Muhasibi, Fahm al Quran an wa manih ed. H. Quwwatli (in the collection of al Aql wa fahm al Quran [n.p., 1971] p 261-502)
p 399 (quoting Anas b. Malik), 400 and 408 (quoting Amr b. Dinar)

403 (quoting Abd al Rahman b. Awf), 405 (quoting Abu Musa al Ashari), 406
Tabari, Jami al Bayan, vol 3 p 472-74, 476, 479-80
Ibn Salama, al Nasikh wa l mansukh, p 21 (quoting Abd Allah b. Masud)
Suyuti, al Durr al manthur, vol 5 p 179 (quoting Ubayy b. Kab)

tion (naskh al Quran) apparently referred originally to those parts that were not included by the Prophet in the scripture.[8] Later,

[8] Abu Ubayd, al Naskih, p 6
Bayhaqi, Dalail al Nubuwwa, vol 7 p 154 (where it is argued that the Prophet never put the Quran together since there was always the expectation that some verses might be abrogated and some later modification was thus in-evitable in any collection of the Quran put together during his lifetime. Underlying this argument is the assumption that the abrogated verses had to be physically removed from the scripture.)
Zarkashi, vol 2 p 30 (the first interpretation of the concept of naskh)

however, the concept was developed in the Sunnite tradition to include several hypothetical categories, most of them with examples preserved in the present text of the Quran. With a single possible exception,[9] however, it is highly doubtful that the Qur'an includes any abrogated verse.

[9] Abu al Qasim al Khui, al Bayan, p 305-403

The Sunnite account of the collection of the Quran is completely different from the above. It contends that the Quran was not compiled in a single volume until after the Prophet died in the year 11/632.[10] The "recorders of the revelation" (kuttab al-

[10] Ibn Sa'd, Kitab al Tabaqat al Kabir, vol 3 p 211, 281
Ibn Abi Dawud, Kitab al Masahif, p 10
Ibn Babawayh, Kamal ad Din, p 31-32
Bayhaqi, Dalail, vol 7 p 147-8
Zarkashi, vol 1 p 262
Ibn al Hadid, Sharah of Nahj al Balagha. vol 1 p 27
Ibn Juzayy, al Tashil li ulum al tanzil, vol 1 p 4
Suyuti, Itqan, vol 1 p 202
Ibrahim al Harbi, Gharib al hadith, vol 1 p 270

wahy) used to jot down the verses immediately after the Prophet received and recited them. Others among the faithful memorized portions of the revelation or occasionally recorded them on whatever primitive writing material was available. According to the supporters of this account, the fact that the Quran was not compiled as a book until the death of the Prophet is perfectly logical. As long as he was alive there was always the expectation of further revelation as well as occasional abrogations. Any formal collection of the material already revealed could not properly be considered a complete text.[11] Many people had memorized

[11] Bayhaqi, Dalail, vol 7 p 154
Zarkashi, vol 1 p 235, 262
Suyutim Itqan, vol 1 p 202
Ahmad al Naraqi, Manahij al ahkam, p 152

large parts of the revelation, which they repeated in their prayers and recited to others. As long as the Prophet was living among the faithful as the sole authority there was no need for a formal reference book of religion or a code of law. All of these considerations would change after his death and the new circumstances would necessitate the collection of the Qur'an. The story as reported by the Sunnis sources is as follows

Two years etfter the Prophet died, the Muslims were engaged in a bloody battle with a rival community at Yarnama in the deserts of Arabia. Many of the memorizers (qurra) of the Qur'an lost their lives at this time.[12] Fearing that a great portion of the Qur'an

[12] Yaqubi, Kitab al Tarikh, vol 2 p 15, most of the bearers of the Quran were killed during the battle. All together, some 360 persons among the distinguished companions of the Prophet lost their lives on that occasion.)
Tabari, Tarikh, vol 3 p 296
Larger figures upto 500 for Ibn al Jazari, al Nashr, p 7
Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al Quran, vol 7 p 439
Qurtubi, al Jami li Ahkam al Quran, vol 1 p 50
and a figure of 1200 for Abd al Qahir al Baghdadi, Usul al Din p 283 are also given. The last figure is however the number of all Muslims who were killed in the battle, Companions and others see Tabari vol 3 p 300

would be lost should a similar situation arise and more memorizers of the Quran die, Abu Bakr, the first successor to the Prophet, ordered that the Qur'an be collected. To this end, the Prophet's companions and the memorizers of the Quran were asked to come forward with any parts of the revelation they had memorized or written down in any form. Abu Bakr ordered 'Umar, his successor to be, and Zayd b. Thabit, a young recorder of revelation during the Prophet's lifetime, to sit at the entrance to the mosque of Medina and record any verse or part of the revelation that at least two witnesses testified that they had heard from the Prophet. In one particular case, though, the testimony of a single witness was accepted.[13] All of the material gathered in this manner was

[13] The case in question was the last two verses of Sura 9 in the present Quran which was added on the authority of Khuzayma b. Thabit al Ansari (or ABu Khuzayma according to some reports).
Bukhari, Sahih, vol 3 p 392-93
Tirimidhi, vol 4 p 346-47
Abu Bakr al Marwazi, Musnad Abi Bakr al Siddiq, p 97-99, 102-4
Ibn Abu Dawud, p 6-7, 9, 20
Ibn al Nadim, p 27
al Khatib al Baghdadi, Mudih awham al jam wa l tafrig, vol 1 p 276
Bayhaqi, Dalail, vol 7 p 149-50

recorded on sheets of paper,[14] or parchment, but was not yet

[14] Yaqubi, vol 2 p 135
Itqan, vol 1 p 185, 207, 208

compiled as a volume. Furthermore, these materials were not made available to the Muslim community, which continued to possess the Qur'an only in its primitive scattered form. The sheets remained in the keeping of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and after 'Umar's death they passed to his daughter Hafsa. 'Uthman took the sheets trom Hafsa during his caliphate and had them put together in the form of a volume. He had several copies sent to different parts of the Muslim world and he then ordered that any other collection or portion of the Qur'an found anywhere else be burned.[15]

[15] Bukhari, vol 3 p 393-94,
Tirmidhi, vol 4 p 347-8
Abu Bakr al Marwazi, p 99-101
Ibn Abi Dawud, p 18-21
Bayhaqi, Dalail, vol 7 p 15051
Abu Hilal Askari, Kitab al Awail, vol 1 p 218

This whole story about the collection ot the Qur'an was accepeed by the Sunnite scholars as trustworthy and served, as we shall see below, as the basis for the idea that later emerged of the incompleteness of the text of the Qur'an.

Sunnite literature contains many reports that suggest that some of the revelation had already been lost before the collection of the Qur'an initiated by Abu Bakr. It is reported, for example, that 'Umar was once looking for the text of a specific verse of the Qur'an he vaguely remembered. To his deep sorrow, he discove-

red that the only person who had any record of that verse had been killed in the battle of Yamama and that the verse was consequently lost.[16] Umar allegedly had a recollection of a Qur'anic verse

[16] Ibn Abi Dawud, p 10
Itqan, vol 1 p 204

on stoning as a punishment for adultery.[17]. But he could not

[17] Malik b. Anas, Muwatta, vol 2 p 824
Ahmad, vol 1 p 47, 55
Muhasibi, p 398, 455
Bukhari, vol 4 p 305
Muslim, Sahih, vol 2 p 1317
Ibn Maja, Sunan, vol 2 p 853
Tirmidhi, vol 2 p 442-3
Abu Dawud, Sunan, vol 4 p 145
Ibn Qutayba, Tawil mukhtalif al hadith, p 313
Ibn Salama, p 22
Bayhaqi, al Sunan al Kubra, vol 8 p 211, 213

convince his colleagues to insert it in the Quran because nobody else came forward to support him,[18] and the requirement that

[18] Itqan, vol 1 p 206

there be two witnesses for any text to be accepted as a part of the Qur'an was therefore not met. Later, however, some other Companions recalled that same verse,[19] including Aisha the

[19] Ahmad, vol 5 p 183 (quoting Zayd b, Thabit and Said al-As
Abd al Razzaq, AL Musannaf, vol 7 p 330
Itqan, vol 3 p 82, 86
al Durr al Manthur, vol 5 p 180 (quoting Ubayy b. Ka'b and Ikrima)

Prophet's youngest wife. She is alleged to have said that a sheet on which two verses, including that on stoning, were recorded was under her bedding and that after the Prophel died, a domestic animal [20] got into the room and gobbled up the sheet while the

[20] Dajin can mean any kind of domestic animal, including fowl, sheep, or goat. A narrative in Ibrahim b. Ishaq al Harbis Gharib al hadith makes it more specific, as it uses the word shal, that is sheep or goat (see Zamakshari, al Kashaf, vol 3 p 518 footnote)
The same is in Qutaybas understanding from the word dajin in Tawil mukhtalif al hadith, p 310, apparently because of the context, since it is said that the animal ate the sheet of paper.
Also see Sulaym b. Qays al Hilali, Kitab Sulaymn b. Qays, p 108
Al Fadl b. Shadahn, al Idah, p 211
Abd al Jalil al Qazwini, p 133

household was preoccupied with his funeral. [21] Umar also

[21] Ahmad, vol 4 p 269
Ibn Maja, vol 1 p 626
Ibn Qutayba, Tawil, p 310
Shafi'i, Kitab al Umm, vol 5 p 23, vol 7 p 208

remembered other verses he thought dropped out (saqata) from the Qur'an [22] or were lost, including one on being dutiful to

[22] Mabani, p 99
Itqan, vol 3 p 84 (See Also And al Razzaq vol 7 p 379-80; Ibn Abi Shayba, vol 14 p 564, where the expression Faqadnah, "we lost it", is used)
The expression "saqata" is also used by Aisha in the case of another phrase that alledgly "dropped out" from the Quran. See Ibn Maja, vol 1 p 625 (See also Itqan, vol 3 p 70)

It is also used by Malik (Zarkashi, vol 1 p 263).

parents[23] and another on jihad.[24] His claim regarding the first

[23] Abd al Razzaq, vol 9 p 50
Ahmad, vol 1 p 47, 55
Ibn Abi Shayba, vol 7 p 431
Bukhari, vol 4 p 306
Ibn Salama, p 22
Itqan, vol 3 p 84
Zarkashi, vol 1 p 39 (Also quoted from Abu Bakr)

[24] Muhasibi, p 403
Mabani, p 99
Itqan, vol 3 p 84

of the two was supported by three other early authorities on the Qur'an: Zayd b. Thabit, 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, and Ubayy b. Ka'b.[25] Anas b. Malik remembered a verse which was revealed

[25] Abd al Razzaq, vol 9 p 52
Muhasibi, p 400
Itqan, vol 3 p 84

in the occasion of some Muslims who were killed in a battle, but was later "lifted".[26] Umar's learned son, 'Abd Allah [27] as

[26] Muhasibi, p 399
Tabari, Jami, vol 2 p 479

[27] Itqan, vol 3 p 81-82

well as some later scholars [28] maintained that much of the Qur'an

[28] Ibn Abi Dawud, p 23 quoting Ibn Shihab (al Zuhri)
Itqan, vol 5 p 179 quoting Sufyan al Thawri
Ibn Qutaybah, Tawil, p 313
Ibn Lubb, Falh al bab, p 92

had perished before the collection was made.

Similar reports specifically addressed the official Uthmanic rescension of the Qur'an. They reported that many prominent Companions could not find in that official text portions of the revelation they had themselves heard from the Prophet, or found them in a different form. Ubayy b. Ka'b, for instance, recited sura 98 (al Bayyina) in a form he claimed to have heard from the Prophet. It included two verses unrecorded in the Uthmanic text. (29) He also thought that the original version of sura 33 (al-

[29] Ahmad, vol 5 p 132
Tirmidhi, vol 5 p 370
Hakim, vol 2 p 224
Itqan, vol 3 p 83

Ahzab) had been much longer, from which he specifically remembered the stoning verse that is missing from the Uthmanic text.[30] His claim was supported by Zayd b. Thabit,[31] by

[30] Ahmad, vol 5 p 132
Muhasibi, p 405
Bayhaqi, vol 8 p 211
Hakim, vol 2 p 415
Itqan, vol 3 p 82 (the same claim about the size of the Sura and it included the stoning verse is quoted from Umar anmd Ikrima in Suyuti, al Durre Manthur, vol 5 p 180)
Zarkasi, vol 2 p 35, where the verse is said to to have been in Sura 25 (al Nur), and with Mabani, p 82, where Sura 7 (al Aaraf) is mentioned instead. This latter is however a slip of the pen or mis spelling as evidenced by the author's later mention of the Sura al Ahzab in p 83 and 86

Aisha who reported that during the Prophet's lifetime the sura was about three times as long, although when Uthman collected the Qur'an he found only what was made available in his text,[32]

[32] Al Raghib al Isfahani, Muhadarat al Udaba, vol 4 p 434
Suyuti, al Durre Manthur, vol 5 p 180
Itqan, Suyuti, vol 1 p 226

and by Hudhayfa b. al-Yaman (who found some seventy verses missing in the new official text, verses that he himself used to recite during the lifetime of the Prophet.[33] Hudhayfa also

[33] Suyuti, al Durre Manthur, vol 5 p 180, quoting from Bukhari book
Kitab at Tarikh

contended that Sura 9 (al-Bara'a in its Uthmanic form was perhaps one-fourth[34] or one-third[35] of what it had been during the

[34] Hakim, vol 2 p 331
Haytami, Majam al Zawaid, vol 7 p 28-29
Itqan, vol 3 p 84

time of the Prophet, an idea later supported the prominent 2nd/8th century jurist and traditionist Malik b. Anas, founder of the Maliki school of Islamic law.[36] There are also reports that

[36] Zarkshi, vol 1 p 263
Itqan, vol 1 p 226

Suras 15 (al-Hijr) and 24 (al-Nur) had once been of a different length.[37] And Abu Musa al-Ash'ari recalled the existence of two

[37] Sulaym, p 108
Abu Mansur al Tabrisi, al Intijaj, vol 1 p 222, 286
Zarkshi, vol 2 p 35

long suras (one verse of each he still remembered) that he could not find in the present text.[38] One of the two verses he recalled ("If

[38] Muslim, vol 2 p 726
Muhasibi, p 405
Abu Nuaym, Hilyat al Awliya, vol 1 p 257
Bayhaqi, Dalai, vol 7 p 156
Itqan, vol 3 p 83

the son of Adam had two fields of gold he would seek a third one...") is also quoted from other Companions such as Ubayy [39], Ibn Masud [40], and Ibn 'Abbas [41]. Maslama b. Mukhallad al-

[39] Ahmad, vol 5 p 131-32
Muhasibi, p 400-01
Tirmidhi, vol 5 p 370
Hakim, vol 2 p 224

[40] Raghib, vol 4 p 433

[41] Itqan, vol 1 p 227

Ansari orfered two further verses that are not in the Uthmanic text [42] and Aisha came forward with a third [43]. Two short

[42] Itqan, vol 3 p 84

[43] Abd al Razzaq, vol 7 p 470
Ibn Maja, vol 1 p 625, 626

chapters known as Sural al-Hafd and Sura al-Khal were recorded in the collections of Ubayy [44], Ibn Abbas and Abu Musa [45]. They were allegedly also known to Umar [46] and other

[44] Muhasibi, p 400-1
Ibn al Nadim, p 30
Raghib, vol 4 p 433
Zarkashi, vol 2 p 37
Haytami, vol 7 p 157
Itqan, vol 1 p 226, 227

[45] Itqan, vol 1 p 227

[46] Itqan, vol 1 p 226-7

Companions [47] although no trace of either chapter is found in the

[47] Itqan, vol 1 p 227, vol 3 p 85

of official text. Ibn Masud did not have Suras 1, 113, and 114 in his collection [48] but he had some extra words and phrases that were

[48] Ibn Abi Shayba, vol 6 p 146-47
Ahmad, vol 5, p 129-30
Ibn Qutayba, Tawail mushkil al Quran, p 33-34
Ibn al Nadim, p 29
Baqillani, al Intisar, p 184
Raghib, vol 4 p 434
Zarkashi, vol 1 p 251, vol 2 p 128
Haytami, vol 7 p 149-50
Itqam, vol 1 p 224, 226, 270-73

missing from the Uthmanic text [49]. He and many other Compa-

[49] Arthur Jeffrey, Materials for the History of the Text of the Quran, the Old Codices, p 20-113

nions also preserved some verses that differed from the official text [50]. There were also widely transmitted reports that after

[50] See the lists, Ibid, p 114-238

the death of the Prophet, 'Ali put all the parts of the Qur'an together [51] and presented it to the Companions; hut they rejected

[51] Ibn Sa'd, vol 2 p 338
Ibn Abi Shayba, vol 6 p 148
Yaqubi, vol 2 p 135
Ibn Abu Dawud, p 10
Ibn al Nadim, p 30
Abu Hilal al Askari, vol 1 p 219-20
Abu Buaym, vol 1 p 67
Ibn Abd al Barr, al Istiab, p 333-34
Ibn Juzay, vol 1 p 4
Ibn Abi al Hadid, vol 1 p 27
Itqan, vol 1 p 204, 248
al Kafi, al Kulayni, vol 8 p 18

it, and he had to take it back home [52]. These reports also sugges-

[52] Sulaym, p 72, 108
Basair al Darajat, p 193
Kulayni, vol 2 p 633
Abu Mansur al Tabrisi, vol 1 p 107, 255-28
Ibn Shahrashub, Manaqib Al Abi Talib, vol 2 p 42
Yaqubi, vol 2 p 135-6

ted thal there were substantial differences between the various versions of the Qur'an.

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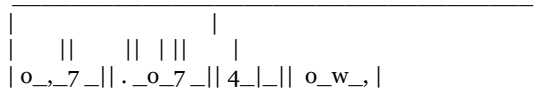

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Early Debates on the Integrity of the Quran (Part II)

It is universally acknowledged in the Islamic tradilion-based on the collective memory of the early generations of Muslims rather than simply on a number of isolated reports that Uthman promulgated an official rescension of the Qur'an and banned all other versions. There were certainly differences between that official Quran and other early codices as there were differences among the variant codices themselves. It was, after all, those differences that necessitated the establihment of a standard and universally accepted text.

It is conceivable that close associates of the Prophet, especially those who had joined him during his years in Mecca, still remembered parts of the revelation that had not been included by the Prophet in the Qur'an. It is also plausible to speculate that Ali whose version of the Scripture might have been one of the most complete and authentic, had offered it to Uthman to be consecrated as the official text, but that his offer was rejected by the caliph who preferred to select and combine elements of all the competing early codices. This in turn may have caused 'Ali to withdraw his manuscript as a basis for compiling of the official rescension. Another Companion, 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, is also reported to have stood aloof from the process and to have declined to offer his own text.[53]

[53] Ibn Abi Dawud, p 15-17
Ibn Asakir, Tarikh madinat Dimashq, vol 39 p 87-91

The foregoing account of the first compilation of the Qur'an is, otherwise, extremely problematic [54]. Despite the significance of

[54] A.T Welch p 404-5 and the sources quoted therein

this report, it does not appear tn any work written by scholars of the 2nd/8th and early 3rd/9th centuries [55]. Some details of the

[55] Thus the story doesn't appear in for instance in Tabaqat of Ibn Sa'd in sections of Abu Bakr, Umar and Zayd b. Thabit, nor in Musnad Ahmad Hanbal or Fadail as Sahaba where he gathered so may reports about their virtues and good services to Islam.

story reportedly took place later at the time that Uthman ordered the creation of a standard Qur'an [56]. Several reports categori-

[56] Bukhari, vol 3 p 392-93, vol 4 p 398-99
Tirmidhi, vol 4 p 347
Ibn Abi Dawud, p 7-9, 20, 29 with Bukhari vol 3 p 393-94
Tirmidhi, vol 4 p 348
Ibn Abi Dawud, p 17, 19, 24-26, 31
Ibn Asakir, Tarikh, Biography of Uthman p 236

cally deny that any official attempt to collect the Qur'an was made before 'Uthman's time [57], an assertion reportedly supported by

[57] Ibn Asakir, Biography of Uthman, p 170
Zarkashi, vol 1 p 241
Other reports suggest that the collection of the Quran had already been started during the time of Umar, but he died before the project was completed during the caliphate of Uthman (Abu Hilal al Askari, vol 1 p 219)

the collective recollections if the Muslim community [58]. Dif-

[58] Zarkashi, vol 1 p 235
Itqan, vol1 p 211
Ibn Asakir, p 243-46

ferent versions of the story reveal major contradictions in regards to some of its main particulars. The name of the Companion

whose testimony alone was accepted [59] and the precise verses in

[59] He is (a) Khuazyma b, Thabit al Ansari in Bukhari vol 3 p 310, 394
Tirmidhi, vol 4 p 347
Abu Bakr al Marwasi, p 103
Ibn Abi Dawud, p 7, 8, 9, 20, 29, 31
Bayhaqi, Dalial, vol 7 p 150
and (b) Abu Khuzayma (Aws b. Yazid) in Bukhari, vol 3 p 392-93
Tirmidhi, vol 4 p 348
Abu Bakr al Marwazi, p 99
Ibn Abi Dawud, p 19
Bayhaqi, Dalail, vol 7 p 149
and (c) an un-identified man of Ansar in Ibn Abi Dawud, p 8
Tabari, Jami, vol 14 p 588
and (d) Unayy in Ibn Abi Dawud p 9, 30
Khatib, Talkhis al Mustadrak, vol 1 p 403
There are also reports which indicate that Ubayy not only knew these verses he knew that they were the last to have been revealed to the Prophet, too (Tabari, Jami, vol 14 p 588-89)

question [60] vary. Contradictory accounts are also given of the

[60] It is the last two verses of Sura 9 in Bukhari, vol 3 p 392-93
Tirmidhi, vol 4 p 347
ABu Bakr al Marwazi, p 99, 103
Ibn Abi Dawud, p 7, 9, 11, 20, 29, 30, 31
Tabari, Jami, vol 14 p 588
Bayhaqi, Dalail, vol 7 p 149
and Verse 23 of Sura 33 in Bukhari, vol 3 p 310, 393-94
Tirmidhi, vol 4 p 348
Ibn Abi Dawud, p 8, 19
Bayhaqi, Dalail, vol 7 p 150
Khatib, Mudih, vol 1 p 276

role of Zayd b. Thabit in the compilation process [61]. The inclu-

[61] In the above cited account of the collection of the Quran he is the one who undertook the task of putting the Quran together in two stages during the times of Abu Bakr and Uthman. Some other reports ascribe the collection of the Quran, including Zayd's participation in it, to the period of Uthman (Bukhari, vol 3 p 393-94; Tirmidhi, vol 4 p 348; Ibn Abi Dawud, p 31; Ibn Asakir, Biography of Uthman, p 234-36)
Other reports don't mention his name at all (Ibn Abi Dawud, p 10-11)
Yets others assert that he had already collected the Quran doing the time of the Prophet, putting together all the fragments of it which were recorded on various sorts of primitive writing material, as in
Tirmidhi, vol 5 p 390
Hakim, vol 2 p 229, 611
In another report, however, he is quoted as stating by the time the Prophet died, the Quran had not been collected, as in
Itqan, vol 1 p 202

sion of the clause related to the acceptance of the testimony of one man alone is an obvious attempt to make the story more acceptable through references to the familiar and widely quoted story Khuzayma Dhu 'l-Shahadstayan, a man whos single testimony was aid to hav ebeen accpted by the Prophet as equivalent to the testimony of two witnesses [62]. In a variation of this story, in

[62] Bukhari, vol 3 p 310
Ibn Abi Dawud, p 29
Khatib, Mudih, vol 1 p 276
Itqan, vol 1 p 206

which the witness is an unidentified man from Ansar, Umar is reported to have accepted the testimony of this single witness on the grounds that the message of the verse he orfered was, in Umar's judgement, true since the verse described the Prophet with qualities that he had really possessed [63]. In other varia-

[63] Tabari, Jami, vol 16, p 588

tions. The verse or verses were said to have been accepted because 'Umar [64], Uthman [65] or Zayd [66] themselves testified that they,

[64] Ibn Abi Dawud, p 30
[65] Ibid, p 31
[66] Ibid, p 8, 19, 29

too, had heard those Verses from the Prophet; or, alternatively, because the caliph had generally ordered that anybody's testimony be accepted provided that he took an oath that he had personally heard from the Prophet the verse or part that he offered for inclusion [67]. Moreover, the story contradicts numerous and widely

[67] Ibn Asakir, p 236, where the episode is ascibed to the period of Uthman who asked the Muslism to come forward with whatever part of the Quran they had in hand. The Muslims came forward with whatever primitive writing material on wwhich they had recorded parts of the Quran. The Uthman asked every single one to swear that he had personally heard what he had offered as a part of the Quran from the Prophet. He then ordered the collected material to be put together as Scriptures.

In an obvious attempt to purge the sotry of these terrible contradictions a variation of it was authored by some later transmitters that suggested that (a) the collection of the Quran started during the reign of Abu Bakr but could not be completed before his death and was put together during the reigns of Umar, that (b), Zayd was the one who wrote the Quran first during the time of Abu Bakr on primitive writing material and then on paper during the time of Umar, that (c), there was no question of testimony or witness, but rather Zayd himself after completing the text once went ovr it and could not find Verse 33:23. He then looked around for it, untill he found the record of it with Khuzayma b. Thabit. He then went over the text once more and this time noticed that the Verses 9:12-129 were missing, so he looked around again untill he found the record with another man who was incidently called Khuzayma as well. When he went over the text for the third time, he found no problem and so the text was completed. (Tabari, Jami, vol 1 p 59-61)

transmitted reports [68] which assert that a number of the Compa-

[68] The list of the early collectors of the Quran is different in different sources, for instance, Ibn Sa'd, vol 2 p 112-14
Ibn al NAdim, Kitab al Fihrist, p 30
Tabarani, al Mujam al Kabir, vol 2 p 292
Baqillani, p 88-90
Dhahabi, al Maridat al qurra al kibar, vol 1 p 27
Zarkashim vol 1 p 242-43
Qurtubi, vol 1 p 57
Itqan, vol 1 p 248-49, quoting Abu Ubayd in his Kitab al Qira'at

nions, notably Ali, Abd Allah b. Masud and Ubayy b. Kab, had collected the Qur'an during the time of the Prophet [69]. Further-

[69] In order to remove the obvious contradictions between these reports and the story in question, the supporters of the story have offered two suggestions. According to one, those who are said to have collcted the Quran during the time of the Prophet, had each made a collection of only a part of the revelation, not a complete version. According to the other, the word "collected", had to be understood to mean that those Companions memorized the Quran during the time of the Prophet, not they they had put a complete record of it together. As mentioned in
Ibn Abi Dawud, p 10
Itqan, vol 1 p 204

more, a clear and suspicious attempt seems to have been made to somehow credit the first three caliphs with achieving the compilation of the sacred scripture of Islam to the exclusion of the fourth, Ali.
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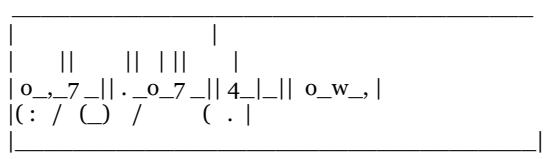

Early Debates on the Integrity of the Quran (Part III)

This latter point, when compared with the reports cited above on Ali's collection of the Quran after the death of the Prophet, may shed some light on the origins of the story. Taking into account some of the early political, and later polemical, disputes within the Muslim community, one may suggest the existence of a multi-stage process in the formation of that account. There was apparently a widely circulating rumor In the first century ot the Hijra to the effect that Ali did not attend the public meeting at which Abu Bakr was declared ruler after the death of the Prophet, and that it also took some time before he swore his allegiance to Abu Bakr. From early times the partisans of Ali have interpreted this as a reflection of his dissatisfaction with the choice of Abu Bakr and used this conclusion as a basis from which to attack the allege consensus of thc Companions which was put forward by the supporters of the caliphs as the legal hasis for the validity of Abu Bakr's succession to caliphate. This line of argument seems also have appeared quite early; possibly even before the decline of the Umayyads in Lhe early 2nd/8th century whem sectarian debates began to flare in the Muslim communily [70]. With the decline of

[70] For instance the poem attributed to Ali in the Sharif al Radi, Nah al Balagha, p 503, "If you (claim that you) have come to power on the basis of consultation, how did then it happen while those who had to be consulted were absent."

the Umayyads, 'Ali could no longer be ignored and a response had to be found. Many of the reports which alleged that 'Ali retreated from public life after the death of the prophet in order to put the Qur'an together mention this as the explanation for his failure to tender an early allegiance to the caliph [71]. It scems very

[71] Ibn sa'd, vol 2 p 101
Ibn Abi Shayba, vol 6 p 148
Abu Hilal al Askari, vol 1 p 219-20
Ibn ABi Dawud, p 10
Itqan, vol 1 p 204

likely [72], therefore, that these reports were composed-using as

[72] Alternatively, there might actually have existed some rumours suggesting that Ali, having noticed that the Seniors of Quraysh had chosen one among themselves as the succesor to the Prophet and having decided to withdraw from the public, kept himself busy with the Quran and took that as an excuse not to participate in any social activity. The Sunnites, however, put forward that excuse as the real cause and denied that 'Ali was unahppy with the Quraysh process of Caliph making.

background material some pre-existing reports and recollections concerning Ali [73] - the sectarian purpose of suggesting that

[73] Ali was among one of the early collectors of the Quran, one of those who collected it during the life time of the Prophet as mentioned in Ibn Asakir, vol 39 p 80.
Ali was known for his vast knowledge and of special dedication to the Quran. (Ibn Sa'd vol 1 p 204)
In his codex of the Quran he had reportedly indicated the verses which were abrogated and those which abrogated them (Itqan, vol 1 p 204).
The exact timing of when he had offered the codex for the official consecration was already blurred by the early 2nd/8th Century. The Shi'ites were themselves were now attributing it to the time of Umar (Sulaymn, p 108, also quoted by Abu Mansur al Tabrisi, vol 1

p 228, vol 2 p 7), but a vague memory of it was presumably still extant.

Ali's delay was not a sign of his dissatisfaction. Instead, Ali was quoted as telling Abu Bakr (when the caliph asked him whether he had failed to swear allegiance because he was unhappy with Abu Bakr's election) that he "had vowed to God not to put on his outside garment except for attending the communal prayer, until such a time as he had put the Qur'an together." [74]

[74] Abu Mansur al Tabrisi, vol 1 p 71
The point that these reports had an anti Shi'ite polemical application can also be attested to by the fact that in some of its later versions, the report is quoted by the Sunnites on the authority of Jafar al Sadiq, who quoted it from his fore fathers (Abu Hilal al Askari, vol 1 p 219)
It was a common practice in the sectarian reports to put the idea on the tongue of the respected authority of the opponent, a practice whioch can also be observed in the cases which shortly follow in the discussion above. (See also Kashshi, p 393-97)

The episode, however, created other problems for the supporters of orthodoxy for it added another item to the list of Ali's special privileges used by the Shi'ites to argue with for his claim to the caliphate. In addition to all his other alleged merits, he was now the one who had undertaken the critical task of assembling the Islamic scripture after the death of the Prophet [75]. This was

[75] Kitab Mihnat Amir al Muminin (an early Shi'ite text preserved in Pseudo Mufid, al Ikhtisas, p 157-75), p 164
Sulaymn, p 113, 120

potentially a dangerous weapon in the hands of his partisans in sectarian debates. The partisans of 'Ali might have already used it against the Uthmaniyya, to counter their argument in support of 'Uthman on the basis that he was the one who established the official and standard Qur'an. For the Uthmaniyya that constituted a real challenge that they met, as in many other cases, by seeking to undermine Shi'ite claims for the special quality of Ali or the House of the Prophet. Some examples are as follows [76]:

[76] For other interesting examples see Ibn Asakir, Biography of Uthman, p 146-68. 290-94

1. Many reports suggest that the Prophet chose Ali as his brother [77] at the time that he established the "brothering" among his followers [78]. A counter report claims this status for Abu Bakr [79], though it is widely believed that the Prophet made Abu Bakr and ' Umar brothers [80]. Many other reports quote the Prophet as saying that "if I could adopt an intimate friend I would adopt Abu Bakr, but your colleague (i.e. the Prophet) is already taken by God as His intimate friend." [81] These seem to have been composed to counter the claim of Ali's selection as the Proephet's brother.

[77] Nur Allah al Tastari, Ihqaq al haqq, vol 4 p 171-217; vol 6 p 461-86 p 450-17; vol 20 p 221-55
Abd al Husayn al Amini, vol 3 p 113-25
[78] Muakhat in the Encyclopedia of Islam, 2nd ed, vol 7 p 253-54
[79] Ahmad b, Handal, Fadail al Sahaba, p 99, 166-7, 378
Bukhari, col 3 p 113-25
[80] Ibn Sa'd, Tabaqat, vol 3 p 123
[81] Ahmad, Fadail, p 99, 166-67, 177, 183-84, 378-79, 411

2. The partisans of Ali regarded him as the most excellent among the companions of the Prophet. Indeed, there are many indications in the history of the Prophet that Ali was in fact one of the pre-eminent Companions. An obviously pro-Uthmaniyya report, however, emphasized that during the time of the Prophet only Abu Bakr ' Umar and ' Uthman were pre-eminent. All others followed with no distinctions of status or eminence. [82]

[82] Ahmad, Fadail, p 86-92
Biography of Uthman, p 153-59
Bukhari, vol 2 p 418

3. In an oft-quoted statement ascribed to the Prophet, he is reported as having called his two grandsons by Fatima- al Hasan and al-Husayn-the "two masters of the youth of Paradise [83]. Another report from the Prophet applies the same epithet to Ali [84]. A counter report calls Abu Bakr and Umar the to masters of the middle-aged of the paradise [85].

[83] Tustari, vol 10 p 544-95; vol 19 p 232-51
[84] Ibn Asakir, Tarikh madinal Dimashq, Section on the Biography of Ali, vol 2 p 260
[85] Ibn Sa'd, vol 3 p 124
Ahmad, Fadail, p 158-59, 771, 774, 780, 788
Daylami, vol 1 p 530

4. A widely circulating statement attributed to the Prophet stated that he was the city of knowledge for which 'Ali was the gate [86]. A counter statement described Abu Bakr as the foundation of the city, 'Umar as the wall and 'Uthman as the ceiling [87].

[86] Tustari, vol 5 p 468-515; vol 16 p 277-309; vol 21 p 415-28
Amini, vol 6 p 61-81
[87] Daylami, vol 1 p 76

5. It is reported that during the early years of the Prophet's stay at Medina, the Companions who had their houses around the mosque of the Prophet had opened exit doors from their houses into the mosque in order to make it easier for themselves to attend the communal prayer there with the Prophet. According to a widely quoted report, the Prophet later ordered all those doors to be closed, excepting only the door that led from the house of Ali, which was virtually the door leading from the house of the Prophet's daughter [88]. (The exception was not, therefore, to signify a merit or to establish a special status for Ali himself.) A counter report, however, tried to establish that it was the door from the house of Abu Bakr which was the exception [89].

[88] Ahmad, Fadail, p 581-82
Tustari, vol 5 p 540-86; vol 16 p 332-75; vol 19 p 243-55;
Amini vol 6 p 209-16
[89] Bukhari, vol 2 p 418;
Ahmad, Fadail, p 70-71, 98, 152, 379

6. It is unanimiously believed that during a ceremonial imprecation that took place between the Prophet and the Christians of Najran towards the end of the Prophet's life [90] he brought with him the members of his immediate family 'Ali, Fatima, and their two sons [91]. This clearly followed the traditional rules for the Arabs' custom of the mutual curse, which required each party to attend in the company of his own household. A counter report however, asserts that the Prophet. was accompanied to the ceremony by Abu Bakr and his family, 'Umar and his family and Uthman and his family [92].

[91] Tustari, vol 3 p 46-62; vol 9 p 70-91; vol 14 p 131-47
vol 20 p 84-87
[92] Ibn Asakir, Biography of Uthman, p 168-89, quoting on the authority of Imam Jafar al Sadiq, who acordingly related it from his father. As noted above, this was a common phenomenon in this genre of material which was auhtored for anto Shi'ite polemical purposes.

7. According to a widely transmitted report, the Prophet described Fatima, Ali and their two sons as constituting his own household [93]. This definition of the Prophet's house is supported by almost all early Muslim authorities [94]. A clearly pro Uthmaniyya report, however, quoted the Prophet as saying that Ali, al-Hasan, al-Husayn and Fatima were his own household while Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and A'isha were the household of God [95].

[93] Tustari, vol 2 501-62; vol 3 p 513-31; vol 9 p 1-69; vol 14 p 40-105 vol 18 p 359-83
[94] Tabari, Jami al Bayan, vol 22 p 6-8
[95] Daylami, vol 1 p 532
Tabari, Jami, vol 22 p 8 quotes that Ikrima, a tabi'i well known for his anti Alid tendencies was crying in the market, that the household of the Prophet were his wives only.

It seems safe to assume that this same model was followed with respect to the reports about Ali's collection of the Qur'an and that the story in question was composed as part of an anti-Shl'ite polemic. The process seems to have beglin with assertions that, with the exception of Uthman, none of the caliphs or any of the Companions collected the Qur'an [96] some made the point more

[96] See above footnote 57

emphatically and stipulated that Ali, in particular, passed away before he could collect it [97]. (In reality, of course, not only did

[97] Ibn Asakir, Biography of Uthman, p 170

Ali witness the collection of the Qur'an, he did not die until years after the official Qur'an had been established.) Another report asserted that the first person to collect the Qur'an was Salim, a client of Abu Hudayfa, who after the death of the Prophet "vowed to God not to put on his outside garment until such a time as he had put the Quran together."[98] This is exactly the state-

[98] Itqan, vol 1 p 205, quoting Ibn Ashta in his Kitab al Masahif

ment attributed to Ali in other reports. Salim was among those who lost their lives in the battle of Yamama[99]. Other reports

[99] Ibn Abd al Barr, p 562

came forward with the straight forward assertion that the first to collect the Qur'an was Abu Bakr.[100] Employing popular beliefs

[100] Ibn Abi Shayba, vol 6 p 148
Ibn Abi Dawud, both quoting the report from Ali

among Muslims concerning 'Uthman's establishment of the standard Qur'an-including the role of Zayd b. Thabit as the project's main coordinator - the role of Abu Bakr in the collection of the Quran was then developed to what is seen in the above-cited account which, at the same time, reserves a major role for Umar as well, in the process.

***A Variant Text of the Fatiha: The Orthography Of The Samarqand codex,* Arthur. Jeffery and I. Mendelsohn, 1943**
(Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 63, 1943, pp. 175-195 (New Haven [etc.] American Oriental Society).

Materials for the History of the Text of Qur'an: The Old Codices : The Kitab Al-Masahif of **Ibn Abi Dawud, Together With a Collection of the Variant Readings from the Codices of Ibn Masud, Ubai, Ali**
by **Abd Allah Ibn Sulayman Sijistani, Arthur Jeffery (Editor)**

Samarqand & Topkapi Qurans:-

SAMARKAND CODEX-

Manuscript evidence is a major problem for Islam and its claims for the Qur'an. Aside from some of the manuscripts discovered in the loft of the **Great Mosque in Sanaa in 1972,** no manuscript fragment of the Qur'an can be dated earlier than first quarter of the 8th century A.D. - nearly 100 years after Muhammad. *(**Calligraphy and Islamic Culture,*** Annemarie Schimmel, 1984, p.4*)*

Muslims attempt to get around this problem by claiming that there are **two**

"Uthmanic recensions", or original copies of 'Uthman's Codex of the Qur'an :
the **Samarkand Manuscript,** in the Tashkent library, Uzbekistan and
the **Topkapi Manuscript,** in the Topkapi Museum, in Istanbul, Turkey.

The flaw in this claim is that these documents are written in the **Kufic Script** which, according to Qur'an scholars **Martin Lings and Yasin Hamid Safadi,** did not appear until the **late eighth century** *(Lings & Safadi 1976:12-13,17; Gilchrist 1989:145-146; 152-153).*

Therefore, both the **Samarkand and Topkapi Codices** could not have been written earlier than 150 years after the 'Uthmanic Recension was [supposedly] compiled - at the earliest during the late 700's or early 800's since both are written in the Kufic script *(Gilchrist 1989:144-147).* This is a serious problem because we have a period of 150 years between the death of Muhammad and the earliest Qur'an. Could there have been changes, or even an evolution of the text of the Qur'an prior to the Umayyad period?

Nevertheless, the **Samarkand Codex** is one of the oldest extant manuscripts of the Qur'an. This fact makes it valuable for comparison with the today commonly printed texts. There are several very interesting textual differences between the "modern Qur'an" and the Samarkand Codex which can be compared at this site:

From: http://www.answeringislam.info/PQ/ch9a-index.html

Related Articles-

1. ***JAM' AL-QUR'AN:*** THE CODIFICATION OF THE QUR'AN TEXT, by John Gilchrist
A `Perfect' Qur'an, or `so it was made to appear to them'?
The Orthography of the Samarqand Codex

2. CHAPTER IX: SAMARQAND VS. 1924 EDITION - 'THE SAME'?
Extensive Textual Comparison

Von Denffer shows us copies of Pages #1 (Q2:7-10), and #375 (Q7:86-87). But that is little evidence after assuring us it indicates:

"In other words: two of the copies of the Qur'an which were originally prepared in the time of Caliph `Uthman, are still available to us today and their text and arrangement can be compared, by anyone who cares to, with any other copy of the Qur'an be it in print or handwriting, from any place or period of time. They will be found to be identical." ***(Ulum,*** p.64)

Indeed, what assurance can 4 verses provide when there are more than 6000 in the Qur'an and his claim about it being the 'Imam' was also wrong!
Had Von Denffer been willing to show us Page 3, we would have found an extra **ya** in the modern **1924 Egyptian Arabic EDITION.**

Page#373/374:

-In the last line of Page #373 the 'original' of Q7:82 is quite different. Is it from 'original' scribal ignorance?
Page #370:
-In line #1 the 'original' Q7:73 contains the letters **lam-alif** which someone has **stroked out** and which are absent from the modern version.

Page #369:
-In line #8 the letter **alif** is in the 'original' of Q7:73 while the modern version has the letter **'h'.**

Page #367:
-In line #1 the word in Q7:68 contains the letter **sin** in the 'original' whereas in the modern versions the word has **mim & ya.**

Page #90:
-In line #1 there is **no word** present in the Samarqand 'original' of Q2:283 where the modern Arabic version has the word **Allah.**

-In line #8 we find the pronoun **huwa [he]** is present in the Samarqand 'original' of Q2:284, whereas the modern Arabic version has the word **Allah.**

Page #92:
-In line #10 the 'original' of Q3:37 is not in agreement with the modern version which has more words - including the word **Allah.**

Page #108:

-In line #9 someone has tried to **'add' extra words** to the 'original' -including the word **Allah.** Today they all appear in the modern Arabic version of Q3:78.

Page #118:
-In line #4 the 'original' is **without the word Allah** in Q3:109! It is in the modern version.

-Also in line #4 the letter dal occurs, but is omitted in the modern version.

Page #252:
-In line #1 the 'original' of Q5:119 the **word Allah is absent,** yet has been introduced into the modern version.

Page #320:
-In line #1 the **waw** is absent in the 'original' of Q6:140 but present in the modern version.

-In line #7 **words are absent** in the 'original' of Q6:141 **but present** in the modern version.

Page #321:
-In line #10 several **words are absent** in the 'original' of Q6:144 [although the attempt has been made to 'introduce' them in the margin] but are present in the modern version.

Page #365:
-In line #2 a ya is present in the 'original' of Q7:63whereas the modern version has two consonants.

Page #323: -The modern version of Q6:146 **contains many more words** than are found in line #2 of the 'original' [although again we see words 'added' in the margin].
-In line #7 in the 'original' of Q6:147 we note that an **alif** is present - but not in the modern version.

Page #15: -In the modern version of Q2:57 a **word appears** which is not in line #5 of the 'original' but a small portion remains in the margin where it was sought to 'add' it.

The truth is that these are but a few of the many variations found between the **modern versions** of the **Arabic texts** and that which is found in the **Samarqand 'original'.**

A large number of them can be viewed in Appendix A.

Further reading-

1. http://www.bible.ca/islam/library/Jeffery/Samarqand/index.htm
The Orthography of the Samarqand Codex by Arthur Jeffery A. and I. MENDELSOHN

JAM' AL-QUR'AN: THE CODIFICATION OF THE QUR'AN TEXT, by John Gilchrist

2. http://www.al-islam.org/encyclopedia/chapter8/8.html

Early Debates on the Integrity of the Quran (Part I)

[This article is written by **Professor Hossein Modarresi** from Princeton University, NJ]