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The Contribution of Modern Muslim Scholars and Institutions to Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies: A Preliminary Survey

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Abstract

The Idea of this paper is to document the contributions of contemporary Muslim scholars, Islamic institutions, and postgraduate students to the

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Areas of interest: Quran translations into English, Philosophical exegesis, Orientalism, Quranic manuscripts especially early Mushafs, and Muslim minorities in South America.

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study of Qur'ān manuscripts through an initial bibliographic survey. **The central question** addresses the extent and scope of these contributions, examining whether there was any reluctance among Muslim scholars to engage in the study of Qur'ān manuscripts. **The objectives of this paper** is to provide a preliminary comprehensive overview of the efforts made by contemporary Muslim scholars and Islamic institutions in this domain. Furthermore, **this study showcases** the significant contributions of contemporary Muslim scholars and Islamic institutions to the study of Qur'ān manuscripts, highlighting their roles and any reservations they may have had regarding the analysis of ancient Qur'ān manuscripts. The paper also identifies key challenges in this field, including the scarcity of previous studies, limited bibliographic surveys, and the lack of dedicated Qur'ānic research centers in the Muslim world. **In this paper, a statistical and analytical methodology** was applied, the statistical methodology was facilitated by a preliminary bibliographic list from the e-Ma'rifa Foundation, which included books, published articles in academic journals, conference papers, and university theses. Additional data were provided by the Tafsir Center for Quranic Studies.

The findings reveal that contemporary Muslim scholars, postgraduate students, and Islamic institutions have made substantial contributions to the study of Qur'ān manuscripts, with no significant opposition to analytical studies in this area. **Consequently**, the authors **recommend** the establishment of specialized centers to conduct comprehensive studies on Qur'ān manuscripts across the Muslim world.

Keywords: Qur'ān manuscripts, modern Muslim scholars, Orientalists, 'Uthmān Muṣḥaf.

إسهامات علماء المسلمين المعاصرين والمؤسسات الإسلامية في دراسة المصاحف المخطوطة: دراسة إحصائية أولية

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ملخص البحث

تقوم فكرة هذا البحث على تبيان إسهامات العلماء المسلمين المعاصرين والمؤسسات الإسلامية وطلبة الدراسات العليا في دراسة المصاحف المخطوطة، من خلال مسح بيبليوغرافي مبدئي. وتتمثل إشكالية البحث في معرفة مدى وسعة هذه الإسهامات، وهل كان العلماء المسلمون يجدون حرجاً في دراسة المصاحف المخطوطة. ويهدف هذا البحث إلى تقديم صورة مبدئية عامة لجهود العلماء المسلمين المعاصرين، والمؤسسات الإسلامية في دراسة المصاحف المخطوطة. وتكمن أهمية هذا البحث في أنه أول بحث في هذا المجال إذ هو يعرض إسهامات العلماء المسلمين المعاصرين والمؤسسات الإسلامية في دراسات المصاحف المخطوطة، مع تسليط الضوء على أدوارهم والتحديات التي قد عبروا عنها تجاه دراسة المصاحف العتيقة. وهو يُعرف بالتحديات التي تواجه هذا المجال، خاصةً في ظل ندرة الدراسات السابقة والمسوحات الببليوغرافية، وقلة وجود المراكز العلمية القرآنية في العالم الإسلامي. وقد اقتضت طبيعة البحث أن نسلق المنهج الإحصائي والتحليلي وقد ساعدنا في ذلك ما وفرته لنا مؤسسة معرفة من قائمة ببليوغرافية مبدئية حول الدراسات المتعلقة بالمصاحف سواء منها ما كان كتاباً أو بحثاً منشوراً في مجلة علمية أو مؤتمر علمي أو رسالة جامعية، وكذلك ما وفره لنا مركز تفسير للدراسات القرآنية من معلومات. وكان من أهم نتائج هذا البحث هو البرهنة على أن العلماء المسلمين المعاصرين وطلاب الدراسات العليا والمؤسسات الإسلامية قد بذلوا جهوداً كبيرة في مجال خدمة المصاحف المخطوطة، وأنهم لم يمانعوا أبداً إجراء دراسات تحليلية عن هذه المصاحف. لذا يرى الباحثان أن هناك ضرورة للتوصية بإنشاء مراكز خاصة تعنى بجمع المصاحف في العالم الإسلامي وإجراء دراسات معمقة عنها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المصاحف المخطوطة، العلماء المسلمون المعاصرون، المستشرقون، مصحف عثمان.

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Introduction⁽¹⁾

The study of early Qur'ānic manuscripts has significantly expanded in the past three decades, with a notable increase in interest from Western scholars and researchers.⁽²⁾ Central to Western scholarship has been the investigation into the authenticity of the Qur'ānic text and whether the text currently in circulation can be traced back to the foundational period of Islam, specifically the era of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and his immediate successors, the Caliphs: Abū Bakr, 'Umar I, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī. While Muslim scholars maintain that the Qur'ān has been preserved in its original form,⁽³⁾ both orally and in writing, since the

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- (1) The major theme of this article was presented during Prof. Abdallah El-Khatib's lecture entitled "Why modern scholarship in the Muslim world expresses concerns and reservations about the study of Qur'ān manuscripts?" at the workshop we attended: Qur'ān Manuscripts, Past and Present: Cataloging and Digital Tools, held in Berlin from September 18th to 23rd, 2023. The workshop was organized by Michael Marx (Corpus Coranicum BBAW), Christoph Rauch (Oriental Department, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin), and Sali Shahsivari (Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation) at Unter den Linden 8, Room 07W04, hosted by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. Later, Abdallah El-Khatib and Ahmad W. Shaker contributed to and expanded this article.
 - (2) For the history of Western interest in the field of Qur'ānic manuscripts, see Alba Fedeli, *Early Quranic Manuscripts, Their Text, and the Alphonse Mingana Papers Held in the Department of Special Collections of the University of Birmingham*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, College of Arts and Law, Institute of Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing, September 7, 2015, pp. 5, 12, 16. See also Abdallah El-Khatib, "The Orientalists Reading of the Quran: Corpus Coranicum as an Example," in *The Noble Quran: From Revelation to Compilation*, proceedings of the conference organized by the Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation Center for the Study of Islamic Manuscripts, London, held in Istanbul, 2017, pp. 562-566.
 - (3) 'Alī 'Nizī, *Jam' al-Qur'ān fī 'Ahd Abī Bakr*, *Journal of Sharia and Islamic Studies*, vol.30, issue100, March 2015.

Prophet's time, Western Orientalists have expressed diverse and often conflicting views on the subject. For instance, J. Wansbrough posited that the Qur'ānic text as it is known today was compiled 200 years after the Prophet's death,⁽¹⁾ a stance that contrasts sharply with that of contemporary Orientalists, such as Sergio Noja Nosedada⁽²⁾ and Marijn van Putten. These scholars argue, based on studies in Qur'ān codification and paleography, that the text has been preserved with only minor variations, which are well documented by Muslim experts in Qirā'āt, from an early stage.

Putten, in his 2019 article for the Bulletin of SOAS titled "The Grace of God' as Evidence for a Written Uthmanic Archetype: The Importance of Shared Orthographic Idiosyncrasies,"⁽³⁾ presented significant findings from his examination of 14 early Qur'ānic manuscripts. He noted a consistent spelling of the phrase "Ni'mat Allāh" ("Grace of God") across all manuscripts, suggesting that they originated from a single written archetype, likely part of a codification project in the 1st century of Islam.⁽⁴⁾ This consistency implies that Qur'ānic manuscripts were derived from written exemplars from the outset, supporting the Muslim

(1) See also the following article: Abdallah El-Khatib, "The Journal of Quranic Studies published by SOAS, London University: The Question of Objectivity and Prejudice," *Journal of the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2020), p. 100. <https://doi.org/10.29117/jcsis.2020.0257>

(2) See S. N. Nosedada, "Parerga to the Volumes of Sources de la Transmission Manuscrute du Texte Coranique," p. 172, in M. Kropp (Ed.), *Results of Contemporary Research on the Qur'an: The Question of a Historio-Critical Text* (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 100).

(3) See Marijn van Putten, "The Grace of God" as evidence for a written Uthmanic archetype: the importance of shared orthographic idiosyncrasies" in *the Bulletin of SOAS*, 82, 2 (2019), 271–288.

(4) *Ibid.*, p.272.

perspective on the Qur'ān's early codification—a view that has gradually gained acceptance in the Western academic sphere.

The debate now primarily revolves around the events between 'Uthmān's codification and the Prophet's death, with Muslims emphasizing three key points:

1. The Qur'ān was transmitted both orally and in written form from the Prophet's time.
2. The Prophet's death marked the beginning of the existence of a complete written copy, known as Muṣḥaf, that is still in use today.
3. 'Uthmān's edition standardized the text's orthography and content, leading to widespread agreement on the Qur'ān across Muslim regions. To this end, 'Uthmān dispatched four copies⁽¹⁾ of the text to the major cities Mecca, Basra, Kufa, and Damascus, each accompanied by a reciter.

Despite the consensus among Muslim scholars on this question, skepticism persists in both Western and Eastern circles. According to Dr. Donner,⁽²⁾ Qur'ānic studies in the West have been marred by 'chaos', a situation that, as Prof. Walid Salih suggests,⁽³⁾ necessitates a redirection of the field toward more coherent methodologies. Salih advocates for recognizing the Qur'ān as an analyzable text that conveys a clear message,

(1) Some views suggest that they were seven copies.

(2) Fred M. Donner, "The Qur'ān in Recent Scholarship: Challenges and Desiderata," in *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context*, ed. Gabriel S. Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 29.

(3) Walid Salih, "In Search of a Comprehensible Quran: A Survey of Some Recent Scholarly Works," *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies* 5, no. 2 (Autumn/Winter 2003): 143-162.

challenging the dominance of the etymological approach that often undermines the text's intelligibility by seeking explanations in cognates from other Semitic languages.⁽¹⁾

Angelika Neuwirth's work,⁽²⁾ particularly on the Meccan chapters of the Qur'ān, has been instrumental in advocating for an analysis of the Qur'ān that respects its compositional coherence. This approach, which recognizes the Qur'ān's chapters as cohesive units of analysis, promises to significantly enhance the quality of scholarship in the field, following in the footsteps of scholars such as Toshihiko Izutsu.⁽³⁾

The last topic for the researcher of the Qur'ān is to concentrate more on the context of the Qur'ān and analyze its coherence, instead of comparing it to the Bible, and to consider the concepts of intertextuality and borrowing.

Importance of the Study:

This study showcases the significant contributions of contemporary Muslim scholars and Islamic institutions to the study of Qur'ān manuscripts, highlighting their roles and any reservations they may have had regarding the analysis of ancient Qur'ān manuscripts. Furthermore, it is the first paper of its kind.

Study Question:

This study attempts to answer the following questions: What roles have modern Muslim scholars played in Qur'ānic Manuscript

(1) *Ibid.*,

(2) See Angelika Neuwirth, *Studien Zur Komposition der Mekkanischen Suren*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1981).

(3) Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qur'an, Semantics of the Qur'anic Weltanschauung*, 2nd. ed., (Malaysia: Islamic Book Trust, 2002).

Studies (QMS)? Have they expressed any reservations about delving into the study of Qur'ān manuscripts?

A definitive answer emerges, which is that Muslim scholars, postgraduate students, Islamic institutions, and exhibitions have diligently engaged in studying and advocating for the study of Qur'ān manuscripts from the past century to the present.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that, unlike in the Western world, the Islamic world lacks dedicated institutions or large-scale projects focused on Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies. The pressing need for such establishments underscores the necessity of creating a center dedicated to Qur'ānic studies.

Objectives of this Study:

- 1 - To highlight the efforts done by Muslim scholars in the field of Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies.
- 2 - To prove that Modern Muslim scholars expressed no concerns or reservations about the study of Qur'ānic Manuscript.
- 3 - It is the first comprehensive study on this topic.

Literature Review

The authors found no previous studies or literature surveys on the topic of this article.⁽¹⁾ Therefore, we searched the e-Marifa

(1) There are some general bibliographical works about Qur'ānic Studies which are not specific to this topic. See for example the following references: Morteza Karimi-Nia, *Bibliography of Qur'ānic Studies in European Languages*, (Qum: The Centre for Translation of the Holy Qur'ān, 1433/2012); Samuel J. Ross, "What Were the Most Popular tafsīrs in Islamic History? Part 1: An Assessment of the Manuscript Record and the State of tafsīr Studies", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, Volume 25 Issue 3, Page 1-54. <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2023.0555>; Claude Gilliot, art. 'Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Classical and Medieval', in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*; Andrew Rippin, 'The Present Status of Tafsīr Studies', *Muslim World* 72 (1982), pp. 224–238; and Andrew Rippin, art. 'Tafsīr', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn.

database⁽¹⁾ for a bibliographical survey about Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies to gain a glimpse into this important field of study. In addition, we have written to Tafsir Center for Qur'anic Studies to provide us with all the articles they published in their site on this topic. These articles are listed below in this article.

Contribution to the Field

This article has contributed to the field of Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies as it is the first article which provide a general view about the real contributions of Muslim scholars and Islamic institutions to this field.

Scope of the Research

Given the themes of this research, it is limited to explaining Modern Muslim Scholar's and institutions' contributions to Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies from the mid of the nineteenth century till now.

(1) We would like to express our gratitude to Prof. Sami al-Khazrendar, Chairman of Arcif and e-Marifa, for assisting us in conducting a bibliographical survey of books, articles, conferences, and related materials pertinent to the topic of this article. The survey can be found here:

https://search.emarefa.net/ar/search?query%5B0%5D%5Btext%5D=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%81&query%5B0%5D%5Bfield%5D=all&query%5B1%5D%5Boperator%5D=OR&query%5B1%5D%5Btext%5D=%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%85+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A2%D9%86%D9%8A&query%5B1%5D%5Bfield%5D=all&query%5B2%5D%5Boperator%5D=OR&query%5B2%5D%5Btext%5D=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%AA+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A2%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9&query%5B2%5D%5Bfield%5D=all&has_full_text=0&query%5Blimiter%5D=&query%5Blimiter%5D=&lang=&page_no%5Blimiter%5D=equal&page_no%5Bnumber%5D=&type=&year%5B0%5D=&;-year%5B1%5D

Methodology:

Relying on the e-Marifa database and other sources, we used a partial statistical methodology and an analytical methodology to achieve the results of this article.

Paper Content:

This article is structured into the following sections:

The introduction, three parts and a conclusion followed by the bibliography as follows:

- _ Introduction
- _ Part one: Efforts by individual scholars
- _ Part two: Efforts by institutions
- _ Part three: Efforts by postgraduate students
- _ Conclusion

I

Efforts by Individual Scholars

This section provides an overview of the initial scholarly efforts in Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies by contemporary Muslim scholars. We examine contributions from scholars in Central Asia, India, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Yemen, offering insights into their methodologies and findings.

Musa Bigiev (1870–1949)⁽¹⁾

Bigiev, also known as Musa JārAllāh Bigi, was a prominent Tatar Islamic scholar and theologian of the early 20th century.

(1) For further information about Jarullah Bigiev, see Efim A. Rezvan, *The Qur'ān and Its World* (St. Petersburg: Institute of Oriental Studies, 2001), pp. 36-38, especially note no. 61. See also, Efim A. Rezvan, "The Qur'ān and Its World, VIII/2. West-Östliche Divans (The Quran in Russia)," *Manuscripta Orientalia*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1999), pp. 45, 58, note no. 61. Available at https://lib.kunstkamera.ru/files/lib/978-5-88431-178-7/978-5-88431-178-7_08.pdf.

Born in the Russian Empire, he emerged as a significant figure within the Tatar intellectual community, particularly in the Volga–Ural region. Bigiev wrote an early treatise on the history of the Qur’ān and Masāḥif, which was published in Arabic by the Islamic Press of Saint Petersburg in 1313 AH/1895 CE.⁽¹⁾ While Bigiev did not extensively analyze a specific Qur’ān manuscript, he was notably drawn to the classical writings on rasm al-muṣḥaf, particularly by al-Dānī (d. 444 AH) and al-Shāṭibī (d. 590 AH).

In 1905, Bigiev examined a well-known Qur’ān manuscript located in Saint Petersburg believed to have originated from Caliph Uthmān ibn ‘Affān. He shared his thoughts on this manuscript and made the following observations:

I had the opportunity to visit this revered manuscript during my trip to St. Petersburg. Upon examination, I was certain that it wasn’t the “Imām’s Muṣḥaf” due to its substantial size. Scholars have often described the Imam’s Muṣḥaf as being approximately the size of two hand palms, with a slightly greater length. This is documented in various texts. By this measure, ‘Uthmān’s Muṣḥaf, may Allāh be pleased with him, would be just a tad larger than our standard manuscripts. However, it definitely isn’t as large as the one housed in the St. Petersburg Library. Additionally, it’s worth noting that Uthmān’s Muṣḥaf vanished after his martyrdom, leaving its whereabouts a mystery. Some believe it was last with his son, Khālid, but its subsequent location remains unknown.⁽²⁾

(1) Mūsá Jār Allāh, *Tārīkh al-Qur’ān wālmṣāḥif*. Sānt Buṭrusburgh: al-Maṭba‘ah al-Islāmīyah, 1313 AH.

(2) See Ṭāha al-Walī, “al-Qur’ān al-Karīm fī Bilād al-Rūsīyā,” *al-Mawrid*, 1980, issue 4, pp. 29-30.

Similarly, Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn al-Margānī al-Qāzānī (1818–1889)⁽¹⁾ examined the very same manuscript in 1844, when it was located in Samarkand. He made the following observations to some Tatar Muslim newspapers regarding the authenticity of its attribution to Caliph ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān:

Inside Samarqand, housed in a madrasah attributed to Khwājah ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Aḥrār, there was an ancient muṣḥaf written on animal parchment using the Kūfī script. This muṣḥaf was devoid of the typical diacritical marks, punctuation, verse indicators, sūrah names, and other such annotations. Some pages had a distinct red hue, resembling twilight, rumored to be blood. People from Bukhārā and Samarqand have professed that this was the ‘Imām’s Muṣḥaf,’ which belonged to ‘Uthmān himself, may God be pleased with him. After capturing Samarqand, the Russians relocated this manuscript to St. Petersburg. They proudly asserted it as the primary muṣḥaf of Muslims, adding that even our scholars can’t read it.⁽²⁾ Although I recognize its antiquity, I am not convinced it’s the ‘Imām’s Muṣḥaf’. I had a chance to examine

(1) See Tayyar Altıkulaç, *Al-Maṣāḥif al-Ūlā: Dirāṣah wa-Taḥqīq li-Aqdām al-Maṣāḥif allatī Waṣalatnā*, trans. Şāliḥ Sa’dāwī (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2016), p. 201. Also consult D. A. Shagaviev, “The Works of Shihab ad-din al-Marjani on Islamic Scholastic Theology,” *Minbar. Islamic Studies* 13, no. 1 (2020): 103-116, <https://doi.org/10.31162/2618-9569-2020-13-1-103-116>. Additionally, refer to E.G Sayfetdinova, “Manuscript of the Osman’s Quran in the History of the Golden Horde,” *Minbar. Islamic Studies* 16, no. 2 (2023): 263-272, <https://doi.org/10.31162/2618-9569-2023-16-2-263-272>. Retrieved on April 7, 2024.

(2) This muṣḥaf, written in old Kufic script without diacritical points, presented a challenge for readers unfamiliar with this script. Given the difficulty in deciphering it, people in Central Asia may have revered it for its spiritual blessings (baraka) rather than for practical reading purposes.

and read it during my visit to Samarqand in 1260 AH (1844 AD). About fifteen years earlier, I penned my thoughts on this muṣḥaf in my book ‘Wafiyat al-Aslāf’, specifically in the biography of Mullā ‘Abd al-Raḥīm bin ‘Uthmān al-Ūtūz Āymanī, who passed in 1250 AH (1834 AD).⁽¹⁾

The conclusion reached by Musa Bigiev and Shihāb al-Dīn al-Margānī, both deeply rooted in Islamic tradition, casts significant doubts on the authenticity of the St. Petersburg Qur’ān manuscript’s attribution to Caliph ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān. Although modern-day research on early Qur’ān manuscripts has significantly advanced since their time, it is important to acknowledge their initial efforts in the modern framework of Qur’ānic Manuscript Studies in the Muslim world.

The following scholar, who also originates from Central Asia, continued the legacy of these earlier contributions to the study of the ancient masāḥif.

Ismā‘īl Makhdūm (1893–1976)⁽²⁾

Born in Namangan, Uzbekistan, in 1893, shaykh Ismā‘īl Mukhdūm was a prominent religious scholar who memorized the Qur’ān by age 13. He played a key role in the revival of Islamic institutions in Central Asia during the Soviet era, leading the Hajj pilgrimage six times and editing various Qur’ān editions. He was

(1) Taha al-Wali, “al-Qur’ān al-Karīm,” p.30.

(2) For further information about his efforts see Tayyar Altıkulaç, *Al-Maṣāḥif al-Ūlā: Dirāsah wa-Taḥqīq li-Aqdām al-Maṣāḥif allatī Waṣalatnā*, tr. by Şāliḥ Sa’dāwī. Istanbul: IRCICA, 2016, pp. 196, 207. Additionally, see Ismatulloh Abdulloh, “Sheikh Ismail Mahdum (1893-1976),” accessed April 8, 2024, <https://www.savol-javob.com/en/sheikh-ismail-maxdum-1893-1976/>.

versed in the history, culture, and languages of the Central Asian region. Mukhdūm died in 1976 in Tashkent, leaving a lasting legacy, with a street and mosque named in his honor in Namangan.

In his concise work titled *Tārīkh al-Muṣḥaf al-‘Uthmānī fī Tashkand*, published in 1971, Makhdūm discussed the history of the Samarkand Qur’ān manuscript, which had been examined by both Bigiev and al-Qāzānī. He traced the journey of this specific manuscript to Central Asia and discussed whether it was the original ‘Uthmānic muṣḥaf or not. In the introduction to this work, Makhdūm states the following:

When the Russians captured Samarkand, they recognized the value of this precious Qur’ān manuscript and spread its news. From then on, pens and newspapers discussed it, and books circulated its stories. However, they used various methods to introduce it, especially in this new Soviet era. Researchers eagerly sought it, particularly after knowledge flourished in Uzbekistan, attracting scholars from all fields. Tashkent became a hub, drawing tourists and delegations eager to learn about and examine this muṣḥaf. Among them, Muslim delegations were the most eager to seek the truth about its origin. The religious administration saw the need to compile a book, so, seeking God’s help, I compiled a book gathering everything related to this noble muṣḥaf, from major works to local narratives. This book was titled “The History of the ‘Uthmānic Muṣḥaf in Tashkand.” My role was merely to gather and organize [information], with God’s help, and He is sufficient for me, the best trustee.⁽¹⁾

(1) Ismā‘īl Makhdum, *Tārīkh al-Muṣḥaf al-‘Uthmānī fī Tashkand*, pp. 5-6

Makhdūm discussed the views of the earlier scholars, Margāni and Bigev, who doubted the attribution of the Samarkand Qur'ān manuscript to Caliph 'Uthmān based on the Islamic tradition. Disagreeing with their assertions, he argued that the manuscript should indeed be considered one of the 'Uthmānic master copies that reached Central Asia.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, his conclusion was based mostly on the riwāyāt (narrations), along with a basic understanding of Arabic script and the material used for the manuscript, such as animal skin (parchment). However, his insights were circumscribed by the constraints of the era, given the less developed state of Islamic manuscript studies compared to the present time.

Our next topic of discussion in the context of modern interest in Qur'ānic manuscripts pertains to a figure originating from the Indian subcontinent.

Muhammad Hamidullah (1908–2002)

Muhammad Hamidullah was a renowned Islamic scholar, historian, and author of Pakistani origin. Born in Hyderabad, India, he was fluent in several languages and contributed to Islamic studies through his extensive research and writings. Among his notable works is the translation of the Qur'ān into French. Hamidullah also discovered ancient manuscripts that provided insights into early Islamic history. He lived in France for many years, where he served as a professor and continued his academic pursuits, earning a reputation as a prominent figure in Islamic scholarship worldwide.

In 1963, Hamidullah wrote an article in Arabic that shed light

(1) *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41

on German scholarship on the Qur'ān, specifically focusing on the history of German translations.⁽¹⁾ Within this article, a section titled "The Lost Qur'ān Institute" elaborates on a Qur'ānic project funded by the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in Munich. This project laid the foundational groundwork for the modern Corpus Coranicum project in Berlin.⁽²⁾

According to Hamidullah, the University of Munich in southern Germany had once established a unique institute dedicated to Qur'ānic research. Tragically, during World War II, this institute was destroyed by "American" bombings, leading to the loss of its contents.⁽³⁾ Hamidullah emphasized the importance of this institute, noting that the German Orientalists Gotthelf Bergsträsser and Otto Pretzl had dedicated their lives to it. Substantial investments were made by the university and the Prussian government for its creation and further development. At the time, it was regarded as the world's largest Qur'ānic museum.

Hamidullah's fascination with old Qur'ānic manuscripts traces back to 1933 when he encountered Otto Pretzl in Paris. At that

(1) Muhammad Hamidullah, "al-Ālmān fī khidmat al-Qur'ān", *fikr wa-fan*, 1963, Issue 2, pp. 17-18.

(2) On the history of this project and its association with Corpus Coranicum, see Michael Marx, "The Koran According to Agfa Gotthelf-Bergsträbers Archiv Der Koranhandschrift," *Trajekte - Zeitschrift Des Zentrums Für Literatur- Und Kulturforschung*, 2009, Volume 19, pp. 25-29.

(3) It was initially believed that the British bombed the Institute, leading to the destruction of the film archive. However, this was later proven wrong, and the archive was subsequently rediscovered. See Andrew Higgins, "The Lost Archive," *The Wall Street Journal*, 12 January 2008, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB120008793352784631>

time, Pretzl was leading the Qur'ānic project for the Bavarian Academy of Sciences. Hamidullah later recounted their meeting as follows:

When I was at the University of Paris in 1933, the third director of the Institute. Mr. Pretzl, came to Paris to get photocopies of all the ancient manuscripts of the Holy Qur'an available in the Public Library of Paris.⁽¹⁾ The professor told me personally at that time (1933) that the institute had 43,000 photocopies of the Holy Qur'an and that the work of collation was proceeding apace. During the Second World War, a bomb hit the building of the Institute destroying the edifice, the library and the staff. An interim report published shortly before the beginning of the Second World War stated, inter alia, that the work of collation of the Qur'anic manuscripts had not yet been completed. The examination conducted until then suggested that while some mistakes of calligraphy had been detected in the manuscripts, not a single discrepancy in the text had been discovered.⁽²⁾

More recently, Yūsuf al-Sinārī shared archival material from the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts in Cairo, dated November 28, 1962. This archival material reveals Muhammad Hamidullah's request for multiple images of the Kufic Qur'ān manuscripts, which were obtained by the institute delegations from several major libraries. Below is a partial translation of that document:

I am presently engaged in studying ancient Qur'ān manuscripts.

(1) Referring to Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

(2) M. Hamidullah, *The Emergence of Islam*, tr. Afzal Iqbal, India: Adam Publishers, 1993, p. 22.

While going through your institute's catalog of photographed manuscripts (Part 1, 1954), I noticed references to several manuscripts numbered 9, 10, 14, 18, 19, 21, 31. Would it be possible for you to provide me with photocopies of two or three pages from these manuscripts, particularly those containing the author's name? Could you also include two or three pages from each manuscript?⁽¹⁾

Based on this document, Hamidullah's focus extended to several Qur'ān manuscripts primarily housed in Turkish libraries, notable for their colophons or marginal notes attributing authorship to prominent Islamic figures. However, it is worth noting that the attributions and dates provided are subject to debate. Among these manuscripts, number 9 is attributed to Khadīj ibn Mu'āwiyah and dated 52 AH (672 CE), while number 10 is attributed to 'Uqbah ibn 'Āmir, dating back to 52 AH (672 CE). The manuscripts numbered 14 and 18 are associated with 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, while the numbers 19, 21, and 31 are linked to 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān.⁽²⁾

During Hamidullah's time, the study of Qur'ānic manuscripts was still in its infant stage, with very few resources available. Nevertheless, he demonstrated a profound interest, particularly in the Samarkand Qur'ān codex. In the 1980s, he self-published photographs from its facsimile edition, along with a two-page

(1) He presented this archive material—a letter from Muhammad Hamidullah addressed to Muḥammad Rashād 'Abd al-Maṭlūb—in a lecture titled “‘Ulamā' Mukhtaṭṭāt Ṭawāhum al-Nisāyan,” hosted by the Quran Manuscripts Initiative on July 29, 2023, <https://youtu.be/A1d9JYDBJis?si=uSSQLPAEkUoUvSc3>

(2) See Fu'ād Sayyid, *Fihris al-Makhṭūṭāt al-muṣawwarah*, Ma'had al-Makhṭūṭāt al-'Arabīyah, Cairo, pp. 1-4

forward.⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, Hamidullah expressed hope that Muslim countries would initiate efforts similar to the German project of the 1920s. The project systematically photographed thousands of Qur'ānic manuscripts from collections in Europe and the Middle East for the research institute in Munich.⁽²⁾

While not specialized in Qur'ān manuscripts, Hamidullah demonstrated a keen interest in them, which is evident from the numerous articles he authored in both English and Arabic. These articles often showcased specimens from Qur'ān manuscripts in Kufic script obtained from various libraries.⁽³⁾ This indicates his curiosity and engagement with Qur'ānic studies, despite not being his primary area of specialization, as he was more focused on Islamic law and economics.

Muhammad Hamidullah's initial contributions set the foundation for a prominent Turkish scholar, Tayyar Altikulac, who is described in a subsequent section.

(1) Ahmad von Denffer, *Ulum al-Qur'an: Introduction to the Science of the Quran*, Islamic Foundation, 1983, p. 64. Due to the self-nature of this work, we were unable to locate its origin, though it seems to have been printed in Philadelphia, USA.

(2) It's noteworthy that nearly a decade has passed, yet we still lack such an institute in the Muslim world, despite calls for its establishment by Arab scholars.

(3) Muhammad Hamidullah's interest in Quran manuscripts is evident from various articles; see for instance "Ṣan'at al-kitābah fī 'ahd al-Rasūl wa-al-ṣaḥābah," published in *Fikr wa Fann*, issue 3, January 1964, pp. 21-27, and "Orthographical Peculiarities in the Text of the Qur'an," published in *Islamic Reviews*, October 1954, p. 15.

***Fehmi Ethem Karatay (1888–1968)*⁽¹⁾**

Fehmi Ethem Karatay was a pioneering figure in modern Turkish librarianship. Born in Istanbul, he graduated from Galatasaray High School and initially studied architecture before his military service in World War I. Captured by British forces in Iraq, he was imprisoned in India. Upon returning to Turkey, he transitioned into teaching and then librarianship, contributing significantly to the field by organizing library courses and setting up library systems within Turkey. Karatay's works include foundational texts in librarianship and catalogs of manuscripts, significantly impacting the preservation and organization of Turkey's literary heritage.⁽²⁾

Between 1951 and 1969, Karatay compiled two catalogs of Arabic manuscripts kept at the Topkapı Palace Museum⁽³⁾ and the Istanbul University Library.⁽⁴⁾ These catalogs included sections on Qur'ān manuscripts. The following example showcases Karatay's catalog entry for a Qur'ān manuscript kept at the Topkapı Palace Museum (H. S. 194):

(1) We would like to extend our gratitude to Esra Gözleer for bringing this figure to our attention. See Esra Gözeler's lecture titled "Qur'anic Manuscripts Studies in Türkiye: State of the Art and New Developments," presented at the workshop "Qur'ān Manuscripts, Past and Present: Cataloging and Digital Tools" in Berlin, on September 20, 2023.

(2) Semavi Eyice (2001). "KARATAY, Fehmi Ethem." *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. Retrieved March 12, 2024, from <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/karatay-fehmi-ethem>

(3) Karatay, İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Arapça Yazmalar Kataloğu, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1951

(4) Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi Arapça Yazmalar Kataloğu*, 1962-1969

1 HS 194. Codex of the Qur'ān. Parchment. 410 + 3 folia of 460 mm height and 400 mm width. The text area, written in Kufic script [contains] 18 lines measuring 300 mm. [The manuscript] was probably copied during the 1st and 2nd centuries. The date 1226 AH (1811–12 CE), added at the beginning [of the manuscript], suggests that this is the Qur'ān codex [kelâm kadim] that the third Caliph 'Uthmān recited when he was martyred. There are three Qur'an folia of various sizes added at the end of the codex) and ends in the middle of Q 53:32; II. [folio] 315 mm wide and 240 mm high beginning with *واسرؤا النجوى ...* of the 2. verse [3. verse] of Q 21 (Sūra al-'Anbiyā') and continuing till the end of Q 21:16 flap [miklep] and a writing mandorla/writing sun [yazma şemse, an almond shaped aureola].⁽¹⁾

As can be seen from the catalog entry, Karatay provided a sufficient set of details about the manuscript, covering its relevant aspects. This includes the measurements, the script used, the Qur'ānic content, the dating, the type of binding employed, and any noteworthy observations or notes associated with it.

Given the tendency of many catalogs of Islamic manuscripts throughout the Muslim world to either omit Qur'ān manuscripts from their inventories or provide only scant details about them, Karatay stands out as a commendable exception in this regard.

The next figure is also from Turkey and has contributed

(1) See Esra Gözeler (in collaboration with Tuba Karaşahin), "Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi: HS 194 [= Karatay 1]", in: *Manuscripta Coranica*, published by Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, edited by Michael Marx, <https://corpuscoranicum.de/en/manuscripts/1977/page/1>

significantly to the study of Qur'ān manuscripts in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Tayyar Altıkulaç (1938 –)⁽¹⁾

Born in 1938 in Devrekani, Altıkulaç memorized the Qur'ān at nine and graduated from Istanbul's High Islamic Institute in 1963. He taught at İmam Hatip schools, studied Arabic in Baghdad, and held various religious-administrative roles in Turkey, including President of Religious Affairs, until 1986. He contributed significantly to Islamic studies, recording Turkey's first complete Qur'ān recitation and editing classical Qirā'āt works.

Altıkulaç's interest in ancient Qur'ānic manuscripts began in the late 1960s after encountering works by Azhari scholars Muhammad 'Abd al-'Azīm al-Zurqānī (d. 1948) and Muhammad Hamidullah.⁽²⁾ Al-Zurqānī questioned the authenticity of Qur'ānic copies attributed to the third caliph, 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān, due to their inclusion of decorative elements and markers not typical of early manuscripts. He discussed the renowned muṣḥaf associated with 'Uthmān at Al-Hussein Mosque in Cairo, suggesting that it was likely transcribed from one of 'Uthmān's master copies.⁽³⁾

(1) This section provides an updated summary of an article Ahmed W. Shaker authored several years ago. For the original piece, see Ahmed W. Shaker, "Tayyar Altıkulaç and His Contributions to Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies," *IQSA*, 26 June 2017, <https://iqsaweb.org/2017/06/26/tayyar-altikulac-and-his-contributions-to-quranic-manuscript-studies>

(2) Altıkulaç states clearly that he was influenced by Hamidullah's works. See Tayyar Altıkulaç, *Al-Maṣāḥif al-Ūlā: Dirāsah wa-Taḥqīq li-Aqdām al-Maṣāḥif allatī Waṣalatnā*, tr. by Şāliḥ Sa'dāwī. Istanbul: IRCICA, 2016, p. 192

(3) Muhammad Zurqānī, *Manāḥil al-'irfān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, pp. 330-331

Inspired by Al-Zurqānī's account, Altıkulaç sought to examine this monumental muşḥaf. Despite traveling to Cairo in 1969 for this purpose, he faced challenges due to a lack of official cooperation and his inexperience at the time. However, decades later, in 2009, he managed to examine the muşḥaf and publish it as a facsimile edition.

In addition, Hamidullah suggested that the original Qur'ānic codices sent by 'Uthmān may have been lost over time. He listed three known copies attributed to 'Uthmān, including those in the Topkapı Palace Museum, Tashkent, and the India Office Library, the latter bearing a later colophon indicating that it was 'copied by 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān.'⁽¹⁾

Between 2007 and 2017, within the framework of IRCICA's project, Altıkulaç played a significant role in the meticulous reproduction and scholarly presentation of early Qur'ānic codices attributed to caliphs 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. Assigned by IRCICA, Altıkulaç's task involved preparing these ancient manuscripts for academic publication, which included comprehensive transcriptions, annotations, and supplementary materials.

Altıkulaç's dedication to this endeavor led to the publication of five early codices attributed to 'Uthmān, housed in various institutions such as the Topkapı Palace Museum, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in Istanbul, Central Library of Islamic Manuscripts, and Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo. Additionally, he contributed to the publication of a codex attributed to 'Alī that

(1) Muhammad Hamidullah, *Introduction to Islam*, p.22.

was kept in Şan‘ā and another one in Mashhad, Iran.⁽¹⁾ He also published four Hījāzī Qur’ān fragments from European libraries, including the British Library (Or. 2165), the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Arabe 328a), Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Wetzstein II 1913), and the Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen (Ma Va 165).

Altıkulaç’s scholarly contributions are summarized in his Turkish monograph titled *Günümüze Ulaşan Mesahif-i Kadîme: İlk Mushaflar Üzerine Bir İnceleme* (Old extant copies of the Qur’ān: A study of the earliest copies).⁽²⁾ This publication synthesizes his research on ancient Qur’ānic manuscripts, offering insight into their significance and historical importance.

It is worth noting that Altıkulac’s work emphasizes the importance of studying Qur’ān manuscripts and encourages modern Muslim scholars to actively engage in these studies. On one occasion, he offers crucial insight into the following observation:

Certainly, it’s perplexing why Muslim researchers haven’t undertaken a comparative analysis between the manuscripts they possess and those dating back to the time of the Companions. Were they unaware of Western Orientalists’ efforts to collect ancient manuscripts from across the Islamic world? Additionally, why didn’t they consider presenting Caliph ‘Uthmān’s manuscripts for scrutiny, especially when witnessing attempts to cast doubt on the Qur’ān’s authenticity? Were

(1) This volume was published with Astan Quds Razavi Library in 2017.

(2) This volume was published by IRCICA in 2015.

their apprehensions about potential challenges to their preconceived notions hindering them from doing so?⁽¹⁾

Altıkulaç acknowledges the significant efforts of thousands of reciters who have memorized the Qur'ān over the decades and the abundance of written copies. However, he highlights a major shortcoming: the failure of modern Muslims to take the necessary steps to study and publish these manuscripts.

Altıkulaç's work has significantly influenced the study of Qur'ān manuscripts in the modern 21st-century Muslim world. With him, we witness the emergence of a scholarly methodology grounded in the examination and analysis of Qur'ānic codices, marking a departure from the reliance on mere thoughts and opinions prevalent among Muslim writers in the early 20th century.

As we shall see in the next section of this paper, Altıkulac's research on the old masāḥif has captivated scholarly minds, leaving an indelible mark on postgraduate students in the Muslim world, especially in Turkey and Iraq.

The next figure to be discussed in this article is a scholar from India who brought a unique perspective to the study of Qur'ānic manuscripts.

Muhammad Mustafa al-Azami (1932–2017)

Muhammad Mustafa Azami was an Indian Islamic scholar known for his expertise in hadith literature. He earned a PhD

(1) Tayyar Altıkulaç, *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf: Nuskhah Maṭḥaf al-Fann al-Islāmī*, p. 25. Additionally, Altıkulaç voiced similar concerns during his interview with Prof. Abdallah El-Khatib in Istanbul in the summer of 2022. Furthermore, he wrote a refutation to Daniel Alan Brubaker's views on the Qur'ān collection. His book is entitled: *Daniel Alan Brubaker'e Reddiye*, Istanbul: IRCICA, 2020.

from the University of Cambridge and authored influential works such as “Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature.” Azami’s contributions significantly impacted the study of hadith authenticity and methodology.

In the late 1990s, al-Azami underwent a significant shift in his scholarly focus, transitioning from his established project on hadith studies and literature to the emerging field of Qur’ān manuscript studies.⁽¹⁾ This shift was notably influenced by the growing discourse surrounding Qur’ānic fragments discovered in Yemen during the 1970s, a topic that captured the attention of journalists and academics alike. Additionally, the publication of Italian orientalist Sergio Noja Noseda’s series on early Hijāzī Qur’ān fragments,⁽²⁾ which commenced in 2001, further propelled al-Azami’s interest in this field.

Al-Azami recounts his meeting with Sergio Noseda in the following excerpt:

In the summer of 2002, I was among a number of guests at Prof Sergio Noseda’s seaside retreat in Italy. We had never met before, but, as Professor of Arabic at the Catholic University of Milan, he was keenly drawn to Qur’anic manuscripts, and this was one of several aspects where our professional interests overlapped. Curiosity led me to thumb through his collection, and I was startled at the sheer volume

(1) This is evident in his book, *The History of the Qur’anic Text from Revelation to Compilation: A Comparative Study with the Old and New Testaments*, 2nd ed. (UK, 2008), pp. 95-113.

(2) On this project, see Ahmed W. Shaker article: “Sergio Noja Noseda and the Quran Manuscripts Studies,” *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 28 (2), 2023, pp. 105-108.

of high-quality images he had of precious Qur'anic fragments from the treasure trove in Sanaa', Yemen.⁽¹⁾

The limited access Mustafa al-Azami had to Qur'ān manuscripts from Yemen in 1999 stands in stark contrast to the extensive collection of high-quality images that Sergio Nosedá possessed during their encounter in 2002. While al-Azami could only obtain a few samples,⁽²⁾ Nosedá's comprehensive collection showcased a wealth of precious Qur'ānic fragments from the Ṣan'ā' trove and other world collections.

His later work, including the posthumously published book *Ageless Quran Timeless Text*,⁽³⁾ exemplifies his dedication to advancing the field. In this visual approach, al-Azami presented Sūrah al-Isrā' through 17 Qur'ān manuscripts spanning from the 1st to the 13th century AH. He relied on Qur'ān manuscripts from world collections in London, Berlin, Samarkand, Istanbul, India, Ṣan'ā', Tunisia, Riyadh, and Dublin.

Al-Azami systematically extracted the words of Sūrah al-Isrā' from these manuscripts, organizing them visually in chronological order. Additionally, he incorporated tables to highlight the agreements and orthographical variations in comparison to the printed Medina Muṣḥaf of 1405 AH/1984 CE. In summarizing his findings, Al-Azami stated:

Our major takeaway from this project is this: indeed across

(1) Al-Azami, *Ageless Quran Timeless Text*, p. 3.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 3.

(3) Ahmed W. Shaker has previously reviewed this work in Arabic. See Ahmed W. Shaker, "Arḍ Kitāb al-naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī al-khālid 'abra al-'uṣūr," *Tafsir Centre for Research and Studies*, 10 June 2019, <https://tafsir.net/article/5182/ard-ktab-alns-s-al-qr-aany-al-khald-abr-al-swr-lmhmd-mstfa-al-a-zmy>

the centuries, as we hypothesized, Muṣḥafs have adhered to ‘Uthmān’s consonantal text. Traversing continents and epochs, in the end, the differences were orthographical (centering on the explicit rendering or not of the middle alif). The unity of text, once dots and diacriticals in the latter Muṣḥafs opens up to us even more of how each word is to be pronounced, affirm that the oral and the written must have worked together as an integrated whole from the very start.⁽¹⁾

Al-Azami’s approach to the Qur’ānic manuscripts uniquely displays each verse of a single surah across 13 centuries on one page, allowing readers to appreciate the script and artistic features of every verse. This method celebrates the Qur’ān’s rich textual and artistic heritage in a visually engaging way.

The next two figures to be discussed in this article are Arab scholars from Iraq and Yemen.

Ghānim al-Ḥamad (1950–)⁽²⁾

Ghānim Qaddourī al-Ḥamad is an Iraqi scholar, author, and researcher renowned for his work in the Qur’anic sciences and Tajwīd. Born in Tikrit in 1950, al-Ḥamad’s family later moved to Baiji, where he grew up. He completed his high school education in 1967 and pursued higher education at the University of Mosul, where he received a bachelor’s degree in Arabic Language Sciences in 1970. Al-Ḥamad furthered his studies at Cairo

(1) Al-Azami, *Ageless Quran Timeless Text*, p.44.

(2) For his full biography, see: <https://dr-ghanim.com/node/4> Further, on September 6, 2023, Prof. al-Ḥamad sent a letter to Prof. Abdallah El-Khatib, detailing a comprehensive list of his published works related to the study of the maṣāḥif.

University, obtaining a master's degree in Linguistics in 1976 with a thesis on Qur'anic orthography titled "Rasm al-Muṣḥaf dirāsah lughawīyah tārikhīyah."⁽¹⁾ He earned his Ph.D. in Arabic Language from the University of Baghdad in 1985, focusing on phonetic studies among Tajwīd scholars in his dissertation.

Since the 1970s, Al-Ḥamad has contributed extensively to the field of Qur'ānic studies. He has published academic papers in Arabic on rasm al-muṣḥaf and Qur'an manuscripts, which were later collected and edited in his book 'Ilm al-Maṣāḥif.⁽²⁾ His foundational work, which brings new perspectives to Qur'ānic studies and its relation to Qur'ān manuscripts, is titled 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān al-Karīm bayn al-Maṣādir wa al-Maṣāḥif.⁽³⁾ His most recent book, which serves as an introduction to this new field of study, is titled Al-Madkhal ilá 'Ilm al-Muṣḥaf al-Makhtūṭ.⁽⁴⁾ Furthermore, he edited and studied some important mushafs, such as al-Mukhallisī's Muṣḥaf (343 A.H.), Yāqūt al-Musta'simī's Mushafs, and Ishbīlyā Muṣḥaf.

Recently, Al-Ḥamad received the Doha Arabic Book Award for his outstanding work in Qur'ānic and linguistic studies. In discussing his research on manuscript copies of the Qur'ān, he noted the following:

The topic of Qur'ānic manuscripts is a vital and significant one, which previously did not attract the attention of researchers and scholars. When I was studying for my master's degree, I

(1) On his early interest in ancient masāḥif kept at Egyptian libraries, See Ghānim Al-Ḥamad, *Rasm al-Muṣḥaf*, p. 160 (ft. 3).

(2) Published by the Society for the Preservation of the Holy Quran (Amman, Jordan) in 2018.

(3) Published by Tafsir Centre for Quranic Studies in 2017.

(4) Published by Al-Ghauthānī Centre for Quranic Studies in 2024.

wanted to read some of the ancient masāḥifs in the Egyptian National Library, but it was difficult to obtain the necessary permissions. Nonetheless, I managed to read the muṣḥaf of the 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ mosque, which is one of the oldest Qur'ān manuscripts written in the ancient Kufic script.⁽¹⁾

He further elaborated on the status of Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies in the Muslim world over the past decade, noting significant developments:

Ten years ago, the field of Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies underwent a significant transformation with the advent of digital imaging technologies. Manuscripts were digitally photographed in color and made available online. Notably, the muṣḥaf kept at the Al-Ḥusayn Mosque was digitized and made accessible electronically. Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç took the initiative to reproduce this copy, enabling individuals to compare the physical and digital versions of the manuscript from the comfort of their own homes.

The final figure to be discussed in this section is a prominent scholar from Yemen.

Bashīr al-Ḥimyarī (1970–)

Dr. Bashīr al-Ḥimyarī, a Yemeni scholar affiliated with Taybah University in Medina, Saudi Arabia, is renowned within the Islamic world for his expertise in rasm al-muṣḥaf (Qur'anic orthography) and the Qur'anic counting system. In 2006, he authored the seminal encyclopedic work titled *Mu'jam al-rasm al-'Uthmānī*, which was subsequently published in Riyadh in 2015.

(1) See Ghānim Qadūrī Al-Ḥamad, "Shahādah Ghānim Qadūrī al-Ḥamad bimunāsabat al-dawrah al-tā'sīsīyah li-Jā'izat al-Dawḥah lil-Kitāb al-'Arabī." *YouTube*, 14 April 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nh-V-ILWHFM>.

This lexicography represents an innovative endeavor, organizing Qur'ānic words alphabetically and detailing their orthography based on classical rasm works and Qur'ān manuscripts. Initially, its compilation was based on five Qur'ān manuscripts; however, in its latest edition, this number has expanded to include 10 manuscripts.⁽¹⁾

Al-Ḥimyarī's interest in Qur'ān manuscripts began in 2003 when he published a study on a folio from the Sana'a collection as part of his bachelor's degree.⁽²⁾ In addition, he edited the following Old Qur'ān manuscripts, which are in publication: Paris 5122, Paris 399, and the muṣḥaf preserved in the King Fahad National Library in KSA, No. 2500.⁽³⁾

Currently, Dr. al-Ḥimyarī conducts periodical lectures (mājalis 'ilm),⁽⁴⁾ offering commentaries on classical Islamic texts on Qur'ānic orthography and verse counting systems, such as Al-Muqni' fī rasm al-muṣḥaf by Al-Danī and Ḥusn al-madad fī 'ilm al-'adad by al-Ja'barī. These lectures contribute to the preservation and interpretation of Islamic scholarly heritage that focuses on the Masāḥif sciences.

(1) He shared this information with Prof. Abdallah El-Khatib. As of the writing of this article, the anticipated edition has not yet been released.

(2) See Ahmed W. Shaker, "Mu'jam al-Rasm al-'Uthmānī : liqā' ma'a al-Duktūr Bashīr al-Ḥimyarī," *Majallat al-Dirāsāt al-dīnīyah*, online electronic magazine, December 2015, Issue 3, pp. 23-27, available at https://religmag.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/rsm_issue3.pdf

(3) He informed Prof. Abdallah El-Khatib during a meeting at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina on Wednesday, 10 April 2024, which was the last day of Ramadan 1445 AH.

(4) These *majālis* can be found on his YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/@Balhemyari>

Muslim Scholars in Western Academia and Emerging Researchers

This section explores the impact of Muslim scholars in Western academia, highlighting Yasin Dutton's contributions and the works of emerging researchers in the field.

Yasin Dutton

Yasin Dutton is a scholar specializing in Islamic studies, particularly in the fields of Islamic law, theology, and Sufism. He has written extensively on various aspects of Islam and has translated classical Islamic texts into English. Dutton has taught at universities in the UK and the Middle East, and he is known for his contributions to the academic study of Islam.

By the late 1990s, Dutton had begun publishing papers that focused on vocalization in Qur'ānic manuscripts.⁽¹⁾ Among his works are analyses of two early Qur'ān manuscripts: Or. 2165,⁽²⁾ housed in the British Library, and BnF Arabe 328,⁽³⁾ located in the Bibliothèque

(1) See Yasin Dutton, "Red Dots, Green Dots, Yellow Dots and Blue: Some Reflections on the Vocalisation of Early Qur'anic Manuscripts — Part I." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1999, pp. 115–140; "Red Dots, Green Dots, Yellow Dots and Blue: Some Reflections on the Vocalisation of Early Qur'anic Manuscripts (Part II)." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2000, pp. 1–24.

(2) See Yasin Dutton, "Some Notes on the British Library's 'Oldest Qur'an Manuscript' (Or. 2165)." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2004, pp. 43–71. Additionally, Intisar Rabb has also made contributions to the study of this muṣḥaf as she had access to the full manuscript, whereas Yasin Dutton at the time only had access to a facsimile edition which contained only the first 61 folios out of 121. See Intisar Rabb, "Non-Canonical Readings of the Qur'an: Recognition and Authenticity (The Ḥimṣī Reading)," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 2006, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 84–127.

(3) See Yasin Dutton, "An Early Muṣḥaf According to the Reading of Ibn 'Āmir." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 2001, 3(1), 71–89.

nationale de France. Additionally, he published a study on an Umayyad Qur'ānic fragment kept in a private collection.⁽¹⁾ Another key area of his research is the study of Ḥijāzī Qur'ān fragments from the Mingana collection at the University of Birmingham.⁽²⁾

Omar Hamdan

Professor Omar Hamdan holds the position of Chair of Qur'ānic Exegesis at Tübingen University. His academic contributions are notable, particularly in the field of the sciences of Maṣāḥif, focusing on the readings of the Qur'ān (Qirā'āt). Among his works is the extensive encyclopedic volume titled al-Kāmil fī al-Qirā'āt al-Khamsīn by al-Hudhalī.

Recently, he published and edited a two-volume Qur'ān fragment found in the Tübingen University Library, published as “Maṣāḥif Tübingen al-Makḥṭūṭah: al-Rābi'ah al-Qur'āniyyah (M a VI 157 & M a VI 166).”⁽³⁾

Efforts by emerging researchers in the field

In concluding this section, we acknowledge the contributions

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- (1) See Yasin Dutton, “An Umayyad Fragment of the Qur'an and Its Dating.” *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2007, pp. 57–87.
 - (2) Yasin Dutton, “Two ‘Ḥijāzī’ Fragments of the Qur'an and Their Variants, or: When Did the Shawādh become Shādh?” *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 8.1 (2017): 1-56.
 - (3) See Omar Hamdan and Taghrīd Hamdan, *TübingerKoranhandschriften, Das Koranfragment M a VI 157 mit Faksimile-Ausgabe*, 1st. ed., (Tübingen University: Zentrum Fur Islaische Theologie, 2022) vol.1. & Omar Hamdan, Seyma Nur Unal, and Funda Eryurt, *TübingerKoranhandschriften, Das Koranfragment M a VI 166 mit Faksimile-Ausgabe*, 1st. ed., (Tübingen University: Zentrum Fur Islaische Theologie, 2022) vol.2.

of notable emerging scholars in Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies, including Morteza Karimi-Nia,⁽¹⁾ Abdullah M. Al-muneef,⁽²⁾ Esra

(1) Morteza Karimi-Nia (born in Qum, Iran, 1971), studied Islamic theology in a traditional manner in Qum Seminary (al-Ḥawza al-'Ilmīyya) as well as "Qur'ānic and Ḥadīth Studies" at the University of Tehran in a modern academic way. With his more than 100 Persian, Arabic & English articles and some monographs about the Qur'ān, as well as a 12-years experience in teaching and researching in Islamic Azad University (Tehran), he is recognized as a Muslim scholar in the fields of Qur'ānic studies in Iran. Due to his encyclopedic work *Bibliography of Qur'ānic Studies in European Languages* (Tehran, 2012), he has been engaged in western scholarship on the Qur'ān as well. Since 2012 he is involved in the field of Qur'ān-manuscripts studies. His last publication on *Codex Mashhad* as a facsimile edition received great evaluations and praise for its comprehensiveness amongst both Muslim and Western scholars. This publication is detailed in "*Codex Mashhad: Qur'ān Manuscripts Nos. 18 & 4116 in the Āstān-i Quds Library, edited by Morteza Karimi-Nia*, (Qom: The Alulbayt Islamic Heritage Institute in 1444AH/2022; this codex is accompanied with another separate book entitled: *Codex Mashhad: An Introduction to its History and Content*, (Qom: The Alulbayt Islamic Heritage Institute: 2023); See also Morteza Karimi-Nia, "Codex Mashhad, An English Introduction" in *youtube* in:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06mQgvL9K7s>. in Arabic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzAgTCdbKIU>, in Persian: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_uwovsu9Tg & <https://codexmashhad.com/en/overview/>. See also Morteza Karimi-Nia, *Early Kufic Qur'ān's in Iran and a Survey of their Dispersed Leaves*, (Tehran: The Holy Quran Print an Publication Center, 1444/2022).

(2) See his two works: *Dirāsa Fanniyya li Mushaf Mubakkir*, "An Art Study of an Early Quran preserved in the King Fahad National Library in KSA", (Riyadh: 1998) and IDEM, *The Arts of Najdi Mushafs*, Ph.D. thesis in 2007 at King Saud University, KSA.

Gözleer,⁽¹⁾ Abdallah El-Khatib,⁽²⁾ Hythem Sidkey,⁽³⁾ Abderrazak Hermas,⁽⁴⁾ Syed Hussain Murtaza,⁽⁵⁾ Ali Aghaei,⁽⁶⁾ Rami Hussein

- (1) Esra Gözeler, "A Study on Qur'ān Manuscripts in the Vatican Library in terms of Physical and Content Features," *Cumhuriyet Theology Journal*, vol. 22, no. 1 (June 2018), pp. 627-678; Esra Gözeler, "ŞE 4141 Rulo: Türk Ve İslam Eserleri Müzesinde Kufi Bir Kur'an Elyazması". *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 63, no. 1 (May 2022): 1-32.
- (2) Abdallah A. El-Khatib (born in Baalbek, Lebanon in 1965-.....) holds an MA from London University (SOAS) and a Ph.D from Manchester University in Quranic Studies in 1993. He is now professor of Quranic Studies at Qatar University, whose interest in the old *masahif* began in 2015 and he visited many important libraries for the purpose of studying old *masahif* such as : Leiden, Hamburg, Berlin, Paris, Istanbul, St. Petersburg Qatar, Saudi Arabia and other palaces. See his two publications on old *masahif*: Abdallah El Khatib, "Editing MS Leiden OR.14.545 B-C: The Oldest Qur'ān Fragments In Leiden University Library", *Journal Islamic Manuscript*, 2023 Issue 14, pp.1-46. Recently, Al-Khatib conducted an interview with Al-Jazeera regarding Quran manuscripts. You can also view the interview here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-diVDNny8QMKXnDa1YxUhpjPPYFdh2i/view?usp=drivesdk>.
- (3) See Hythem Sidky, "On the regionality of the Qur'ānic codices." In *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association*, vol. 5.1 (2020), pp. 133-210. See also his latest article: Ahmad al-Jallad and Hythem Sidky, "A Paleo-Arabic Inscription of a Companion of Muhammad?", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, volume 83, No1, April 2024, pp.1-14.
- (4) See his book: Abderazzak Hermas and Mohamed El Boukhārī, Manuscripts of the Koran in the National Library of France, the collection of *the chancellor Pierre Segurier d.1672*, (Riyadh, 1442 AD).
- (5) He recently published the following book entitiled: *Holy Quran Writing and collection during the era of holy Prophet (S.a.w.a.w)*, (Karachi: Martaza Library & Zahra Academy, 2023).
- (6) Some of his works are: Radiocarbon Dating Of Manuscripts Kept in the Central Library of the University of Tehran, published online by Published by Cambridge University Press, in *Radiocarbon*, Vol 65, Nr 2, 2023, p 307–321 <https://doi.org/10.1017/RDC.2023.2>; Carbon Dating of Seven Parchment Qur'ān Manuscripts and One Syriac Bible of the National Museum of Iran, in *Journal of Iranian National Museum*, vol. 2, issue 1, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.22034/JINM.2022.553481.1055>; and Digital Analysis and Online Publication of Early Kufic Quranic Manuscripts Kept in Iranian Collections, https://quranmss.com/2020/04/20/irankoran_project/

Halaseh,⁽¹⁾ and others. These works continue to advance the field significantly.

II

Efforts by institutions

While there is no single institution exclusively focused on Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies in the Muslim world at present, numerous academic centers and organizations are deeply involved in the research and preservation of Qur'ān manuscripts.

IRCICA

The Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) is an international institution based in Istanbul, Turkey. Established in 1980 by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), IRCICA aims to promote research and education in Islamic history, art, and culture. It conducts scholarly activities, including conferences, publications, and exhibitions, to foster understanding and appreciation of the rich heritage of the Islamic world. Through its efforts, IRCICA contributes to preserving and promoting Islamic culture globally.⁽²⁾

At the beginning of the 21st century, the IRCICA initiated a project to collect and publish facsimile editions of ancient Qur'ānic manuscripts. In 2002, the IRCICA released a facsimile of the muṣḥaf Fāḍil Bāshā, a Qur'ān manuscript dated to 582 AH/1186 CE, housed at the Gazi Husrev-beg Library in Sarajevo. This effort was followed in 2005 by the facsimile publication of the

(1) His recent book is: *The Topkapı Qur'ān Manuscript H.S. 32: History, Text, and Variants*, (Islam – Thought, Culture, and Society, 7, Gruyter), 2024.

(2) <http://ircica.com>

muṣḥaf Qāzān (Kazan), dated 1217 AH/1802 CE, which is regarded as the earliest printed Qur'ān in the Islamic world. From 2007 onwards, the IRCICA focused on the reproduction of early Qur'ānic texts attributed to the caliphs 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. This task was entrusted to Tayyar Altikulaç, who was responsible for preparing these ancient manuscripts for scholarly publication.

Tafsir Center for Qur'anic Studies

Founded in 2008 in Riyadh, the Tafsir Center for Qur'anic Studies is dedicated to advancing Qur'ān studies through scientific, educational, technological, and media initiatives. It aims to innovate, disseminate pioneering research, introduce the Qur'ānic sciences to wider audiences, and provide advanced facilities for the development of Qur'ānic studies.

Since 2019, the Tafsir Center for Qur'anic Studies has released a significant body of work on its website,⁽¹⁾ comprising 21 scholarly articles focused on Qur'ān manuscripts, in addition to 10 translations that span broad discussions on maṣāḥif and provide in-depth analyses of the Ṣan'ā' palimpsest. This prolific contribution is systematically cataloged in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Title of Articles Related to Qur'anic Manuscripts

Number	Title	Publication Date
1	Introduction to the Manuscript of the Quran at the University of Tübingen, Germany, No. MaVI165	27-3-2022

(1) <http://tafsir.net>

Cont. Table 1

Title of Articles Related to Qur'anic Manuscripts

Number	Title	Publication Date
2	Study of the Quran Manuscript Preserved in the (Hakim Oglu) Library, No. (1) in Istanbul	14-3-2022
3	Study of the Quran Manuscript Preserved in the (Aya Sophia) Library, No. (23) in Istanbul	26-2-2022
4	Study of the Quran Manuscript Preserved in the (Mughal) Library, No. (1) – The Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul	17-1-2022
5	Study of the Quran Manuscript Preserved at the Walters Museum, No. (w.563.koran) – United States of America	18-12-2021
6	Study of the Quran Manuscript of the (Hidaya) Library, No. (13) in Istanbul	22-11-2021
7	Study of the Quran Manuscript Preserved in the National Library, No. (7263) –Paris	18-10-2021
8	Study of the Quran Manuscript Preserved in the Dar Al-Ilm Library, No. (88012)	24-3-2021
9	Study of the Quran Manuscript of the Ahmed Pasha Library, No. (1) – Koç University Library in Istanbul	9/2/2021
10	Study of the Quran Manuscript of the Kayseri Rashid Efendi Library, No. (4) – Turkey	19-12-2020
11	Study of the Quran Manuscript of the Sultan Ahmed Library, No. (11) – The Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul	29-6-2020
12	Quranic Manuscript Written in Kufic Script at the Juma Al Majid Center for Culture and Heritage	21-3-2020

Cont. Tabel 1

Title of Articles Related to Qur'anic Manuscripts

Number	Title	Publication Date
13	Study of the Quran Manuscript of the Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih Library, No. (16) – The Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul	26-2-2020
14	Study of the Quran Manuscript (Nur al-Othmaniya), No. (17) – The Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul	28-12-2019
15	Early Quranic Leaf in Ma'il Script from the Tareq Rajab Museum in Kuwait	16-11-2019
16	Study of the Quran Manuscript of the Istanbul Municipal Library, No. (04)	24-6-2019
17	Study of the Quran Manuscript (Hakim Oglu), No. (3)	27-5-2019
18	Writing the Word of God; Quranic Manuscripts in the Context of Their Time	16-4-2019
19	Quranic Manuscripts Between Islamic Approach and Orientalism: Reality –Problems – Prospects	21-8-2022
20	Qurans of the Cities: A Review of Qurans Copied in the Early Days of Islam	21-5-2022
21	Before the Cairo Quran: A Glimpse at the Study of Early Qurans	7-6-2023

Table 2

Translated Articles About Quranic Manuscripts and the Sana'a Palimpsest

Title	Publication Date
Quranic Manuscripts in the Late Period of Muslim Spain: A Study of the (Almonacid de la Sierra) Collection	28-12-2022
Malik's Inheritance from His Grandfather: The Quran of Ibn Abi Amer	7/12/2022

Cont. Table 2

Translated Articles About Quranic Manuscripts and the Sana'a Palimpsest

Title	Publication Date
When Did the Quran Become a Closed Text?	4/7/2022
Some Notes on the Oldest Quran Manuscript in the British Library (No. Or. 2165)	2/7/2022
Compiling the Quran: Reassessing Western Approaches in Light of Recent Methodological Developments	25-6-2022
Comparing the Uthmanic Codex and One of the Sanaa Manuscripts (Sanaa Palimpsest 1): Insights into the History of the Quran's Compilation	11/6/2022
Common Script Features in Early Quran Manuscripts: Evidence of an Uthmanic Written Origin	28-5-2022
Qurans of the Cities: A Review of Qurans Copied in the Early Days of Islam	21-5-2022
Sanaa 1 and the Origins of the Quran	23-3-2022

Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation Center for the Study of Islamic Manuscripts

The Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, studying, and promoting Islamic heritage worldwide. Established in 1988 in London, UK, the foundation focuses on cataloging, digitizing, and conserving Islamic manuscripts and other cultural artifacts. It also supports research, publications, and educational initiatives aimed at advancing the knowledge and appreciation of Islamic heritage. The foundation collaborates with institutions, scholars, and experts globally to fulfill its mission of safeguarding and disseminating the rich intellectual and cultural legacy of Islam.

The foundation organized three consecutive conferences titled “The Noble Qur’ān from Revelation to Compilation,” held in Istanbul in 2017 and 2019, and in Rabat, Morocco in 2022.⁽¹⁾ These conferences brought together specialized scholars in Qur’ānic Studies and Qur’ānic manuscripts to share their research. A total of 32 articles were presented, delving into various aspects of this area of research.

Additionally, the foundation collaborated with the Berlin State Library and the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences to host a training course titled “Quran Manuscripts: Past, Present, and Digital Tools.” This event took place in Berlin from September 18 to 23, 2023. It attracted 30 participants and fostered cooperation between Muslim and European scholars working in this field.⁽²⁾

Qur’an Manuscripts Initiative (QMI)⁽³⁾

Founded by Ahmed W. Shaker in 2020, the Qur’an Manuscripts Initiative is a pioneering research project focused on Qur’anic manuscripts and Islamic documents. This initiative is the first in the Arab world to concentrate on Qur’anic manuscripts and provide publicly recorded lectures online.

Among its goals are to reconnect Arab Muslim researchers

(1) The lectures can be accessed and viewed on YouTube through the following links:
<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1ri262Fg97lkqyBz9JEMkTy-0QC8BK2b;>
<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1ri262Fg97nCJ3qOkLkO26zaZoz6TFLq;>
https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1ri262Fg97kESy3iTPoj_1dS2guCuz7b

(2) For more details on this training course, read our report; Ahmed W. Shaker and Abdallah El-Khatib, “Bridging Traditions: Berlin Workshop on Quranic Manuscripts and Modern Digital Tools.” *Quran Manuscripts Studies Blog*, 4 October 2023, <https://quranmss.com/2023/10/04/berlinworkshop>

(3) <http://quranmss.com>

with their heritage, develop a network for scholarly communication, organize academic events, turn visual content into scholarly publications, form partnerships with scientific organizations both in the Muslim world and the West, and innovate research methodologies for broader engagement.

Since its establishment, the initiative has organized lectures, seminars, and conferences dedicated to this subject. All materials and recordings from these events are available on its YouTube channel <http://YouTube.com/AhmedShakerQM>.

Exhibitions, Conferences, and Seminars

In 2010 the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art (Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi or TIEM) hosted a very important exhibition of its very rich Qur'anic collections from the 8th to the 20th centuries, commemorating the 1,400th year since the first revelations of the Holy Book of Islam.⁽¹⁾ This successful exhibition was followed by another one in the United States entitled "The Art of the Qur'an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts." It was held at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., from October 22, 2016, to February 20, 2017. The catalog for the exhibition was published by the Smithsonian Institution.⁽²⁾ In addition, since the notable rediscovery of the

(1) For more details about this book see: <https://www.oakknoll.com/pages/books/136683/1400th-anniversary-of-the-quran-museum-of-turkish-and-islamic-art-qoran-collection-the>. Last retrieved on 21-4-2024.

(2) For more information about this exhibition, see the following companion publication to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery's groundbreaking exhibition entitled: *The Art of the Qur'an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts*, by Massumeh Farhad (Editor), Simon Rettig (Editor), Julian Raby (Foreword) With contribution from: Francois Deroch, Idhem Eldem, Jane McAlulife, Sana Mirza and Zaren Tanidi, (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2016). <https://www.>

“Birmingham Qur’an” in 2015, there has been a marked increase in interest in Qur’ānic manuscripts. In response to this growing fascination, we have documented a series of conferences, seminars, and exhibitions specifically focused on this area of study.

The last exhibition of old Qur’an manuscripts took place on September 13, 2023 (The Letters of Light: Louvre Abu Dhabi exhibition illuminates the history of holy books), featuring Holy Scriptures from three religions: Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. The oldest Qur’an manuscript held in the National Library of France (BnF) was shipped from Paris to the Louvre Abu Dhabi exhibition.⁽¹⁾

Qatar University

On May 2nd and 3rd, 2018, the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies at Qatar University held a conference entitled “Contemporary Western Trends in Quranic Studies, the Problem of Objectivity and Bias: An Epistemological Perspective,” aiming to establish a leading conference on Qur’ānic studies, including Qur’ān manuscripts. Researchers and scholars from Islamic and Western countries participated in the conference. The conference findings were later published in a special issue of the Journal of College of Sharia and Islamic Studies (Volume 38, Number 1, July 2020).⁽²⁾

= amazon.com/Art-Quran-Treasures-Turkish-Islamic/dp/1588345785. See also Arthur M. Sackler Gallery’s site: <https://asia.si.edu/whats-on/exhibitions/the-art-of-the-quran-treasures-from-the-museum-of-turkish-and-islamic-arts/> Retrieved on 8-9-2023. See also: <https://www.bu.edu/sequitur/2017/05/01/the-art-of-the-quran-treasures-from-the-museum-of-turkish-and-islamic-arts/>. See also parts of the book in google: https://books.google.com.qa/books?id=teE5DQAAQBAJ&pg=PA98&hl=ar&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=1#v=onepage&q&f=false

(1) See <https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/2023/09/12/louvre-abu-dhabi-letters-of-light-exhibition/>.

(2) This issue is accessible at this link: <https://journals.qu.edu.qa/index.php/sharia/issue/view/158>.

Qatar National Library

On March 30, 2022, the Qatar National Library hosted an online international seminar titled “Qur’anic Manuscript Traditions: Readings from the Qatar National Library Collection.” The seminar gathered international experts who had studied the traditions of the production of Qur’ān manuscripts over 14 centuries and across a sprawling geographical area. It also focused on Qur’ān manuscripts from the periphery of Islam. The lectures discussed Qur’ānic manuscripts from the library’s rich collection in relation to important and relevant manuscripts from various other collections around the world.

Furthermore, the library hosted a recitation session on April 13, 2022, allowing participants to recite the Qur’ān from manuscripts dating back to the first and second Hijri centuries. The session’s recitation was moderated by Dr. Aḥmad Khālīd Shukrī, Professor of Qur’ānic Studies at Qatar University, who was joined by Ahmed W. Shaker, a researcher in Qur’ānic manuscripts, and Mahmoud Zaki, the manuscript specialist at the library.

Muhammad IV Institute for Quranic Readings and Studies

In December 2022, the Institute of Muhammad VI for Quranic Readings and Studies organized an international conference in Rabat, Morocco, titled “al-Maṣāḥif al-‘Atīqah: Mudārasah fī Awḍā‘ al-Rusūm wa-Mawḍū‘āt al-‘Ulūm.”⁽¹⁾ The conference was attended by scholars and researchers from both the Mashriq and

(1) See Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh al-Bukhārī, “al-Maṣāḥif al-makhtūṭah mudārasah fī awḍā‘ al-rusūm wa-mawḍū‘āt al-‘ulūm,” *The Journal of the Mohammed VI Institute for Quranic Readings and Studies*, Jumāda II 1444 / December 2022, Issue no. 2, pp. 181-196.

the Maghrib, reflecting a broad spectrum of expertise and perspectives on the topics discussed.

- The conference highlighted four critical areas of discussion:
- The role of Qur'ān manuscripts within traditional Muslim sources
- The significance of 'Uthmānic rasm in the Islamic tradition and its manifestation in Qur'ān manuscripts
- The physical development of Maṣāḥif throughout history
- Innovations and forthcoming endeavors in the study of Qur'ānic manuscripts

A notable outcome of the conference was the strong recommendation to create a center specifically focused on Qur'ān manuscripts. This proposed center would function under the auspices of the Muhammad VI Foundation for the Holy Qur'ān, leveraging its guidance and expertise in the preservation, study, and dissemination of Qur'ānic manuscript research.

III

Efforts by postgraduate students: Ph.D. and MA Dissertations and Theses⁽¹⁾

In recent years, there has been a notable increase in theses analyzing Qur'ān manuscripts. This reflects the growing interest in Qur'ānic studies among master's and doctorate students, mostly from Iraqī, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. The following tables highlight

(1) We thank Esraa Gözleer for providing a thorough list of Turkish theses on Quranic manuscripts. Furthermore, we express our appreciation to the following PhD students who participated in our survey: Elif Behnan Karabiyik, Aşşenur Elif Unal, Abdulvahap Kösesoy, Şeyma Genan, and Betül Genan.

some contributions to the field from 1998 until now, showcasing diverse research endeavors in understanding Qur'ānic manuscripts and their historical and religious significance.

Table 3

Arabic Theses on Qur'ān Manuscripts

Author	Thesis Title	Thesis Type	Year of Completion	Institution	Language
Dalāl Khālid al- Miṭrafi	An artistic study of some Qur'an manuscripts preserved in the Fahd National Library in Riyadh	Masters	1998	King Saud University	Arabic
Razān Ghasān Ḥamdūn	The Qur'an Manuscripts from the First Century AH in Sana'a and the Handwritten Preservation of the Qur'an	Masters	2004	Al-Yamaniya University	Arabic
Maryam Aḥmad al-Ḥarbī	Moroccan and Andalusian leather manuscripts of the Holy Quran Preserved at King Abdulaziz Public Libraries in Riyadh and Medinah	Masters	2006/2007	King Saud University	Arabic
Iyād Sālim al- Sāmarrā'ī	Orthographic Features of "Mushāf Uthmān" at Al-Ḥusayn Mosque in Cairo	Doctorate	2011	Tikrit University	Arabic

Cont. Table 3

Arabic Theses on Qur'ān Manuscripts

Author	Thesis Title	Thesis Type	Year of Completion	Institution	Language
Aḥmad Ḥātim al-Sāmarrā'ī	Masahif al- Qirā'āt al-makhtutah	Doctorate	2018	Tikrit University	Arabic
Aqdi Rofiḳ Asnawi	Muhammad Musatafa al-Azami and Quran Manuscripts	Masters	2020	Hamad bin Khalifa University	Arabic

Table 4

Turkish Theses on Qur'ān Manuscripts

Author	Thesis Title	Thesis Type	Year of Completion	Institution	Language
Betül Özdirek	Ibn al-Bawāb Mushaf found in TEM	Masters	2017	Istanbul University	Turkish
Elif Behnan Karabıyık	Ms Berlin 4313 Analysis and Description of Hijazi Quran Manuscripts in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts	Masters/ Doctorate	2017 Exp. June 2024 (Ongoing)	Marmara University / Istanbul 29 Mayıs University	Turkish
Abdulkader Kurabi	BnF Arabe 338	Masters	2021	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	Turkish
Fatih Cankurt	Mushaf attributed to Ali bin Abi Talib in TIEM	Doctorate	2021	Istanbul University	Turkish

Cont. Table 4

Turkish Theses on Qur'ān Manuscripts

Author	Thesis Title	Thesis Type	Year of Completion	Institution	Language
Ayşenur Elif Ünal	Analysis of a Quranic Manuscript: TIEM 358	Doctorate	Exp. 2025 (ongoing)	İstanbul University	Turkish
Abdulvahap Kösesoy	Inclusion of the written-oral Qur'an materials of pre-'Uthmān period in the Qur'anic manuscripts reproduced during the 'Uṭmān period and their representation issue	Doctorate	Exp. 2026 (ongoing)	Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University	Turkish
Şeyma Genan	The Case of Diacritical Marks in the Qur'anic Manuscripts of the Damascus Documents in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art	Doctorate	Exp. June 2024 (Ongoing)	Marmara University	Turkish
Betül Genan	The Issue of Qiraat in Qur'anic Manuscripts: The Case of Damascus Manuscripts in Museum of Turkish and İslamic Arts	Doctorate	Exp. September 2024 (Ongoing)	Marmara University	Turkish

Conclusion

This article has clearly achieved its objectives and answered the main question of the study by presenting a detailed bibliography of the works and efforts of Modern Muslim scholars and institutions in the field of Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies, and by proving that modern scholarship in the Muslim world have no reservations and concerns about delving into the study of Qur'ān manuscripts. In addition, the contributions of modern Muslim scholars and institutions toward Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies underscore a rich tapestry of engagement, innovation, and scholarship. From the pioneering efforts of early 20th-century scholars, such as Musa Jār Allāh and Muhammad Hamidullah, to the methodologically rigorous work of contemporaries Tayyar Altıkulaç and Muhammad Mustafa al-Azami, the landscape of QMS within the Muslim world has evolved significantly. These scholars, alongside institutions such as the IRCICA, al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation Center and the Tafsir Center for Quranic Studies, have played pivotal roles in advancing the field through meticulous research, publication of facsimile editions of ancient manuscripts, and the organization of conferences and seminars that bridge the gaps between traditional Islamic scholarship and modern research methodologies.

The establishment of the Qur'an Manuscripts Initiative and the growing interest in QMS among postgraduate students in countries such as Turkey, Iraq and Iran indicate a vibrant and expanding field of study. Moreover, the collaborative efforts between Muslim and Western scholars, facilitated by institutions such as the Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, highlight the

potential for further advancements in the study of Qur'ānic manuscripts through cross-cultural and interdisciplinary cooperation.

Despite these contributions, the field of QMS in the Muslim world faces challenges, including the need for more dedicated research centers and broader engagement with digital technologies. The call to establish a center focused on Qur'ānic manuscripts reflects the critical need for institutional support to sustain and expand research in this area.

Lastly, the engagement of modern Muslim scholars and institutions with Qur'ānic Manuscript Studies not only contributes to a deeper understanding of the Qur'ānic text from the early dawn of Islam but also enriches the broader field of Islamic studies. Their efforts, bridging tradition and modernity, underline the enduring significance of the Qur'ān as a focus of scholarly inquiry and its potential to inspire future generations of researchers. As this field continues to evolve, it holds the promise of unveiling new insights into the history, transmission, and reception of the Qur'ānic text across the Islamic world and beyond.

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