



An Examination of the Orientalists' Views on the Qur'ān Collection Time

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ABSTRACT

An examination of the orientalist's (1860-1977) opinions gives in four different views on the Qur'ān collection time: John Burton believes that the collection of the Qur'ān occurred in the prophet Muḥammad's lifetime. Friedrich Schwally claims that the Qur'ān was collected during the 'Uthmān's time. In Paul Casanova and Alfonso Mingana's viewpoint, the Qur'ān was collected during 'Abd al-Malik's era following Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf's order. Finally, John Wansbrough believes that the collection of the Qur'ān was carried out in the early third century AH. From among these opinions, Burton's view can be accepted, not on the basis of the reasons he has underscored in his research, but rather, due to the intellectual, historical, narrative, and Qur'ānic principles that some Muslim scholars have put forth.

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1. Introduction

As we know, various topics are studied in the Qur'ānic sciences. One of these regards the history of the Qur'ān issue, which includes matters such as the quality of the Qur'ān revelation, occasions of revelation, differences in the Readings, and the Qur'ān collection. The orientalist's have paid considerable attention to the Qur'ān collection issue, and face numerous questions in this area. How and when have the Qur'ān – whose verses have been revealed separately in different times and places – been collected and turned into a book with a clear opening and ending? Has prophet Muḥammad taken this responsibility to order and supervise the collection of the Qur'ān or his successors have undertaken this important duty?

In order to answer these questions, different viewpoints have been expressed by the orientalist's. The present author aims at using a descriptive-analytical method to examine the opinions of the most important orientalist's (1860-1977) about the Qur'ān collection date.

2. Nöldeke's opinion

Theodor Nöldeke believes that at the time prophet Muḥammad demised, there was no complete and clear collection of the Qur'ānic verses substantiated by the prophet; rather, some of his companions had memorized considerably long chunks of the Qur'ānic verses, while some others had written parts of it on different materials. Shortly after the demise of the prophet of Islam (s.a.) and following the order of the first caliph Abū Bakr, the first collection of the whole Qur'ān was prepared and several copies of it were made. The reason for this collection was that many reciters of the Qur'ān were killed in the wars and people felt worried about the loss of some parts of the Qur'ān. Abū Bakr appointed Zayd b. Thābit – a Qur'ān writer – to collect the Qur'ān. After Abū

Bakr passed away, the Qur'ān copies that Zayd had been written were given to Abū Bakr's successor, 'Umar, and after his demise they got to his daughter, Ḥafṣa. Nearly 20 years after Abū Bakr's collection, during the caliphate of 'Uthmān, the disagreements and disputes among the proponents of the different copies caused the caliph to prepare a formal collection of the Qur'ān and send copies of it to the most important centers of the Islamic empire, and meanwhile, destroy the previous, varied copies. This formal manuscript was also written by Zayd b. Thābit with the help of three Qurayshite people based on Ḥafṣa's copy of the collection previously prepared during Abū Bakr's time. The majority of Muslims quickly accepted this formal collection of the Qur'ān – aka Mushaf 'Uthmāni – which then turned into the formal manuscript among them.^[1]

3. Schwally's view

Friedrich Schwally rejected the historical authenticity of a tradition according to which, the collection of the Qur'ān is done shortly after the demise of the prophet Muḥammad by the first caliph –Abū Bakr. His conclusion is based on the following reasons.

a. The connection that this tradition makes between the [first] collection of the Qur'ān and the loss of numerous Qur'ān reciters in Yamāmah war is fictitious due to two reasons. First, there are few reciters of the Qur'ān mentioned in the list of the slain fighters of this war. Second, the basis of this connection is not logical, since there are strong evidences that the inscription of the Qur'ān happened in a dispersed manner during the prophet Muḥammad's era. Therefore, murder of some reciters of the Qur'ān could not have caused the decision to collect the Qur'ān.

b. There are discrepancies among some narrations on the question that if the Qur'ān collected during the first caliph's

time has been identical to the formally developed manuscript in 'Uthmān's era.

Based on these discrepancies, Schwally concludes that the transmitters of the tradition on 'Uthmān's collection of the Qur'ān have had no idea about Abū Bakr's collection of the Qur'ān, but rather, they have expressed their imaginations about Abū Bakr's era. Moreover, Schwally considers it odd that 'Uthmān appoints a group under supervision of Zayd b. Thābit to collect the Qur'ān, while Zayd himself has collected the Qur'ān during Abū Bakr's era and has written it down as a manuscript, and then this same text is used as the only model and basis for replication.

c. Abū Bakr was caliph only for two years and two months. This length of time seems short for collection of the Qur'ān whose pieces were in the hands of a huge number of people. In addition, if Yamāma war is considered as the main reason, the remaining time will come to be only 15 months.

d. From this claim in the narrations that the first collection of the Qur'ān is ordered by Abū Bakr and he has given his manuscript to his successor 'Umar, we should conclude that this manuscript has been a formal text. However, this is not congruent with other narrations which stipulate that the people of some big cities widely used the manuscripts specific to some Companions. Moreover, if Abū Bakr's version of the Qur'ān has been a formal text, it will then be very strange that 'Umar gave his manuscript to his daughter Ḥafṣa instead of the next caliph.

Based on these reasons, Schwally concluded that the narrations on the first collection of the Qur'ān by Abū Bakr are among the posterior forgeries to give more authenticity to 'Uthmān's collection. He believed that the narrations on Abū Bakr's collection of the Qur'ān have been molded during Abbasside dynasty.

Nonetheless, Schwally considers the content of the narrations on the development of the formal manuscript of the Qur'ān by 'Uthmān as being historically authentic, although he referred to some discrepancies and unbelievable issues in their details.^[2]

4. Casanova and Mingana's view

Paul Casanova was the first to claim in 1911 that the Qur'ān was not collected before the caliphate of the Umayyad 'Abd al-Malik, and its compilation was carried out by his appointed governor Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf's initiative.^[3] Alfonso Mingana accepted this view in 1915 and added more details to it. His arguments are as following:

1. The oldest written account of the collection of the Qur'ān is in Ibn Sa'ad's *Ṭabaqāt* (d. 229AH/844 AD) nearly 200 years after the demise of prophet Muḥammad. There is no authentic historical description on the quality of oral transmission of the traditions within these two centuries.

2. Ibn Sa'ad has narrated traditions about the companions who have collected the Qur'ān during the lifetime of the prophet of Islam and also during 'Umar's caliphate. However, he has not discussed the collection of the Qur'ān by Abū Bakr or 'Uthmān.

3. Our information about 'Uthmān's collection of the Qur'ān is limited to the narrations in al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ by al-Bukhārī—who has passed away a quarter of a century after Ibn Sa'ad—and other narrative sources after him.

Mingana believes that despite Muslim and western researchers' tendency, there is no reason to prefer the posterior reports of al-Bukhārī to earlier narrations of Ibn Sa'ad. Moreover, the related reports of the prior tradition collections are so chaotic and contradictory that authentic

traditions cannot be discerned. Due to the lack of historical authenticity of the narrative reports, Mingana suggests reference to sources out of Islamic tradition. In his opinion, some of the Syriac-Christian sources are more suitable for historical studies due to their precedence over Islamic sources. Accordingly, he enumerates the following sources:

1. The debate between 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ and the first John, the monophysite bishop of Antakya occurred in 18 AH (639 AD) and has been recorded;

2. A letter that Nineveh bishop has written in the early years of 'Uthmān's caliphate in which he has referred to Muslims;

3. A report on Muslims that an unknown Christian wrote in 60 AH (680 AD);

4. A chronicle written by John bar Penkaye in 70 AH (690 AD), corresponding to the early years of 'Abd al-Malik's caliphate.

Mingana argues that in none of these first century AH sources (7th century AD), there is a mention of any holy Islamic book when describing Muslims and their beliefs. In his opinion, this is also true about the texts written by the historians and theologians of the early second century AH (8th century AD). It is only at the end of the first quarter of the second century AH that the Qur'ān was discussed in the Nestorian, Jacobite, and Melkite churches. Consequently, Mingana concludes that the formal text of the Qur'ān has not appeared before the end of the seventh century AD. Moreover, as one of the oldest non-Muslim reports on the history of the Qur'ān, Mingana recourse to a part of "the defense of the Christian faith", written by al-Kindī around 830 AD (nearly forty years before al-Bukhārī). In this book, Al-Kindī asserts that the present manuscripts of the Qur'ān were collected following the order of Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, a governor in 'Abd al-Malik's caliphate. Then, six new manuscripts of the Qur'ān were written and sent to the centers of the Islamic empire.

Tallying his findings from Christian sources, Mingana concludes that there might have been people who have individually and informally collected and developed the Qur'ān—'Uthmān being one of them—but there was no formal manuscript before the Umayyid 'Abd al-Malik caliphate. At this time, following the order and under supervision of Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, the available written texts and oral information were collected.^[4]

5. Wansbrough's stance

John Wansbrough's most important hypothesis is that the final fixation of the Qur'ānic text has occurred at the end of the second or the early third century.^[5] He believes that before then, there has not been a consensus among Muslims about a standard, unalterable text.

Wansbrough's stance and arguments are based on the premise that the final fixation of the Qur'ānic text and its role in the creation and formation of the Islamic society is completely similar to the progress of Jews' holy book from oral tradition to final collection.^[6] His scattered and disordered words in this regard can be organized in several arguments.

1. He believes that in non-Muslim sources of the first century AH, there is no reference to the Qur'ān.

2. The Islamic traditions on divine revelation, the biography of prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the early Islam were mostly formed through the posterior Muslim sources such as commentaries and biographies of the late second and early third century AH/ 8th and 9th centuries AD and

transmitted to us, and there is no mention of the Qur'ān in sources before them.^[7]

3. Wansbrough considers the literary analysis of the qur'ānic text representative of the features which reveal that despite Muslim's traditional reports, the collection of the Qur'ān "has not lasted for just one generation nor it is a result of the work of one or few individuals", but rather, it has been accomplished in a long process and during successive generations.^[8]

Relying on the premise that the textual features of the Qur'ān have been precisely analyzed for the first time in textual commentaries such as al-Farrā's *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, Wansbrough deems illogical the traditional reports on the collection of the Qur'ān and writes,

...acceptance of the 'Uthmanic recension traditions has entailed assent to a period of from 150 to 200 years between textual stabilization of the Qur'ān and analysis of its contents in the formulation of Arabic grammar. The implication must be that the text of scripture, like those of pre-Islamic poetry, was faithfully transmitted and intelligently read/recited and heard for a very long time indeed, without once provoking the questions about its meaning and its form with which the literature of the third/ninth century is filled. Logic alone might preclude serious consideration of this version of Islamic history. Examination, moreover, of the Quranic exegesis which I have called *masoretic* suggests that both the document of revelation and the corpus of pre-Islamic poetry were being there assembled, juxtaposed, and studied for the first time.^[9]

In short, it can be said that the results of Wansbrough's studies regarding the collection of the Qur'ān is that in his view, the collection of the Qur'ān has accomplished in early third century AH. Moreover, he considers the traditions on the collection of the Qur'ān as fictitious reports of this era.

The Qur'ān researchers have afflicted numerous criticisms on this disputable stance of Wansbrough. Using non-Muslim sources from the first century and historical evidences such as the hand-written manuscripts of the Qur'ān, epigraphs, and papyrus documents, they have proved that the development of the Qur'ān has happened in the first century AH.^[10]

6. Burton's stance

In Burton's view, the Qur'ān that is in our hands today is collected in prophet Muḥammad's lifetime and under his supervision.^[11]

He believes that "abrogation" and "companions' manuscripts" are made up to erase the role of the prophet of Islam in the collection of the Qur'ān.^[12]

According to Burton, topics such as "abrogation of reading and ruling, abrogation of reading and continuance of ruling, and the difference among the readings of the companions' manuscripts" are not really tangible, but rather, are the product of some jurists' minds who – in their debates with other jurists – have tried to use such concepts to substantiate those of their rulings that do not have any evidence in the available manuscript of the Qur'ān. If the prophet of Islam has collected the qur'ānic verses in a manuscript, then the jurists could not argue about the differences in companions' manuscripts and deletion of parts of the existing manuscript as two types of recitation abrogation. Their solution has been to make fictitious traditions to obliterate the role of prophet Muḥammad from the collection of the Qur'ān and to attribute its collection to a time after his demise, and they did so.^[13]

In Burton's view, there has occurred no flaw in the existing manuscript^[14], since those traditions that suggest flaws in the existing manuscript are made up by some jurists.^[15] Their motive in fabrication of such traditions was to first prove the deletion of some parts of the existing Qur'ān through those traditions and then, use those deletions as evidence for some of their jurisprudential rulings in their jurisprudential debates with other jurists.^[16]

Moreover, even if we disregard the fictitiousness of the aforementioned traditions, all of them are isolated reports.^[17] That is to say, the Qur'ān that is in our hands today has got to us through successive transmission.^[18] Therefore, texts can be considered qur'ānic when they are successively transmitted. However, the traditions that assert the belonging of the texts to the Qur'ān and their deletion from the existing manuscript are isolated reports, and the qur'ānic text cannot be formed based on such traditions.^[19]

In Burton's opinion, the set of Muslim traditions on the collection of the Qur'ān after the demise of prophet Muḥammad are congruent and void of contradiction. The reason is that first, all of them similarly deliver this message to their audience that whoever has for the first time in the history of Islam collected the qur'ānic text, he has not been Muḥammad, the prophet of Islam. Second, consideration of contradiction between those traditions can only be conceived if the roles assumed for Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān – as the key players in the discussion of the Qur'ān collection after the demise of the prophet of Islam – are given the same level of importance. However, a precise contemplation in the content of the foregoing traditions reveals that each of them has played a different role and their acts are complementary. That is to say, according to these traditions, 'Umar suggests the collection of the Qur'ān, Abū Bakr realizes it through *Jam' al-Qur'ān* initiative, but does not distribute that collected text among Muslims. 'Uthmān complete his act by distribution of the text collected by Abū Bakr and imposition of the existing arrangement and order on the chapters. By doing this, in fact, 'Uthmān unites Muslims – who have come to disagreements and clashes between themselves due to lack of a uniform manuscript in their society – based on a uniform text.^[20]

In Burton's view, examination of the nature of the traditions on the collection of the Qur'ān demonstrates that the issue of the Qur'ān collection is the result of a long-term movement. These traditions have been made to answer different needs.^[21]

A reflection on the words of Burton indicates that his method of analyzing the collection of the Qur'ān traditions is based on the fact that he considers the Qur'ān mainly as a source for extraction of the divine rulings needed by Muslims. Therefore, like other western researchers, Burton's method of analyzing this issue is not based on the principle that the Qur'ān is just an eternal literary work.^[22]

7. Collection of the Qur'ān in the time of the prophet of Islam Muḥammad

The present author believes that from among the foregoing orientalist stances, Burton's view on the development of the Qur'ān during the time of prophet Muḥammad can be accepted, based on the following arguments that some Muslim scholars have put forth.

7.1. Consideration of public interest

The Qur'ān is the eternal miracle of the prophet of Islam Muḥammad, and any flaw and distortion in it will devastate

the foundation of Islam. As a result, from among all Islamic rites, God has repeatedly guaranteed its protection.^[23]

With regard to the fact that the Qur'ān consolidates the invitation of the prophet of Islam and includes religious obligations that have come from God, it would be an unwise act and a disregard of the public interest if the prophet of Islam Muḥammad set aside the Qur'ān and did not collect it. Such negligence cannot be expected from an ordinary Muslim, let alone the prophet of Islam Muḥammad who was a messenger of God to people.^[24]

In the light of the command that the prophet of Islam Muḥammad issued about inscription of the divine revelation as well as his saying that "keep knowledge through writing"^[25], is it possible that the prophet of Islam has been heedless about inscription and collection of the Qur'ān? In addition, concerning the special context of the Arabian Peninsula and the possibility of the loss of the Qur'ān as well as the very saying of the Qur'ān that Jews distorted their divine scripture^[26], how is possible that the prophet of Islam has not paid attention to inscription of the Qur'ān so that Zayd b. Thābit was compelled to collect the Qur'ān from the hearts of people?^[27]

If one looks at the prophet of Islam as standing at the height of wisdom and frequently advising on the Qur'ān, and knows about his foresight and forethought about his nation, then he/she will admit that it is impossible for the prophet of Islam to abandon the Qur'ān fragmented and dispersed.^[28]

7.2. The essentiality of the Qur'ān for Islam

Historians have stipulated that the prophet of Islam Muḥammad had special scribes who recorded the treaties and assessed the volume of the date palm crop as well as the borrowed money. For instance, he has ordered them to write down the name of all individuals who have converted to Islam before the treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah. Moreover, in the Muslim army there were scribes who wrote down the issues related to the battle as well as the name of those who went to the combats. Is it logical that the prophet of Islam considered important the recording and writing of such issues but did not make any effort to write down the Qur'ān as the basis of Islam and the pillar of religion?! Was writing the borrowed money more important for the prophet of Islam than inscription of the Divine word?! Even ordinary people don't do such an act, let alone the prophet of Islam who was a thoughtful manager.^[29] The prophet of Islam and his companions made great efforts to write down the Qur'ān. Can it be said that such an effort could have been fruitful without paying attention to maintenance of order, arrangement, and comprehensiveness of this divine book? Is it possible to be whole-heartedly bound to the divine revelation – and even be ready to sacrifice oneself for it – and deem it as the greatest blessing of God but do not heed its arrangement and inscription? How can we accept that the prophet of Islam who made tremendous efforts to teach and write down the Qur'ān has been inattentive to its collection and has not made any decision about the future of the Qur'ān that he himself has delivered to people, a book which is the axis and principle of human civilization till the dooms day?^[30]

The collection of the Qur'ān in any time and its development and distribution among Muslim has been one of the most important obligations and affairs of the Muslims in the early Islam, since the Qur'ān was the main miracle of the prophet of Islam Muḥammad and is considered as one of the chief reasons for accuracy of his prophethood. Moreover, the

Qur'ān is the basis of Islam and the source for extraction of its rulings.^[31]

7.3. Inscription of the Qur'ān and the order of its verses and chapters

The prophet of Islam Muḥammad selected those who knew writing to inscribe the divine revelation. In addition, he encouraged those who were not skilled in writing to learn it. Whenever a verse was revealed, he would call upon one or some of the scribes and ordered them to write down the divine revelation. The historians have recorded the names of those scribes and according to the studies carried out, the number of writers has been more than 40.^[32]

The prophet of Islam precisely supervised what the scribes did. As stipulated by some traditions, after inscription of the divine revelation, he asked the scribe to read what he had written, and if there was any flaw, the prophet corrected it.^[33]

What is certain in the order of the verses and the way they appear in the chapters – as is in the present-day manuscript – is that this order is prescribed by the prophet of Islam and is revealed by God, and there has been no place for personal opinion and judgment in this regard. According to traditions, whenever Gabriel descended with a verse, he specified the position of that verse in its respective chapter. Then, the prophet of Islam articulated that verse for his companions and ordered the divine revelation scribes to write it down in its place.

Numerous narrative evidences are at hand that attest the prescribed order of the Qur'ānic verses, as following.

A) It has been narrated from 'Uthmān that

"When a verse was revealed onto the prophet of Islam Muḥammad, he called upon a scribe and said, 'put this verse in a chapter that entails this and that!'"^[34]

B) 'Uthmān b. Abi al-'Āṣ says,

"I was sitting by the prophet of Islam. Suddenly he looked up, and then looked down and said: Gabriel came to me and said to put the verse 'God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition' in this part of this chapter."^[35]

C) Ibn 'Abbās narrates,

"When the verse 'And fear the Day when ye shall be brought back to God. Then shall every soul be paid what it earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly'^[36] was revealed, Gabriel said, 'God has ordered positioning this verse after the verse 280 of the Cow chapter.'^[37]

In his prayers and sermons, the prophet of Islam Muḥammad recited many chapters of the Qur'ān with the present order of their verses. That is to say, not only he made clear the order of the verses right after their revelation, but also observed this order in practice.^[38] Moreover, he both prescribed the order of the verses and assigned the names of the Qur'ānic chapters.^[39]

Shia and Sunni have narrated many traditions on the reward of reciting the Qur'ānic chapters. This implies that the chapters were composed of certain verses and their naming was done during the lifetime of the prophet of Islam. The order of the Qur'ānic chapters has been prescribed and was done under the orders of the prophet of Islam.^[40]

Many traditions substantiate this view. Some of these are presented below.

A) Ḥudayfah Thaqaḥī says,

"I asked the companions of the prophet of Islam, 'How do you divide the Qur'ān into sections? They said, "three chapters, five chapters, seven chapters, nine chapters, eleven chapters, thirteen chapters, and the extended section is from the Qāf chapter to the end of the Qur'ān".^[41]

These three chapters, five chapters, and seven chapters mean the first three chapters (the Cow, the Family of 'Imrān, and the Women), the five chapters after them (the Food, the Cattle, the Elevated Places, the Spoils of War, and the Repentance), the next seven chapters, etc.^[42]

B) It has been narrated from Ubay b. Ka'ab that,

"Once the prophet of Islam Muḥammad summoned me and said, 'Gabriel ordered me to salute you and read the Qur'ān out to you.' I said, 'May my parents be your sacrifice! Tell me about the reward and blessing of the Qur'ān!' The prophet of Islam set out to talk about the divine reward of reciting the chapters. He started from the Opening chapter and successively mentioned the divine reward of reciting the chapters to the Mankind chapter.^[43]

As the prophet of Islam Muḥammad had the mission of preaching the text of the verses and chapters, he had also the task of preaching their order and arrangement, and it was impossible for him to fall short of preaching and undertaking his duties as messenger of God. Therefore, anyone who has memorized the whole verses and chapters of the Qur'ān by heart, he has also known their order and arrangement following the orders of prophet Muḥammad. One of the aspects of the miraculousness of the Qur'ān is its order, arrangement, and style. Consequently, this aspect of miraculousness should originate from God not His creatures.^[44]

Reason and intellectual authority necessitates that the style – including the order of the chapters – of the Qur'ān as the eternal miracle of the prophet of Islam should not have been delegated to the companions of the prophet of Islam, because they had had different tastes and understandings, and delegation of the task of ordering the chapters of the Qur'ān would have led to disagreements.^[45]

Therefore, in the light of the inscription of the Qur'ān during the lifetime of the prophet of Islam and the prescribed order of its verses and chapters, it can be asserted that the Qur'ān was developed into a collection during the lifetime of the prophet of Islam and under his supervision.

7.4. Gauging the traditions using the Qur'ān

Regarding the evaluation of the accuracy of a tradition, the prophet of Islam Muḥammad said, "Whenever you heard a tradition, gauge it with the Divine Book and my practice; if it was congruent with the Divine Book and my practice, accept it and if it was incongruent with them, discard it."^[46] This implies that there has been a collection in the form of a book that was known to the companions.

7.5. 'Umar's word when the prophet of Islam was passing away

Just before his demise, the prophet of Islam Muḥammad said, "bring me an ink-pot and a quill pen to write something so that you never get misguided after me!" 'Umar said, "the Divine Book suffices us." Referring Muslims to the Divine book was acceptable only if the Divine Book had been collected, safe and sound, and clearly known. If not, deeming it sufficient could not be acceptable.^[47]

A reflection on 'Umar's word reveals that the Qur'ān has been a compiled, organized, and well-known collection that has been known as a book among the companions of the prophet of Islam so strongly that when 'Umar said, "the

Divine Book suffices us", no one opposed him by saying, for example, that what information do you have about the book and how do you know where it is that you say it suffices us?^[48]

7.6. The qur'ānic evidences

Numerous verses imply this reality that the Qur'ān has been systematically written down and organized during the lifetime of the prophet of Islam. In the following some of these are presented.

A) God says, "Or they may say, "He forged it," Say, "Bring ye then ten suras forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever ye can, other than God!- If ye speak the truth!"^[49]

It is clear that when the prophet of Islam Muḥammad challenged the polytheists and asked them to bring 10 chapters like those of the Qur'ān if they could, while the Hūd chapter had been revealed in Mecca (around 9 years after his appointment and four years before Hegira), then it can be concluded that the Qur'ān must have been written down and developed into a collection accessible to the polytheists before then, and it is because of this the Qur'ān says, "Bring ye then ten suras forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever ye can". For this challenge to be plausible, this collection – including more than 3400 verses revealed till then – should have been accessible to the polytheists in one volume. They should have been informed about the topic of the competition. The case should have been clear so that the invitation for challenge could be accurate. If they did not know all the verses and the message as a whole, invitation to the unknown and indefinite was not acceptable. As a result, it could be said that at least from the same eighth or ninth year after Appointment and during the years before Hegira, the Qur'ān has been collected.^[50]

B) God says, "Move not thy tongue concerning the (Qur'an) to make haste therewith; It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it "^[51]

These verses say that the prophet of Islam was worried about missing a word, letter, or concept of the divine revelation and the Qur'ān, and he hurried to articulate and spell it as soon as possible and the scribes of the divine revelation write it so that it takes the form of an undoubted written text, without any part missing and added, and without any misplacement of the words.

Moreover, the aforementioned verses demonstrate that the prophet of Islam set out to write, develop, and order the qur'ānic verses right after their revelation. Even regarding the verses that directly address himself and talk about the manner of receiving and total understanding of the divine revelation, he recited them exactly in the same way that was revealed from God next to other verses and commanded the divine revelation scribes to write it down. Moreover, the foregoing verses indicate that the manner of the prophet of Islam has been this way from the start of prophethood; because the Rising of the Dead chapter is among the chapters that have been revealed in Mecca.^[52]

These verses show that the collection of the Qur'ān – i.e. developing it into a full book – has been done under the guidance of the divine revelation. According to the abovementioned verses, collection and organization of the Qur'ān is as divinely done as its revelation. Therefore, the Qur'ān not only emphasizes that this book is the word of Allah, but also that its arrangement and development have also done following the divine revelation.^[53]

C) God says, "And they say: 'Tales of the ancients, which he has caused to be written: and they are dictated before him morning and evening.'"^[54]

The Qur'ān has always been the most important topic of debate between the prophet of Islam Muḥammad and the polytheists of Mecca. They all knew the divine verses and were aware of its preaching. The polytheists had access to the verses to know about what he preached, and the faithful accessed those verses to learn and think.

The polytheists said, "[these are] tales of the ancients, which he has caused to be written: and they are dictated before him morning and evening." So, the fact is that there have been organized texts that the polytheists could say the prophet of Islam had the Qur'ān written from the tales of the ancients.^[55]

This verse reports a reality: that the verses and chapters of the Qur'ān were organized as they were gradually revealed, and then were recited for people from the written and organized manuscripts. This gave the polytheists the opportunity to say that "what the prophet of Islam calls the Qur'ān is copied by him from the books and tales of the ancients."^[56]

8. Conclusion

By examination of the orientalist's works (from 1860 to 1977), four different viewpoints are obtained regarding the time of the Qur'ān collection, as following.

A) John Burton believes that the collection of the Qur'ān was done during the lifetime of prophet Muḥammad

B) Friedrich Schwally claims that the Qur'ān has been collected during the time of 'Uthmān

C) Paul Casanova and Alfonso Mingana deem that the Qur'ān has been collected during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik following the order of his governor Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf

D) John Wansbrough believes that the collection of the Qur'ān was done in early third century AH.

From among these opinions, the proposition of John Burton on the collection of the Qur'ān during the lifetime of prophet Muḥammad is acceptable based on the intellectual, historical, narrative, and qur'ānic reasons that some Muslims scholars have set forth in this regard.

A reflection on the opinions of the foregoing orientalist about the collection of the Qur'ān indicates that in analyzing the traditions on the collection of the Qur'ān, their views is based on Goldziher's doubts about the historical authenticity of the traditions related to the early Islam as well as Schacht's theories in considering fictitious the evidences of the traditions. This basis is not backed scientifically, as some of the Muslim and non-Muslim tradition researchers have shown in their criticisms of the evidences and proofs of this skeptic approach to Islamic traditions.

Notes

[1].Harald Motzki, «The collection of the Quran: A Reconsideration of Western View in Light of Recent Methodological Development», *Der Islam*, (No.78 : 2001), p.6.

[2].Maḥmūd Rāmyār, *Tārīkhi qur'ān*, (Tehran: amīr kabīr press, 2001), pp.393-396; Murtaḍā Karīmī nīyā, «Naqd wa barrasiyī riwāyāti jam'ī qur'ān», *Ulūmi ḥadīth*, (No.35: 2005), pp.87-91.

[3].Maḥmūd Rāmyār, *Tārīkhi qur'ān*, (Tehran: amīr kabīr press, 2001), p.396.

[4].Alfonso Mingana, «The transmission of the Kur'ān», *Journal of The Manchester Egypt and oriented society*, (No. 5: 1915), pp.25-47.

[5].John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, (Oxford:1977), pp.43-47.

[6].Ibid, pp.33, 45.

[7].Ibid, p.58.

[8].Ibid.

[9].Ibid, p.101.

[10].For more details q.v. Ursula Dreiholz, *Early Quran Fragments from the great mosque in sana'a*, (sana'a: 2003), pp.19-25; Patricia Cron, «Two legal Problem bearing on The early history of the Quran», *Studies in Arabic and Islam*,

(No. 18: 1994), pp.1-37; William Graham, «Review of Quranic Studies», *Journal of the American oriental society*, (No.100: 1980), p.140; Estella Whelan, «Forgotten Witness: Evidence for Early condification of The Quran», *Journal of The American Society*, (No. 118: 1998), pp.3-7.

[11].John Burton, *The Collection of The Quran*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), PP.239-240.

[12].ibid, pp.203-205, 231-232.

[13].ibid, pp.130-137, 160-166, 198-199, 203-205, 231-239.

[14].ibid, pp.127-129, 231-240.

[15].ibid, pp.117-120, 126-127.

[16].ibid, pp.30-112.

[17].ibid, pp.99-100, 127.

[18].ibid, pp.140-144.

[19].ibid, pp. 98-108, 127-128.

[20].ibid, pp.139, 158, 160, 212-213, 231.

[21].ibid, p.225.

[22].ibid, pp.174-187, 225-239.

[23].Holy Qur'ān 15, 9; Abū 'alī faḍl b. ḥasan Ṭabrisī, *Majma' al-bayān li 'ulūm al-qur'ān*, (beirut: mu'assisah al-'a'lamī lilmaṭbū'āt, 1993), vol.6, p.509; Muḥammad b. ḥasan tūsī, *Al-tibyān fī tafsīr al-qur'ān*, edited by Shaykh āghā buzurg Tihirānī and Aḥmad qaṣīr 'āmīlī, (beirut: dār 'ihyā' al-turāth al-'arabī, 1982), vol.6, p.320; Fakhr al-dīn Rāzī, *Maḥāṭib al-ghayb*, (beirut: dār 'ihyā' al-turāth al-'arabī, 2000), vol.19, p.123; Aḥmad b. ibrahīm tha'labī Niyshābūrī, *Al-kashf wa al-bayān 'an tafsīr al-qur'ān*, (beirut: dār 'ihyā' al-turāth al-'arabī, 2001), vol.5, p.331; Ḥusayn b. ḥasan Jurjānī, *Jalā' al-'adhhān wa Jalā' al-'aḥzān*, (Tehran: university of Tehran press, 1998), vol.5, p.128.

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[26].Holy Qur'ān 2, 79; Muḥammad b. jarīr Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-qur'ān*, (beirut: dār al-ma'rifah, 1991), vol.1, p.300; Ismā'īl b. Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-qur'ān al-'azīm*, edited by: Muḥammad ḥusayn Shams al-dīn, (beirut: dār al-kutub al-'ilmīyyah, 1998), vol.1, p.205; Muḥammad ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāyī, *Al-mūzān fī tafsīr al-qur'ān*, (Qom: daftari intishārāt islāmī jāmi'ah mudarrisīn hawzah 'ilmīyah qum, 1996), vol.1, p.215.

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- [32]. 'Abd al-ṣabūr Shāhīn, *Tārīkh al-qur'ān*, (Cairo: nihḍah miṣr, 2005), p.97; Abū 'abd allāh Zanjānī, *Tārīkhi qur'ān*, translated by abū al-qāsim saḥāb, (Tabriz: kitāb furūshīyi surūsh, 1962), p. 20; Muḥammad bāqir Ḥujjātī, *Pajūhishī dar tārīkhi qur'āni karīm*, (Tehran: daftari nashri farhangi islāmī, 2005), p.202; Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ, *Mabāḥith fī 'ulūm al-qur'ān*, (beirut: dār al-'ilm lilmalāyīn, 1979), p.69; Rujī Bilāshir, *Dar āstānih qur'ān*, translated by Maḥmūd Rāmyār, (Tehran: daftari nashri farhangi islāmī, 1987), p.27.
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