





OIC | Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
IRCICA | Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture

Alemdar Cad., No: 15, Bâbüâli Girişi
34110 Cağaloğlu, Fatih İstanbul, Türkiye

PHONE | +90 212 402 00 00

FAX | +90 212 258 43 65

ircica.org

ircica@ircica.org

**REFUTATION OF DANIEL ALAN BRUBAKER'S "CORRECTIONS IN EARLY QUR'ÂN MANUSCRIPTS"
BY DR. TAYYAR ALTİKULAÇ**

CRITICAL EDITIONS SERIES; NO.15

© COPYRIGHT | IRCICA 2020

ISBN 978-92-9063-386-0

İSTANBUL 2020

CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

Altıkulaç, Tayyar

Refutation of Daniel Alan Brubaker's "Corrections in Early Qur'an Manuscripts" / by Tayyar Altıkulaç; foreword by Halit Eren; translated by Zeynep Durukal.- İstanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 2020.

105 p.: facsim.; 28 sm.- (Critical editions series; no. 16)

Includes bibliographical references.

Bibliography: p. 105.

ISBN 978-92-9063-386-0

1. Koran--History. 2. Koran--Study and teaching. 3. Orientalism. I. Eren, Halit. II. Durukal, Zeynep. III. k.a. IV. Series.
297.12209--dc22

AUTHOR | Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç

FOREWORD | Prof.Dr. Halit Eren

TRANSLATED BY | Zeynep Durukal

PREPARATION | Selahaddin Uygur

DESIGN | Muhammed Nur Anbarlı

PRINTING AND BINDING | Optimum Basım



RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

Refutation

of Daniel Alan Brubaker's
“Corrections in Early Qur’ān Manuscripts”

DR. TAYYAR ALTIKULAÇ

İstanbul 2020

Contents

Abbreviations ➤ 9

Foreword ➤ 11

Preface ➤ 15

I. What is Orientalism? ➤ 19

II. Daniel Alan Brubaker's interest in the Quran? ➤ 21

III. An overview of Daniel Alan Brubaker's approach to the Quran ➤ 23

IV. The examples presented by Brubaker as evidence of his claims on corrections in the Quran ➤ 39

V. The examples of Daniel Alan Brubaker, and our explanations ➤ 41

Example 1: Post-production insertion of the word هو ➤ 41

Example 2: The claim that the word له was replaced by لهم ➤ 44

Example 3: Examples relating to post-production insertions of the sacred word الله ➤ 46

Example 4: Erasure after the word عقبة ➤ 49

Example 5: Corrections in the page shown in Image 35 ➤ 52

Example 6: Post-production insertion of the expression وعلمو الصلحت ثم اتقوا وامنوا ➤ 56

Example 7: Post-production insertion of the word السبع ➤ 58

Example 8: The sacred word الله and the word كان written on an erasure ➤ 60

Example 9: Post-production insertion of the word الرحيم ➤ 62

Example 10: Post-production insertion of the word بمثل ➤ 64

Example 11: Post-production insertion of the sacred word الله ➤ 67

Example 12: The word فضل written over an erasure ➤ 69

Example 13: The word قال replaced by قالوا ➤ 71

Example 14: Partial erasure of the sacred word الله and of the word قد ➤ 73

Example 15: Erasure in the verse at Image 108 ➤ 76

Example 16: Post-production insertion of the word كان ➤ 79

Example 17: The word نعمة and the sacred word الله written over an erasure ➤ 81

Example 18: Superscript insertion of the word الساعة ➤ 84

Example 19: هو and the sacred word الله written over an erasure ➤ 87

Example 20: The expression ومما رزقناهم ينفقون written over an erasure ➤ 89

Another matter of concern for Daniel Alan Brubaker: The tapings on page 33b of the Cairo manuscript ➤ 91

VI. Conclusion ➤ 97

A scholarly criticism directed to Daniel Alan Brubaker's book ➤ 103

Bibliography ➤ 105

Abbreviations

f.	folio
a	first side of the folio
b	second side of the folio
d.	death
BnF	National Library of France (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris)
TİEM	Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum (Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi, İstanbul)

Foreword

Prof.Dr. Halit Eren
Director General, IRCICA

The history regarding the transmission of the Holy Quran since the period of its revelation has been a topic of high priority in the research projects conducted by IRCICA. Our Centre's program of studies on the Holy Quran aims to promote scientific research and produce reference publications focusing on the dissemination and preservation of the Holy Quran.

In this context, we initiated a major research project on the history of the earliest copies of the Holy Quran in 2005. This comprehensive project covers a wide range of subjects including the following: Identification of the earliest copies that reached our time via their locations and estimated periods of production; comparing various copies with their precedents and contemporaries with regard to their distinctive features such as the script and physical appearance. The project entails appraisals of the accumulated knowledge, the main sources and methods associated with the inquiry and their contributions to further research.

This project was initiated in consultation with the relevant academic circles in the Member States of the OIC, to respond to the scholarly and documentary needs observed in this field. Thus, it has received appreciation and encouragement at the Ministerial Conferences of the OIC, as expressed in the resolutions on the work programs of IRCICA.

Our research program on the early copies of the Holy Quran is mainly conducted in collaboration with the internationally recognized scholar of

Quranic studies, Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç. A series of studies by Dr. Altıkulaç on some of the earliest copies/fragments of the Quran preserved in collections around the world, have been published by IRCICA. By the order of publication, the studies related to the manuscripts are: The Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul (2007), the Central Library of Islamic Manuscripts, Cairo (2009), the Manuscripts Library in Sana'a (2011), the Islamic Arts Museum in Cairo (2014), the National Library of France, Paris (2015), the Library of the University of Tübingen (2016), the British Library, London (2017), the State Library of Berlin (2018) and the Library of the Topkapı Palace Museum, Fahreddin Pasha Collection, Istanbul (2020).

A major feature of the history of the transmission of the Holy Quran highlighted through the above-mentioned publications of IRCICA is that the Holy Quran has been preserved and transmitted in an intact manner, without the slightest modification. This book also underlines the same message and fits well into that context. The work has been prepared by Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç in response to a book by Daniel Alan Brubaker titled *Corrections in early Qur'ān Manuscripts: Twenty Examples* (Lovettville: Think and Tell Press, 2019). Brubaker's book can be described as one of the numerous publications authored by the Western writers who perceive various scribal errors and corrections found in the earliest copies of the Holy Quran as changes that could have been deliberately made to its text. Brubaker presents a collection of twenty examples of scribal corrections interpreting them as possible evidence of changes that could have been made at different times in the authentic text of the Quran. Yet his book carries many informative, analytical and methodological shortcomings. The present book by Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç, on the other hand, discusses and evaluates each and every one of the claims proposed by Brubaker in great detail. Through these evaluations, the study demonstrates that any claims, including Brubaker's attempts aimed at casting doubt on the authenticity and intactness of the Holy Quran, are bound to fail.

❧ FOREWORD ❧

With the information it contains on the history of the preservation and dissemination of the Holy Quran, I believe that this book by Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç will be a valuable contribution to the field. Besides, I hope that there will not be such malicious attempts anymore to question the intactness of the Holy Quran.

I present my sincere thanks and appreciation to Dr. Altıkulaç who has prepared this work with great patience and deep expertise.

Preface

Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç

As the topic is the fictional, non-scientific claims amounting to no more than “a waste of pen and paper” that we read in an Orientalist’s book, we recalled another narrative related to a “scenario”: Dr. David Powers, whose name the author cites once, delivered for a lecture in Istanbul on 6 June 2008 where he made an interesting claim¹: The word **كللة** in Surah Nisa had been modified to be written with two lams though its original spelling was **كلّة**. By this, he means that an alteration was made in the Quran and the evidence of this was seen in the manuscript which was reprinted with a study in *Mushaf al-Sharif (Paris Copy)* (IRCICA, Istanbul, 1436/2015). There, the word is spelled with two lams and there has actually been an intervention (erasure and rewriting). This observation of Dr. Powers is not inaccurate.

After the completion of the lecture, during the questions and answers session, someone from the audience took the floor and projected onto the screen the same pages from other early Quran manuscripts, where the word was written with two *lams*. He raised the possibility that somebody, noticing that the word had been spelled wrongly by the scribe of the *Paris Copy*, might have corrected it, and asked: “If it were so, then wouldn’t your thesis remain unjustified?” Dr. Powers’ answer was brief, that they were thinking of “scenarios”. This answer surprised the audience and objections were raised in reaction.

¹ Dr. Powers later published this argument in a book titled *Muhammad is Not the Father of Any of Your Men* (PENN – University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

Before diving into the main subject, it is worth recalling a surprising opinion of another Orientalist whom I came across some months ago on the Internet. This person, whose name I do not remember, claimed that the Quran had undergone major changes over the centuries and, as he tried to present evidence from his own mind to prove it. He also cited humble works of mine. His statements were along the lines of “Altıkulaç’s works have shown that hundreds of changes have occurred in the Quran over the centuries. The footnotes of the manuscript(s) he published are full of examples of those changes”.

It may be recalled that in our books cited, we examined some of the earliest manuscripts and indicated their orthographic differences in the footnotes. We concluded that other than the orthographic differences pointed out in the footnotes, these old manuscripts that were produced at places distant from each other carried no variations whatsoever in their texts and meanings, which is clear evidence that the holy book reached us intact, with its original content. In other words, our intention was to demonstrate not that the Quran underwent modifications, but that it has been preserved without any alteration. In the face of people’s inability to grasp such a simple conclusion or attempt to distort it, the difficulty of our task can be appreciated.

I intended to respond to that person who referred to the readings he failed to understand, but I was unable to retrace his article. If I had found it, I would have briefly stated my response as “This person either has mal-intent, is motivated by hatred and has prejudice against the Quran and Islam, or lacks the basic comprehension skills required to deal with such serious subjects; both maybe applicable concurrently as well.” What I mean will become clearer in the upcoming chapters, during the analyses of the examples.

While I regretted being unable to relocate and answer that article, I was presented with a book which – as I saw after skimming through it for a while – evaluates the early Quran manuscripts with the same approach, and is

titled *Corrections in Early Qur'ān Manuscripts: Twenty Examples* by Daniel Alan Brubaker.

Then, I thought that I should not regret my inability to answer the aforementioned author, because now we have another example of the same inconsistent approach to the misspellings and corrections of words. The focus of our present work is the 113-page book by Daniel Alan Brubaker titled *Corrections in early Qur'ān Manuscripts: Twenty Examples*.

Undoubtedly, the themes concerned must be handled by a purely academic approach, and observations deduced must be evaluated with scholarly meticulousness. This applies to wording and style used in the analysis as well. We are fully aware that from the very beginning, our own text might not fulfill this requirement. However, it has not been possible for us to act otherwise in the face of the inaccurate scenarios and subjective observations contained in the book we will comment on. Given this setting, we are confident that the readers will correctly understand our above and forthcoming remarks. But will we be able to explain all this in a compelling manner to Daniel Alan Brubaker? We doubt it. Biased people are always difficult to deal with.

Finally, in the face of these implausible scenarios emerging in the West, I deeply appreciate the sensitivity and attention through which Prof. Halit Eren, Director General of IRCICA, extends his support to the publication of our brief remarks. Our work on several of the earliest manuscripts of the Quran which reached us from fourteen hundred years ago, and constitute the main proofs against such claims and scenarios, was in its greater part undertaken and published owing to his patronage, encouragement and assistance. With our sincere gratitude and appreciations to Prof. Halit Eren.

15 September 2020

I.

What is Orientalism?

Though our main subject is not Orientalism, it will be useful to quickly recall what is meant by this term. Although it has been defined in varying ways, we will explain it as follows: Orientalism is an activity that aims to advance the Western world's knowledge of the Islamic world by means of studies on all elements of the Eastern, Islamic civilization—including its religion, languages, history and culture—and provide evidence to the advantage of the West in the competition between Islam and Western civilization. According to Edward Said,

“... Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient, dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it settling it, ruling over it: In short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, 1989: 15-16).

The Arabic equivalent of the term is “İstishraq” and those engaged in it are called “Mustashriq”.

Undoubtedly, one of the main themes of Orientalism is the holy book of Muslims, the Quran. Certainly, the Orientalists also produced serious, scholarly works. Prominent examples include Ibn Abu Dawud's *Kitab al-Masahif* which reached us in a single manuscript, was studied and brought to our knowledge by Arthur Jeffery (Leiden 1937). Even though in his study

he also aimed by adding appendices to the original book to raise doubts about the authenticity of the Quran. It is important that this unique source about the history of Quran manuscripts is made available to researchers. Yahya b. Adam's *Kitab al-Haraj*, one of the oldest sources about Islamic tax law, was also first studied and presented to the world of learning by G. H. Albert Juynboll (d.1948). The first *Encyclopedia of Islam* was also the work of Orientalists. This work is a serious and important source in the field despite containing some articles or paragraphs imbued with a preceduces.

We wished that the author whose book we shall examine here had made a useful contribution to the history of the Quran, which would give us the pleasure of similar acknowledgment. This is because we are not biased in any way or apprehensive about studies made in the West; on the contrary, we make use of them when needed and believe in the obligation to adopt an objective stance in the face of diverging opinions.

What we should perhaps say at the end, we will say it now: Even though we do not agree with the author's general descriptions of the Quran, we can consider these as matters of the author's own choice. Regarding the examples that he provides to illustrate changes that would have occurred in the holy text over time, they require some reflection.

In a note he shared on the Internet on 28 May 2019, the author introduces himself as a scholar of the field and claims that he treats the data with honesty.¹ Even if we admit his honesty in approaching the Quran per se, we have to say that he lacks the required qualification or acts under the influence of his western upbringing. What we mean by that will become clearer as we examine the relevant examples.

¹ In his statement shared on Internet on 28 May 2019, he states: "I am a scholar in Religious Studies. My primary academic focus is Qur'an manuscripts of the first several centuries of the book's existence. As any scholar, I am learning and gathering data, then processing and analyzing them. I try to do so with honesty and applying the tools of reason and prudence."

II.

Daniel Alan Brubaker's Interest in the Quran?

1.

Daniel Alan Brubaker's interest in the Quran does not go far back in time. As he writes in the Preface of his book, his interest in the Holy Book of the Muslims started around 2007 after listening to a paper presented by an Orientalist (Keith Small) about a textual criticism of the Quran and continued with his own presentation of a similarly themed paper. Subsequently, while he was planning to work on the "early examples of the Quran in written form" for his doctoral dissertation, he changed his mind and decided to pursue the subject of "corrections in the Quran".

2.

As understood, the author's interest grew further as he engaged in the field, where he saw that the Holy Quran has had an impact on world history for more than a thousand years and that it affected and still affects the lives of billions of people.

3.

At the beginning of his Preface, the author states that it took him a long time to prepare it due to "a personal tendency toward perfectionism". He says that the abundance of the materials to be analyzed also has a part in this prolongment. It is understood he intends to supply more technical details in his future publications.

III.

An overview of Daniel Alan Brubaker's approach to the Quran

It would have been understood from the preceding brief remarks that Daniel Alan Brubaker is an Orientalist author who deals with the textual aspects of the Quran. Judging by the nature of the examples he presents, the main purpose of his work is to demonstrate that the Quran had undergone changes. However, as will be demonstrated during meticulous examination of the examples, some of the observations he makes are contradictory. While he takes the possibility of scribal errors into consideration, the examples he presents as evidence of amendments are in fact corrections of what could not be interpreted as anything but scribal errors.

The first to bring up those same examples he provides as evidence of changes in the Quran was, in my opinion, Alphonse Mingana (d. 1937). Mingana, together with Agnes Smith Lewis, published a book titled *Leaves from Three Ancient Qurans Possibly Pre-Othmanic* (Cambridge, 1914). Based on this probability he tried to prove that modifications were made during the writing of Caliph Othman's^{RA} manuscripts. He stated that for example, their documents had **ضل** instead of **ضلال**; **اعرض** instead of **اعرضن**; some words, such as **كافة**, were missing; the first occurrence of the word **كافة** in the verse 9: 36 **وَقَتْلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَافَّةً كَمَا يَقْتُلُونَكُمْ كَافَّةً** was missing (p. xxxvii; xl).

The way thus paved by Mingana must have aroused the appetite of later Orientalists who taught that the Quran had undergone a process of change,

given that the same method has been used frequently over the last one hundred years. There is no doubt that Daniel Alan Brubaker is one of them. In his book we are examining here, he expresses views on the Quran from various angles; I will not evaluate every single one but will comment on a few. But regarding the examples he proposes as evidence to the thesis that the Quran had undergone a process of change, we will comment on all of them and leave it to the reader to judge.

1.

There is nothing to comment on the author's acknowledgement, stated in his Preface, that "the Quran did not only have an impact on world history for more than a thousand years, but it continues to affect the lives of billions of people today" (p. xvii). Nevertheless, when he suggests the possibility that the text of the Quran had undergone corrections over time, he seems to overlook some factual realities. Such as: The Holy Quran, besides being the oldest book that reached our time, was memorized by hundreds of people during the first centuries of Islam and then over time by thousands, even tens of thousands, in different parts of the world. It has been read and recited in the same way by millions of people across the Earth every minute, even every second over 14 centuries. In all respects these readings and recitations remained within the context of what had been written in the manuscripts supervised by Caliph Othman^{RA}. The situation is the same today in the 21st century and will remain so forever.

Moreover, starting from the first centuries of the Quran, innumerable books were written on its language, textual style, orthography, history and superiority in inimitability; libraries are filled with its exegeses. It is a reality that the manuscripts ordered by Caliph Othman^{RA} to an authoritative committee and then distributed to different provinces may not have been discovered by us yet. However, some of the copies produced on the basis of these manuscripts during the lifetimes of Prophet Mohammed's^{SAW} Companions, did reach us which is another source of confidence and

certainty about the Quranic text. If our approach to the Quran overlooks these realities, then our judgments about it will not be sound.

Certainly, we have no doubt that a wealth of Quran manuscript fragments has survived and the materials to be examined are abundant. This is because from the first century Hijra onwards, countless competent people devoted themselves to copying this sacred text. Some of those copies disappeared over time but a considerable number of them were successfully preserved and placed in libraries. It should also be noted that, especially in the early centuries, writing tools and materials were scarce, where one copy of the entire Quran required the use of parchments from the skins of hundreds of animals. Despite the presence of such difficulties, an immense range of copies were produced, and abundant materials are there for our reference. But an analysis of the author's allegedly "faultless" ideas will show us how faultless the examples chosen by him and his observations on them are.

2.

In his Preface, the author addresses different circles: First he addresses the Muslims by stating that "the Quran is, quite simply, your *kitab*, your book. Obviously, you may know this. When it comes to these manuscripts, they are among the earliest surviving witnesses to the message Muhammad delivered" (p. xix). Having said that, he does not neglect to arouse hesitation by asking why differences appear in various Mus'haf copies. He also points to the importance of these manuscripts for believers.

We have been engaged in the study of early copies of the holy text for about 20 years before we felt obliged to attend the present task, but we never had the capacity like the author suggests to observe anything like "variations among them and what could these mean?" (p. xix). On the contrary, what we were able to witness clearly is that all these ancient documents testify to the intact state (authenticity) of the holy book, which only strengthens one's belief in it.

In our opinion, in undertaking the task to study the Quran, the author was influenced by his more senior, biased colleagues which caused him to hang on to sample texts, containing nothing more than the scribal errors he identified in some of the early copies.

If a case he identifies as problematic in one manuscript was, in the very same verse, either 1) repeated in various manuscripts, such as for example, if the word هو he saw as inserted later into a manuscript was also added to many or several other copies, or 2) this word which looked like a textual addition was not found in the copies in use today, then the author would have been proven right. However, as none is the case, interpreting a correction (of a scribal error) occurring in a single copy as proof and projecting it to state an extremely crucial claim, namely, modifications in the Quran, is neither a scholarly approach, nor is consistent with good faith.

3.

The author also calls upon academics and draws their attention to these manuscripts by coming up with the statement that academically this is an exhilarating period to live in regarding the study of Quranic manuscripts. His underlying motivation here seems to be confusing the minds of Muslims by pointing out and emphasizing some occurrences in early manuscripts (cases of orthographic variants, words corrected or omitted by oblivion) and thus shake their beliefs. He goes as far as claiming that his book —by being based on factual evidence and documents— would somewhat challenge traditional methods in approaching the Quran. It appears that the author acts boldly due to his lack of knowledge or with the mindset stemming from prejudice, since he does not notice that he stands on a Trojan Horse.

4.

Coming to more tangible issues; Brubaker states that early Quran manuscripts contain thousands of physical changes or corrections and that his book is meant to serve as an overview of them (p. 1). It is clear that he aims to raise

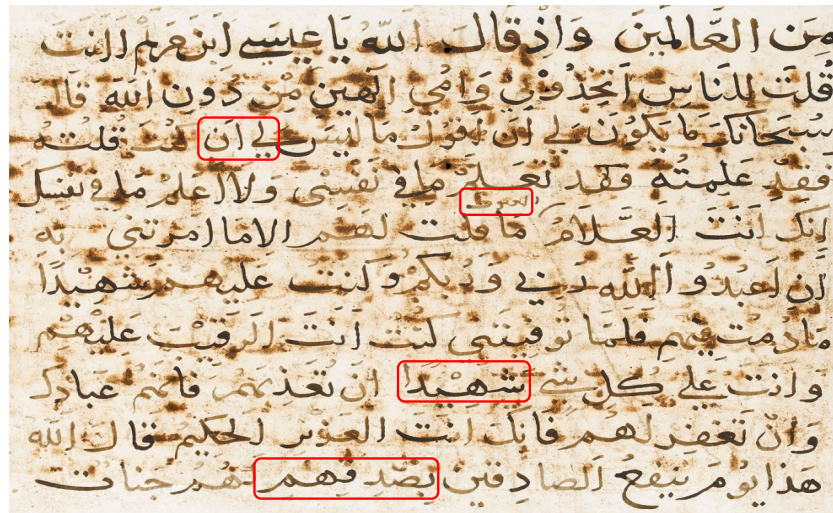


Image 1 Surah al-Maida, 4: 116-119

attention to them. He expects that once exposed, the examples will challenge the belief of the Muslims to the authenticity of the Quran (p. xxi). He does not conclude with one example like Dr. David Powers, but tries to support his thesis with 20 examples that he found in various early copies of manuscripts and sets of sheets.

He does not think that changes or corrections such as those in his examples are found not only in early manuscripts but also in the ones written in subsequent centuries until today printed in the absence of diligent institutional checks. The author does admit that simple scribal errors do occur in some of these examples, that the manuscripts were written by humans, not machines, therefore ordinary human error must always be taken into account (p. 95).

He also clearly explains that during the copying from an exemplar, haplography (missing a word or phrase), dittography (writing a word or a phrase twice) or parablepsis (looking aside when writing, such as to fill the nib of a pen with ink) occur and says there were many instances of correction

of such mistakes in the early manuscripts he examined (p. 97, footnote 15). Nevertheless, it is understood that he is unwilling to give up baseless claims.

Let us examine this example together: Image: 1 shows one of the leaves (f. 91a) copied on year 841 (1437) i.e. 800 years after Prophet Mohammed's^{SAW} time to complete the lost leaves of the manuscript attributed to Caliph Othman^{RA} which is preserved at the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, Istanbul. There are four scribal errors on this one leaf.

- * In the third line, the word **بحق** between **لى** and **ان** was forgotten.
- * In the fifth line, the word **الغيوب** was forgotten and later added above the line
- * In the eighth line, the word **شهيد** is wrongly written as **شهيدا**.
- * In the tenth line, the compound **صدقهم** was written as **بصدقهم**.

How will the author, who claims to produce an academic work but ends up writing scenarios, explain these and other similar cases? We presume that he will not generate new scenarios by pretending this and similar manuscripts predate the work of Othman^{RA} or will not claim -as some Orientalists have suggested as regards some pages- that predate the advent of the Quran.

5.

Another issue pointed out by the author is that disagreements arose in Othman's^{RA} time over the reading of the Quran (pp. 8-9). On this important matter, some remarks are noteworthy:

- * At a time when there was nothing like printing, writing tools and materials were scarce, and Quranic education was based on memorizing and oral tradition, such disagreements were only natural. They were also unavoidable when people met having learnt the Quran in different geographies and with different dialects. It is true that a discord emerged on the reading of the Quran between Muslim soldiers

from Sham (Damascus) and Iraq during the conquest of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

It is stated in many recorded sources that Caliph Othman^{RA} was apprehensive that this may provoke a controversy, he thus decided to make several copies from the Mus'haf which was collected during the time of Caliph Abu Bakr^{RA}. The information that Zayd bin Thabit who had participated in the preparation of the first manuscript supervised the committee in charge and that the copies made were sent to major administrative centers, is also recorded.¹

When examining the documents that possibly date from the first century of Islam, the following facts, recorded in many sources, must also be kept in mind: Naturally, the copies resulting from this work, accomplished with institutional authority under the joint scrutiny of other Companions of the Prophet^{SAW}, invalidated any non-conforming individual copies or sheets. Caliph Othman^{RA} achieved this extraordinary work and fulfilled a historical task of an extreme degree of responsibility. This work won the approval of the Prophet's^{SAW} Companions in the same way that Caliph Abubakar's^{RA} collection of the first copy of the Quran was approved by them. Caliph Ali's^{RA} statement as a member of the Prophet's^{SAW} household "If Othman had not done this work, I would have done it" indicates the importance attached to it. The following statement of Caliph Ali^{RA} also bears significance:

"Oh people! Do not be unfair to him. I swear by Allah that the work he did on the copies is not otherwise than in conformity with the view of a community from among us..."²

¹ Bukhari, *al-Sahih (Fadail al-Quran)*, p. 3; Makki b. Abi Talib, *al-Ibanah*, pp. 28-29; al-Suyuti, *al-Itkan*, I, p. 169.

² Ibn Abi Dawud, *Kitab al-Masahef*, p. 12. Also see Ibn Kathir, *Fadail al-Quran*, p. 18-27; Ibn Jazari, *al-Nashr*, I, p. 8.

- * There is another noteworthy fact the author and other Orientalists overlook while speaking about the Quran. It is understood from many narratives reported in the sources relating to exegeses and Hadiths that the Prophet^{SAW}, in order to encourage Muslims' learning the Quran, told them about the "Ahruf al-Sabah" (seven letters) principle. He said "The Quran was revealed in seven letters. Read it in any of them you find easy". There is no doubt that with this permission of the "Ahruf al-Sabah" (الأحرف السبعة), Arabs from different tribes or speaking different dialects were allowed to read the Quran in their own way of pronunciation.

The disagreement between Caliph Omar^{RA} and Hisham b. Hakim on this matter is well known. The narrative says that Omar^{RA} thought Hisham was reciting verses incorrectly during his prayer. Together they went to the Prophet^{SAW}, who made each of them read the same verses, after which he said "The Quran was revealed in seven letters. Read it in any of them you find easy."³

However, such narratives must be taken with caution bearing in mind, particularly the conditions of the initial years of the revelation. Most important was to enable people have access to the divine message rather than the dialect in which they read it. Though information regarding the background and subsequent process of application of the Prophet's^{SAW} permission of the "Ahruf al-Sabah" is scarce, it is possible to think that the range of permissible pronunciations must have evolved towards the end of the Medina period within the framework of the Quraysh dialect. Caliph Othman's^{RA} instruction to the committee in charge with the copies that in case of disagreement with Zayd, who was not from the Quraysh, on orthography, the Quraysh dialect should be taken as basis. In consequence,

³ Bukhari, *al-Sahih (Fadail al-Quran)*, pp. 5, 27); Muslim, *al-Sahih, Salat al-Musafirin*, p. 270.

the framework of permissible readings was ascertained by his manuscripts, discarding any readings their script would not allow. These remarks about the “Ahruf al-Sabah” must be taken into consideration particularly when looking at palimpsests (parchments on which texts were written over effaced earlier writings) (see below).

6.

Making reference to another theory, which entertains the possibility that the *rasm* came to be mis-pointed at times by later generations which lacked a complete oral tradition, the author states that such a theory, if true, would alter traditional assumptions about the Quran’s transmission history (p.15). He also refers to the subject of oral transmission in his Conclusion (p.97).

But to date the “traditional assumptions about the Quran’s transmission history” have never changed. Never, in particular, for the reasons mentioned by the author. This is so because the institutionalization of Quran recitation (*qira’at*) in major administrative centers as of the middle of the first century Hijra (when many of the Prophet’s^{SAW} Companions were still alive) and activities to teach its recitation which started even earlier, as of the Prophet’s^{SAW} Hijra to Medina, never left the matter of sign-marking unattended. We need to be well informed that authoritative *qira’at* imams (leaders) and madrasas established in their circles worked with utmost meticulousness. Biographies of famous *qira’at* imams and records of their activities will suffice as solid evidence to that. As the author states, anybody may commit errors in writing or marking. What counts is whether what was done gained validity or not. Throughout the history of the Quran, there is no such case having gained validity.

7.

Furthermore, the author is interested in earlier forms of the text supposedly concealed in the lower texts of the palimpsests and seems regretful that none of this evidence is visible in today’s copies. He states, “It is odd that no

copy existing as of today has been reliably identified as one of these actual authoritative copies, and that the ones about which such a claim is made seem to have been produced long after Othman's time" He also says that "These documents would have been extremely important objects, so we would expect they would have been preserved" (p. 19). I think that on these issues, the following excerpts (shortened) from my book *Mesahif-i Kadîme* will be informative enough for the author Brubaker:

"Having worked for some years on the restoration, maintenance and classification of part of the bags-full of folios of Quran manuscripts which were discovered in Yemen's capital Sana'a, Dr. Gerd - R. Puin and Elisabeth Puin are leading experts in the field. In some examples they studied, underneath clearly legible lines of Quranic verses one can discern older writings, also of Quranic texts. That is, the older text was erased and rewritten. Even so, the lower text is discernable and also partially legible."

These documents which were presented as solid evidence that the Quran allegedly underwent a process of change had enchanted the Puins, who believed that such a process did actually take place. It is underlined that this enchantment also influenced other Orientalists. Elisabeth Puin was one of the Orientalists to insist on these materials. The material that Puin examined is a folio of the manuscript preserved at Dar al-Makhtutat in Sana'a under inventory no. 01-27.1 (folio 2ab). The folios of 36x28 cm. dimensions she mentions are in the number of 32. Puin tried to decipher the lower writing of the folio and observed differences. Her evaluation of this observation is as follows:

"It is impossible to conceive of all these differences in terms of simple scribal errors or incompetence, even if this is sometimes the case (...). Along with small differences, there also exist more serious ones: Variations of the orders of suras, and above all, a large number of

important textual differences, such as stylistic variations, missing or added parts of texts (...) ⁴

Some people think of the Quran as any other book, written by an author sitting at a desk, and therefore comment on its style. Those who engage in such argument should remember that the sacred text was revealed gradually over a 23-year period and that each revelation was made in relation to specific events. It must also be recalled that over time these revealed texts were grouped in *surahs* under specific titles and kept in their original form without being edited in the way of an authored book or article. As to stylistic variations mentioned by the author, what kind of stylistic differences she means is unclear.

Coming to what has been designated as missing or added parts of the texts, though the degree of accuracy of her observations on the document is not certain, it is not difficult at all to explain the existence of differences of this kind. The subject deserves to be considered in its entirety and with regard to all examples evaluated, but looking at the first example she gives will suffice to clarify the subject.

In the example at Image 2, the author has shown in the first line the writing of a verse as found in present time copies and copied in line 1b an easily readable form of it from an old parchment; however, this text is not different from the copies we have in hand today. On line 1a she tried to discern the lower writing. According to this assessment of hers, **اذ** in the lower text was replaced with **لقد**. Thus although the word was **اذ** in the deleted text, it was changed into **لقد** in the upper text and in today's copies. Furthermore, the expression **على اثره** in the lower text was later changed into **من بعده**. As

⁴ See Puin, Elisabeth, "Ein früherer Koranpalimpsest aus San'ā' (DAM 01-27.1)", *Schlaglichter Die beiden ersten islamischen Jahrhunderte*, Berlin 2008, pp. 461-463.

Text: Sure 2, Verse 87-96		Zeile
وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ		StT
وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ	1b	
وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ	1a	

Image 2 An example contained in E. Puin's book

mentioned by the author, it is possible to explain some of these variations as scribal errors or incompetence, an eloquent example to it being the document at Image 1 belonging to the first century Hijra.

Regarding the difference between the erased text and the one written over it, the following strong possibility in the light of historical and scientific facts shall be taken into consideration. The “Ahruf al-Sabah” principle relating to the alphabet in which the Quranic verses were revealed, is known. According to narratives contained in almost all of the established and essential sources relating to the Hadith, the Prophet^{SAW} declared that the Quranic revelation was based on seven letters.⁵ This is the declaration of permission authorization for individuals or groups to read/recite the Quran in their own dialects or verbal style. It is due to this permission that, particularly during the Medina period, some differences occurred between the readings of Quran learners or the texts of some scribes. At times, disagreements arose among the Companions over these differences. The production of Caliph Othman's^{RA} manuscripts determined and documented the authorized forms of readings and this information reached our time through the science of *qira'at*. In this light, there is no difference in essence between **ولقد آتينا**

⁵ On the narratives and comments about them, see Ebû Şâme, *al-Murşidu'l-vecîz*, pp. 77-145.

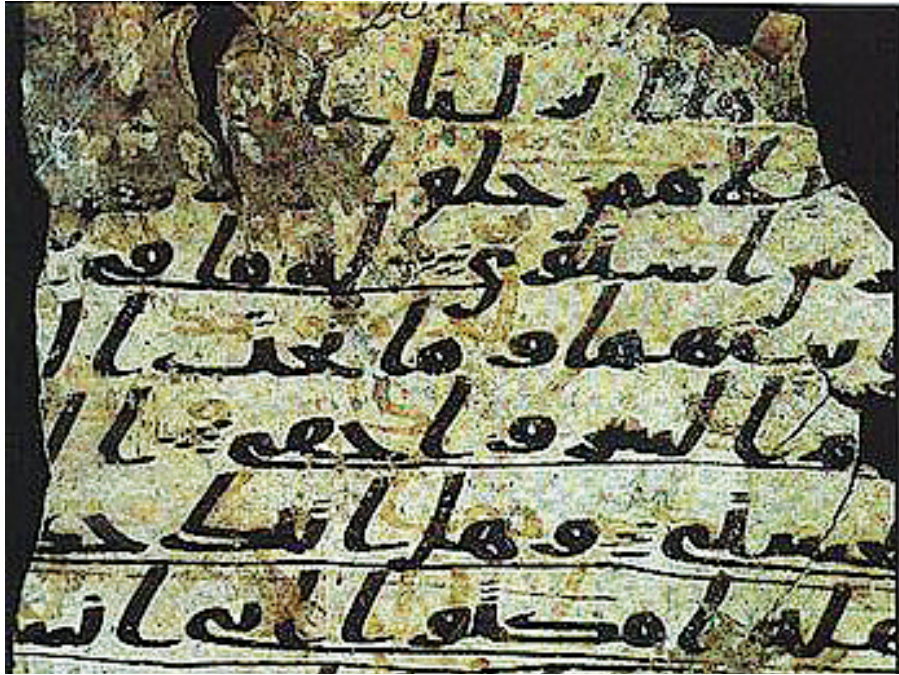


Image 3 A verse in a palimpsest

and **على اثره** and **من بعده** or **واذا اتينا**. In each case, both forms will be perceived in exactly the same way. Despite this, the author does not seem to intend to take this reality into consideration.

It must be noted, to complete the review of possibilities, that the difference between the lower and the upper texts might have been caused by dialectical variations between readings of the Prophet's^{SAW} Companions as allowed by the "Ahruf al-Sabah" authorization, but also, possibly, by corrections of serious mistakes the lower texts might have contained. The practice of erasing and overwriting incorrect texts on the same parchments must have been considered as the usual or the right thing to do when writing materials were scarce. In other words, these folios must be evaluated in the same way as the example at Image 1, taking into account the possibility of scribal incompetence or ignorance.

While I express disapproval of examples and views offered by Orientalists trying to show that the Quran was modified, I am not unaware of contributions Orientalists have made to studies on the history of the Quran, Islamic sciences, culture and civilization. The efforts of the Dr. Gerd – R. Puin and Elisabeth Puin team in rendering the Yemen parchments accessible cannot be forgotten. It would be inconceivable to think that we will oppose to the work done by Prof. Angelika Neuwirth and her colleagues in Berlin in the context of the *Corpus Coranicum* project. Our objection is not directed to unbiased studies undertaken in the West but to the forced efforts behind some of them aimed at casting doubt on the intactness of the Quran. Obsessive claims such as “The Quran is a book compiled from the Old Testament and the New Testament”, “The Quran was authored by Muhammad” and even “Muhammad is a fictional, imaginary personality” are the dark spots of Orientalism. There is not much to say to those who do not distance themselves from these.⁶

8.

The author, Daniel Alan Brubaker, claims that even at an early date (during the reign of Caliph Othman^{RA}) it was not clear whether a widespread consensus existed regarding the text of the Quran (p. 19). In the Conclusion of his book he expresses his view from a slightly different angle by accepting that most of the oldest Quran manuscripts which have reached us carry signs indicating that they were produced following the standardization works of Caliph Othman^{RA} (p. 95).

We disagree with the author on the point that there was not widespread agreement about the Quranic text during the Caliphate of Othman^{RA} (as already explained above). Regarding his statement as to most surviving manuscripts bearing signs of having been produced following works

⁶ See Altıkulaç, Tayyar, *Mesâhif-i Kadîme*, pp. 168-175.

of standardization directed by Caliph Othman^{RA}, in our opinion there is no doubt that these manuscripts were copies from Caliph Othman's^{RA} manuscripts or recopied from their copies. These copies were written in different places (distant from each other, such as Medina, Damascus and Basra) by scribes who under the conditions of the era had most probably never met; despite this, they all carry the same orthographic characteristics as the copy sent there by Caliph Othman^{RA} and are identical in their essence. At the same time, they are in conformity with the copies which have been in use in the Islamic world over the centuries. Furthermore, this conformity also applies with regard to memorization and recitation / reading practices which have been in existence for fourteen hundred years. All of these facts are there to invalidate the author's departing from scribal errors he saw in some manuscripts and folios to conclude that the Quran underwent modifications over time.

9.

According to the author, the existence of finely produced manuscripts some of which were corrected after a long passage of time is interesting and presents a challenge to the notion that there was a strict uniformity and widespread agreement about every detail, every word and letter (p. 19).

We ought to know that a distinction should be made between the uniformity of the "word" and "letter". There is no rule or claim to the effect that there would be a "concordance of letters" between the writings of different scribes. It is a reality that with the evolution of Arabic orthography, scribes copying the Quran at different times came to spell a given word in varying ways. While one wrote the word al-Salihah as **الصالحات** another one wrote it as **الصلحت**. But both of these were read in the same way everywhere in the world, with a long vowel. The examples given by the author for corrections do not represent such cases. As to the examples he gives to illustrate a challenge to the notion of uniformity of words, their analysis, in what follows, will show the inconsistency of his arguments.

IV.

Examples presented by Brubaker as evidence of his claims on corrections in the Quran

Erasures, erasures overwritten, mere overwriting, insertions and the like are the main focus of Brubaker's book. Based on these and samples of script styles from the 7th, 8th and 9th centuries (p. 27), he concludes that textual corrections were made in the Quran at times. In fact, his PhD dissertation is titled *Intentional Changes in the Quran Manuscripts*. In support of his thesis, he selected 20 examples from six manuscripts and analyzed them. With this opinion the author attempts to demonstrate that the examples that he draws on could not be seen simply as scribal errors, but instead prove that the Quran was subjected to changes over time. Concerning the majority of his examples, the author does not consider the possibility that they could be corrections of scribal errors. Do the examples he presents justify his judgment? No, they do not. He himself admits that 4 of the 20 are corrections of scribal errors. This inconsistency will become clearer as we proceed.

For each of the examples given by the author, we chose to refer to the edited manuscripts that were published by IRCICA. Without doubt, these are the earliest manuscripts that have reached us from the first and second centuries of Hijra. Although some of the author's examples are from lost folios of the said copies, it has been possible for us to find their counterparts in at least 5 to 8 other copies. These are:

1. The Istanbul, Topkapı manuscript (publ. Istanbul, 1428/2007, 1440/2019)
2. The Istanbul, TIEM manuscript (publ. Istanbul, 1428/2007)
3. The Cairo, Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript (publ. Istanbul, 1430/2009)
4. The Sana'a manuscript (publ. Istanbul, 1432/2011)
5. The Paris manuscript (publ. Istanbul, 1436/2015)
6. The Tübingen manuscript (publ. Istanbul, 1437/2016)
7. The London manuscript (publ. Istanbul, 1439/2017)
8. The Berlin manuscript (publ. Istanbul, 1441/2019)
9. The Istanbul, Topkapı/Medina manuscript (publ. Istanbul, 1441/2020)

The author chose some of his examples from the above manuscripts and sets of folios, and we are well informed of their identity and history. He chose 3 examples from the Istanbul, Topkapı manuscript, 1 from the Cairo–Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, 2 from the Paris manuscript. But we cannot pretend that we know the other manuscripts he used, and understand that he does not know them well either. We are not aware of any academic study about them either and we do not think they ever exist.

V. The examples of Daniel Alan Brubaker, and our explanations

EXAMPLE 1

Post-production insertion of the word هو
(al-Tawbah, 9: 72)



Image 4 Topkapı manuscript, f. 122b, line 8

The author included this and similar examples in his book to serve as evidence to changes he claims the Quran underwent over time. This example consists of the interlinear insertion of the word هو with a different nib in the copy which is preserved in the library of Topkapı Palace Museum in Istanbul (nr. 44/32) and was published with a critical edition (IRCICA, Istanbul 1428/2007; 1440/2019). The author's observation that this word was added to the copy after some time, is correct. The photograph he reproduced does not carry any photomontage or technical error. The same picture is reproduced above in a clearly legible format. Nevertheless, the author's explanation of this scenario is not convincing.

Although it is necessary to examine early Mus'hafs before reaching a conclusion, and how the word هو was written, the author fails to do this. Had he done it, he would have noticed that the word exists in all the other copies as old as this one (some older). None carries any sign of intervention – erasure or correction.

It can be understood that the person who added it to the text did not think of renewing the whole page, since in the 7th and 8th centuries when these copies were produced, writing materials were scarce, and even irregular pieces of skin were used for writing. If the author cares for objectivity as he claims to do, he must be assured that tens even thousands of the Quran copies written in different places of the world do include the word هو in their original form. Given all of this, can the examples given by the author be considered as evidence for the claim that the Quran was subjected to changes over time?

How will the author explain the presence of the word in question in the original form in the 7 early copies contrary to its absence in the Topkapı copy? It is to be recalled that as a result of our research we know that the 7 copies mentioned here were written in places far away from each other. For example, the Topkapı and Sana'a manuscripts were copied from the manuscript that Caliph Othman^{RA} had kept in Medina; the London and Paris manuscripts from the copy he had sent to Damascus, or from the copies of these. There is no doubt that the word هو is there in this verse in all existing copies. While choosing this example, the author seems to have forgotten his statement that "In order to provide readers the most value," he had generally decided not to pick corrections that he had "judged to be the result of correcting a mere scribal mistake from the time of first production". How could this example convince readers? It is impossible for us to understand it.

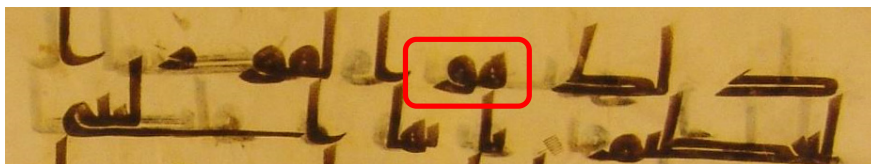


Image 5 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 328b, line 1

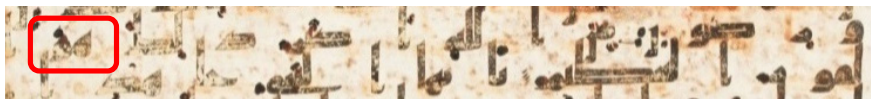


Image 6 TiEM manuscript, f. 142b, line 4



Image 7 Berlin manuscript, f. 74b, line 2

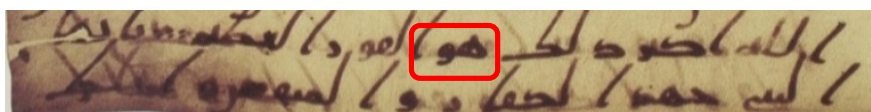


Image 8 Paris manuscript, f. 41a, line 22

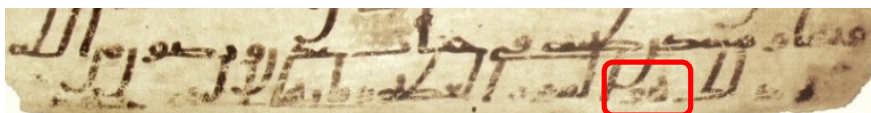


Image 9 London manuscript, f. 13b, line 25



Image 10 Sana'a manuscript, f. 91b, line 1



Image 11 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 121b, line 7

EXAMPLE 2

The claim that the word **له was replaced by **لهم****
(al-Shura, 42: 21)

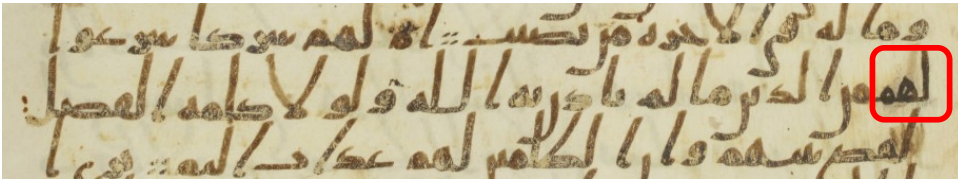


Image 12 Paris manuscript, f. 48b, line 18

The author chose this example from the manuscript preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale (nr. 328) in Paris which was published along with a study (IRCICA, Istanbul 1436/2015). The claim is that the word **لهم** was overwritten on an erasure; the word **له** in the original was replaced by **لهم**. Though the image reproduced could be interpreted in different ways as to the erasure, we find no inconvenience in basing our comments on his observation. Accordingly, what has to be said is clear: Our explanations for the first example are equally valid here. That is, regarding this possible erasure in the Paris manuscript we again have to refer to other early manuscripts. When we do it we see that the word **لهم** in this same place is written in the same way, as **لهم**, in the Topkapı, TiEM, Cairo–Mashhad al-Husayni, Sana’a, Topkapı / Medina, Berlin and London manuscripts, all from the moment of their original production and none carries any erasure or intervention at this point. Had it been possible to check tens or thousands of other copies produced later in different places, it is certain that the situation would not be any different.

Then, what has to be said is clear: This example given by the author in support of his thesis that “the Quran underwent corrections over time” does not qualify as evidence to his scenario. Below are the lines in question reproduced from the Paris copy and other early copies:



Image 13 Topkapı manuscript, f. 317a, line 1



Image 14 TiEM manuscript, f. 351a, line 1

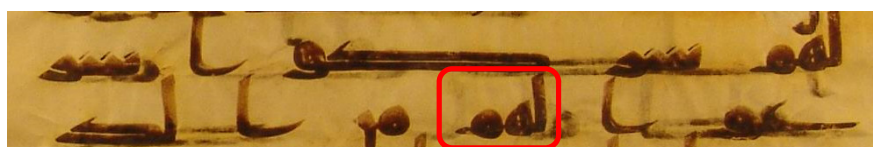


Image 15 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 851b, line 8



Image 16 Sana'a manuscript, f. 241a, line 3

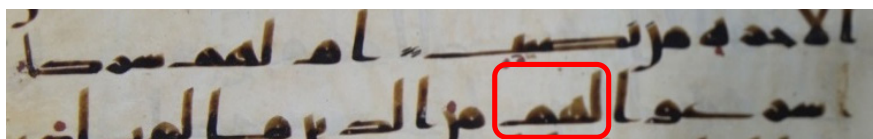


Image 17 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 314a, line 8

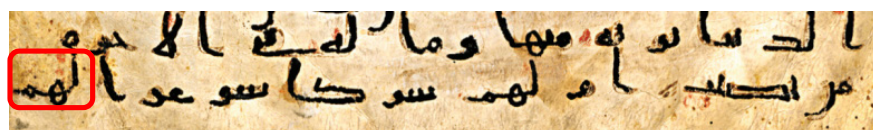


Image 18 Berlin manuscript, f. 167b, line 24

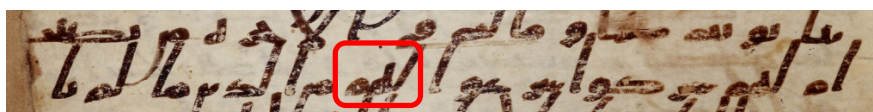


Image 19 London manuscript, f. 118a, line 15

EXAMPLE 3

Examples relating to post-production insertions of the sacred word الله

(L-R) al-Ahzab, 33: 18, 24, 73; Fussilat, 41: 21; al-Hajj, 22: 40; al-Nur, 24: 51;
Fatir, 35: 11; al-Tawbah, 9: 93, 78)

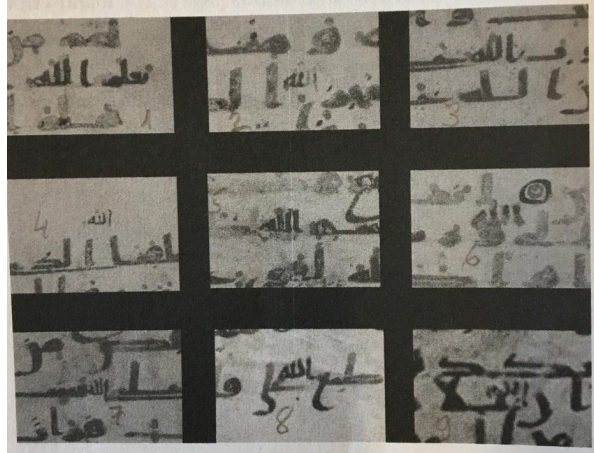


Image 20 The word Allah written -inserted- in various manuscripts

This image reproduced from the author's book brings together nine examples from different verses in different copies where the sacred word الله was inserted later than the first writing. Seven of the passages reproduced here were taken from the same copy. The author's statement "it has fascinated me to discover that, of all things for a scribe to "forget", *Allah* would be among them; ..." is important. That is, he says that although the word الله was meant to exist in all of them, it was not written and missing for a reason unknown to the author. The author nevertheless wanted to formulate a guess and suggested that recurrence of similar corrections in different places seemed to him as "evidence, perhaps, of a certain degree of early flexibility in the manuscripts and probably also reflects the oral nature of the transmission ..." (pp. 34-35).

Here, the boundaries of "flexibility" alluded to by the author is highly important. If this "flexibility" refers to what applies in the Prophet's^{SAW}

authorization “The Quran was revealed in seven letters; read it in any of them you find easy”, then there would be no inconvenience. We would agree with the author when it comes to such “flexibility” on condition that the latter is located in a manuscript that is scientifically and indisputably proven to belong to the period of the Prophet’s^{SAW} Companions. However, the author’s examples come from copies later than those commissioned and distributed by Caliph Othman^{RA}. All of the Mus’hafs after this were copied either from the copies of Caliph Othman^{RA} or from their copies. It is natural that more or less scribal errors existed in the copies produced in this process. Each error must be analyzed as an individual case, with regard to its own context.

As to the “oral nature of the transmission” as a possible cause, referring to errors made while recording the orally transmitted message, it is a conjecture which requires no comment. What is important is whether such mistakes exist in the same verses in different manuscripts. But no such case exists and the author’s examples do not include any such case either.

We found it unnecessary to compare each of the nine examples in this image with all eight manuscripts that we have at hand. We are sure comparison of the first three examples with their counterparts in other manuscripts will sufficiently serve for all. As basis for comparison, we used only two of them, the Topkapı and the Cairo – al-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscripts, which in our understanding are also available to the author.

Below are reproductions of the parts in question from the first three verses, all from Surah al-Ahzab, from the Topkapı and Cairo – Mashhad al-Husayni manuscripts. All have the holy name of الله written at the moment of their original production.

a) The text in the first example:



Image 21 Topkapı manuscript, f. 269b, line 12

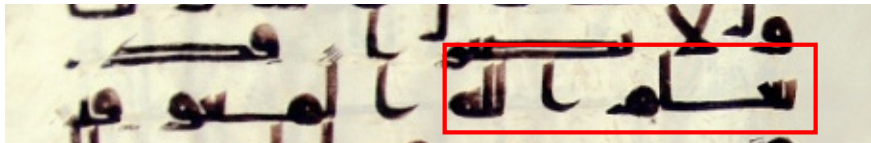


Image 22 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 719a, line 12

b) The text in the second example:



Image 23 Topkapı manuscript, f. 269b, line 18

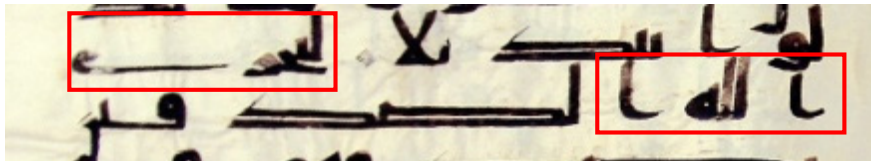


Image 24 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 721a, lines 3-4

c) The text in the third example:



Image 25 Topkapı manuscript, f. 275a, lines 9-10



Image 26 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 735a, line 7

EXAMPLE 4

Erasure after the word عَقْبَة

(al-Rum, 30: 10)

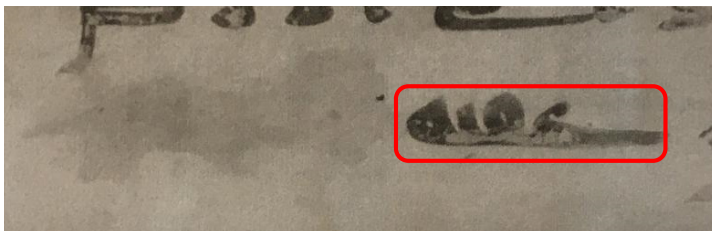


Image 27 National Library of Russia, Marcel 2, f. 30b, last line

Image 27 was taken from Brubaker's book (p. 44). Here, the author devised his scenario around some imaginary significance of the erasure discernible after the word عَقْبَة. He listed grammatically viable possibilities for the erased word: For example, he imagined that it could have been something like من كل or من كثيرا or designations such as "Jews" or "Muslims". At the same time, he did not fail to say "To be clear, I have no idea that the erased writing said any of these things". While he was imagining all these, he did not think of the possibility that the scribe could have written one or two words there by mistake and then erased it/them.

It is understood that the author does have in hand images from some early manuscripts. Before elaborating upon this erasure, was not the correct action to take, to first check those other copies to see what follows عَقْبَة in them? The author did not do it. To fill the resulting gap of information, we looked at seven early manuscripts and saw that in all of them the text continues with the words عَقْبَة الذين من قبلهم. In the place shown in the image, the word عَقْبَة is in the last line of the page; therefore, we are sure – although the author does not say it – that the following page begins with the words الذين من قبلهم.

REFUTATION



Image 28 Topkapı manuscript, f. 259a, line 18

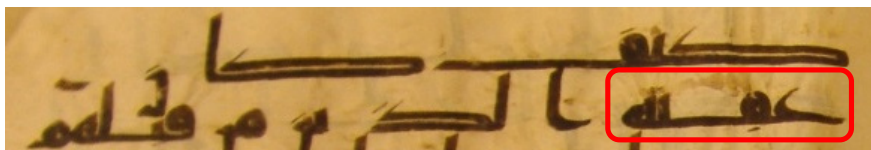


Image 29 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 688a, line 2



Image 30 TiEM manuscript, f. 291b, line 13

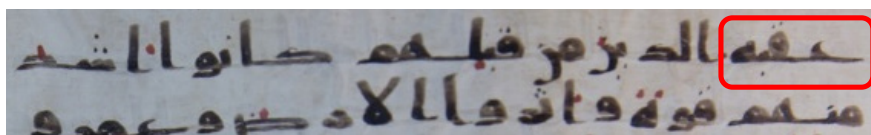


Image 31 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 259b, line 1



Image 32 Sana'a manuscript, f. 201b, line 3

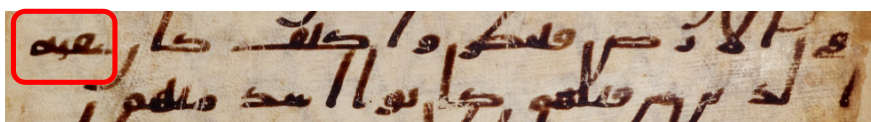


Image 33 London manuscript, f. 88b, line 16

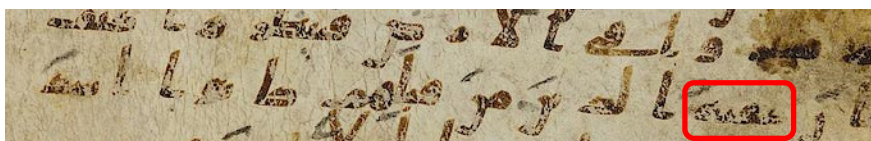


Image 34 Tubingen manuscript, f. 58b, line 14

The images below show what comes after the word **عقبة** in other early manuscripts. They illustrate that the author's discussing this case is, we regret to say, not only an imagination of a scenario but simply nonsense. Such statements serve nothing but cast a shadow on serious studies conducted in the West.

EXAMPLE 5

Corrections in the page shown in Image 35

(al-An'am, 6: 93-94)

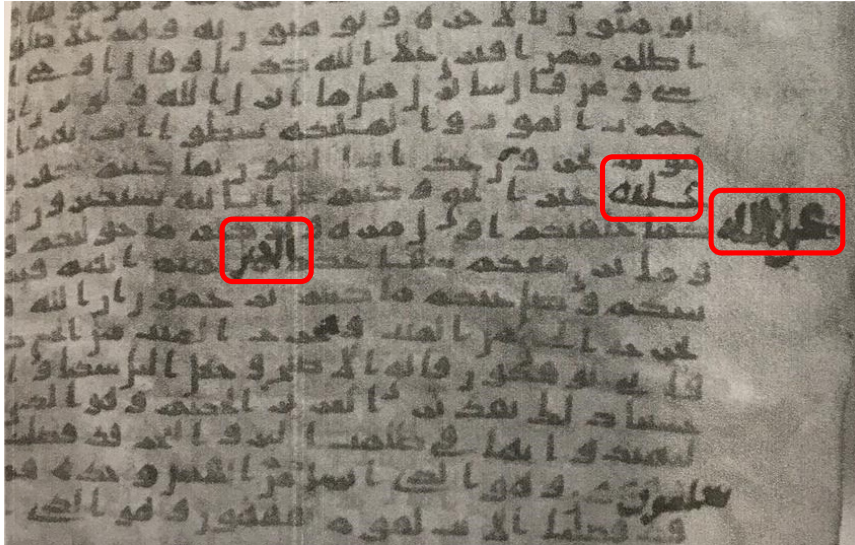


Image 35 Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, MS.474.2003, f. 9b

This page, given as the fifth example and also reproduced on the front cover of the book, carries several scribal errors, but it will suffice to dwell on only two of them: **الذين** and **على الله**. We also consulted other early copies to see how these words appear there.

The author indicates that the manuscript has about 30 physical changes over its 12 folios. We would like to record at this juncture that among the known calligraphers of Quran copies, some were well-versed readers of the Quran such as the famous Ottoman calligrapher Ali el-Kârî (d. 1014/1605) while others were copying lines of text they perceived as images. There were also some still at the level of apprenticeship of this art who tried to copy the Quran. For example, the Topkapı / Medina manuscript published with a study (IRCICA, Istanbul 1441/2020) was probably written by three or four, one of them a master calligrapher. This particular copy appears to carry a

relatively large number of errors.¹ We can see that the author was excited by the existence of numerous scribal errors in this image. However, a glimpse at the corresponding lines in other early copies given below will persuade him to moderate his approach. Our recommendation to him would be to this effect.

As can be seen on the image, somebody who noticed that the intervention in the word **عليه** at the beginning of the 6th line was wrong, tried to correct it by writing **على الله** in the margin; in the 8th line, somebody (probably the same person) tried to correct another error by writing **الذين**. This type of correction can be considered normal at a time when copies were scarce and sought after. The important point here is that such errors found in copies that do not have any institutional authority or known history are not repeated in the same verses of the major, well-known copies. Topkapı, Cairo, TIEM and similar manuscripts which have an institutional authority and known history do not include such errors. Then, in our opinion, there is no sense in trying to launch a debate about the intactness of the sacred text taking such marginal scribal errors as points of departure.

After this brief explanation, we can compare the image given by the author with the corresponding lines in six other early manuscripts. It is seen that there is no sign of intervention on these words in question in any of the early Quran copies. As mentioned earlier, the manuscripts containing examples presented below were written at locations far away from each other. Therefore, the author's effort to produce a scenario by providing these examples is in vain.

¹ See Altıkulaç, Tayyar, *Mushaf-ı Şerif (Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Medine nr. 1)*, İstanbul 1441/2020

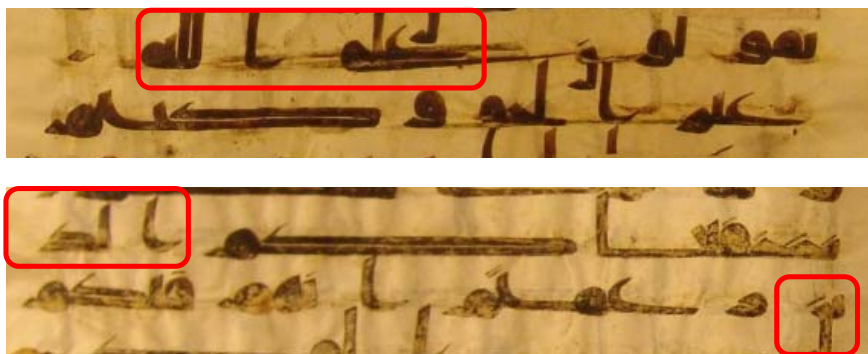


Image 36 Cairo – Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, lines from the same page, f. 208b-209a, lines 10-12, 7-9



Image 37 Topkapı manuscript, f. 86a, lines 14-18

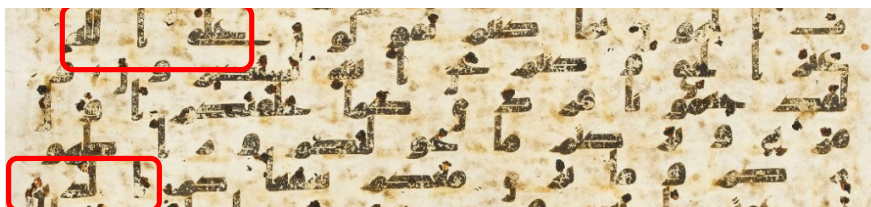


Image 38 TIEM manuscript, f. 100b, lines 2-6



Image 39 Berlin manuscript, f. 51a, lines 12-17

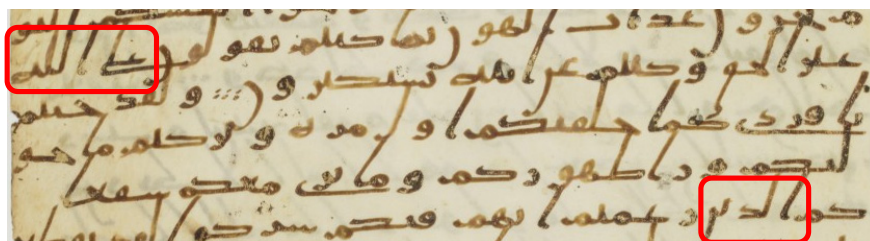


Image 40 Paris manuscript, f. 26a, lines 10-14

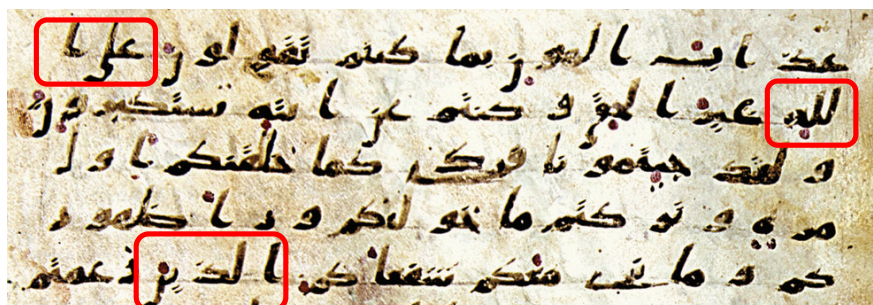


Image 41 Topkapı/Medina manuscript, f. 90a, lines 1-5

EXAMPLE 6

Post-production insertion of the expression

وَعَمَلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقُوا وَآمَنُوا

(al-Maida, 5: 93)

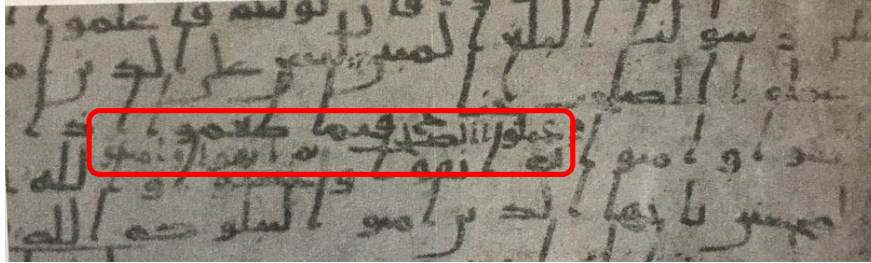


Image 42 Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, MS.474.2003, f. 9b

The author's explanations relating to this example are, in my opinion, plausible, because he mentions the possibility that the insertions, except the letters 'alif in the word **وَعَمَلُوا**, were made by the original scribe soon after the time of the first writing, and that the scribe might have become confused due to the several repetitions contained in this verse.

Even though there are some details in his explanations about the use of the word *'Alif*, they are not worth evaluating. It can be recalled that the author declared (pp. 94-95) that he will not pick examples he judged to have resulted from mere scribal errors, with the exception (possibly) of Example 8. In fact, we consider his exceptional inclusion of Example 8 in his book an inconsistency. As will be seen in the coming pages, the author has other exceptions and inconsistencies. We cannot understand his underlying reason in including such examples, given that these do not serve his purpose of imagining stories and building scenarios.

We checked six other early manuscripts and saw that this part of the verse is present within the original text.

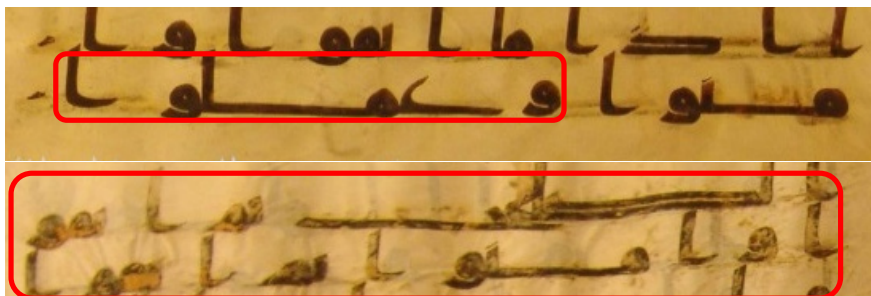


Image 43 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 177b-178a, lines 12 and 1



Image 44 Topkapı manuscript, f. 75b, lines 12-13



Image 45 TIEM manuscript, f. 87b-88a, lines 15 ve 1

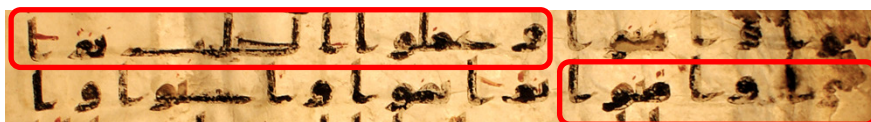


Image 46 Sana'a manuscript, f. 52b, lines 8-9



Image 47 Berlin manuscript, f. 51a, lines 6-7

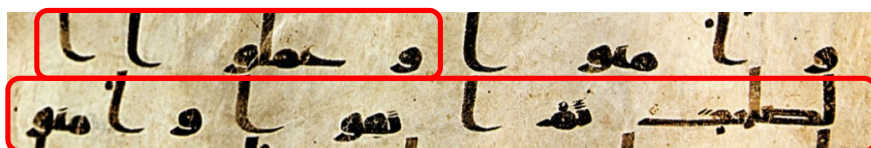


Image 48 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 78b, lines 16-18

EXAMPLE 7

Post-production insertion of the word السبع

(al-Mu'minun, 23: 86)

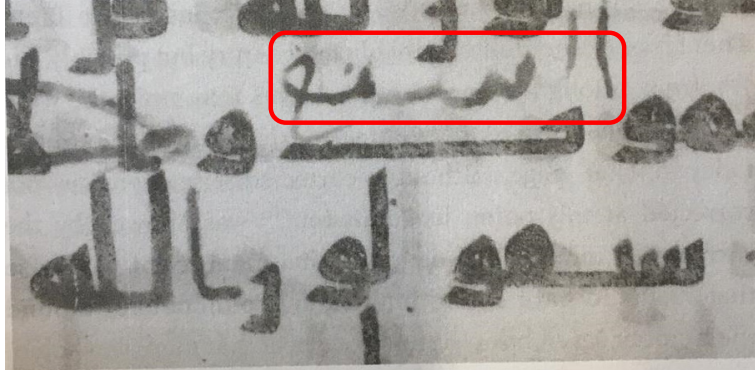


Image 49 BnF arabe 327, f. 1a

The author admits that the presence or absence of the word السبع does not change the meaning and that after the correction, the text aligns with the 1924 Cairo edition, but his intention in including this example is different. His main question is: Which reading reflects the original? Did the original verse include the word السبع or did someone add this word later?

As in the previous cases, our advice to the author would be to notice the presence of this word in the lines we are referring here from the eight early manuscripts that he can also see in all early and recent copies of the Quran available to him. We are sure he will see that the word السبع is present in all of them and he should regret having attempted to construct such scenarios around this. We checked the manuscripts and saw that the word السبع is present in all of them.

Frankly, in the face of such arguments, one cannot help but feel sorry by seeing such pointless endeavors some Orientalists are engaged in.



Image 50 Topkapı manuscript, f. 220a, line 16



Image 51 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 588b, line 6

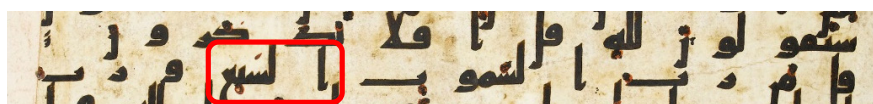


Image 52 TIEM manuscript, f. 249a, line 6



Image 53 Sana'a manuscript, f. 172b, line 11

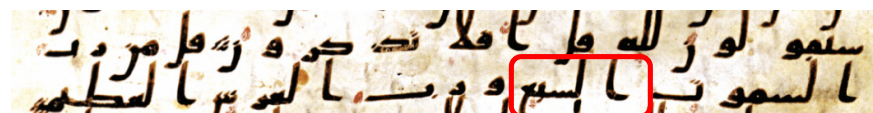


Image 54 Berlin manuscript, f. 133a, line 15



Image 55 London manuscript, f. 64b, line 19



Image 56 Tubingen manuscript, f. 32a, line 5

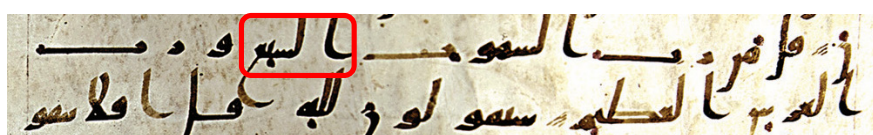


Image 57 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 211b, line 5

EXAMPLE 8

The sacred word الله and the word كان written on an erasure

(al-Nisa, 4: 149)

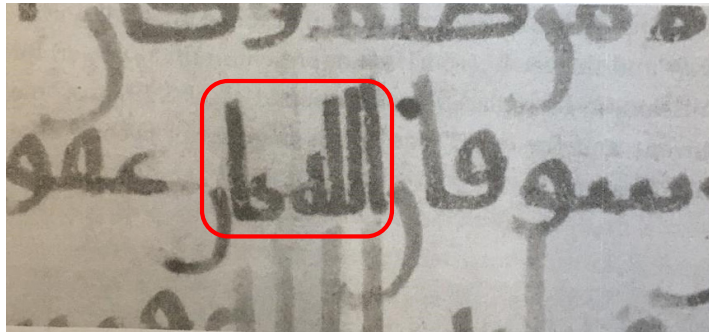


Image 58 BnF arabe 330, f. 55a

The author does not build any scenario upon this example. While he generally decided not to pick examples he had judged to have resulted from mere scribal errors, he exempted (possibly) Example 8 from this principle (pp. 94-95).

It is seen in the image that a word was erased and replaced by الله كان. The author notes that the word كان might have been omitted at the moment of the original writing, the resulting grammatical error later noticed and corrected. With this correction, the text in the image became identical with the corresponding texts seen below from the other early seven copies.

Given all this, it is hard to understand why the author included this example in his book. There is no explanation for this. As we indicated in the context of Example 6 above, it is an inconsistency. Besides Examples 6 and 8, there are other examples that show the inconsistencies of the author, as explained in what follows.

Original images from the seven early manuscripts show that the words الله كان were included.

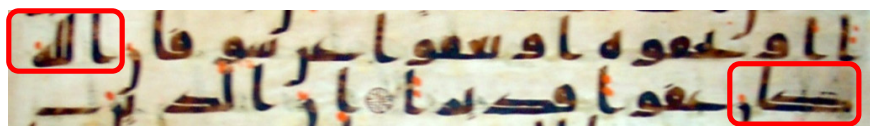


Image 59 Topkapı manuscript, f. 63b, lines 6-7

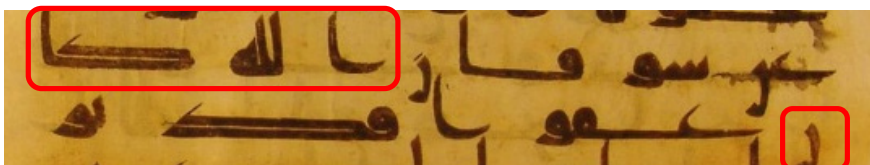


Image 60 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 141a, lines 5-6

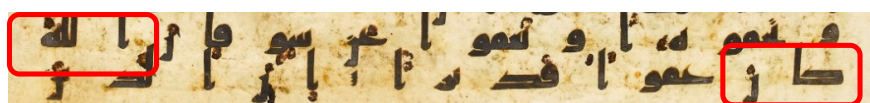


Image 61 TIEM manuscript, f. 72a, lines 14-15



Image 62 Sana'a manuscript, f. 42b, line 17

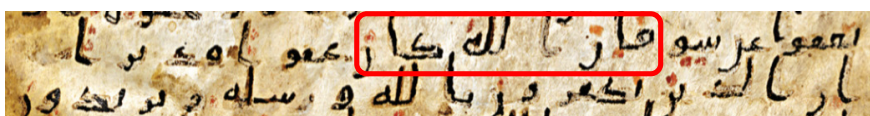


Image 63 Berlin manuscript, f. 36b, line 22

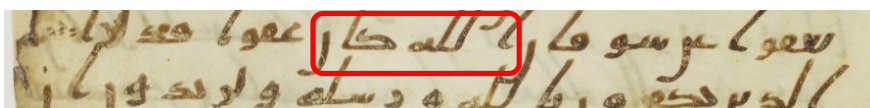


Image 64 Paris manuscript, f. 19a, line 21

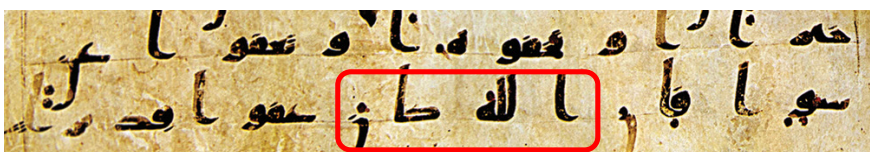


Image 65 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 60a, line 18

EXAMPLE 9

Post-production insertion of the word الرحيم

(al-Shura, 42: 5)



Image 66 BnF arabe 327, f. 12b

The author's observations about this example reveal a situation that falsifies his general motive and ambition. He states that the verse is grammatically correct and semantically viable without the word الرحيم, but that it is difficult to imagine reading this verse without this insertion. He clearly explains that because the word was omitted at the time of first writing, it was added later with a different nib. Then, the same question as in Examples 6 and 8 arises: Why did the author use this example? It is not possible for us to understand this. Had not he stated that only Example 8 is a scribal error? Then why?

Recalling the view of Daniel B. Wallace, Executive Director of the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts in the US quoted on the back cover of the book which can be outlined as "It had long been popularly asserted that ... the Quran manuscript tradition is pristine and perfect, without ever a mark out of place, much less a variation involving whole words or phrases. this book about corrections in handwritten copies of the Qur'an offers its own correction of a widespread but faulty view about the Quran" one wonders what the author intends to correct with this example. If it is a case of omission during first writing, then what distinguishes it from the others? How does the author get convinced that the latter are not scribal omissions or errors and builds scenarios upon them? In fact, these questions must be directed to Daniel B. Wallace, who tries to baptize the author ignoring the inconsistencies in his book.

Here are the original writings in the early Quran copies:



Image 67 Topkapı manuscript, f. 315a, line 9



Image 68 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 846a, line 7

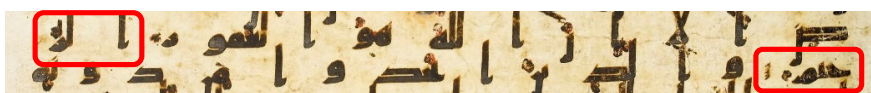


Image 69 TlEM manuscript, f. 349a, lines 10-11

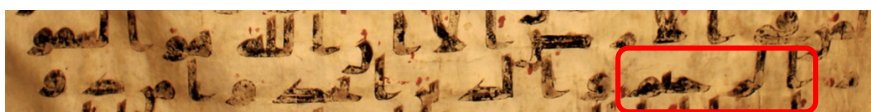


Image 70 Sana'a manuscript, f. 239b, lines 14-15

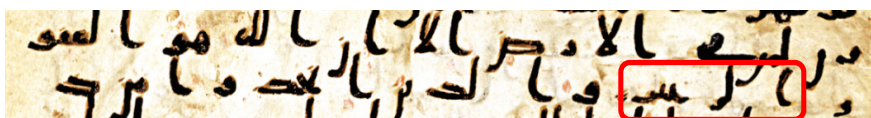


Image 71 Berlin manuscript, f. 167a, lines 2-3



Image 72 London manuscript, f. 117a, line 21

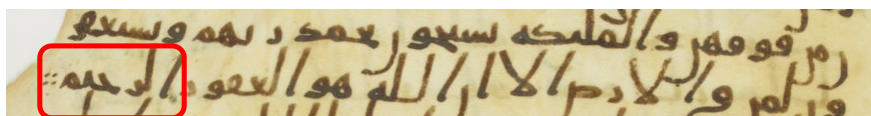


Image 73 Paris manuscript, f. 58a, line 6

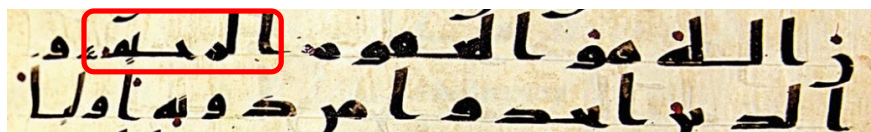


Image 74 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 312b, line 4

EXAMPLE 10

Post-production insertion of the word **بمثل**

(al-Baqara, 2: 137)

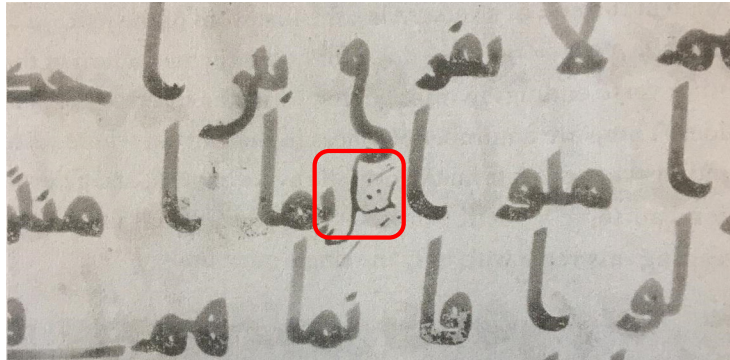


Image 75 BnF arabe 331

We could evaluate this example in comparison with only four of the early manuscripts at hand namely the Topkapı, Cairo – Mashhad al-Husayni, TiEM and Berlin manuscripts, since these verses of Surah al-Baqara fall within the lost folios of the others. The Topkapı / Medina manuscript does contain this *surah* but the page of this verse was severely affected by humidity which rendered many of its words, including this one, illegible.

Yes, the author of the book we are examining finds it clear that “there existed *some* differences of perception about the actual words of the Quran text at the times most of these manuscripts were produced”. These differences of perception were not confined to the earliest decades after Muhammad’s death, but there was some flexibility extending for several centuries” (p. 95).

As regards to his opinion on this, we would like to ask him the following: Which one of the 20 examples in his book is evidence to changes in the Quran over time due to “differences of perception about the actual words of the Quran text at the times most of these manuscripts were produced”? For instance, what is the relationship between the insertion of the word **بمثل**

omitted by the scribe and the differences of perception he alludes to? Is it possible for you to show any other example indicating that this word was added to the Quran later? How will you explain the existence of this word originally in the early Quran copies? If he finds the word there in this place in hundreds of other copies, will he continue to suggest this example as a piece of evidence? Other than the examples below, if you were to examine hundreds of Quran copies and if you find that this word originally exist, will you continue to give it as evidence?

We are sure that the author cannot produce any convincing answers to these questions. It will not be possible for him to reach anywhere by interpreting corrections of scribal errors as changes brought to the Quran.

The fact that the person who noticed and filled in the word **بمثل** did not intervene regarding the letter **ب** in the word **بما** is another case of inadvertence or ignorance. There is no point in dwelling upon it. Hundreds, even thousands of manuscripts extant from the first centuries in different places around the world testify to the presence of the word **بمثل** in the Quran originally. As to the word **ما**, it does not contain the letter **ب**. Furthermore, tens of thousands of *hafez* – memorizers of the Quran - have been rendering these two words as **بمثل ما** since the early centuries. Their original images from the early copies are given here.



Image 76 Topkapı manuscript, f. 12b, line 16

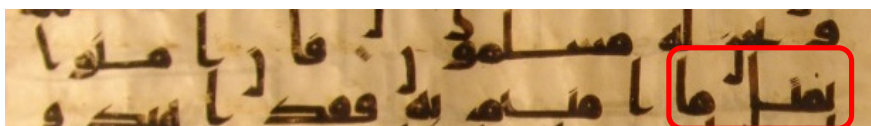


Image 77 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 23a, line 5

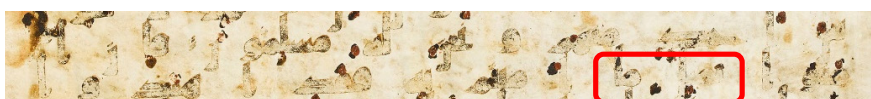


Image 78 TIEM manuscript, f. 13b, line 12

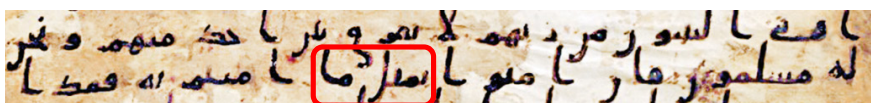


Image 79 Berlin manuscript, f. 6a, line 13

EXAMPLE 11

Post-production insertion of the sacred word الله

(al-Tahrim, 66: 8)

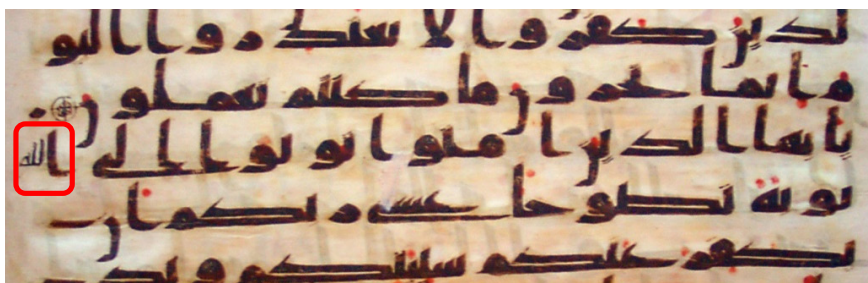


Image 80 Topkapı manuscript, f. 374b, line 7

There are many places in the early manuscripts where words are split at line ends. Such breaks sometimes occur even across pages. The word is broken after its first letter(s) and continued in the following line. Obviously, this was the intention of the scribe of this section of the Topkapı manuscript (published with a study, IRCICA, Istanbul 1428/2007; 1440/2019) but after writing the letter *'alif* at the end of the line, while passing on to the next he omitted to complete the word and continued with the subsequent words. We have come across scribal omissions of this type from time to time.

The example given by the author is by no means any different. What is inappropriate and unexplainable is why the author, who aims to prove there were changes in the Quran, chose this example along with the others. As in other cases, he did not make an effort to look at the other early manuscripts to check the existence of the word.

We made the effort and saw that the sacred word الله is present there from the time of first production of the Cairo–Mashhad al-Husayni, TiEM, Berlin, Paris and Topkapı / Medina manuscripts. We also believe that it also exists in all other earlier Quran copies available to us. Hence, trying to base a scenario on this example is nothing but a waste of time.

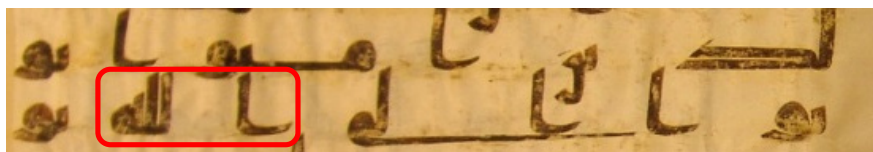


Image 81 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 1002a, line 8

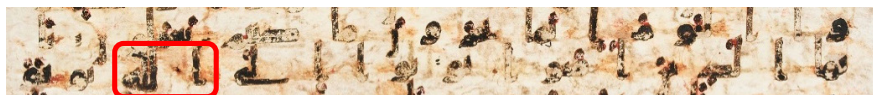


Image 82 TIEM manuscript, f. 407b, line 7

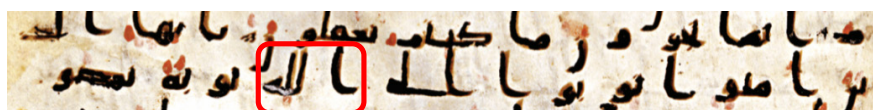


Image 83 Berlin manuscript, f. 200b, line 10

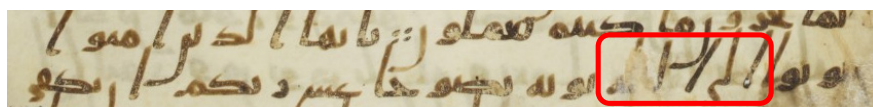


Image 84 Paris manuscript, f. 67b, line 20



Image 85 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 364b, line 6

EXAMPLE 12

The word **فضل** written over an erasure

(Al-i Imran, 3: 171)

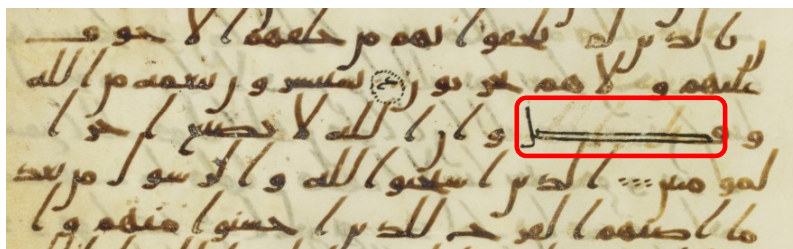


Image 86 BnF arabe 328, f. 8a, line 13

Still another one of those stories.... An erasure over which the word **فضل** was written, making a change in the Quran: This is the allegation that the author tries to demonstrate. It is true that there was an intervention: A different movement of the nib is discernible in the second and third letters (**ضل**) of the word **فضل**; The letter *lam* is inclined leftward differently and there are traces of erasure which is evidence of interference.

Scribes who copy long texts such as the Quran can make errors here and there, and the author admits that ordinary human error must always be taken into account (p. 95). He nevertheless quotes corrections without checking if and how the words they relate to are present in other copies and in the tradition of recitation. As seen in the examples below, this word was written as **فضل** in other early manuscripts; it was also pronounced as such for 14 centuries up till now. Again, the author's efforts in this example as in the other cases were futile.



Image 87 Topkapı manuscript, f. 44b, line 10

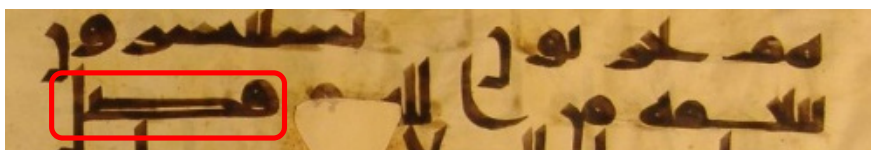


Image 88 Cairo - Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 92b, line 5



Image 89 TiEM manuscript, f. 50b, line 15



Image 90 Sana'a manuscript, f. 27b, line 8

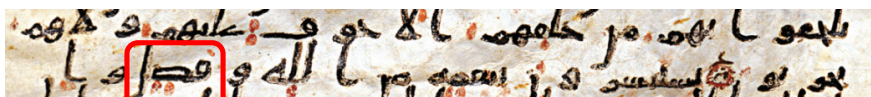


Image 91 Berlin manuscript, f. 25a, line 14



Image 92 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 40a, line 1

EXAMPLE 13

The word قال replaced by قالوا

(Saba, 34: 35)

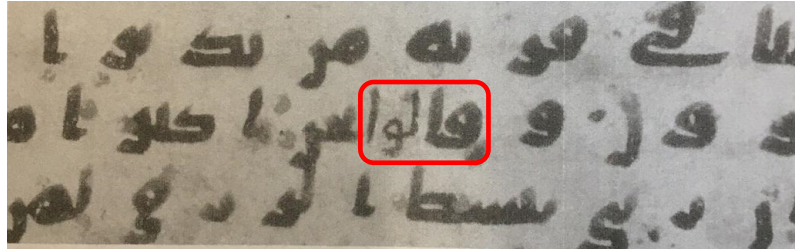


Image 93 BnF arabe 340, f. 26a

The author's observation about the word قالوا in this example is correct. However, once again, he did not take the trouble of checking the manuscripts at his disposal and quoted the example of the word قالوا as evidence to changes in the Quran without examining them.

The author's example in Image 93 and the original images of the word قالوا below in the Topkapı, Cairo–Mashhad al-Husayni, TIEM, Sana'a, London, Tübingen and Topkapı/Medina manuscripts are below:



Image 94 Topkapı manuscript, f. 278a, line 14

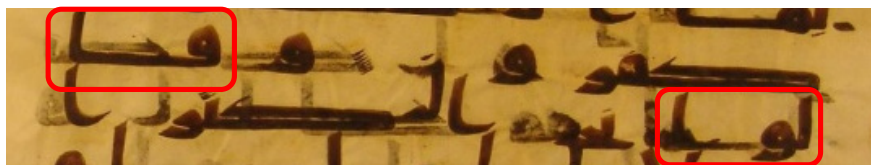


Image 95 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 744b, lines 7-8

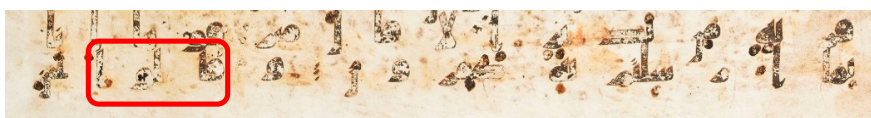


Image 96 TIEM manuscript, f. 311b, line 15



Image 97 Sana'a manuscript, f. 215b, line 19

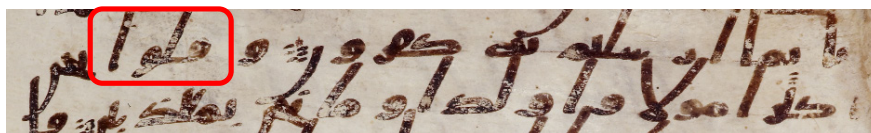


Image 98 London manuscript, f. 100b, line 2

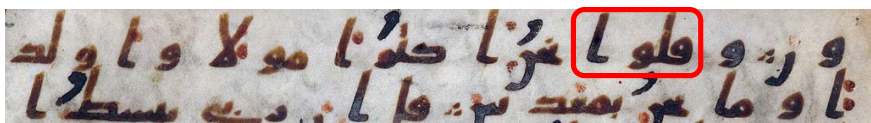


Image 99 Tübingen manuscript, f. 72a, line 1

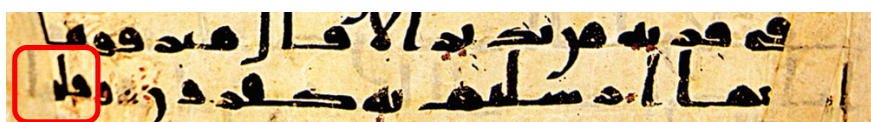


Image 100 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 276b, line 19

EXAMPLE 14

Partial erasure of the sacred word **الله** and of the word **قد**

(al-Nisa, 4: 167)

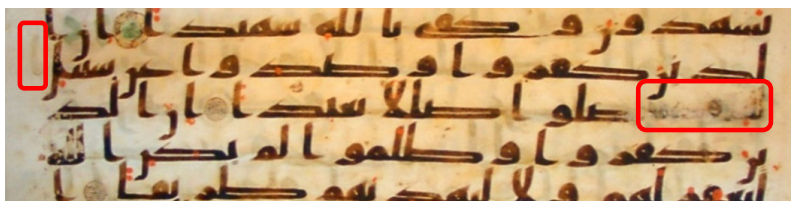


Image 101 Topkapı manuscript, f. 65a, lines 11-12

The author, Daniel Alan Brubaker, argues that the pale *‘Alif* at the end of the second line and the words **الله قد** at the beginning of the next line were erased intentionally. In the manuscript itself and even in the image he presented as evidence in example 14, the words are clearly legible. It is unthinkable that a purposeful erasure would leave them legible to this extent. If it did so, then the real motive of the intervention must be investigated.

Prior to this erasure, the verse read as: “Those who disbelieve and hinder (people) from the way of Allah, have verily strayed far away from the Path”. With the erasure, it would read “Those who disbelieve and hinder (people) from a way, have verily strayed far away from the Path”.

Then, as a result of such an intentional erasure, “Those who hinder (people) from the way of Allah” would not be doing wrong but “Those who hinder (people) from a way” would be doing wrong. Or, else, the person who made the intervention might have found it excessive (!) that the sacred word **الله** occurs ten times in that page of the original manuscript and wanted to delete at least one of them. Even if so, he failed, because both words are legible.

This is like the author showing his right ear with his handicapped left hand, instead of his healthy right hand. It has slipped his mind that these documents



Image 102 Cairo - Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 145a, line 10

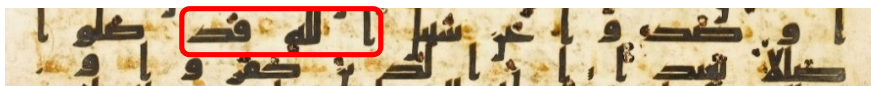


Image 103 TiEM manuscript, f. 74a, line 9



Image 104 Berlin manuscript, f. 37b, line 21



Image 105 Sana'a manuscript, f. 44a, lines 12-13

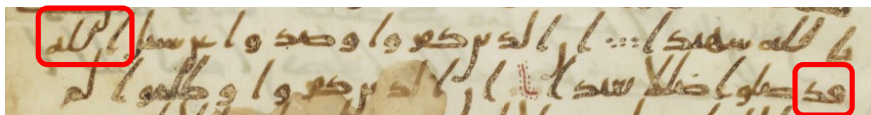


Image 106 Paris manuscript, f. 20a, lines 13-14



Image 107 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 62a, line 14

are 13 or 14 centuries old. Those who work on them know that some of the folios are entirely or partly stuck together. There are hundreds of cases where their separation left some words completely illegible or barely legible. For instance, the Topkapı manuscript, which is preserved in the Holy Relics section of Topkapı Palace Museum and opened for visits during the month of Ramadan, was sent to Süleymaniye Library on 19.4.1984 for treatment and restoration and brought back to the Topkapı Palace Museum Directorate on 9.10.1987. The considerable length of time —three years and five months approximately— it took for the process to be completed indicates the extent of the wear and tear. The Topkapı / Medina manuscript is similarly in need of restoration: It was observed during digitization that many of its pages were stuck together. The majority of early manuscripts are in similar state.

Since all of these possibilities are in front of us, it is impossible to understand how it appeared to the author's mind, as such thing, would not even arise in the mind of the devil.

Furthermore, he cares to consider whether the omission of the word (الله قد) creates any grammatical errors or gaps in meaning. At the same time he states that there would not be a problem if these words were omitted, by doing so he tries to prove that these words in fact do not exist.

Another important question is whether there exists any other early manuscript copied from this one that carries a similar erasure. Strangely enough, the author does not give any thought to this question either. For the sake of providing clarification to the readers, we looked at six of the early manuscripts and saw that the sacred word الله and the word قد are clearly legible as (الله قد) from the time of first production in all the Cairo – Mashhad al-Husayni, TIEM, Berlin, Sana'a, Paris and Topkapı / Medina copies (it is noteworthy that among these, the Sana'a manuscript belongs to the same region as the Topkapı manuscript under study for this example namely the Medina region). We believe the same can be seen in all early and recent copies of the Quran.

EXAMPLE 15

Erasure in the verse at Image 108

(al-Nur, 24: 33)

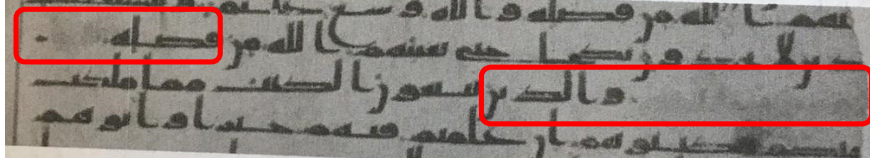


Image 108 Museum of Islamic Art, Doha

Another example suggested by the author as evidence to changes in the Quran is the erasure seen in this image at the end of the second line and at the beginning of the third. Erasures and corrections such as these can be seen not only in these verses but also elsewhere in the early manuscripts. It is understood that after writing the word **فضله** the scribe continued to copy from a further point in his exemplar due to drift of attention and then probably he himself noticed his mistake and erased the misplaced words before continuing. This is my interpretation of what occurred. In fact, after some explanations the author says “this manuscript is the only known copy with a correction at this point” and says that perhaps there was a mere scribal error (p. 74).

Then, the author must be asked the following questions: “If this is the only copy with a correction at this point, then what about the other examples you provide as evidence?” Are they any different? More precisely, “did you check, for instance, if the erasure you gave as evidence of the sacred word **الله** and the word **قد** in example 14 is also (**الله قد**) seen in other manuscripts? Were they also erased in various other copies?” The author has not made any such comparisons. This reflects an inconsistency in his methodology. He does not seem to realize he states invalid suggestions in a field of study he thinks is left unattended.

Let us now see the continuation of the text in question in other early Quran copies. In the Topkapı, Cairo–Mashhad al-Husayni, TIEM, London, Berlin,



Image 109 Topkapı manuscript, f. 224b, line 18



Image 110 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 599b, line 5



Image 111 TiEM manuscript, f. 254a, line 4

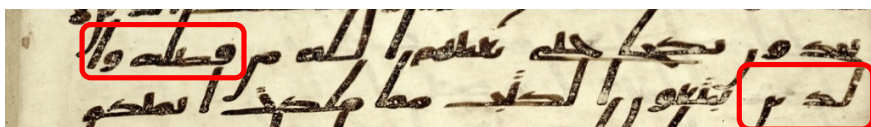


Image 112 London manuscript, f. 67b, lines 6-7



Image 113 Berlin manuscript, f. 135b, line 21



Image 114 Tübingen manuscript, f. 35a, line 6

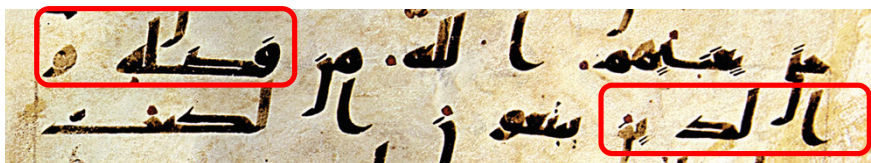


Image 115 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 215b, lines 5-6

Tubingen and Topkapı/Medina manuscripts, the verse continues, after the word **فضله**, with **والذين يبتغون**. None carries any erasure or any other intervention at this place.

EXAMPLE 16

Post-production insertion of the word **كان**

(al-Nisa, 4: 33)

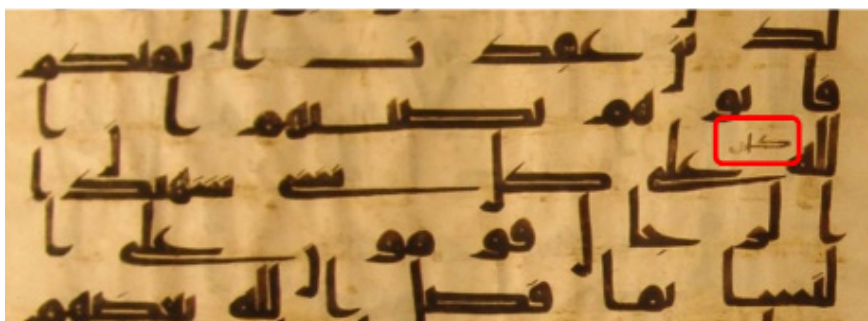


Image 116 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f.109a, line 5

In his presentation of this example taken from the Cairo – Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, the author mentions that there is another insertion of the same word **كان** in the NLR Marcel 17 manuscript, f. IIV (Al-Nisa 4: 6). The reason for his mentioning this other case is unclear, since as he himself indicates this insertion is related to another verse in another copy, and in our opinion, it has nothing extraordinary. If a given word was inserted into the same verse in various early manuscripts, then he would have made a point. However, till now he has not been able to document any such case.

In our opinion, the omission of the word **كان** during the first writing of the Cairo – Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript (and any other one) and its later insertion above or within the line by someone who noticed that it was missing, has nothing extraordinary either. The copies of the same verse reproduced here from other early manuscripts (Topkapı, TiEM, Sana'a, Berlin, Paris, and Topkapı/Medina) include this word from the moment of their original production. We are sure that it exists in all early and recent manuscripts and that it was seen and read as such in all Quran schools.

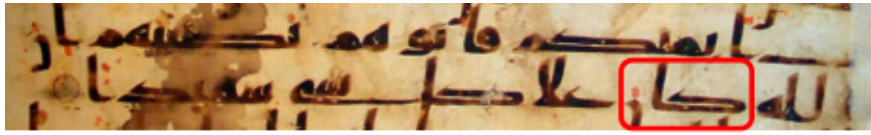


Image 117 Topkapı manuscript, f. 51b, line 16



Image 118 TiEM manuscript, f. 58b, line 13-14



Image 119 Sana'a manuscript, f. 33a, line 17



Image 120 Berlin manuscript, f. 29b, line 2

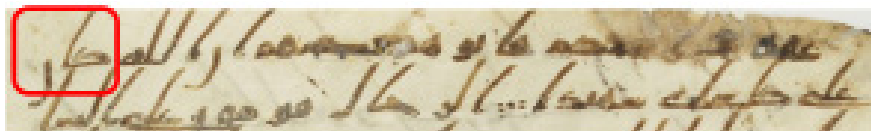


Image 121 Paris manuscript, f. 12b, line 1



Image 122 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 47b, line 15

EXAMPLE 17

The word **نعمة** and the sacred word **الله** written over an erasure

(al-Ahzab, 33: 9)



Image 123 National Library of Russia, Marcel II, f. 7a

It is true that the compound **نعمة الله** taken from the image in the author's book was written by a different person, using a different nib and ink. As mentioned by the author, this manuscript of 12 folios has many other corrections; he qualifies four of them as omissions of the sacred word, examined in relation with Example 3. Clearly, the copy reproduced in this image was written by an inexperienced scribe. Therefore, in our opinion, this case has nothing worth examining.

But it seems the author finds it important, since he continues with a peculiar interpretation: He claims that the original Quran contained the grammatically more fitting form **نعمته** of the word but someone changed it later into **نعمة**. But then, regarding this peculiar and rather insignificant allegation, he does not fail to add that it is only a conjecture that he cannot tell for sure. While throughout, it does not occur to him that the scribe might have written it incorrectly and that someone else would have noticed and corrected it. In fact, we think this simple explanation did occur to him, but he did not follow it as it would not serve his purpose. This is what he generally does.

What counts is the position of the words **نعمة الله** in the early Quran



Image 124 Topkapı manuscript, f. 269a, line 3



Image 125 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 716b, line 8

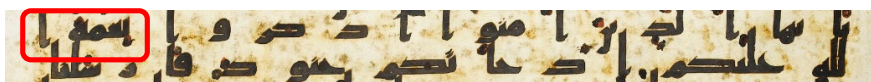


Image 126 TiEM manuscript, f. 302a, lines 2-3



Image 127 Sana'a manuscript, f. 208b, line 10

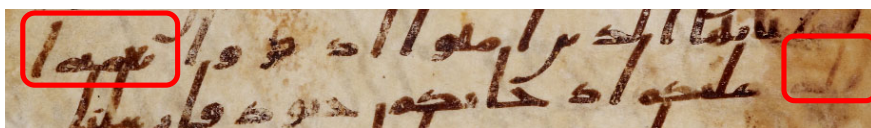


Image 128 London manuscript, f. 94b, lines 14-15



Image 129 Tübingen manuscript, f. 65b, line 4

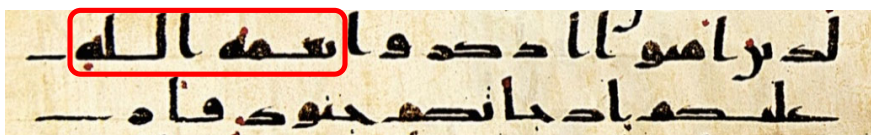


Image 130 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 268a, line 9

copies that have reached us from the first and second centuries. In the Topkapı, Cairo–Mashhad al-Husayni, TİEM, Sana’a, London, Tübingen, and Topkapı/Medina manuscripts, we see that this phrase of two words exists in them in original handwriting. There is nothing in the real situation to allow for scenarios.

EXAMPLE 18

Superscript insertion of the word الساعة

(al-An'am, 6: 40)

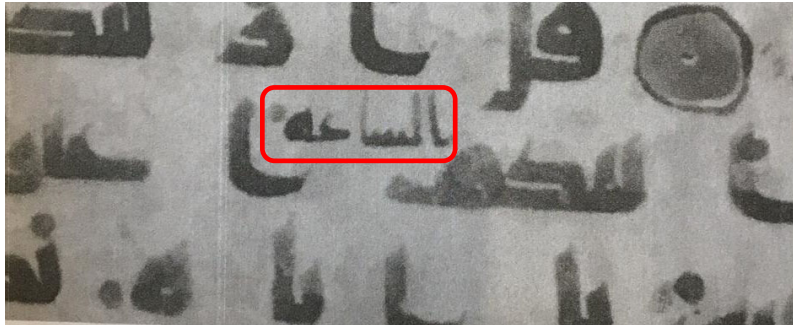


Image 131 National Library of Russia, Marcel 7, f. 7a

In this image reproduced from the book under review, we can see a post-production insertion of the word **الساعة** above the line. The author also records other corrections involving the same word, in the BnF arabe 340 manuscript (verse 15: 85) and the E20 manuscript (verse 7: 34) located at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St. Petersburg. It is only natural that corrections as these be found in different verses in some – such as these – out of thousands or tens of thousands of manuscripts, fragments, or folios. The criterion must be whether this word **الساعة** for example, is corrected in the same verse in more than one manuscript, which is not the case here. We see that the Topkapı, Cairo – Mashhad al-Husayni, TIEM, Sana'a, Berlin, Paris, and Topkapı / Medina manuscripts, which reached us from the first and second centuries Hijra, do not contain any correction on this word.

The author finds this correction interesting because, he mentions, this word relates to eschatological themes. He states, with references to some sources, that its insertion would strengthen and clarify those themes. This implies the possibility that someone who found the expression not strong enough (!) wanted to strengthen it. To put it more clearly, what is implied by these statements is that a problem would have occurred at some stage during

the process between the Divine Revelation and its recording in writing. It might have happened during the Revelation (unthinkable – Allah^{SWT} forgive), its transmission by Angel Gabriel, or its recording by the Scribes of the Revelation. This person with more capability than them would have noticed this weakness and intervened to strengthen the text and clarify the theme.

The author seems to be unaware of the irresponsible nature of his approach. It must be mentioned first that without the word **الساعة** the verse loses its meaning, which originally is: “If there came to you the punishment of Allah or there came to you the Hour.. “ but without this word becomes “If there came to you the punishment of Allah or if it came to you ...“. What would “it” represent? There is no answer to this. Second, the word **الساعة** occurs 38 times in the Quran. How can one think of any reason other than scribal error for its absence in the present context, where it is indispensable, despite its presence at 37 places in association with the Day of Judgment? An attempt to generate incredible scenarios from some scribal omission is more than surprising. The word **الساعة** exists in original writing in the seven early Quran copies given below:

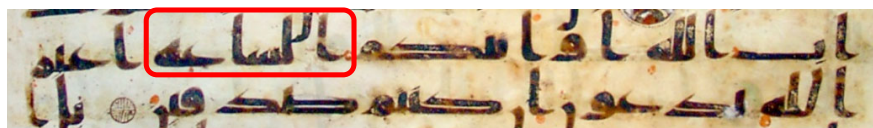


Image 132 Topkapı manuscript, f. 81b, line 13



Image 133 Cairo – Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 194b, lines 9-10

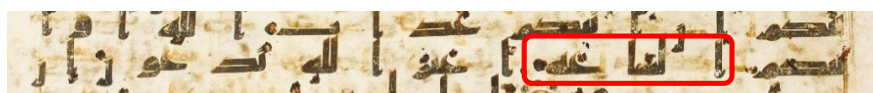


Image 134 TiEM manuscript, f. 95a, line 7



Image 135 Sana'a manuscript, f. 57b, line 1

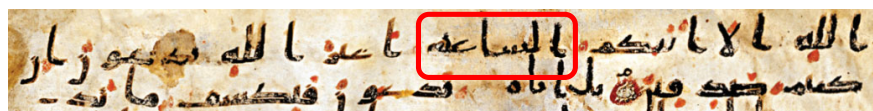


Image 136 Berlin manuscript, f. 48b, line 1

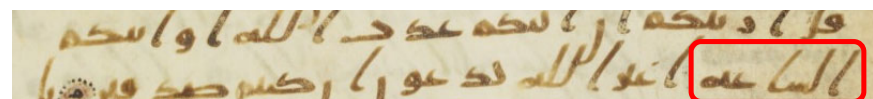


Image 137 Paris manuscript, f. 23b, line 16

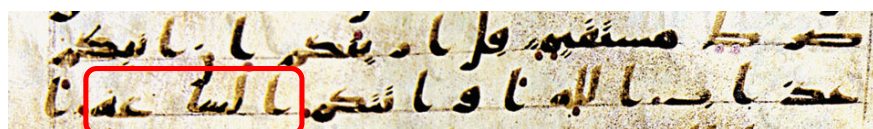


Image 138 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 86a, line 6

EXAMPLE 19

هو and the sacred word الله written over an erasure

(Saba, 34: 27)



Image 139 National Library of Russia, Marcel 5, f. 1a

The author describes this example, which is reproduced here from his book, pointing out first that the correction was not made by the original scribe, since the ink and the position of the letters are different. He also states that with this correction the text aligns with the 1924 Cairo edition. We cannot but confirm that his observations are correct.

It is not our intention to attribute anyone's statements any more sense than their immediate meanings. But evidently, what the author intends to suggest is that starting from the first centuries Hijra, Quranic verses underwent a process of change until they reached their ultimate version (as in the 1924 Cairo edition). This is what he tries to show with his examples.

By consulting the early Quran copies at hand (the Topkapı, Cairo – Mashhad al-Husayni, TIEM, Sana'a, London, Tübingen, and Topkapı/Medina manuscripts) we see that هو and the sacred word الله exist in all of them from the time of first writing and understand once again that the author's scenario is pointless.

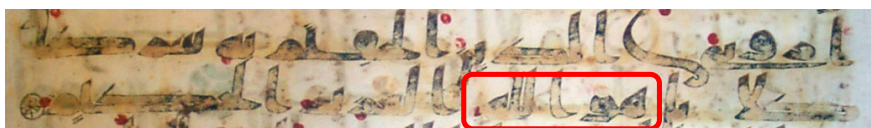


Image 140 Topkapı manuscript, f. 277b, line 7



Image 141 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 742b, line 4

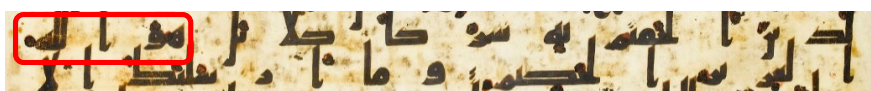


Image 142 TlEM manuscript, f. 311a, line 7



Image 143 Sana'a manuscript, f. 215a, line 17

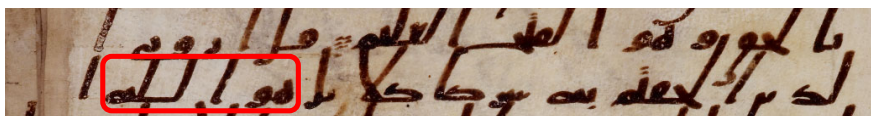


Image 144 London manuscript, f. 100a, line 4

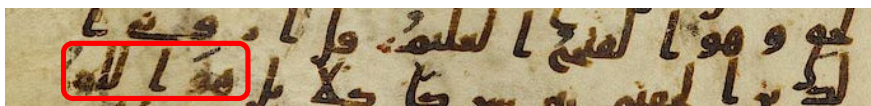


Image 145 Tübingen manuscript, f. 71a, line 18



Image 146 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 276a, line 16

EXAMPLE 20

The expression **ومما رزقناهم ينفقون** written over an erasure

(al-Anfal, 8: 3)

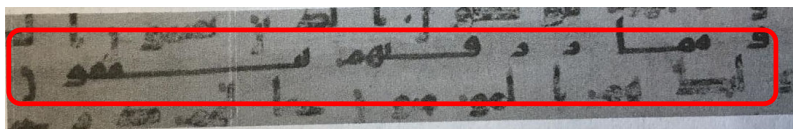


Image 147 Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, MIA.2014.491, f. 7b

The author's observation on this example taken here from his book is correct. But his claim that the word **رزق** is corrected quite frequently in the early copies of the Quran is not valid.

For the expression overwritten on an erasure, when we consulted the early Quran copies that we have, we saw that it is there as part of the original writing of the verse in the Topkapı, Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni, TiEM, Sana'a, London, Berlin, Paris and Topkapı/Medina manuscripts. This is another example of the author's vain attempts to cast doubts on the intactness and authenticity of the Holy Quran by devising different scenarios.

Throughout the study, the author's efforts through these 20 examples without exception have been a futile waste of time which gave a rather shocking representation of the Orientalist scholarship. The author did not feel the need to check at least one or two of the manuscripts reproduced here. He simply and bluntly evaded the reality.



Image 148 Topkapı manuscript, 109a, lines 15-16

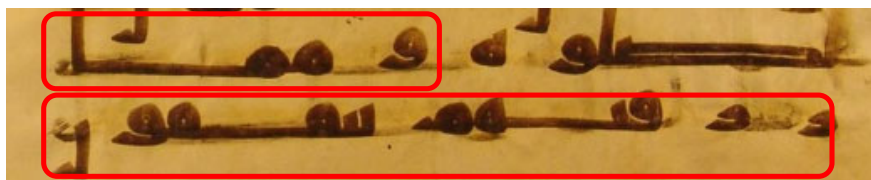


Image 149 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 286b, lines 12-11



Image 150 TIEM manuscript, f. 127a, line 14



Image 151 Sana'a manuscript, f. 80a, lines 9-10

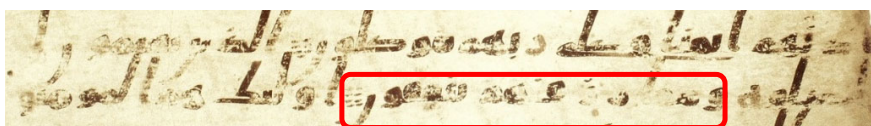


Image 152 London manuscript, f. 7b, line 17



Image 153 Berlin manuscript, f. 66a, line 12



Image 154 Paris manuscript, f. 40a, line 4



Image 155 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 110b, line 12

Another matter of concern for Daniel Alan Brubaker

The tapings on page 33b of the Cairo manuscript

(al-Baqara, 2: 191-193)



Image 156 Cairo – Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 33b

Daniel Alan Brubaker points to the tapings on the page seen in the image (f. 33b) of the Cairo – Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript. According to us, this is nothing to dwell on; but it may bear significance for him. For example, having seen that the reverse side of the page with the tape “appears to be perfectly sound”, he states that “this observation leaves open the possibility, then, that the tape might be serving another purpose, such as selective concealing of something that is written on the page.”

There is not much to say about the author’s skepticism since it seems that—if he is sincere—he will not easily change his prejudiced mentality before acquiring more experience. The bottom line is that he does not even think of referring to more than one source before launching an argument.

As will be seen in Image 157, the former page (a side) of the folio is not at all in “perfectly sound” state. There are partial tapings on this side as well. Having travelled to Cairo twice to examine this manuscript, we can say that its folios suffered important deteriorations due to humidity and, also, that it was subjected to inferior restorations. There is no doubt that the tapings mentioned by the author were applied to stabilize these deteriorations. Separation of the folios that were stuck together might have caused more damage in the (b) side than the (a) side of the folio. There is nothing unusual about this. Actually, nothing is concealed in the corresponding pages of the other early Quran copies which we have in our hands.

It is noteworthy, on the other hand, that in the Berlin manuscript, the same verses fall in the last lines of side (a) and the first lines of side (b) of a folio, and also, that due to the fading out of the ink on side (a) where the verse begins, the whole page was overwritten with ink, which holds for several other pages of the same manuscript as well. We hope this state of the manuscript will not inspire the author to devise another scenario.



Image 157 Cairo-Mashhad al-Husayni manuscript, f. 33a



Image 158 Topkapı manuscript, f. 18b, lines 1-9

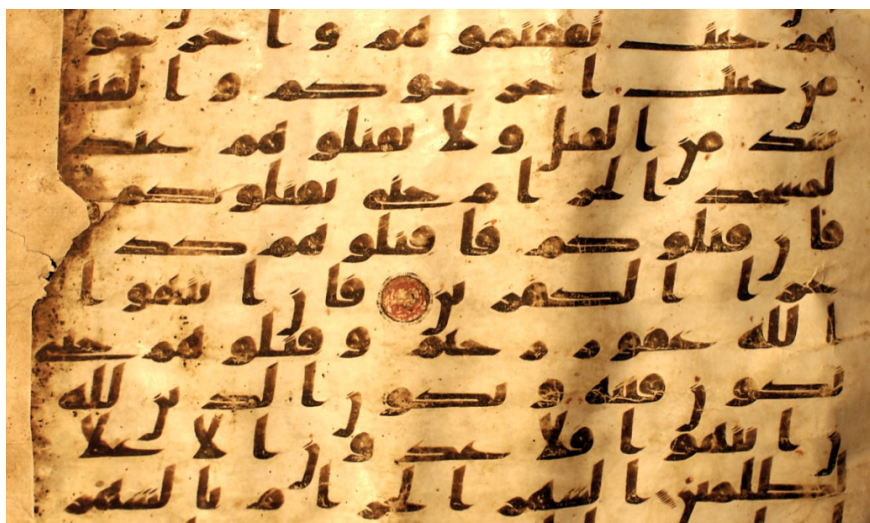


Image 159 Sana'a manuscript, f. 20a, lines 7-16



Image 160 TiEM manuscript, f. 20a, lines 5-13

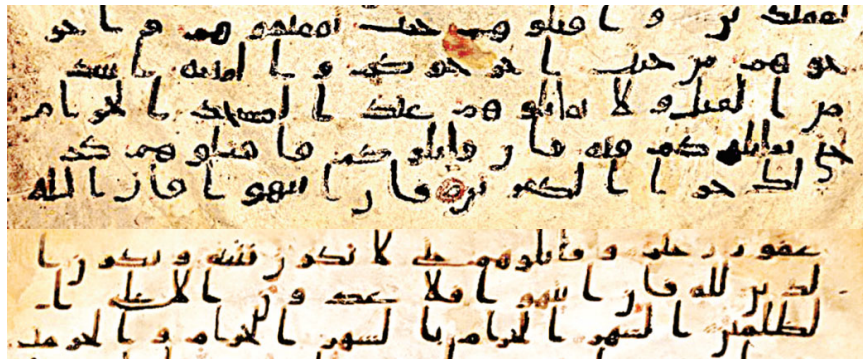


Image 161 Berlin manuscript, f. 9a-9b, lines 11-15, 1-3

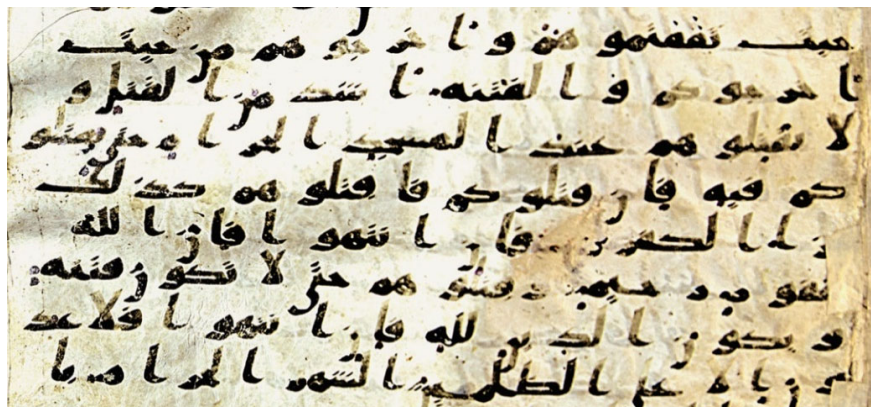


Image 162 Topkapı / Medina manuscript, f. 136, lines 10-17

VI. Conclusion

Some of the Orientalists in the West have positive opinions about the authenticity of the Quran; some admit that it remained intact from the beginning, and express their admiration for the extraordinary processes of the preservation and dissemination of its contents in their original state. However, the majority of Orientalists maintain biased attitudes towards the Quran, under the influence of a theological reasons and/or anti-Islamic sentiments. Given these facts, we felt the pressing need to discuss the cases this one author has presented in relation with the textual authenticity of the Quran, considering it our duty to attend to the matter although it is a single, specific book.

Before even opening the book, the first thing that caught our attention was one of the blurbs printed on the back cover. Obviously, the author included this one to serve as an endorsement, an institutional approval, of his views about a process of change that the Quran would have undergone. In that blurb, Daniel B. Wallace, Executive Director of the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts in the US introduces the book with the following words of appreciation:

“It has long been popularly asserted that, in contrast to that of the New Testament, for example, the Qur’an’s manuscript tradition is pristine and perfect, without ever a mark out of place, much less a variation involving whole words or phrases. Brubaker’s fascinating study demonstrates that this is not quite so. What the author has done in this short book is to distill

years of research, making accessible to a general readership significant and interesting examples of scribal corrections in some of the earliest Qur'an manuscripts. This book about corrections in handwritten copies of the Qur'an offers its own correction of a widespread but faulty view about the Qur'an."

Daniel B. Wallace, who wrote these lines of appraisal to baptize Brubaker and his book on behalf of the institution he chairs, must be asked the following: If he cared to make a thorough evaluation of all twenty examples provided in the book to determine whether they qualify as pieces of evidence; if he did any research on any of them testing them against their counterparts in different sources. We are pretty sure that he did not, because had he checked their validity, he would be unable to endorse the book.

All the examples presented by Brubaker except four (examples 6, 8, 9, and 15) serve no purpose other than producing unrealistic scenarios. As to these four examples, the reason for their inclusion is unclear. The author interpreted them as possible scribal errors and did not devise any scenarios around them, but still included them in his book; then, what distinguishes them from all other similar cases of scribal errors? Isn't this an inconsistency?

One cannot object to the general practice of modelling probable situations in the absence of objective evidence, in order to generate reflection. However, Brubaker's arguments cannot be considered in this light whatsoever: He neglected to conduct research to check the validity of his observations prior to stating them as premises. He wanted to make arguments as he pleases in a field of research which he perceived to be unattended. In a note he shared on the Internet on 28 May 2019, Brubaker introduced himself as a scholar in religious studies and stated that his primary academic focus is Quran manuscripts of the first several centuries of the book's existence. What Brubaker did in the name of scholarly endeavour is actually an act of desperation.

❧ VI. CONCLUSION ❧

Our aim is not to write the history of the Quran, however since we are trying to say/write about the Quran and its authenticity, first of all there is a need to review the following: While the Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammed^{SAW} gradually, it was instantly recorded by the forty or so Scribes of the Divine Revelation and at the same time memorized by the Prophet's^{SAW} Companions. When the Prophet^{SAW} passed away, some of the Companions already knew the entire Quran by heart; though the figures vary in the different narratives, their initial number must have been around one hundred. Later, during the period of Caliph Abu Bakr^{RA}, while hundreds of *hafez* – memorizers of the Quran were still alive, the verses were compiled between two covers in the form of a book for the first time.

During the Caliphate of Othman^{RA}, five or six copies were written on the example of this first manuscript. The task was accomplished by a committee, whose members are known by name. One copy was kept in Medina and others sent to the Makka, Damascus, Basra and Kufa. All the later copies were produced in strict conformity with these official manuscripts.

This is only one aspect of activities regarding the written standardization of manuscripts. In addition, there is the memorization and recitation aspect, which evolved as a science but is generally overlooked or misunderstood by Orientalists. Foundations of this science, having no counterpart in the Western world, were laid by the Prophet^{SAW} in person in the Madina Mosque. Specialists are aware that from that time on, a succession of thousands, even tens of thousands of *Ijaza* - licenses – for the memorization and recitation of the Quran were carried on without interruption until into the 21st century. The well-known *qaris* (Quran reciters) who learnt this science from the Prophet's^{SAW} Companions and their contemporaries, as well as the adherents of the seven readings, the ten readings, and the other schools and scholars, constituted a line of transmissions which, in secure traceability, can compete with the reality of the reporting and authentication of the Hadith. Isn't the fact that readings of the Prophet's^{SAW} Companions reached our time

with all their subtleties through chains of transmissions, significant enough? Aren't Brubaker and those who approach the Quran similarly, aware of a certification document called *Ijaza* in the science of Quran reading? Will all these facts be disregarded in favour of scribal errors contained in some codices or folios, for the sake of producing scenarios contrasting with the authenticity of the Quran?

A closer look at one of the *Ijaza* documents in our hands will help us understand this issue more clearly. This document belongs to Talip Akbal, a *qira'at* scholar in Istanbul. It was signed by his teacher, the late Abdurrahman Gürses, and delivered to him at a ceremony. The document cites 34 names, between the Prophet's^{SAW} until Talip Akbal non-inclusive, where each one is the student of his predecessor and the teacher of his successor. The list begins with the name of the Prophet's^{SAW} Companion Ubayy b. Ka'b^{RA}. The holder of the document, Talip Akbal, received it from Abdurrahman Gürses, who had received it from Üsküdarlı Hasan Fehmi Efendi; the latter had received it from Ispartalı Hüseyin Sabri Efendi, who was given it by the Imam of Nuruosmaniye Mosque Muhammed Selim Efendi, who in turn, had received it from Mustafa Efendi, the imam of Hidaye Mosque, and so forth. The line of *Ijaza* goes back in this way, until Ubayy b. Ka'b^{RA}. There are five names in the chain including Ubayy b. Ka'b^{RA} after the Prophet^{SAW}: Abu Neshid (Muhammed b. Harun), Qalun (Abu Musa b. Mina b. Verdan), Nafi b. Abdurrahman, Abu Jafar Yazid b. al-Qa'ka, and Ubayy b. Ka'b^{RA}. Each of them learnt the articulatory and acoustic configurations and all phonetic features and patterns of the holy book from his predecessor. This document in our hand is only one of the tens of thousands in existence, linking us to the era of the Companions. It happens that chains of succession maintained in different places of the world intersect at some common teachers. The voices and sounds of these scholars continue to be echoed in all corners of the world. The Quran is the only book that is being read all the time and maintains its actuality everywhere in the world. For this reason, any study and evaluation of the codices or fragments dating from early centuries must

❧ VI. CONCLUSION ❧

take into consideration this extraordinary structure and sustainability of the science of *qira'at*. The written text, and the oral transmission that is inseparable from it, are certainly the safest sources of confidence of Muslims.

It is not possible for us to understand the attitudes and actions of some Orientalists who formulate incorrect scenarios to cast doubt on the Quran despite the latter's magnificent constitution and unique history trusted by Muslims. This observation applies also to the textual evaluation of the Quran by Western Orientalists during the last one hundred years starting from Alphonse Mingana. It is not possible for me to comprehend or give even the slightest credit to Brubaker in particular for his totally unfounded scenarios that fall outside the realm of scientific method. As to the remarks of Daniel B. Wallace, "Executive Director, Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts", they are not worthy of attention.

Another criticism directed to Daniel Alan Brubaker's book

In the days when the present book was finalized for printing, we were informed of an article published on Daniel Alan Brubaker's book. In this article published in the journal *Al-'Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* (nr. 27, pp. 273-288), the author Hythem Sidky directed serious criticism to Brubaker's book. We found it proper to add a few words on this article to this modest study of ours. We can summarize our comments on the article concered as follows:

1.

According to Sidky, the book suffers from methodological problems (p. 273). As we have emphasized repeatedly, Sidky states that in evaluating whether a given correction is intentional or consists merely of an accidental omission, other manuscripts must be checked to see which variant they contain (p. 285). Therefore, with the many deficiencies of its analyses and discussions, the book has been a real deception. It carries many flaws (p. 273).

2.

Sidky gives examples of Brubaker's refusal to consider the possibility of accidental errors or omissions of words, the most likely explanation for the corrections observed in those cases (p. 281, 285-287).

3.

Sidky evaluated Brubaker's doctorate thesis and did not find it convincing.

4.

Sidky makes an appraisal of the 20 examples provided by Brubaker and discusses the conclusions of his analyses. Regarding Example 5, for instance, relating to the manuscript located in the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Sidky points to the fact that despite the changes it later underwent, it is still not in conformity with the standard text, and asks the following questions:

- * Was this manuscript written by a scribe with weak memory?
- * Was it written by a sloppy scribe?
- * Or, does the divergence result from a deliberate deviation from the Othmanic text?
- * Alternatively, does it represent a pre-Othmanic tradition?
- * Are any of the variants present attributed to the Companions? (p. 286)

5.

Regardless of which of the above possibilities is opted for, it can be deduced from Sidky's observations that corrections in one manuscript that are absent in others cannot be considered as evidence to the claim that changes were introduced in the Quran over time.

6.

Towards the end of the article, the author's following statement provides a concise description of the book: "If the objective of Brubaker's book is to demonstrate the humanity of the scribes involved in transmitting the Quranic text, it certainly succeeds" (p. 287).

7.

That is, the article clearly demonstrates the inconsistencies contained in Brubaker's book, pointing to inaccuracies and gaps of information.

Bibliography

- Abu Shama, Abd al-Rahman b. Ismail al-Maqdisi, *al-Murshid al-wadjiz ila 'ulumin tataallaqu bi al-Kitab al-Aziz* (ed. Tayyar Altıkulaç), Beirut, 1395/1975.
- Altıkulaç, Tayyar, *Günümüze Ulaşan Mesahif-i Kadime: İlk Mushaflar Üzerine Bir İnceleme*, Istanbul: IRCICA, 2015.
- Altıkulaç, Tayyar, *Mushaf-ı Şerif (Berlin Nüshası)*, Istanbul: IRCICA, 1441/2019.
- Altıkulaç, Tayyar, *Mushaf-ı Şerif (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)*, Istanbul: IRCICA, 1436/2015.
- Bukhari, Abu Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ismail, *al-Sahih (Sahih al-Bukhari)*, Istanbul, 1315.
- Ibn Abi Dawud, Abd Allah b. Sulayman b. al-Ashas al-Sidjistani, *Kitab al-Masahif* (ed. Arthur Jeffery), Cairo, 1355/1936.
- Ibn al-Djazari, Abu al-Khayr Muhammad b. Muhammad, *al-Nashr fi al-qiraat al-ashr* (ed. Ali Muhammad al-Dabba'), Cairo: (Matbaat Mustafa Muhammad).
- Ibn Kathir, Abu al-Fida Ismail, *Fadail al-Qur'an*, Beirut, 1385/1966.
- Edward Said, *Oryantalizm* (transl. Selahaddin Ayaz), Istanbul, 1989.
- Makki b. Abi Talib, *al-Ibana 'an ma'an al-qiraat* (ed. Abd al-Fattah Ismail Shalabi), Cairo, 1379/1960.
- Mardjani, Shihab al-Din, *al-Fawaid al-Muhimmah*, Qazan, 1297.
- Mingana, Alphonse (with Agnes Smith Lewis), *Leaves from Three Ancient Qurans Possibly Pre-Othmanic*, Cambridge, 1914.
- Puin, Elisabeth, "Ein früher Koranpalimpsest aus San'a' (DAM 01-27.1)", *Schlaglichter Die beiden ersten islamischen Jahrhunderte*, Berlin, 2008, s. 461-463.
- Sidky, Hythem, "Daniel Alan Brubaker, Corrections in Early Qur'ānic Manuscripts: Twenty Examples (Lovettville: Think and Tell Press)", *Al-'Usur al-Wusta*, nr. 27 (2019), pp. 273-288.
- Suyuti, Djalal al-Din Abd al-Rahman b. Kamal, *al-Itqān fi 'ulum al-Qur'an* (ed. Muhammad Ebu al-Fadl Ibrahim), Cairo, 1387/1967.
- Yahya b. Adam, *Kitab al-Haradj*, editor's foreword (ed. Ahmad Muhammad Shakir), Lahore, 1395.

