

QURANIC MANUSCRIPTS IN THE FIRST CENTURY OF HIJRAH

Oleh:

Ahmad Baha' Mokhtar ¹
Ahmad Abdussalam Abdul Rahman ²
Hanan Abdul Aziz ³
Muhammad Lukman b. Ibrahim ⁴

Abstract

In this modern and sophisticated era, the access to copies of al-Quran is easily available and owned and the need to old Quranic manuscripts is less popular. Nonetheless, the old manuscripts are not regarded as merely exhibitional sources at the library. Its importance is equally significant and these manuscripts should be thoroughly studied because old Quranic manuscripts possess its own high value in delivering the knowledge of Quranic Calligraphy as a primary source in the rasm Uthmani. This paper will discuss parts of the copies of Quranic manuscripts which were written in the first Islamic century. In this study, the writer will try to review the copies of manuscripts which were written in the early history of Islam. Its present status will also be examined and in the final study, the comparison between the old manuscripts and the present mushaf will be discussed. The outcome of the study on the manuscripts proves the truthfulness of Allah's promise towards preserving al-Quran and rejects the false perceptions of disbelievers of al-Quranic text authenticity. This study aims to collect informations related to Quranic manuscripts and present its outcome. According to the researcher's findings, the

¹ Ahmad Baha' Mokhtar, Assistant Lecturer, Faculty of Usuluddin, Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA), Negara Brunei Darussalam.

² Ahmad Abdussalam Abdul Rahman, Lecturer, Faculty of Usuluddin, Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA), Negara Brunei Darussalam.

³ Hanan Abdul Aziz (Ph.D) Lecturer, Faculty of Shariah & Laws, Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA), Negara Brunei Darussalam.

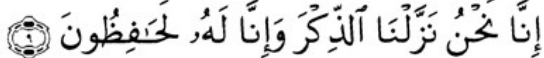
⁴ Muhammad Lukman b. Ibrahim (Ph.D), Senior Lecturer, Programme Coordinator, Islamic Education Programme, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

writing of the Quranic manuscripts during the period of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W and the Uthmani Mushaf written during the period of Caliph Uthman r.h. were lost and unable to be traced. However, presently the manuscripts written within the first century of Hijrah are still intact and available.

Keywords: *Manuscript, al-Quran, Rasm Uthmani*

INTRODUCTION

The Quran is the only book that is protected from any alteration, addition or reduction. This is proven through the comparative study of the manuscript, written in the early centuries of Hijrah with the mushaf we have today. All this proves the truthfulness of Allah's words:

(Al-Hijrī 15: 9) 

Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Quran) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption).

QURANIC MANUSCRIPTS IN THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S PERIOD

As stated in history that the writings of al-Quran started since the Quran was revealed ⁵ and it did not stop till the present day.⁶ During the early stages of Quranic writing, it was under the supervision of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W which lasted nearly 23 years. Despite the fact that Prophet Muhammad S.A.W prioritized the writing of new revelations, he did not order the companions to gather the writings in one place.⁷ These documents are separately kept by the companions.

⁵ Abū `Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ayyūb b. Durays (1987), *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr, p. 33.

⁶ Currently, the writing of mushaf evolves through printing. There are millions of mushaf printed every year. Muḥammad Salīm b. Shadīd al-`Awfī (1432 H), *Kitābah al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf wa Ṭibā'atih: Tārīkhuhā wa Atwaruhā wa 'Ināyah al-Mamlakah al-'Arabiyyah al-Sa'ūdiyyah bi Ṭab'ih wa Nashrih wa Tarjamah Ma'ānīhā*, al-Madīnah: Majma' al-Malik Fahd li Ṭibā'ah al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf. p. 87-90.

⁷ Jalāl al-Dīn `Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī (n.d), *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, p. 126.

According to historians, these manuscripts were successfully collected in full twice.⁸ First at the time of Abu Bakr r.h. in 12H⁹ during the first *ṣuḥuf* writing and the second at the time of Uthman r.h. in the year 25H¹⁰ during the Uthmani Mushaf writing project. After these two events there is no subsequent entry in the history of the development of the manuscripts. According to the author, the likelihood of these manuscripts were burned together with the documents burned at the time of Uthman r.h. during the launch of the Uthmani Mushaf.¹¹

MANUSCRIPT OF UTHMANI MUSHAF

The second most important Quranic manuscript was written during the period of Uthman r.h. which were known as the mushaf Uthmani. Scholars do not agree on the number of copies of the mushaf. According to the author's analysis, there are five opinions:

1. Four Copies

According to al-Dānī, most scholars are firmly of the opinion that the Uthmani Mushaf consists of only four copies sent to Kufa, Basra, Sham and a copy kept by the Caliph himself.¹²

2. Five Copies

According to al-Suyūṭī, the most popular opinion among scholars is that the Uthmani Mushaf was made in five copies. But he did not explain clearly where the five copies were placed.¹³

⁸ Zaid b. Thabit r.h. narrated that after Abu Bakr r.h. had ordered him to collect al-Quran saying:

So I started to search the Quran and collect it from bones, animal skins and from the companions who had memorized it. Finally, I found the final part of surah at-Tawbah from Abū Khuzaymah al-Anṣārī which I had never found from others. Aḥmad b. `Alī b. Ḥajar al-`Asqalānī (1379), *Fath al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 9, Bayrūt: Dār al-Ma`rifah, p. 14.

⁹ `Abd al-Wahhāb b. `Abd al-Razzāq al-Rāwī (2007), *Ḥadāth al-Qur`ān al-`Azīm*, al-Urdun: Dār al-`Ulūm, p. 58

¹⁰ Aḥmad b. `Alī b. Ḥajar al-`Asqalānī (1379), *Fath al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, j. 1, Bayrūt: Dār al-Ma`rifah, p. 17.

¹¹ Nizām al-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Naysābūrī (1416 H), *Gharā'ib al-Qur`ān*, j. 1, Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, p. 27 and Abū Bakr `Abd Allah b. Abī Dāwud Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (2002), *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, vol. 1, Bayrūt: Dār al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyyah, p. 68.

¹² Abū `Amr `Uthmān b. Sai`īd al-Dānī (n.d), al-Muqni', Taḥqīq: Muḥammad Ṣiḍḍīq al-Qamhawī, al-Qāhirah: Maktabah Kulliyāt al-Azhar, p. 19.

¹³ al-Suyūṭī (1974), *op.cit*, vol. 2, p.393.

3. Seven Copies

According to Ibn Abu Dawud, the Uthmani Mushaf were written in seven copies and sent to Mecca, Sham, Yemen, Bahrain, Basra, Kufa and a copy was kept in Medina.¹⁴

4. Eight Copies

According to Ibn al-Jazarī, the number of mushaf copies sent by Uthman r.h. was eight copies where were sent to Basra, Kufa, Sham, Medina, Mecca, Yemen, Bahrain and a copy was kept by himself and this Mushaf was called as “*al-Imām*”.¹⁵

5. Nine Copies

There is a narration of al-Ya`qūbī which says that the number of mushaf sent by Uthman r.h. was nine copies which were sent to Kufa, Basra, Medina, Mecca, Egypt, Sham, Bahrain, Yemen and Arabian Peninsula.¹⁶

6. Popular Opinion among Researchers

Many researchers are firmly of the opinion that the number of Mushaf sent by Uthman r.h. was six copies namely the Basra Mushaf, Kufa, Sham, Mecca, Medina, and a copy kept by himself. This mushaf is called “*al-Imām*”.¹⁷ It should be noted that there are two Mushaf in Medina, the first Mushaf “*al-Imām*” which was in the custody of Uthman r.h. This particular mushaf was read by him at the time of his murder and his blood stains were left untouched on the Mushaf. The second mushaf is for general reference.¹⁸

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the four copies agreed by historians are the Basra Mushaf, Kufa, Sham and Medina. As for the other manuscripts, the scholars differ in their opinions. But if we examine the facts in terms of execution during the delivery of copies of the Mushaf, Uthman r.h. appointed a teacher among the companions for

¹⁴ Ibn Abī Dāwud Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (2002), *op.cit*, vol. 1, p. 133.

¹⁵ Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Jazarī (n.d), *al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'āt al-'Ashr*, vol. 1, Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, p. 7.

¹⁶ Aḥmad b. Abū Ya`qūb (1883), *Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī*, Ledan n.p, p. 194.

¹⁷ Sahr al-Sayyid `Abd al-`Azīz (n.d), *Aḍwā' `Alā Muṣḥaf `Uthmān b. `Affān r.h.*, al-Iskandariyyah: Mu'assasah Syabāb al-Jāmi`ah, p. 18.

¹⁸ Read the topic “Uthman’s r.h. Personal Mushaf” in this paper.

each Mushaf. The teacher for Madinah Mushaf was Zayd b. Thabit r.h., `Abd Allah b. al-Sa'ib r.h. for Mecca Mushaf, Al-Mughira b. Shihab r.h. for Sham Mushaf, Abu` Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami r.h. for Kufa Mushaf and `Amir b. `Abd al-Qays r.h. for Basra Mushaf.¹⁹

This fact strengthens the opinion of many researchers that Uthman r.h. also sent a copy of the Mushaf to Mecca. The fact is also supported through the observation of chains of *qirā'āt* (the way of reciting the Quran) Ibn Kathir al-Makki,²⁰ indicating that he had read the Quran from a friend `Abd Allah ibn al-Sa'ib r.h., a teacher of the Quran appointed by Uthman r.h. as described above.

While for countries like Yemen, Bahrain, Egypt and Arabian Peninsula, it was not found in history books or the Quranic reading chains any names of companions sent by Uthman r.h. to become the teacher of the Quran as in the case of other copies mentioned earlier. So this can be concluded that strongest opinion is those historians that said copies of Uthmani Mushaf are six.

DEVELOPMENT OF UTHMANI MUSHAF MANUSCRIPTS ONWARDS

As stated above, Uthman r.h. had sent mushaf to several states as a main reference. After this particular event, not much information could be gathered regarding the development of the copies. Among the information obtained was:

1. Mecca Mushaf

According to Ibn Jubayr in his cruising book in 579H, it was found that a Mecca Mushaf of one of the four califs was in a box under the dome of the `Abbasid al-Haram mosque. This mushaf was written in Zayd b. Thabit r.h. handwriting and was copied in year 18 after the death of the Prophet.²¹ Later this mushaf was seen by Ibn Batuta.²² The 18th year after

¹⁹ Muḥammad `Abd al-`Azīm al-Zarqānī (1995), *Manāhil al-`Irfān*, vol.1. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, p. 330.

²⁰ Shihāb al-Dīn `Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ismā'īl al-Muqaddasi (n.d), *Ibrāz al-Ma`ānī*, Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, p. 6.

²¹ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Jubayr al-Andalūsī (n.d), *Riḥlah Ibn Jubayr*, Bayrūt: Dār al-Hilāl, p. 72.

²² Muḥammad b. `Abd Allah al-Ṭanjī (1417H), *Riḥlah Ibn Baṭūṭah*. vol. 1, Rabāṭ: Akademi al-Mamlakah al-Maghribiyyah, p. 376.

the death of the Prophet is equivalent to 29H because the Prophet S.A.W died in the 11th year of Hijrah.²³ Uthman r.h. was appointed as Caliph in 24H and he was martyred in the year 35H.²⁴ So 29H was during the reign of Uthman r.h. Hence, this mushaf is a copy of the Uthmani Mushaf.

2. Medina Mushaf

According to Ibn Jubayr, one of the Uthmani Mushaf was locked in a big chest in the Prophet's mosque. This chest was located near the Rawdah.²⁵

3. Kufa Mushaf

So far, no history was found on the Uthmani Mushaf in Kufa after it was sent by Uthman r.h. According to the view of Sahr al-Sayyid 'Abd al-'Aziz, it was likely destroyed during an unrest in the aftermath of the battle of Kufa between Ali r.h. and Mu'awiyah r.h.²⁶

4. Basra Mushaf

According to Ibn Batuta: He had seen a Mushaf being stockpiled in the 'Ali's r.h. mosque in Basra and there were blood stains on the page where the verse *فسيكفيهم الله وهو السميع العليم*²⁷ was written. According to Sahr al-Sayyid 'Abd al-'Aziz, the Mushaf which was seen by Ibn Batuta was the Basra Mushaf.²⁸

5. Sham Mushaf

According to Ibn Jubayr, a copy of mushaf which was sent by Uthman r.h. to Sham was found in a big chest in the east corner of the mihrab (semicircular niche in the wall) of the Great Mosque of Damascus. The chest was opened after every jumu'ah prayer. After the prayer, people will come to osculate it.²⁹

²³ 'Amr Khalifah b. Khayyāt (1397H), *Tārīkh Khalīfah b. Khayyāt*, Bayrūt: Dār al-Qalam, p. 100.

²⁴ Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-'Imrānī (2001), *al-Anbā' fī Tārīkh al-Khulafā'*, al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Afaq al-'Arabiyyah, p. 48.

²⁵ Ibn Jubayr al-Andalūsī (n.d), *op.cit*, p. 153.

²⁶ Sahr al-Sayyid 'Abd al-'Azīz (n.d), *op.cit*, p. 48.

²⁷ Ibn Batuta (1417H), *op.cit*, vol. 2., p. 12.

²⁸ For further information on this mushaf, see: Sahr al-Sayyid 'Abd al-'Azīz (n.d), *op.cit*, p. 26 and p. 129.

²⁹ Ibn Jubayr al-Andalūsī (n.d), *op.cit*, p. 217.

The mushaf was also seen by Ibn Batuta ³⁰ and Ibn Kathir. Ibn Kathir said: “The most popular Uthmani mushafs at this age is a copy sent to the Sham state which is stored in the Great Mosque of Damascus. The Mushaf was originally stored in the city of Tabriyyah ³¹ but then moved here in the year 518H.” ³²

6. Uthman’s r.h. Personal Mushaf

As has been stated earlier, most researchers on the Uthmani mushafs stated that the number of Uthmani mushaf copies is six including that of Uthman’s r.h. personal copy. This fact is supported by the narration of al-Sijistani from Iyas bin Sakhr that he had personally read the Mushaf of Uthman r.h. and found 12 words which were different with the copies of the Medina Mushaf.

According to history, on the day of the murder of Uthman r.h., he was at that time reading the Quran using his personal Mushaf. Blood flowed from his body on the sheet of the Mushaf which contained the word of Allah S.W.T :³⁴ *فسيكفيكم الله وهو السميع العليم*.³⁵ After this event, the effect of the blood on this Mushaf has become a unique symbol as compared with the other Uthmani mushaf.

After the assassination of Uthman r.h., it was reported that the Mushaf was still in Medina for some time. Later on, the Mushaf disappeared and its whereabouts was unknown. It emerged subsequently numerous allegations claiming that the Mushaf was stored in several mosques. ³⁶

Among the allegations were:

a. Al-Maqrizi’s Report

During the reign of al-`Azīz bi Allah al-Fātimī³⁷ on 5th of Muharram 378 H, the people of Iraq had come to Egypt to bring

³⁰ Ibn Batuta (1417 H), *op.cit*, vol. 1, p. 309.

³¹ The City of Tabriyyah is situated in Jordan. See: Yaqut al-Hamawi (1995), *op.cit*, vol. 4, p. 17.

³² Ibn Kathīr (1416 H), *op.cit*, p. 89.

³³ Abū Dāwud Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (2002), *op.cit*, vol. 1, p. 139.

³⁴ Surah al-Baqarah (2): 137.

³⁵ Abū `Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī (2003), *al-Jāmi` li Ahkām al-Qur`ān*, vol. 3. Riyāḍ: Dār `Ālam al-Kutub, p. 1046.

³⁶ Sahr al-Sayyid `Abd al-`Azīz (n.d), *op.cit*, p. 22.

³⁷ He was the Fifth Fatimid Caliph ruling in the years 344 H - 386 H. See: Ahmad

a mushaf allegedly the personal Mushaf of Uthman r.h. where traces of blood were found inside. The Mushaf was then stored in the Great Mosque of `Amr b. al-`Āṣ.³⁸ In 1305 H, it was moved to the al-Husayn Mosque in Cairo, Egypt to this day.³⁹

Al-Maqrīzī himself has rejected the notion that the Mushaf which was in Egypt was Uthman's r.h. personal Mushaf.⁴⁰ After Su`ad Mahir did a scientific research on the type of calligraphy written in the Mushaf, she also ruled out the possibility that the Mushaf was that of Uthman r.h. She also denied that this Mushaf was one of mushaf of the copies of Uthmani muṣḥaf. She was more likely in the view that the Mushaf was written in the reign of `Abd al-`Aziz b. Marwan.⁴¹

b. Ibn Batuta's Report

According to Ibn Batuta, he had seen this Mushaf in the `Ali r.h. Mosque and there was still blood stains on the page where the verse *فسيكفيهم الله وهو السميع العليم* was written.⁴² This claim was also rejected by the Sahr al-Sayyid `Abd al-`Aziz's research on the ground that the Uthman's personal Mushaf during Ibn Batuta's period had been in Marrakech, Morocco brought from Andalusia.⁴³

There were also allegations that claimed the personal Mushaf of Uthman r.h. is currently at Tashkend Uzbekistan, Homs Syria and the Topkapi Museum Turkey. All these theories relating on how it was brought into these places were scientifically rejected by Sahr al-Sayyid `Abd al-`Aziz in his book entitled *Adwa' `Ala' Mushaf' Uthman bin Affan r.h.*⁴⁴

b. `Ali al-Maqrizī (1418 H), *al-Mawā'iz wa al-I'tibār*, vol. 2. Bayrut: Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, p. 190.

³⁸ *Ibid*, vol. 4, p. 20.

³⁹ Aḥmad Taymū Bashā (1951), *al-Athar al-Nabawiyyah*, al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, p. 43.

⁴⁰ Al-Maqrizī (1418 H), *op.cit*, vol. 2, p. 190.

⁴¹ Sahr al-Sayyid `Abd al-`Azīz (n.d), *op.cit*, p. 24.

⁴² Ibn Batuta (1417 H), *op.cit*, vol. 2, p. 12.

⁴³ Sahr al-Sayyid `Abd al-`Azīz (n.d), *op.cit*, p. 26.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 28-31.

According to a study by Sahr al-Sayyid `Abd al-` Aziz, Uthman's r.h. personal Mushaf was still in Medina after his assassination until 169H. The Mushaf was then moved to Andalusia during the reign of al-Amir `Abd al-Rahman al-Awsat. The latest report about the Mushaf is that it was managed to be withdrawn from the Republic of Portugal and brought to Fes, Morocco by a merchant named Abu `Ali al-Hasan b. Jammi.⁴⁵ After this incident until now, there is no news about this Mushaf.

46

MANUSCRIPTS OF THE QURAN

Presently, there are many manuscripts of the Quran being discovered. Some of them are over 1000 years old. Most of the manuscripts are kept in Paris, Oslo, London, Berlin, Leningrad and the Vatican.⁴⁷ However, most of the Mushaf manuscripts found so far are kept in the Manuscripts' Library located opposite the Great Mosque in Ṣan`ā' in Yemen. It is estimated that the manuscripts relating to the Holy Quran kept at the library are around 12,000 copies. And more than 100 copies of the Mushaf manuscript were written between the first century and the fifth century of Hijrah.⁴⁸

SCIENTIFIC REASERCH ON THE QURAN MANUSCRIPTS

After over 14 centuries, the text of the Quran was written and copied from generation to generation. It is proven that the text of the Qur'an is ceaselessly remained genuine without changes to the text. Among the scientific research ever published about this is that of Hassan al-Bashir with the title: *Dirāsah Lawḥah Makḥṭūṭāh li al-Qur`ān fī al-Qarn al-Awwal al-Hijrī* and Ghassān Ḥamdūn with the title: *al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-Qur`āniyyah fī Ṣan`ā' min al-Qarn al-Awwal wa al-Thānī al-Hijriyayn*.

⁴⁵ Muḥammad b. Marzūq al-Talimsānī (1981) *al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Jazā'ir: al-Sharikah al-Wataniyyah, p. 461.

⁴⁶ Sahr al-Sayyid `Abd al-` Azīz (n.d), *op.cit*, p. 135.

⁴⁷ Ghassān Ḥamdūn (n.d), *al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-Qur`āniyyah fī San`ā' min al-Qarn al-Awwal wa al-Thānī al-Hijriyayn*, t.t.p. p. 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*. See also: http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=11438&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html retrieved on 18th March 2013.

In the research, they have chosen some of the oldest manuscripts approximately written in the first century of Hijrah. The age of the manuscripts can be determined by two methods which are well known among archaeologists as follows: ⁴⁹

1. Determination of the Age of Manuscripts Based on Features And Letters' Design

The Archaeologists have identified that there is a clear distinction between the uses of capital letters in a particular century. They have found several manuscripts dating from the first and second century of Hijrah. Through these manuscripts, they review the shape of the letters used in that era. ⁵⁰ As a result of this study, they were able to identify the characteristics and shape of the letters used in this period that varies with other centuries.

In addition to studying the writings, they also referred to a number of important references relating to the development of forms of letters and methods to recognize it. The references are: ⁵¹

- a. *The Quranic art of calligraphy and illumination.* ⁵²
- b. *Maṣāḥif Ṣan`ā`.* ⁵³
- c. *The book Ṣubḥ al-A`shā` fī Kitābah al-Inshā`.* ⁵⁴
- d. *The Abbasid tradition: Qur`ans of the 8th to 10th centuries.* ⁵⁵
- e. *Al-Fahrasat.* ⁵⁶
- f. *Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh al-Khaṭ al-`Arabī.* ⁵⁷

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ For further information on the designs of letters, see: Suhaylah Yasīn al-Jābūrī (1977), *Aṣl al-Khaṭ al-`Arabī wa Taṭawwurih hattā Nihāyah al-`Asr al-Umawī*, Baghdād: Jāmi`ah Baghdād.

⁵² Martin Lings (1976), *The Quranic art of calligraphy and illumination*, World of Islam Festival Trust.

⁵³ Kuwait National Meseum (1984), *Maṣāḥif Ṣan`ā`*, Kuwayt: Dār al-Athar al-Islāmiyyah.

⁵⁴ `Abū al-`Abbās Aḥmad al-Qalaqsyandī (1922), *Ṣubḥ al-A`syā` fī Kitābah al-Insyā`*, al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Kitāb al-Miṣriyyah.

⁵⁵ François Déroche (1992), *The Abbasid tradition: Qur`ans of the 8th to 10th centuries*, UK: Oxford University Press.

⁵⁶ Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. al-Nadīm (1997), *al-Fahrasat. Ibrāhim Ramaḍān (editor)*, Bayrūt: Dār al-Ma`rifah.

⁵⁷ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munjid (1979) *Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh al-Khaṭ al-`Arabī Mundh Bidāyatih ilā Nihāyah al-`Asr al-Umawī*, Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd.

Through these references, the researchers were able to determine the age of a manuscript existed at the time of the first, second and third Hijrah.⁵⁸

2. Determination of the Age of Manuscripts Using Carbon 14⁵⁹

The laboratory use of carbon known as Carbon 14, the age of an organic material can be identified. Since the manuscripts are included as organic material, its age can be determined by using these materials. But it can not surpass the accuracy of using the first method which is through the study of the forms of the letters. This is because by recognizing the shapes of letters, it is able to distinguish between the letters used at the beginning and end of each century.⁶⁰

COMPARISON BETWEEN ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS AND THE PRESENT MANUSCRIPTS

Among the comparative studies carried out on the manuscripts of the Quran written in the first century to the present Mushaf is Ghassān Ḥamdūn study on some manuscripts of the Quran that he had taken a copy of the picture from Manuscript Central San`a' on 24 February 2000.

The manuscript has been confirmed by one of the experts in manuscripts from Germany named Gerd Rüdiger Puin. He determined that the manuscript was written in the first century of Hijrah.⁶¹ According to Ghassān Ḥamdūn, for those who are interested in studying and making comparisons between the text of the manuscripts of the vintage Quranic Mushaf with the present Mushaf should know that there are some important technical differences between the present writing of mushaf with the writing of the Qur'an in the first centuries of writing the Quran. At the beginning of the first century of Hijrah, Quran was not written

⁵⁸ Ghassān Ḥamdūn (n.d), *op.cit.*

⁵⁹According to Kamus Dewan: Radioactive Carbon found in the organic material is usually used as a tracer to determine the structure of the internal..., or to determine the age of ancient organic materials. See the word "radiokarbon" on Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka website: <http://prpm.dbp.gov.my/Search.aspx?k=+karbon+radioaktif>, retrieved on 24th March 2013.

⁶⁰ Ghassān Ḥamdūn (n.d), *op.cit.*, p. 4.

⁶¹ Ghassān Ḥamdūn (n.d), *op.cit.*, p. 10. See also: Kuwayt National Museum (1984), *Maṣāḥif San`ā'*, Kuwayt: Dār al-Athar al-Islāmiyyah, p. 43.

using points and lines. In addition to that, there is a difference in spelling, where previously the writings mostly used *hadhf*⁶² letter alif method for certain words.

Technical differences do not affect the authenticity of the text of the Quran or can not be said as changes or additions. Because the addition of vowel and dots or spelling differences from the point of *hadhf* a letter alif on certain words is not considered to change the expression to the text read. It is just a technical difference only.

Study done by Ghassan Hamdun is the content of the manuscript of al-A`raf starting from mid-verse 37 to mid-verse 44. The results of this comparative study have found that there is no difference between the texts of the manuscript, written at the beginning of the first century of Hijrah with the present mushaf. There is only one word which is different in terms of spelling. The word is “كلما”.⁶³ In the manuscript, it is written in two separated words “كلما” while in the present mushaf, it is written in one word “كلما”. This does not give any effect on the readings.⁶⁴ So this can be concluded that no change occurred between the texts of the Quran written in the first century of Hijrah with the present mushaf. It is hereby established that the promise of Allah S.W.T to keep the Quran from any changes is real.

CONCLUSION

The findings and the comparison between the manuscripts of mushaf written in the first century of Hijrah as well as the mushafs that exist today have proven that the text of the Quran is still intact, although it has been through over a thousand years. This is a proof of Allah's assurance in protecting the Quran and thus dismissing any false presumptions from groups who rejected the genuineness of the Quran's text.

⁶² Hadhf means deleting a letter alif from text. See: Asyraf Muḥammad Fu'ād Ṭal'at (2003), *Safīr al-`Ālamīn fī Idāḥ wa Tahrīr wa Taḥbīr Samīr al-Ṭalībīn fī Rasm wa Ḍabt al-Kitāb al-Mubīn*, vol. 1. Brunei: Ministry of Education, p. 69.

⁶³ Verse 38 surah al-A`raf.

⁶⁴ To examine the defference between both writings of this verse, see the appendix 1.