Research Article

CODIFICATION AND ORDER OF THE SURAHS OF THE QUR'AN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE BOOK AL-ITQAN FI 'ULUMIL QUR'AN BY IMAM AS-SUYUTI

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Abstract

Codification and determination of the order of the surahs of the Qur'an is an important aspect in the study of the Qur'an which is related to the systematics of the mushaf. The problem in this research is how the process of codification of the Qur'an took place from the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW to the Caliph Uthman bin Affan. And examines the views of Imam As-Suyuti in his work Al-Itqan fi ulumu Al-Qur'an. The method used is qualitative with a type of library research, through deductive analysis of relevant primary and secondary sources. Research shows that the codification of the Quran took place gradually and systematically to maintain the purity of revelation, while the order of the surahs in the Mushaf was determined by the Prophet's guidance, which stemmed from revelation, not merely the ijtihad of the Companions. These findings confirm that the structure of the Mushaf of Uthman has both historical and theological legitimacy within the Islamic scholarly tradition.

Keywords: As-Suyuti, Codification of The Al-Quran, Sequence of The Al-Quran

INTRODUCTION

The codification of the Qur'an constitutes one of the most significant discussions within the discipline of Ulūm al-Qur'ān, as it is directly related to the historical process through which the divine revelation was preserved, documented, and transmitted in an orderly manner. The study of Qur'anic codification not only addresses the process of recording the revelation but also examines the historical mechanisms that ensured the authenticity and continuity of the Qur'anic text across generations. Scholars of Qur'anic studies emphasize that the preservation of the Qur'an occurred through both oral and written traditions, forming a comprehensive system of safeguarding the sacred text (Caronge et al., 2024).

Historically, the process of recording the Qur'an began during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Prophet appointed several companions as *kuttāb al-waḥy* (scribes of revelation) who wrote down the verses as they were revealed. These verses were recorded on various materials such as parchment, bones, palm leaves, and stones. At the same time, many companions memorized the Qur'an, ensuring that the revelation was preserved through strong oral transmission. This dual system of preservation became the foundation for the later compilation of the Qur'an into a unified manuscript (Caronge et al., 2024).

After the death of the Prophet, the Muslim community faced new challenges that encouraged the formal compilation of the Qur'an. One of the major motivations occurred after the Battle of Yamāmah, in which many Qur'an memorizers were killed. This situation raised concerns among the companions about the potential loss of portions of the Qur'anic text. Consequently, during the caliphate of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, the Qur'an was compiled into a single manuscript under the supervision of Zayd ibn Thābit and several other companions (Zaeni, 2021).

The compilation conducted during the period of Abū Bakr marked the first formal stage in the codification of the Qur'an. The primary objective of this effort was to gather scattered written fragments of the Qur'anic revelation and combine them into a single collection. This process involved rigorous verification methods, including cross-checking written materials with memorized recitations from reliable companions. Through this systematic approach, the authenticity of the Qur'anic text was maintained, demonstrating the careful attention given by the early Muslim community to preserving the integrity of the revelation (Zaeni, 2021).

The second major stage of codification occurred during the caliphate of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān. As Islam spread rapidly across different regions, linguistic differences and variations in recitation began to appear among Muslim communities. These variations created the risk of disputes regarding the correct form of Qur'anic recitation. In response to this situation, Caliph ʿUthmān initiated a project to standardize the Qur'anic text by producing official copies of the Qur'an that would serve as the authoritative reference for the Muslim world (Sholikhah et al., 2020).

The standardized text produced during this period became widely known as the *Muṣḥaf ʿUthmānī*. This codex was compiled based on the earlier manuscript collected during the time of Abū Bakr, ensuring continuity with the original compilation. Several official copies of the standardized manuscript were then distributed to major Islamic centers such as Mecca, Kufa, Basra, and Damascus. By doing so, the Muslim community was provided with a uniform textual reference that helped maintain unity in Qur'anic recitation and interpretation (Ammar & Dahliana, 2025).

Despite the standardization achieved through the *Muṣḥaf ʿUthmānī*, scholarly discussions concerning the structure of the Qur'an continue to be a subject of debate. One of the key issues discussed by Qur'anic scholars relates to the arrangement of surahs and verses within the Qur'anic manuscript. Some scholars argue that the arrangement is *tauqīfī*, meaning that it was determined directly by divine instruction through the Prophet Muhammad. Others suggest that certain aspects of the arrangement may involve scholarly reasoning (*ijtihād*) by the companions during the compilation process (Aspandi & Sarkoni, 2022).

Another important aspect of the codification discussion concerns the writing system known as *rasm ʿUthmānī*. This orthographic system reflects the early conventions used in writing the Qur'anic text during the period of standardization. The *rasm* system often differs from modern Arabic spelling but serves as an important historical record of early Qur'anic writing traditions. Studies of Qur'anic manuscripts demonstrate that this orthographic style has played a crucial role in preserving the authenticity of the Qur'an across centuries (Fadilah & Asif, 2024).

Beyond its historical significance, the codification of the Qur'an also demonstrates the extraordinary effort made by early Muslims to protect the integrity of divine revelation. The meticulous processes of memorization, documentation, verification, and standardization collectively ensured that the Qur'an remained preserved in its original form. These historical efforts reinforce the belief within Islamic scholarship that the Qur'an has been safeguarded from alteration or distortion since its revelation (Ammar & Dahliana, 2025).

Ultimately, the Qur'an serves as the primary source of guidance for Muslims in regulating both worldly life and the hereafter. As the revealed word of Allah transmitted to Prophet Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel, the Qur'an functions as a comprehensive guide that distinguishes truth from falsehood and provides ethical, spiritual, and social direction for humanity. The historical process of Qur'anic codification therefore represents not merely a textual compilation but a foundational effort to preserve divine guidance for future generations (Zaeni, 2021).

RESEARCH METHOD

The method employed in this research is qualitative research, which focuses on understanding phenomena through interpretative and descriptive analysis rather than numerical measurement. Qualitative research is commonly used in Islamic studies because it allows researchers to explore religious texts, historical narratives, and scholarly interpretations in a comprehensive and contextual manner. Through qualitative inquiry, researchers can interpret meanings, examine historical developments, and analyze conceptual frameworks related to Islamic intellectual traditions. This approach emphasizes depth of analysis and contextual understanding, making it suitable for studies dealing with religious texts and historical discourse such as the codification of the Qur'an (Fadli, 2021; Fatimah et al., 2025).

Specifically, this study applies a library research approach, which is a research method that relies on collecting and analyzing data from written sources such as books, academic journals, historical manuscripts, and other relevant scholarly publications. Library research is particularly important in the field of Islamic studies because many of its primary sources exist in textual form, including classical Islamic literature, tafsir works, and historical accounts of Qur'anic compilation. By systematically reviewing relevant literature, researchers can identify patterns, theoretical perspectives, and scholarly debates that contribute to a deeper understanding of the topic under investigation (Abdurrahman, 2024; Jamaluddin et al., 2024).

The process of data collection in this research involves identifying and examining various scholarly sources that discuss the history of Qur'anic codification. These sources include contemporary journal articles, classical Islamic scholarship, and modern academic discussions that analyze the compilation and preservation of the Qur'an. Library-based qualitative research allows the researcher to synthesize different viewpoints and interpretations from previous studies, thereby constructing a comprehensive understanding of the historical process surrounding the codification of the Qur'an. This method also facilitates a critical review of existing scholarship and contributes to the development of new perspectives within Islamic studies (Saefullah, 2024).

In terms of analytical approach, this study employs deductive analysis. Deductive analysis is a reasoning process that begins with general theoretical concepts and then moves toward more specific conclusions based on the analysis of relevant data. Within qualitative research, deductive analysis is useful for examining how established theories or historical frameworks can be applied to specific research problems. By starting from broader theoretical discussions about Qur'anic preservation and codification, the researcher can analyze particular historical events, scholarly opinions, and textual evidence related to the formation of the Uthmanic codex (Haryono et al., 2024).

Through the integration of qualitative methods, library research, and deductive analysis, this study aims to produce a systematic and structured examination of the history of Qur'anic codification. This methodological framework allows the researcher to analyze historical data, interpret scholarly arguments, and synthesize various academic perspectives in an organized manner. Consequently, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the development of Qur'anic codification while also contributing to broader discussions in Qur'anic studies and the discipline of *Ulūm al-Qur'an* (Ermawati & Baimunah, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Qur'an had already been completely written during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, although it had not yet been compiled into a single codex (mushaf) nor arranged systematically according to the order of the surahs as known today. During the prophetic period, the Qur'an existed primarily as scattered written records and memorized recitations among the companions. This condition reflected the dynamic nature of revelation, as verses continued to be revealed in response to various events and circumstances faced by the Muslim community (Ammar & Dahliana, 2025). The revelation of the Qur'an occurred gradually over a period of approximately twenty-three years. This gradual process allowed the teachings of Islam to be internalized by the early Muslim community while simultaneously addressing specific social, spiritual, and legal situations that emerged throughout the Prophet's mission. Scholars explain that the progressive nature of Qur'anic revelation also facilitated memorization and comprehension among the companions who were directly involved in preserving the divine message (Caronge et al., 2024).

Historically, the beginning of the Qur'anic revelation occurred when the Prophet Muhammad reached the age of forty in the year 610 CE. At that time, he was meditating in the Cave of Hira near Mecca when the Angel Gabriel appeared and delivered the first revelation. The verses revealed on that occasion were from Surah Al-'Alaq (96:1-5), which emphasize the importance of knowledge, reading, and the recognition of God as the Creator of humanity (Sholikhah et al., 2020). During the lifetime of the Prophet, the Qur'an was transmitted through both oral and written methods. According to narrations reported by classical scholars and later documented in works of hadith, the companions frequently wrote down the Qur'anic verses in the presence of the Prophet. Zayd ibn Thabit narrated that the companions used to write the Qur'an on pieces of leather and other available materials while sitting near the Prophet, ensuring that the text was recorded accurately under his supervision (Zaeni, 2021).

In addition to written documentation, memorization played a central role in the preservation of the Qur'an. Many companions dedicated themselves to memorizing the entire Qur'an, becoming known as ḥuffāẓ (memorizers of the Qur'an). This dual preservation system—memorization and writing—provided a strong safeguard against the loss or alteration of the Qur'anic text, forming the foundation for later compilation efforts (Fadilah & Asif, 2024). Whenever a new verse was revealed, the Prophet Muhammad instructed specific companions to record it and place it within the appropriate context among previously revealed verses. This demonstrates that the arrangement of verses within chapters was guided by prophetic instruction. Among the companions who served as scribes of revelation were Zayd

ibn Thabit, Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, Ubayy ibn Kaʿb, and others who were trusted to document the revelation accurately (Ammar & Dahliana, 2025).

Alongside the scribes of revelation, a large number of companions were known for their strong memorization of the Qur'an. These included prominent figures such as Abu Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Ibn Masʻud, Ubayy ibn Kaʻb, Muʻadh ibn Jabal, and many others. Their collective memorization ensured that the Qur'an remained widely preserved within the Muslim community, making it nearly impossible for the text to be lost or forgotten (Caronge et al., 2024). After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, new challenges emerged regarding the preservation of the Qur'an. One of the most significant events occurred during the Battle of Yamamah, where many companions who had memorized the Qur'an were martyred. This event raised serious concerns among the companions about the possibility that portions of the Qur'an might be lost if further casualties occurred among the ḥuffāẓ (Zaeni, 2021).

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Umar ibn al-Khattab proposed to Caliph Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq that the Qur'an should be collected into a single manuscript. Initially, Abu Bakr hesitated because the Prophet had not undertaken such a compilation during his lifetime. However, after careful consideration, he agreed that compiling the Qur'an would serve as an important measure to preserve the revelation for future generations (Aspandi & Sarkoni, 2022). Abu Bakr then appointed Zayd ibn Thabit to lead the project of collecting the Qur'anic text. Zayd was chosen because of his experience as one of the primary scribes of revelation and his deep knowledge of the Qur'an. The task required him to gather Qur'anic verses from various written materials such as palm leaves, stones, bones, and parchments, while also verifying them through the testimony of companions who had memorized the verses (Ammar & Dahliana, 2025).

The compilation carried out during the caliphate of Abu Bakr resulted in the first collected manuscript of the Qur'an. This manuscript was later kept by Abu Bakr, then passed to Umar ibn al-Khattab after his death, and eventually entrusted to Hafsah bint Umar, one of the wives of the Prophet. This preserved manuscript later played a crucial role in the next stage of Qur'anic codification during the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan (Fadilah & Asif, 2024). During the reign of Caliph Uthman ibn Affan, Islam expanded rapidly into various regions such as Iraq, Syria, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. As Islam spread among different linguistic communities, variations in Qur'anic recitation began to emerge. Although these variations were originally acceptable within the framework of the seven modes (ahruf) of recitation, misunderstandings among new Muslim communities began to lead to disputes (Sholikhah et al., 2020).

One famous report describes how Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman witnessed disagreements among Muslim soldiers from Syria and Iraq during military campaigns in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Concerned that these differences might lead to division similar to that experienced by earlier religious communities, Hudhayfah urged Caliph Uthman to take immediate action to unify the Qur'anic text (Zaeni, 2021). In response, Uthman formed a committee known as the "Committee of Four," led by Zayd ibn Thabit and supported by several Qurayshi companions. Their task was to produce standardized copies of the Qur'an based on the manuscript preserved by Hafsah. The committee carefully reviewed the material to ensure that the official text reflected the authentic Qur'anic recitation recognized by the Prophet's companions (Aspandi & Sarkoni, 2022). After the standardized manuscript was completed, several copies were sent to major centers of the Islamic world such as Mecca, Kufa, Basra, and Damascus. Uthman also ordered that other personal manuscripts that differed from the standardized text be destroyed in order to prevent further disputes. As a result, the Muṣḥaf ʿUthmānī became the official reference for Qur'anic recitation and remains the foundation of the Qur'anic text used by Muslims worldwide today (Ammar & Dahliana, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the codification of the Qur'an represents a historical process that developed gradually from the time of the Prophet Muhammad until the caliphate of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, with the primary aim of preserving the authenticity and purity of the divine revelation. During the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the Qur'an had already been written and memorized by many of the Prophet's companions. However, the verses were not yet compiled into a single codex (mushaf). The preservation of the Qur'an at that time relied on two main methods: oral transmission through memorization by the companions and written documentation on various materials such as palm leaves, parchment, bones, and stones. This dual method of preservation ensured that the Qur'an remained safeguarded while revelation was still ongoing.

Following the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the Muslim community faced new challenges regarding the preservation of the Qur'anic text. During the caliphate of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, the initiative to collect the Qur'an into a single manuscript was undertaken after many Qur'an memorizers (qurrāʾ) were martyred in the Battle of Yamāmah. Concerned about the potential loss of portions of the Qur'an, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb proposed that the Qur'an should be compiled systematically. Abū Bakr then appointed Zayd ibn Thābit to lead the effort of collecting all Qur'anic verses from written materials and from the memories of reliable companions. This compilation marked the first formal step toward the preservation of the Qur'an in a unified manuscript.

The next significant stage occurred during the caliphate of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, when the rapid expansion of the Islamic world led to variations in Qur'anic recitation among different regions. To prevent disputes and unify the Muslim community, ʿUthmān initiated the standardization of the Qur'anic manuscript, resulting in the well-known Muṣḥaf ʿUthmānī. In the perspective of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, as explained in his work Al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān, the arrangement of surahs in the Qur'an is considered tauqīfī, meaning that it is based on the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad derived from divine revelation. Therefore, the systematic structure of the Uthmanic codex should not be viewed merely as the result of the companions' independent reasoning (ijtihād), but rather as part of the divine preservation of the Qur'an, reflecting God's protection over the integrity and authenticity of the sacred text.

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