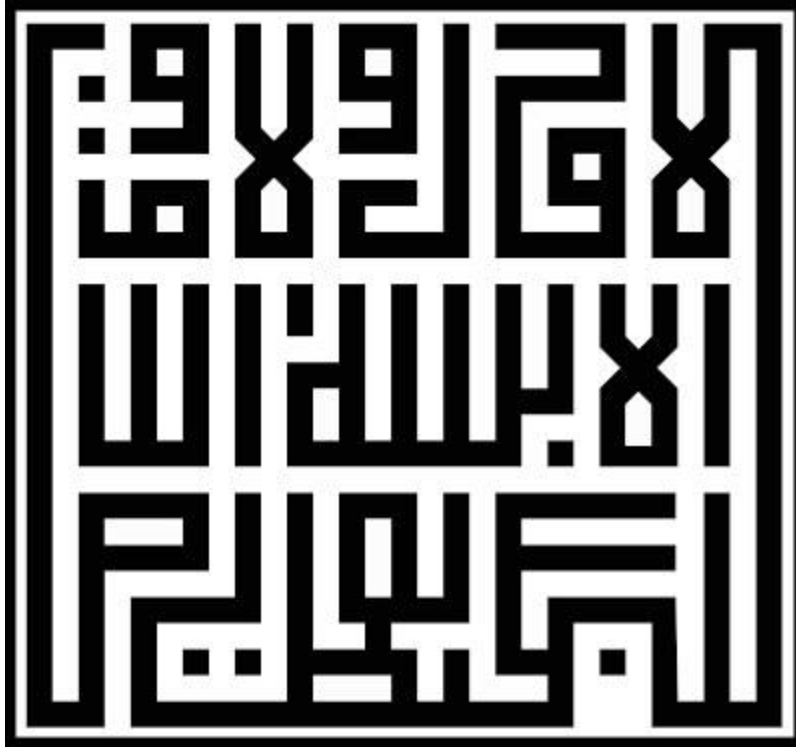


A Critical Analysis: Jay Smith's Claims About the Qur'an



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Foreword

Polemics against Islam have reached a whole new level in recent times. Muslim apologists are no more faced only with arguments like those brought forward by old-school orientalists. This is especially true in relation to Qur'anic preservation and compilation. Muslims could easily answer the arguments around narrations preserved in classical works because it was all in the traditional fields of sciences of narration and interpretation where Muslims scholars have always proved formidable. In recent times, however, inspired by the critical studies on the Bible the manuscripts of the Qur'an have also been a subject of academic interest. Luckily, the issue has been attended to and some Muslim scholars along with certain orientalists have come forward to carry out objective study on the earliest Qur'anic manuscripts and to present their findings to the world of academia. This document presents a cogent overview of some such studies.

The advent of the WWW paradigm presented Muslims with another challenge. It exposed the laymen to all sorts of criticism on Islam while they had little to no knowledge of how to respond despite their firm belief that the Islamic scripture is impeccable. But since God raises a David against every Goliath, some young Muslims came forward to fill in the gap. They tried to become a bridge between the Muslim knowledge banks and those who turn up to search engines seeking answers to what perturbs them. Though many more are still needed, these young Muslims responded with confidence and filled cyberspace, from purpose built websites to discussion forums, videos, and chatrooms. Brother Ijaz Ahmad is perhaps the youngest of the lot and despite some health issues that he continues to face, he has braved against these professional critics of Islam.

This document is a point wise response to the claims made by Jay Smith in his debate with Dr. Shabir Ally on the subject, "Which is the Word of God: The Bible or the Qur'an" held on September 27th, 2014 in Canada. As Ijaz has shown Jay made glaring mistakes and bold claims without due deliberation. In fact some instances show that he was clearly fabricating ideas to win brownie points. However, Ijaz has put Jay's presentation under a high quality microscope. Ijaz's response is not just an exposé of a certain critic's frustrated arguments, it is an unveiling of a whole mindset built on the objectivity bereaved attitude towards the Islamic scripture. The paper is arranged in the form of point by point responses to Jay's mistakes, this takes the reader along helping him build a complete picture of the different aspects of the subject. With the useful summary added in the beginning any intelligent, even an uninitiated reader can follow the author in his exposition and make perfect sense of it. I am hopeful this document will prove a significant work in Muslim apologetic literature helping Muslim debaters against the would-be commentators on Qur'anic manuscripts. It goes without saying that general readers will find it as a more accessible source for the gist of important findings of Qur'anic manuscript studies.

As someone involved with apologetics I am certain this presentation will prove a major achievement in the Ijaz's career. On this achievement he truly deserves our felicitations. May Allah preserve him and bless him with sound health. Ameen!

Waqar Akbar Cheema
Lahore, Pakistan.
1436 AH.

Definition of Terms

<u>Word:</u>	<u>Meaning:</u>
ahruf	modes or styles of the Qur’an (<i>arabic</i>)
alif	consonantal Arabic letter (<i>arabic</i>)
Allah	islamic name for God (<i>arabic</i>)
codex	collection of manuscripts
extant	in existence, still existing
folio	a manuscript; alt: leaf
majuscule	large lettered writing with no spacing of words
manuscript	handwritten document
mushaf	collection of manuscripts (<i>arabic</i>)
orientalist	specialist in Asian history
orthography	how letters are used in the spelling of words
paleography	study of ancient writing styles
palimpsest	a manuscript which has been rubbed, washed or erased to remove previous writing
qira’at	recitations of the Qur’an (<i>arabic</i>)
qur’an	islamic holy scripture (<i>arabic</i>)
scribe	professional copyist of manuscripts
scriptio inferior	the text written over; underlying text
scriptio continua	continuous script
scriptio superior	the first or topmost text in a manuscript

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Summary

The poor state of the New Testament manuscript record has, in our time led the Judaeo-Christian world to have great doubt in the veracity and authenticity of the New Testament as a scripture. As a consequence of this, Muslim preachers have taken the initiative in using this important information to confirm the Qur'anic claim of corruption regarding the scriptures of the Jews and Christians in Surah 2, Verse 79. Christian apologists in response to this weakening of their scripture, are now attempting to weaken the stature of the Qur'an's preservation. Muslims for centuries, since the Qur'an's revelation have held strongly to the belief that it is God who would guard the transmission and preservation of the Qur'an as is mentioned explicitly in Surah 15, Verse 9. We have been accused of not critically studying the Qur'an using the methodology of Textual Criticism, the reason being that we Muslims implicitly know that God has not protected the Qur'an thus proving it is a falsehood. Christian apologists have challenged the Muslim world to apply their methodology of Textual Criticism to the Qur'an, so that we may establish that the dismal state of the New Testament manuscript record is on par with the Qur'an's.

Unbeknownst to them, Muslims have been practising stringent critical studies of the Qur'an's manuscript tradition since its revelation. For centuries before the development of New Testament Textual Criticism as it is known today, Muslims have been utilising the science of *'Uloom al Qur'an* (the sciences of the Qur'an). One such field within *'Uloom al Qur'an* is *'Ilm al Rasm al Mushaf*, or the Science of the Writing of the Copies of the Qur'an. Most importantly, the identity of our copyists and scribes of the Qur'an have been known to us for centuries as we have employed the sciences of *Rijal al Hadith*, *Mustalah al Hadith* (the sciences of evaluating the characters of scribes and transmitters) and *Jarh wa Ta'deel*. Due to this, we can list the identities of a significant number of Qur'anic scribes during the Prophet's ﷺ lifetime. Christian criticism of the Qur'anic manuscripts has been appalling to say the very least. One such major condemnation is the control of manuscript copying by the Caliph 'Uthman (رضي الله عنه), they have posited that his act of standardizing the copying of the Qur'an negatively impacted the Qur'an's preservation. Such a criticism is unfounded given that they have later imitated such a methodology of controlling their scripture's transmission in the form of the Pope sanctioning the Vulgate, the use and dissemination of the Textus Receptus and of today's Greek Critical Texts which are controlled by their foremost scholars in the field of Textual Criticism. They do not allow and they wholly reject any random and unknown individuals to produce critical editions of the New Testament, thus following in the methodology and footsteps of 'Uthman (رضي الله عنه) himself.

In applying the methodology of New Testament Textual Criticism to the Qur'an, we have come to know that the Qur'an has indeed been well preserved. The manuscript record does show changes. However these changes in the manuscripts are generally of two types. Orthographic changes and scribal mistakes. Orthography as defined, is the representation of a language in a textual graphical form. As the language developed textually, the manuscript records demonstrate that the Qur'an remained consistent in its contents whereas changes being made were those of the representation of its letters, vowels and punctuation marks. In the case of scribal errors, these did not manifest themselves into the Qur'anic tradition and as such remained as the odd anomaly here and there which scribes later corrected, but which never found themselves to be seen as part of the Qur'an's canon. This is at odds with the New Testament textual tradition which shows changes manifesting themselves as inclusive of the official Church accepted scriptural tradition. Two such infamous cases are the inclusion of several key doctrinal verses in Mark 16:9-20 and 1 John 5:7. There is nothing in the Qur'anic textual tradition which demonstrates such a level of corruption. Therefore, when missionaries attempt to criticize the Qur'an's textual tradition, they have encountered great difficulty. Consequently, as we will soon read, they have been forced to invent claims, manufacture studies and to manipulate their methodology through dishonest and irrational means.

The Qur'an's textual tradition and the New Testament's textual tradition are indeed not equal. While missionaries may attempt to equate them, the evidences presented within this document wholly demonstrate that this is not the case. They do not stand on equal footing. Whereas the Qur'an's preservation has been consistent with Surah 15 Verse 9, the same cannot be said of the New Testament. Muslims have been meticulous in their conveying of the Qur'an since its revelation, preserving it via *mutawatir* transmission. In the study of stemmatics, this is referred to as multiple and simultaneous independent chains of transmission on a grand scale. This document examines the studies of the latest research into the Qur'an's textual tradition, as provided by Muslims, Christian apologists and Orientalists. The information contained herein, provides the Muslim with the resources they need to understand what the Qur'anic manuscript tradition witnesses of the Qur'an's preservation.

Introduction

The beliefs relating to the inerrancy of scripture within the milieu of the Abrahamic faith traditions persists to be a contentious, confusing and hotly debated topic of discourse. The disparity in the understanding of the definition, and origins of *scripture* between the Islamic faith and the Graeco-Roman Jewish Syncretic faith of Christianity has been the focal point of much polemical and apologetical wrangling. The traditional Islamic view insists that scripture is the dictated word of God (رسالة), conveyed verbatim through a Messenger (رسول) of God as is substantiated in Qur'an Surah 42:51. This view, also includes the belief that God's word cannot be corrupted with the understanding that God has promised to protect the scripture from corruption as can be seen in Qur'an Surah 15:9.

The traditional Christian perception of scripture is rooted in the process of inspiration. Whereas God may inspire someone to write about God's teachings, the spokesperson cannot be viewed as an amanuensis. Rather than being dictated by God of what to narrate, recite or write, the spokesperson conveys their inspired thoughts from God by expressing them through his or her own understanding, this being in the spokesperson's own words. The question of inerrancy then arises when we take into consideration the human's role in this sublime encounter. In the Islamic view, the Messenger does not convert God's word's into their own, rather the Messenger transmits word for word what God has conveyed to them. Errancy in this case can only occur if the Messenger fails to transmit God's words accurately.

In the Christian understanding of inspiration, errancy can occur if the spokesperson themselves misunderstand and misinterpret these inspired thoughts, or if they express those thoughts inaccurately as in the case of anacoluthon. There is no guarantee in the Christian framework of inspiration that God will protect what He inspires to Christian spokespersons, nor is there any guarantee that the person claiming inspiration can understand what God is trying to convey. These distinct beliefs have lead to two diametrically opposing ideas on the preservation of scripture. In the Christian doctrine of inspiration, errors can be expected but this does not necessarily imply that the scripture is inaccurate or corrupted. Rather, Christians believe that they can extract from the manuscript record, a critical version of what God intended to convey. This is often referred to as the general eclectic methodology in the process of the preservation of scripture.

In the Islamic view, while it is understood that scribes can make mistakes otherwise known as *lapsus calami* or slips of the pen (hand), the traditional view of scripture insists that these mistakes would not manifest themselves into the official transmission of the Qur'an whether orally or textually. This paper then, seeks to analyse the claims of Jay Smith during his debate with Dr. Shabir Ally entitled, "The Qur'an or the Bible: Which is the Word of God?". Orthodox Islamic beliefs state that the Qur'an has been revealed in seven modes known as *ahruf al Qur'an*. These seven modes according to the majority of Muslim scholars refers to the Messenger receiving the Qur'an in variant forms from God¹. These forms, modes or *ahruf* all refer to the seven categories of variant revelation. These categories are listed as being variations of numbers, genders, diacritical (vowel) markings, verbs, syntax, transposition and of pronouncement. Jay Smith has incorrectly attempted to use the modes of the Qur'an as evidential of its corruption or errancy, so as to demonstrate that both scriptures are errant. This paper seeks to analyse Jay Smith's statements with the sources he appealed to, with the intention of demonstrating his misrepresentation, misunderstanding and ignorance of the relevant scholastic works referenced which fundamentally oppose his eisegetical conclusions.

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1. The Qur'an was the first book published by the Arab peoples in the Arabic language. Previous to this, the varying tribes in Arabia spoke differing dialects of the Arabic language and as a consequence of this, there existed no standardized dialect of the spoken word or of its orthography (style of writing). Due to this, when the Qur'an was revealed, it was conveyed in varying modes by God to accommodate the various dialects in existence at that time. Thus, the *ahruf al Qur'an* have been expounded upon in the Prophetic Sunnah of Muhammad ﷺ and has been documented extensively by the scholars. For a quick introduction to this topic, see Br. Waqar Akbar Cheema's article, "[Understanding the Seven Ahruf](#)" which is based on the immensely popular work by Dr. Taqi Uthmani, "[An Approach to the Qur'anic Sciences](#)". Alternatively, some additional works which expound upon the *ahruf* or modes of the Qur'an are Dr. Muhammad Mustafa al-'Azami's, "[The History of the Qur'anic Text: From Revelation to Compilation](#)", and Shaykh Saalih al Munajjid's, "[The Revelation of the Qur'an in Seven Styles](#)".

Structure of the Paper

The timestamps listed in this paper are based on the video recording provided by the event organizer's live stream located at the following link:

<http://new.livestream.com/accounts/291710/events/3400440>

I have attempted to transcribe Jay Smith's words as accurately as is possible². Due to his style of oration, at some points his statements were incomprehensible. This is especially noticeable once transcribed in full. His use of the linguistic phenomenon known as speech disfluencies is frequent, largely due to his not reading from a paper but from elaborating on points in an *ad lib* manner³.

The format of his quotes and their timestamps are as follows:

“Transcribed opening speech enclosed by quotation marks and italicised, followed by a timestamp in bold.” - 1:00.

Following the quote and the timestamp, I present my analysis of Jay's statements.

The example of the timestamp presented above is to be read as 1 **minute** and 00 **seconds**. Each new mistake is written on a new page, thus leaving some empty space following a mistake's analysis. This is not an error, and is done to accommodate the citations at the end of each mistake.

Please note, this paper has a total of **53 pages**.

Revision Notes:

Edits were made on 20.11.14, and as such, this is version 2 of the paper. The changes made are as follows:

- Page 11, Citation #13 - Minor adjustment to argument.
- Page 12, Mistakes #5 & #6 - Clarification of dating.
- Page 36, Mistake #25 - Typographical Error, thanks to Br. Anna.

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2. If any error is noted in the transcription, please contact me via my email at your earliest convenience: callingchristians@gmail.com. Errors made are not intentional and will be corrected once the discrepancy is found to be valid. In cases where his speech was incomprehensible, these instances are represented by a successive series of period markings.
 3. As opposed to reading word by word from a written opening speech, Jay Smith improvises at certain points. Unfortunately when he does this, as is demonstrated in this paper, he either exaggerates claims, falsifies statements or issues erratic arguments. At no point in his entire opening speech does he once provide us with a single usable citation. He does mention a lot of author's names, and perhaps the only work mentioned by name was Dr. Dan Brubaker's thesis, "Intentional Changes in the Qur'an". Other than this sole occurrence, he does not state the work of the authors he mentions despite claiming to have their works "in his hands". He mentions Dr. Francois Deroche but does not state which work of his he sources his information from, he mentions Dr. Sadeghi but does not state which paper he took his information from.

Analysis of Jay Smith's Allegations About the Qur'an

Mistake #1:

"One of the problem's that we've had is that we've not really been able to look at the Qur'an." - **18:22.**

At the very beginning of his presentation, Jay Smith attempts to falsely establish a conspiratorial narrative in which he claims that the Islamic world has been trying to prevent academic research of the Qur'an's extant⁴ manuscripts. This however, cannot be more than furthest from the truth. It is universally known that the greatest Orientalist attempt at studying the Qur'anic manuscripts was undertaken by the Germans in the 20th century in which 15,000+ photographs were taken of Qur'anic manuscripts located worldwide, unimpeded by the Muslim world. Consequent to this, the infamous history of the hiding of these photographs by Orientalists themselves, is recorded as follows:

"As a preliminary result there was finally gathered a comprehensible mass of material stored with Bergstrasser in Munich, not the least a collection of about 15,000 photographs of folios of very old Koran codices from all over the world. As the one who inherited the task of continuing after World War 2 the work of his teacher Bergstrasser (d. 1933) and of Arthur Jeffery, and meanwhile as the successor to the chair of Bergstrasser in Munich, Spitaler spread the rumor that these materials had perished in the bomb attacks on Munich in the last months of World War 2. Still further, in a note from 1972 in a publication of his (see Rudi Paret [ed.], *Der Koran*, Darmstadt 1975, p.413) Spitaler fostered this rumor. But now in the ending 1990s it comes out that he was in possession of these approximately 15,000 photographs all the time since 1945, obviously to keep everybody else aloof from them in order to reserve exclusively to himself the right and possibility of exploiting them in the hope of producing something outstanding in Koran scholarship - what in the end he was obviously incapable of achieving. Such behaviour is well known in the history of scholarship as characteristic of mediocre scholars who never develop a sense of unselfish scholarship as mere search for truth but are oriented solely on their own personal career and questionable fame." - "[A Challenge to Islam for Reformation by Gunter Luling, Preface, XXI.](#)"

At this point, the quote that Jay uses at the timestamp of **18:29** is from Shaykh Muhammad Mustafa al-'Azami's, "[The History of the Qur'an: From Revelation to Compilation](#)", p. 315. As will become quite apparent, Jay's *modus operandi* from this point onward is to mention the name of an author and to provide some apparent information⁴ based on these author's works⁵, which when examined in relation to what he has claimed, there appears to be a consistent pattern of inventing conclusions, misrepresenting the research done or by manufacturing information outright.

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4. While making his claims, Jay presents a bundle of papers grasped in his hands in which he states that the information from the authors he is appealing to, is contained within that bundle. However, not once does he give a citation from that bundle of papers. What is perplexing is that he *ad libs* his way through most of his presentation and never references a single quote from that bundle of papers. If anyone can provide an instance in which he cites a book by Dr. Deroche and gives a page number, I'll be amazed. He attempts to convince the crowd that he has done his research by waving this bundle of papers around, but surprisingly he can't give a single complete book, journal or thesis reference!
 5. The literature of the authors he mentions by name, patently disagrees with his claims. One has to ask, has he actually read these works or not?

Mistake #2:

"Now up till a few years ago there was not much we could do about this claim, there was not much we Christians could do or anybody else because we were not given access to these manuscripts. We could go to the Topkapi Manuscripts, which is the one there in Istanbul, the one which most Muslims would look at as their standard. We couldn't go to the Samarkand which was in Tashkent, we couldn't go to the Hussein Manuscripts which was in Cairo." - 19:48.

I am quite surprised that he claims Christians were not given access to these manuscripts with the exception of up until a few years ago. This is odd, considering that one of the foremost works on the Hussein Manuscripts in which four folios were published was by Bernhard Moritz in the year 1905⁶. It is perhaps Jay's intention to bolster the validity of his conspiratorial idea⁷, by claiming that Christians were denied access to the Cairo manuscripts for religious purposes. He fails to mention however, that the restriction was due to a major political fallout⁸ in the years following the British Occupation of Egypt from 1882 to 1953.

His claims about the manuscripts from Samarqand are perhaps even more deceitful. The Samarqand manuscripts were studied extensively in Russia, not Uzbekistan, but in the city of St. Petersburg in 1891 by the Russian Orientalist A. Shebunin. The facsimile edition of the manuscripts was published by the Orientalist S. Pissareff in 1905, also from St. Petersburg in Russia. Dr. Saifullah documents⁹ that many folios from the codex have appeared in various auctions in the Western world. They appeared in America in the 1940's, and were also auctioned off in London in 1992, 1993 and 2008.

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6. See, Bernhard Moritz's, "Arabic Palaeography: A Collection of Arabic Texts From the First Century of the Hidjra Till the Year 1000", 1905.
 7. His conspiracy theory, as previously stated is that the Islamic world hid the manuscripts from Christians so that they would not be able to examine them. This despite the Christian-Orientalist world having had access to them and publishing works about those manuscripts, as well as taking photographs of them since the 19th century.
 8. I could be wrong, but according to history, the natives of a militarily occupied nation may not necessarily be enthusiastic to cooperate with their colonial masters. If Jay is willing to explain how the British military occupation of Egypt did not contribute to the lack of cooperation between the native Egyptians and their colonial occupiers, I'd be willing to give him the time he needs to justify his reasoning, however long or impossible that may be.
 9. See, Dr. Saifullah's history of the manuscript with full citations in his article, "[The Qur'an of 'Uthman at Tashkent \(Samarqand\)](#)".

Mistake #3:

"It is those 6 manuscripts that I'm going to zero in on, it is those manuscripts that we've finally, finally had Muslims look at." - **20:46**.

Does he mean the extensive codifying/ cataloguing of them which has already been done for some time now, or does he mean the studying and examining of them? It's obvious the former was done, otherwise how were the other books in **Mistake #2** compiled? If he means the latter, then that already has been done for quite some time by Muslim scholars. One such work is *Mu'gam al-Qira'at al-Qur'anniya* by Ahmad Muhtar Umar and Abd al - al Salim Mukarram which has gone through two editions in Kuwait and at least one printing in Iran. There was also *Mu'gam al - Qira'at* by Abd al Latif Muhammad Hatib published in Syria¹⁰.

Jay then proceeds to refer to Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç and Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu whom he mentions here but never references once during his entire opening statement. We must ask if he has ever read any of their works or is he simply mentioning their names as an appeal to authority¹¹, he also foregoes another scholar's work published since 1972¹².

10. See, Arabica 57 (2010), p. 415 for more information and full citations as provided by Dr. Sadeghi. It's interesting that Smith appeals to Dr. Sadeghi later in the debate, he even mentions that he's read Dr. Sadeghi's works. If he has indeed read Dr. Sadeghi's published works, how can he possibly not know of the studies done by Muslim scholars on those manuscript collections which Dr. Sadeghi references and mentions by name numerous times in his journal publication?

11. Jay Smith frequently mentions the names of these two Muslim Turkish scholars, but not once does he quote them or give a single citation from them. There is one point later in the debate in which he references the number 93 from Dr. Deroche's work but gives his own analysis and draws his own conclusions, which contradicts Dr. Deroche's own conclusions.

12. See, S. al-Munajjid's, "Dirasat fi Tareekh al-Khatt al-'Arabi Mundhu Bidayatihi ila Nihayat al-'Asr al-Umawi", 1972.

Mistake #4:

"*This is the earliest manuscripts which Muslims have been claiming for centuries.*" - **21:49**.

Except since 1972 when we've clearly stated otherwise, as I've referenced above! Perhaps he's unaware¹³ that in the last eight years we've been radiocarbon dating our manuscripts and are now claiming this of the Sana'aa manuscripts due to Dr. Michael Cook's, *Yasin Dutton's*, Dr. Behnam Sadeghi's, Bergmann's, Gouzardi's, *Ahmad Muhtar Umar's*, *'Abd al - al Salim Mukarram's* and *Abd al Latif Muhammad Hatib's* research?

13. He can't be unaware as he spent from the timestamp of **21:09** to **21:49** boasting about the credentials of just two of the numerous scholars who are Muslims and are at the forefront of this research. How is it possible that he mentions the names of (and claims to have read the works of) several non-Muslim Orientalist scholars who reference the works of Muslims in their research, only for him to say 40 seconds later that Muslims have not been honest about the datings? He himself from the timestamp of **21:09** boasts about Muslims leading the research! His very arguments are based on research being done by Muslims, how then can he claim that Muslims aren't involved in looking at these manuscripts?

Mistakes #5 & #6:

"According to Altıkulaç and İhsanoğlu this is a mid 8th century manuscript, not a mid 7th century. So it's about anywhere from 60 to 100 years after Uthman, it's not from the 7th century. What's more, it's not complete. It has 2, 270 manuscript variants that means words or phrases in this manuscript which means which do not agree with the Cairo text. So you've got a problem there, this cannot be Uthmanic it's from the wrong century. " - **21:58**.

Let's read what Dr. Altıkulaç really says about the dating. Note that Jay Smith claims to have their research in the stack of papers in his hands, but refuses to read from their research and instead chooses to paraphrase or to give his own recollection of what they have said. This is problematic because they state otherwise:

Altıkulaç dates the Topkapi manuscript to "the second half of the first century A.H. and the first half of the second Century A.H. [due to] "vowelling and dotting." (i.e. early – mid 8th century) (Altıkulaç, 'Al-Mushaf al-Sharif' 2007:81)"

This is a blatant falsification of data by Smith, I believe he has confused himself. He has unfortunately manufactured information and attributed it to Dr. Altıkulaç. The first century AH or After Hijra refers to the period between 622 CE and 722 CE, which is some 78 years into the 7th century. Dr. Altıkulaç clearly states that the Topkapi manuscript dates to the second half of the first century. To understand the date range he is referring to, we can practise some simple mathematics. A century is 100 years. Half of a century is 50 years. This would mean, that the second half of the first century begins at 622 + 50 years. From this, we arrive at 672 CE. This date, would then mean that the Topkapi Codex's dating range includes some 28 years in the 7th century CE. Therefore when Smith says it's not a 7th century manuscript, on what basis is he excluding 28 years of the 7th century? See **Appendix A** for a graphical representation of the Hijri and Gregorian dates.

In regard to the 2, 270 variants between the King Fahd (Cairo) and Topkapi manuscripts, I was quite shocked to see Jay Smith invent such an incredulous claim. Let's read what Dr. Altıkulaç states about these differences¹⁴:

5. There are 2270 instances where there is dissimilarity between the Topkapi Muṣḥaf and the Fahd Muṣḥaf –most of them concerning whether or not the word was written with an *alif*-. The reason that this numbers seems so great is that many words that are written with a different spelling are repeated in the Qur'ān. Let us give a few examples:

- The words *على* and *حتى* were spelled with an *alif* as *علا* and *حتا* in more than 780 places in the Topkapi Muṣḥaf.
- The words *بايتنا*, *بايته*, *بايتي*, *بايت* and which begin with the letter *bā* are spelled with a single *yā* in Fahd Muṣḥaf in this way. In the Topkapi Muṣḥaf, however, the same words are written with two *yās* as *باييتنا*, *باييتي*, *باييت* and *باييتنا* and these words appear in more than 90 places.⁶²
- The words *يستحي*, *فيستحي*, *نستحي*, *يحي*, *فيحي*, *تحي*, *احي*, *نحي*, *لنحي*, *لمحي* were spelled with one *yā* in the Fahd Muṣḥaf. In the Topkapi Muṣḥaf, however, they were spelled with two *yās* as *يستحيي*, *فيستحيي*, *نستحيي*, *يحيي*, *فيحيي*, *تحيي*, *احيي*, *نحيي*, *لنحيي*, *لمحيي*. Their total number is 34.⁶³

There are also other words which recur three or five times thus increasing the number of differences between the two muṣḥafs, as well as words which appear once and which are spelled differently. The words *الحفا*–*الحافا*, *استبدل*–*استبدال*, *تدينتم*–*تداينتم*, *قطرن*–*قطران*, *كاملين*–*كاممها*, *سنبل*–*سنابل* are some examples of the words that appear once and their differences only stem from the fact that some of them are spelled with an *alif* while others are not.

According to Dr. Altıkulaç himself, the vast majority of these differences have to do with the differences in the spelling of the same words. This is what we refer to as a difference in orthography. What this means, is that the way a word can be represented in a language may vary over time but it will carry the same pronunciation and the same meaning. The English language equivalent would be

the Shakespearean spelling of “sonne”, which we know today as, “son”. Do both of these words have the same pronunciation? Yes. Do both of these words have the same meaning? Yes. As Dr. Altıkulaç states, the differences between the words are the variation in spelling of the same word.

There is quite literally no other difference. This then, encourages us to ask a very important question. Is Jay Smith lying by omission? He unequivocally states that he has their research in his hands. He proceeded to boast about their credentials. Why then, if he had their research in his hands, has he paraphrased what Dr. Altıkulaç stated, and not only that, lied twice in the space of 10 seconds. Why was he unable to quote Dr. Altıkulaç’s research, read it word for word and then cite it? The reason is, that he merely wanted to give the impression that he is familiar with their work and because he wanted to discredit the Qur’an.

Unfortunately for Jay, I have quoted and fully cited both instances of where Jay appeals to Dr. Altıkulaç, but in which Jay is completely at odds, if not blatantly lying about the Turkish scholar’s research. Can Jay Smith justify his incredulous, incredible behaviour? These are not simply isolated instances of his deceit, these are consistent, documented, repetitive, habitual acts of intellectual fraud^{15, 16}.

14. Tayyar Altıkulaç, Al-Muşhaf Al-Sharif: Attributed To ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 2011, p.102.

15. I can confirm that in 2012 Jay Smith did received a PDF edition of this work by Dr. Altıkulaç. Jay’s version only goes up to page 89, whereas the 2011 edition I possess is the complete version and reaches page 124. Not only does Jay have an incomplete source, the portion in which the two quotes he lies about are included in the version he has, which leads us to conclude he has intentionally lied by omission.

16. I would like to thank Br. Ahmed Shaker for assisting in the translation of some portions of Dr. Altıkulaç’s works. His assistance in acquiring and verifying a number of quotes, and assisting in fact checking was indispensable. A young brother with a bright future indeed. May Allah reward him for his efforts.

Mistakes #7 & #8:

"What's more, it's not complete." - 22:06.

The Topkapi Codex contains 408 folios, with 99% of the text of the Qur'an. It's only missing 2 folios which are supposed to have contained Surah 5:7-8 & Surah 17:17-33 (which are accounted for in other contemporary manuscript collections). In **40:08**, he makes the claim that the Topkapi Codex only contains 78% of the text of the Qur'an, on what basis does he arrive at this figure and how does 17 missing verses account for 22% of the Qur'an?

Let us read what Dr. Altikulaç says about the Topkapi manuscripts:

“The Topkapi Mushaf, which was made famous by a claim that it belonged to Caliph ‘Uthman, was preserved in libraries for centuries and its last stop has been the Topkapi Palace Museum Library. Until we undertook this study, nobody had read or examined this Mushaf from the beginning to the end. Was there really a parallelism between the text of this copy and the Mushafs that were being read in various countries of the world? Nobody could answer this question. To what extent did the rules of reading, which passed from one generation to the other, conform to its spelling? No statement was made on this subject. All these questions were taken into consideration when we decided to examine and publish it and our excitement continued until the examination of the text and its writing on the computer was completed. When the writing was completed we realized that this Mushaf which starts with the sentences of بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ and ends with مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ, and which was copied about thirteen centuries ago, exactly conforms to the Mushafs that are read by all those who read the Qur’an throughout the world. To state it more clearly, the copies of the Mushaf that are read today are the same as this Mushaf which was copied thirteen or fourteen centuries ago.

The fact that two folios of it are missing and the existence of the minor differences of spelling that are also observed in the spelling of Mushafs in various periods or countries does not contradict the above-mentioned conclusion. It is normal that such differences will be seen in texts that are produced by the human hand. Apparently, the Holy Qur’an was protected not only by the Hafizun’s (people who have memorized the complete Qur’an) reading and memorizing but also thanks to its script and spelling. It exists in the same way that it was revealed and recorded fourteen centuries ago. These written documents are the actual and material manifestations of the divine revelation to the effect that “Behold, it is We Ourselves who have bestowed from on high, step by step, this reminder: and, behold, it is We who shall truly guard it [from all corruption]”¹⁷.

I wonder if Jay Smith had actually read Dr. Altikulaç’s conclusions, would he still have appealed to him as an authority?

17. Tayyar Altikulaç, *Al-Muṣḥaf Al-Sharif: Attributed To ‘Uthman Bin ‘Affan* [The Copy at the Topkapi Palace Museum], 2007, Organization of the Islamic Conference Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture: Istanbul (Turkey), pp. 82 - 83.

Mistake #9:

"This one they date would be the earliest manuscript they would date and they would say that the underscript....." - 22:36.

What is confusing here is that later in his speech he would refer to Dr. Behnam Sadeghi and Goudarzi who also date the Sana'aa manuscripts to the mid 7th century¹⁸. That would mean four scholars have examined this codex and have arrived at the same dating conclusion. However, later in his speech he dismisses the dating of Behnam and Goudarzi and attempts to discredit their dating of the Sana'aa manuscripts by equating the radiocarbon dating to when the animal died and not to when the script was written. He was completely oblivious to the fact that four scholars whom he referred to as authorities all arrived at the same conclusion through both radiocarbon dating and paleographic dating. How then, can he reference all four of them as authorities, use their studies but arrive at a completely different conclusion than they have?

Either their studies are conclusive and reliable, which would be the same of their conclusions, or what is more probable is that Jay Smith does not know what he’s speaking about and quite frankly, his statements are certainly beyond incredulous.

18. See, citation #20 in **Mistake #10**.

Mistake #10:

"The inferior text, they would have dated to the last two decades of the 7th century. That's the time of Abd al Malik, the Caliph who ruled from 685 to 705 CE. The superior text, the one you can read, that is dated to the early 8th century, that's what they're saying. But they're claiming very clearly that this also has manuscript variants." - 23:10.

I have no idea if he's read these journals at this point because what he gives as their dating is different to what they have given. We read:

"The lower text of Ṣan'ā' is at present the most important document for the history of the Qur'ān. As the only known extant copy from a textual tradition beside the standard 'Uthmānic one, it has the greatest potential of any known manuscript to shed light on the early history of the scripture. Comparing it with parallel textual traditions provides a unique window onto the initial state of the text from which the different traditions emerged. The comparison settles a perennial controversy about the date at which existing passages were joined together to form the sūras (chapters). Some ancient reports and modern scholars assign this event to the reign of the third caliph and link it with his standardizing the text of the Qur'ān around AD 650. However, the analysis shows that the sūras were formed earlier.¹⁹"

How daft do you have to be, to incorrectly quote a date from the first page of a study. The first paragraph! It get's worse....the following two quotes are from the second page of their study, but from the 344th page of the journal:

"The upper layer of writing, a standard Qur'ān, could be from the first or second half of the seventh century AD, and possibly even early eighth century. Radiocarbon dating assigns the parchment, and hence the lower writing, to the first half of the seventh century."

"According to the collective memory of early Muslims, the Companion 'Utmān, after becoming caliph, disseminated a version of the holy book, declaring it the standard. The date of this event is uncertain, but it appears to have taken place sometime during AH 24-30, i.e. AD 644-650.2 It is to the textual tradition identified with this version that almost all extant Qur'ānic manuscripts belong.²⁰"

As for the dating, Dr. Sadeghi concludes his findings support a dating to the time of the Prophet:

"The findings here support the less common dating to the time of the Prophet.²¹"

19. Behnam Sadeghi, Mohsen Goudarzi, "Sana'aa and the Origins of the Qur'an", Der Islam (2012), Vol. 87, p. 1.

20. Behnam Sadeghi, Uwe Bergmann, Arabica 57 (2010), p. 344.

21. Behnam Sadeghi, Uwe Bergmann, Arabica 57 (2010), p. 346.

Mistake #11:

"But they're claiming very clearly that this also has manuscript variants." - **23:20**.

As demonstrated in **Mistakes #5 to #8**, changes in orthography are natural and as has already been explained in **Mistakes #5 & #6**, the variations in spelling do not affect meaning. They carry the same pronunciation and the same meaning. Another alternative understanding, can be drawn from Dr. Sadeghi's analysis in regard to the modes of the Qu'ran or *Ahruf al Qur'an*:

"The majority traditional scholarly position associates Companion Qur'ans with the Seven Modes (ahruf) in which God revealed the holy book.²²"

Many of these variants are the means in which the vowels are represented. Which is common in orthography (how language is transcribed from oral recitation to a textual graphical representation). We have to remember that these scribes had to sit down and think, how do I represent this sound, how do I represent this word, how is this letter to be represented. Over time the representations or orthography may change as the development of the text becomes more standardized. This does not affect what the text means. What matters is that what is written, when recited or converted back to the oral recitation, is the same as the oral recitation before it was written. So while the representation may change, the recitation does not.

This is common in all languages. An easy example would be the Shakespearean English word, "olde" which we now spell as, "old". Both have the same pronunciation but different spelling. Other examples are "sonne" and "son". Here we have both a consonantal and vowel addition, but the oral pronunciation remains the same as does the meaning. Later in Jay's presentation, he will claim that the Qur'an has 800 variants in which a vast majority of them have consonantal and vowel differences. However as we have just learned, they're inconsequential and common to every single language on the face of the earth. He will also claim that the diacritical marks or vowel marks were not invented until centuries later, except for the fact that the following quote not only disproves that, it makes it quite clear that the vowelling from the Sana'aa's lower or *scriptio inferior* text already had vowelling which conforms with our vowelling tradition of today:

"Surprisingly, the lower script on occasion appears to use what are possibly diacritics, in the form of perfectly round dots, to signify short vowel marks (and possibly elided alifs, i.e. hamzat al-wasl) These dots are in the same ink as the rest of the lower writing and do not appear to have been added later. In particular, the words tahluka and nusukin in Stanford '07, in Kor 2, 195 and 196, appear to have dots on the consonants lām ("l") and sīn ("s") respectively, both placed at an elevated level, possibly for indicating the vowel "u" (the dammaa). The vocalization of both of these letters later became a matter of dispute. So, it seems unlikely that the dots are in these positions by chance. If these words are vowelled, this may indicate that they were already deemed difficult at the time of C-1. In each case, the lower writing's apparent vowelling agrees with what came to be the majority view of later authorities.²³"

22. Behnam Sadeghi, Uwe Bergmann, Arabica 57 (2010), p. 346.

23. Behnam Sadeghi, Uwe Bergmann, Arabica 57 (2010), p. 359.

Mistake #12:

"Let me just say something about Francois Deroche. I know an awful lot of Muslims do not like him because he's a Westerner. By the fact that he's French they don't like him. They like him even worse. Nothing against the French." - **24:00.**

Jay has been known to be a bit rough around the edges, uncouth, crass. When I first heard him say this, I was very much offended that he'd have the audacity to say something so insulting. I decided maybe this was a play on the Quebec - Franco speaking peoples in Canada thing, a joke of sorts. So I asked people who were in the audience that night how they perceived that statement. Most were confused as they'd never heard of Deroche before that night and I don't blame them. Unless you're dedicated to studying the Qur'an, it's unlikely you'd know about him.

So their general response was that the hall was quiet at that time because the name threw most people off. However, when I asked if they were now offended after reading his statements, both Muslims and Christians affirmed that this was an off putting and insensitive, if not outright negative claim to have been made. Jay had managed to insult quite a large spectrum of people with those statements. Muslims in France, Algerian Muslims, Muslims in Canada and America, Muslims in the UK, Liberal Christians who were Muslim friendly, French speaking persons, and even me, all the way in this tiny Caribbean island that he's probably never even heard of before. I think it's only fair that he should issue an apology for making such a remarkably insensitive statement²⁴. This however, was not the worst thing he had said that night. Jay Smith had managed to say something even more insulting, for which this was the wrong forum. He in essence, used his decorum from Speaker's Corner (Hyde Park, London) during this debate.

24. While this is not a factual error in regard to his claims about the Qur'an, I found this to be a highly insulting statement and I believe its presence in this paper is justified on account of Jay's lack of academic decorum. An inter-faith forum should by no means have to entertain someone so intellectually irresponsible. I do believe the moderator, Steven Richard Martins should have stepped in at this point and cautioned Jay Smith. E&AM, the event organizers, should review this debate and learn from this experience, I am thoroughly disappointed in Steven.

It should be noted that as of the writing of this note (25.10.14), Steven has already been in possession of these very comments of mine, delivered verbatim from this paper in which his response was sought. To date, he has not replied to or remarked on these comments. Should he eventually do so, our conversation and conclusions with his permission would be included in an updated version of this paper via the appendix.

Mistake #13:

"(But) Let me just say what your supervisor Dr. Waleed Saleh said about Francois Deroche. This is the man you (Dr. Shabir) got your doctorate from. He says...Francois Deroche is now the giant jar whose handles we, the not so tall, are all trying to reach. If you are going to revise the outline of early Islamic history, you had better fit your timeline supplied by now Deroche. For the manuscripts to light by Deroche are not easily dismissed, the work of Deroche is such that as it has changed the manner of doing Qur'anic studies by making the codices the center of our research on the Qur'an. Deroche has brought the Qur'anic studies to a level never before seen in Anglo-American scholarship. " - 24:06.

Comments about Deroche aside (what he says of Deroche is largely agreed upon), what was the message that Jay was trying to convey? Was it a fallacious appeal to authority, to invoke the idea that a student cannot disagree with his teacher or that Dr. Shabir is somewhat unqualified to make an informed decision on an area of study he has specialised in and earned his PhD about? Maybe, and I'm just speculating here, Jay may have some pent up resentment towards Dr. Shabir. After all, they've had quite a tumultuous relationship over the years. Perhaps what is most telling is that Jay first made public statements about his intention to pursue a PhD in 1998 while sharing a platform for a debate with Dr. Shabir in Birmingham (UK).

It's now 2014, Dr. Shabir has recently received his PhD while Jay, some 16 years later still does not have one. What's worse, is that the area that he claims to specialize in, is under great scrutiny by many in the inter-faith community. For example, we have [Klingschor's critique and assessment of Jay's numerous mistakes](#) ²⁵ in a lecture he recently gave on Islamic Origins. Klingschor exposes his tales, his inventing of quotes and citing of papers that don't agree with conclusions. I'm doing pretty much the same thing, but in less than 10 minutes we already have 13 inaccuracies to report on that are clearly deceptive and intentionally so. His ability to be truthful or responsible is definitely lacking and leaves much to be desired.

25. See, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=picDHvRooGw>, "Problems with Jay Smith (Christian Critic of Islam)". It should be noted that I fully expected Jay Smith to repeat the silly and factually incorrect allegations he delivered in his lecture earlier in 2014, "Islamic Origins", during his debate with Dr. Shabir. Surprisingly, a few days before the debate I found an Evangelist using some of Jay's allegations based on information from the 1980's. Information so inaccurate, that if used against the New Testament, according to Jay Smith's own criteria, the New Testament would be invalidated and errant! See that discussion on my website, "[A Chat with Mari Kaimo](#)".

Mistake #14:

"Now you may not like that quote, but then you're going to have to deal with your own (PhD) supervisor, I'll let you talk to him later today." - 24:45.

This too, is crass and only bolsters the opinion that Jay Smith does not belong on a stage for academics to discuss ideas intellectually as he chooses and actively so, to argue emotionally. This was a very unnecessary comment, completely uncalled for and certainly below the belt. If Jay has an axe to grind with Dr. Shabir, I suggest he do it in private, as opposed to on a stage where scholastic views and opinions are exchanged and discussed. What was he thinking making such a remark? He definitely needs to apologize for his lack of decorum and professionalism.

As I remarked in **citation #24**, the moderator of the event, Steven Richard Martins was very irresponsible to allow Jay Smith to repeatedly make remarks such as these. I want to be absolutely clear, I am not being pedantic and I am not nit picking. These were specifically chosen, underhanded statements that were made for the sole purpose of provoking Dr. Shabir Ally. It is my view, that the moderator mishandled this situation to such a poor degree, I would be very disappointed if in the future he did not condemn such behaviour on a public platform. His silence during and after the debate in regard to Jay Smith's inciteful, hateful and degrading comments serves as implicit support of Jay's behaviour.

Mistake #15:

"He's saying that they're (the Sana'aa manuscripts) coming from the 3rd quarter of the 1st century, so you're talking about early to mid 8th century." - **24:59**.

When he refers to the 1st century, he means the 1st century of the Muslim calendar or AH as the suffix is known as (After Hijrah). So the 3rd quarter of the first century would be the 7th century CE (697 CE, to understand the calculation of these dates see, Appendix A), not the 8th century. The problem is, this is the second time²⁶ he's specifically said early to mid 8th century when referring to the 1st century AH. He's quite intentionally manipulating the conversion of the dates between the Islamic (Hijri) calendar and Common Era calendar. So not only does he misquote and misinterpret Dr. Deroche, for a specialist in Islamic apologetics, he doesn't even know the year the Muslim calendar began, which is very important as he's been converting and throwing around dates all night.

The problem here, is that he laudes himself as a specialist in Islamic history. It was quite frankly, embarrassing for me to sit all the way in the Caribbean listening to Jay Smith in Canada, spewing blatantly incorrect information, that he should have known given all of his decades of “researching” and “studying” Islam.

26. See Mistakes #5 & #6, where he also incorrectly attributes Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç’s dating to the 8th century CE, when he clearly wrote, 7th century CE.

Mistake #16:

"When comparing (the Sana'aa manuscripts) with the Cairo edition, the 1924 edition there have many words which turned out different in different ways, they are written in a scripted defective, the manuscript differs with the Cairo canonical system in 93 places." - **25:11**.

It is odd, or perhaps extremely strange that he appeals to Deroche in mentioning the figure 93, but not Deroche's analysis of this figure. We need to ask yet again, why does Jay Smith refuse to quote word for word from the authors he appeals to and why does he continue to refuse to cite any of his sources. Let's see what Dr. Deroche says:

"Turning now to the five or eight qira'at systems recorded by Spitaler, I shall study the position of the manuscript in comparison with these various schools in order to identify the school which is followed in Codex Parisino-Petropolitanus. In principle, the latter should be in complete accordance with one of them, a situation which can be verified by looking at the places where the schools are at variance, since they disagree on some verse endings as well as consequently, on the number of verses in the Qur'an. In the manuscript, ninety-three cases about which some schools have a specific stance are present. Only thirty-eight of those are common with the Kufan school, which clearly excludes any relationship between its reading and that of Codex Parisino-Petropolitanus. Conversely, the latter most agrees with the Homs reading, in seventy-five cases of the disputed verse endings. It is therefore possible to state that it is verging towards a specific school, although it cannot be said to reflect its position as a whole.²⁷"

What is troubling, is that Deroche's conclusion differs with Smith's. Whereas 38 & 75 of the endings belong to two major schools of the *qira'at* system (based on the *ahruf* of the Qur'aan as explained above), and is based on examining *Codex Parisino-Petropolitanus*. We find that Smith says that Dr. Deroche compares Sana'aa with the Cairo manuscripts and arrives at this figure. Not only has he lied about the purpose of the figure and its meaning, he has also lied about the quote, the manuscripts being examined and has falsely stated that it is in comparison between the Sana'aa and the Cairo manuscripts. Neither of which Deroche himself has mentioned in this regard. Therefore one has to ask, how many times does Jay Smith refer to an author's work and then proceeds to invent and falsify conclusions which he himself has manufactured and of which cannot be found in the authors' works? This is not the first time he has done so and at this point, I have lost count at the number of occurrences with which this has happened.

27. Dr. Francois Deroche, "The Qur'an of the Umayyads", (Brill), p. 27.

Mistake #17:

"And then the Samarqand, the one that you claim is exactly like our Qur'an today. This one gets off the worst. This one only goes up to Surah 43. It's not complete. What's more, it's full of errors, errors not made by the scribe. Namely they existed in the original text. It is neither one of the Caliph 'Uthman's copies, it is dated to in his case the mid 8th century, not even the early 8th century and there are six reasons why there are problems. It has no discipline of spelling, it has different ways of writing the same word, there are scribal mistakes, copyist mistakes written by a scribe who had no writing experience and later added signs after verses. The Tashkent mushaf was neither the Mushaf of Caliph Uthman was reading nor was it those when he was martyred nor was it any of the mushaf he sent into various centers, nor that was a copy of it kept in Madina for the benefit of the people." - 26:05 .

The claim that it only goes up to Chapter/ Surah 43 and is dated to the mid 8th century does not discredit or negate the texts' importance. It's still a very early Qur'an. If we were to compare the Qur'an with the New Testament, we'd see that the Tashkent/ Samarqand manuscripts are within 100 years of 'Uthman (may Allaah be pleased with him), whereas the New Testament's full copies of the Gospels are dated to within 350+ years of the disciples of Christ. Therefore, if we are going to use the age of the manuscripts as a discriminating factor, isn't 100 years less than 350+? If Jay rejects their importance for being within 100 years, then he should completely reject the validity and importance of the 4 Great Uncial Codices: Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus and Ephraemi-Rescriptus.

His six reasons as to why the Tashkent/ Samarqand manuscripts are problematic has left me utterly baffled. Of the six "problems", all of them are orthographic differences. Phillip Comfort describes orthography as the following:

"The correct way to write letters according to standard usage.²⁸"

What this means is that the way letters, vowels and punctuation marks are represented differ throughout the ages as the conversion from oral/ aural (spoken word) to textual graphical (writing) takes place. That means one scribe can use one means of orthography and another scribe can use another means. What matters is that when the textual graphical illustration (writing) is converted (read and spoken) to the oral form, it reads the same as before it was converted. I previously gave some English examples to clarify this point. "Sonne" in Shakespearean English is pronounced the same as "Son" in modern or contemporary English. The way the words are written may differ, but they are pronounced the same and carry the exact same meaning. A simpler definition of orthography is as follows, *"a method of representing the sounds of a language by written or printed symbols"* - [The Free Dictionary](#).

Jay's problems which were: no discipline in spelling, different ways of writing the same word and added signs after verses would be orthographic differences. They carry the same meaning and the same pronunciation. I can write a comma 10 different ways, it's still going to be a comma. I can write a period/ full stop many different ways, it's still going to mean the sentence, phrase or statement ends here. Same word but different spelling - orthographic difference. Signs to show a verse has ended - orthographic difference. None of these "problems" are problems. As for the scribal/ copyist mistakes, didn't Jay explain that himself? He clearly stated that the manuscripts were written by a scribe with no experience. It's a bit strange that he acts surprised that an untrained scribe made copying mistakes. It's a bit like being surprised that an inexperienced driver has problems with driving, or an inexperienced boxer having problems while boxing. Maybe I'm wrong to assume that Jay knows what the phrase *"no experience"* means. What's most important though, is that we know the scribe made mistakes. Since we know the manuscripts have mistakes, then we know it's not representative of the canon of the Qur'an. To simplify what I'm trying to say, consider that Jack and John are both told to copy an essay. Jack spells the word *apple* as "appel", while John spells it as "apple". If we know that Jack made a mistake, then we know his copy of the letter is not representative of the original. Knowing that a mistake exists, implies that we know that it is not what the original said. A mistake would mean that an error has been made. By the very fact we are able to state that the scribe made a mistake, then we know with certainty that his mistake is not representative of what the original looked like or what the word should be spelled like. Given that we have manuscripts before and contemporary to the time the Samarqand manuscripts were written, we can say with certainty where the scribe made an error and what the correct version would look like, hence there are no problems with this collection of manuscripts at all.

At this point, it becomes important to mention that not every codex (collection of manuscripts) is a canon (set of writings which are deemed to be authoritative). Many of us own those little booklets

with just the four gospels in them, this is a codex (a collection) of a subset of the canon. In the case of the Qur'an, Jay looks at this codex and says the canon of the Qur'an only goes up to Surah 43. In other words, he takes a subset and says it is representative of the whole, instead of admitting it is a subset of the canon and is merely a smaller collection of select Surahs. To think like this, would mean that Jay purchases one of those little booklets with just the four gospels and then proclaims that the New Testament is comprised of just these four writings alone. Obviously to think like this would be intellectually dishonest and this is what Jay does! Surprising behaviour for a man who claims to be educated!

28. Phillip Comfort, “Encountering the Manuscripts (Kindle Location 11336), Kindle Edition, (19-07-2010).

Mistake #18:

"When we look at the palimpsest as we mentioned earlier, the underscript, possibly the best work being done on the palimpsest coming out of Sana'aa. If I could put up a picture of it here, right here, here we could see the underscript. When you look at the underscript you will see, it does not agree with the overscript. When they put it under ultraviolet light, they have now found that they're two different scripts showing that there's an evolution between the last two decades of the 7th century and the first two decades of the 8th century. There's evolution in those 10 to 20 years. According to Sadeghi and Goudarzi, it is clear that these fall outside of the standard type text, and is from a different textual type tradition completely. Dr. Elizabeth Puin who's doing the standard work, probably doing the most original work on the palimpsest, her conclusion, it's a completely different Qur'an, not the Qur'an we have today." - 27:00 .

It's important to note that not once is the term "evolution" used by Sadeghi or Goudarzi. This is a figment of Jay's imagination and I'd gladly request that he cite where either of them have stated this in their study. What they actually said, is as follows:

"There are several possible explanations for why the leaves of the original manuscript were reused to prepare a new one. The original codex may have been worn out due to extensive use over a number of decades. Just how quickly the pages were worn out would depend on how often the manuscript was used, something that we are not in a position to know. In addition, the orthographic and paleographic differences between the two layers are consistent with their being separated by a period long enough for the codex to have been worn out: though both scripts are Ḥijāzī, the upper writing is more compact, uses more alifs, and uses more dots for distinguishing the consonants.²⁹"

This "evolution" did not happen, and the changes which occurred were due to the development of Arabic orthography, a more standardized way of representing the Arabic language in writing. The changes therefore, are not due to the Qur'an being changed, verses being taken out or Surahs being taken out or added in. The changes are due to orthographic development and standardization, this is clearly what Sadeghi and Goudarzi are saying, by their own words! The onus is therefore on Jay to explain his erratic and deceitful statements. They have also explained what they meant by standard text type:

"Many reports imply the legitimacy of Ibn Mas'ūd's codex or other Companion codices. Even some of the reports that express preference for the standard text do so.³⁰"

This refers to [the ahruf or modes of the Qur'aan](#) as previously mentioned:

"One idea that seems to have been in fairly wide circulation already in the first century of Islam was that the Qur'ān was revealed in Seven Modes (sab'at ahruf).³¹"

When Jay claims that Dr. Elisabeth Puin has allegedly stated that the Sana'aa underscript is a completely different Qur'an, it is important to note that she has since recanted those views and now affirms the same view as Sadeghi himself, we read:

"Beginning in 2008, nineteen years after all the parchment manuscripts in Ṣan'ā' had been restored, in three successive articles published at the rate of one per year, Elisabeth Puin (the wife of Gerd-Rüdiger Puin) transcribed the lower text of three and a half folios (folios 2, 5, 6A, and 20). Her first essay (2008) mentioned the pictures taken "recently" by S. Noja Nosedá and added that they might be published soon. The transcriptions are positive contributions, though the articles are not free from errors. In the third article (2010), she states views (not found in her first two essays and presented without justification) that mirror the conclusions of Sadeghi and Bergmann's "Codex" essay. She thereby moves away from the prevailing revisionist outlook of the authors in the In'ārah series in which her previous two articles appeared.³²"

What was Sadeghi's conclusion? He states his view in accordance with Dr. Michael Cook's study, he says:

"Cook's investigation of the list of skeletal-morphemic variations which, according to early scholars, distinguished the 'Uṭmānic codices, allowed him to reconstruct the genetic relationships between and among the codices. The variations among the cities follow strikingly regular patterns. For example, the codex of Medina has no variant that is unique to it. Some variants belong uniquely to it and Syria, and others uniquely to it and Basra. But it never agrees

with Kūfa against Syria or Basra. When such patterns are taken into consideration, the upshot is that of the well over 100 conceivable stemmata that could describe which codex was copied from which, only several closely related ones fit the data, and among these some are more probable than others. On the one hand, the great regularity of the patterns requires an explanation other than chance, and, on the other hand, it is difficult to explain why the texts fit this very specific set of stemmata if not as a result of having emerged in accordance with one of them. Cook argues convincingly against the possibility that the descriptions of these codices were forged by pointing out that the variants of four cities show no sign of cross-contamination. To create the appearance of non-contamination would have required skills that the scholars did not have, namely knowledge of the logic of stemmata. From this, Cook infers that “we have to do with genuine transmissions from an archetype”, thus showing the correctness of the reports about the regional codices. The historicity of the received data, in turn, is “a testimony to the continuing accuracy of the transmission of the variants” in the qirā’āt literature.³³

According to Sadeghi and Cook, the Sana'aa palimpsest’s underscript is an accurate transmission of the *qira’at* of the Qur'an, which is based on the modes of recitation (*ahruf al Qur’an*). He concludes that we have an archetype manuscript of the Qur'an, which means that it is from this Sana'aa underscript that many other copies of the Qur'an were written accurately. Shocked by the accuracy Dr. Cook describes the multiple witness, yet simultaneous transmission as having, "*strikingly regular patterns*", that it is not due to chance, "*the great regularity of the patterns requires an explanation other than chance*" and that this is, "*difficult to explain why the texts fit this very specific set of stemmata if not as a result of having emerged in accordance with one of them*". Not by chance, accurate, mass transmitted with independent chains of transmission, all these claims of the Qur’an, lead him to conclude that the Qur'an was accurately transmitted and that the traditional Islamic history of their transmission was, "*a testimony to the continuing accuracy of the transmission of the variants*” in the qirā’āt literature."

29. Behnam Sadeghi, Mohsen Goudarzi, "Sana'aa and the Origins of the Qur'an", *Der Islam* (2012), Vol. 87, p. 27.

30. *ibid*, p. 28.

31. *ibid*, p. 29.

32. *ibid*, pp. 12 - 13.

33. Behnam Sadeghi, Uwe Bergmann, *Arabica* 57 (2010), p. 368.

Mistake #19:

“Fogg’s Palimpsest, when you look at and Fogg’s falimps.... you can find it has omissions, different words, word sequences, orthographical variants, reading errors and corrections. Certainly this is not a complete text.” - **28:02**.

As previously explained, variations in the presence and absence of words and word sequences are due to the modes or *ahruf* of the Qur’an³⁴ as revealed to the Prophet ﷺ. The *ahruf* are classified and categorized as follows³⁵:

Of these ones whose enlistment is the most concise, well arranged and firmly established is Imam Abdul-Fadl Razi. According to him, Variations in Recital of the Quran depend on seven kinds:

1. *Variations in nouns:* This includes difference in number and gender e.g. تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ has also been read as تَمَّتْ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّكَ.
2. *Variations in verbs:* The same verb is read in the past, present or future tense, or as an imperative, for example رَبَّنَا بَعْدَ بَيْنِ أَسْفَارِنَا has also been read as رَبَّنَا بَعْدَ بَيْنِ أَسْفَارِنَا .
3. *Variations in the position of diacritical marks:* There is a variance in I’rab the kasrah, fathah, dammah: وَلَا يُضَارُّ كَاتِبٌ becomes لَا يُضَارُّ كَاتِبٌ and دُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ becomes دُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدِ.
4. *Variations caused by omissions and additions:* There is an extra word in a reading which is not found in another. For example تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ becomes تَجْرِي تَحْتَهَا الْأَنْهَارُ.
5. *Variations in placement of words:* A word precedes in a reading while it follows in another e.g. فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ becomes فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ.
6. *Variations caused by replacement of words:* There is a word in one reading but quite another word in the other reading e.g. تُنْشِرُهَا becomes تُنْشِرُهَا and فَتَبَيَّنُوا becomes فَتَبَيَّنُوا and طَلَحَ becomes طَلَعَ .
7. *Variation of Accent:* It rests round changes in tafkhim, tarqiq, imalaha, qasr, madd, hamz, izhar and idgham (e.g. Musa read with imalah becomes Musay).

With this having been explained, these variations are expected and therefore normal within the Qur’anic tradition. In regard to orthographic differences and scribal mistakes, these too have been previously explained at length. Orthographical differences do not affect meaning in any way and scribal mistakes or *lapsus calami* can easily be detected as such and rectified as slips of the pen (or hand). I’m uncertain as to the purpose of Jay’s statement that this is not a complete text. Fogg’s palimpsest are only two leaves of a manuscript. Two leaves. Obviously this isn’t an entire codex. It escapes me as to what conclusion he was attempting to draw here.

34. See **citation #1** for more detailed information and further resources.

35. This version of the quote from Mufti Taqi Uthmani’s, “*An Approach to the Qur’anic Sciences*” is a combination of [Br. Waqar’s translation from Urdu to English](#) and from the official English translation of the book, [pp. 115 - 116 \(2000\) by Darul Isha’at Publishers](#). The official English translation has a few typographical errors which complicate the English translation more than is necessary. Br. Waqar’s translation fixes these few embellishments without altering the work’s accuracy in any way. A link to the official English translation has been provided should anyone have the need to authenticate the passage quoted.

Mistake #20:

“So every one that we’ve looked at, the six major manuscripts, every one of them so far has been found to be fraudulent.” - 28:17.

We haven’t looked at six manuscripts, we’ve looked at several codices and a few individual manuscripts. This is a bit embarrassing as Jay is supposed to be commenting on the textual legacy of the Qur’an, but his ineptitude is so great, he himself does not seem to comprehend what exactly he’s been discussing. There is a significant difference between six manuscripts and six manuscript codices (collections) and it is quite unfortunate that he’s ignorant of this fact. It is akin to stating that one has read three individual pages, when one means to say they’ve read two books and a pamphlet, it is highly impossible to confuse pages with entire books and pamphlets. This is, quite unfortunately a very telling statement of Jay’s incredulous and pretentious claims.

I am at a lost to interpret what he meant to convey by claiming these manuscript collections were fraudulent. None of these collections are forgeries or manufactured, as such, I am bewildered by this statement of his and I take this to mean that he is simply speaking out of ignorance or deceit.

Mistake #21:

“And he looked at the ten of the earliest manuscripts, and he did his research just on these ten manuscripts. His research is going to be published next year. Intentional Changes in the Qur’an, is the title of his research. You notice, intentional changes, and what he has done he has looked at....gone to every one of the manuscripts of in the ones I’ve just looked out, uhhh referred to, and he’s looked for these intentional changes and he’s found 6 different kinds of changes. He’s found tapings where they’ve put tapings over certain words, blocking it out, patches that appear to be serving some other purpose than to repair the pages itself. He has found hundreds and hundreds of insertions, here are some of the examples, cause he’s now found 800 of these corrections in these manuscripts. Where you find an insertion, a post production in addition to the text, adding it to that which was originally there. He also found erasures, where they’ve actually erased part of the text. Intentional removal of the text from the page. Hundreds he has found. Erasures with over written, they have erased it and they have written over top of it. Here’s is some examples here.” - 28:42.

The first page of Dan’s thesis, the very first page, in the introduction, in the very first paragraph he states that he’ll be utilizing eleven Qur’anic textual witnesses. Not ten, but eleven. Thus begins Jay’s disastrous foray into Dan’s thesis, in which he can’t even get what’s written in the first paragraph accurate. Dan states³⁶:

“The material in the following pages, then, contributes to knowledge about the early history of the Qur’an in the year around and following the Arab/ Muslim conquests of the first century AH / seventh century AD by cataloguing and discussing instances of intentional change in eleven of the earliest textual witnesses, the Qur’an manuscripts themselves.”

One would be led to believe by Jay’s statements that these are magnificent intentional changes. He gives a number of categories of changes and a significant number of them in the figure of 800 but stops short of ever producing a single example. This is very telling. On reviewing the audio at the time stamp given, Jay proceeded to give some examples, but when he picked up the paper, he placed it down again and continued without giving a single example. This then implies that there was apprehension, and for good reason. What Jay was claiming of the changes and what Dan had noted were two completely different things. Let’s look at some of Dan’s statements from his conclusion in his thesis:

“We also know that these manuscripts have signs of both the development and increasing precision of a written orthography of the Arabic...³⁷”

Of these intentional changes, he primarily notes orthographic variants of the vowels:

“Corrections involving the addition, removal, or exchange of textual elements in Qur’an manuscripts are not uncommon. Corrections proliferate in these ten early Qur’ans and also in the fragments. One frequent type of corrections involves the addition or removal of the long vowels that served as matres lectionis but whose orthography followed a process of standardization;³⁸”

Style and aesthetic alterations for beautification purposes also count as intentional changes according to Dan:

“Stylistically, there is a wide range of ways that corrections were made. In some cases, great care was taken to match the features and style of the original text of the page; at other times little such care was taken and the only concern of the corrector is conforming the page to a standard, largely absent aesthetic concerns. At times, aesthetic concerns were relatively impossible to address due to available space or other factors.³⁹”

Interestingly, Dan quotes Small’s defense of the Qur’anic preservation by relaying a contradictory analysis that quite a significant number of the intentional changes (according to Dan) in the manuscripts studied were actually unintentional (according to Small) and due to scribal mistakes while copying, followed by the scribe’s self-correction of these mistakes. These intentional changes were then, a scribe’s correction while copying it themselves:

“Small finds that the majority of variants in the Qur’an manuscripts are likely to have been unintentional, “There are many different kinds of inadvertant errors of sight and hearing. There is an apparent concern for accuracy in scribal habits in that many of these were corrected. Also, these were usually easily detected and evaluated because they often resulted in

a word from that was nonsensical or had clearly repeated letters or misplaced punctuation.” This finding seems to hold true in a general sense regarding the changes catalogued in this dissertation; a good number appear to have been made by the original scribe.⁴⁰”

We’ve arrived at a conundrum. The very purpose of Dan’s thesis and Jay’s use of it was to demonstrate that the Qur’an had intentional major changes. Unfortunately for both Dan and Jay, Dan’s own analysis relegates much of these changes to be stylistic, aesthetic and orthographic in nature. Furthermore, we see Dan’s concession that a majority of these intentional changes were due to unintentional mistakes (lapsus calami) by the scribe themselves while in the process of copying and these changes were the scribe’s own correction of their mistakes. Thus, Dan’s thesis not only negates it’s alleged hypothesis, by his own analysis he’s debunked Jay’s greatly inflated claims. This explains why Jay related not a single example of intentional change and relegated himself to solely mentioning the type of changes and not what was changed in and of themselves.

36. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 1 (2014).

37. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 297 (2014).

38. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 299 - 300 (2014).

39. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 300 (2014).

40. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 307 - 308 (2014).
There is a typographical error by Dan which I’ve left intact for the sake of being true to my quoting and referencing of his work, he meant to write “inadvertent”.

Mistake #22:

“These are all available, I can get them, I can give them to you if you want them. Over writing without an apparent reason, they just over wrote without even, not even trying to erase it. Selective coverings, coverings as a category of intentional change directly over the portions of the text. Selective coverings that are then over written. These are fascinating, these he’s found 10’s in 10’s in 10’s, he was expecting maybe to find one or two or three. He found over 800 and those are just the ones he’s published in his thesis. These is interesting because they have not only they are covered it over they are then written over top. We would like to take off the covering and see what is that they censored. Cause obviously these manuscripts, the earliest manuscripts were not the same or are not the same as the Qur’an we have today. Here’s a case where they are multiple changes in just one page.” - 30:25.

Unfortunately for Jay, they are available and there’s a reason he offers to provide the examples but never gives one. I’ve chosen this quote intentionally because he raises a sheet into the air during the final sentence and claims that this is evidential of his claims. Sadly, he did not read what those changes were for the reasons outlined previously, they simply were not of any substance. We can see that he once again engages in bravado and significantly overstates what these stylistic, aesthetic, orthographic and scribal corrections were, by stating these manuscripts prove that the Qur’an then is not the same as the Qur’an of today. This claim is evidently false given what I’ve presented of Dan’s own analysis above, which leads us to ask, has Jay actually read Dan’s thesis, and whose fault is it that Jay is misrepresenting Dan’s study? Is this disaster of a presentation, due to Dan’s failure to accurately convey what he has written to Jay, in which case Dan would be responsible for this parody of an intellectual discourse?

Let’s read for ourselves what these changes were from Dan’s thesis, which as we will largely see is due to the orthographic variance of the single letter, *alif*:

“A second example of a page with several types of change is found on 6r or F340 which has five instances of textual alteration comprised of three types: insertion, erasure, and erasure with overwriting. The first is the addition of an ‘*alif* squeezed in and slightly above the main text on line 6, it is the initial ‘*alif* of the *أوليا* *awliya’a* (“companions”) of Q4:89, which was apparently missing from the text as originally written here.⁴¹”

“On F327, page 7v, there is an insertion of a *lam* ‘*alif* ater its omission at the first writing.⁴²”

“On F328, 5v, there is an insertion of an *alif*, with slightly narrower nib, different hand (angle of writing) and ink on the final line of the page.⁴³”

“On F328, page 74v, lines 19 and 21 both contain insertion of ‘*alifs*.⁴⁴”

“The second, a mid-word insertion, is the first *alif* of *مالا* *mala* (“some money”) of Q11:29.⁴⁵”

“On F330, page 3r, near the beginning of line 4, there is an inserted ‘*alif*.⁴⁶”

“On F330, 3v, at line 5 there is an insertion of ‘*alif* in red ink and with a much narrower nib than is used in the main text of the page.⁴⁷”

“On 069052B.BMP, there is an insertion in the middle of the fifth line of the text. This is the initial *alif* of *أسوة* *uswa* (“an example of”) of Q60:6.⁴⁸”

At this point, I’m trying to distribute the changes that Dan gives in the thesis from variant intervals, to demonstrate that the non-issue of an *alif* change is present throughout the entire thesis and not simply a misrepresentation by me:

“In F1924, there is a dagger ‘*alif* at this point in the page. This is the only such correction apparent on this page, and there are other places on this page that contain dagger ‘*alifs* in F1924 but are not corrected in such a way in this manuscript.⁴⁹”

“In 096086B.BMP, the two instances of the name *جبريل* in Q2:97-98 have been changed to *جبرائيل* by the insertion of ‘*alif*.⁵⁰”

“It has been written in such a way that what is now the initial ‘*alif* of the definite article before the following word, which is at the end of line 17, has become the initial ‘*alif* of *ila*, with the *lam*

‘*alif*’ being now inserted in the left margin after this line, and the new definite article ‘*alif*’ then being written in the right margin of line 18.⁵¹”

“It is not quite clear what happened here; it does not appear that the long ‘*alif*’ was originally written here, since a ligature that appears to be original connects forward to the final *ta*’ *marbuta*.⁵²”

“Again, erasure marks are clear, and a gap of 2cm remains, indicating this as a correction made after the page had been written. In this case, however, the removal of the ‘*alif*’ is in line with today’s accepted text at this point.⁵³”

“On F331, page 52v, there is an erasure of an ‘*alif*’ at line 11, leaving at 2cm gap.⁵⁴”

“On F340, 27v, there are two erasures of ‘*alifs*’, leaving gaps at line 10.⁵⁵”

“Erasure marks can be seen on close examination. Two ‘*alifs*’ and one *lam* of the line below have been extended upward to apparently fill some of this space and make the gap less conspicuous.⁵⁶”

“The long ‘*alif*’ originally written between the *waw* and the final *dal* appears to have been rubbed out or erased, and a new long ‘*alif*’ placed after the initial *dal* instead.⁵⁷”

“It also appears to convert an ‘*alif maqsura*’ to an upright ‘*alif*’; F1924 has the former.⁵⁸”

“It seems most reasonable to consider that this was a restoration of a faded text, but it looks more like erasure when examined closely so it is very difficult to say what precipitated this event. Except for the upright ‘*alif*’ at the end of its first word, which is an ‘*alif maqsura*’ in F1924, this correction has resulted in a CST that is in conformity at this point with that of F1924.⁵⁹”

“Erasure marks are clear and the shape of the erasure suggests an ‘*alif*’, this also appears to be a correction similar in nature to those seen elsewhere on this page.⁶⁰”

I’ve thus listed 20 cases present throughout the thesis, in which an intentional change consists of the rewriting, erasure or inclusion of the letter ‘*alif*’.

41. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, pp. 57 - 58 (2014).
42. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 62 (2014).
43. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 63 (2014).
44. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 64 (2014).
45. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 64 (2014).
46. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 65 (2014).
47. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 65 (2014).
48. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 91 (2014).
49. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 92 (2014).
50. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 92 (2014).
51. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, pp. 99 - 100 (2014).
52. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 121 (2014).
53. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 127 (2014).
54. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 128 (2014).
55. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 132 (2014).
56. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 133 (2014).

57. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 143 (2014).

58. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 171 (2014).

59. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 180 (2014).

60. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 202 (2014).

Mistake #23:

“So what are his conclusions? When you look at the manuscripts between the 8th and 9th century, you can see that Dr. Brubaker says there is a movement of the Qur’an, towards a standardized text. That continues right up until the 9th century, right up until the 800’s. Muhammad died in 632 CE, so this continues for almost 200 years. The canon he suggests is not 656, or Uthman’s time. He suggests its closer to the 9th century. The 800 changes are they are found corrections, removing or adding the long vowel, corrections by the original scribe, corrections that suggest movement towards a standardize, there were corrections sometimes started or selected to try to conform to the 1924 text. Style and stick conform to the pages standard, without and any aesthetic concerns and goes on and on and on. I’m not going to go through, the whole list of what he’s done. You’ll be able to read it next year.” - 30:58.

There is a movement to a standardized orthography, or as Jay insists on calling it, a movement towards a standardized text. Indeed, this development of orthography developed throughout the 8th and 9th centuries as more scribes began to copy the Qur’an which led to efforts of standardizing the Arabic language’s orthography. I’m afraid at this point that Jay confuses the development of how letters and punctuation marks are represented with the canon of the Qur’an. The change in orthography did not bring new *surahs* (chapters) or additional numbers of *ayat* (verses). The change brought variation in how the Arabic letter of *alif* was used, as demonstrated by the over 20 examples given previously.

The 800 changes are corrections of mostly *alifs*, removing *alifs* and adding *alifs*, and corrections by the scribe after they made mistakes in copying. Indeed, all of this suggests movement to one standard type of orthography. Fortunately, we’ve already gone through an extensive list of what Dan’s compiled and viewed his conclusions, this year. Jay can wait for next year, but this year, we possess the work.

Mistake #24:

“Therefore agreeing with Atikulic who said, there is not one companion codice that he has reached that was without corrections, nor is there one manuscript that is even near match to the recording reported reading of any one of the companions. There can now be no doubt that all the extant manuscripts of the Quran have undergone some alteration and that the simple standardization of orthography or the technology of written Arabic is insufficient to explain every instance of this alteration. The material evidence in the form of manuscript presentations....uh.....present according to Brubaker challenges to the traditional narratives suggesting a process of standardization of written Qur’ans took place over a much longer period of time and not just 18 years.” - 31:57.

It is indeed true that it’s impossible to find a companion codex written on papyri during an age of developmental orthography which does not possess changes. The only event in which that would be possible is if the scribe had a Xerox machine, a photocopier, a printing press or some more advanced writing material than fragile and easy to wear papyri. His appeal to such an anachronistic, ignorant, ahistorical and intellectually dishonest statement brings into question Jay’s study of manuscript use in the early medieval period. He is quite honestly attempting to argue using 21st century writing standards of which not a single textual critic has ever attempted to use in the history of this science. Let us remind ourselves of what Dr. Altikulaç has said:

“The Topkapi Mushaf, which was made famous by a claim that it belonged to Caliph ‘Uthman, was preserved in libraries for centuries and its last stop has been the Topkapi Palace Museum Library. Until we undertook this study, nobody had read or examined this Mushaf from the beginning to the end. Was there really a parallelism between the text of this copy and the Mushafs that were being read in various countries of the world? Nobody could answer this question. To what extent did the rules of reading, which passed from one generation to the other, conform to its spelling? No statement was made on this subject. All these questions were taken into consideration when we decided to examine and publish it and our excitement continued until the examination of the text and its writing on the computer was completed. When the writing was completed we realized that this Mushaf which starts with the sentences of بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ and ends with مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ, and which was copied about thirteen centuries ago, exactly conforms to the Mushafs that are read by all those who read the Qur’an throughout the world. To state it more clearly, the copies of the Mushaf that are read today are the same as this Mushaf which was copied thirteen or fourteen centuries ago.

The fact that two folios of it are missing and the existence of the minor differences of spelling that are also observed in the spelling of Mushafs in various periods or countries does not contradict the above-mentioned conclusion. It is normal that such differences will be seen in texts that are produced by the human hand. Apparently, the Holy Qur’an was protected not only by the Hafizun’s (people who have memorized the complete Qur’an) reading and memorizing but also thanks to its script and spelling. It exists in the same way that it was revealed and recorded fourteen centuries ago. These written documents are the actual and material manifestations of the divine revelation to the effect that “Behold, it is We Ourselves who have bestowed from on high, step by step, this reminder: and, behold, it is We who shall truly guard it [from all corruption]”¹⁷.

While Jay disavows the explanation of orthographic development, as quoted previously, Dan himself explicitly and unequivocally states otherwise⁶².

61. Tayyar Altikulaç, *Al-Muşhaf Al-Sharif: Attributed To ‘Uthman Bin ‘Affan [The Copy at the Topkapi Palace Museum]*, 2007, Organization of the Islamic Conference Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture: Istanbul (Turkey), pp. 82 - 83.

62. See **citations #36, #37, #38, #39, #40.**

Mistake #25:

“What Andy Bannister found out is that there is a formula formulaic formulaic type of usage that is uh that is found in all of these stories. The seven sleepers in Surah 18 Ayah 9 to 25, the story of Dhul Qarnayn who many people believe was Alexander the Great, Surah 18, Ayah 83 to 101, and specially the story of Iblis and Adam and he really zeros in on that story. And he looked and he found out that this story is repeated seven different times in the Qur’an and it has 13 different elements in the seven different repetitions, but what was interesting there is only three common elements that are found on right through all the seven stories of Iblis and Adam. And when he looked at that he realised that these three common elements that are found in all seven readings are the same three common elements that you’ll find in Jewish and Christian apocryphal writings that existed at that time in that place. which means these are borrowings, these are just been borrowed from those different writings.” - 33:41.

Interestingly, these comments are taken directly from Dan’s thesis and not Andy’s work. One has to wonder if Jay himself has ever read Andy’s work, and if so, why was he unable to produce anything beyond what Dan had limited himself to in his thesis’ introduction⁶³? In regard to Andy’s claim itself, he presumes that the Qur’an must have been revealed in a vacuum. His entire argument stands on the basis that the Qur’an is a distinct and new religious phenomenon and as such, it is not supposed to comment in any way on the previous revelations, Messengers or Prophets. This however, is not only ahistorical, but clearly absurd thinking, the Qur’an posits itself as a member of the Abrahamic faith tradition and thus its commentary on Adam, Satan’s fall from heaven and the Judaic Prophets are not only expected, they are necessitated. Therefore the reasoning on which Andy’s thesis and subsequent book was published on, is not only incredulous, ahistorical, anachronistic and evangelical in nature, it escapes any appeal to formal reasoning and honest study.

Indeed, Andy’s allegations are not new and should not be presented as his own work or as a result of his own thinking, such claims were leveled against the Qur’an during the Prophet’s ﷺ time and are commented upon directly in the Qur’an:

“And when Our Verses (of the Qur'an) are recited to them, they say: "We have heard (the Qur'an); if we wish we can say the like of this. This is nothing but the tales of the ancients."⁶⁴”

“"Verily, this we have been promised - we and our fathers before (us)! This is only the tales of the ancients!"⁶⁵”

“And they say: "Tales of the ancients, which he has written down: and they are dictated to him morning and afternoon."⁶⁶”

“"This is no other than the false tales and religion of the ancients,⁶⁷”

“"Indeed we were promised this - we and our forefathers before (us), verily, these are nothing but tales of ancients."⁶⁸”

“When Our Verses (of the Qur'an) are recited to him he says: "Tales of the ancients!"⁶⁹”

Therefore, this is not new research, Andy’s repeating of a claim some 1436 years old is not groundbreaking and it goes without saying that it is ironic that he claims the Qur’an plagiarised ancient sources when he himself is plagiarising ideas, arguments and beliefs found in the Qur’an and presenting them as his own research. Andy is a Christian, a Missionary Apologist for Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, therefore his research has an evangelical purpose. His research is not objective, nor is it scholarly, nor is it intelligent and the Muslim community solely recognizes his work as missionary apologetics.

His logic needs to be questioned. If Islam claims to be from the Abrahamic tradition, shouldn’t we expect it to comment on the tradition? Why then, does he demand that Islam should not comment on anything from the Abrahamic tradition? This would only make sense if Islam did not claim to be from the Abrahamic tradition. Therefore the logic he employs to argue against Islam is fanciful at best, and it should not be taken as a serious work under any circumstances, until he explains his reasoning in an objective, academic and intelligent manner.

63. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, pp. 23-26 (2014)

64. Qur’an 8:31, English Translation by Mohsin Khan.

65. Qur’an 23:83, English Translation by Mohsin Khan.

66. Qur’an 25:5, English Translation by Mohsin Khan.

67. Qur’an 26:137, English Translation by Mohsin Khan.

68. Qur’an 27:68, English Translation by Mohsin Khan.

69. Qur’an 83:13, English Translation by Mohsin Khan.

Mistakes #26, #27 & #28:

“When you look at the Arabic script yourself, you need to ask can their, could this Arabic script, what this Arabic script accommodated the Qur’an we have today? And the answer is absolutely no. The Arabic script in the 7th century was so incomplete and so defective that it is known today as a scriptural defecta. You cannot read the Qur’an using the 7th century Arabic script. Deroche looks at it. He says take a look at just one letter, the smiley face. That could be five different letters. Later on they had to put dots above or below where to make it so such you could distinguish which letters were. You put one dot above it, it’s a nun, two dots a taa, three dots a thaa, one dot below a baa.....5 such letters for one smiley face. Can you see the problem? How the early Arabic text, it could not have accommodated the Qur’an. The Qur’an could not have been written in that text and the question I would ask is, if God really wanted to reveal Himself to mankind, why in the world did he use the language that could not have accommodated His revelation? Why did He use Arabic? Since Arabic, it took them 200 years for finally to get the accommodation so that we could read the Qur’an as we do today. 200 years it took them to finally, get the diacritical marks and the vowelization. why didn’t God just use Hebrew? See Hebrew had its not only its consonantly text but its vowelization by the second century BC in place, or greek that we have for our new testament? It had both the vowel and the consonantal, they’ve been around since the very beginning, they’ve been since the time 2000 years ago, the very beginning of the New Testament writings. Why didn’t God continue in the very same script, He had already been that He man had already been using to write down His revelation?” - **36:00.**

Could the Arabic script accommodate the Qur’an? Let’s try to understand this question. Could the Arabic script which was being developed for the purpose of writing the Qur’an, be used to write the Qur’an? Could the wheel being developed for the purpose of rolling, be used to roll? Could the car being developed for the purpose of driving, be able to drive? In Jay’s mind, the answer to all these questions would be no, while to everyone else, the answer would be yes, quite rhetorical. The Qur’an is the first book to be written by the Arabs, therefore it is implicitly understood that the Arabs in developing Arabic orthography would seek to develop it for the purposes of the Qur’an. We should also read what Dr. Deroche himself states, given Jay’s misapplication and misunderstanding of what the Dr. himself says:

Régis Blachère spoke later of *scriptio defectiva*. This definition can remain in use if understood properly. The Arabic script is in itself defective as it does not note the short vowels. In the case of the *scriptio defectiva* found in early Qur’anic copies, the script fails to write correctly the /ā/ and is somewhat inconsistent in the way in which it writes /ī/ and in its use of diacritical marks—in addition to the lack of short vowels.⁷⁰

As can clearly be seen, Dr. Deroche is referring to the writing of the vowels, the representation of the vowels, particularly the short form of the vowels *a* and *i*. He insists that should the definition of the defective script be understood properly, then one would solely attribute it to the lack of a representation of short vowels in particular. Therefore, by Dr. Deroche’s own analysis, Jay would qualify as someone who does not understand this definition properly, as he attributes the defective script to the consonants and not the short vowels. This would then mean, not only has Jay contradicted what Dr. Deroche has said, he’s also lied, and is thus categorized by the Dr.’s own definition as being one who has no understanding. Dr. Deroche further qualifies what the term defective script should be understood as:

The manuscripts in *hijāzī* style which follow basically the ‘Uthmanic version provide evidence of this situation, with limited variations of the *rasm*. The script used for the recording is defective, particularly in the sense that the diacritics are not put to use in order to clarify possible ambiguities of the *rasm*, although they are known to the copyists of the majority of these copies.^{71, 72}

This is important, he again relegates the defective script to the diacritical/ vowel marks. What is of greater importance is that while the script may be defective to us, as we do not in our modern times know the rules the scribes and copyists used in developing the orthography to read the script, those scribes and copyists would have had to know the rules needed to read the script accurately. Thus it is not defective to those who wrote the script themselves or to those trained to read the text contemporary to their time, but defective to us as we don’t have the knowledge required to understand the script as the scribes and copyists would have possessed. This is similar in the case of the Egyptologists and their experience of the hieroglyphs before the Rosetta Stone was found. Until the Stone was found, we could not decipher what the ancient hieroglyphs meant, but obviously they had meaning to the Egyptians who chiseled them on the stone walls, they had rules, they had syntax

which we in the modern age did not possess, but the ancients did. Therefore, not only do Jay's statements directly contradict Dr. Deroche's own studies, they are blatantly misrepresentations and falsifications of the definition of defective script, and seeks to claim that the scribes themselves did not know what they were writing. Not only is this a stunningly inane claim, it behoves me to question Jay's education itself. There is no way anyone can level such claims against the Qur'an if they were truly partially or even minimally read on the subject matter.

It must be stated, that it took 200 years for the development of the orthography of the vowel markings to develop, it should not be understood that the Arabs had no use of vowels before the 7th century as Jay has confused himself to think. Jay's knowledge in regard to the language of the Bible is also defective, with respect to the Hebrew of the Old Testament we read:

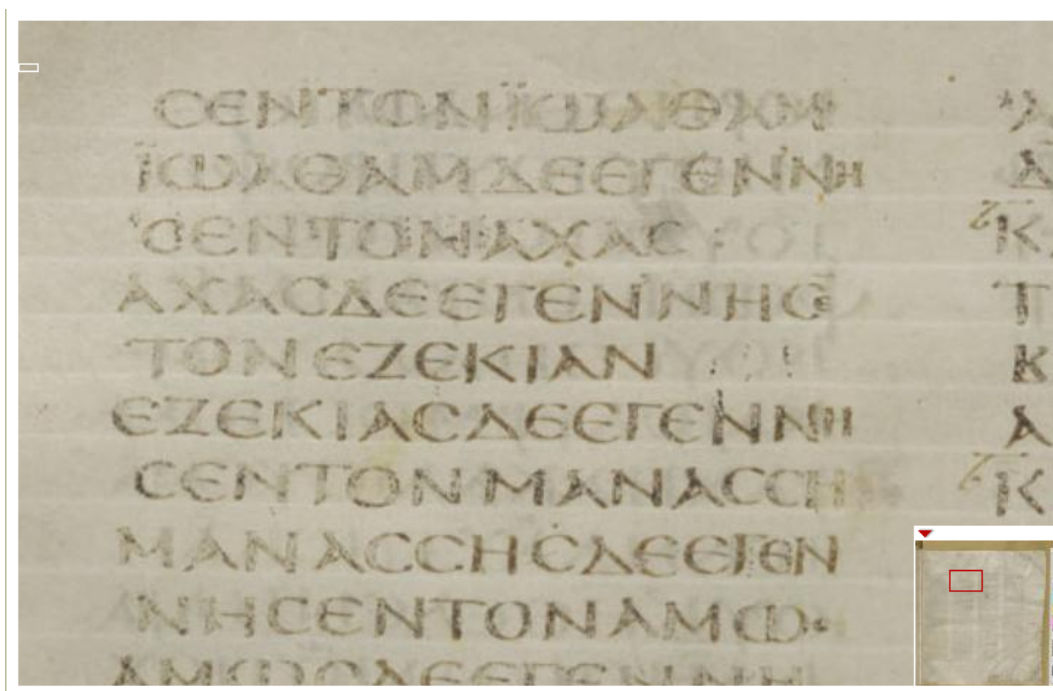
Some time after the eighth century AD, Jewish scholars called Masoretes added vowel points to the Hebrew text in order to aid readers in pronunciation.⁷³

I could be wrong, but I do believe the 8th century, is after the rise of Islam in the Arabia during the 7th century. Perhaps Jay could explain to us if the 7th century comes before or after the 8th and what the implications of this would mean. If the Jews have been reading the Torah for centuries without diacritical markings, can't the same be said of the Arabs? It should also be noted that all early New Testament manuscripts were written in all capital (majuscule), no space sentences, with no punctuation markings. We read from Bart Ehrman:

One of the problems with ancient Greek texts (which would include all the earliest Christian writings, including those of the New Testament) is that when they were copied, no marks of punctuation were used, no distinction made between lowercase and uppercase letters, and, even more bizarre to modern readers, no spaces used to separate words. This kind of continuous writing is called *scriptio continua*, and it obviously could make it difficult at times to read, let alone understand, a text. The words *godisnowhere* could mean quite different things to a theist (God is now here) and an atheist (God is nowhere); 5 and what would it mean to say *lastnightatdinnerisawabundanceonthetable*?⁷⁴

Accidental slips of the pen 16 no doubt were exacerbated, as we have seen, by the fact that Greek manuscripts were all written in *scriptio continua*—with no punctuation, for the most part, or even spaces between words. This means that words that looked alike were often mistaken for one another. For example, in 1 Cor. 5: 8, Paul tells his readers that they should partake of Christ, the Passover lamb, and should not eat the “old leaven, the leaven of wickedness and evil.” The final word, *evil*, is spelled PONĒRAS in Greek, which, it turns out, looks a lot like the word for “sexual immorality,” PORNEIAS. The difference in meaning may not be overwhelming, but it is striking that in a couple of surviving manuscripts, Paul explicitly warns not against evil in general, but against sexual vice in particular.⁷⁵

Therefore, the problems he levels at the Qur'an, are not realistic. While his understanding of the development of the orthography of both the Hebrew and Greek languages used to write his scripture is not only wrong, it is deficient to a stupendous degree. I would like to see Jay Smith look at the majuscule of Codex Sinaiticus and compare the breathings (diacritical) markings with that of a 12th century New Testament manuscript, and then tell us about the development of Greek diacritics. Would he be able to see the development between the two photos below?



Above, is a photo of the Gospel of Matthew from Codex Sinaiticus⁷⁶. Below is a 12th century New Testament manuscript. Can Jay see the developments? Codex Sinaiticus is dated to the 4th century CE, whereas the other manuscript below is dated to the 12th century CE⁷⁷:



Eight centuries separate these two manuscripts, can Jay explain if there's been any development as he seems to think only Arabic orthography underwent development and is the only language to have had this done so. In response to Jay's question of why didn't God continue to use the same script for subsequent revelations, isn't that a problem for Christianity to answer given that the Hebrew Testament, was at first in paleo-Hebrew? Or that the New Testament graduated from majuscule to miniscule polytonic Greek orthography? Somehow, I don't believe paleo-Hebrew to be the same as miniscule polytonic Greek, Jay is invited to correct me on that though.

70. Dr. Francois Deroche, "The Qur'an of the Umayyads", (Brill), p. 21.

71. Dr. Francois Deroche, "The Qur'an of the Umayyads", (Brill), p. 137.

72. Rasm, is the Arabic word for Orthography.

73. Comfort, Phillip (2010-07-19). Encountering the Manuscripts (Kindle Locations 10663-10664). B&H Publishing. Kindle Edition.

74. Ehrman, Bart D. (2009-01-23). Misquoting Jesus (Kindle Locations 770-776). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.
75. Ehrman, Bart D. (2009-01-23). Misquoting Jesus (Kindle Locations 1464-1471). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.
76. Matthew 1, [Codex Sinaiticus](#).
77. Greek Reporter, "[Return of Byzantine Manuscript to Mount Athos](#)" (2014).

Mistake #29:

“Dr. Keith Small, did his doctorate looking at the readings. He noticed that there were seven different readings in the Qur’an because of the problem of the script. They are so many different ways that it could be read, those are the ahruf or the qira’at. By the time al mujahid finally created these 7 readings, that was 936, we’re talking about the 10th century he then allowed 7 different readings of the Qur’an. Then three more readings were added and then another four were added on top of that. So that you came to a total of 14 different readings when finally the Ottomans in the 1500’s decided that it to choose just 1 one of those readings. The Hafs reading. And remember, these are as Dr. K small said, these alternate readings, are different discreet versions of the text. Each one of them is different. when you look at the Hafs that they’ve chosen, this is one of the 14, what happened to the other 13? Well one still exists today, the Warsh it’s still found in northern Africa and parts of Western Africa. The Hafs then became the standard in the 1500’s that became the reading that was but this means it was men that was choosing that.” - 37:55.

Keith Small is also a Christian, Missionary Apologist just as Andy Bannister is. The scope of his work is also apologetic in nature and is neither scholastic nor academic. It is interesting to note that many have noticed that Keith is unable to read Arabic, given his inability to produce a single Arabic source about the Qur’an in his book and the mistakes made in Arabic, also in his book as documented and expounded upon by Br. Sami Ameri:

While Small’s inability to read Arabic was evidently the main reason he did not use Arabic references in his book about the “Arabic” Qur’an(!), Small did not abstain from discussing linguistic themes to prove his negative view of the Qur’anic manuscripts. He made egregious mistakes as he was trying to make it appear that obvious scribal errors were variant readings. He writes, for instance, that the al-kibr with an extra tooth al-kabir, as is written in the manuscript 01-29.1; Q. 14:39, means “very old age” in plural form. To make it worse, he alluded in the endnote to Dictionaries that do not contain any such incorrect translations. The word al-kabir has nothing to do with the claimed plural form; it means mainly “the big or old,” in singular. The whole sentence with the form al-kabir is not an acceptable Arabic construction.⁷⁸

What is perhaps most telling are the series of basic mistakes that Small makes, thus demonstrating his inability to correctly write one of the most infantile and popular words in the Arabic language and Muslim culture, *mujahid*, we read:

More appalling than the two previous examples is the fact that Small does not even know how to spell the name of the central, key figure of the readings studies; Small wrote the name of this person throughout his book as “Ibn Mujahid,” and his name is spelled “Ibn Mujahid” with “h,” and not “h.”⁷⁹

One might be asking, how great of a mistake is this? Evidently, it’s a mistake someone solely ignorant of the Arabic language can make. Essentially, given Keith’s Arabic transliteration table in his book as written by himself, it demonstrates that he clearly does not know the language on a basic level. In his table, he gives the following⁸⁰:

ح	ه
ه	h

These are two completely different letters and therefore words. Whereas he should have written ابن مجاهد, he instead writes ابن مجاحد by using “ه” in Ibn Mujahid, when he should have used “h” in Ibn Mujahid^{81, 82, 83, 84}. It’s very much like writing “catastrofe” in English, when one meant “catastrophe”, another example would be writing “fone” when one meant “phone”. It would then be highly stupendous for someone who can’t distinguish between those letters and words to be a critic of the Arabic language or of Arabic literature. This is the kind of scholarship that Jay refers to, whom he appeals to as authorities in the Christian world who are supposed to be experts of Islam.

All Muslims understand the difference between the *Qira’at* and the *Ahruf al Qur’an*, they are not the same thing, they do not carry the same meaning. Unfortunately Jay thinks they are interchangeable as he says, “those are the ahruf or the qira’at”. This is like confusing a Gospel with an Epistle, while both may refer to New Testament literature, they convey distinct and different meanings. If a Muslim had

said, “The Epistle or Gospel of Matthew”, it would be laughable, such is the result of Jay’s erratic statement. There are 7 *ahruf al Qur’an*, or 7 modes of the Qur’an. These modes which were previously mentioned⁸⁵ give credence to the *qira’at* or recitations of the Qur’an. The modes (*ahruf*) allow for more than one recitation (*qira’at*) to be read from them. Jay has confused the modes with the recitations. Whereas a recitation can come from a mode, a mode is not a recitation in and of itself. Therefore, there are seven popular recitations which are from the following reciters⁸⁶:

1. Naafi’ al-Madani
2. Ibn Katheer al-Makki
3. ‘Aasim al-Kufi
4. Hamzah al-Zayaat al-Kufi
5. Al-Kisaa’i al-Kufi
6. Abu ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ala’ al-Basri
7. ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Aamir al-Shaami

These recitations are from the *qira’at*. These *qira’at*, are based on the *ahruf*. Over time, various recitations became more popular than other recitations. These recitations compliment each other, are substitutes for each other and as such, if one recitation is lost to disuse, nothing is lost as each recitation is complete in and of itself and was revealed for the sole purpose of allowing the Qur’an to be understood by the various Arabic tribes at the time of the Prophet ﷺ. Over time, one recitation became more prevalent than the others and eventually as it is today, more Muslims preferred the use of the Hafs recitation, while a minor amount of Muslims found it easier to recite in the Warsh recitation.

Jay’s statements lend credence to the view that he is highly ignorant of the nature of the Qur’an, its transmission and its understanding within the religion of Islam. His confusion of basic terms and definitions as used in regards to the Qur’an cannot be excused, given the fact that he is speaking on behalf of Christian academics and their errant research.

78. Ameri, Sami (2013-01-21). Hunting for the Original Word of God: the quest for the original text of the New Testament and the Qur'an in light of textual and historical criticism (Kindle Locations 3039-3045). Thoughts of Light Publishing. Kindle Edition.

79. Ameri, Sami (2013-01-21). Hunting for the Original Word of God: the quest for the original text of the New Testament and the Qur'an in light of textual and historical criticism (Kindle Locations 3035-3037). Thoughts of Light Publishing. Kindle Edition.

80. Keith Small, “Textual Criticism and Quran Manuscripts”. p xv (2011).

81. Keith Small, “Textual Criticism and Quran Manuscripts”. p 8 (2011).

82. Keith Small, “Textual Criticism and Quran Manuscripts”. pp 25-27 (2011).

83. Keith Small, “Textual Criticism and Quran Manuscripts”. p 38 (2011).

84. Keith Small, “Textual Criticism and Quran Manuscripts”. p 53 (2011).

85. See **citations #1, #35 and #86**.

86. Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid, [“The Revelation of the Qur’aan in Seven Styles”](#).

Mistake #30:

“And then that became standardized in 1924 when the Qur’an was finally canonized. That’s right canonized in 1924. That’s less than 100 years ago and then it was finally officially canonized by the King Fahd Mushaf as they know it. King Fahd did that in 1985. That’s less than 29 years ago. So your Qur’an, in fact I’m twice as old as your Qur’an. Which Qur’an is Shabir talking about? Mathematically there was really no Qur’an until 1924.” - 39:07.

At this point, Jay is merely regurgitating ideas from his evangelical brother’s thesis⁸⁷. This view has not originated with Dan himself though, it is parroted from the orientalist, revisionist work published in 1977 by John Wansbrough entitled, “Quranic Studies”. Essentially, Dan’s thesis was an attempt to reconcile an age old missionary argument coupled with quasi-research of Qur’anic manuscripts. Interestingly, the same mistakes that Keith Small made, we found Dan doing the same. In Keith Small’s book, as previously discussed, he attempted to equate scribal errors (lapsus calami) with *qira’at* differences. As Br. Sami Ameri commented:

He made egregious mistakes as he was trying to make it appear that obvious scribal errors were variant readings.⁸⁸

Despite already agreeing with Small’s view that most of the changes in the Qur’an were due to scribal errors⁸⁹, Dan also tries to pass off obvious scribal errors as variant readings, often times commenting in his thesis:

No mention of an issue at this point was found in the *qira’at* literature⁸⁹.

It is not coincidental that two missionaries studying Qur’anic manuscripts several years apart, one citing the other’s work, randomly uses the same flawed methodology to arrive at the same mistaken, or rather, the identical forced conclusions. Given Keith’s flawed methodology and criticism, it was odd to then find that Dan who cites and quotes Keith’s work often, also uses the same flawed methodology. This leads me to believe that Dan was not objective in his study and it is quite dishonest for him to have claimed the work in his thesis to be his own, when all he had done was repeat verbatim, Keith’s erratic conclusions.

To prove this view, whereas Dan quotes Keith in acknowledging most changes were due to scribes correcting their copying mistakes⁹¹ or rewriting faded script, Dan repeats this view yet openly continued to claim that these intentional changes are beyond scribal correction, thus contradicting himself and blindly repeating conclusions from both Keith and Wansbrough:

Chapter 6

Overwriting without apparent erasure

Sometimes the text is seen to have been altered in some way without any evident erasure. This sort of change is in some respects similar to insertion except that, rather than elements standing apart from the original text, it rather involves modification or overwriting of existing letter forms. This category is perhaps the most tentative when it comes to the clear classification of a re-working as “change,” since it often looks almost as if someone has simply attempted to restore a portion of text that has faded with time. However, in light of all the other things that we see going on in these manuscripts, and also the rather targeted nature of some of the touching up of the text which often only concerns itself with restoration of certain words or areas on a page the entirety of which has become faded, I feel it is important to include these for consideration here⁹².

On what basis, can rewriting faded words be considered intentional changes, if nothing had been changed? Yet, in some play of logic and reason, Dan comes to an already predetermined conclusion that these are alterations. This is why I argue that his study was not objective, but missionary apologetical in nature that merely sought to parrot views from orientalists and fellow missionary writings. The striking erratic and flawed methodologies followed through in both Dan and Keith’s works can therefore not be seen as coincidental, but intentional to arrive at some predetermined end. When Dr. Deroche speaks about the canon of the Qur’an, he refers to its orthography (arabic: *rasm*; diacritics, typography), and not to its contents. This is important as Jay, Dan and Keith would like to give an impression of the latter, as opposed to the scholastic view of the former. Dr. Deroche says of the canon in regard to the Qur’anic orthography:

In all these cases, the erasure of the supplementary element ensured the conformity of the manuscript with the canonical *rasm*⁹³.

Most importantly, he explains that the development of the *rasm* or the orthography of the Qur'an provides proof that while it was not yet fully standardized, across the various styles of orthography the contents of the manuscripts correspond and are compatible with each other:

In addition, the small non-canonical variants and the peculiarities of the division of the text into verses suggest that at the time when the manuscript was transcribed, the *rasm* was not yet fully fixed, although the *Codex Parisino-petropolitanus* in itself proof that the part of the canonical text corresponding to the contents of the manuscript was there—more precisely: is compatible with them⁹⁴.

On a more important level, that of canonicity, the text found in the *Codex Parisino-petropolitanus*, in spite of some peculiarities in the division into verses or in the text itself, is consistent with the 'Uthmanic *rasm* since we can surmise for the moment that the differences in orthography and the lack of diacritical marks do not impair the possibility to read it according to the canon⁹⁵.

What is surprising is that while he acknowledges the orthography of Sana'aa is different to that of the standardized 'Uthmanic orthography, he confirms that the text of the Qur'an coincides with the canonical (standardized) orthography of the Qur'an today:

With the important exception of the *Codex San'a' I*, the *rasm* found in the handwritten witnesses of that period corresponds to the 'Uthmanic vulgate if we admit that, in spite of the orthographic peculiarities, a lack of most of the required diacritics and of any orthoepic signs, the text the copyists had in mind coincided with the canonical version as we know it today⁹⁶.

The evidence they provide, when confronted with the accounts transmitted by the Islamic tradition about the writing down of the Qur'an, confirms that these reports contain without doubt a historical core and, notably in the case of the *Codex Parisino-petropolitanus*, that a text compatible with the canonical version was transmitted⁹⁷.

This directly contradicts Jay's claim that the Qur'an of today based on the 1924 orthographic style is not the same as that of the earlier Qur'anic manuscripts. Dr. Deroche quite succinctly, confirms what the Islamic tradition has been saying for the previous 1436 years. It is important to note though, that when Jay speaks of canon he does not understand what Dr. Deroche is referring to. Jay thinks it is a canon of verses and chapters, whereas Dr. Deroche specifies and states numerous times that it is of orthography. We need to remind ourselves that orthography refers to how language is textually represented, the representation changes over time as it becomes more standardized across the various towns and cities that wish to communicate in one standard of the same language. Today, while the contents of the Qur'an has remained the same, there has been a natural update to its orthography to help readers recite the Qur'an as it was recited by the Prophet ﷺ:



What’s the change? Colour! Colour has been added to help readers identify when certain *tajweed* (pronunciation) rules should be used. Does this change the text? No. Does it change the meaning of anything? No. Has there been a change? Yes. What does this change affect? The reader’s ability to correctly identify and recite the Qur’an as it should be recited. This is the best example of what we mean by orthographical, *rasm*, typographical development of the Qur’an. The canon of the *rasm* or canon of the orthography, simply means the accepted standard of how to represent the Qur’an textually.

With respect to the New Testament, the very last update to its contents was in the month of August 2014 with the release of the United Bible Societies 5th Edition. This involves changes to the main text of the New Testament. This has nothing to do with how the language of the New Testament is represented, it involves the alteration of the contents of verses and passages. Such an update has nothing to do with orthography. As such, I am 22 years older than the New Testament’s latest canonical edition. Given Jay’s estimates of his age, he is as of today some 58 years older than the New Testament’s canon⁹⁸. The New Testament’s canon of its main text, of its contents, is roughly two months old. The physical copies of the Qur’an which we have today are some 1436 years older than the New Testament as it exists in its form today.

87. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 299 (2014).

88. Ameri, Sami (2013-01-21). Hunting for the Original Word of God: the quest for the original text of the New Testament and the Qur'an in light of textual and historical criticism (Kindle Locations 3039-3045). Thoughts of Light Publishing. Kindle Edition.

89. See **citation #40**.

90. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 251 (2014).

91. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 299 (2014).

92. Dan Brubaker, “Intentional Changes in the Qur’an”, p. 277 (2014).

93. Dr. Francois Deroche, “The Qur'an of the Umayyads”, (Brill), p. 31.

94. Dr. Francois Deroche, “The Qur'an of the Umayyads”, (Brill), p. 35

95. Dr. Francois Deroche, “The Qur'an of the Umayyads”, (Brill), p. 37.

96. Dr. Francois Deroche, “The Qur'an of the Umayyads”, (Brill), p. 71.

97. Dr. Francois Deroche, “The Qur'an of the Umayyads”, (Brill), p. 137.

98. Ijaz Ahmad, “[Newest Critical Bible to be Released: UBS 5th Ed. Greek New Testament](#).”

Mistakes #31, #32, #33 & #34:

“It certainly cannot be the Topkapi, there is 2270 variants with the Qur’an we have today. More than that, its only 78% of the Qur’an. You better not use the Petropolitanus because that one only has 26% of the Qur’an and as we see from Dr. Brubakers material every one of these manuscripts is full of errors and what’s interesting and what Keith small goes on to say its is that there seems to be a standardization going on almost immediately.” - 40:06.

It certainly can be the Topkapi, given the evidences presented in **Mistakes #5 & #6**. The 2, 270 variants have to do with a single orthographic variant of the letter *alif*. His calculation of 78% has been demonstrated to be wrong and invented given the evidences presented in **Mistakes #7 & #8**, we possess 99% of the Topkapi Mushaf. We can use Codex Petropolitanus, as Dr. Deroche confirmed in **Mistake #30** that it conforms with the canonical Qur’an as we know it today. Dan or Dr. Brubaker as Jay refers to him, has shown that the letter *alif*, is what has been added and removed given orthographical standards and as such, he has not labelled them as errors. In regard to Keith stating that there is a standardization of orthography, I do not see the problem with this and it is at this point that I believe Jay is simply repeating himself *ad nauseum*. I am reminded of an old adage, Jay is like a drunk man leaning upon a lamppost, he does so for support but it does not illuminate him.

Mistakes #35, #36, #37 & #38:

“Let me just give you a history of the standardization process. When Keith Small looked at his doctorate at the different corrections, the corrections in the text that he found show a pattern. they were changing earlier wordings that became that is what is now known as Textus Receptus. 67% of the corrections he found did this, even moreso, when he looked at the palimpsests because they are the older one the older scripts underneath. Physical corrections in manuscripts and palimpsests provide substantial evidence of the standardizations of the impression of varying text he says and you can see the standardization going towards one text but who was doing it. Well according to in al buhari, in chapter 6 hadith number 109 510, it’s very clear he says that the first standardization would done under the time of Uthman and Zaid ibn Thabit was given the responsibility along with Zubair al as, and Harith the four of them were to created the Qur’an in one standard form. That was then sent to the four cities that I mentioned earlier. Left madina, sent basra, baghdad and damascus. so that was the first standardization, so who was the first responsible for that Uthman, he was a political authority. So this is a political standardization. A political control. Then there’s also said that Abd al Malik did another standardization in between 685 and 704 in is governorate, in 705 al Hajaj Yusuf then eradicated the changes 11 different changes and created another standardization. so you have another standardization coming within 50 to 60 years according to Islamic tradition. The problem with islamic tradition, just take a look when it was written. al Buhari died in 870, muhammad died in 632, can you see a problem? Everything we know about the standardization process comes from 240 years later none of these people ever knew the Prophet Muhammad, never lived in the same century. They lived 200 - 240 years after the event. Then you had the standardization that ibn Mujahid well he died in 936 so it happened prior to his death. Under the authority of ibn Mutla who died in 940. So here’s another political standardization, is there fascinating in every case it’s the Caliph that creates the standardization, and then the Ottomans did this in the 1500s by choosing the Hafs, one of 14, readings they only chose one of them. Threw away the other 13, I don’t know, I’d love to see the other 13 to see why it is they rejected them, thank you.” - 40:30.

He begins by arguing that Keith Small demonstrated that there was a movement to one standardized text type, or orthography, as explained this is not new information and this proves that the early Muslims were interested and intent on developing the orthography of the Arabic language to preserve the Qur’an. Jay asks who was doing this development, obviously it was the scribes who were transcribing and copying the Qur’an. Scribes and copyists would be the individuals who are developing the orthography. For an expert on Islam, he should know Imam Bukhari’s proper name, I have no idea who *al Buhari* is. I would be willing to forgive Jay’s mistake, but it’s akin to saying *Jeyus*, when one meant *Jesus*. It’s a mistake you can only accept from an uneducated, inexperienced individual, not a self proclaimed expert.

In regard to the collection and writing of the Islamic tradition, it is well known that the companions and their students both had written collections. Br. Waqar has documented and cited several early evidences of this material in his work, “Hadith Compilation by the Companions”⁹⁹. I would not expect Jay to know of Abdullah ibn ‘Amr’s manuscript or of those by ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, Malik bin Anas, Ibn ‘Abbas, Hammam bin Munnabih may Allah be pleased with them all. It is therefore not 240 years before the Islamic tradition was written. Jay then proceeded to confuse the orthographic standardization with that of the *qira’at* and the codification of the *ahruf al Qur’an*, all of which have been explained in detail previously. The Ottomans chose the most prevalent *qira’at* (recitation) to be the one which would be taught by their scholars, thereby continuing a legacy of the standardization of the Qur’anic recitation. They did not outlaw, ban, destroy or prevent the other *qira’at* from being taught or used, they simply preferred one over the other due to their usage and experience with it.

They did not reject, or throw away the other 13 *qira’at*. Throughout Islamic tradition, we know of 14 prevalent *qira’at* based on the *ahruf al Qur’an*. Over time, as the nation of Islam grew and more peoples began to accept Islam, a migration to 10 and subsequently 7 *qira’at* occurred. As was stated previously, these recitations compliment each other, are substitutes for each other and as such, if one recitation is lost to disuse, nothing is lost as each recitation is complete in and of itself and was revealed for the sole purpose of allowing the Qur’an to be understood by the various Arabic tribes at the time of the Prophet ﷺ.

99. Br. Waqar Cheema, [“Hadith Compilation by the Companions.”](#)

Mistake #39:

“And then of course according to Muslims today this is the standard. This is the standard 1924, this is the only standard that was chosen by what I would call theologians. al Azhar University but it had to be given its rule of approval and that was not done until 1985, less than 29 years ago. Again by the Ibn Saud family, a political standardization.” - 43:04.

In his final statements on the Qur'an, Jay persisted in confusing the orthography of the Qur'an, with the *qira'at*, the *ahruf* and who scholars were and were not. Does he not consider the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, theologians or scholars in their own right? Does he not consider 'Uthman, 'Ali, Zayd bin Thabit, may Allah be pleased with them all as theologians? Does he not consider Ibn Mujahid as a theologian? It is therefore very confusing for Jay to make such erratic statements that mean absolutely nothing or of which are completely contradictory with Islamic tradition and history.

In one breath he condemns Islam for allowing political authorities to standardize the orthography of the Qur'an, while he ignores when Pope Damasus commissioned St. Jerome near the end of the 4th century CE to produce the “best” edition of the New Testament based on the Latin texts of that time. While that is a political standardization of the textual contents, the Qur'an's standardization of orthography has nothing to do with its contents. When the Councils of Carthage in 393 and 397 CE were called by the political authority for the purpose of unity in determining what exactly constituted the New Testament, Jay does not see this as political involvement in the development of the canon of the New Testament. Those councils involved voting on which of the 27 books would be considered scripture, there was no such council for Islam. All of the companions, all of the scholars, everything from our religious tradition confirms 114 Surahs of the Qur'an and Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah has never differed on this.

Therefore, Jay is being unfaithful to Christianity and deceitful when laying these allegations before our respective faiths. He has merely demonstrated his ignorance of his own religion and moreso of the Islamic faith.

Conclusion

This paper while meant to criticise Jay Smith's claims during his debate with Dr. Shabir, is not limited to being understood as relevant to only that debate. The information shared within this paper explains and comments upon many of the missionary allegations about the Qur'an. It is therefore useful in understanding the arguments of missionaries and Christian apologists, and thus provides a reliable foundation from which one can utilize in countering and thoroughly refuting their claims. I have made the utmost effort to cite as many examples as I could have, especially those that can be found online so that the source texts can be easily accessed for anyone who wishes to study this topic. For the benefit of the reader, at the very beginning of this paper I mentioned several works by Muslim scholars to help them develop a holistic understanding of the Qur'an as it is seen in Islam. As this paper is written in English, I have referred to mainly English sources.

It should be noted that this paper is not meant to be a personal attack on Jay Smith. However, as his statements were issued on a public forum and meant for public consumption, it is my right to have expressed my criticism of his statements and this reason is the foundation of this paper. I myself, have had no correspondence with Smith and I have not written this paper on behalf of anyone. The criticisms leveled against Smith in this paper are my own and should not be taken as representative of Dr. Shabir Ally's views or sentiments. As I have demonstrated, Jay Smith's allegations were wholly inaccurate and unreliable. In my attempt to critique his statements, I have found him to misrepresent, misquote, misapply and misunderstand the works of the authors he referred to. His inability to have quoted any of the authors presents a troubling phenomenon. Given the understanding that he had in his possession a document during the debate which contained all the quotes and references from the works he mentioned, it is indeed a very peculiar problem that he failed to cite a single source.

I cannot find an excuse for him in regard to his appealing to authors but disagreeing with their conclusions. There exists a clear dichotomy between what Smith wants to be the case and what is actually presented in the works of the authors he mentioned. In my assessment of his allegations against the authors he has appealed to, there is not a single instance in which his statements aligned themselves with the authors'. Similarly, I found it highly problematic that he has confused the *qira'at* with the *ahruf*. Considering that this was the focus of his arguments, being ignorant of them cannot be excused. In following this issue, he also confused the Qur'an's *ahruf* with its canon, and its canon with its orthography. These are simple terms as used by textual critics and by those learned in the field of Qur'anic studies, it is embarrassing for anyone to claim to be an expert on this topic but to be patently unaware, ignorant, and confused with the basic terms of this discipline. For the reader, I have found Yasin Dutton's explanation of the *ahruf*'s differences easy to understand, and for this reason they are presented as follows:

What is also apparent is that this level of variation does not in any way indicate a loose, unfixed text, or that there was ever more than one Qur'an, but, rather, in the light of contemporary orality theory, that the Qur'an is essentially a 'multiform' text, such as one would expect with a text that manifested in a society where the oral, rather than the written, was the norm.¹⁰⁰

In other words, the differences that are encompassed by the seven *ahruf* do not affect the basic 'storyline', or meaning, of the text, but only its form: the message is always one.¹⁰¹

This understanding escapes Smith and his evangelical friends. What Smith has tried to demonstrate with all of his arguments in this debate is that there is no one Qur'an, there are multiple Qur'ans. To the contrary, there is only one Qur'an, of which there are several modes or *ahruf*. This problem in understanding is evident when he asks which one is the true Qur'an, he is unable to conceptualize that the Qur'an has modes, and so denies them or tries to conflate these modes by casting them as entirely different and contradicting Qur'ans. Fortunately, we do not depend on Smith as a source for Islamic studies and we can rely upon the works of the *Ulama* to explain this literary concept:

It is thus clear that Ibn al-Jazari’s main argument is, firstly, that the seven *ahruf* must relate to form and not content; secondly, that this variation in form cannot be considered dialectal but manifests, rather, within one form, or we could say one dialect, of Arabic (effectively, the highest register of the ‘dialect’ of Quraysh); thirdly, this degree of variation on the level of form was allowed in the earliest period but was then restricted somewhat in the time of ‘Uthman in a way that was (a) permissible, and (b) did not result in any of the content of the Qur’an being lost. The Qur’an is thus complete, but only preserves of the variations formerly allowed in the time before the agreement on one skeletal text ‘that of the seven *harfs* that it can contain’, while containing at least one of those *harfs* in its totality.¹⁰²

While it is true that I have found many errors that Smith and his missionary colleagues have made, the end result continues to be the same. The mass of works cited and quoted in this paper all point to the same conclusion:

Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian.¹⁰³

It is thus fitting, that I end with a quote from Dr. Jonathan Brown’s latest work which I have found most suitable in explaining Jay’s and his missionary colleagues’ dilemma:

“Islam’s scriptures have always posed a great obstacle to Western attempts to understand the religion. The Qur’an’s format and style would strike anyone accustomed to the Bible as unusual. It is non-linear, with no one narrative flow within individual chapters or across the book as a whole. This has confounded non-Muslim readers for centuries. Despite incalculable advances in scholarship on and awareness of other lands and cultures, Christian and European reactions to the Qur’an changed little between the eighth century and the 1800s.”¹⁰⁴

100. Yasin Dutton, “Orality, Literacy and the ‘Seven Ahruf Hadith’ ” (2012), p. 3.

101. Yasin Dutton, “Orality, Literacy and the ‘Seven Ahruf Hadith’ ”, p. 20.

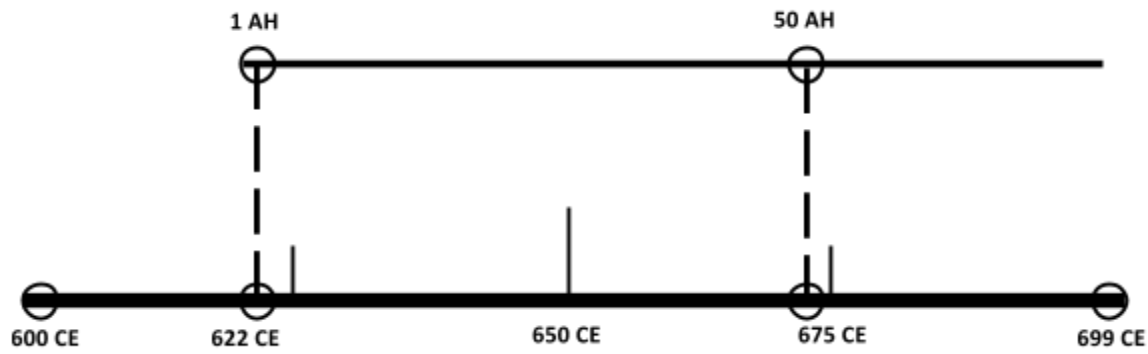
102. Yasin Dutton, “Orality, Literacy and the ‘Seven Ahruf Hadith’ ”, p. 30.

103. Qur’an 15:9, English Translation by Saheeh International.

104. Dr. Jonathan Brown, “Misquoting Muhammad: The Challenge and Choices of Interpreting the Prophet’s Legacy”, (Kindle Version).

Appendix A

Hijri Calendar in Context of 7th Century CE Calendar.



As is seen above, the 1st century of the Muslim calendar is denoted by the postfix of AH or *Anno Hijrah* (in the year of the Hijrah), in the upper line. The Gregorian calendar is denoted by the below thicker line in which the more common, CE postfix is used (Common Era). In the year 622 CE of the Gregorian calendar, the Muslim calendar started year 1. This is thus represented as 1 AH.

With the values presented, the 7th century of the Gregorian calendar is delimited between the years of 600 CE and 699 CE. We can then see, that the second half of the 1st century AH, falls within the second half of the 7th century CE. Therefore, when Smith says that the second half of the 1st century AH falls outside of the 7th century CE and instead limits us to the 8th century CE and beyond, he is highly mistaken. The second half of the 1st century AH, clearly falls within the second half of the 7th century CE.

The date provided for the initiation of the Hijri calendar has been adopted from the data provided in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam and the Muslim World* (2004), “Hijra”, p. 299.

Appendix B

General Information About the Author.

Br. Ijaz Ahmad (pen name) is at the time of this paper's writing, a 22 year old Muslim from the twin island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. He is a member of the Muslim Debate Initiative, whose works can be found on both of their websites:

- The Debate Initiative - www.thedebateinitiative.com
- Muslim Debate - www.muslimdebate.org

A majority of his writings can also be found on his own website:

- Calling Christians - www.callingchristians.com

He has debated a number of Christian Apologists both formally and informally, including Answering Islam's Anthony Rogers and Sam Shamoun, along with CL Edwards and Pastor Samuel Green. The recordings of those debates can be viewed on www.callingchristians.com/debates :

- "The Old Testament Teaches that the Angel of the Lord is a Divine, Distinct Person in the Godhead" - Anthony Rogers vs Ijaz Ahmad (2012).
- "Jesus the Christ: Man, God or Both?" - CL Edwards vs Ijaz Ahmad (2013).
- "An Incarnate God: Fact or Fiction?" - Pastor Samuel Green vs Ijaz Ahmad (2013).

Br. Ijaz is available for debates, discussions and dialogues, both online and on stage. He can be contacted via his website: www.callingchristians.com or through email: callingchristians@gmail.com

Any issues found with this paper, factual, typographical or otherwise are not intentional. Should such an issue arise, please inform the author via any of the means listed above at your earliest convenience.

