

## Rejection of Orientalis Argumentation About Textual Criticism of the Qur'an

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

Orientalis; Textual Criticism;  
Qur'an

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#### Article history:

Received 2023-12-14

Revised 2024-04-13

Accepted 2024-10-28

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### ABSTRACT

This research stems from accusation and unfounded criticism by orientalists regarding so many errors contained in the Qur'an from various aspects. Both in terms of historicity, originality, inconsistent variety of readings, the influence of Jewish and Christian on the teaching and verse of the Qur'an and even criticism of error in copying the text of the Qur'an. The purpose of this study is to explain the textual criticism of the Qur'an from an orientalist's perspective, starting from their criticism of the history of the Qur'an and leading to accusations of error in copying the Qur'an, the second purpose is about the refutation of the idea and criticism conveyed by the orientalist. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative with the type of research literature study. The theory used in this research for orientalist study is theory of textual criticism and the philological approach as a method of copying the Qur'an. Based on the research that has been done, the results obtained are: firstly, regarding the criticism of the Qur'an by orientalist, it focus on the authenticity of the Qur'an which they consider to be fake. Refutation of orientalist's arguments, as Muslim scholars does. For example, Mustafa A'zami said that orientalist only felt defeated when they found out that their holy book was no longer original and had undergone many changes. The purpose and mission of the missionaries to find out the weakness of Muslim is also one of the objections that can be put forward because with this mission and purpose, orientalist studies of the Qur'an are no longer objective. Based on the result of this study, the author suggest for Muslim to read more Islamic literature so that they can maintain their faith and continue to believe that the Qur'an is the holy word of God.

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### INTRODUCTION

Study as an attempt to examine or study in depth about something with the aim of obtaining knowledge or scientific studies (Syarnubi, 2016). The study of the East, including Islam, by Western scholars has been around for a long time. However, it wasn't until the 18th century that the study of the East was named Orientalism. Although there have been many studies of Orientalism, in the development of thought, recently the theme of Orientalism has become a very interesting topic to be revisited. This is because the framework and criticisms of Orientalists on Islam have become a trend among Muslim scholars (Fadholi, 2014).

Linguistically, Orientalism is defined as the scholarly knowledge of eastern cultures, languages, and people (Syarnubi, 2019a). Therefore, it can be concluded that Orientalism is the

Western scholarly study of 'eastern knowledge'. However, it seems that the object of Orientalism has become narrower to the discussion of Islam alone, because in reality, the studies of Orientalists have recently focused more on Islamic discourse. Islamic discourse refers to expressions used to convey various aspects of Islamic life (Syarnubi, 2019b). The history of Orientalism is actually very long. The defeat of the West in the Crusades is considered the green light for the start of Oriental studies by Western intellectuals (Anshori, 2021; Agustiar, 2015). Initially the Orientalists studied the Arabic language, then proceeded to divine issues (Syarnubi, S., Alimron, A., & Muhammad, 2022). Then, one of the centers of this Orientalism study focuses on the study of the Qur'an and the polemic history of the Qur'an. The Qur'an has been widely criticized and reviewed by Western scholars, they put their scientific foundations on the history and compilation of the Qur'an (Madyan, 2015; Hamim, 2015).

Orientalism in a broader sense is an attempt to articulate an interpretation of Islam (Syarnubi, 2024). Orientalists argue that Islam is universal and therefore cannot be given a single interpretation. Orientalists argue that what they do is about explaining, explaining or describing the objective reality of Islam in their own way (Muzakki, 2005; Jakub, 1970). In analyzing the eastern world, Orientalism is heavily infested with subjectivity, which is independent of religious and racial bigotry (Syarnubi, Fauzi, et al., 2023). A fanatical attitude is a behavior of excessive interest in something (Syarnubi, 2020). Therefore, background and emotionality determine the study conducted (Syarnubi & Fahiroh, 2024), be it in terms of historical or literary studies. Because Orientalist discussions are usually full of mistakes and deliberate lies, those who read and study must be careful.

There are several motivations for Orientalism that made Western scholars interested in studying and studying in depth about the East and Islam in particular, including: 1) Religious motivation is aimed at missionary activities where Orientalists try to create a negative impression of Islam by writing something that is not in accordance with the facts of Islamic teachings (Arif, 2008). 2) Scientific motivation, this motivation arises due to Western curiosity about Islamic teachings and the eastern world through methodological and systematic means (Arif, 2008; Setiawan & Muhsinin, 2016). 3) Political motivation, this motivation arises due to technological and scientific advances achieved by the West (Syarnubi, Syarifuddin, et al., 2023). Napoléon's expedition inspired Orientalists to undertake further expeditions. Orientalism's study of Islam in that era was strongly related to Western imperial goals, so that more or less their writings explained negative things about Islam (Arif, 2008; Sholihah, 2012).

The foundation of the Orientalism movement can be traced back to the translation and collection of Islamic texts from Arabic into Latin in medieval Europe. Later, as Orientalism became an important tradition of study in the West, it was institutionalized and developed into a formal program in higher education in the form of majors or departments in several Western universities (Fadholi, 2014).

Western influence on Orientalism studies has a huge impact on the Qur'an (Syarnubi et al., 2024). The initial assumption that the Qur'an is not a revelation becomes the goal and foundation of Orientalism's study of the Qur'an. The study of the history of the Qur'an text was initiated by Gustav Weil (1808-1889) (Agustina et al, 2022) which then inspired Theodore Nöldeke (Germany, 1836-1930) to continue it (Nur, 2023) then Arthur Jeffery (Australia 1892-1959), then the theory of revision of the Qur'anic text by Richard Bell (Great Britain, 1876-1952) (Bell, 1953) as well as assumptions about Qur'anic writing errors by James A. Bellamy (American, 1925-2015) and Keith E. Small (1959-2018), and many other Western scholars spent their lives uncovering changes and errors in the Qur'an. But the Orientalists researched the Qur'an using only their social science research methods and approaches. As a result of the methods they used, the problems that were used as topics of discussion were adjusted to the methods they used (Zarkasyi, 2011; Muttaqin & Fambudi, 2022).

Most Orientalists do not believe in the fact that the existence of the Qur'an in oral form from the tradition of *taḥfīz* or memorization that was gradually carried out by the Arabs at that time. By asserting that the substance of the Qur'an as a text, the Orientalists tried to ignore the history of writing and compilation during the time of the Prophet (Irpina, 2022) and during the time of Caliph Abû Bakr, but accepted the compilation made by Caliph Uthmân. It's just that the Orientalists are

prejudiced that there is a possibility of errors in the text of the Qur'an in that era. Because between the death of the Prophet Muhammad and the distribution of the Qur'anic text to various parts there is a long time span; namely 15 years.

Orientalists also assume that during this relatively long period of time, the original texts could have been falsified and distorted. In fact, Biblical scholars have never disputed the history of the Bible, although some Old Testament books were written based on oral transformations after a gap of 8 centuries (Tarlum, 2020). On the other hand, the Jewish texts, which were transmitted during the return of the Jews from Babylon to Palestine during the captivity, are without any valid evidence and this was the case for 2000 years until the contact with Arab Muslims triggered it. Although the notion of a 50-year time span as a means of proving the falsity of the Qur'anic text and the possibility of doubt, it is all highly improbable (Zarkasyi, 2011; Carr, 1993).

Such an Orientalist opinion is actually understandable because Orientalists equate and use the standard of criticism of the Gospels regarding variant readings of the New Testament. In the study, an Orientalist named John Mill conducted research on textual criticism of the New Testament from a collection of Ancient Greek manuscripts as well as various versions of the New Testament text from Church officials. As a result of the textual criticism, John found 30,000 variant readings that differed from the *textus receptus* in the Ancient Greek version. Things like this are used by Orientalists to study and deepen the Qur'an. The Orientalists also argued that the possibility of the holy Qur'an also experienced the same thing. They also argued that the language and text of the Qur'an became the cause of the differences in reading in the Qur'an. They also assume that in the era of the Muslim community, changing a word in the Qur'anic verse to find similarities was allowed. There are Western scholars who argue that Muslims are more concerned with the spirit of the Qur'an, not the letter or text (Darmawan, 2016).

## METHODS

This article is a literature research. literature research is research that collects data by collecting data from various literatures (Syarnubi, 2022). This article using a qualitative approach. Data collection is done by reviewing textbooks, encyclopedias, journals, and others related. From the phenomenon and opinions of Orientalists who doubt the Qur'an, criticize the text of the Qur'an and so on, there are interesting things that can be responded to, namely refuting allegations and breaking the arguments of Orientalists about criticizing the text of the Qur'an is something right.

The author believes that if the Orientalists are left unchallenged, they will become more skeptical. James A Bellamy and Keith Small are Orientalists who criticize the text of the Qur'an, even they are very thorough when doing research on the Qur'an. Bellamy (in his work entitled *Textual Criticism of the Koran* published in the *Journal of the American Society*, Vol. 121, No. 1 in 2001) recorded the copying errors of the Qur'an which Bellamy considered inappropriate and did not fit the meaning of the Qur'an. Bellamy also examines all aspects of the text, with the aim of establishing the accuracy of a text using two processes that cause Bellamy to equate the Qur'an and the Bible which he considers that the Qur'an can be studied using philological methods commonly used by Western scholars when studying the Bible (Rihlasyita, 2018).

Moving on from the above, Orientalists did not only criticize the historicity of the Qur'an or reconstruct the Qur'an, but even the text and literature were criticized by Western scholars. There are still many Orientalist reformers who spread their ideas through various means, therefore there is a need to neutralize and refute the accusations of Orientalists who doubt the authenticity of the Qur'an and refute the accusations of Orientalists who think that the Qur'an has errors in copying.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Characteristics and Influences of Orientalism

A little familiar with orientalism which comes from the Latin word *oriens* which means rising of the sun in English and 'terbit matahari' in Indonesian. There are also those who interpret it with the eastern part of the world. Meanwhile, according to the term orientalism, many figures

define it. Edward Said defines orientalism as a way to discuss the Eastern world, based on its special place in the observation of Western Europeans (Said, 2010). Then Hasan Hanafi defines orientalism with sciences related to the Eastern world. It can be said that people who explore, study eastern sciences (Hanafi, 1981). Meanwhile, Yusuf Shuayub defines orientalism as an understanding or flow that aims to investigate everything related to the East and its environment (Ghurab, 1992).

The characteristics of orientalist studies are actually inseparable from the definition of orientalism itself. There are several special characteristics of this orientalism, namely:

- a. The study of orientalism in the Western world is a powerful weapon against Islam. There is one example of Western politics that can illustrate how orientalism is viewed by the West. Orientalists assume that if they want to fight the enemy (Muslims) then they will study how the enemy is first (Saifullah, 2020; Sari et al, 2023).
- b. Orientalism has strong ties to the Second World War. If you look at the history of orientalism (Nasir, 2021), you will see how it is closely related to colonialism. History tells us that every Western country that was a colonizer had an orientalist organization and platform. For example, Snouck Hurgronje was an orientalist from the Netherlands who also colonized Indonesia (Ichwayudi, 2011). Snouck also studied Islam in the Middle East, and when Snouck returned to Indonesia there were many clerics who were deceived by the faith shown by Snouck (Ghurab, 1992).
- c. The study of orientalism is also inseparable from the Christian propagation movement. There is a lot of evidence of the connection between orientalism and the Christianization process because many priestly schools usually cooperate with Jewish orientalists to study Islam and the condition of Muslims (Saifullah, 2020).
- d. The study of orientalism if measured by scientific standards and also the object of its nature then academically it can be said that the thought of orientalism cannot be accounted for. Because orientalism is based on the wrong foundation. From the beginning, orientalists studying Islam have made the assumption that Islam is a despicable and lowly religion. Orientalists studied Islam with a purpose that can be called negative, so the results obtained are also negative. It is not surprising that the research conducted by orientalists will produce something that deviates from historical facts and actual arguments (Saifullah, 2020; Yurnalis, 2019).

Orientalists started their study of the Eastern world because of the element of hatred and hostility towards the people and religion of Islam. This is due to the crusades which are broadly classified into 5 phases, namely:

- 1) First, the anti-Islamic (Yurnalis, 2019) and misonary movements that began in the 16th century AD were initiated by Jewish and Christian groups. This is a reaction to the teachings of Islam. In addition, the defeat of Christian Europe in the crusades was also one of the triggers for the anti-Islamic Movement. This movement was designed with a strategy initiated by Christian orientalists, namely Jean Germain, John Segovia, Nicholas Cusa and others. The strategy is to spread the impression of the ugliness of Islam and the confusion of Islamic literature sources to Europeans and the East (Teng, 2016; Luthfan, 2013).
- 2) Second, the diatribes and studies that began in the 17th and 18th centuries. This phase coincided with the modernization of the West, at which time the West was interested in studying Islam in order to become civilized. At that time the Kings and Queens in Europe also began to collect all information related to the eastern world. This is evidenced by Epernius who published the first book on Arabic grammar. Then there was Bedwell W who wrote about the history of the Prophet's life and there was G. Sale who translated the Qur'an in 1734 and said that Islam was a false religion and so on (Teng, 2016; Huda, 2021).
- 3) Third, colonialism and studies in the 19th century AD and the first quarter of the 20th century. This period corresponds to the era of Western colonialism to various Islamic countries in the military, cultural, political and economic fields. During this period, many orientalists produced works of Islamic studies in Arabic and Persian. This period was also

marked by the emergence of several Islamic study centers, such as the Asiatic Society of Paris in 1822. Then the following year the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland was born in England. Furthermore, America also established the School of Oriental Studies in 1824 which has now been changed to the School of Oriental and Africal Studies (SOAS) (Susmihira, 2017; Huda, 2021).

- 4) Fourth, the political period is the second half of the 19th century. Islam and Muslims became the center of popular studies at that time. The studies carried out in this fourth phase were not carried out for academic reasons alone but also for the benefit of business and political policies. In this period, the motives of orientalism studies changed slightly, such as religious sentiments that initially tended to be vulgar then turned into a little softer. Modern orientalists no longer study Islam out of hatred and dislike but to understand between Islam and Christianity (Smith, 1981).
- 5) Fifth, at this time Islamic works were objective. In the 20th century orientalism became more advanced with various scientific works on Islam. Orientalism was used to understand the eastern world. In this fae, Arabic literature and classical Islam began to be studied and the Western world began to find more varied branches of Islamic studies to study. In this phase, orientalists such as Ignaz Goldziher, William Montgomery Watt, and others were born with various works on Islam (Badarussyamsi, 2016).

Regarding the influence of the orientalism movement on the Islamic world, it began with the object of study of orientalism which became narrow. Initially they studied the Eastern world such as language, culture, history and so on. However, this became even smaller because the object of study of orientalism leads to Islam and the Qur'an only, although not all orientalists do the same. The dynamics of thought have a very large impact on the West's view of the Eastern world, especially on Islam. In the context of the fight between Western and Eastern civilizations, orientalists studied Islam and the Qur'an to explore and reveal the decline of the Islamic mindset to be known by everyone (Saifullah, 2020; Said, 2018).

## 2. Textual Criticism of the Qur'an

Regarding the text criticism carried out by Orientalists against the Qur'an, it originated from historical criticism which was built long ago because the Orientalists assumed that this historical criticism method was better than the teachings believed by Muslims. Then, the initial assumption of this historical criticism method is the text of the Qur'an which is considered by Orientalists as a scriptural text that has undergone various changes. This refers to the fact that in addition to the Qur'an not having the autography of the original manuscript, the original text of the Qur'an also changed even though the change was actually for the good. For example, the early manuscripts of the Qur'an were written without lines or dots and written using khat Kûfî which is different from the writing currently used (Dhulkifli, 2019). From this basis, Orientalists argue that the current text of the Qur'an is not a copy of the first version of the Qur'an. However, the current Qur'an is a text that has undergone a process of change from generation to generation (Jeffery, 1952).

Starting from the historical criticism that was built, literary criticism emerged to study the Qur'an (Syarnubi, 2023). When viewed from its history, this literary criticism appeared to criticize the Bible in 17 and 18 AD with the aim that the Bible could be more easily understood. The literary approach used for the Bible was used to the Qur'an by John Wansbrough. According to him, the textual process of the Qur'an was formed at the end of the second century Hijri. Therefore, all the Prophet's hadiths that explain about the set of the Qur'an are considered as historically unreliable information. All the information is fictitious that has a specific purpose and it is possible that the information is also just a fabrication made by the *fuqaha* to explain doctrines that are not actually in the text of the Qur'an. One criticism that is also widely used in this literary approach is textual criticism which aims to establish the accuracy of the text (Karim, 2013; Didipu, 2020).

Arthur Jeffery argues that the Qur'an is only considered holy because of the actions of the community. Like the residents of Kuffah who consider Mushaf 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud as their

version of the Qur'an. Damascus residents with Mushaf Miqdad Ibn al-Aswad. Basrah residents with Mushaf Abû Musa and residents of Syria with Mushaf Ubay (Jeffery, 1952; Nubowo, 2014). By using the method of historical criticism of the history of the Qur'an and also textual criticism of the Qur'anic text, Orientalists argue that the Prophet Muhammad did not have the intention to compile the revelation he got into one mushaf. Like the assumption of Leone Caentani (1869-1935) who rejected the collection of the Qur'an during the time of Caliph Abû Bakr because according to him the Qur'anic mushaf that had been collected during the time of Caliph Abû Bakr only aimed to justify the actions of Caliph Uthmân to collect the Qur'an (Caentani, 1905).

In contrast to Arthur Jeffery who argues that the Mushaf collected by Caliph Abû Bakr was only for personal use not an official Mushaf. This is also recognized by Richard Bell and Règis Blachère. Arthur Jeffery argues that the number of Mushafs that existed before the time of Caliph Uthmân shows that Caliph Uthmân's choice of the Medina text tradition is not a very good choice. In addition, Arthur Jeffery's assumption that there was a difference between Ibn Mas'ud and Caliph Uthmân was a case of Ibn Mas'ud's refusal to submit the Mushaf he had to Caliph Uthmân who sent his standard text to Kuffah. That's why Arthur Jeffery has a desire to recompile the Qur'an with a new form called the critical edition of the Qur'an (Karim, 2013).

The diversity of the recitation of the Qur'an also triggered Orientalist doubts about the authenticity of the Qur'an. One of them is Theodore Nöldeke who in his view says that the different recitations of the Qur'an are actually due to the fact that the Qur'anic text actually relies on the copying error of the Qur'anic text itself (Nöldeke, 1985). This is also in line with the thoughts of Ignaz Goldziher, an Orientalist in the field of Hadith (Goldziher, 1995).

Textual criticism of the Qur'an was also carried out by James A Bellamy (1925-2015) who in his view Bellamy said that textual criticism has no continuity with art, music or literary criticism because the text criticism referred to by Bellamy is correcting errors in the texts (McAuliffe, 2005). Regarding this, according to Bellamy, the right solution is to study more deeply the science of *nasikh mansukh*, semotics, munasabah science, semantics and dal related to these sciences. The Arab community thinks that the Qur'an is a very unique and beautiful book to the extent that the Meccans at that time were unable to imitate the lyrics of the Qur'an. In the Qur'an it is also said that the Qur'an is a clear thing (*mubîn*) but if you look back many simple words or sentences in the Qur'an cannot be understood (Zaman, 2021).

Continuing the criticism of the Qur'anic text that begins with the chronological reconstruction of the Qur'an. James A. Bellamy criticized the process of writing and copying the Qur'an by assuming that in the past the copyists of the Qur'an made mistakes and were negligent when copying the Qur'an. Not only that, James A. Bellamy also tried to change the structure of the Qur'an text literally. This is actually the same as what Luxenberg did with his Sira Aramaic which also seeks to change the word order of the Qur'anic verse which ultimately has an impact on changing the meaning of the verse. In his work Bellamy made hundreds of criticisms of the Qur'anic lafaz, as in the following example (McAuliffe, 2005):

**Table 1. Some Examples of Bellamy's Criticism of the Qur'ân's Lafaz**

No.	Surah and Verse	Critique	Description
1	Al-Anbiya: 98; Al-Lahab: 4; Al-Jin: 15	Bellamy thinks that there is an error when writing the word <b>حَصَب</b> in surah al-Lahab because in surah al-Anbiya and surah al-Jin it is written with <b>حَطَبًا</b> which means firewood.	It should be harmonized using the word <b>حَطَبًا</b> (firewood). The mistake in transcribing this verse is thought to be due to the copyists omitting the vertical stroke (the end of the letter <b>ṭa</b> . <b>Ṭa</b> becomes <b>ṣad</b> ).
2	Hûd: 8; Ali 'Imrân: 30; Al-Kahf: 12; Al-	Bellamy criticizes the word <b>أُمَّة</b> in surah Hûd	The reading of <b>أُمَّة</b> which turns into <b>أُمَّة</b> in surah Hûd

	Ḥadīd: 16; Al-Jin; 25	verse 8 should be <b>أَمَدًا</b> because it is in harmony with other surahs that use the word <b>أَمَدًا</b> to indicate the meaning of time.	is considered erroneous because there is a possibility that the pen used to copy the Qur'an is leaking or the hand of the copyist is unstable so that the error in writing the text.
3	'Abasa: 27, 31	Bellamy criticizes the text in surah 'Abasa verses 27 and 31 which uses the words <b>حَبًّا</b> and <b>أَبًا</b> which should have used the word 'lubban' which can be interpreted as nuts.	If the word <b>أَبًا</b> is considered by Bellamy to have no acceptable meaning if the word is interpreted with grains. However, if the word 'lubb' is used, then the meaning can be a gift 'and the fruits are a gift' (QS: 'Abasa; 31.) This might have happened because the pen used by the copyist stopped so that <b>أَبًا</b> was not perfectly connected to become lubban (between lam and ba).
4	Al-Anbiya: 104	The word <b>السَّجِّلِ</b> in the verse should be musajjil (isim fa'il) because it is considered more appropriate if it means writers on sheets of paper (documents) rather than sheets of paper alone.	The lack of the letter mim in the word <b>السَّجِّلِ</b> is considered to be an error by the copyists of the Qur'an at that time, Bellamy assumed that it could be that the pen had leaked or that the copyist was not careful.
5	Al-Baqarah: 58; Al-A'râf: 161 with Al-Fath: 29	In the word <b>خَطِيئَتِكُمْ</b> in surah al-Baqarah and <b>خَطِيئَاتِكُمْ</b> in surah al-A'râf, the meaning of the verse is about the forgiveness of mistakes for those who sin. Then in surah al-Fath verse 29 which explains that Allah also promises forgiveness to those who do good deeds.	The criticism about the text snippet is that it is considered inconsistent because in surah al-Baqarah the letter hamzah is not included as in surah al-A'râf <b>خَطِيئَتِكُمْ</b> . Then in addition to these textual criticisms, regarding Allah's intention regarding the concept of granting forgiveness is not clear because in surah al-Baqarah and al-A'râf it is clear that those who ask for forgiveness are interpreted as the same as those who have sinned. But if in surah al-Fath God's forgiveness is promised to people who do good deeds.
6	Az-Zukhruf verse 88	The word <b>وَفِيهِ</b> in the verse according to Bellamy should be written with	Bellamy's criticism of verse 88 is that when viewed from the meaning, verse 88

		وقبله	should be placed before verse 87 (Bellamy, 1996).
7	Al-An'âm verse 74	The name of Prophet Ibrâhîm's father in the surah <i>لِأَبِيهِ</i> <i>ءَأَزَّرَ</i> which Bellamy considers Prophet Muhammad is wrong. Because in the Bible it is mentioned that the father of Prophet Ibrâhîm was named Terah. However, Bellamy also mentions that Prophet Ibrâhîm's father had a servant named Eliezer.	Bellamy's assumption about the name of Prophet Ibrâhîm's father could be that Prophet Muhammad did not know that Prophet Ibrâhîm's father was named Terah. However, he only knew about his servant and when the copyists of the Qur'an copied the mistake they copied the word <i>ءَأَزَّرَ</i> which should be <i>إِزْرَاءَ</i> which means 'with disdain' because <i>إِزْرَاءَ</i> is more appropriate than <i>ءَأَزَّرَ</i> which is definitely wrong. This assumption of error is also reinforced by Bellamy on the pretext that the era of copying hamzah letters had not yet been formulated.
8	The word <i>عيسي</i> in the Qur'an	According to Bellamy, the word <i>عيسي</i> which refers to Jesus is highly inappropriate.	Bellamy states that Prophet Muhammad made a mistake when he adopted the Bible tradition which should be <i>مسي</i> or Messiah (McAuliffe, 2005).

Not only criticizing the words, Bellamy also criticized the *fawâtih al-Suwar*. Because according to Bellamy, *fawâtih al-Suwar* is actually an abbreviated expression of *basmalah*. Bellamy's theory of linking *fawâtih al-Suwar* with *basmalah* was adopted from Theodore Nöldeke's reconstruction. Bellamy's assumption regarding the abbreviation of the *basmallah* is for two reasons: saving energy and paper limitations. The authors of revelation could not have been just one person, but there were several people who must have had different ways and styles of writing, so the abbreviation of the *basmalah* became diverse. Bellamy also stated that this *fawâtih al-Suwar* was actually never revealed to the public when the Prophet Muhammad lived but when the codification of the Uthmânî mushaf only appeared about *fawâtih al-Suwar*. In contrast to Alan Jones and Noldeke who say that *fawâtih al-Suwar* has no meaning (Rohman, 2017; Cholily, 2014). Bellamy tries to reconstruct *fawâtih al-Suwar* which he considers as an abbreviation of *basmalah* (Bellamy, 1973).

Table 2.

No.	Surah	Fawâtih al Suwar	Result	Description
1	Al-A'râf	الْمَصَّ	الم	One letter replaced by Bellamy is the letter <i>şâd</i> replaced by the letter <i>mîm</i> .
2	Şâd	ص	م	The letter <i>şâd</i> is replaced with <i>mîm</i> because according to Bellamy, the letter <i>mîm</i> is more appropriate if it stands for <i>basmalah</i> .



3	Yâsîn	يَس	يس	The letter <i>ya</i> is replaced with <i>ba</i>
4	Maryam	مَرْيَمُ	باه بسم	All letters are replaced by Bellamy because he considers it wrong and not in accordance with the <i>basmalah</i> if it uses the abbreviation <b>مَرْيَمُ</b>
5	An-Naml	طس	باس	The letter <i>ta</i> is replaced with the letter <i>ba</i>
6	Qâf	ق	م	The letter <i>qâf</i> is replaced with <i>mîm</i>
7	Ṭâhâ	طه	باه	The letter <i>ta</i> is replaced by the letter <i>ba</i>
8	Al-Qaṣaṣ and Al-Shu'ara	طسم	باسم	One letter replaced by Bellamy is the letter <i>ta</i> replaced by the letter <i>ba</i>

In addition to those described above, there are actually many criticisms made by Bellamy, but most of them are unfounded.

Actually, the influence of orientalism studies is diverse, not only negative things because not all orientalists have the same attitude towards the Eastern world (Fauzi, M., Lestari, A.R.S., & Ali, 2023). Many orientalists are neutral and study the Eastern world or Islamic studies very objectively (Syarnubi et al., 2021). Like Johann J. Reiske who has a positive attitude towards Islam. This is evident because of his services in developing Arabic Studies in Germany. Besides Reiske, Silvestre de Sacy was also a positive orientalist. He pursued *nahwu* and literature and did not want to be involved in the study of Islam. Silvestre made Paris the center of objective Islamic studies without criticism and even Sheikh Rifa'ah Tantawi had a discussion with Silvestre (Saifullah, 2020; Hadi, 2018).

Regarding the negative influence of this orientalism movement, of course there are many, because it returns to the purpose of orientalists who study Islam and the Qur'an based on the aim of reviling and insulting, the influence of this is of course also bad for Eastern civilization, especially Islam. Many criticisms are not based on making Muslims a little vulnerable to faith, and even began to follow in the footsteps of orientalists to tear apart the Qur'an (Saifullah, 2020).

### 3. Rebuttal to Qur'anic Textual Criticism

The Orientalist mistake in using the Bible method in criticizing the Qur'an is very inappropriate because the status of the Bible and the Qur'an is clearly different. Using biblical criticism in the study of the Qur'an is tantamount to ignoring the sacredness of the Qur'an. Christians recognize that the Bible is a human creation while the Qur'an was revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad (not by the Prophet). The Qur'an is also not as problematic as the Bible because the Qur'an was clearly revealed in Arabic and should not need to be disputed. This Orientalist mistake stems from their assumption that treats the Qur'an as a written work and cultural product. They then applied the philological method usually used to criticize the Bible to find fault with the Qur'an (Darmawan, 2016; Sujati, 2018).

The fundamental error of the Orientalist approach is formulated by the tradition of epistemology, academia, and political domination which can be called the points of departure of the Orientalism movement that can be imagined in which direction and how the results of the studies researched by Orientalists. The reason for the point of departure of their studies that want to destroy the pillars of Islam is a bad intention that is already an initial mistake in the development of the methodology of the study of Islam and the Qur'an. Because of this initial bad intention, Orientalist studies are filled with pretense in order to justify their theories and deliberately ignore data and facts that do not support their assumptions and manipulate real evidence. This methodological ambiguity is an undeniable paradox. On the one hand, they doubt

and even deny the truth of sources originating from Muslims, but on the other hand they use these Islamic sources as references that they unconsciously recognize as true. In general, Orientalist epistemology can be said to be skeptical from beginning to end. Doubting the truth and justifying doubt (Markus, 2019).

Before Orientalism developed, the Western world had already given a bad view of the Qur'an; such as the title that the Qur'an plagiarized the Bible, the Qur'an is not just a fake holy book. They began to test the authenticity of the Qur'an and equated the status of the Qur'an with the Bible because Christian scholars doubted the authenticity of the Bible (Fauzi, 2019). There are three basic Orientalist mistakes in understanding and criticizing the Qur'an that are actually able to refute all Orientalist accusations and arguments in denigrating and doubting the authenticity of the Qur'an. Among them:

First, the Qur'an is not writing (*kitābah*) but reading (*qirâ'at*) which is about the process of revelation, delivery, teaching and how to narrate the Qur'an solely through oral and writing only as a supporting medium (Ikhwan, 2020). The writing of the Qur'an which is considered as a basic manuscript by Orientalists is actually based on memorization in the memory of the *qâri*. The transmission of isnad or sanad mutawatir from generation to generation has proven successful in ensuring the authenticity and integrity of the Qur'an like the early Qur'an when it was revealed by God through the Angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad and then passed on to the companions. This is very different from the Bible which was written in the form of papyrus manuscripts and other sheets that became the reference for the Novum Testamentum Grace (Houghton, 2023) or Gospel (Agoestina, 2020). This is the root of Orientalist confusion in assessing the Qur'an.

Secondly, while the Qur'an was principally taught through memorization, it was also recorded using several written media. Until the death of the Prophet Muhammad almost all of these early records belonged to the companions and therefore differed in quality and quantity from one another. For their own purposes the Companions wrote additional notes as comments or information in the margins or between verses. Then when many memorizers of the Qur'an were martyred on the battlefield, efforts to codify the Qur'an began to be carried out at the idea of Caliph Abû Bakr As-Siddiq so that the Qur'an was collected into a mushaf based on direct and mutawatir transmission from the Prophet. After the death of Caliph Abû Bakr, the Mushaf was kept by Caliph 'Umar. After Caliph 'Umar died, the Mushaf was kept by Sayyidah Hafsa before being handed over to Caliph Uthmân. It was during the time of Caliph Uthmân that a commission was formed to re-record all existing *qirâ'at* and determine the value of the validity of the verses of the Qur'an in order to maintain and prevent errors. The historical facts about this codification are very clear. However, Orientalists when they want to change the Qur'an usually start by questioning this historical fact and rejecting the existing results (Jabal, 2001).

Then assume that the history of the codification is just a false story. Like Arthur Jeffery who says that Caliph Abû Bakr made the official review only as a highly dubious orthodox theory (Fahrizi & Zubir, 2022). He also assumes that the text canonized by Caliph Uthmân is only one of many and should be investigated again about what happened before the canonical text. From Arthur Jeffery's statement it is clear that he pretends not to know and does not understand that the history of the Qur'an is not the same as the Bible. That the Qur'an was not born from manuscripts but manuscripts were born from the Qur'an (Jeffery, 1952).

Third, for Orientalist assumptions that always criticize the Uthmânî rasm which is actually Arabic writing that has developed. At first the Qur'an was written bald or without punctuation and the vocalization system only existed afterwards, but this did not become a problem because Muslims believed in the existence of an undoubted 'sanad' of memorization. The Qur'ân is a tradition of *tahfiz* that Orientalists ignore (Al-Hafyan, 2001) and misunderstand by assuming that the Qur'ân refers to writing and relies on early manuscripts. Orientalists such as Arthur Jeffery, Christoph Luxenberg and Ignaz Goldziher concluded that the bare text of the Qur'an was the source of variant readings as he equated it with the Bible and equated *qirâ'at* with reading, whereas *qirâ'at* should be equated with recitation from memory because the rule is

'writing must refer to the recitation that has been narrated by the Prophet Muhammad, not the other way around' (Arif, 2008; Hamnah, 2021).

The Orientalist assumption that there is a possibility of error in the Qur'an is actually just a matter of Orientalists not trusting the sanad. They assume that Muslims overly glorify the sanad and rule out other possibilities. Whereas if you look at the friends of the *qirâ'at* expert teachers from generation to generation are very reliable. Because it is through this sanad that the Qur'an is preserved and spread until now.

## CONCLUSION

Some of the descriptions that the author describes above, it can be concluded that the Orientalist study of Qur'an criticism originated from their study of the historicity of the Qur'an and the history of the Uthmânî rasm. Many of them ignore historical facts to justify their criticisms and assumptions. By using the method of textual criticism and philology, the irregularities of the Qur'an are increasingly apparent to those who are actually only based on the fact that the Qur'an is equal to their holy book. The history of the copying of the Qur'an that they consider ambiguous is actually just a cover to erode the sanctity of the Qur'an even though the authenticity of the pure Qur'an is an absolute thing. If examined further about this Orientalist criticism, it is natural for Muslims to start thinking of ways to date the criticism so that there is a balance for the study of the Qur'an. Because if this Orientalist criticism is left unchecked, more or less Muslims will be contaminated and become skeptical of the Qur'an.

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