

# FROM THE HISTORY OF MUSHAF OF UTHMAN

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## Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of historical information and narratives related to the creation of Mushafs of Uthman, given in primary sources. In it, the events related to the holy text of the Qur'an, which was created as a result of the conquest of Azerbaijan, were considered. The date of creation of Mushaf of Uthman has been clarified.

**Keywords:** Holy Qur'an, Mushaf of Uthman, Mushaf, pages of Abu Bakr.

## INTRODUCTION

The controversies about the first written copies of the Holy Qur'an prepared under the command and control of Uthman ibn Affan is still relevant and remains one of the important scientific matters in the focus of Western and Eastern scholars. Due to the lack of reliable information on the subject or controversial positions on it, most researchers refrain from drawing firm conclusions on this matter, limiting themselves to comparing existing assumptions and hypotheses and analyzing their strengths and weaknesses. The main reason for this is that the sources do not provide accurate information about the exact years in which these manuscripts were written. From this, it is logical to conclude that the opinions about the appearance of Mushafs of Uthman are based on scientific assumptions in many cases. Therefore, deepening the analysis of data on this topic will help to find a solution to scientific tasks such as proving or rejecting the hypotheses put forward until today.

It should be noted that the foundation of the Mushaf of Uthman was laid in the time of revelation. Because the first person who wrote down the entire text of the Holy Qur'an and organized it was the Prophet ﷺ, which went down in history under the name "Pages of Abu Bakr", served as the primary source of the Mushaf attributed to Uthman (R.A.). This fact is mentioned in relevant primary sources, including hadiths.

In fact, Hadith is the most important source for the history of Mushafs attributed to Uthman (R.A.). The most famous and reliable narrations about the compilation and transcribing text in the Mushaf are recorded in the works of Imam Abu Ubayd and Imam Bukhari. The most comprehensive and detailed of these narrations are:

**Narration of Abu Ubayd<sup>1</sup> :**

<sup>1</sup> Abu Ubaid Qasim ibn Sallam Haravi was born in Herat in 157/774. Linguist, jurist, muhaddis, historian and recitation scholar. He died in 224/838 and was buried in Makkah Mukarrama.

"Abdurrahman said: "From Ibrahim ibn Sa'd Zuhri, who narrates from Anas ibn Malik, may God be pleased with him: "Hudhaifa ibn Yaman, during the conquest of Armenia and Azerbaijan, was marching with the Iraqis in the ranks of the people of Sham... Finally, they transferred the pages to the Mushafs...." [7:282; 8:195-196]<sup>2</sup>.

#### **Narration of Imam Bukhari:**

"Hudhaifa ibn Yaman came to Uthman. He was marching with the Iraqis in the ranks of the people of Sham during the conquest of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Hudhaifa was afraid of their differences in recitation. Hudhaifa said to Uthman: "O chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book as Jews and the Christians did before!". So Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, "Send us the manuscripts of the Qur'an so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you." Hafsa sent them to Uthman... After the pages were copied into mushafs, Uthman returned the pages to Hafsa. From the copies he copied, he sent one copy to each country and ordered to burn the Qur'an in any other pages and copies" [1:200].

As can be seen, both the narrations refer to the date of the writing of the Mushaf. According to them, this incident happened after a controversy arose between soldiers during the conquest wars to Armenia and Azerbaijan. Therefore, in determining the exact date of the book of Mushafs, it is necessary to specify the years in which this event took place. What makes it difficult to do this is that due to the violation of the relevant agreement, there have been several battles between the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the Muslims. In such circumstances, it is crucial to identify the battle in which Hudhaifa ibn Yaman participated and witnessed the dispute between the soldiers.

Khalifa ibn Khayot recalls the truce of Azerbaijan by Huzaifa (R.A.) in the context of the events of 22 Hijri and states the following:

"Abu Ubaydah said: "It (Azerbaijan) was conquered by Habib ibn Maslama al-Fihri during the caliphate of Umar, using force with the help of the Shamians, after a fierce battle. People of Kufa were with them. Hudhaifa was also with them" [5:151].

But it is contradictory to say that Azerbaijan was conquered both by peace and by war. Rather, it can be noted that at first there was a battle, and then a truce was agreed upon. Important for the issue under investigation is that the report clearly indicates the year of the incident. According to it, the conquest of Azerbaijan took place in 22 of Hijri.

We read another information about the battle of Azerbaijan in the writings of Imam Tabari. He mentions the events of year 24 of Hijri and says: "According to the narration of Abu Mikhnaf, in this year, that is, in year 24, Walid ibn Uqba marched to Azerbaijan and Armenia. The reason is that they refused to give the money agreed upon in peace with the people of Islam during the caliphate of Umar." [2/4:246]

So, there was a battle between Azerbaijan and Armenia with Muslim army in year 24 of Hijri. According to the report, this battle took place after the people of Azerbaijan broke the agreement, which means that this is not the first march.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Abu Dawud narrated from Abdullah, he from Muhammad ibn Bashara, and he from Abd al-Rahman ibn Mahdi. The part of the Sanad up to Anas ibn Malik is the same.

Ibn Asir, citing the events of the 25 of Hijri in "al-Kamil fit-tarikh", said that in this year Caliph Usman (R.A.) dismissed Utba ibn Farqad from the governorship of Azerbaijan, appointed Walid ibn Uqba as the governor of Kufa, and in 25th of the Hijri he entered the lands of Azerbaijan and Armenia. He says that he raised an army and managed to re-enact the truce between them and Hudhaifa ibn Yaman (R.A.) [4/2: 487-488]. This narration also mentions the situation mentioned by Imam Tabari, but it is said that the incident happened in 25 Hijri.

From the cited narrations, it is known that the march of the Shamians and Iraqis to Azerbaijan and Armenia with the participation of Hudhaifa (R.A.) began in the period of Umar ibn al-Khattab (R.A.), i.e. in 22 Hijri and lasted for 3 years. At the end of 23 Hijri, when Umar (R.A.) died and Uthman (R.A.) became the caliph, Hudhaifa (R.A.) was in charge of the lands of Armenia for a while. Although Walid ibn Uqba, the governor of Kufa, led the military operations in these areas, the role of the spiritual leader was important. Therefore, when Hudhaifa (R.A.) returned with the advice of the Caliph, he left his student Sila ibn Zafar Abbasi<sup>3</sup> in his place [3:287-288]. On his return, he entered Medina and met Uthman (R.A.). He told him about the conflict between the Muslim armies in Azerbaijan and Armenia. In order to put an end to these situations, proposed to gather the Muslim community around one mushaf. This meeting corresponds to 25 Hijri [9:31].

Hudhaifa's (R.A.) concern about the Holy Qur'an was reasonable, and the danger was serious. Therefore, Caliph Uthman ibn Affan (R.A.) had to take immediate action. Based on these considerations, it can be concluded that the creation of mushafs began in the beginning of 25 of hijri. This is supported by other data.

For example, Ibn Abu Dawud narrates the following from Mus'ab ibn Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas: "Uthman (R.A.) stood up and addressed the people: "O people! Thirteen years have passed since you were separated from your Prophet, you are arguing about the Qur'an. In another narration, it is as follows: "It has only been fifteen years since the death of your Prophet, and you have already fallen into disagreement over the Qur'an" [8/1:209].

In these two narrations, it is almost clearly stated when the disagreements arose that led to the conversion of the Qur'anic text into the form of Mushafs. Taking into account that the death of the Prophet ﷺ took place in 11 hijri, according to the first narration, this sermon corresponds to 24-25 hijri, and this is closer to the truth. In the second narration, adding two more years, the period is fifteen years. From this it follows that the sermon took place in the years 26-27 of Hijri and the creation of the Mushaf also started from then. However, this is not true of other sources and data. Therefore, it is more correct to explain the message in the second narration by saying the big number by dropping the decimal number, i.e. not saying "thirteen" but summarizing it as "fifteen". This expression is widely used in Arabic. This is also the case in other languages. For example, if 69 or 72 years have passed since an event, it is possible to generalize and say, "This is the situation for seventy years."

Although the cited narrations mention disputes, there is no mention of writing a mushaf. True, from the flow of the phrase, it can be assumed that there was an assignment about the

<sup>3</sup> Sila ibn Zafar Abbasi is one of the tabi'uns. Narrated hadith from Ammar, Ibn Mas'ud, Ali, Huzaifa may Allah be pleased with them. Muhaddises described him as trustworthy. He died in approximately 70 hijri.



Mushaf, but there is no clear mention of this in the narration itself. However, in another narration cited in the same source, it is also revealed that Caliph Uthman (R.A.) ordered the mushaf to be written down in his sermon:

"It was narrated from Abu Qilaba:

"During the Caliphate of Uthman, one teacher taught someone's recitation, and another teacher taught another person's recitation. Then, when the children gathered together, they began to argue with each other. Such disputes even reached the teachers. They even went so far as to call each other disbeliever. This word reached Uthman. He stood up and gave a sermon and said: "You are arguing and misreading while standing next to me. People in cities far away from me are probably more in disagreement about this matter and are making more mistakes... O Companions of Muhammad! Gather together and create an "Imam"<sup>4</sup> for the people! [6/17:9]".

Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani in his work "Fath al-Bariy" refers to these narrations and concludes that the creation of the Mushaf was started about a year after the election of Uthman (R.A.) as caliph, that is at the end of the 24th and the beginning of the 25th Hijri: "The conquest of Armenia according to the historians was during these times. This corresponds to the early years when Walid bin Uqba bin Abu Mu'ayt was appointed as a governor of Kufa by Uthman. Some people we met, who were unaware of this, said that the Mushafs were written in the 30th, but they could not give any reason for this" [6/17:9].

The fact that the writing of mushafs of Uthman began in the 25th year of the Hijri coincides with the historical reality in many respects. Subhi Salih, one of the modern researchers, also supports this idea and emphasizes that he relies on Ibn Hajar Asqalani.<sup>5</sup> Abdul Fattah Qazi also states that the beginning of writing the Mushafs of Usman took place after the conquest of Armenia in 25 Hijri [6:18].

Another researcher, Ghonim Qadduri, also seems to accept this opinion. Because he cites Asqalani's opinion and does not object to it, at the same time he denies that the Mushaf project was carried out in the 30s of Hijri [10:103].

But the Russian Rezvan E., who conducted a comprehensive study of the "Katta Langar" manuscript in the conclusion of his research, states that the project of the Mushaf of Uthman was carried out in the years 650-656 AD, that is, in the years 30-36 AD [13:93].

In the medieval sources, there are many supporters of the opinion that the Mushafs of Uthman were written in the 30s of Hijri. For example, the historian Ibn Asir in his work "Al-Kamil Fit-Tarikh" mentions "Hudhaifa's raid to the Bab and the work of Mushafs" [4/3:8-9] among the events of 30 Hijri, Ibn Khaldun in his book "At-Tarikh" mentions "Hudhaifa's raid to the Bab and the work of Mushafs" [5:56], Hafiz Muhammad ibn Jazari concluded this in "an-

<sup>4</sup> In this place, the highest-ranking or chief mushaf is meant. With this word, it is emphasized that all other copies should be in accordance with it, and all recitations should be based on it. According to this, the Mushafs that were created under the command and control of Caliph Uthman (R.A.) were called "Imam Mushafs". However, this phrase has a second meaning. "Imam Mushaf" usually refers to the copy that was in the personal possession of Caliph Uthman (R.A.). Other copies are usually referred to in relation to the regions to which they were sent. For example, "Imam of the Shamis", "Imam of the Iraqis", "Imam of the people of Sham and Hijaz". Also, it was a tradition to call such mushaf "Madina mushaf", "Shom mushaf", "Kufa mushaf", "Basra mushaf". "Hijaz mushaf" refers to Medina and Makkah mushaf, and "Iraq mushaf" refers to Kufa and Basra mushaf.

<sup>5</sup> Subhi Salih. "مباحث في علوم القرآن". In it, the author gives the information that "the four-member panel began to implement the decision of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, in the 25th of Hijri."

Nashr" [12/1:7]. French researcher Regi Blascher and German scientist Theodor Njoldke also supported this opinion. Based on the information of the historian Ibn Asir and others that the events of Armenia and Azerbaijan took place in 30 hijri, Njoldke puts forward the opinion that the creation of the mushaf was carried out in the 30s. However, he wants to point out that the mushafs were completed during the lifetime of Ibn Mas'ud (R.A.), whose unique attitude to this project was narrated in the narrations, and that he died in 32 Hijri, and that the mushafs began to be written a little earlier than the 30th year. [14:280].

The researcher Hind Shalabi does not specify the exact date of copying of the Mushafs, but says that "Mushafs of Uthman were written in the earliest 25/645 AD and the latest in 33/653 AD" [11:55]. In doing so, he seems to endorse the second hypothesis, that the manuscripts were copied in the 1930s.

In summary, there are three views in the sources regarding the historical period of the creation of the Mushafs of Uthman:

The first. Mushafs began to be copied at the end of the 24th year of the Hijri, the beginning of the 25th year (645 AD). Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani (d. 852/1449) (rah) also supported this opinion. Many modern researchers have come to the same conclusion [8:65].

The second. Mushafs of Uthman were created in around 30/650 AD. Historian Ibn Asir (d. 630/1233) and scholar Ibn Khaldun (d. 808/1406) also supported this opinion. Researcher Blascher also confirmed it.

The third. The Mushaf was written in 25 hijri/ 645 AD at earliest, in 33 hijri/ 653AD at latest. Mrs. Hind Shalabi put forward this idea.

The first of these conclusions is more supported by researchers, and the third is considered a combination of different assumptions.

Omar Hamdan,<sup>6</sup> one of the scholars of our time, presents a new assumption about the history and number of Mushafs of Uthman in his scientific article entitled "Mushafs of Uthman Project: A New Look at its History and Numbering of Copies". According to him, the transfer and distribution of the Mushafs of Uthman was carried out in three stages, lasting approximately 8-9 years.

The first stage is between 25-30 hijri and is considered the most important period. At this time, the first copy of the pages of Abu Bakr was prepared, and according to many people, it was considered a personal copy of Uthman (R.A.). Later, three more copies were copied and sent to Basra, Kufa and Sham.

In the second stage, three more copies of the Mushaf were prepared and sent to Makkah, Bahrain and Yemen. The third phase included the years 33-34 hijri, in which mushafs were sent to Homs, Tabariyya and Tartus. According to another narration, a separate Mushaf was also sent to Egypt. In the next two stages, experts were also appointed to provide training from the mushafs.

Although Dr. Omar Hamdan has made many valuable points in this study, he presents many of his conclusions as guesswork rather than in firm form. His interpretation of the mushaf project into three stages has not yet been accepted by the scientific community.

<sup>6</sup> Umar Hamdan is an expert in Quranic sciences, a lecturer in tafsir and Quranic sciences at the Faculty of Islamic-Shari'i Sciences of the University of Tübingen (Germany), head of the "Islamic Jurisprudence Center" at this university.

It should be noted separately that the sources mainly mention six copies of Mecca, Medina, Basra, Kufa, Sham, and personal manuscripts of Hazrat Uthman. There is no clear information about Bahrain, Yemen and other countries. Therefore, the scholars did not agree on their existence in reality. At the moment, the absence of such an opinion cannot be a reason to deny the existence of these mushafs. They may have been copied from previous Mushafs and have not been described due to their lack of distinctive features.

It can be concluded that the work of moving and sending Mushafs of Uthman to different countries started at earliest in 25th year of Hijri and ended in 33rd year of Hijri at latest. Therefore, the manuscripts whose writing history does not correspond to this period cannot be attributed to Uthman ibn Affan.

It should also be stated that when the Mushafs of Uthman were distributed to different countries, there were other Mushafs in the hands of people. As the owners of such mushafs destroyed their own mushafs by the order of the caliph, copied the words of Mushaf of Uthman and copied the writing of the words in the same form, it is possible that they called these new copies "Mushafs of Uthman " in the sense of "according to the manuscript of Mushaf of Uthman ".

It is extremely important for the societies that strive to preserve the Muslim identity to continue the research on the creation of the Mushaf of Uthman, a universal and highly important event in the history of Islam, and to scientifically substantiate the information and conclusions contained in them. Eliminating the dubious claims spread by some ignorant people by scientifically substantiating the historical reality in this regard is one of the important tasks facing the researchers. The fact that one of the manuscripts attributed to Hazrat Uthman is kept in Tashkent makes the research in this regard a more urgent issue for Uzbek scientists.

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