

Deconstruction of the Ottoman Narrative in the Study of the Qur'an: A Comparative Analysis of At-Thabari's Tafsir and John Wansbrough's Criticism

Royan Majid Abiyi
Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia
E-mail: royanmajid33@gmail.com

Mutma'inah
Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia
E-mail: mutmainah@walisongo.ac.id

Manuscript received: January 16, 2026, revised: January 23, 2026; approved: January 29, 2026

Abstract

This study examines the deconstruction of the Uthmani Mushaf narrative in Qur'anic studies through a comparative analysis of At-Thabari's classical interpretation of Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2):2 and John Wansbrough's historical-critical approach. The aim of this research is to investigate how the concepts of revelation, textual authority, and the narrative of salvation are constructed within normative Islamic exegesis and how they are challenged by modern historical criticism. This research employs a qualitative, library-based method with clearly defined stages, including the collection of primary and secondary sources, content analysis of Jami' Al-Bayan, a critical examination of Qur'anic Studies and The Sectarian Milieu, and an epistemological comparison of the two interpretive frameworks. The findings indicate that At-Thabari understands revelation as a certain and transcendent reality that underpins spiritual transformation and salvation for the God-conscious, whereas Wansbrough interprets the certainty of revelation as an ideological construct shaped by the dynamics of the early Muslim community. The significance of this study lies in demonstrating that the Uthmani Mushaf functions not merely as a product of codification or a symbol of political authority, but also as a mechanism for stabilizing meaning that enabled the emergence of a normative exegetical tradition in early Islam, while simultaneously opening a critical dialogue between theological faith and modern academic approaches in Qur'anic studies.

Keywords: *Uthmani Mushaf, Salvation Narrative, At-Thabari Exegesis, John Wansbrough, Revelation.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas dekonstruksi narasi Mushaf Utsmani dalam studi Al-Qur'an melalui analisis komparatif antara tafsir klasik At-Thabari atas Q.S. Al-Baqarah ayat 2 dan kritik historis John Wansbrough. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji bagaimana konsep wahyu, otoritas teks, dan narasi keselamatan dibangun dalam tafsir normatif Islam serta ditantang oleh pendekatan historis kritis modern. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan tahapan metodologis yang meliputi: pengumpulan sumber primer dan sekunder, analisis isi tafsir Jami' Al-Bayan, pembacaan kritis karya Qur'anic Studies dan *The Sectarian Milieu*, serta perbandingan epistemologis antara kedua kerangka pemikiran tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa At-Thabari memaknai wahyu sebagai realitas transenden yang pasti dan menjadi dasar transformasi spiritual serta keselamatan bagi orang bertakwa, sedangkan Wansbrough menafsirkan

kepastian wahyu sebagai konstruksi ideologis yang lahir dari dinamika komunitas Muslim awal. Dampak kajian ini adalah memperlihatkan bahwa Mushaf Utsmani tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai hasil kodifikasi atau simbol kekuasaan, tetapi juga sebagai mekanisme stabilisasi makna yang memungkinkan lahirnya tradisi tafsir normatif dalam Islam awal, sekaligus membuka ruang dialog kritis antara iman teologis dan pendekatan akademik modern dalam studi Al-Qur'an.

Kata kunci: Mushaf Utsmani, Narasi Keselamatan, Tafsir At-Tabari, John Wansbrough, Wahyu

A. Introduction

In contemporary Islamic studies, attention to the origins of the Qur'anic text and to its authority as revelation is growing.¹ Along with that, there has been a tendency among academics to re-examine the classical narrative of the codification of the Qur'an, including the existence of the Ottoman Mushaf, which has been believed to be the final and authentic text of divine revelation.² In the midst of the rapid growth of the study of textual criticism and religious history, new questions arise whether the Qur'an as we know it today indeed dates from the time of the Prophet Muhammad without change, or is it the result of an editorial process that took place in the history of the early Muslim community? This phenomenon not only disturbs the historicity of revelation but also affects Muslims' interpretation and understanding of salvation, faith, and the authority of sacred texts.

This study aims to analyze how At-Tabari's interpretation of Q.S. Al-Baqarah verse 2 forms a theocentric and ethical narrative of salvation, and how this narrative stands as an antithesis to the deconstructive criticism proposed by John Wansbrough.³ This research also explores how classical interpretations of revelation, texts, and instructions for salvation are challenged by historical-literary approaches that question the origins, editorial processes, and legitimacy of the Qur'anic text. By comparing the two, this study aims to show the dynamics of the relationship between traditional faith and the scientific approach to understanding revelation and the authority of sacred texts.

This research departs from the assumption that At-Tabari's interpretation of Q.S. Al-Baqarah verse 2 reflects Islamic salvation theology, which relies on the concept of revelation as the final, transcendent instruction. In such a framework, salvation does not come

¹ Budi Sujati, 'The Revelation of the Prophet Muhammad in an Orientalist View', *Tamaddun Journal: Journal of Islamic History and Culture*, 6.1 (2018).

² Aksin Wijaya, Nur Rif'ah Hasaniy, and Tati Nur Pebiyanti, *Islam with Humanity* (IRCiSoD, 2021).

³ Fahrurrozi Fahrurrozi, 'The Implementation of the Double Movement Hermeneutics Method (Study of Fazlurrahman's Thought in Interpreting Khilafah Verses)' (UIN Mataram, 2022).

automatically, but is given to those who meet the conditions of piety.⁴ On the other hand, John Wansbrough's critique of the concept of revelation and the Ottoman Mushaf implies that the text of the Qur'an is the result of a non-linear historical process and is inseparable from political and sectarian interests.⁵ John Wansbrough was an orientalist from the United States who is widely regarded as the leading figure in the critical approach to the study of the Qur'an.⁶ His most influential contributions are *Qur'anic Studies* and *The Sectarian Milieu*, which offer a radical approach by questioning the historical validity of the Ottoman Mushaf and arguing that the text of the Qur'an resulted from a complex and unresolved editorial process during the Prophet's time.⁷ John Wansbrough's thinking is influenced by the tradition of biblical criticism, especially the historical *criticism method* used in the study of the Old and New Testaments.⁸

Therefore, the hypothesis put forward in this study is that the salvation narrative in the At-Thabari interpretation rests on the authority of the text which is believed to be absolute, while Wansbrough's criticism suggests that such authority is established, rather than authentically inherited. This contradiction opens up a space for a critical dialogue between tradition and rationality in understanding revelation and salvation in Islam.

B. Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method grounded in a literature review of relevant academic sources. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research does not aim to measure phenomena statistically, but rather to interpret, understand, and compare the theological and epistemological meanings contained in classical interpretive texts and in modern Qur'anic criticism. Through this approach, the researcher seeks to uncover the paradigm differences in understanding revelation, textual authority, and salvation narratives between the tradition of classical Islamic interpretation and contemporary historical criticism.

⁴ Chusnul Chotimah, 'Manhaj Tahlili Bi Al-Ra'y: An Analysis of Manhaj Tafsir Al-Qur'an At-Thabari in Tafsir Jami'ul Bayan 'an Ta'Wilil Qur'an', *Axioreligia*, 1.1 (2023), pp. 12–20.

⁵ Ahmad Mustakim and others, 'DECONSTRUCTING THE HISTORICITY OF THE QUR'AN JOHN WANSBROUGH'S PERSPECTIVE: A HERMENEUTIC STUDY OF ISLAMIC PHILOLOGICAL SUSPICION AND CRITICISM', 2025.

⁶ Maqdis Maqdis and Lukman Hakim, 'The Principles of Qur'an Interpretation from John Wansbrough's Perspective and Its Comparison with the Islamic Mufasir Tradition', *At-Taisir: Journal of Indonesian Tafsir Studies*, 3.2 (2022), pp. 1–8.

⁷ Agung Perdana Kusuma, 'John Wansbrough's Study of Non-Muslim Western Scholars on the Salvation History of the Qur'an', 2020.

⁸ Michael Graves, 'Form Criticism or a Rolling Corpus: The Methodology of John Wansbrough through the Lens of Biblical Studies', *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association*, 1.1 (2016), pp. 47–92.

This research is comparative-analytical, namely, a methodological and epistemological comparison of two frameworks of thought. The main object of study of this study is the interpretation of Q.S. Al-Baqarah verse 2 in the work of *Jami' Al-Bayan 'an Ta'wil Al-Qur'an* by At-Tabari as a representation of classical interpretation, as well as the criticism of John Wansbrough as stated in *Qur'anic Studies* and *The Sectarian Milieu* as a representation of the modern historical-critical approach. This comparison was made to examine how each tradition constructs a narrative about revelation, textual authenticity, and salvation.

The analytical approach used in this study combines historical-critical hermeneutics with a narrative analysis of *salvation history*. Historical-critical hermeneutics is used to read the Qur'an and its interpretation as a product of a particular historical, social, and intellectual context.⁹ In this framework, At-Tabari's interpretation is understood as the result of the interaction among revelation, narrative traditions, and the theological needs of classical Muslims. Meanwhile, John Wansbrough's approach is analyzed as a critique of normative assumptions about the revelation and codification of the Qur'anic text by placing the text as the result of the historical and discursive construction of the early Muslim community.

With this methodology, the research is expected to present an objective, argumentative, and academic analysis of paradigm differences in understanding revelation and the narrative of salvation, and to contribute to the development of Qur'an studies and interpretation in the contemporary academic realm.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Reconstructing Early Islamic History: An Intellectual Biography of John Wansbrough

John Wansbrough is a British academic who is known as one of the pioneers of the critical study and history of the modern Qur'an. He devoted his life to the study of religious texts and early Islamic historical documents, using a critical approach that combined historical studies, philology, and literary criticism.¹⁰ John Wansbrough was born in 1928 and educated at Oxford University, where he began to develop his interest in Arabic and Islamic studies. His academic career was mainly at the School of Oriental

⁹ Fransius Kusmanto and Peter Enos Mendrofa, 'THE IMPORTANCE OF USING CRITICAL HISTORICAL METHODS IN STUDYING THE BIBLE', *EKKLESIA: Journal of Christian Theology and Education*, 3.2 (2025), pp. 138–47.

¹⁰ Kusuma.

and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, where he became one of the leading lecturers and researchers in Islamic history and the Qur'an.¹¹

John Wansbrough died in 2002, leaving an intellectual legacy that continues to shape debate and influence in the study of modern Islam. John Wansbrough began his academic career by studying Arabic language and literature, as well as classical religious texts. After completing his education at Oxford, he joined SOAS in London, where he spent most of his career. There, he built a reputation as a meticulous and critical scholar, with an interdisciplinary approach that integrates history, linguistics, and textual theory.¹² His academic life was greatly influenced by the development of religious history in the 20th century, especially the emergence of a critical approach to religious texts that had previously been considered sacred and scientifically untouchable. In this review, the main reference to John Wansbrough's thought is strictly limited to his own works, not to the writings of reviewers or secondary interpreters. These limitations are important to maintain the authenticity of the analysis and avoid the interpretive biases that often appear in the derivative literature.

John Wansbrough was also a Western Orientalist, whose approach was highly critical of the study of the Qur'an.¹³ The term Orientalist refers to Western scholars who academically study the Eastern world, including Islam, the Qur'an, its history, and culture. By using the methodological tools of modern humanities such as philology, critical history, anthropology, and literary criticism.¹⁴ In Islamic studies, orientalists cannot be understood as a homogeneous group; they encompass a wide spectrum of approaches, ranging from descriptive and philological to radical critical.¹⁵ In the Western academic tradition, orientalism initially developed as part of the study of the philology and history of the Ancient Near East, focusing on Semitic languages, religious texts, and ancient Eastern civilizations.¹⁶ However, in the study of the Qur'an, orientals such as John Wansbrough, Michael Cook, and Patricia Crone introduced approaches

¹¹ Abdul Karim, 'Orientalist Thought on the Study of Hadith Tafsir', *Addin*, 7.2 (2015).

¹² Kusuma.

¹³ Fauzan Zil Ikram Ahmad, Muhammad Fathurrahman Lasaba, and Mustaqimah Mustaqimah, 'ORIENTALISTS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE QUR'AN, AND HADITH', *TADAYYUN: Journal of Religious, Social and Humanities Studies*, 2.1 (2024), pp. 122–50.

¹⁴ Lulu Nurul Khasanah and Syaifiin Mansur, 'The Contribution and Controversy of Orientalist Tafsir in the Process of Reform of Modern Islamic Thought', *Journal of Islamic Religious Ethics*, 3.6 (2025), pp. 1–18.

¹⁵ M Ulil Abshor and M Miftahun Najib, 'Orientalism and the Study of the Qur'an Theme', *AR ROSYAD: Journal of Islamic and Social Humanities*, 3.2 (2025), pp. 114–28.

¹⁶ Suzanne L Marchand, 'German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race and Scholarship', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 2, 2010.

that explicitly questioned the traditional Islamic narrative of revelation and the codification of the mushaf.¹⁷

In contrast to orientalists, *the term Islamist or Islamicist* in an academic context refers to a scholar. Especially Muslims who study Islam and the Qur'an while still using modern scientific methodologies, but departing from the framework of Islam's internal epistemology.¹⁸ This approach does not reject historical, linguistic, or contextual analysis, but places revelation as a transcendent and normative reality that becomes the starting point for interpretation. Thus, the study of the Qur'an from an Islamist perspective seeks to balance academic objectivity with theological commitment to the authority of revelation.¹⁹

John Wansbrough's two major works that formed the foundation of his thinking on the Qur'an were *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (1977) and *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (1978). In *Qur'anic Studies*, Wansbrough developed a literary and philological critique approach to the Qur'anic text by rejecting the assumption that the mushaf had reached its final form in the time of the Prophet Muhammad.²⁰ John Wansbrough views the Qur'an as a text that undergoes a long process of composition and redaction, comparable to the development of scripture in the Judeo-Christian tradition.²¹

Meanwhile, in *The Sectarian Milieu*, Wansbrough more explicitly discusses how the salvation narrative in Islam was formed through the sectarian dynamics of the early Muslim community. He places the text of the Qur'an within an intra-community polemic aimed at building religious identity, legitimacy, and authority.²² These two works not only became the methodological basis for modern Qur'anic criticism but also marked a radical shift in Western Islamic studies from a descriptive approach to historical-structural criticism.

John Wansbrough emphasizes that the Qur'an is the result of a long literary and editorial process in the context of early Islamic sectarian polemics.²³ However, this

¹⁷ Henning Trüper, 'Suzanne L. Marchand, German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, Scholarship', *Historische Anthropologie*, 19.1 (2011), pp. 161–63.

¹⁸ Khan M Husain, 'Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition' (JSTOR, 1983).

¹⁹ Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (Taylor & Francis, 2005).

²⁰ John E Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, Edisi pert (Prometheus Books tahun 2004, 1977), pp. 1–10.

²¹ John E Wansbrough and Andrew Rippin, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford University Press Oxford, 1977), CXCIV, pp. 44–45.

²² John E Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition Of Islamic Salvation History*, 1st Editio (1978).

²³ Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition Of Islamic Salvation History*, pp. 119–21.

claim is hypothetical and not supported by the manuscript's evidence, which does not explicitly suggest the existence of a long-term process of collective composition.²⁴ Philological research on early Qur'anic manuscripts, such as the Sana'a palimpsest, has revealed textual variations, but these are generally limited to orthography, word structure, and reading traditions.²⁵ These variations are insufficient to support the assumption that the basic structure of the Qur'an was still fluid or had not yet been formed in the early period.²⁶ Therefore, Wansbrough's approach is better understood as a theoretical reconstruction grounded in literary criticism and an analogy with biblical criticism, rather than as a historical conclusion verified by manuscript data.²⁷

2. The Qur'an as a Social Product: John Wansbrough's Historical-Philological Critique

John Wansbrough in his work *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* and *The Sectarian Milieu* argues that the concept of revelation in Islam needs to be questioned.²⁸ Wansbrough viewed the Qur'an as a literary product that flourished in a sectarian milieu fraught with debate between various early Muslim groups.²⁹ Thus, revelation does not come in the form of a final text from heaven, but rather is the result of a gradual process of composition, redaction, and reproduction.³⁰ According to Wansbrough, there is no strong enough historical evidence to confirm that the Qur'an was circulated in complete and standard book form during the time of the Prophet Muhammad or in the period of Ottoman codification.³¹ For Wansbrough, the experience of revelation is better understood within the framework of social and cultural phenomena, in which the early Muslim community played a central role in interpreting the teachings of their religion through sacred texts.³²

²⁴ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*.

²⁵ Behnam Sadeghi and Mohsen Goudarzi, 'San'a'1 and the Origins of the Qur'an', *Der Islam*, 87.1/2 (2012), p. 1.

²⁶ Angelika Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage* (Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 35–40.

²⁷ Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qur'ân in Its Historical Context* (Routledge London, 2008), pp. 12–18.

²⁸ John E Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* introduces a historical-critical approach to the Qur'anic text, highlighting how the early Islamic narrative was shaped through literary and community processes.

²⁹ John E Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition Of Islamic Salvation History*, 1st Edition (1978).

³⁰ Johana Salsabillah, 'THE QUR'AN ACCORDING TO THE THOUGHT OF JOHN WANSBROUGH', *Al-Qolam: Journal of the Science of the Quran and Tafsir*, 1.1 (2024), pp. 23–32.

³¹ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 39–47.

³² Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 1–16.

John Wansbrough, through his approach to literary criticism and the history of discourse, rejects the view that the Qur'an was composed in the time of the Prophet.³³ He proposed that the Qur'anic mushaf known to Muslims today was the result of a long editorial process that had just been completed between the 8th and 9th centuries.³⁴ Within the framework of Wansbrough's literary-historical analysis, the declarative verses of the Qur'an can be understood not merely as a transcript of spontaneous revelation that descended ahistorically, but as a form of *authoritative proclamation* that affirms the authority and legitimacy of the community of believers. In this context, QS al-Baqarah 2, with its normative affirmation of the Qur'an's status as a guide, can undoubtedly be read as an example of such authoritative discourse, as explained in Wansbrough's typology of scriptural discourse.³⁵

Wansbrough places it in the rhetorical tradition of the scriptures of the late antique monotheistic religions. He writes: "*Assertions of scriptural authority belong to the rhetoric of self-authentication characteristic of late antique religious communities.*"³⁶ Within this framework, the statement "there is no doubt about it" is not understood as a metaphysical declaration by God, but rather as a claim to the text's legitimacy amid the ongoing authority debate. This perspective consciously shifts the center of analysis from "God who speaks" to "community that confirms words".³⁷

John Wansbrough's fundamental criticism of the concept of revelation in Islam stems from his rejection of historiographical assumptions that regard revelation as a linear, verbatim event transmitted to the Prophet Muhammad.³⁸ In *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, Wansbrough explicitly rejects the classical assumption of the Qur'an's initial finality. He states: "*The Qur'ān is not a document contemporaneous with the beginnings of Islam, but rather the product of a long process of transmission and redaction*".³⁹ The statement shows that Wansbrough places the Qur'an not as a completed and established text in prophetic times, but as the result of a long historical process.⁴⁰ Methodologically, this view departs from philological

³³ Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, 'The Tradition of Orientalism and the Framework of Qur'an Studies', *Tsaqafah*, 7.1 (2011), pp. 1–30.

³⁴ M Djidin, 'The Problematics of the Qur'an (A Critical Study of the Views of Western Scholars)', *Ushuluddin Journal: Media of Islamic Thought Dialogue*, 15.1 (2011), pp. 1–19.

³⁵ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 39–47.

³⁶ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 43–45.

³⁷ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 43–45.

³⁸ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 39–42.

³⁹ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 40–47.

criticism and from a comparative approach to the history of the canonization of scripture in the Jewish and Christian traditions, which Wansbrough uses to read the formation of the Qur'anic text as a gradual and discursive process rather than an instantaneous event.⁴¹

This approach has implications not only for the historical aspect of revelation but also for the Islamic theological conception of the Qur'an as Allah's permanent *kalam*. In this building of thought, revelation is understood to always be intertwined with language, culture, and human historical conditions.⁴² Thus, the reading of revelation needs to be placed within the framework of systematic philological, intertextual, and historical studies. This approach opens up space for analysis to understand revelation not merely as a spiritual claim but as a narrative construct that developed within the social and political context of the early Muslim community.

In John Wansbrough's view, revelation in Islam is not understood as an instantaneous, linear process, but rather as the result of a literary composition that unfolds over a certain span of time.⁴³ This indication is evident in the presence of editorial layers and in the use of literary devices such as parallelism, repetition, and complex rhetorical structures. John Wansbrough not only questions the form and chronology of revelation, but also challenges the assumption of the absolute originality of the contents of the Qur'an. In *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, Wansbrough asserts that the narrative of salvation in Islam is not born directly from revelation. Rather, it is from the dynamics of the post-Prophetic community: "*Islamic salvation history was formulated retrospectively within a sectarian environment.*"⁴⁴ This quote is the basis for using the term "*salvation history*" in this study. For Wansbrough, the history of Islamic salvation is not a direct reflection of the divine will. But it was a theological narrative that was formed to assert the identity and legitimacy of the early Muslim community.⁴⁵ Thus, verses that affirm the authority of revelation, including (Q.S. Al-Baqarah):(2), are understood as part of a rhetorical strategy to reinforce claims of textual truth.

⁴¹ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 52–55.

⁴² Jidin Mukti, 'The Controversy over the Validity of the Ottoman Mushaf in Mun'im Sirry's View of the Canonization of the Quran' (State Islamic University of North Sumatra Meddan, 2018).

⁴³ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 41–43.

⁴⁴ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, p. 119.

⁴⁵ Kusuma.

John Wansbrough's view of making a clear analytical differentiation within the religious experience of revelation and the final form of the Qur'anic text raises serious questions when read from the perspective of normative Islamic theology.⁴⁶ Therefore, his view is better understood as a historical-literary construction that departs from the methodology of biblical criticism, rather than as a theological description of revelation in Islam.⁴⁷ It is important to emphasize that Wansbrough's approach is historic-critical and represents a particular school in Western Qur'anic studies; therefore, it cannot be considered a universal academic consensus.⁴⁸ This affirmation is crucial to ensure that the reading of Wansbrough's thought is not misunderstood as a neutral or objective position on the concept of revelation, but rather as the result of epistemological assumptions that differ fundamentally from the framework of classical Islamic theology.

John Wansbrough emphasizes that the Qur'an is the product of a long literary and redactional process within the context of early Islamic sectarian polemics.⁴⁹ However, this claim is hypothetical and not supported by manuscript evidence that explicitly demonstrates the existence of a long-term collective process of composition.⁵⁰ Philological research on early Qur'anic manuscripts, such as the Sana'a palimpsest, reveals textual variations; however, these are generally limited to orthography, word order, and reading traditions.⁵¹ These variations are insufficient to support the assumption that the Qur'an's basic structure was still fluid or had not yet been established in the early period.⁵² Therefore, Wansbrough's approach is better understood as a theoretical reconstruction grounded in literary criticism and analogies with biblical criticism, rather than as a historical conclusion verified by manuscript evidence.⁵³

Although John Wansbrough's historical-critical approach significantly broadened the horizons of modern Qur'anic studies, his views on the process of Qur'anic composition lasting until the 8th or 9th century, as well as the strong influence of the Judeo-Christian tradition, cannot be regarded as a consensus.⁵⁴ A number of scholars, such as Harald Motzki and Gregor Schoeler, criticized this approach for relying too much on *argumentum ex silentio* and for tending to ignore the role of oral transmission, a major

⁴⁶ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 14–18.

⁴⁷ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 40–45.

⁴⁸ Andrew Rippin, *The Qur'an and Its Interpretative Tradition*, 1st Editio (2001), pp. 25–30.

⁴⁹ Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition Of Islamic Salvation History*, pp. 119–21.

⁵⁰ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*.

⁵¹ Sadeghi and Goudarzi.

⁵² Neuwirth, pp. 35–40.

⁵³ Reynolds, pp. 12–18.

⁵⁴ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 44–52.

characteristic of early Arab societies.⁵⁵ In addition, applying the biblical criticism model to the Qur'an contains problematic comparative assumptions, as it methodologically equates the canonization of the Islamic holy book with that of Jewish and Christian traditions, which have fundamentally different historical contexts and transmission patterns.⁵⁶

Furthermore, Wansbrough's approach operates within a historical-secular epistemological framework that methodologically suspends claims of revelational transcendence. On the other hand, classical interpretations, such as At-Tabari's, depart from the theological assumption that revelation is a divine reality that serves as the epistemic basis of interpretation. This distinction suggests that Wansbrough's criticism does not directly invalidate the authority of classical interpretation, but rather challenges it from fundamentally different external paradigms.⁵⁷ By clearly distinguishing historical-critical approaches from Muslim theological beliefs, this research avoids a reductive reading of Islamic interpretive traditions and seeks to present a more nuanced, dialogical, and reflective interpretation of revelation and the narrative of salvation.

The background to John Wansbrough's thought is rooted in the tradition of biblical criticism that developed in Western religious studies in the 20th century.⁵⁸ This tradition places scripture as a historical text, formed through the processes of transmission, redaction, and canonization within a community of believers, rather than as a revelation present from the beginning in a final and standard form.⁵⁹ By adopting the historical-critical *method* commonly used in the study of the Old and New Testaments, Wansbrough applies similar epistemological assumptions to the reading of the Qur'an.⁶⁰ Consequently, he rejected the normative Islamic view, which regards the mushaf as a transcendent revelation that has been perfect since the time of the Prophet Muhammad.⁶¹ Within this framework, Wansbrough's critique of the Ottoman Mushaf and the concept of the unity of revelation is not intended as a purely theological rejection, but rather as

⁵⁵ Harald Motzki, 'The Collection of the Qur'ān. A Reconsideration of Western Views in Light of Recent Methodological Developments', 2001.

⁵⁶ Neuwirth.

⁵⁷ Rippin.

⁵⁸ Edward Ullendorff, 'John Wansbrough: Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation. (London Oriental Series, Vol. 31.) Xxvi, 256 Pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.£ 16.', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 40.3 (1977), pp. 609–12.

⁵⁹ Kusmanto and Mendrofa.

⁶⁰ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 1–20.

⁶¹ Muhammad Syahrul Mubarak and Erina Aolia Pangesti, 'PARADIGM SKEPTICAL TOWARDS THE EXISTENCE OF THE HISTORICITY OF THE QUR'AN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF JOHN WANSBROUGH', *BIDAYAH: A STUDY OF ISLAMIC SCIENCES*, 2024, pp. 198–215.

a methodological implication of a textual historical paradigm that places the early Muslim community as a major actor in the formation of the authority and legitimacy of sacred texts.⁶²

Thus, the novelty of this study lies in the attempt to see John Wansbrough's criticism not only as a rejection of the codified history of the Ottoman Mushaf but as a way of explaining how the authority of revelation was formed in early Islam.⁶³ This approach allows QS al-Baqarah verse 2 to be understood not only as a theological statement but also as a text that actively affirms the authority of the Qur'an amid sectarian differences and debates. In this section, the study also critiques Wansbrough, arguing that his overemphasis on revelation as a social construct risks overlooking the spiritual dimension and prophetic experience that are the main basis of classical interpretation.

3. Revelation and Transformation of Spirituality in At-Tabari's Theological Study of Al-Baqarah verse 2

Q.S. Al-Baqarah verse 2 is one of the discussions on this theme. By taking At-Tabari's interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah verse 2, which reads:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

That is: there is no doubt about this book (the Quran); guidance for those who are pious.

In the translation of the book Jami' Al-Bayan 'an Ta'wil Al-Qur'an, At-Tabari discusses this verse in detail through the approach of tafsir bil matsur, which is to use the narration of the companions and tabi'in as well as linguistic and contextual reasoning.⁶⁴ Tafsir Jami' al-Bayan, At-Tabari places (Q.S. Al-Baqarah) verse (2) as the theological foundation for the entire edifice of Islamic epistemology.⁶⁵ In the framework of interpreting At-Tabari as analyzed by Zaenal Muttaqin, "this verse does not merely function as a textual opening, but can be understood as a normative declaration regarding the status of revelation, the mechanism of guidance, and the conditions of

⁶² Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition Of Islamic Salvation History*, pp. 1–10.

⁶³ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, vol. 1.

⁶⁴ F A R MUHAMMAD B I N JARIR AT-THABARI, *Translation of Tafsir Jami' Al-Bayan An Ta'wil Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Abdul Mun'im Madkur Abdul Hamid, Cet 1 (1985).

⁶⁵ F A R MUHAMMAD B I N JARIR AT-THABARI, *Translation of Tafsir Jami' Al-Bayan An Ta'wil Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Abdul Mun'im Madkur Abdul Hamid, Cet 1 (1985), vol. 1.

salvation".⁶⁶ Thus, in the interpretation of At-Thabari revelation is not only understood as divine information, but also as a medium of spiritual transformation that demands the active involvement of the believing subject in line with the view of praxian theology as stated by "M. Amin Syukur".⁶⁷

In At-Thabari's interpretation, as narrated by the mufasir in his book, the phrase *ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ* indicates that revelation is a transcendent reality with absolute authority over human religious experience.⁶⁸ The sign word *ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ* does not only show linguistic distance, but serves as a ta'zim (exaltation) of the Qur'an.⁶⁹ In his book, At-Thabari said, based on several mufasir narrations, that the interpretation of *ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ* is the Book of the Torah and the Gospel. If so, the excision does not need to excise the word *ذَلِكَ* as above. Because he is right to inform the news that is supernatural or invisible.⁷⁰ Such exaltation constitutes the spiritual realization that revelation is not the product of human reflection but a normative source above human history and rationality.⁷¹

The word *لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ* emphasizes the theological dimension of revelation as a text free from doubt. At-Thabari, in his book, through the historical opinions of the mufasir, understands the absence of doubt not just as a doctrinal claim, but as an epistemic condition that allows the certainty of faith.⁷² This certainty is the main prerequisite for spiritual transformation, because without belief in the validity of revelation, man cannot make it an ethical and existential guideline.⁷³ Thus, in the tafsir of At-Thabari as analyzed by Zaenal Muttaqin, "revelation can be understood to function as an instrument of forming faith beliefs, which further directs the orientation of human life towards salvation".⁷⁴

⁶⁶ Zaenal Muttaqin, *The Interpretation of Qur'anic Verses on the Salvation of Religious Others by Abū Jaḥfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923): Content and Method* (The University of Manchester (United Kingdom), 2018).

⁶⁷ M Amin Syukur, *Applied Islamic Theology: Anticipatory Efforts to Hedonism in Modern Life* (Tiga Serangkai, 2003).

⁶⁸ AT-THABARI, *Translation of Tafsir Jami' Al-Bayan An Ta'wil Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Abdul Mun'im Madkur Abdul Hamid, *Tafsir Surah Al-Baqarah:2*, Cet 1 (1985) vol. 1.

⁶⁹ AT-THABARI, *Translation of Tafsir Jami' Al-Bayan An Ta'wil Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Abdul Mun'im Madkur Abdul Hamid, Cet 1 (1985), vol. 1.

⁷⁰ AT-THABARI, p. 293.

⁷¹ AT-THABARI, vol. 1.

⁷² AT-THABARI, *Translation of Tafsir Jami' Al-Bayan An Ta'wil Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Abdul Mun'im Madkur Abdul Hamid, Cet 1 (1985), vol. 1.

⁷³ AT-THABARI, *Translation of Tafsir Jami' Al-Bayan An Ta'wil Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Abdul Mun'im Madkur Abdul Hamid, Cet 1 (1985), vol. 1.

⁷⁴ Muttaqin.

The peak of the concept of spiritual transformation in the tafsir of At-Thabari lies in the word هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ (guidance for the pious).⁷⁵ The guidance in this verse, as reflected in the characteristics of Al-Muflihun analyzed by Emra et al, "is not understood as a universal instruction that works automatically, but rather as an effective selective guidance for those who have spiritual readiness in the form of piety".⁷⁶ In some of the opinions of the mufasir in the book of tafsir, At-Thabari emphasizes that piety includes faith in the supernatural, ritual obedience, and ethical commitment.⁷⁷ In the framework of At-Tabari's interpretation as analyzed by Zaenal Muttaqin, "salvation is not understood as a status given unconditionally, but as a religious process that demands the internalization of the values of revelation".⁷⁸ In the framework of contextual interpretation, as stated by Abdullah Saeed, "spiritual transformation can be understood to occur when revelation is not only read textually, but also lived and embodied in the praxis of life".⁷⁹

If read comparatively, At-Tabari's view is epistemologically opposed to John Wansbrough's criticism.⁸⁰ For At-Thabari, in his book, the certainty of the revelation, لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ, is the starting point of spiritual transformation.⁸¹ As for Wansbrough, the statement is understood as a claim of textual legitimacy born from the dynamics of the early Muslim community.⁸² This distinction suggests that At-Thabari's interpretation operates within a theological-normative paradigm, while Wansbrough's approach, as classified by Andrew Rippin, "operates within a historical-critical framework that does not depart from theological assumptions about the transcendence of revelation".⁸³ Thus, the spiritual transformation in the interpretation of At-Thabari cannot be separated from the belief in revelation as the final divine reality.⁸⁴ In the framework of Tafsir At-

⁷⁵ AT-THABARI. *Translation of Tafsir Jami' Al-Bayan An Ta'wil Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Abdul Mun'im Madkur Abdul Hamid, Cet 1 (1985), vol. 1.

⁷⁶ Yusril Emra, Achmad Abubakar, and Muhammad Irham, 'Characteristics of Al-Muflihun {U< n in the Qur'an (Tafsir Tah Study} Li> Li> QS Al-Baqarah/2: 5)', *Al-Mubarak Journal: Journal of Qur'an Studies and Tafsir*, 9.1 (2024), pp. 35–48.

⁷⁷ AT-THABARI, *Translation of Tafsir Jami' Al-Bayan An Ta'wil Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Abdul Mun'im Madkur Abdul Hamid, Cet 1 (1985), vol. 1.

⁷⁸ Muttaqin.

⁷⁹ Saeed.

⁸⁰ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*.

⁸¹ AT-THABARI. *Translation of Tafsir Jami' Al-Bayan An Ta'wil Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Abdul Mun'im Madkur Abdul Hamid, Cet 1 (1985), vol. 1.

⁸² Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition Of Islamic Salvation History*.

⁸³ Rippin, Explains that Wansbrough developed a historical-critical approach Asserts that this approach differs epistemologically from classical Muslim interpretations Suggests that Wansbrough's approach

⁸⁴ AT-THABARI, vol. 1.

Thabari as analyzed by Zaenal Muttaqin Al-Baqarah:2, it can be understood "as the initial foundation of the Islamic narrative of salvation, where salvation is born from the active relationship between revelation as a normative source and pious human beings".⁸⁵

It can be explained at this point that this theme lies in the way of reading the tafsir of At-Thabari, which sees revelation not only as a source of law or moral teachings, but also as a force that shapes the way of thinking and spiritual consciousness of man.⁸⁶ QS al-Baqarah verse 2 shows that belief in the certainty of revelation is the basis for spiritual change, because it directs people from the search for speculative meaning to an attitude of submission to divine guidance.⁸⁷ This reading also confirms that spirituality in classical interpretation cannot be understood solely as a product of social construction, as assumed by John Wansbrough's historical-critical approach.

4. The Ottoman Mushaf and the Myth of the Unity of Revelation: John Wansbrough's Historical Deconstruction of the Islamic Tafsir Tradition

The Ottoman Mushaf narrative is understood as a consensus in Orthodox Islamic history that the codification of the Ottoman Mushaf standardized the text of the Qur'an and ended discrepancies in reading that could cause conflict.⁸⁸ However, Wansbrough's approach opens up a space for the deconstruction of this narrative.⁸⁹ By dismantling this narrative, Wansbrough challenges the epistemology of classical interpretation, since many scholars, including At-Thabari, base their interpretations on such historical assumptions.⁹⁰ QS al-Baqarah:2, which seems simple, is precisely the ideological foothold for the entire authority structure in classical Islam.

Researchers such as Wansbrough, Puin, and Neuwirth note that no 7th-century manuscript explicitly indicates the final form of the Ottoman Mushaf.⁹¹ Even the oldest manuscripts, such as the Sana'a Palimpsest, show textual variations, which indicate a lengthy process of redaction and revision.⁹² The Ottoman narrative claims the unity of

⁸⁵ Muttaqin.

⁸⁶ AT-THABARI, vol. 1.

⁸⁷ AT-THABARI, vol. 1.

⁸⁸ Lavinatus Sholikhah and Linda Rosyidah, 'The History of the Codification of the Qur'an Mushaf Uthmani', *Ta'wiluna: Journal of Qur'anic Science, Tafsir and Islamic Thought*, 1.2 (2020), pp. 64–82.

⁸⁹ Sulaiman Ibrahim, 'The History of the Qur'an Text: A Study of John Wansbrough's Thought', *Jurnal Farabi*, 13 (2016), pp. 187–207.

⁹⁰ Wansbrough and Rippin, CXCIV.

⁹¹ Gerd-R Puin, 'Observations on Early Qur'an Manuscripts in San'a', in *The Qur'an as Text* (Brill, 1996), pp. 107–11.

⁹² Muhammad Fajarussalam Al-Hamdani, 'Western Scholars' Study of the Qur'an: A Study of Angelika Neuwirth's Thought' (FU, 2022).

reading and text, whereas early Islamic sources, such as in the narration of Ibn Abi Dawud (in *Kitab al-Mashahif*), mention a wide variety of readings (*qira'at*) even after codification.⁹³ This indicates that the text's unity does not necessarily occur in every sense. According to some scholars, political motives and narrative authority suggest that this codification project is more a political project to unite Muslims socially and administratively than a purely religious one. In this context, the "standardization of the mushaf" became a tool for legitimizing Uthmanic authority and for controlling the production of meaning in the early Muslim communities.⁹⁴

The concept of the unity of revelation holds that the Qur'an is a revelation that descends chronologically, memorized and recorded during the Prophet's lifetime, and then compiled systematically.⁹⁵ This is a fundamental assumption in classical interpretations, such as At-Thabari's work, which linearly uses the verses of the Makkiah and Madaniyah in interpreting the text.⁹⁶ However, Wansbrough criticizes the Qur'an's structure as a coherent, systematic text, using a historical-critical method combined with literary examination to suggest that the Qur'an exhibits patterns of repetition, ellipsis, and rhetorical variation that, he argues, do not support reading it as an orderly chronological narrative.⁹⁷ Many verses appear to be editorial additions, suggesting that the text undergoes editing and revision all the time.

This deconstruction paved the way to see the Qur'an not as the final text from the beginning, but as a dynamic, evolutionary, and open process of negotiation of meaning in the early days of Islam. The narrative of the Ottoman Mushaf is not only concerned with the collection of texts, but also the formation of orthodoxy in the face of plurality. By declaring one version of the Qur'an as final, Uthman's caliphate at the same time established a certain form of Islam by eliminating other groups, such as the early Shi'a, Khawarij, and even local variants.⁹⁸ John Wansbrough views the canonization of revelation as a historical process related to the need for early Islamic authority to establish religious orthodoxy, a process that was later stabilized through the

⁹³ Emir Surya Kautsar, Ahmad Mujahid, and M Ag Sohrah, 'The Writing of the Qur'an at the Time of the Prophet and Khulafaur Rasyidun: Jam'ul, Codification, and Unification', *Academia. Edu*.

⁹⁴ Al-Hamdani.

⁹⁵ Jauhar Azizy and Muhammad Sairi, 'The Qur'an Between Aural Revelation and the Codification of 'Uthmānī', 2018.

⁹⁶ AT-THABARI, vol. 1.

⁹⁷ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, This approach is taken by Wansbrough in his main work described in the Introduction and Methodology section.

⁹⁸ Yusuf Rahman, 'The Qur'an and its Tafsir in the Perspective of Toshihiko Izutsu' (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta: Postgraduate School, 2010).

development of interpretive literature and traditions.⁹⁹ Thus, the Ottoman Mushaf is not just a text, but a hegemonic symbol that negates other alternatives.¹⁰⁰

However, the historical and philological approach taken by Wansbrough, as well as other scholars such as Angelika Neuwirth and Gerd R. Puin, actually shows that the text of the Qur'an reflects a long and complex editorial process.¹⁰¹ Wansbrough argues that the structure of the Qur'an is full of repetition, rhetorical shifts, and non-linear logical transitions, all of which suggest that the Qur'an is more like a collection of fragments gradually assembled rather than a text that comes down whole.¹⁰² He identifies various literary forms such as parallelism, repetition, and inclusion as characteristic texts that are formed through the process of writing and editing, rather than mere copying of revelation. Seeing this, Wansbrough concludes that the unity of revelation in the traditional sense cannot be critically maintained.¹⁰³ He called the concept a "post-factual assumption," a belief formed after the text is considered final and then applied retroactively to the process of revelation.¹⁰⁴ Thus, according to Wansbrough, the unity of revelation cannot be understood as a directly given historical reality, but rather as an ideological construct formed retrospectively to affirm the authority and originality of the sacred text. This construction serves to face external challenges from other religious traditions while reducing internal fragmentation in early Islam.¹⁰⁵

Surah (Al-Baqarah):(2) is one of the verses that is very fundamental in shaping the perception of Muslims towards the Qur'an. This verse states, *ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ* (There is no doubt about it, a guide for the righteous). In classical interpretations, such as At-Thabari's, this verse is read as a direct affirmation of the Qur'an's validity as pure, perfect, and authoritative revelation.¹⁰⁶ This affirmation underpins the theological construction that the Qur'an is a complete and unchanging divine revelation. However, John Wansbrough argues that this is in a different framework, not as a transcendental declaration but as a form of *internal rhetoric* that reflects the process of authority

⁹⁹ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 44–52, Discussion of the *canonization of scripture* and the formation of orthodoxy in the context of early Islamic communities and authorities.

¹⁰⁰ Ihwan Agustono, 'Characteristics of Contemporary Western Scholarship in the Study of the Qur'an', *Dissertation-UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya*, 2018.

¹⁰¹ Neuwirth.

¹⁰² Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 39–50.

¹⁰³ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, vol. 1.

¹⁰⁴ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*.

¹⁰⁵ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 44–50.

¹⁰⁶ AT-THABARI, pp. 291–300.

formation within the early Muslim community.¹⁰⁷ In other words, the Qur'an was not necessarily accepted as revelation by all circles at the time, and this verse was part of a textual strategy to shape the perception of the sacredness and legitimacy of revelation.

In this context, it can be described that the way of understanding the Ottoman Mushaf was not only the result of collecting texts or symbols of political power, but as a means to maintain the unity of the meaning of the Qur'an in early Islam. The concept of the unity of revelation helps limit the variety of interpretations and enables the development of a standard, normative interpretive tradition, as seen in the work of At-Thabari.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, the study criticizes John Wansbrough's approach, pointing out that attempts to dismantle the unity of revelation as a whole risk overlooking the Qur'an's role as a source of knowledge and normative guidelines in shaping Muslim faith and religious practices.¹⁰⁹

D. Conclusion

This research shows that differences in how revelation is understood and in the Ottoman Mushaf are greatly influenced by the frame of thought used. A comparison between At-Thabari's interpretation of Q.S. Al-Baqarah verse 2 and John Wansbrough's criticism reveals a fundamental difference between the classical interpretive approach and the modern historical-critical approach to understanding the Qur'an and the concept of salvation. In At-Thabari's tafsir, the Qur'an is understood as a definite, undoubtedly divine revelation and the main source of guidance for the pious. This belief in the certainty of revelation became the basis for the formation of spirituality and the orientation of religious life. In contrast, John Wansbrough views the Qur'an as a text formed through the historical process and debate of the early Muslim community. According to him, verses that affirm the authority of the Qur'an serve to strengthen the legitimacy of the text, not merely as a theological statement.

This study offers a novel contribution by reading the Ottoman Mushaf not only as a collection of texts or tools of political power, but also as a means of maintaining the unity of the Qur'an's meaning in early Islam. The unity of revelation gives rise to a standard and normative tradition of interpretation, as seen in At-Thabari's tafsir. At the same time, this study shows that Wansbrough's approach has limitations as it tends to ignore the spiritual dimension and prophetic experience in Islam.

¹⁰⁷ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 39–52.

¹⁰⁸ AT-THABARI, vol. 1.

¹⁰⁹ Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, vol. 1.

Further research is recommended to examine this theme by drawing on early Qur'anic manuscripts, qira'at traditions, and commentaries from various periods to obtain a more complete picture of the authority of the Qur'anic text. A cross-disciplinary approach among history, philology, and theology is also important for enriching the contemporary study of the Qur'an. The author would like to thank the supervisors and all parties who have provided support and input during the research and writing process of this article.

E. Bibliography

- Abshor, M Ulil, and M Miftahun Najib, 'Orientalisme Dan Kajian Tema Al-Qur'an', *AR ROSYAD: Jurnal Keislaman Dan Sosial Humaniora*, 3.2 (2025), pp. 114–28
- Agustono, Ihwan, 'Karakteristik Kesarjanaan Barat Kontemporer Dalam Studi Al Qur'an', *Disertasi-UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya*, 2018
- Ahmad, Fauzan Zil Ikram, Muhammad Fathurrahman Lasaba, and Mustaqimah Mustaqimah, 'PERSPEKTIF PARA ORIENTALIS TERHADAP AL-QUR'AN, DAN HADIS', *TADAYYUN: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 2.1 (2024), pp. 122–50
- Al-Hamdani, Muhammad Fajarussalam, 'Kajian Sarjana Barat Terhadap Al-Qur'an: Studi Pemikiran Angelika Neuwirth' (FU, 2022)
- AT-THABARI, F A R MUHAMMAD B I N JARIR, *Terjemah Tafsir Jami' Al-Bayan An Ta'wil Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Abdul Mun'im Madkur Abdul Hamid, Cet 1 (1985)
- Azizy, Jauhar, and Muhammad Sairi, 'Al-Qur'an Antara Wahyu Aural Dan Kodifikasi 'Uthmâni', 2018
- Chotimah, Chusnul, 'Manhaj Tahlili Bi Al-Ra'y: Analisis Manhaj Tafsir Al-Qur'an At-Thabari Dalam Tafsir Jami'ul Bayan 'an Ta'Wilil Qur'an', *Aksioreligia*, 1.1 (2023), pp. 12–20
- Djidin, M, 'Problematika Al-Qur'an (Telaah Kritis Atas Pandangan Sarjana Barat)', *Jurnal Ushuluddin: Media Dialog Pemikiran Islam*, 15.1 (2011), pp. 1–19
- Emra, Yusril, Achmad Abubakar, and Muhammad Irham, 'Karakteristik Al-Muflih {U< N Dalam Al-Qur'an (Kajian Tafsir Tah} Li> Li> QS Al-Baqarah/2: 5)', *Jurnal Al-Mubarak: Jurnal Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, 9.1 (2024), pp. 35–48
- Fahrurrozi, Fahrurrozi, 'Implementasi Metode Hermeneutika Double Movement (Studi Pemikiran Fazlurrahman Dalam Menafsirkan Ayat-Ayat KhilafFah)' (UIN Mataram, 2022)
- Graves, Michael, 'Form Criticism or a Rolling Corpus: The Methodology of John

- Wansbrough through the Lens of Biblical Studies', *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association*, 1.1 (2016), pp. 47–92
- Husain, Khan M, 'Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition' (JSTOR, 1983)
- Ibrahim, Sulaiman, 'Sejarah Teks Al-Qur'an: Studi Atas Pemikiran John Wansbrough', *Jurnal Farabi*, 13 (2016), pp. 187–207
- Karim, Abdul, 'Pemikiran Orientalis Terhadap Kajian Tafsir Hadis', *Addin*, 7.2 (2015)
- Kautsar, Emir Surya, Ahmad Mujahid, and M Ag Sohrah, 'Penulisan Al-Qur'an Pada Masa Rasulullah Dan Khulafaur Rasyidun: Jam'ul, Kodifikasi, Dan Unifikasi', *Academia. Edu*
- Khasanah, Lulu Nurul, and Syafiin Mansur, 'Kontribusi Dan Kontroversi Tafsir Orientalis Dalam Proses Reformasi Pemikiran Islam Modern', *Jurnal Budi Pekerti Agama Islam*, 3.6 (2025), pp. 1–18
- Kusmanto, Fransius, and Peter Enos Mendrofa, 'PENTINGNYA PENGGUNAAN METODE HISTORIS KRITIS DALAM MENELAAH ALKITAB', *EKKLESIA: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristiani*, 3.2 (2025), pp. 138–47
- Kusuma, Agung Perdana, 'Kajian Sarjana Barat Non Muslim John Wansbrough Tentang Salvation History (Sejarah Penyelamatan) Terhadap Al-Qurān', 2020
- Maqdis, Maqdis, and Lukman Hakim, 'Prinsip Penafsiran Al-Qur'an Perspektif John Wansbrough Dan Komparasinya Dengan Tradisi Mufasir Islam', *At-Taisir: Journal of Indonesian Tafsir Studies*, 3.2 (2022), pp. 1–8
- Marchand, Suzanne L, 'German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race and Scholarship', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 2, 2010
- Motzki, Harald, 'The Collection of the Qur'ān. A Reconsideration of Western Views in Light of Recent Methodological Developments', 2001
- Mubarak, Muhammad Syahrul, and Erina Aolia Pangesti, 'PARADIGMA SKEPTIS TERHADAP EKSISTENSI HISTORISITAS AL-QUR'AN PERSPEKTIF JOHN WANSBROUGH', *BIDAYAH: STUDI ILMU-ILMU KEISLAMAN*, 2024, pp. 198–215
- Mukti, Jidin, 'Kontroversi Keabsahan Mushaf Ustmani Dalam Pandangan Mun'im Sirry Tentang Kanonisasi Alquran' (Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, 2018)
- Mustakim, Ahmad, Fariha Akmaliatu Sholihah, Amelia Mutiara Rahmah, and Nadia Raissa Martafia, 'DECONSTRUCTING THE HISTORICITY OF THE QUR'AN JOHN WANSBROUGH'S PERSPECTIVE: A HERMENEUTIC STUDY OF ISLAMIC

PHILOLOGICAL SUSPICION AND CRITICISM', 2025

- Muttaqin, Zaenal, *The Interpretation of Qur'anic Verses on the Salvation of Religious Others by Abū Jafar Muḥammad b. Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923): Content and Method* (The University of Manchester (United Kingdom), 2018)
- Neuwirth, Angelika, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage* (Oxford University Press, 2019)
- Puin, Gerd-R, 'Observations on Early Qur'an Manuscripts in Ṣan'ā', in *The Qur'an as Text* (Brill, 1996), pp. 107–11
- Rahman, Yusuf, 'Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsirnya Dalam Perspektif Toshihiko Izutsu' (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta: Sekolah Pascasarjana, 2010)
- Reynolds, Gabriel Said, *The Qur'ân in Its Historical Context* (Routledge London, 2008)
- Rippin, Andrew, *The Qur'an and Its Interpretative Tradition*, 1st Editio (2001)
- Sadeghi, Behnam, and Mohsen Goudarzi, 'San'a'1 and the Origins of the Qur'an', *Der Islam*, 87.1/2 (2012), p. 1
- Saeed, Abdullah, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (Taylor & Francis, 2005)
- Salsabillah, Johana, 'AL-QUR'AN MENURUT PEMIKIRAN JOHN WANSBROUGH', *Al-Qolam: Journal Ilmu Al-Quran Dan Tafsir*, 1.1 (2024), pp. 23–32
- Sholikhah, Lavinatus, and Linda Rosyidah, 'Sejarah Kodifikasi Al-Qur'an Mushaf Uthmani', *Ta'wiluna: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an, Tafsir Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 1.2 (2020), pp. 64–82
- Sujati, Budi, 'Kewahyuan Nabi Muhammad Dalam Pandangan Orientalis', *Jurnal Tamaddun: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan Islam*, 6.1 (2018)
- Syukur, M Amin, *Teologi Islam Terapan: Upaya Antisipatif Terhadap Hedonisme Kehidupan Modern* (Tiga Serangkai, 2003)
- Trüper, Henning, 'Suzanne L. Marchand, German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, Scholarship', *Historische Anthropologie*, 19.1 (2011), pp. 161–63
- Ullendorff, Edward, 'John Wansbrough: Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation. (London Oriental Series, Vol. 31.) Xxvi, 256 Pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.£ 16.', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 40.3 (1977), pp. 609–12
- Wansbrough, John E, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scripural Interpretation*, Edisi pert (Prometheus Books tahun 2004, 1977)
- , *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition Of Islamic Salvation History*, 1st

Editio (1978)

Wansbrough, John E, and Andrew Rippin, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford University Press Oxford, 1977), CXCIV

Wijaya, Aksin, Nur Rif'ah Hasaniy, and Tati Nur Pebiyanti, *Berislam Dengan Berkemanusiaan* (IRCiSoD, 2021)

Zarkasyi, Hamid Fahmy, 'Tradisi Orientalisme Dan Framework Studi Al-Qur'an', *Tsaqafah*, 7.1 (2011), pp. 1–30