



University of Tehran Press

Classical and Contemporary Islamic Studies (CCIS)

Online ISSN: 3060-7337

Home Page: <https://jcis.ut.ac.ir>

## The Survey of The Quranic Studies of Orientalists in the Last 150 Years

Baqer Riahi Mehr 

Department of Comparative Studies of the Qur'an, Qur'an and Hadith Specialized University, Al-Mustafa International University, Qom, Iran. Email: [dr.riahi@chmail.ir](mailto:dr.riahi@chmail.ir)

---

### ARTICLE INFO

**Article type:**  
Research Article

**Article History:**  
Received 06 May 2023  
Revised 22 October 2023  
Accepted 11 November 2023  
Published Online 06 January 2025

**Keywords:**  
Quranic studies,  
Orientalists,  
19th century,  
20th century,  
interpretation studies.

---

### ABSTRACT

The survey of Quran in the West has developed and progressed ever since the Quran was presented to Westerners in the first century of Hijri (8th century AD). The current research, with a descriptive-research method and with a critical approach, deals with the Quranic studies of Orientalists in the last 150 years. The Orientalists' works started with text-based methods and evolved with the emergence of religious sociology and religious psychology methods in the 17th and 18th centuries. In terms of the methods of religious phenomenology, the document analysis method and the archeological method reached their peak in content and extent from the 19th century onwards. Regarding the approaches, although we are facing a significant positive progress in Quranic areas and subjects, the progress and improvement of the approaches and goals of the Quran studies of the Westerners have not been fully achieved. Mostly, a controversial and dogmatic approach has been dominant. However, in addition to these cases, realistic and fair approaches cannot be ignored in any period; in the recent times, this type of approach seems to be more prominent in Western Quranic studies. The present article states, with scientific reasons, that despite the progress it has in various Quranic fields, Western Quranic studies, contain presuppositions and biases, while the studies of Orientalists are facing serious damages.

---

**Cite this article:** Riahi Mehr, B. (2025). The Survey of The Quranic Studies of Orientalists in the Last 150 Years. *Classical and Contemporary Islamic Studies (CCIS)*, 7 (1), 21-30. <http://doi.org/10.22059/jcis.2023.358884.1328>



© The Author(s).

**Publisher:** University of Tehran Press.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22059/jcis.2023.358884.1328>

---

## **Introduction**

Quranic study is one of the branches of Islamic studies. The beginning of Quranic studies in the West probably coincided with the significant presence of Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula (Spain) due to the Islamic conquests at the end of the first century of Hijri and the end of the eighth century AD, during the Caliphate of Walīd Ibn Abdul Mālik. It was during this time that the West became familiar with Islam and the Qur'an for the first time. It is noteworthy that from the beginning to the middle of the twelfth century, the Quranic research of the Westerners was mostly of a general aspect, and the most important topic of their research was the prophethood of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and other Islamic issues related to him, as well as other controversial issues between Islam and Christianity. The method and approach of this period's research regarding the Quran may be due to the lack of sufficient awareness of the teachings and content of the Quran, which has resulted in the extraction of evidence against the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). Almost from the middle of the twelfth century, detailed and complete research of the Qur'an began in the form of translation and other works. In this period, the first Latin translation of the Quran was written. Saint Peter, the monk of the Colony Monastery in France, during his trip to Spain, learned about the Holy Quran and the influence of Islam and Quran on Christianity. For this purpose, he decided to complete the Latin translation of the Qur'an with the help of two Christian monks who were familiar with the Arabic language, named Robertus Ketenensis, an Englishman and a German Dalmatian, along with an Arab named Muhammad. The most important goal of the first Latin translation of the Qur'an was to make the Arabic Qur'an useful for his fellow believers. For this reason, the said translation was under the monopoly of the church for five centuries until 1543, and its public publication was prevented. From the middle of the 16th century AD, due to the occurrence of important events such as renaissance, reforms, and the creation of the printing industry, an opportunity was provided for the Holy Quran to be published in the West for the first time. In this century, the first Latin translation of the Quran was published by Theodore Bibliander. During this period, the Arabic text of the Quran was also published for the first time. These two things caused the growth and flourishing of Quranic research in the following periods. The Arabic text of the Holy Quran increasingly appeared in Quranic studies. Since the emergence of rationalism and intellectualism in the 18th century, Quranic studies took on a new color. The range of Quranic research in terms of methods and approaches appeared far more diverse than before. From the 19th century until today, we are witnessing the peak of Quranic studies in topics and areas, methods and approaches. This change and transformation in the course of Quranic studies in the West needs to be investigated and analyzed. In this article, the historical course of Quranic studies by Orientalists in the last 150 years is explained and analyzed. (Zamānī, 2006)

## **1. Background**

According to the extensive background of Qur'anic studies of Orientalists in the early centuries, regardless of their motives, the most important axes of Qur'anic research of Orientalists can be counted in the following cases: 1- This encyclopedia will have five volumes and 1,000 entries. So far three volumes have been published. The first volume was published in 2001 by Leiden Publishing House (Holland) and the third volume was published in 2003. In these three volumes, entries A to O have been written. The editor-in-chief of this encyclopedia is Ms. Daman McAuliffe, a professor at Georgetown University in the United States, and four Western Quran scholars and Islamic scholars help her in this endeavor. (Zamānī, 2006). 2- Among other things, see the details of the verses of the Holy Qur'an by Jules Labum Fransowi, with the attention of Muhammad Fu'ād Abd al-Bāqī, and also see Ali al-Saghir, 76 under the title: Al-Fahrsa 3- One of the oldest actions of the Orientalists and one of the most obvious manifestations of their Orientalism and Islamology was the translation of the Qur'an in both general and partial forms, which was carried out from the twelfth century with the intention of tarnishing the image of Islam by church authorities. During the past centuries, it was accepted with great haste. 4- The order of the surahs of the Qur'an during the time of the Prophet (PBUH) was not in the current form. Most of the Orientalists, with such a belief, have done their translations based on the chronological order of the surahs of the Qur'an; thus, the theory of the success of the order of the surahs is denied based on the works of Noldeke, Shawali, Blasher. 5- The cut-off letters in the Qur'an are deemed meaningless and pointless. These letters are not part of the Qur'an, but are the initial letters or symbols of the names of the believers who prepared personal

collections of the Qur'an for themselves during the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH). When Zayd ibn Thābit collected the Qur'an, he used these codes of the owners of the Qur'anic copies in the books.

According to this background, there is limited research on the Quranic studies of Orientalists in the last 150 years, and therefore, the present research has an aspect of privilege and innovation in this regard.

## **2. Quranic Studies in the West in the Last 150 Years**

In the last century, Quranic studies reached their peak, and in various Quranic fields, a large number of works have been presented by Orientalists. The Orientalists of this period have a significant difference from their previous era in that they deal with Quranic and Islamic studies in a collaborative and organized manner and they used many approaches and methods in Quranic studies. It is very difficult to cover all aspects of Quranic studies by Orientalists in the last century, because with each passing day, the works and number of Orientalists are increasing, and they pursue the study of the Holy Quran with unlimited approaches, motivations and methods. Here we mention the most important fields of Quranic studies:

## **3. Quranic Studies in the First Half of the Last 150 Years**

During this period, the various fields of Quranic studies were investigated by Orientalists. The most important chapters of Quranic studies of this period include linguistic aspects of Quranic expression, different readings and involved words, the meaning of Quranic terms and concepts, order and dating of text components and their coherence, as well as the impact of previous monotheistic beliefs on the content and message of the Qur'an (including the traditions of the holy books and its annexes) (Scholler, 2008). Here we mention the most important and influential of them:

### **3-1. Biographers' Attention to Quranic Research**

The first person from this group was Gustav Weil, whose two famous works in this field were published with the titles "Biography of Prophet Muhammad (1843 AD)" and "Critical-Historical Enlightenment on the Qur'an (Bielfeld 1842)" (Bell, 2012).

Also, there were two other western researchers named Alois Springer and William Muir, who conducted important research on the discovery of older and better sources and texts about the prophetic life, spending many years in India and obtained the ancient sources there. Sprenger's first treatise on the history of life, using the same newly discovered sources, was published in English in Allahabad in 1851, and it was not complete until it was finally replaced by a three-volume work in German under the title of "Life and Teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)," published in Berlin in 1861. About 36 pages of the introduction of the third volume were dedicated to the Holy Quran, discussing topics such as the difference between Meccan and Madani surahs, and the collection and editing of the Qur'an (Bell, 2012).

In his research, Muir determined the date of the revelation of the surahs in a more comprehensive and detailed manner, and his conclusions were published in a treatise on the sources and texts for writing the biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), with an appendix on his biography. He mentioned the same issues in more detail in his next work, which is the composition and teaching of the Qur'an and the testimony he gave about the Holy Book, and published in London in 1878 (Bell, 2012).

### **3-2. Increasing Interest in Quranic Studies in Europe**

In this century, we are witnessing more interest in Quranic studies in Europe. An example of this is the proposal of the Academy of Inscription Studies and Literature in Paris, which in 1857 offered a prize to the best monograph in the field of "critical history of the text of the Qur'an" (Bell, 2012). In this regard, it was specified that the mentioned text should discuss the primary division of the Qur'an and the characteristics of its different parts, determine the stages of the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as far as these parts are related to it, as well as using the works of Arab historians and commentators. This work aims to clarify the changes that the Qur'anic text has undergone from the time of the recitations of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to its final collection and compilation, which has become the final and modern Mushaf. It sought to search for the types of versions of the Badals

that remained after the final collection and compilation of other old books by referring to the oldest manuscripts (Bell, 2012).

This proposal attracted the attention of three researchers: Eloise Sprenger, Italian Michele Amari, and the young German Theodor Noldeke, who in 1856 published a long research work in Latin about the origin, collection, and compilation of the Qur'an. Noldeke won the research award, and the extended German version of his award-winning work was published in Göttingen in 1860 under the title "The History of the Qur'an," which became the basis of most (European) Qur'anic research (Karīmīnīyā, 2005).

Other such examples are Hartwig Hirschfeld. After compiling and printing several works on the Holy Quran, he published the book "New Researches in the Field of Collecting, Editing and Commentary of the Quran" in London in 1902. Also, Hubert Grimm is a socialist biographer who wrote the biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In the mentioned work, he has taken an independent line of research that is intertwined with the history of gathering, compiling and determining the date of the revelation and the timing of the surahs (Bell, 2012).

### **3-3. The Letters Of The Syllables**

A topic that interested many thinkers during the 20th century was the meaning of letters. Noldeke addressed it for the first time in the history of the Qur'an. After him, many hypotheses were presented, which started with "Loth" and continued with the detailed articles of Bauer and Goesness. Before that, Hershfeld and later Jones, Seal, and Bellamy added materials to it (Scholler, 2008).

### **3-4. The Original Language of the Qur'an**

Another subject of the Qur'an that was studied by Westerners in the 20th century was the language used in the Qur'an and, implicitly, the language that the Prophet used to speak (Scholler, 2008). This issue became famous with the work of Wallers called "Spoken Language and Written Language in Ancient Arabic". His theory was based on the fact that the Qur'an was first recited in spoken Arabic without Arabic signs at the end of phrases, and the current text of the Qur'an is the product of the work of later linguists who tried to separate the expression of the Qur'an from the works of Arabic dialects and create a text that conforms to Arabic traditional rules. (Scholler, 2008). This opinion found some followers, such as Calle and Luling, and others such as Geyer, Noldeke and Shawali raised objections. A well-known opinion among Orientalists in this regard is that the original language of the Quran is more or less the same dialect that is used in intra-tribal dialogues and Jahili poetry, and of course, roots of the Meccan dialect remain in the Quran's script (Scholler, 2008).

Another branch in the subject of the original language of the Qur'an, which began in the first half of the 20th century and had no precedent, was the understanding of the terms used in the Qur'an. The discussion of the linguistic features of the Qur'an was compatible with the research on the message of the Qur'an, because both are bound together in the semantic capacity of the Qur'anic terms (Scholler, 2008). The first writings in this field, which paved the way for subsequent researches in the 20th century, were the Arabic-English dictionary of Qur'anic terms written by Pinrice and the analysis of business terms used in the Qur'an and their relationship with the Qur'anic word written by Tori (Scholler, 2008).

In the first half of the 20th century, the approach changed towards the discovery of the etymological contexts of the key words of the Qur'an, their connection with their use in the previous monotheistic religions, and the announcements of the Qur'an. The most effective and interesting works in this regard are the efforts related to the book "Qur'an Research" by Horowitz, as well as "Syriac Influence" by Mingana, "Qur'an Research" by Arenes, and "Words in the Qur'an" by Jeffery (Scholler 2008). The same change of direction in the research of terms and concepts was followed towards the recognition of their possible roots in Jewish, Christian or Judeo-Christian uses. The study about the supposed Jewish or Christian origins of emerging Islam and, accordingly, the Qur'an, is the lasting legacy of the 20th century Qur'anic studies, which has had the greatest impact in every respect until the present time (Scholler, 2008.). Additionally, such researches provided a lot of evidence about the real relationships between monotheistic religions, and now most of the Quranic research in academic studies revolves around the interdependence of these three great monotheistic religions and their holy books. Many works in the 1950s from people like Mason, Henninger, Joumier and Katsh and then by

Craig, Sialeh, Bonanit came to the field of writing. This approach involved research on the relationship between the message of the Qur'an, the areas of the Near East's movements (Samaritan Jews), and the pre-Islamic religion of the Jahili Arabs (Scholler, 2008). In the second half of the 20th century, some monographs were published by people, such as Hayek, Michaud, Parinder, Tysanen Robinson and Skoman about the declaration of the Bible, such as Adam, Abraham, Mary and above all, Jesus, as described in the Quran (Scholler, 2008).

The 1920s and 1930s can be considered the most serious and impressive period of research on the Qur'an. Although their results have been published in educational journals, university seminars, and scattered research collections, the real value of what was done step by step in this period was only realized in post-World War II research, which sought to collect scattered articles among French and English scientists (Scholler, 2008).

### **3-5. Dating of Quranic Verses and Chapters**

The most important field of Quranic research in the West in the 19th century is the dating of Quranic verses and surahs based on the order of descent, and the important part of the Quranic works in this century dealt with this issue. Although this field has been discussed in the 20th century as well, and most of the works of the 20th century in this field were based on the same works done in this century by famous western orientalist. Accordingly, it is appropriate to state the history of this field along with the names and works of its famous researchers.

Although Islamic researchers have done important work on dating Quranic verses and surahs based on the order of their revelation, they used a solid and firm method, which consists of authentic hadiths, along with paying attention to the style and context of the verses and their timing. They presented the classification of verses and surahs. On the other hand, Orientalists tried to bring innovation in this field, just like their other Islamic and Quranic researches, disregarding the Islamic research done in this field. This can explain their belief that the Holy Quran was not collected and written down during the time of the Prophet and this work was done in later times based on the *ijtihadat* of the Companions. Consequently, it does not prevent them from changing the current order of verses and chapters and presenting a new and appropriate chronology (Rizwān, 1992). They addressed the issue of new dating for Quranic verses and chapters based on the order of revelation and in this, they did not achieve much success because their method was incomplete and most of them wanted to present a new dating based on the history and life of the Prophet (*ibid*: 492), the tone and melody of the Qur'anic phrases, or citing weak traditions. (Iskandarlū, 2013)

The first western researcher who took action in this field is the German Gustav Weil, who in his two books, "Critical Historical Introduction" and (Bobzin, 2002) "Muhammad the Prophet," presented a four-period dating system, including three Makki periods and one Madani period based on attention to the themes of the surahs (for example, the similarity of contents and terms), as well as attention to the linguistic and formal components of the Qur'an text (Scholler, 2008). In 1845, the aforementioned German Orientalist became an assistant professor of Oriental Linguistics at Heidelberg University, and in 1861, he became a professor (Nūshābādī, 2017). The said book is a short treatise, from which about forty pages are dedicated to the Quran. In this treatise, the author presents the differences between Muslims regarding the Madani and Mecca verses, in order to provide a dating system for the revelation of the Qur'an. By doing this, he became the first person to re-evaluate the traditional dating of the surahs and the division of the Meccan revelations into three other periods, which was later fully explained and confirmed by Noldeke. (Scholler, 2008)

The German orientalist, Theodor Nolde, who in his famous book, "History of the Qur'an," presented a new classification of surahs (a four-period dating system, including three Meccan periods and one Madani period) based on two external and internal approaches. The external approach includes discussions such as hadith, and books. The history is related to the causes of revelation, and the internal approach includes factors such as the style and characteristics of words and expressions, the laws brought by revelation, and the position of the Prophet against Jews, Christians and polytheists. In the Mecca section, he mentions three sections or stages (Bell, 2012). The said book consists of three large parts and close to nine hundred pages; the first part is related to the revelation, the second part is related to the collection of the Qur'an and the third part concerns the recitations and calligraphy of the Quran (Nūshābādī, 2017). Its second edition in the first decade of the 20th century

was published with additions by three other scientists. The second part in the form of a separate volume was published by a student of Noldeke, named Friedrich Shawali; the third part was published as an independent volume by Bergraser and Pritzl (the explanation of the four-period dating system was introduced and presented in the first volume). (Scholler, 2008)

William Muir, an orientalist and English missionary, who stayed in India during the years 1876-1837 and started learning Arabic there, was strongly biased towards Christianity (Iskandarlı, 2013). In the book, "Life of Muhammad," and also in the book, "Qur'an, Genesis and Its Teachings," he has divided the Meccan surahs into five periods (Bell, 2012).

Grimm's effort in the book "Muhammad" is focused on the arrangement of surahs based on the idea of transformation of religious topics or issues such as monotheism, resurrection, etc. Like Noldeke, he divided the Meccan surahs into three periods. However, his order in these three periods is more or less different from Noldeke's order (Bell, 2012).

The Scottish Arabic scholar, Richard Bell, in his English translation of the Qur'an (1937-39 AD), presented a new arrangement of the Qur'anic chapters. Although the first translator who presented the chronological order of the surahs in the translation was Midus Rodwell, who died in 1900. He used the chronological order of the surahs in the new English translation of the Qur'an in 1861 for the first time, but in this regard, he relied on previous works, such as the works of Gustav Weil, William Muir and Noldeke (Bobzin, 2002). Richard Bell went a step further in his translation and followed the traditional order of surahs, while within the surahs, he offered a new order based on the origin of individual verses (Bobzin, 2002). The basis of the order presented by him is the theory of having three periods of the Qur'an's compilation, which he describes as "1. the initial period in which the only surviving parts and composites have been from the list of signs and incentives to worship God. 2. The Qur'an period: which includes the final part of Muhammad's activity in Mecca and the first and second years in Medina, during which the revelations of the Qur'an were transferred to Arabic. 3. Book Period: This period starts around the end of the second year of Hijra. In this period, Muhammad (PBUH) presented the book as an independent revelation" (Bobzin, 2002, p. 351). According to Hartmut, "none of the Qur'anic scholars has extracted a theory for the internal coherence of the surahs like Bell" (Bobzin, 2002, p. 351). The French Arabic scholar, Regis Blacher, in his French translation of the Qur'an in 1947-9, relied on Noldeke's arrangement except for a few minor differences. (Bell, 2012)

The dating and determination of the revelation of Quranic verses and surahs by orientalist has several important problems, such as a lack of trust in authentic hadiths and prophetic life, as noted by Grimm; a lack of complete familiarity with the Arabic language, as seen in Hershfeld; a lack of knowledge of educational goals in the revelation of the verses of the Crimea, and trust in the weak sayings of Islamic scholars. (Rizwān, 1992)

## **4. Quranic Studies in the Second Half of the Last 150 Years**

### **4-1. Publication of the Most Influential Quranic Works of This Period**

The publication of three public and influential works of this period, which dealt with the phenomenon of the Qur'an in general, established the modern Qur'anic research in the form of an ever-increasing collection of new methods, perspectives and approaches. These three works are: 1. Blasher's introduction to the first edition of his translation (in 1947, which was published independently in 1959): 2. The Qur'an as a sacred text (1952) by Arthur Jeffrey, and 3. An introduction to the Qur'an (1952) by Richard Bell, revised and newly edited by Montgomery Watt in 1970 (Scholler, 2008). These three works are notable for having two features: 1. They are detailed monograph and contain the latest information from many aspects, and various results of Quran research from the first decades of the 20th century until that time, and 2. They introduce the essence of Noldeke's Quranic history to non-German speaking people (Scholler, 2008). Together with the history of the Qur'an, they were transformed into reference and benchmark texts for all Qur'an scholars.

### **4-2. Interpretation of Research**

Another subject related to the Qur'an in this period that has been studied more by Westerners is the study of the interpretation of the Qur'an. Of course, the discussion and analysis of interpretation is common among Muslims, who mostly focus on writing interpretations of the Qur'an; However, among Westerners, this field is not of interest, rather, their attention is directed to aspects of interpretation that

help them in determining the authenticity of the Qur'anic text or knowledge of the history of the Qur'an, the Arabs, etc. This is the reason why in this period of interpretative research, which spans over one and a half centuries, with most of its growth occurring in the 20th century, there has been no desire on the part of Western scholars to write interpretations. Because their primary audience is the Western society and the problems and ambiguities of their arguments are against Islam. Rather, the form that Westerners pay attention to interpretative studies is research interpretation, not exegesis. Therefore, the axes of exegetical studies in the West are the subject of exegesis, emergence of exegesis, evolution of exegesis, types of exegesis, and reasons for exegesis (Karīmīnīyā, 2011). That is, they want to know what different factors and causes were involved in creating the seeds of the first interpretive traditions and its subsequent evolutions in the form of different interpretive methods. What reasons could be found for the Islamic commentators in the second and third centuries to make the interpretation of a verse very prominent and bold, and not say much elsewhere. In this regard, interpretative works were done by Orientalists. The axes of studies of the interpretation of the Orientalists are:

First: Research and correction of some interpretations: The mentioned field has been the subject of more attention in the second half of the 19th century. Its notable examples are the research of the German orientalist named Freitag, who died in 1886, on the interpretation of *Asrār al-Ta'wīl* and *Anwār al-Tanzīl*, which was published in Leipzig in 1845, as well as the work of the English orientalist, William Nasoliz, who died in 1889, regarding the interpretation of *al-Kashshāf* (Hadidi, 2012)

Second: Methodology of commentators and interpretive trends: The aforementioned axis started at the beginning of the 20th century and developed in the second half of the century. Many works were written in this field, including «New Debates in the Order of the Qur'an and its Interpretation» written by an English Orientalist, named Hershfeld, published in London in 1902, or «Wahb Muniya and the Jewish-Christian Heritage in Yemen» written by a French Orientalist, Kliman Hovar, published in Paris in 1904 (Hermas, 2010), and «Interpretative Tendencies among Muslims» written by Goldziher in 1921, or the article «Interpretation of the Qur'an in the Journal of Oriental Studies in 1924» written by Richard Hartman. In the second half of the 20th century, with the publication of the book of Qur'anic studies by John Wensbrough, the scholarly analysis in the methodology of the old texts, the interpretation made in the said book was followed by many later scholars. On the basis of the method of literary analysis, Wensbro has investigated the works of interpretation before the time of Tabari and examined many interpretations that were in written form until that time, such as the interpretation of Muqātil bin Sulaymān, the virtues of the Qur'an by Abu Ubaydah Qāsim bin Sallām, the interpretation of Abd al-Razzāq, the suspicions of Al-Qur'an Kasai (Ripin, 2006). After that, many western researchers followed the analysis of exegetical texts according to Wensborough's method, such as Andrew Rippin's analysis of various texts attributed to Ibn Abbās, which was published in 1981 and 1983; Norman Calder in his article entitled «Tafsir Tabari with Ibn Kathīr»; Christo Farbak's review of Bahā'u'llāh's commentary, «Kitāb-i-īqān» published in 1995; Claude Gilliot's review of Tabari's commentary published in 1990 (Ripin, 2004)

#### **4-3. Lists and Lexicography of the Holy Quran**

Regarding this field of Quranic studies in the West, three types of work can be mentioned as examples:

The lists of the Holy Quran are of two types:

A: Literary (list of words of the Qur'an or revelation of verses) (Khurramshāhī, 1994)

The first list of the words of the Qur'an ordered alphabetically was published in Leipzig in 1839 by the German scholar of the Qur'an, Gustav Flügel, under the title "Al-Furqan Astrology around the Qur'an" (Daryai, 1382, p. 149). Muhammad Fu'ād Abd al-Bāqī compiled the Qur'an indexed dictionary based on Flügel's work, which indicates the slowness and weakness of the efforts of Islamic scholars and religious officials and centers. Of course, Mohsen Bidar has mentioned the names of six books of Qur'an vocabulary that were compiled by Muslims before Flügel's work, which probably did not become very popular. After Flügel's work, many Quranic lexicons were compiled by Islamic scholars, including «Miftāh Kunūz-e-Qur'an» and others (Zamānī, 2006).

B: Subject (list of contents or discovery of contents or description of verses)

The first thematic dictionary in the west is the work of French Orientalist, Jules Labum (died 1876 AD). He divided the whole Quran into 18 chapters and a total of 350 topics (Khurramshāhī, 1994). This book was published in Arabic translation by Fu'ād Abd al-Bāqī, the Egyptian scholar, (Tafṣīl Ayāt-e-Qur'an Al-Karīm) and in Persian as «Kashf al-Mutaleb» translated by Muhammad Hassan Khan Sanī al-Doulah (died 1313 AH), and with the translation of Kikāus Malik Mansour in 1344 AH as well (Zamānī, 2006).

Lists about the Holy Quran: In this type of lists, the manuscripts of the Quran and the Quranic compilations are introduced and reviewed. In this context, Arthur John Arbery's cataloging of the Qur'an collection, which is the personal collection of Christianity in Europe, is considered the most exquisite collection of the oldest manuscripts of the Qur'an. Furthermore, the oldest complete Qur'an in this collection is written by Ibn Bawāb, dated 391 AH (Khurramshāhī, 1994). Also, Martin Lings has published several annotated albums of important collections of written Qurans, including those preserved in the library of the British Museum (Khurramshāhī, 1994).

#### 4-4. Description and Correction of Some Islamic Dictionaries

In this case, «Al-Qamūs al-Muḥīṭ» was written in the early 9th century of the Hijri by 'Allāma Majdu-d-Dīn Muhammad bin Yaḳūb Fīrūzābādī (729-817 AH), which is one of the oldest, most common, and most reliable Arabic vocabulary books. Of course, the late Fīrūzābādī mentioned a large number of Qur'anic verses and prophetic hadiths in the pages of his book. The Christian priests put this book on the agenda of correcting and completing it, and the Reverend "Petros Bostani" born in 1819 undertook to correct and complete the book, and after making the necessary changes, he published it in 1870 under the name «Mūḥīṭ al-Mūḥīṭ», donated it to the Ottoman sultan and received a prize in turn (Zamānī, 2006).

#### 5. Analysis

Despite the passion for scientific studies, at the end of the 19th century and until the middle of the 20th century, the Islamic studies of the Orientalists were mixed with a kind of extreme pessimism. In fact, this pessimism was the continuation of the negative attitudes of their predecessors towards Islamic sources, which had become sharper. This can be found in the works of Goldziher (1850-1921) who held a different view on the authenticity of the Qur'an compared to Noldeke's works, and also in the works and views of Shakht (1962-1902) and Mingana (1937-1881) in relation to previous orientalists (Pākatchī, 201). These two had serious doubts about the authenticity of the Prophet himself and his tradition, but he believed that the Qur'an cannot be understood without understanding the role played by the Syriac language in it (Reynolds, 2004). He even specified the percentage of foreign words in the Qur'an in his works (Mingana, 2002), but his ideas were largely forgotten (Reynolds, 2004).

In 1950, Shacht reached the peak of skepticism by writing the book "The Sources of Islamic Jurisprudence" and questioned the authenticity of any hadith in the Islamic world. After Shacht, people like Wensbro (1928-2002) followed this approach (Wansbrough, 1977). Wansbrough's works are considered one of the basic steps in the investigation of the roots of Islam. In his two important books, Qur'anic Studies (1977) and Sectarian Environment (1978), he examines this issue using a linguistic-historical approach. He completely questioned the Muslim narrative works - which were accepted by most Orientalists. From Wansbrough's point of view, the Quran is a text that was written in the Jewish-Christian sectarian environment during the third century of Hijri. He does not consider the Quran to be from the Holy Prophet, rather he considers it to be the work of northern Arab Muslims. Wensborough's students, such as Ripin, Calder and Houghton, are subject to their master's views in this regard (Gokkir, 2001). John Burton, one of Wensboro's students, believes that the Qur'an found its form in the time of the Prophet. In his book, Collecting the Qur'an, he has completely rejected the compilation of the Qur'an during the time of the Caliphs, and on the other hand, he has stated that erasure was the most important reason for not collecting the Qur'an during the time of the Holy Prophet.

#### 6. Conclusion

From the current research, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the topics and fields of Quranic studies in the West:



1. The subjects and areas of Quranic studies by Orientalists in the last 150 years, such as: The extraordinary diversity and development of research topics related to the internal and extra textual topics of the Holy Quran, such as the sciences of the Quran, the teachings of the Quran, etc., are the beginning of post-modern and academic studies of the Holy Quran, and finding the central focus of the field of Qur'anic studies in the fields of Islamic Studies for the Orientalists. Despite the variety of topics and fields in the Western Quranic studies, the results of the study do not show diversity and progress, and in most of the Quranic researches of Westerners and Orientalists, old and monotonous results are observed.
2. In a general approach, the works written about the Quran in the last 150 years can be divided into four categories:
  - A: The works that deal with the formation of the collection and the history of the Qur'an in general. In these works, an attempt is made to analyze the structure and literature of the Qur'an.
  - B: Works written by Christians and with Christian motives.
  - C: The works that examine Muslim interpretations of the Qur'an.
  - D: Works that investigate a specific interpretation of a topic or verse with different approaches.
3. Explanation and correction of some Islamic lexicons, pessimistic approach in Quranic studies since the 20th century, lists and lexicography of the Holy Quran, exegetical studies, publication of the most influential Quranic works of this period, dating of Quranic verses and chapters, the original language of the Quran, fragmentary letters, and biographers' attention to Quranic studies are among the most important subjects in Quranic studies of Orientalists in the last 150 years.

## References

- Bell, R. (2012). *An introduction to the history of the Qur'an (Revision and rewriting of Montgomery Watt)* (B. Khurramshāhī, Trans.). Center for the Translation of the Holy Qur'an.
- Bobzin, H. (2002). Translation of the Quran. In *Encyclopedia of the Quran* (Vol. 5, pp. 340-358). Brill.
- Iskandarlū, M. J. (2013). Criticism of Quran dating according to Muir's narration. *Research and Field*, No. 19 and 20.
- Gokkir, B. (2001). Origin, organization and influences on the Qur'an. In O. Leaman (Ed.). *The Quran: An Encyclopedia*. Routledge.
- Hadidi, A. M. (2012). Quranic studies in Germany (Motives and achievements) (S. Zafaranizadeh, Trans.). *Andishe Sadeq*.
- Hermas, 'A. (2010). Knowledge of Tafsir in the writings of the Orientalists (A. Rad, Trans.). *Aineh Harush* No. 104.
- Karīmīniyā, M. (2006). History of the Qur'an (Noldeke-Shwali), the history of compiling and criticizing its Arabic translation. *Research Journal of the Qur'an and Hadith*.
- Id. (2011). Exegetical studies of the Holy Quran in the new era of the Arab world and the West. In *Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the Research Center for Written Heritage*. Tehran.
- Khurramshāhī, B. (1994). *Quran studies*. Mashreq Cultural Publishing Center. (In Persian)
- Mingana, A. (2002). Syriac influence on the style of the Koran. *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 11(1), 77-98. <https://doi.org/10.7227/BJRL.11.1.5>
- Nūshābādī, H. K. (2017). *Translation and criticism of the entry of academic study of the Quran in the post-enlightenment era* [Master's thesis of Quranic Sciences]. (In Persian)
- Pākatchī, A. (2003). Critique of previous orientalist perspectives by recent orientalists. *The Quarterly Journal of Islamic Law Research*, 5(1), 8-21.
- Reynolds, G. S. (2004). A reflection on two Qurānic words (Iblīs and Jūdī) with attention to the theories of A. Mingana. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 124(4), 675-689. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4132112>
- Ripin, A. (2006). *The current status of Qur'anic interpretation studies* (M. Karīmīniyā, Trans.). Islamic Culture and Communication Organization.
- Id. (2004). Methodological points about the fourth chapter of the Qur'anic Studies book (M. Karīmīniyā, Trans.). *Research on the Sciences of the Qur'an and Hadith*, 1
- Rizwan, U. (1992). *The opinions of orientalists about the Holy Qur'an and its interpretation* (Vol. 1). Dar Tayyaba. (In Arabic)
- Scholler, M. (2008). Post-Enlightenment academic study of the Quran. In *Encyclopedia of the Quran* (Vol. 4, p. 188), Brill.
- Wansbrough, J. (1977). *Quranic studies: Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (Vol. 194). (A. Rippin, Trans.). Oxford University press
- Zamani, M. H. (2006). *Orientalists and Quran*. Bostan Kitab. (In Persian)