
REVIEW

UNESCO CD of Ṣan‘ā’ MSS. Part 2: Qur’ān MSS Contents in *Sūra* Order

In the June 2006 issue of *Manuscripta Orientalia* (pp. 65—72), I presented an index to the Qur’ān manuscripts contained in the UNESCO CD-ROM of the Ṣan‘ā’ manuscripts. I would now like to present a second index that lists the contents of the individual manuscripts in *sūra* and *āya* order. This is so that one can see at a glance which portions of the Qur’ān are contained in which manuscripts on the CD. A third instalment to this index is planned which will list, among other things, the

manuscripts according to their picture file reference on the CD, the size and format of each manuscript, and the actual manuscript reference numbers for some of the manuscripts listed as “Showcase...”. These “Showcase” manuscripts are ones that were in actual showcases at the museum in Ṣan‘ā’ where the manuscripts were displayed. I have been told that these showcases have been dismantled, so the “Showcase” designations, while appropriate for use with the CD, are not the manuscript numbers in general use in Yemen¹. In this index, “Showcase” has been abbreviated to “Sh”.

A Correction

Before we get to the second index though, there is an important correction that needs to be made to my last article. In it, I mentioned that while looking through the images I found pictures of *three* Qur’ān manuscripts which had variant *sūra* orders. This was not correct. Of the three, *only one* is a picture of a manuscript with a variant *sūra* order. It is this one:

Showcase 12, Ms. 35: 26:226—37:20. *Sūra* 26 is immediately followed by *sūra* 37.

The other two I mentioned are simply folios that are missing intervening pages. My mistake highlights the importance of acquaintance with the actual manuscripts. The error was brought to my attention by Dr. Elisabeth Puin. She also confirmed that the one manuscript pictured that does have a variant *sūra* order is indeed the one her husband, Dr. Gerd-R. Puin wrote about in his 1996 article². This is a very significant manuscript, being the first recorded extant manuscript to contain a *sūra* order that matches one recorded for a Companion's collection³.

The Index Part 2

Concerning this second instalment to the index, the manuscripts are categorized according to *sūra* and *āya* order. There is some duplication in that many of the manuscripts have the ending of one *sūra* and the beginning of another on the same page. For these manuscripts I have listed their respective *sūra* portions separately.

Also, for these particular manuscripts, I have included a category as to whether or not there is a decorative band between the *sūras*. There is a good variety of kinds of decorative artwork in these bands between *sūras*

showing development of artistic styles, from lines of very simple repeated designs in one or two colours, to multi-coloured and complex geometric patterns. Occasionally, there is a picture of a page with a decorative border around the entire text. These are not yet noted on this index. Also, sometimes *sūra* titles are presented in a decorative way, like in a different script style and with a different colour of ink. These are also not yet noted in this index.

¹ I was told this in a personal conversation with Dr. Gerd-R. Puin in September 2006.

² G.-R. Puin, “Observations on early Qur’ān MSS in San‘ā’”, *The Qur’ān as Text*, ed. by S. Wild (Leiden, 1996), pp. 107—11.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 110—1.