Surah an-Nurayn & Surah al-Waliyah: Their Authenticity & Literary Style

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Assalamu-alaikum wa rahamtullahi wa barakatuhu:

It has been claimed by Jochen Katz in his website that some Shi'ite's have two more chapters in their Qur'an called Surah an-Nurayn and Surah al-Waliya. They can be viewed at:

http://answering-islam.org/Quran/Miracle/nurain.html

http://answering-islam.org/Quran/Miracle/wilaya.html

Regarding the Surah al-Walaya, Jochen says:

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Source: The Sura was taken from the book "ALThWRh
AL'YARANYh FY MYzAN AL'sLAM" (The Iranian revolution in
the balance of Islam), published in Egypt. This is a
Sunni book attacking the Shia. The author claims he has
taken it from the Shia Qur'an. Only problem is that the
Sunni author didn't realize that he was digging his own
grave with publishing this sura.
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My methodology for this problem is very simple. Go back to the Shi'ite sources and check what they say and then check out what the orientalists say about the two Surahs which are quoted above.

The Shi'ite Sources

The figure Ja'far al-Sadiq (d. 148/765), a great grandson of al-Husayn(R), is described in the Shi'ite tradition as a charismatic character and quietest of the Imaams. The Shi'ites regard him as the founder of Shi'ite Law, which is based , to a great extent , upon decisions supposed to have been transmitted from him.

In the section The Belief Concerning The Extent (Mablagh) Of The Qur'an Ja'far al-Sadiq says:

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Says the Shaykh Abu Ja'far: Our belief is that the
Qur'an, which Allah revealed to his Prophet Muhammad is
(the same as) the one between the two boards (daffatayn).
And it is that which is in the hands of the people, and
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is not greater extent than that. The number of suras as generally accepted is one hundred and fourteen. [[1], pp. 77]

And again:

And he who asserts that we say it is greater in extent than this (the present text) is a liar. [[1], pp. 77]

This would have been a proof good enough to stop here and dismiss what Jochen is claiming about the "Qur'an" which Shi'ites have. But let us go further and expose the deceptive methodology. In another Shi'ite book talking about the two Surahs mentions above, it says:

A small minority of Shi'is have attempted to get much larger passages (and even the whole suras) accepted as being missing portions of the Qur'an but without success. [[2], pp. 173]

And quoting the history of the Shi'ite belief regarding the Qur'an the author says:

With regards to the question of the text of the Qur'an, it has already been noted that the early Shi'is believed that the Qur'an has been altered and parts of it has been suppressed. The Nawbakhtis are said to have adhered to this view although it went against their usual position of agreeing with Mu'tazili thought. The compiler of the earliest, authoritative collection of Twelver Traditions, al-Kulyani, seems to have given some substance to this view in several of the Traditions that he relates. Ibn Babuya, however, takes the position that the text of the Qur'an is complete and unaltered. Al-Mufid appears to have wavered somewhat on this point during his lifetime. He seems to have accepted the fact that parts of the Qur'an had been excised by the enemies of the Imams in some of his early writings, although he refused even then to state that anything had been added. In his later writings, however, al-Mufid had reinterpreted the concept of omissions from the text of the Qur'an to mean that the text of the Qur'an is complete (although he does allow that the order needs to be changed) but that what has been omitted is the authoritative interpretation of the text by 'Ali. In this manner, al-Mufid and most subsequent Shi'i writers were able to fall into line with the rest of the Islamic world in accepting the text of the Qur'an as contained in the recension of 'Uthman. [[2], pp. 81]

Now we have said enough about the Shi'ite sources. Let us now discuss the view of the orientalists.

Surah al-Waliyah & an-Nurayn: Orientalists' View

The Surah an-Nurain was published in Dabistan-i Madhahib. In 1842 and 1843 it was review in the references [3] and [4].

The passages of Sura al-Waliyah and Sura an-Nurayn were discovered in a manuscript of Qur'an in Bankipore, India, in June 1912. The translation of the Sura was published by St. Clare Tisdall in the journal The Moslem World in 1913. The manuscript is said to be some 200-300 years old, at least.

On Surah al-Waliyah and Surah an-Nurain, St. Clare Tisdall writes:

The reader (of the original Arabic especially) is irresistibly led to the conclusion that the whole of these additions, - with the possible exception of sura al-Nurain, - are forgeries. The style is imitated from the Koran, but not always very successfully. There are some grammatical errors, unless these are due to the transcriber. Occasionally the meaning which the context shews to be that in which a word is used is later than the time to which the Koran belongs. The verses are largely, however, centos of Koranic passages taken from their context. The amount of repetition shews the writer's determination to prove what he wished to prove at all costs. [[5], pp. 229]

And talking about the nature of these two surahs, St. Clare Tisdall says:

We notice also that some, - or, perhaps, only one person, - among the Shi'ites decided to forge the passages which we are considering. Doubtless he thought the end justified the means. He certainly must have determined to insert these forgeries in the Koran and to get his own sect to adopt them. But, although it was so greatly to their apparent interest to accept these additional passages, yet the Shi'ites did not do so. The forger found it impossible to introduce a single such altered verse into the Koran. This, we may again say in passing , is highly to the credit of the Shi'ah community in general. Although they think that they are staking their eternal happiness on the truth of their contention that 'Ali and his family are the true and Divinely commissioned inheritors of Mohammad's spiritual rights, so far as these could be handed down to others, yet they have never permitted a single one of these forgeries to

become incorporated into their copies of the Koran. [[5], pp. 229-230]

He went on to say:

So, far as we know, the manuscript which we are now concerned with is the only one in existence which, together with the genuine Surahs of the Koran, also contains these Alterations and Additions. To get them generally accepted, even by Shi'ites, proved impossible. The attempt to Sunnites to adopt them was probably never made, for its hopelessness must have been evident even to the forger himself. [[5], pp. 230]

Further criticisms were added by Joseph Eliash concerning the text from Bankipore and Dabistan-i- Madhahib. He says:

Concerning the Bankipore text, its only connection with the Imami Shi'a is the claim that the manuscript was brought from the Nawwab in Lucknow which was a centre of Imami learning in India. This alone does not constitute it into an authoritative Qur'an for the Imami Shi'a. [[6], pp. 19]

As to the Dabistan-i- Madhahib, it is significant to note that the author does not identify himself with the Shi'a. He discusses twelve different religions practised in his time in India and devotes just a few pages to the Shi'a which he entitles "Statements about the second sect of Muslims who are known as Shi'a" and prefaces his remarks by phrases such as "the author of this book relates what he learned from Mulla Muhammad Ma'sum, Muhammad Mu'min and Mulla Ibrahim, who in the year of 1053 (AD 1643) were in Lahoreand from others" and the like. He precedes the 'Surah al-Nurayn" by the following statement: "Some of them (the Shi'a) say the 'Uthman burnt the copies of the Qur'an and excluded (rejected) some of the surahs which were on the dignity of 'Ali and his excellence, on of the surahs is this." The Dabistan-i-Madahib was critically edited and translated into english in the year 1843, the editors are not certain of the identity of the author. The give the date of the death of the supposed author, Muhsin Fani, as probably 1081/1670, and state that he was "of the philosophic sect of Sufis", "a native of Kachmir, a learned man and respectable poet, a scholar of Mulla Yakub, Sufi of Kachmir", but make no mention whatsoever that he was Shi'a authority. Hence Dabistan cannot be referred to as an Imami Shi'a source and nor can its author be called Imami-Shi'i. [[6], pp. 19-20]

In the words of Professor Grunebaum:

The only two Shi'ite surahs which have come to light are obvious forgeries; the other omissions that would have been dictated mostly by dogmatic considerations foreign to the 'Uthmanic period can not be substantiated, and the Shi'ites themselves have never been able to agree on the alleged distortion of the sacred text of their adversaries. [[7], pp. 80] and [[8], pp. 282]

In the article The Speaking Qur'an and The Silent Qur'an: A Study of The Principles and Development of Imami Shi'i Tafsir by Mahmoud Ayoub, we read:

Hence Muslims. and especially Shi'i Muslims, have insisted that God revealed to Muhammad both the Qur'an and its exegesis. The sacred text of the Qur'an, or what is contained 'between the two covers', is what Muhammad taught the generality of faithful. [[9]. pp. 178]

Now what we know for sure is that Surah al-Waliyah and Surah an-Nurayn are forgeries by a small Shi'ite Group in India. This has been endorsed by the Shi'ites [2] as well as the orientalists [6].

Do These Surahs Exist In The Early Codices Of The Companions?

This is a very interesting exercise. Even if one assumes what some Shi'ites says is true concerning 'Uthmaan, its authenticity can easily be verified by the work of Arthur Jeffery on the early companion Codices. Jeffery collected some *variant* readings attributed to 'Ali as well as Zaid bin 'Ali. It is interesting to note that **none** of these Codices have either of these surahs. The Codex of 'Ali can be found in Materials For The History Of The Text Of The Qur'an: The Old Codices [[10], pp. 182-192] and the Codex of Zaid bin 'Ali can be found in The Qur'an Readings Of Zaid bin 'Ali [[11], 249-289].

References:

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[2] An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism: 1985, Moojan Momen, George Ronald, Oxford ISBN 085398-201-5

[3] Chapitre inconnu du Coran, Garcin de Tassy, 1842, Journal Asiatique, Volume XIII, pp. 431-39.

[4] Observations sur Chapitre inconnu du Coran, Mirza Kazembeg, 1843, Journal Asiatique, Volume XIV, pp. 371-429.

[5] Shi'ah Additions To The Koran: 1913, W. St. Clair Tisdall, The Moslem World, Volume III.

[6] The Shi'ite Qur'an: A Reconsideration of Goldziher's Interpretation: Joseph Eliash, 1969, Arabica Revue D'etudes Arabes, Volume XVI, E J Brill, Leiden.

[7] Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition: G E von Grunebaum, 1961, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London.

[8] Note For The Study Of A Shi'i Qur'an: B Todd Lawson, 1991, Journal of Semitic Studies, pp. 279-295.

[9] Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'an: Andrew Rippin (Ed.), 1988, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

[10] Materials For The History Of The Text Of The Qur'an: The Old Codices: Arthur Jeffery, 1937, E J Brill, Leiden.

[11] The Qur'an Readings Of Zaid bin 'Ali: Arthur Jeffery, 1936, Rivista Degli Studi Orientali, Volume XVI.

And Allah knows best.