

Historical Evolution of Qur'anic Sciences in Sokoto

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Abstract: This study explores the historical development of Qur'anic sciences in Sokoto, emphasizing the contributions of scholars from the Sokoto Caliphate in introducing, preserving, and advancing Qur'anic knowledge. Through qualitative research, including interviews with prominent scholars, the study highlights the role of figures like Shaykh Abdullahi Foduye in shaping Qur'anic studies through extensive writings and structured educational institutions. Findings reveal that factors such as the Sokoto *Jihad*, establishment of *madaris*, scholarly influence from North Africa, and royal patronage played key roles in the spread of Qur'anic sciences. Despite historical challenges, these traditions remain influential in contemporary Islamic scholarship, ensuring the continued transmission of Qur'anic knowledge in Sokoto and beyond.

Keywords: Qur'anic Sciences, Sokoto Caliphate, Islamic Scholarship, Shaykh Abdullahi Foduye, *Madaris* (Islamic Schools).

Review Paper

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INTRODUCTION

Sokoto is in northwestern Nigeria, sharing a border with the Niger Republic to the north and the Nigerian states of Kebbi and Zamfara to the south and east. The city holds a significant historical and religious status, particularly in the development of Islamic scholarship. Sokoto was established as the capital of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1809 by Shaykh Uthman Ibn Foduye, following his *jihad* against un-Islamic practices in Hausaland. The Caliphate quickly became a center of Islamic governance, scholarship, and trade, influencing the spread and study of Qur'anic sciences in the region.

The Sokoto Caliphate placed immense emphasis on Qur'anic education, with scholars dedicating their lives to the teaching, memorization, and interpretation of the Qur'an. Shaykh Uthman Ibn Foduye and his successors established Qur'anic schools (*Tsangaya*) and advanced centers of learning, where students studied *Tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis), *Tajweed* (rules of Qur'anic recitation), and *Ilm al-Tajwid* (science of recitation). The Caliphate's scholarly tradition ensured that Sokoto became a beacon of Qur'anic sciences, attracting students from across West Africa.

In 1903, the British colonized Sokoto, bringing significant changes to the governance and educational systems. Despite colonial rule, the Sultan of Sokoto remained a key Islamic authority, preserving the religious and scholarly traditions of the Caliphate.

Islamic scholars continued to teach and interpret the Qur'an, adapting their methods to ensure the survival of Qur'anic education. The resilience of these scholars played a crucial role in maintaining Sokoto's reputation as a center for Qur'anic learning and Islamic jurisprudence.

After Nigeria gained independence in 1960, Sokoto continued to thrive as an Islamic and educational hub. The establishment of Usmanu Danfodiyo University in 1975 further strengthened the study of Qur'anic sciences, providing a modern academic platform for research in Tafsir, Hadith, and Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). Additionally, various Qur'anic institutions and scholars in Sokoto State have maintained the traditional method of Qur'anic memorization, ensuring that the region remains a significant center of Islamic learning.

Today, Sokoto remains a prominent center for Qur'anic education, with the Sultan of Sokoto serving as the highest Islamic authority in Nigeria. The city is home to numerous Qur'anic schools, Islamic research centers, and scholars who continue to preserve and expand the knowledge of the Qur'an. The historical evolution of Qur'anic sciences in Sokoto highlights the city's enduring legacy as a bastion of Islamic scholarship, where the teachings of Shaykh Uthman Ibn Foduye

continue to inspire generations of learners and scholars [1].

Qur'anic science refers to the academic and spiritual discipline that encompasses the study of all aspects of the Qur'an. It is a broad field that includes the historical, linguistic, exegetical, and jurisprudential study of the Qur'anic text. Classical Islamic scholars defined Qur'anic science as the systematic study of the Qur'an to understand its divine revelation, its various meanings, the context in which it was revealed, and the correct methods of recitation and interpretation.

One of the earliest scholars to address the definition and scope of Qur'anic sciences was al-Zarkashi [2] in his work *Al-Burhan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (The Proof in the Sciences of the Qur'an). He emphasized that Qur'anic science is not only concerned with understanding the linguistic structure of the Qur'an but also with comprehending the divine wisdom embedded in its verses. In his words:

علوم القرآن هي التي يُقصد بها فهم الكتاب العزيز وجميع ما يتعلق به من حيث معرفة كيفية نزوله، وقراءته، وفهم معانيه، ودلالاته [3].

The sciences of the Qur'an are those which aim to understand the noble book and everything related to it, such as knowledge of its revelation, recitation, meanings, and implications.

This definition encompasses the essential areas of Qur'anic science, highlighting the need for comprehensive knowledge of its history, recitation, linguistic features, and jurisprudence.

Furthermore, al-Suyuti [4], another significant scholar in Qur'anic sciences, discusses the field in *Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*. He explains that the science of the Qur'an includes its various dimensions such as the science of its revelation (*Asbab al-Nuzul*), the science of abrogation (*Nasikh wa Mansukh*), and the science of its preservation (*Ilm al-Hifz*), all of which contribute to a deeper understanding of the Qur'anic text:

¹ Abdullahi, Mahmud. *Islam and the Sokoto Caliphate: Its Impact on West Africa*. Kaduna: Baraka Press, 2011. Last, Murray. *The Sokoto Caliphate*. London: Longman, 1967.p.g 35

² Imam Zarkashy (745–794 AH / 1344–1392 CE) was a prominent Islamic scholar from Egypt, known for his expertise in Qur'anic sciences ('Ulūm al-Qur'ān), Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh). His full name was Badr al-Dīn Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah al-Zarkashī, and he was affiliated with the Shafi'i school of thought. (iqsaweb- zarkashi- Internationa lQur'anic Studies Association December 04,2024)

³ Z., al-Zarkashi, *Al-Burhan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an, Dar al-Fikr*, Beirut, 1985, vol. 1, p. 25.

⁴ Imam Jalal ad-Din al-Suyuti (1445–1505) was a renowned Egyptian scholar and theologian, celebrated

إن علوم القرآن تشمل تفسيره، وقراءته، وبيان نزوله، واختلاف قراءاته، وحفظه [5].

The sciences of the Qur'an include its interpretation, recitation, explanation of its revelation, variations in its recitation, and its preservation.

Through these works, we see that Qur'anic science is multifaceted and covers every aspect of the Qur'an, from the method of its revelation to its memorization and preservation, which is vital for its transmission through generations.

Another definition which is more comprehensive is:

هو علم يتناول الأبحاث المتعلقة بالقرآن الكريم من حيث تعريف القرآن وبيان أسمائه وصفاته وتمييزه عن الحديث، الوحي وكيفيته، المكّي والمدني، نزول القرآن وأسباب النزول، جمع القرآن وترتيبه. وغيرها من الأبحاث [6].

It is a science that deals with studies related to the Qur'an, such as defining the Qur'an, explaining its names and attributes, distinguishing it from Hadith, the revelation and its method, the Meccan and Medinan verses, the descent of the Qur'an and the reasons for its revelation, the compilation and arrangement of the Qur'an, and other related studies.

This statement describes the various aspects that fall under the science of Qur'anic studies, an essential field in Islamic scholarship that addresses the intricacies of the Qur'an. Below is the breakdown:

1. **Definition of the Qur'an:** The Qur'an is considered the literal word of Allah, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through the Angel Jibril. It is the final and complete scripture in Islam, which Muslims believe serves as a guide for all aspects of life. Scholars of Qur'anic sciences define the Qur'an not just as a holy book but also as a source of law, guidance, and moral framework. For example, Al-Suyuti, in his book *Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, defines the Qur'an as the miraculous speech of Allah

for his prolific contributions to Islamic sciences. A master in various fields, he authored over 600 works, with notable writings in Quranic exegesis, Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, and history. His most famous work, *al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Quran*, is a significant text on Quranic sciences. A scholar of the Shafi'i school of thought, al-Suyuti's vast intellectual legacy continues to influence Islamic studies today, as he remains highly regarded for his deep knowledge and ability to synthesize diverse scholarly traditions.

⁵ J. al-Suyuti, *Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1997, vol. 1, p. 50.

⁶ M. S. Bima, *Al-Mukhtasar al-Mufid Fi Ulum al-Qur'an al-Majid*, Library of Islamic Civilization, Gusau – Zamfara State, 2023, p. 3.

that was revealed in Arabic to Prophet Muhammad over a period of 23 years [7, 8].

2. Explanation of the Names and Attributes of the Qur'an:

The Qur'an is known by several names, each reflecting its different aspects or characteristics. Some of its names include:

- Al-Qur'an (The Recitation), which emphasizes the act of reciting the words. Allah S.W.A says [9];
- Al-Kitab (The Book), highlighting its role as the divine book of guidance. Allah S.W.A also says [10];
- Al-Furqan (The Criterion), underlining its role in distinguishing between right and wrong [11].

These names not only identify the Qur'an but also carry deeper meanings, reflecting its divine origin and purpose. Scholars like Al-Tabari discuss these names in detail, explaining how each term is used in different contexts within the Qur'anic verses and Hadith literature [12].

3. Distinguishing the Qur'an from Hadith: While both the Qur'an and *Hadith* are central to Islamic teachings, they differ significantly in their origin, purpose, and content. The Qur'an is the direct word of Allah, while the *Hadith* comprises the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Scholars like Al-Shafi'i in his book *Al-Risalah* make it clear that the Qur'an holds the highest authority in Islamic law, while *Hadith* provides supplementary guidance and clarification [13].

4. The Revelation and Its Method: The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through Angel Jibril, over a span of 23 years. The revelation was not always continuous but occurred in specific instances, responding to events, questions, and needs of the Muslim community. Allah S.W.A says in the noble Qur'an in clarifying the wisdom behind revealing the noble Qur'an in part;

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا [14]

And those who disbelieved said, 'Why was the Qur'an not revealed to him all at once?' Thus it is [done]

that We may strengthen your heart thereby, and We have revealed it to you in gradual revelation.

The nature of the revelation is discussed in works such as *Al-Muwafaqat* by Al-Shatibi, where he explains how the Qur'an was revealed gradually to guide the Prophet and his companions through various phases of their mission [15].

5. Makkah and Madinah Verses: The Qur'an contains verses revealed both in Mecca and Medina, during different periods of the Prophet's life. Makkah verses tend to focus on the core message of *Tawhid* (Oneness of Allah), the afterlife, and the importance of belief, while Madinah verses deal more with social issues, laws, and the practical implementation of Islamic principles within the newly established Muslim community. The distinction between the Makkah and Madinah verses is a key area of study in Qur'anic sciences, as it helps scholars understand the context and the evolution of Islamic law [16].

6. Descent of the Qur'an and the Reasons for Its Revelation: The Qur'an was revealed in a variety of contexts, often to address specific situations or challenges faced by the early Muslim community. The reasons for revelation, known as *Asbab al-Nuzul*, are critical for understanding the context of certain verses. Al-Suyuti's work *Al-Itqan* and his other work title *Libaab al-Nuquul fi- Asbaab al-Nuzuul* elaborates on the causes behind the revelation of certain verses and their implications for understanding the message of the Qur'an [17].

7. Compilation and Arrangement of the Qur'an: The compilation of the Qur'an was a significant task undertaken by the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), particularly during the Caliphates Abu Bakr and Uthman. The Qur'an was preserved primarily in oral form, with many companions memorizing the entire text. During the caliphate of Uthman, a standardized written compilation was produced to preserve the Qur'an's integrity. This process is thoroughly discussed in classical works such as *Al-Dhahabi's Tafseer*. And that of *Imam sayuti's al-Iqaan work* [18].

⁷ J. al-Suyuti, *Al-Itqan*...vol. 1, p. 15.

⁸ The Revelation of the Qur'an:- The Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ from the start of his prophethood in Makkah at age 40 until his passing in Madinah. The revelation spanned either 20 or 23 years, depending on differing views about his age at death. Some Surahs were revealed in full, while others came in separate verses, which he later compiled. (Ibn al-Juzā'i al-Kalbī al-Andalusī, Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. *Al-Tashīl li 'Ulūm al-Tanzīl*. Edited by 'Abdullāh ibn Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī, Dār al-Arqam, 1995, vol. 1, p. 12].

⁹ Qur'an chapter 43.v 1-3

¹⁰ Qur'an chapter 2 v. 1-2

¹¹ M. S. Bima, *Al-Mukhtasar al-Mufid*...p. 4. Also Qur'an chapter 25. V. 1.

¹² M. J. Al-Tabari, *Tafseer al-Tabari*, Dar al-Ma'arif, Beirut, 1999, vol. 1, p. 50.

¹³ M. A. Al-Shafi'i, *Al-Risala*, Dar al-Ma'arif, Beirut, 1999, p. 102.

¹⁴ Qur'an, 25:32

¹⁵ I. A. Al-Shatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1997, vol. 2, p. 89.

¹⁶ A. S. Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an*, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 2001, vol. 1, p. 120.

¹⁷ J. Suyuti, *Al-Itqan*...vol. 1, p. 97.

¹⁸ S. D. Al-Dhahabi, *Tafseer al-Dhahabi*, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1996, p. 85.

8. Other Related Studies: There are several other areas of study within Qur'anic sciences, such as *Qira'at* (the different methods of reciting the Qur'an), *Tafsir* (exegesis or interpretation), *Al-Nasikh wa al-Mansukh* (abrogation and what was replaced or repealed), and *I'jaz al-Qur'an* (the miraculous nature of the Qur'an). Each of these areas contributes to a deeper understanding of the Qur'an's message and its application to various circumstances [19].

The science of Qur'anic studies encompasses a broad spectrum of knowledge, addressing both the content and the context of the Qur'an. Classical Islamic scholars have laid a solid foundation for these studies, and their works continue to be valuable resources for contemporary scholars in understanding the Qur'an in its full depth and scope.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF QUR'ANIC SCIENCE IN SOKOTO

To gain a deeper understanding of the historical development of Qur'anic sciences in the Sokoto region, the researcher conducted interviews with two prominent Qur'anic scholars: Shaykh Malam Bello Na Malam Boyi and Shaykh Bello Abdul-Hakim Galadanchi. Their perspectives shed light on the significant contributions of the scholars of the Sokoto Caliphate in introducing, preserving, and advancing Qur'anic sciences in the region. They emphasized that the Caliphate's scholarly tradition was built upon the foundations laid by earlier Islamic scholars and Jihad leaders, particularly Shaykh Uthman Ibn Foduye and his disciples. Through their teachings, the study of the Qur'an, including its memorization, interpretation (*Tafsir*), and recitation (*Tajweed*), became deeply ingrained in the region's educational and religious practices.

The scholars further explained that the Sokoto Caliphate established a structured system of Qur'anic education, which included *Tsangaya* schools, higher centers of learning, and scholarly networks that connected Sokoto to other parts of West Africa. These institutions ensured the systematic transmission of Qur'anic knowledge across generations, allowing Sokoto to remain a leading center of Islamic learning. Even after colonial rule disrupted traditional governance, Qur'anic scholars continued to uphold and adapt these

teachings, ensuring their survival and relevance in contemporary times. The insights from Shaykh Malam Bello Na Malam Boyi and Shaykh Bello Abdul-Hakim Galadanchi underscore the enduring impact of Sokoto's Qur'anic scholarship and its role in shaping Islamic education in Nigeria and beyond.

Malam Bello Na Malam Boyi emphasized that the scholars of the Sokoto *Jihad* were the pioneers in introducing and promoting '*Ulum al-Qur'an*' (the sciences of the Qur'an) in Sokoto. He traced the intellectual lineage of these scholars back to the classical Islamic scholars such as *Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti* (d. 911 AH/1505 CE), whose comprehensive works on Qur'anic sciences significantly influenced the scholars of the region. According to Malam Bello, the Sokoto scholars' exposure to the works of al-Suyuti and others shaped their approach to understanding and interpreting the Qur'an. This intellectual foundation laid the groundwork for a vibrant scholarly tradition in the Sokoto Caliphate [20].

The most notable figure in this regard was Malam Abdullahi Foduye, the younger brother of Shaykh Uthman ibn Foduye. He made significant contributions to Qur'anic sciences through his writings and teachings, which served as key for scholars in the region. Among his works, *Diya' al-Ta'wil fi ma'anii al-Tanzil* stands out as a monumental *tafsir* (Qur'anic commentary) that reflects his deep understanding of the Arabic language, Qur'an and its sciences. This work not only provided an explanation of the Qur'anic text but also drew on the earlier classical *tafsir* works, incorporating linguistic, legal, and theological insights [21].

Malam Abdullahi's other works further demonstrate the diversity and depth of his contributions. His *Nail al-Sul min Tafasir al-Rasul* focuses on the prophetic explanations of Qur'anic verses, while *Al-Miftah li al-Tafsir* which was in poetry styles or poems form serves as a key guide for understanding meaning of Qur'anic word and interpretation. *Sulalah al-Miftah* is an abridged version of *Al-Miftah*, intended for easier memorization and teaching in the *Madaris* of the Sokoto Caliphate. These texts became central to the study of the Qur'an in the region, enabling students to gain a holistic understanding of its meaning and application [22].

¹⁹ The Concept of *Naskh* (Abrogation) In language, *naskh* means removal or transfer, while in Islamic law, it refers to the repeal of a legal ruling after its revelation. In the Qur'an, abrogation occurs in three forms:

1. Abrogation of both wording and meaning, such as the verse: "Do not turn away from your fathers, for it is disbelief on your part."
2. Abrogation of wording but not meaning, like the verse about stoning adulterers.
3. Abrogation of meaning but not wording, which is more common, with some scholars identifying over 212

cases, though they often included specification, restriction, and exceptions as types of abrogation. (Ibn al-Juzā'ī al-Kalbī al-Andalusī, Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. *Al-Tashīl li 'Ulūm al-Tanzīl*. Edited by 'Abdullāh ibn Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī, Dār al-Arqam, 1995, vol. 1, p. [21].

²⁰ Malam Bello Na Boyi, (57years), Islamic Scholar, Sokoto, interviewed in his house, 4th February, 2025.

²¹ Malam Bello Na Boyi...4th February, 2025.

²² Malam Bello Na Boyi...4th February, 2025.

Shaykh Malam Bello na Malam Boyi added that Malam Abdullahi's work *Kifayah Du'afa al-Sudan* was specifically written to address the needs of scholars and students in the region, offering them a simplified yet comprehensive approach to Qur'anic interpretation. This work reflects Abdullahi's deep concern for the intellectual development of the people in West Africa, particularly in the regions of Sudan and the western Sudanese belt, including Sokoto. His writings were practical, blending spiritual guidance with linguistic precision, making them accessible to a broad audience [23].

Another significant contribution was *Fara'id al-Jaleelah Wasaidul al-Fawa'idil Jamilah fi Ulum al-Qur'an*, which is the abridgment of Imam al-Shawshawy [24] al- Sayuti' al-Itiqaan fii ulumi al-Qur'a. Another work also is *Miftah al-Tafsir*, a text that focused on outlining essential rulings and interpretations of key Qur'anic verses. This work provided concise guidance on Islamic principles derived from the Qur'an, serving as a useful resource for both scholars and students. The practical orientation of these works ensured that they became widely used in the teaching curricula of Sokoto's Islamic schools, where Qur'anic studies remained a central focus [25].

The scholars of the Sokoto Caliphate, inspired by the intellectual heritage of earlier scholars like al-Suyuti, were not merely passive recipients of this knowledge but actively contributed to its development and adaptation for the local context. They built a robust tradition of Qur'anic studies that combined classical scholarship with the realities of their time and environment. Their works addressed the linguistic, theological, and legal aspects of the Qur'an, offering solutions to the challenges facing the Muslim community in West Africa.

Malam Bello Na Boyi further explained that the spread of '*Ulum al-Qur'an*' in the region was facilitated by the establishment of numerous *Madaris* and learning circles. These institutions played a pivotal role in the teaching and transmission of Qur'anic sciences across generations. The scholars of the Sokoto Caliphate ensured that their works were systematically taught and memorized, creating a strong foundation for Qur'anic scholarship in the region that continues to this day [26].

Shaykh Bello Abdul-Hakim Galadanchi is one of the prominent Qur'anic scholars in the state highlighted how the preservation of Malam Abdullahi's works was critical for sustaining the tradition of Qur'anic sciences in Sokoto. He noted that many contemporary scholars still rely on these texts, finding them relevant and insightful for understanding the Qur'an. The accessibility of these works has ensured that they remain part of the curriculum in many Qur'anic schools across Sokoto and the surrounding regions [27].

The historical development of Qur'anic sciences in Sokoto is deeply rooted in the intellectual legacy of the scholars of the Sokoto Caliphate. Malam Abdullahi Foduye's extensive writings, inspired by earlier scholars like al-Suyuti, played a vital role in shaping the study and understanding of the Qur'an in the region. The efforts of these scholars ensured the preservation and transmission of Qur'anic sciences, leaving a lasting impact that continues to influence Islamic scholarship in Sokoto to this day.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SPREAD OF QUR'ANIC SCIENCES IN SOKOTO

The spread of '*Ulum al-Qur'an*' (Qur'anic sciences) in Sokoto was influenced by several key factors, which created a vibrant scholarly environment that shaped the religious, educational, and intellectual landscape of the region. These factors can be broadly categorized into historical, social, religious, and educational dimensions.

1. The Influence of the Sokoto Jihad Leaders

One of the most significant factors responsible for the spread of Qur'anic sciences in Sokoto was the leadership and scholarship of the *Jihad* leaders—Shaykh Uthman ibn Foduye, his brother Malam Abdullahi Foduye, and his son, Sultan Muhammad Bello and their Students. These leaders were not only military strategists but also erudite scholars dedicated to the revival of Islamic knowledge in West Africa. They made '*Ulum al-Qur'an*' a cornerstone of their educational reforms, producing numerous works on Qur'anic exegesis, grammar, and jurisprudence. Their teachings and writings, such as Malam Abdullahi's *Diya' al-Ta'wil* and *Al-Miftah li al-Tafsir*, became texts for scholars in Sokoto and beyond [28].

²³ Shaykh Bello Abdul-Hakim Galadanci, (50years) Islamic Scholar, interviewd at Sultan Muhammad Maccido Institute of Qur'an and General Studies, Sokoto, on 25th December, 2024.

²⁴ His full name is Imam Hassan bin aliyu bin Talhatu al-Rajrajy al-Shawshawy, He died in the late 9th century, His work "al-Faraidu al-Jamilah fi al-Ayati al-Jalilah" which later Shaykh Abdullahi bin fodiye relied on in his book *Fara'id al-Jaleelah Wasaidul al-Fawa'idil Jamilah fi Ulum al-Qur'an*. (Edited by Dr. AbdulaLIY

Abdu-al-Hamid, a lecturer in department of Islamic studies. Bayaro University Kano, p.g 48-49.)

²⁵ Shaykh Bello Abdul-Hakim Galadanci ...25th December, 2024.

²⁶ Malam Bello Na Boyi...4th February, 2025.

²⁷ Shaykh Bello Abdul-Hakim Galadanci...25th December, 2024.

²⁸ Shaykh Bello Abdul-Hakim Galadanci...25th December, 2024 and Malam Bello Na Boyi...4th February, 2025.

2. Establishment of *Madaris* and Learning Circles

The establishment of *Madaris* and Qur'anic learning circles played a crucial role in the dissemination of Qur'anic sciences in Sokoto. One of the greatest examples is *Madrasah al-Dirasah al-Islamiyyah Furfuri*, also a school called *Tahsin* in Runjin Sambo, also the school named after Shaykh Abdullah Foduye which Shaykh Abubakar Jibril heads located at Tudun Wada, *Markaz al-Dirasah al-Islamiyyah* also located at Tudun Wada, *Ma'had al-Qur'an Hubbari* owned by Mallan Bello Na Malam Boyi, and *Ma'had al-Ilmi Yar Akija*. In modern Sokoto caliphates these institutions served as the primary centers for Islamic education, where students were trained in Qur'anic memorization, recitation (*tajwid*), and *tafsir* (exegesis) [29]. The learning circles also provided a platform for scholars to discuss and teach advanced topics in Qur'anic sciences especially the like of Dr. Muhammad Sani Abdullahi. The *Madaris* ensured that knowledge was systematically transmitted from one generation to the next, creating a solid foundation for continuous learning [30].

3. Scholarly Influence from North Africa and the Middle East

Another factor that contributed to the spread of Qur'anic sciences was the influence of Arab scholars from North Africa and the Middle East, in 1981, the likes of Shaykh Muhammad Hassan Ali Suleiman (popularly known as Shaykh Suleimani), from Egypt, who in fact wrote a book on *Ulum al-Qur'an* titled: "*Al-wajiz fi Tarikh al-Kitab al-Aziz*" which was later used as syllabus to many of our Islamiyya School, S.I.S, Higher institutions and university level like UDUS Sokoto served as a great factors responsible for the development of *Ulum al-Qur'an*. Also Dr. Su'ud, from Syria Dr. Abdulaziz Ibn Abdulfattah Abu Asim, who also contributed immensely to *Ulum al-Qur'an* through his teachings and writings, one of his famous work in the field is *al-Tajwid al-Muyassar* which was published by Centre for Islamic Studies Sokoto 1408 A.H. Shaykh Abdullahi Zawawi, were the driving force in the spread of Qur'anic sciences in Sokoto and most especially in Higher Islamic (HIS) [31]. Although, even before their arrival, the Sokoto scholars were heavily influenced by

the works of classical scholars such as Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti and al-Qurtubi. Again, trade and scholarly exchanges with North African regions facilitated the transfer of knowledge and manuscripts, introducing new ideas and methodologies in Qur'anic studies to Sokoto. The scholarly networks established with scholars from Timbuktu, Egypt, and other parts of the Muslim world enriched the intellectual environment of Sokoto [32].

4. Royal Patronage and Support

The rulers of the Sokoto Caliphate provided strong support for Islamic scholarship, particularly in the field of Qur'anic sciences. Sultan Muhammad Bello, himself a renowned scholar, encouraged the compilation and teaching of Qur'anic sciences. He established libraries and supported scholars in their educational endeavors. The patronage from the ruling class ensured.

5. Manuscript Production and Dissemination

The production and dissemination of manuscripts were instrumental in the spread of Qur'anic sciences. Skilled scribes copied and distributed important works on '*Ulum al-Qur'an*', including *tafsir* texts, linguistic studies, and Qur'anic commentaries. Manuscripts were often preserved in family collections and *Madaris*, ensuring that knowledge was accessible to students and scholars. This manuscript culture helped to preserve and transmit Qur'anic sciences throughout the region [33].

Another factor responsible to the spread of Qur'an and its sciences was the establishment of King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex (KFGQPC) in Madinah, this body is responsible for the printing and distributions of the noble Qur'an globally to the Muslim world particularly to the Muslim pilgrims [34].

6. Integration of Qur'anic Sciences into the Curriculum

Qur'anic sciences were systematically integrated into the curriculum of *Madrasas* and higher Islamic learning institutions. Subjects such as *tajwid*, '*ilm al-tafsir*', and '*ilm al-ma'ani*' were taught alongside other Islamic sciences like fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence)

²⁹ Shaykh Bello Abdul-Hakim Galadanci...25th December, 2024.

³⁰ Malam Bello Na Boyi...4th February, 2025.

³¹ Shaykh Bello Abdul-Hakim Galadanci...25th December, 2024.

³² Malam Bello Na Boyi...4th February, 2025.

³³ H. M. Al-Turabi, Manuscript Culture in West Africa, Oxford University Press, 2023, p. 131.

³⁴ The King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex (KFGQPC) in Madinah, established in 1984, is the world's largest Qur'an printing facility, playing a crucial role in the global spread of Qur'anic sciences. It produces over 10 million copies annually, distributing them free of charge and ensuring accuracy through advanced printing technology. The complex has translated the Qur'an into

more than 76 languages, making it accessible to non-Arabic speakers, and publishes Tafsir (exegesis) to aid deeper understanding. Additionally, it promotes Qur'anic memorization by supplying materials to students and institutions worldwide. KFGQPC also embraces digital advancements by producing audio and digital versions of the Qur'an, further expanding accessibility. Through these efforts, the complex has significantly contributed to the preservation, study, and dissemination of the Qur'an across the globe. (King Fahd Glorious Quran Printing Complex. (n.d.). In *Saudipedia*). Retrieved from <https://saudipedia.com/en/article/450/religion/religious-affairs/king-fahd-glorious-quran-printing-complex> on 16th February, 2025

and hadith studies. This integration ensured that students received a well-rounded Islamic education with a strong emphasis on the Qur'an and its sciences [35].

7. Community Support and Popular Demand

The strong attachment of the Sokoto community to the Qur'an also played a role in the spread of Qur'anic sciences. The community's respect for scholars and their eagerness to learn the Qur'an created a conducive environment for scholarship to thrive. Qur'anic recitation competitions and public *tafsir* sessions became popular, further encouraging the study and understanding of the Qur'an [36].

8. The Legacy of the Sokoto Scholars

The works of the Sokoto scholars, particularly Malam Abdullahi Foduye and other *jihad* scholars, left a lasting legacy that continues to shape the study of Qur'anic sciences in Sokoto. Their writings became foundational texts for students of *tafsir* and related sciences, ensuring that their influence extended far beyond their lifetimes [37].

9. Modern Developments and Continuing Tradition

In contemporary times, the tradition of Qur'anic sciences in Sokoto has been sustained by modern Islamic institutions and scholars who continue to build upon the legacy of their predecessors. The establishment of Islamic institutions like Sultan Muhammadu Maccido Institute for Qur'an and General Studies formally known as (Bafarawa institute) has provided a platform for the advancement of Qur'anic studies, ensuring that the sciences of the Qur'an remain relevant and accessible to new generations [38].

CONCLUSION

The historical development and spread of Qur'anic sciences in Sokoto reflect the city's enduring legacy as a center of Islamic scholarship and education. From its establishment as the capital of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1809, Sokoto has been a beacon of Qur'anic learning, deeply rooted in the teachings of Shaykh Uthman Ibn Foduye and his successors. The Caliphate's emphasis on Qur'anic education, through the establishment of Tsangaya schools, Madaris, and scholarly networks, laid the foundation for a robust tradition of Qur'anic sciences that has persisted through colonial rule, independence, and into the modern era.

The contributions of scholars like Malam Abdullahi Foduye, whose works on *Tafsir*, *Tajweed*, and Qur'anic interpretation became foundational texts, played a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual landscape of Sokoto. Their efforts, combined with the influence of

classical Islamic scholars such as al-Suyuti and al-Qurtubi, ensured that Sokoto remained a hub for Qur'anic studies, attracting students and scholars from across West Africa and beyond.

The spread of Qur'anic sciences in Sokoto was further facilitated by factors such as royal patronage, the establishment of educational institutions, the production and dissemination of manuscripts, and the integration of Qur'anic studies into the broader Islamic curriculum. The community's deep respect for the Qur'an and its scholars, coupled with the resilience of Islamic education during colonial and post-colonial periods, ensured the survival and continuity of these traditions.

In contemporary times, the legacy of Sokoto's Qur'anic scholarship continues through modern institutions like Usmanu Danfodiyo University and Sultan Muhammadu Maccido Institute for Qur'an and General Studies. These institutions, alongside traditional Qur'anic schools, ensure that the study of the Qur'an remains vibrant and relevant, adapting to the needs of new generations while preserving the rich intellectual heritage of the past.

Sokoto's role as a center for Qur'anic sciences underscores its significance not only in Nigeria but also in the broader Islamic world. The city's scholars have made invaluable contributions to the understanding, interpretation, and preservation of the Qur'an, ensuring that its teachings continue to guide and inspire Muslims worldwide. As a bastion of Islamic learning, Sokoto's legacy serves as a testament to the enduring power of Qur'anic education and its ability to adapt and thrive across centuries.

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³⁵ Malam Bello Na Boyi...4th February, 2025.

³⁶ Malam Bello Na Boyi...4th February, 2025.

³⁷ Malam Bello Na Boyi...4th February, 2025.

³⁸ Malam Bello Na Boyi...4th February, 2025, see also: A. M. Galadanci, *Contemporary Islamic Scholarship in Nigeria*, Zaria Islamic Research Publications, 2023, p. 34.

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