



**PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF AL-QUR'AN  
COLLECTION IN NORTH SUMATERA AL-QUR'AN HISTORY  
MUSEUM AS HISTORICAL STUDY**

**Nur Santri<sup>1</sup>, Sakti Ritonga<sup>2</sup>**

**Departement of Library Science, Faculty of Social Science, Universitas Islam Negeri  
Sumatera Utara<sup>12</sup>**

**Nur0601192029@uinsu.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, saktiritonga@uinsu.ac.id<sup>2</sup>**

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**Abstract**

This research study examines the results of the preservation and conservation of the Koran collection at the Al-Quran History Museum in North Sumatra as a study of historical studies. The North Sumatra Al-Qur'an History Museum is a museum founded by Dr. Phil Ichwan Azhari, M.S which was inaugurated by Governor Edy Rahmayadi in 2019. The Al-Qur'an Museum was established with the aim of increasing public knowledge that North Sumatra had Islamic history and civilization in the past. This study used a descriptive qualitative research method with the researcher then functioning as a key tool. Data collection uses literature studies, observations, document analysis and interviews. The results of the study show that the collection of Al-Qur'an in the Museum of Al-Qur'an History of North Sumatra which has been preserved and conserved can be used as material for studying historical studies that can be utilized by historians, history teachers, or history enthusiasts and others, especially through historical methods namely heuristics, external criticism and internal criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The hope is that by utilizing the Al-Qur'an collection at the Museum of Al-Qur'an History in North Sumatra, it will further enrich the treasures of works of Islamic history.

**Key words:** *Preservation, Conservation, Museum of Al-Qur'an North Sumatra*

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\*Corresponding author:  
nur0601192029@uinsu.ac.id

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## INTRODUCTION

Museums carry out the task of acquiring, preserving, researching, transferring and exhibiting objects as evidence of the existence of human civilization and its environment for educational, research and pleasure purposes. Collections in museums that are classified as rare, ancient, and hard to find do require a different preservation and conservation strategy from non-rare collections or ancient manuscripts, to prevent damage, destruction, blurring, and so on (Skumanov, 2020). Library science has developed several preservation strategies on how to prevent damage to this Mushaf of the Qur'an.

The North Sumatra Al-Qur'an History Museum was founded by Dr. Phil Ishwan Azhari since 2012, since 2012 until now the Al-Qur'an Museum in the city of Medan has nearly 90 collections (Biro Administrasi Pimpinan Sekretariat Daerah Provinsi Sumatera Utara, 2019). The North Sumatra Al-Qur'an Museum owns and develops many ancient Al-Qur'ans and is developing a series of activities related to the preservation of this Al-Qur'an Mushaf. This research wants to know how preservation and conservation activities are carried out. In addition, this study also wanted to know the causes of the damage and the types of damage to the Al-Qur'an History Museum in North Sumatra.

Preservation in some cases requires special skills and knowledge, which not everyone can do. Within the scope of the library, preservation (preservation) is the task of preserving and protecting collections or library materials so that they do not experience depreciation and can be utilized by the community in the long term (Faraz, 2020). Therefore it is necessary to do the preservation and conservation of the Al-Qur'an collection materials at the Museum of History of North Sumatra, because the collections in this museum can be damaged, due to many factors that can cause damage to the collection, including chemical factors, environmental factors, ink factors, paper factors, and human factors. By carrying out preservation and conservation activities, they will extend the period or life of the collection so that the Al-Qur'an collection at the Al-Qur'an History Museum in North Sumatra is important for preservation and conservation (Rahmawati, 2021).

To get historical materials, historical

sources must be sought. Historical sources are traces or remnants of human spiritual and physical activities in the past. In the form of all objects that tell something about the old human past (Nilson & Thorell, 2014). Historical sources can be divided into two parts, namely: heritage (tradition) and remnant (remain). The so-called traditions are those that were abandoned consciously or intentionally abandoned, such as (Borobudur, Baeleo, etc.). Remains are those that are not intentionally left behind (such as my machete and salawaku, clothes worn by Thomas Matulesy). The criteria for determining tradition and remain are intentionally and unintentionally abandoned.

All relics are remains but not all remains are relics. In addition, other historical sources are primary sources and secondary sources (Milligan, 1979). In order to assess and test the credibility of the sources and to what extent the truth of their contents can be accepted, source criticism is held. There are 2 (two) sources of criticism, namely: 1. External criticism (external criticism), namely regarding the issue of the age of the document, when it was made, by whom or on behalf of whom/what agency. The source is original or the copy is intact or unchanged. 2. Internal criticism. This criticism questioned the maker and the content. Internal criticism holds an intrinsic assessment of the source, namely determining the nature of the source. Is the responsibility of the maker can be trusted.

With internal criticism, an assessment of the contents of the sources is carried out by comparing the testimonies reported with testimonies from other sources. To carry out internal criticism we dive into the soul of that era (In lieben und einfühlen). After that we read the words recorded in it to see if the current words are the same as the old words. The problem is "What are the Facts and Truths of History". There are three important things that must be studied in historical theory, namely, truth, objectivity and causality. To what extent can the truth and description given by historical stories as reconstructions of the past be trusted. How to prove that the picture is true. To examine the issue of truth here, an approach is made using correspondence and coherence, the theory of truth.

According to the correspondence theory, a statement is true if it is the same as reality. An opinion must match the facts, this theory is realistic, that is, in accordance with

common sense (Rossi, 2019). The notion of truth can be replaced with the notion of suitability. Can statements in history be confronted with historical facts, those historical facts under certain circumstances exist outside of our awareness and in a certain way are the result of our knowledge (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). According to the theory of coherence, presumptions exist in consciousness while the reality of these presumptions exists outside of our awareness. Here presumption is confronted with presumption again. The truth of the assumption is tested by the relationship between the assumptions. A statement is true if it does not conflict with other statements that have been made and justified. Coherence theory assesses truth on the basis of the systematic nature of knowledge. Here historical facts are conclusions in the thought process. According to the correspondence theory, historical facts are considered certain and fixed, frozen. In the process of analysis the historian must always think about the relevant elements in the document, more than the document itself in its entirety. While looking at each element he asked whether it was credible? There is nothing wrong with emphasizing that what is meant by credibility is not that element is what really happened, but that it is the closest thing to what actually happened as far as we can know based on a critical investigation of the best available sources. Or the historian defines something as "apparently true" rather than as objectively true.

Although there is a high correlation between the two, they do not necessarily have to be identical. Thus, historical 'facts' can be defined as elements that are translated directly or indirectly from historical documents and are considered credible after careful examination according to historical methods. Therefore, in this study the researcher raised the title of preservation and conservation of materials for the Al-Qur'an collection at the Museum of the History of the Al-Qur'an in North Sumatra as material for the study of historical studies.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This type of research is descriptive qualitative research, namely research that intends to understand the phenomenon of what is

experienced by research subjects holistically, and by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a special natural context and by utilizing various scientific methods. Qualitative research is a type of research used to scientifically research a subject, with the researcher then serving as a key tool (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The author uses qualitative research to see how the description will be explained by informants in relation to perceptions of the problems found in the field. This study uses a descriptive research type that aims to know and describe in full and set forth in the form of written words about the preservation and conservation of Al-Qur'an collection materials at the Al-Qur'an Museum, North Sumatra.

According to Sugiyono (2016), data collection techniques are the most strategic steps in research, because the main objective of research is to obtain data. In accordance with the qualitative research and the types of data sources used, the data collection techniques used in this research are using literature studies, observation, document analysis and interviews. According to Sugiyono (2017), data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes and documentation, by organizing data into categories, describing them into units, synthesizing them, compiling them into patterns, choosing which ones what is important and what will be learned, and make conclusions so that it is easily understood by oneself and others. Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono suggest that there are three steps in data analysis, namely data reduction, data display, and data verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Collection of ancient Al-Qur'an Manuscripts at the Museum of Al-Qur'an History, North Sumatra**

The North Sumatra Al-Qur'an History Museum is a museum founded by Dr. Phil Ichwan Azhari, M.S which was inaugurated by Governor Edy Rahmayadi in 2019 (Sinaga, 2023). The Al-Qur'an Museum was established with the aim of increasing public knowledge that North Sumatra has Islamic history and civilization in the past. The reason is, of the many regions in Indonesia, North Sumatra was once referred to as an area that has no history of Mushaf Al-Qur'an. This is what later motivated

the historian and initiator of the Museum, Dr. Ichwan Azhari from Medan State University, and then started collecting Al-Qur'an Mushaf in North Sumatra since 2007.

The collection of ancient Al-Qur'an in the Museum of Al-Qur'an History of North Sumatra was obtained from collectors and obtained from various villages in North Sumatra (Patimah, 2020). The paper materials for the ancient Koran were European and Daluang paper.

Figure 1. Mushaf using European paper



Source: Personal Document

The hallmark of European paper is that it has a watermark (paper stamp) which is clearly visible when exposed to light (Müller, 2021). In addition to paper stamps, one of the characteristics of European paper is the presence of countermarks, counter-stamps that

are important for paper stamp dating. On European paper there are also markings in the form of thin horizontal or vertical lines called laid lines or wire lines and thicker longitudinal or vertical lines called chain lines.

Figure 2. Mushaf using Daluang paper



Source: Personal Document

Daluang paper also has characteristics such as brown color, clear bark fiber, etc. The main type of material for making daluang paper is seah (Sundanese) (Pudjiastuti, 2014), which is strongly suspected of originating from mainland China. The paper texture is smooth on the front and rough on the back. Simply put, regarding the Al-Qur'an Mushaf collection at the Al-Qur'an History Museum in Sumatra, it can be seen from the following table:

**Table 1**  
**Number of Al-Qur'an Mushaf Collections in the Museum of Al-Qur'an History in North Sumatra**

Total	Collection Type	Source	Year	Paper Type	Condition	Page
2	Mushaf of the Qur'an	Collector		Daluang	Not good	
3	Tauhid	Collector		Daluang	Not good	
3	Sharaf	Collector		Daluang	Not good	
1	The Book of Sufism by Al-Ghazali	Collector		Europe	Pretty good	
7	Fikih	Collector		Daluang	Not good	
6	Al-Qur'an Mushaf wrapped in Acid Paper	Collector		Daluang	Not good	186 pages 70 pages 50 pages 92 pages 89 pages 66 pages
1	Sheets of Surah An-Nur			Daluang	Not good	
1	Alih Aksara Ismail Thalib			Europe	Good	
1	Kitab Shahib		1349H/1930M	Europe	Good	

1	Muslim Ali-Aksara North Sumatra Al-Qur'an Museum					Good	
1	Al-Qur'an Kuno Monduamas (Minang Aceh)	Bapak Nainggolan	250 year	Europe		Pretty good	
1	Al-Qur'an dengan Iluminasi Tumpal dan Flora			Europe		Pretty good	576 pages
1	Mushaf Al-Qur'an dengan Iluminasi Jawa	Collector		Europe		Pretty good	
2	Mushaf Al-Qur'an Iluminasi Aceh	Collector		Europe		Good	322 pages 860 pages
1	Mushaf Al-Qur'an Simalungun dengan Iluminasi Batik Banji	Titipan Tim Museum Al- Qur'an di Mushallah Al- jariyah		Europe		Not good	
1	Mushaf Al-Qur'an dengan Iluminasi Melayu-Aceh	Collector	Over 200 years	Europe		Pretty good	456 pages
1	Mushaf Al-Qur'an Makkah	Collector	1949 M	Europe		Good	
3	Mushaf Al-Qur'an			Daluang Europe		Pretty good	
1	Kitab Fiqih			Europe		Not very good	
1	Mushaf Al-Qur'an			Europe		Not very good	
2	Surabaya Print Al- Qur'an		1951 1982 2020	Europe		Pretty good	
1	Copies of Old Qur'an Manuscripts 15 Juz			Daluang		Pretty good	56 pages
1	Salinan 3 Juz Mushaf Surat Al- Baqarah ayat 143 sampai Surat An- Nisa ayat 145	Collector		Daluang		Pretty good	
1	Mushaf Al-Qur'an dengan Iluminasi 2 Sayap	Mrs. Rahma Dewi Lecturer at Medan State University	18 AD	Concordiq Resparve Crescut dan Vdl Daluang		Good	608 pages
1	Mushaf Al-Qur'an Iluminasi Flora Geometris	Mrs. Rahma Dewi Lecturer at Medan State University				Good	
1	Mushaf Al-Qur'an dengan Iluminasi Bunga Matahari			Europe		Pretty good	
1	Mushaf tertua dan misteri kolofon		1070 H/1074	Europe		Pretty good	
1	Mushaf Al-Qur'an Iluminasi Melayu Tamiang			Europe		Pretty good	633 pages
12	Mushaf Al-Qur'an	Collector		Eropa dan Daluang		Not good and Pretty good	68 pages 344 pages 70 pages

1	Fiqih			Europe	10 Sheets not very good , 226 good	236 pages
1	Fiqh of the Prophet in Javanese			Daluang	Not good	196 pages
2	Mushaf of the Koran translated into Chinese and Angkola				Very Good	
1	Mushaf Al-Qur'an	1409H/1988M	Pt. Makmur Graba Semarang	Europe	Good	
1	Mushaf Istiqlal	Tahun 1995			Very Good	

Source: Research Primary Data 2023

## 2. Preservation and Conservation of Al-Qur'an Collection Materials at the Museum of Al-Qur'an History, North Sumatra

Preservation is being carried out at the Al-Qur'an Museum of North Sumatra history, namely protecting the Al-Qur'an collection by using square glass so that visitors cannot touch it directly because it can damage the Al-Qur'an collection quickly (except for researchers). Researchers are also not allowed to touch the Koran directly but use medical gloves. Apart from using glass, the North Sumatra Museum of Al-Qur'an History digitizes the Al-Qur'an collection, which is useful so that when visitors come they do not touch the Al-Qur'an directly, but display a pdf file that can be accessed by everyone using a barcode. affixed to each glass. This also makes it easier for visitors to go through each page by page.

In addition, room temperature is also important to prevent damage to the Al-Qur'an collection at the North Sumatra Al-Qur'an History Museum. The rooms in the museum use air conditioning. In addition, to maintain the humidity in the temperature of the box containing the Al-Qur'an, water was used in each box. Closed glass does not allow air exchange so that it makes the temperature inside the box hot, so by making water turn into steam it will be able to humidify the air inside.

Over time, the water will run out and must be refilled again. In addition, in each glass box there is Silica Gel which functions to prevent termites from coming. Light also affects preservation efforts. Light can come from natural sources (sun) or artificial sources (lamps).

Figure 3 Mushaf collection protected by glass



Source: Personal Document

Figure 4 Mushaf digitized using a barcode

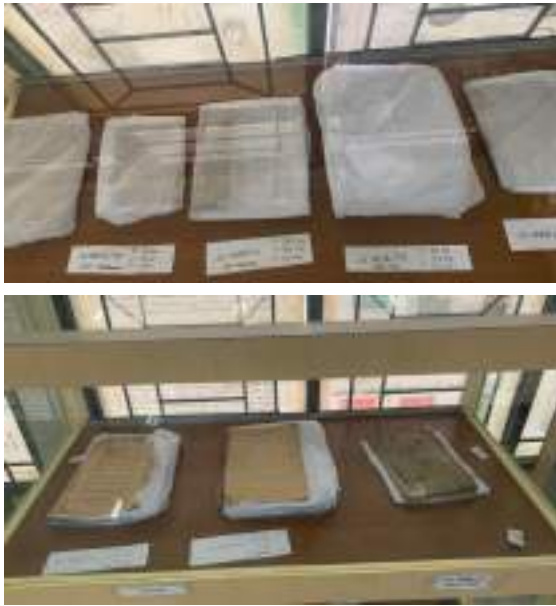


Source: Personal Document

Conservation at the Museum of the History of the Qur'an still uses simple curative conservation or preservation, such as cleaning with a brush on each sheet, cleaning dust with a vacuum cleaner, using acid paper, using a microscope (Kampasakali, Fardi, Pavlidou, & Christofilos, 2021).

A brush is used to clean each sheet of the manuscript, a vacuum cleaner is used to suck up the dust inside the manuscript, acid paper is used to coat the manuscript so that it can absorb substances that damage the paper, a microscope is used to examine the manuscript for bacteria/insects/fungi.

Figure 5. Collection Wrapped In Tamarind Paper On Each Sheet



Source: Personal Document

### 3. Types and Factors of Damage to Mushaf Collections at the Museum of the History of the Al-Qur'an, North Sumatra

Library materials contain materials that are easily damaged, such as: flammable, easily torn, easily soiled, and so on. Gradually the damage process will definitely occur and cannot be avoided (Fatmawati, 2018). The speed of the process of spoiling library materials depends on the quality of library materials (Goswami, 2018), and external influences such as: environment, storage conditions, and handling procedures. The following are the types and factors causing damage to the Al-Qur'an manuscripts at the Museum of Al-Qur'an History in North Sumatra:

Figure 6. Ink streaks on handwritten Al-Qur'an Mushaf



Source: Personal Document

#### 1) Ink Doodle

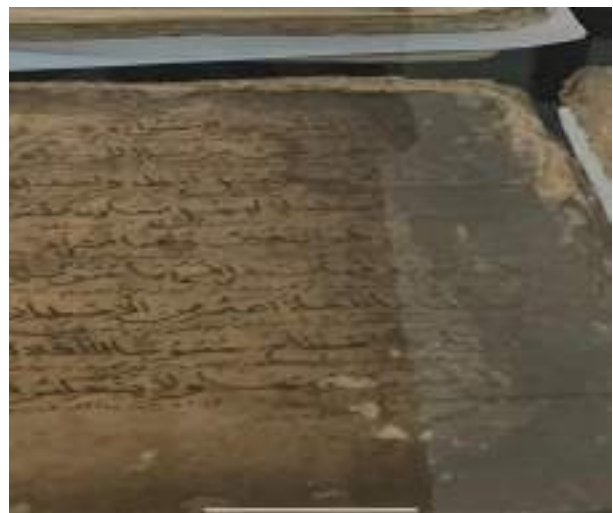
Ink streaks found on handwritten Qur'anic manuscripts can be seen in the photo. The black ink streaks on the manuscript damage the Koran

and make it difficult to read.

#### 2) Black Spots of Insect Dirt

In addition to ink streaks, there are also black spots and black stains on the paper. This damage is caused by dry water, insect droppings such as cockroaches that stick and dry on the paper, and can also be caused by aging paper making it difficult to read.

Figure 7. Black spots on handwritten Al-Qur'an Mushaf



Source: Personal Document

#### 3) Ripped

As for the condition of the Koran, it was damaged, like a part of the paper was torn. This is due to humidity and termites. This corruption is in all the pages of the Qur'an. Besides that, torn paper is also caused by water, the type of ink that leaks and expands easily, burning paper and also the age of paper that is too old. Therefore, the Al-Qur'an manuscripts could not be read.

Figure 8. Mushaf that has been torn because of the type of ink



Source: Personal Document

#### 4. Historical Studies (Historical Writing)

Writing history is not something that can be done casually without strict scientific accountability (Morgan, 2019). The tendency that is getting stronger in the field of historical studies today demands a more sophisticated method (sophisticated) and must go beyond the boundaries of the conventional field of history (Dwivedi et al., 2022). With the help of other sciences, especially the social sciences, the analytical tools in the field of historical studies are increasingly sharpened so that the methods are even more effective (Jennings & Callahan, 1983). Apart from being understood as a historical work, historiography can also be described as a process of writing history. The first understanding relates to the study of the results of historical writings. This study basically studies the characteristics and trends of the written material. While the second

understanding relates to the stages of historical research methods which are commonly known as; heuristics, criticism, fact synthesis or also called historical writing. There are also those who call the synthesis of facts a combination of the stages of interpretation and the stages of historiography. The historical methodology that we wish to define here is a science of how to know about the steps as well as theoretical insights relating to historical writing (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The collection of ancient Al-Qur'ans at the Museum of Al-Qur'an History of North Sumatra was obtained from collectors and obtained from various villages in North Sumatra which can actually be used as material for historical studies and writing of Islamic history in the future (Indra et al., 2023).

Efforts to "revive" the Al-Qur'an collection objects at the Museum of Al-Qur'an History of North Sumatra, namely by regular arrangement, and these efforts are also not free from problems of human resources, management staff in the field of management, documentation/inventory, conservation (maintenance), restoration (renovation), laboratories, exhibitions (displays), education and information, as well as security (security). All of these efforts, especially regarding scientific and technical issues, have been widely discussed by experts in their fields. For example, the problem of conservation (preservation) or reservation (maintenance) of objects made of paper in tropical climates such as Indonesia is very complex (Sahide et al., 2018). Factors causing the damage include insects such as bangbung, book lice, also mushrooms and so on.

The collection of the Koran at the Museum of the History of the Koran in North Sumatra can be used in reconstructing the historical journey of the Koran which is expected to withstand historical criticism as well as withstand various Western "scientific" prejudices. The main problems in the revelation of the Qur'an and the collection and stabilization of its texts are the focus of study in this book. Thus, the object of this study covers all stages of the historical journey of the Qur'an and the results are expected to make a significant contribution to the history of the Muslim holy book (Hobsbawm, 1971). However, because several aspects of history involve the intensity of religious understanding, the interpretation made is not purely historical, but also Islamic in nature (Sayeed & Prakash, 2013). Historical data is not treated as dead data to be analyzed, but as



something that has religious implications for the future of Muslims and their holy books. Therefore, this book is also prescriptive in nature and is expected to contribute new and fresh perspectives in Al-Quran studies.

## CONCLUSION

Museums as institutions carry out tasks in the field of education through the use of museums for educational and research purposes. In the field of education, museums usually cooperate for visits and hold seminars on history and museum collections, this is done to introduce history and culture to museum visitors, including the Museum of the History of the Qur'an in North Sumatra. Whereas the collection of Al-Qur'an in the Museum of Al-Qur'an History of North Sumatra which has been preserved and conserved can be used as material for studying historical studies which can be utilized by historians, history teachers, or history enthusiasts and others, especially through historical methods, namely heuristics, external criticism and internal criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The hope is that by utilizing the Al-Qur'an collection at the Museum of Al-Qur'an History in North Sumatra, it will further enrich the treasures of works of Islamic history.

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