

NEAL ROBINSON'S CRITICISM OF NÖLDEKE'S THEORY OF THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE QUR'AN

Aramdhan Kodrat Permana, M.Ag.^{1}*

¹STAI Samsul Ulum, aramdhankodratpermana14@gmail.com

Abstract: *this paper discusses about Robinson's criticism and examination on Nöldeke's theory of chronology of the Qur'an. There are two primary questions that will be answered here, first, how does Robinson criticize Nöldeke's theory of the chronology of the Qur'an? Second, which method is used by him to do the criticism? Third, what theory does he offer after his criticism? This research can be included into a qualitative research that bases itself on textual data. Here, I use two approaches, first of all, socio-history approach which concentrates in analyzing their biographies. Lastly, phenomenology approach, that is used to explain Robinson's criticism on Nöldeke's theory of the chronology of the Qur'an. The prime data in this research are derived from Nöldeke's, *Geschichte des Qorans* or *Tarikh al-Qur'an*, a translation by Farid Yaisy Syafali and Neal Robinson's, *Discovering the Quran: A Contemporary Approach To a Veiled Text*. In the analysis of data, I use the criticism theory as theoretical framework in this research, which consist of internal and external criticism. The results of this thesis are as follows: first, there is an agreement and disagreement of Robinson on Nöldeke's theory; second, using the similar methods with Nöldeke, Robinson criticizes his theory, structure and content analysis; third, Robinson also uses some ideas other scholars who over criticized Nöldeke's theory, such as Bell, Neuwirth, and Islahi.*

Keywords: *Chronology, Robinson, Nöldeke*

* Corresponding author's e-mail: aramdhankodratpermana14@gmail.com
<http://icehos.nusaputra.ac.id>

INTRODUCTION

The dialectic between the Qur'an and the Arabic culture as well as Muhammad's life cannot be denied (Abu Zaid, 1994: 25-26). This is denoted by the formulation of theory Meccan and Medinan surahs, proposed by Muslim scholars.

The chronology of the Qur'an, even though it is arranged differently of course has a significance for Muslims, notably when they try to understand the Qur'an.

However, to build the theory is not an easy task. It can be seen from the theoretical diversity among Muslim scholars such as alZarkasy, al-Suyuthi, al-Zarqani and alJabiri.

In the early nineteenth century, non-Muslim scholars began to study the Qur'an academically. One of their subjects was the chronology of the Qur'an. Among those, a person who interested in doing research on this subject are Theodore Nöldeke and Gustav Weil. Nöldeke, then, analyzed and criticized Muslim's chronology of the Qur'an in his famous work, *Tarikh alQur'an*.

Neal Robinson, in his work, *Discovering the Qur'an: A Contemporary Approach To a Veiled text* criticizes Nöldeke's chronology of the Qur'an deeply. He also compares Nöldeke's theory of chronology of the Qur'an with Muslim's theory (Neal Robinson, : 2). In his preface of the book he says that he examines the works of non-Muslims on the chronology of the Qur'an which is perfectly begun by Nöldeke. He also discusses about Nöldeke's theory comprehensively in the

third chapter, in which he focuses on morphology, structure and coherency (Mustansir Mir, 2001: 216). Those three elements are used to analyze of Nöldeke's between his theory of the chronology of the Qur'an and his application. It denotes his sincerity in analyzing and examining Nöldeke's theory.

These all make Robinson a bit different from other non-Muslim scholars, when discussing Nöldeke's theory. The most interesting thing in Robinson's citation of the works of al-Suyuti, Ibn Hisham and alBaidlawi to reconstruct his theory. This is an important reason why I am interested in doing research on Robinson's criticism of Nöldeke's theory.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to find out Robinson's criticism of Nöldeke's theory, his methodology of criticism and his theory of the chronology of the Qur'an. This research is very important, because it can be developed an important discourse in the 'Ulum al-Qur'an, i.e. the chronology of the Qur'an, in which I involve the Islamic classical heritage, *al-Turats alQadim al-Islamy*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Neal Robinson is a one of the important of contemporary western scholars. This can be proven from the fact that many scholars who cite his thought no many of them concentrates on his criticism of Nöldeke's theory.

First Literature

Salwa M. S. El Awa in her work, *Textual Relations in the Qur'an: Relevance, Coherence and Structure*, discusses about Robinson's thought. According to her,

Robinson does an analysis to differ the structure of the verses and surahs (chapters) that were revealed in Mecca and Medina. Salwa says that Robinson also uses and enriches Islahi's thematic concept to analyze the Qur'an (Salwa M. S. El-Awa, 2006: 22-23). In this context, Salwa has not read the thought of Robinson which is related to Nöldeke's theory.

The quantity of scholars who have made comments on Nöldeke is relative by the same as that of those who have paid attention to Robinson. In addition, Nöldeke's theory is adopted by some scholars who came after.

Second Literature

Nicolasi Sinai in his article, "The Qur'an as Process", says that there is the possibility that Meccan and Madinan surahs can be subdivided into smaller textual clusters that may be understood as consecutive stages of textual growth. He also agrees with Nöldeke's formulation. (Nicolas Sinai, 2010: 425). In his article, Sinai discusses about Daniel Madigan's view in his work, *The Qur'an's SelfImage*. He says that Nöldeke's theory is not more than completely circular (Nicolas Sinai, 2010; 408). Madigan also questions Nöldeke's reason to take the word al-Rahman as one of the criteria for the Meccan period. In other words, Watt says that appraisal of Nöldeke is enough to make benefit for the development of the theory of chronology of the Qur'an.

Unfortunately, these scholars have not talked about Nöldeke's and Robinson theories of the chronology of the Qur'an

deeply and especially in form of critical study as I present in this paper.

METHODOLOGY

Research Strategy

This research can be included into a qualitative research that bases itself on textual data. Therefore, the sources that used here are book and articles. It is also a critical study, in the sense that I do not only describe the thought of Nöldeke and Robinson, but also try to make critical comment on them.

Primary and Secondary Data

The primary data in this research are derived from, Nöldeke's, *Geschichte des Qorans* or *Tarikh al-Qur'an*, a translation into Arabic by Farid Yasirs Syafali and Neal Robinson's, *Discovering the Qur'an: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text*. Whereas the secondary data are the data which are taken from that are relevant to the subject under discussion, such as al-Zarkasyi's, *al-Burhan fi 'Ulum alQur'an*, al-Suyuthi's, *al-Itqan fi 'Ulum alQur'an*, Shahin's, *Tarikh al-Qur'an*, Salim Muhaisin, *Tarikh al-Qur'an al-Karim*, W. Montgomery Watt, *Pengantar Studi al-Qur'an*, a translation by Taufik Adnan Amal, etc.

The data, then, are already collected from the sources are arranged and displayed systematically. In this case, Nöldeke's thought are, first of all, described properly. After that, Robinson's critical responses to his thoughts are discussed here. Lastly, my evaluation of Robinson's opinion is done as far as I can.

Data Analysis

In order that the concept which Robinson purposes to criticize Nöldeke's theory can be understood clearly and rightly by the reader, I will analyze and explain the data deeply by using the criticism theory, which is considered as theoretical framework in this research.

In a critical study, the criticism is necessary to clarify the matter. It is basically divided into two categories: internal and external criticism. the former can be called the higher criticism whereas the latter can be considered the lower one (Counsuelo (et.al), 2006: 54).

The internal criticism is to check the validity of a writer's expression, by paying attention to four factors: the ability, the honesty, the circumstance and the prejudice of a writer. Meanwhile the external is a study the inventions of the writer. In this paper, both of criticisms will be used together as the theoretical framework to read and to analyze

"Robinson's criticism of Nöldeke's theory of the Chronology of the Qur'an". This is the same manner as Sahiro Syamsuddin does in his thesis, An examination Bint alShathi's method of Interpreting the Qur'an (Sahiron Syamsuddin, 1999: 7).

DISCUSSION

Biography of Theodore Nöldeke Theodore Nöldeke, who was famous with his nick name, "The Father of Historical Criticism of the Qur'an" was born on March 2, 1836 Hanover and died on December 25, 1930 in Karlsruhe, German. He was famous an expert in semitic and also capable speaking

of Greece, Latin, Italian and English. The most famous of his works is *Tarikh alQur'an*, *Geschichtre des Qorans* which was for the first time printed in 1860. After an addition and a revision by Friedrich Schwally in the first chapter (*Über and Ursprung des Qorans*), this work was then several times in (1909-1938), and the second chapter (*Die Sammlung des Qorans*). Whereas the third one was edited by Gotthelf and Otto Pretzl. After finishing this work, Nöldeke, then, wrote the history of Muhammad's life (Faried F. Saenong, 2006: 164-15). Notably, it denotes that his study of the history of the Quran is a source or root for his next and development knowledge. Biography of Neal Robinson

He began his education in United Kingdom, Montgomery. Here Robinson obtained a master degree in Oxford and Phd in Birmingham. He was the Professor for Islamic Studies in Songang University, Seoul, and Wales University. In the same period, he was the senior lecturer in Religious Studies in University of Leeds. His expertise on Qur'anic studies was proven, first, by scholarship he got to spend the sabbatical year at the Sorbonne working on classical Qur'anic Commentaries. Secondly, beside Discovering the Qur'an, he also wrote some works which theoretically cannot be divested from Qur'anic Studies, such as, *The Saying of Muhammad* (1998), *Islam A Concise Introduction* (1999), *The Qur'an as The Word of God in A Linzey and P. Wexler, Heaven and Earth*, 1986, "The Structure and Interpretation of Surah al-Mu'minun, Ali Imran" in *Journal of*

Qur'anic Studies, etc. On the basis of the data, it may be concluded that Robinson's academic interest is Qur'anic studies, especially in 'ulum alQur'an. This can be known from those works which departed from the Qur'an, although he is the master of the classical Muslim commentaries. Nöldeke's view on the Qur'an and the Chronology of Its Revelation Muslim scholars believe that the Qur'an is the revelation of God. He revealed to Muhammad verbatim (Aksin Wijaa, 2011 32-33). It means that the Qur'an is only God's speech, not human's (al- Ghazali, 1322: 100). It is a reason why they used a terminology of I'jaz, that means the human are not be able to following writing as well as the Qur'an. Because, it denotes to Muhammad's honesty, that is only God's speech. (Sasi salim al-Hajj, 2002: 256). Unlike the Muslim belief, Nöldeke points put the Qur'an as Muhammad's work (N. A. Newman, 1892: 21). On other hand, Nöldeke believed that the voice of God always guided Muhammad to understand the revelation. Moreover, he says that Muhammad did not collect the entire of revelation he accepted in Qur'an and he does not equivocate distinctly that all of his word is the Qur'an (Nöldeke, 2000: 67). It seems that Nöldeke's view is contradiction in itself. However, according to me, the God's voice is only the first step of Muhammad inspirations and Muhammad himself who made or produced the Qur'an. Refusing some passages which are saying that the Angel is the mediator of revelation (QS. AlA'la: 6, al-Syu'ara: 193). Nöldeke assumes that angel is only Muhammad's

unconsciousness, It is plain that we have here a somewhat crude attempt of the Prophet to represent to him the more or less unconscious process by which his ideas arose and gradually took shape in his mind. It is no wonder if in such confused imagery the details are now always self-consistent. When, for example, this heavenly archetype is said to be in the hands of an exalted scribe, this seems a transition to a quite different set of ideas, namely, the books of fate, or the record of all human action – conception which are actually found in the Qur'an. It is to be observed at all events, that Muhammad's transcendental idea of god, as a being all together above the world, excludes the thought of a direct intercourse between the prophet and God. (N. A. Newman, 1892; 4). Here, he admits that the Qur'an is Muhammad's transcendental idea of God (Nöldeke, 2000: 4). However, he also recognizes that the Qur'an is the book that guides people to the faith, and is the best history book.

Shortly, Nöldeke's view of the Qur'an is very contradiction with Muslim scholar's view. It is the impact of his historical approach to analyse Muhammad's whole life. Although he points out that Muhammad is a prophet, however he disagrees that the Qur'an is God's speech. This approach of course has many difficulties, such as to find the relation between God and Muhammad. Sasi Salim al-Hajj adds that this method is based with the style of western thought. It sees Muhammad, for example, only as a merchant. Thus, it is not wondering that

Nöldeke considers the angle as Muhammad's unconsciousness. The Sources and The Theory of Chronology of the Qur'an according to Nöldeke Sirah literatures basically emphasize the whole life of Muhammad, since his birth until his death. Meanwhile, the magazi literatures focuses on more the tribal battles and heroic deed of Muhammad and his entourage Nöldeke recognizes that sirah-magazi literatures are the most important sources to reconstruct the chronology of the Qur'an (Nöldeke, 2000: 16 and Neal Robinson, 2003: 37). Those literatures are Ibn Hisham's work, Urwab bin al-Zubair's work, Abu Bakar al-Zuhri's work, Wahb bin Munabbih and al-Waqidi's work.

Nöldeke considers the sirah-magazi literatures as the significant sources for deciding the chronology of the Qur'an, an opinion that it also held by Muslim scholars. In addition, he also sees the structural phenomena of verses and chapters, their length, style and theological development as the basis for the chronological arrangement of revelations (Nicolai Sinai, : 401).

Nevertheless, he is very critical of some historical works. The sirah of Ibn Ishaq, for example, is considered by him as the source providing significant information of the Meccan phase (Nöldeke, 2000: 64). From this paradigm, he takes generally summary, that the other literatures except Ibn Ishaq's – may be the worst – have less information than it.

The Chronology of the Qur'an according to Nöldeke In the view of Muslim scholars,

the chronology of the Qur'an is seen as something urgent, notably when understanding the Qur'an (Taufik Adnan Amal, 2001: 81). In despite of an exegesis that based on the arrangement of Qur'anic chronology, or asbab al-Nuzul, comes after the narrative exegesis, as Herbert Berg says when he analyses the typology of exegesis which arranged by Wansbrough (Wansbrough, 1977: 120).

Regarding to the chronology of the Qur'an, there are many reports on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas, and al-Kafi, Ikrimah and al-Husain, Ibn al-Nadim and Qur'anic chronology of the Egypt. The chronological structures of the Qur'an are basically based on the reports, riwayat (Sahiron Syamsuddin, 2007: 95). This is the reason why orientalist, especially Nöldeke, uses the new paradigm and approach to formulate and systematize the chronology of the Qur'an.

It is necessary to know that Nöldeke does not only elaborate Muslim's chronology of al-Qur'an, but he rather follows, elaborates and systematizes Gustav Weil's fourfold of the chronology of the Qur'an. As the pioneer of this theory, Weil accepts the assumption of Muslim scholars that all chapters are the units of the genuine revelation (Taufik Adnan Amal, : 100). The reason is that the assumption is a starting point of the development of Qur'anic Studies, especially in the theory of the chronology of the Qur'an. Here is the chronology of Qur'an that Nöldeke elaborates it from Weil's fourfold bases on linguistics formal component:

- a. The First period of Meccan
96, 74, 111, 106, 108, 104, 107, 12, 92,
90, 94, 93, 97, 86, 91, 80, 68, 87, 95,
103, 85, 7, 101, 99, 82, 81, 53,
84, 100, 79, 77, 78, 88, 89, 75, 83, 69,
51, 52, 56, 70, 55, 112, 102, 113, 114,
1.
- b. The second period of meccan
54, 37, 71, 76, 44, 50, 20, 26, 15, 19,
38, 36, 43, 72, 67, 23, 21, 25, 17, 27,
18
- c. The third period of Meccan
32, 41, 45, 16, 30, 11, 14, 12, 40, 28,
39, 29, 31, 42, 10, 34, 35, 7, 46, 6, 13.
- d. The Medinan
2, 98, 64, 62, 8, 47, 3, 61, 57, 4, 65, 59,
33, 63, 24, 58, 22, 48, 66, 60, 110, 49,
9, 5.
- e. Meccan addition Median surahs 52
(21, 29-49), 68 (17-52) 78, 37
(41), 79 (27-46), 96 (9-19).
- f. Meccan insertions in Medinan
surahs
2 (63-71, 200-204), 22 (1-24, 43-55,
59-64, 66-74)
- g. Medinan addition to Meccan
surahs
6 (91-94), 7 (157), 14 (9-35), 16 (41,
110-125), 29 (1-11, 45, 69), 31 (11-
18, 25-28), 73 (20), 74 (31).
- h. Addition to Meccan surahs, date
unspecified
51 (24-60), 53 (23, 26-32), 55 (8,9, 33,
except last five words), 56
(75-96), 75 (16-19), 84 (25), 103 (3).

Meccan Period

Speaking of Meccan period, Nöldeke says that the basis for deciding Meccan verses and chapters is Muhammad's theological mission to make the people believe the only God, masyahid al- Qiyamah, borrowoing Sayd Quthb's term and alJabiri's term (Sayd Quthb: 9, al- Jabiri, 2006 : 18), which contains a faith of the last day, the death, and consideration day (Nöldeke, 2000: 65). It is in accordance with his opinion that the main Meccan audience are polytheist, al-Musyrikun.

The first thing that Nöldeke pays attention is the structure of the sentence. In the first revelation, God talks about Himself to denote that He is the only God. Secondly, in relation to the style of sentence, Nöldeke says, the speech fully means clear, distinct, and gracious rhyme by using the sort sentence. Therefore, the pressure of a sound looks like a pattern of rhyme, filled with the rhythm (Nöldeke, 2000: 65). To comment an inclination of rhyme of the first phase of meccan period, I can say that the Qur'an assimilate the rhyme that is popular among the pre-Islamic society (Aramdhan Kodrat Permana, 2010) before the revelation of the Qur'an. In the poems of pre-Islamic generally there are no long sentence in row. In some, Nöldeke bases his theory on the length of the sentences and verses.

On other hand, Nöldeke's theory seems to receive support from a psychological explanation given by Ibn Khaldun who lived long before Nöldeke. Ibn Khaldun says that the gradual process of the Qur'anic revelation gives an ease to

Muhammad and that in this process Muhammad as a human looked like to be an angle (Ibn Khaldun, 2009: 121). Therefore, short passages made easier for him to receive the revelation and chapters and to the people to comprehend it. In relation to content aspect, Nöldeke sees oath styles in the beginning of first Meccan period. God makes oath with His creatures, such a scenery, animals, a night and a day, glow and dark, sun, stars, sky and earth. However, Nöldeke seems to have difficulty in determining the purposes of the oaths, for example with the al-Qur'an (Q. Sad [37]), the wind (alDzariyat [51]), the emissary wind or angle (Q. alMursalat [77]), the running hourse (Q. al-'Adiyat [100]) (Nöldeke, 2000: 6970). He also does not explain the oaths that he mentions before. He only says that it only shows the greatness of God. The oaths with the realm and the time, such as, the stars, the night and the day, according to Izutsu, are revealed in the first Meccan Period. It is aimed to deconstruct the preIslamic paradigm about the time, al-Dahr. They consider that al-Dahr has the authority to end their life, even though they believe that its creator is Allah (Toshihiko Izutsu, 2003: 135-136). In regard to second Meccan priod, Nöldeke says that the characteristics of the chapters of this period are similar to those of the first Meccan period. The same phenomenon also happens to the characteristics of the chapters of the last Meccan and first Medinan period. The style of sentences shifts to the prose style. According to

Weil, this shift is changed by Muhammad to avoid people's accusation to him as the poet (Nöldeke, 2000: 105). The fiery poetry of the previous period is replaced by diatribe (e.g. Q. al- Mu'minun [23]; 80-90) and by frequent references to god's signs in nature (e.g. Q. al-Nahl [16]; 3-18). Also characteristic is the frequent use of the divine name 'The Most Merciful, al-Rahman', the occurrence of the stock phrase 'those who believes and does good works', and the presence of prophetic discourse prefixed with the command "Say, Qul". The name of al- Rahman actually is known hypocrites. There are no many causes that it happens but it denotes a hesitance which tells that Muhammad glorified two gods (Robinson, 2003: 79, Nöldeke, 2000: 107). But actually, the name of al- Rahma is one of His names, al-Isra [17]: 110).

So, the third class comprises lengthy chapters without a discernible literary macrostructure. The structures are prosaic, no more poetic as in the second period of Meccan. Individual verses, which are longer than those from the above category, end in formulaic clausulae that exhibit an even more limited spectrum of rhyme schemes than text from the first and second calls. A large number of these chapters give the impression of homilies dedicated to clarifying various matters of political or social controversy and frequently include detailed regulations (Nicolas Sina, : 411).

Other text, like al-Baqarah [2], appear more like aggregations of originally independent text units. Surahs from the

third category are partly characterized by distinctive terminology that is absent or at least very rare in classes (1) and (2) such as reference to a group called the munafiqun, many instances of second-person address of the Banu Israil, and addressing the text's transmitter through the words ya ayyuha alNabi (Nicolas Sinai, 2010 : 411-412). To call the Arabians, Muhammad revealed to use the word Ya Ayyuha al-Nas. It was exactly Arabians like to be called generally, 'amman.

To arrange the surahs, Nöldeke considers that there is a hidden development which makes hardly possible to do it (Nöldeke, 2000: 129). Thus, sometime, to reconstruct Muslims chronology of the Qur'an, he compares the traditional matters. It implicated to his conviction. So, it is not surprised that he is used to use the word possibility.

Medinan Period

Actually, the influence of Muhammad's migration is the change of the khatab, audience of the Qur'an, which politically purposes to assemble the strength of Muslim. Thus, the inhabitants are not only idolatries nor hypocrites, but also Christians and Jews which had a same religion rule with Islam, Abrahamic or divine religion. It exactly what Nöldeke notes and explains before his clarifying of Medinan period (Nöldeke, 2000: 148: 151). Muhamad Ghalib in his dissertation, ahl-Kitab: Makna dan Cakupannya, emphasizes that the term ahl-Kitab appears 31 times in nine surahs of the Qur'an, one of it (al- 'Ankabut [29]) is Meccan. It describes that the most

habitants in Medina are ahl Kitab. The new inhabitants indirectly make the new cases for Muhammad, as Nöldeke considers, from the themes verses, style and contents. Moreover, Nöldeke agrees with the traditionalist's view saying that the sentence of ya ayyuha al-Ladzina amanu is used in Medinan, and the sentence of ya ayyuha al-Nas is rare. Then, from the length of the surahs, Nöldeke says that a lot of verses were in one a verse, surah.

Finally, he concludes that the Medinan surahs was the longest surahs ever in Qur'an (Nöldeke, 2000: 154), as Muslim scholars say.

Speaking of the reports of Medinan, Nöldeke has different demeanor. Here he believes that many of Medinan's report, riwayat are valid. He argues many of riwayat of Meccans are only the story or khurafat and not valid. However, Medinan's report are clear and explained year by year. Nöldeke's view is in line with his previous view about the sirah-maghazi. It is a reason why he does not pay enough attention the development of language usage in Medinan period.

The compatibility between chapters or verses and the time accuracy, e.g. Nöldeke mentions when explains Q. al- taubah [9]. This chapter is read by Muhammad with 'Ali as a mediator to Arabic People in Mecca, for a moment of the pilgrimage, in ninth of Hijrah. However, he occasionally does not mention the accuracy time. It happens, for example, when he determines surah al-Nasr [110] as Median. It seems that Nöldeke follows Muslim scholars' chronology such as Ibn 'Abbas, al-Kafi,

Ikrimah and alHusain with any criticism. On other hand, his view is contradictive with Mu'irs view which he places this surah into third period of Meccan.

The Criticism of Neal Robinson of Nöldeke's Thought of the Chronology of the Qur'an. There are two problems that Robinson finds in Nöldeke's chronology: the female companion of righteous in the hereafter and the usage of the word

"Allah" and "al-Rahman". Robinson notes that there are twelve passages talking about the female companions (Robinson, 2003: 89).

It is the result of Robinson's analysis of the content of verses which the Meccan period is talking about spouses that a person will get in the hereafter. Moreover, he says, it might be that the sensuous imagery of the early Meccan suras is intended to capture the attention of the Meccan pagans and misunderstood by the faithful, it is phased out and replaced by references to the spouses of the believers. Finally, in the first problem, Robinson agrees with the order of the chapters in the context of female companions.

In relation to the second problem, Robinson refers to the appearance of the word of "Allah" and "al-Rahman". Substantively, he compares Nöldeke's chronology with Egypt's chronology and Bell's one. From Nöldeke's order of chapters, he concludes that name of "al-Rahman" is absent from some earlies revelations. It is used frequently during a short period, but the stopped to occur except in combination with al-Rahim (Robinson, 2003: 90). Answering this,

Robinson says that the appearance of alRahman in the second Meccan period is true. Further he explains what Nöldeke purposes, In the earliest revelation, God was simply refereed to as Muhammad's lord, Arabic Rabb). Then, some tome after Muhammad began to preach publicly, the names al- Rahman and Allah were introduced. Both names were in some ways, problematical. We can deduce from the Qur'an that the Meccans already acknowledged Allah as the High God who had created the universe, and that they would even call on him exclusively in time of crisis, but that they usually also worshipped other lesser deities (29. 61-65), including the three goddesses whom they regarded as his daughters. We can also deduce that, for them, belief in Allah was not accompanied by moral demands. It was therefore difficult to persuade them that Allah was the only God; that He alone should be worshipped; that he had sent messengers to instruct human beings on how to behave; and that on the day of judgment they would be rewarded or punished in accordance with their deeds (Robinson, 2003: 91). Basically, the above mentioned citation is Robinson's summary of Nöldeke's chronology. Robinson does not explain further Nöldeke's reason for the arrangement of the chapters. On other hand, Robinson finds problematical theory of Nöldeke's chronology of the Qur'an.

Robinson's examination of Nöldeke's chronology of Q. al-Nasr [110]

In Nöldeke's chronology, this chapter is included in Medinan. For it, he argues with

the content of its verses, indicating that Meccan people would become Muslim in the last of Muhammad's era. He quotes many reports which supports his argument. These reports denoted to the Conquest of Mecca (Nöldeke, 2000: 155).

According to Robinson, many commentators also associated the surah to the Conquest of Mecca, Fath Makkah, such as Ibn Katsir, al-Baghawi and al-Alusi. Even he mentions that this represented the scholar's consensus. Robinson firstly sees that the chapter resembles the beginning surah al-Fath [48]: "Surely we have opened up a clear victory for thee that Allah may forgive thee thy former and thy latter sins". He argues that is certainly revealed shortly after the treaty of Hudaibiyyah, when fath Makkah becomes a real prospect. Secondly, that the word of al-Fath almost invariably means that conquest of Mecca. Nevertheless, the noun and its cognate verb both occur in Meccan chapters, where they have rather different connotations. Robinson notes it in the Q. al-Shu'ara [26]: 118 (second Meccan period), "faftah between me and them an rescue me together with the believers who are with me".

This verse talks about Noah's prayer when confronts his people. So the word of iftah, the root meaning it to open – in this context is to judge openly between him and his people. According to Robinson, this chapter has a tripartite structure, and the story of Noah occurs in the central section. In the end, Robinson concludes that it is possible for Muhammad expected already a fath, conquest.

It seems that Robinson pays attention to some key words of the verse of the chapters. In addition to 'fataha', he also examines the nash, afwaja and tawwaba. The paraphrase *in Allah and the sentence fasabbih bi hamdi rabbik* are considered in deciding the chronology of the chapters. The word *nasr* may be related to the *anshar*, helpers. Therefore, it might have been revealed at the time when the expectation of divine intervention is heightened. However, Robinson admits that Q. al-Nasr maybe also revealed in second Meccan period, which Muhammad received pledges of support from sympathizers in Yatsrib, the first of the *ansar*. From the cumulative evidences, Robinson considers that it may be Medinan, as Nöldeke admits. But if it follows Nöldeke's category formulation, the stylistic category, which Meccan chapters do not have more than 20 syllables. On the above evidence, the chapters could have been in fact revealed in the second Meccan period, according to Robinson. (Robinson, 2003:82).

Something important to note, that Robinson does not reckon the basic argument of Nöldeke that he receives the reports of Medinan without basing on his own concept of chronology of the Qur'an, the stylistics, themes and style categories. Here, Robinson's criticism is enough to see the idleness of Nöldeke when applying his criteria in his theory himself. Robinson's criticism on Nöldeke's chronology of early Meccan The first Meccan period contains forty-eight

chapters surely will be examined by Robinson in their form and content. He argues that his first step will adopt Angelika Neuwirth's, *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Sarem*. (Nicolas Sinasi, : 410).

According to Nöldeke and Robinson most of the early Meccan chapters begin with oath, commands, questions, or other devices which achieve an emphasis stronger than a direct statement (Robinson, 2003: 100), such as with woes (Q. al-Mutaffifin [83] and Q. al-Humazah (104) and with a curse (Q. al-Masad [111]), with a statement, with the word "ina", with two verbs in the perfect tense (Q. 'abasa [80]), and reproach (Q. al-Takatur [102]). In a detail manner, first, seventeen of the chapters are opened with oaths, ten with impersonal oaths, one (Q. al-Qalam [68]) with an impersonal oath preceded by a detached letter, four with "rider oaths, and two with first-person oaths (al-Qiyamah [75] and al-Balad [90]). For the second, Robinson reckons that there are eleven chapters open with a command or a liturgical bidding; four of them. (Q. al-Kafirun (109), al-Ikhlās [112], Q. al-Falaq (113), and Q. al-Nas [114]) begin with singular imperative, Qul. Two chapters (Q. al-Muzammil [73] and Q. al-Mudassir (741) begin with vocative particle, yā ayyuha, followed by a word denoting the Messenger, and then a series singular imperatives. Q. al-Fatihah (1), Q. al-A'lā [87], Q. al-'Alaq [96], and Q. Quraish [106] begin with biddings,

although only the second and third of these is imperative, amr.

Finally, Q. al-Rahman [55] begins with the divine name of the All-merciful and continues with a hymn sign lists." The last one, according to him, there is 8 chapters open on an interrogatory note. In Q. al-Haqqah [69] and al-Qari'ah [101], a catchword provides the cue for a didactic question. Q. al-Ma'ārij (70) and al-Nabā (78) begin with reference to the question of anonymous opponents. In Q. al-Ghashiyah [88], Q. al-Duha [93], Q. al-Fil (105) and Q. al-Ma'un (107) respectively, a rhetorical question introduces an eschatological diptych, a reminder of God's favours, a narration, and a polemical description of the person who denies the coming judgment." Fourth, five surahs (Q. al-Waqi'ah (56), Q. al-Takwir (81), Q. al-Infitar [82], Q. al-Insyiqāq [84] and Q. al-Zalzalah [99]) open with an eschatological prelude, in the form of a protasis, or series of protases, beginning with "When". These four categories are exactly what Robinson examines this analysis focuses on the style of early Meccan chapters of Nöldeke. In this case, he summarizes that there are twenty-nine chapters containing polemical materials, twenty-five chapters containing eschatological materials, and which are easily classifiable as comprising preludes, proceedings, diptychs and flashbacks. Seventeen chapters contain material addressed to the Messenger in the second person singular. Fifteen chapters contain sign sections, of which the principal constituents are either hymnic signs. Ten chapters contain narrative sections.

Finally, six chapters contain sections dealing with the status and authenticity of the revelation. All but a handful of very brief surahs include one or more of these six types of section. These six types, polemical aspects, eschatology, God's personal communication with the Messenger, the signs of God's power and beneficence, lessons from history, and the status and authenticity of the revelation are called by Robinson 'registers'. To explain the meaning of this terminology, he cites the definition in his book, *A Concise Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*, which exactly Musicologists employ this term to denote the compass of a musical instrument, or of a human's voice and employed by linguist to refer to; context-dependent linguistic characteristics, either spoken or written, and encompassing any set of choices which are made according to a conscious or unconscious notion of appropriateness to context (vocabulary, syntax, grammar, sound, pitch and so on). If, for example, one switches on a commercial radio station it is normally immediately apparent if an advertisement is being broadcast, for broadcast sound. advertisements generally conform to particular register characteristics that make them immediately distinguishable as such, even if one hears them so badly that the actual words used are indistinguishable. There are similar accepted (if changing) registers for church sermons, academic lectures, political speeches, declarations of undying love, and so on. (Robinson, 2003: 22).

Position of Neal Robinson's Criticism of the Theory in Qur'anic Discourse
Development of qur'anic discourse by using historical perspective in Muslim scholars or in nonMuslim after Nöldeke's criticism on theory of Meccan and Medinan period is occurring massively. In Europe Nöldeke's view was followed by Hirschfeld in *New Researches into The Composition and Exegesis of the Qur'an*," (W. Montgomery, 1995: 180) William Muir in *The Life of Mohamet*, H. Grimme in *Mohamed* and Richard Bell in *Introduction to the Qur'an*, Angelika Neuwirth and as Sinai. All those scholars did the research in a same theme with Nöldeke's by using different and medley manners. However, this development can be detached from the critical tradition which happen each other. i.e. Richard Bell who criticizes Nöldeke's view on al-Rahman. It what has been happening in Muslims scholar's qur'anic discourses. Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, Muhammad Abed al-Jabiri, 'Abd Allah al-Zanjani, Muhammad Salim Muhaisin, and 'Abd Sabūr Shahin are Muslim scholars who did not follow Nöldeke's theory. Al-Zanjāni, for the example, he adopts the riwayah from Ibn alNadim's *al-Fihrist* and Ibrahim ibn 'Umar alBiqal's *Nazm al-Durar wa tanāsuq al-Ayat wa al-Suwar*." (Abd 'Allah al-Zanjany: 37). Here he only encloses the different data of dating revelation of the Qur'an. 'Abd Sabur Shahin, who wrote *Tarikh al-Qur'an*, does the same thing with al-

Zanjani, adopting and citing oldest scholars without criticize Nöldeke's theory. ('Abd al-Shabur alSahib, 2007: 34). Two mentioned scholars believe that the genuine of Qur'anic revelation are not only chapters but also verses. The critical study of Nöldeke's theory from Muslim Scholars maybe represented by Sasi Salim al-Haj with his monumental work *Naqd alKhitāb al- Istishraqi: al-Zahirah alIstihraqiyyah wa Atharuha fi al-Dirasat alIslamiyyah*. Here he criticizes Nöldeke's criticism of riwayat. Here Salim says "We believe that those riwayat are really broke up between Meccan and Medinan period. Moreover, those are not influenced by something such politics or other interests. It is also used to know the chronology of Islamic Law" (Sasi Salim al-Haj, 2002: 32).

However, Salim in this case criticizes the idea of non-Muslim scholars generally not particularly. Besides he also uses the internal criticism to criticize them.

Neal Robinson takes different ways other scholars, either Muslim or non-Muslim scholars in receiving Nöldeke's view. In a certain case his method as same as Richard Bell's and Salim's criticism which also criticize internally Nöldeke's view. However, two of them do not criticize him deeply as Robinson does. Here Robinson criticizes internally and examines it in each period. He also develops Nöldeke's view using thematic method and categorizes it into smaller categorizes. Actually, Robinson's criticism is cited and followed by Nicolas Sinai with little differences in enclosing the data.

CONCLUSION

1. In the discourse of the chronology of the Qur'an, Nöldeke is one the most scholars. His theory of the Qur'anic chronology can be found in his work, *Geschichte des Qorans*. Using the literary analysis, he adopts, systematizes and elaborates Weil's concept on this subject. The length of Qur'anic verses and chapters, their style, and their theological development are considered as the barometer of chronological arrangement of revelations. On this basis, he divides three periods to Meccan chapters and one period for Medinan ones. Many nonMuslim scholars after him, William Muir, Grimm, Hirschfeld, Bell, Angeulika Neuwrith, Sinai and Neal Robinson, have discussed his theory. Some of them found many shortcomings and weakness in Nöldeke's theory, Robinson's criticism discusses this theory.
2. Robinson's criticism of Nöldeke's theory includes, first of all, the issues of sources for the chronological arrangement. Basically, Robinson agrees with Nöldeke in the importance of the *sirah-magazi* literatures as one of the bases to the theory. Unfortunately, Robinson finds that Nöldeke does not discuss the sources theoretically. Therefore, Robinson goes in the theoretical discussion about the sources in detail. Unless, Nöldeke says that the reports of Muhammad's life in mecca are small in number for arranging the Meccan chapters and verses. Meanwhile, the *magazi* sources talk much more about his life in Medina. Lastly, the issue of the arrangement of the chronology of the Qur'an. Robinson examines Q. Al-Naṣr, which Nöldeke put it into Medinan chapters. Afterward, he also criticizes the usage of the word "al-Rahman" and Allah's name. With regard to the theory of the Qur'anic chronology, Robinson criticizes Nöldeke, using Bell's Neuwrith's, and Islahi's theories. This kind of criticism represents Robinson's external criticism. In addition, he uses also an internal criticism, in the sense that he criticizes Nöldeke, using the method that is used by the latter, i.e. content and structure analysis, i.e. the female companions, the reason why it is considered as Meccan chapters. Thus, he analyzes deeper to show it. He does not reckon the basic argument of Nöldeke, why he chose the stylistics, themes, and style analysis to arrange the chronology of the Qur'an, especially in Meccan period. Actually, according to Nöldeke the reports of Muhammad's life in Meccan is less than in Medinan. It is a reason why he put Q. al-Naṣr in Medinan period, although the chapter's structure, its length, and its content support itself to be in a Meccan chapter.

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