

Ink and Gold

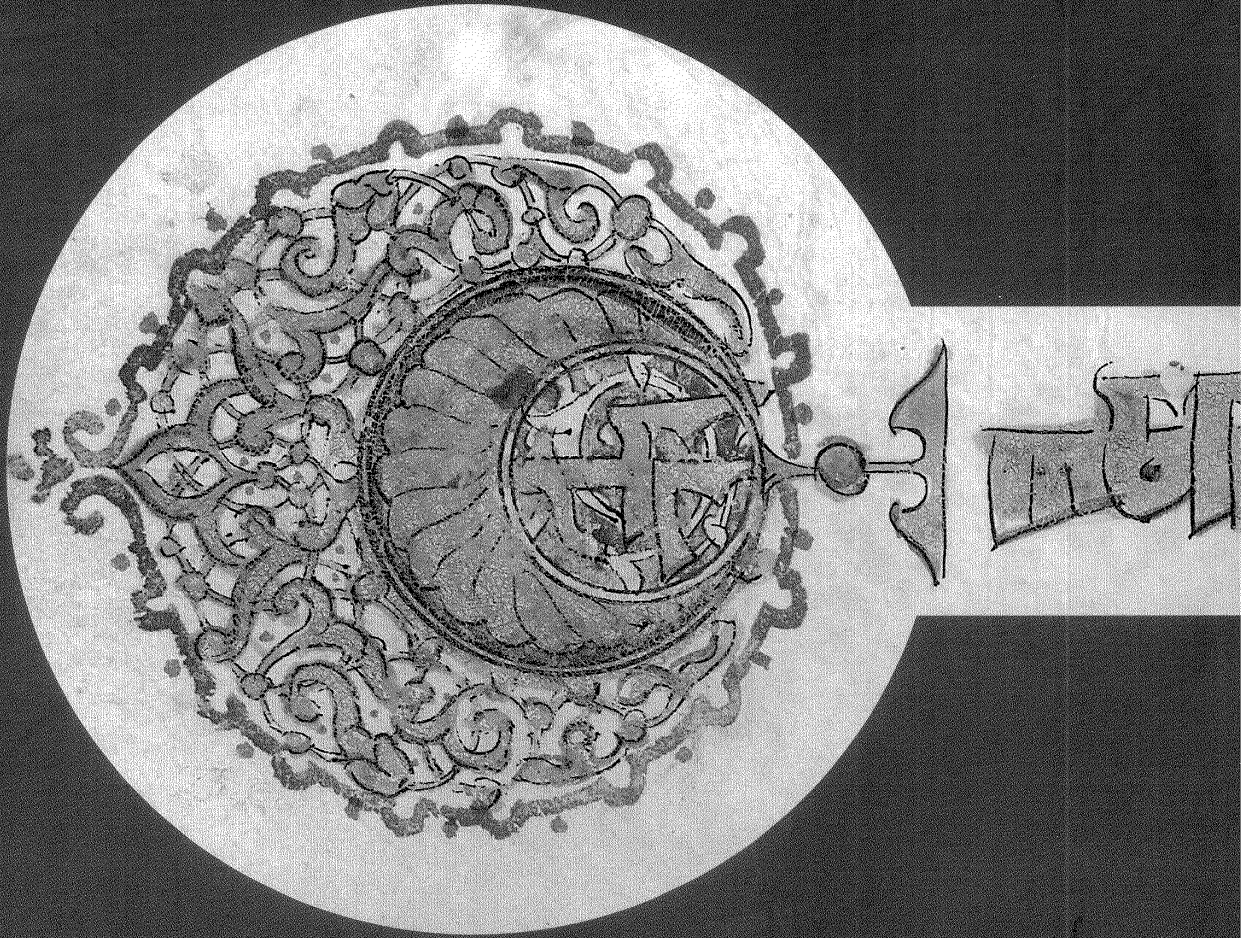
Islamic Calligraphy



MARCUS FRASER AND WILL KWIATKOWSKI

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Ink and Gold is a catalogue of over forty pieces of Islamic calligraphy and illumination, covering a period of some 1200 years and representing the calligraphic traditions of an area stretching from Morocco to Central Asia. Pride of place has been given to the Qur'an as the most widely copied text in the Islamic world and as the inspiration for many of the masterpieces of Islamic calligraphy. The catalogue also includes examples of royal decrees, calligraphic albums and Persian poetry, showing the huge diversity of calligraphic traditions in the Islamic world. *Ink and Gold* has been produced to accompany an exhibition at the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin.



Ink and Gold



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي
خَلَقَ الْمَوَدَّاتِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي
خَلَقَ الْمَوَدَّاتِ
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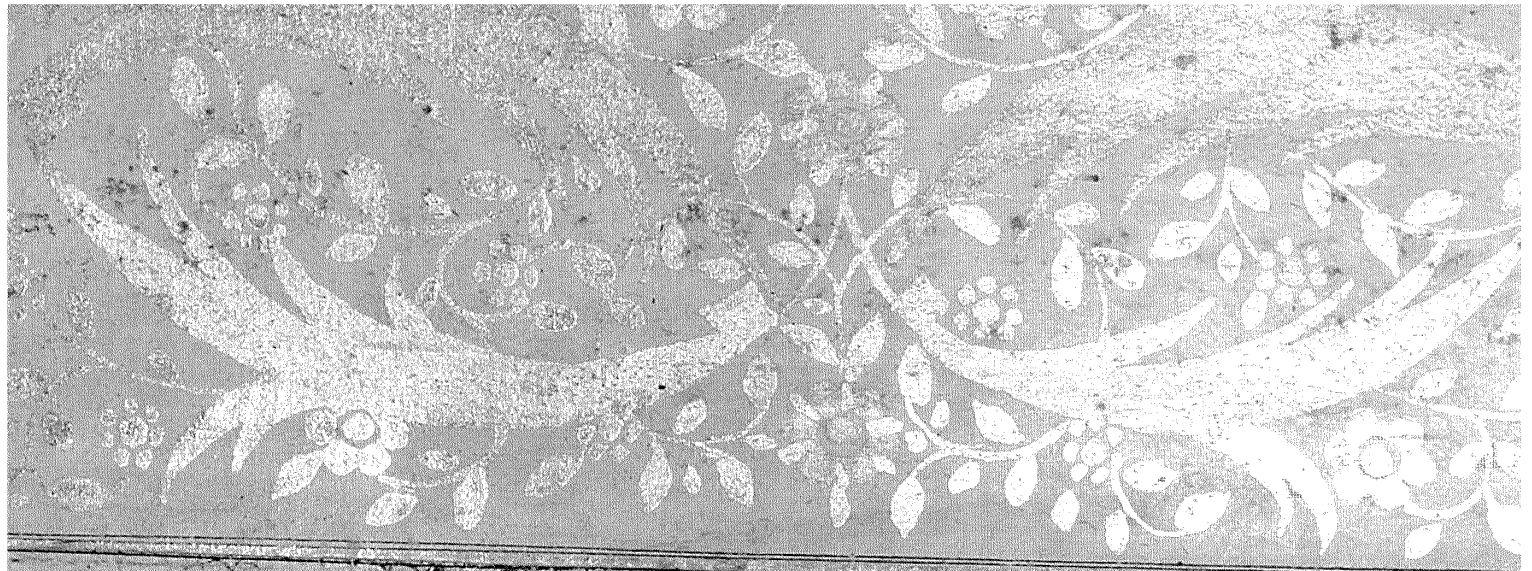
Ink and Gold

Islamic Calligraphy

MARCUS FRASER AND WILL KWIATKOWSKI

Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin

Sam Fogg, London

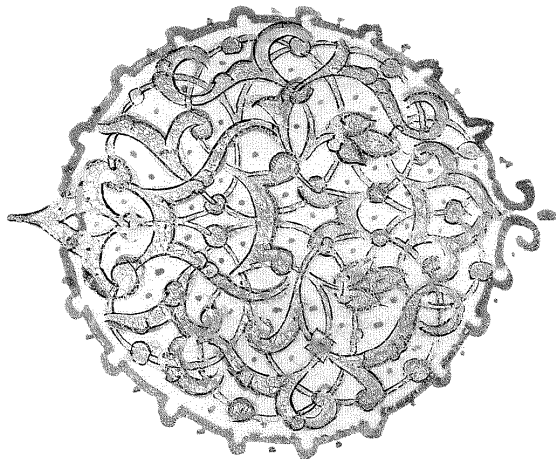


الحمد لله الذي جعل في كل واحد منا
حكمة وعلم وفضل ورحمة

منه ووقع ما يريد من كل امرئ
في كتابه وكتبه

والله اعلم بما
يريد من عباده

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für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu
Berlin*

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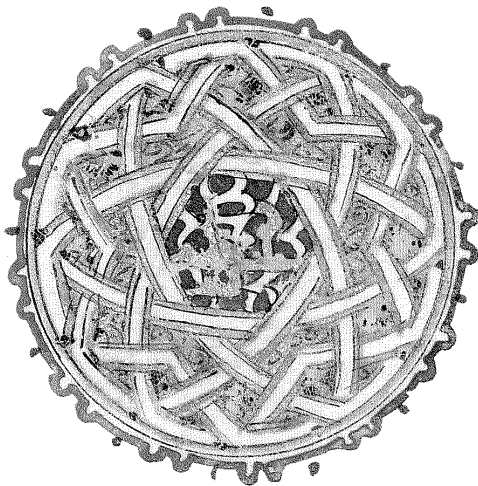
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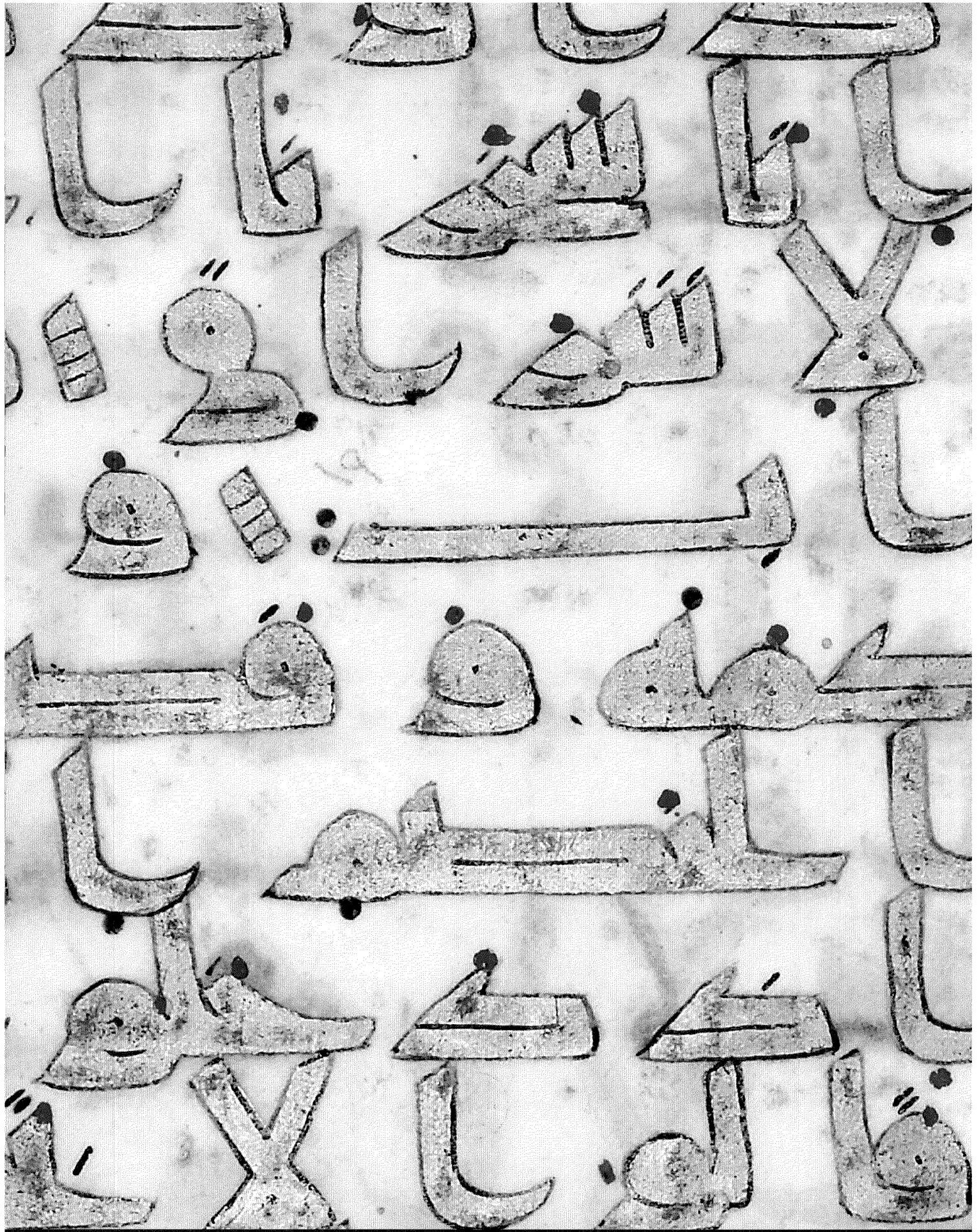
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Foreword

Claus-Peter Haase

Director of the Museum für Islamische

Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

If we in Europe try to seek some understanding of the aesthetics and sense of beauty of our closest cultural neighbour we will very soon turn to the wide range of developments in Arabic calligraphy, the noblest, most stylized and most original of the Islamic arts. Unfortunately this means that we are confronted with signs and textures completely alien to the Western eye: these abstract forms seem wholly 'unreadable' to us – even more than geometrically or organically 'understandable' motifs of abstract Islamic design and ornament. Strangely enough the fact has been neglected that the beauty of a calligraphic design is not wholly connected to its 'readability', for everyone can take the greatest pleasure from contemplating the abstract flow of swelling lines and from compositions of lines and fields within a given space, whether that be pages of books or inscriptions on objects and architecture. Even for Muslims and other readers of the script, the calligraphy is not always readily legible, and what vividly attracts attention is often the inspiring aura of the writing, its serenity and elegance, rather than the meaning of the text, which in some poetry may sound conventional. Thus, Islamic calligraphy can be appreciated not only as a form of writing, but as a work of art in the form of an abstract construction.

In comparison with Chinese calligraphy, Arabic script has occasionally been described as more conservative, but when one considers the very short period of its initial development in the first two centuries of Islam, and surveys its wide range from early Arabic beginnings to new Persian, Mughal Indian and Ottoman styles and then those of the more remote Islamic areas in the West and in East Asia, the horizon widens to an astonishing degree. It is this intense effect and the multiform appearance of Islamic calligraphy which has at all periods induced collectors not only of books but of works of art to preserve great examples of the old masters. Royal patrons such as the Mughal emperors Akbar and Shah Jahan, besides patronizing the work of living calligraphers, added specimens of antique masterpieces to their collections of album pages. Today it seems more difficult to see good calligraphy, as much is hidden in libraries, public or private. We may wonder whether these are the right places for works of art, and it is typical that an institution like the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin, founded over a century ago, was not primarily concerned with collecting the arts of the book, as this was left to the Oriental Department of the State Library.

In his studies and publications, however, Ernst Kühnel, one of the former directors of the museum (died 1964), succeeded in bridging this gap between museums and libraries. He wrote one of the first general studies in German on Islamic calligraphy, based not only on objects in the Library and in some private collections, but especially on the Museum's famous collection of Mughal album leaves. Today, when nearly all the funds of the Berlin State Museums are eaten up by the great building activity that is necessary, it should be a primary goal to ask private enterprises to promote such a valuable and aesthetically rich field. We are very proud and glad that a foremost specialist in the field has assisted us in attracting public attention to this magnificent art. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank those institutions and private collectors who have lent works of art to this exhibition.

Cat. 5

Large Qur'an leaf in gold Kufic script (detail)



محمد بن عبد الله
صلى الله عليه وسلم



Introduction

Calligraphy has never been challenged as the supreme art of the Islamic world, reflecting the centrality of the Qur'anic revelation to Islamic faith and culture. In Islam, the Qur'an is held to be God's eternal and uncreated word, giving Arabic a special status as the language of God's actual revelation. The earliest surviving fragments of Qur'an are in the form of monumental vellum leaves, the awesome physical presence of which is a witness to the reverence in which the Qur'anic revelation was held. These were written in thin slanting scripts collectively called 'Hijazi', which clearly relate to the script used on pre-Islamic stone inscriptions from the sixth century.¹ While the earliest group of Hijazi leaves lack orthographic systems for vocalization and distinguishing consonants of the same shape, with the expansion of Islam such systems, using coloured dots and diacritical strokes, were soon established.

The establishment of the 'Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258 CE), with its capital at the newly founded city of Baghdad from 762 onwards, marked a new stage in the cultural and economic integration of the Mediterranean and Asia. Among the new cultural forms that emerged in the cosmopolitan early 'Abbasid period were illuminated Qur'ans in horizontal format, written in angular scripts frequently called 'Kufic', after the city of Kufa in Iraq where the style is said to have originated. The crisp elegance of many of these scripts and the luxurious sophistication of illumination in the first centuries of the 'Abbasid period have contributed to the notion that this was a 'classical' age in Qur'an production. The diffusion of Kufic styles throughout the Near East and Mediterranean is visual testimony to the extraordinary exchange of ideas and goods that took place under the 'Abbasid dynasty, which stretched at its height from the Atlantic to the borders of China.

The pre-eminence of Kufic scripts was challenged in the eleventh century by various cursive scripts, which probably developed in the chanceries where there was a need for more legible scripts that could be written with greater speed. Particular importance is attached in the Islamic tradition to the colourful figure of Ibn Muqla, a vizier of the first half of the tenth century whose political intrigues eventually led to his imprisonment and the removal of his tongue. Ibn Muqla was also a celebrated calligrapher and is credited with the elaboration of a system for standardizing various scripts based on the proportions of the rhombic dot formed by the nib of the calligrapher's reed pen.² The renowned calligrapher Ibn al-Bawwab, who lived in Baghdad at the beginning of the eleventh century, is said to have refined Ibn Muqla's system further, laying the foundation for the tradition of the six 'proportioned' cursive scripts, which was carried by successive generations to the Central and Eastern Islamic lands.³

Cat. 39

'The Spectacles of the Chameleon' (detail)

The rise of these scripts was also accompanied by changes in writing technology. According to tradition, paper was first introduced to the Islamic world by Chinese prisoners taken in the Battle of Talas (modern-day Kyrgyzstan) fought between Arab and Chinese armies in 751 CE.⁴ Though the bureaucracy was quick to adopt this cheaper and more practical medium,⁵ vellum remained the standard in Qur'an production until the eleventh century, when both paper and the vertical portrait format favoured by the bureaucracy began to be used for Qur'ans as well. In North Africa and Spain the use of vellum for Qur'ans outlived the practice elsewhere in the Islamic world, surviving until the late fourteenth century.

New heights in calligraphy and illumination were reached under Mongol (Ilkhanid) rule in Iran and the Near East (1256-1353), which, despite the initial devastation caused by the Mongol invasions, was a period of artistic brilliance and innovation. Some of the most celebrated copies of the Qur'an ever made were produced by such calligraphers as Yaqut al-Must'asimi and his outstanding pupil Ahmad ibn al-Suhrawardi. At the same time the Mamluk rulers of Egypt were also commissioning lavishly illustrated copies of the Qur'an, the size and splendour of which were equal to the architectural splendour of the Mamluk mosques and *madrasas* (theological schools).

Whereas scripts and decorative devices were shared by Ilkhanid and Mamluk Qur'ans, a separate calligraphic tradition developed in North Africa and Spain. The earliest surviving Qur'an from this part of the world is the famous Nurse Quran. Completed c. 1020, the Nurse Qur'an was written in huge letters on large vertical vellum sheets in a distinctive variant of Kufic, sometimes called 'Western' Kufic. This tradition seems to have died out, and by the twelfth century Qur'ans were written in a distinctive hand usually referred to as 'Maghribi', characterized by the deep curve of the letters below the line. Here Qur'an production tended to be conservative, continuing to use vellum long after it had fallen out of use in the rest of the Islamic world, and usually following a standard pattern. This consisted of a square format, brightly coloured vowel markers and marginal devices, and often lavish gold illumination marked by the use of thick strapwork borders and geometric patterns. However, North African and Spanish Qur'ans were also written on paper. There were several centres of high-quality paper manufacture in Spain, the most famous of which was in Jativa, renowned for its paper of pinkish hue and for being the first paper-mill in Europe. It was from such Spanish paper-mills, conquered by the Christians during the thirteenth century, that the art of paper-making spread into the Latin West.⁶

Major changes in calligraphic styles took place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, under the direction of the cultivated Timurid and Safavid rulers of Iran. This period saw the ascendancy of the *nast'aliq* script, which probably emerged in the chanceries attached to the Timurid courts, but soon became the script *par excellence* of Persian and Turkish poetry.⁷ The assembling of albums of individual calligraphic specimens, usually of Persian poetry, marked another change in taste of the period.⁸ These proved so popular that the individual sheet of poetry (*qita*), prized for its calligraphic beauty, became an independent art form. The Timurids



Fig. 1
Interior of the Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem

were the descendants of Timur Leng or Tamerlane (d. 1405), the Central Asian leader who established a vast empire in Iran, Iraq and Central Asia at the end of the fourteenth century, and campaigned as far as Anatolia and the Duchy of Moscow. His descendants established highly cultured courts in cities such as Shiraz, Herat and Samarkand, and patronized many of the new cultural forms that dominated artistic life in the following centuries.

The major Islamic empires that ruled the Islamic world after the collapse of the Timurids, such as the Safavids in Iran, the Ottomans in Anatolia, the Balkans, Syria and Egypt, and the Timurids' descendants in India, the Mughal dynasty, drew heavily on the Timurid achievement. In addition to calligraphic albums and individual poems in *nast'aliq*, copies of the Qur'an illuminated in styles inspired by Timurid precedents were popular in all three empires. During the sixteenth century *naskh* became the favourite, though not exclusive, script for copying the Qur'an. The Ottoman Empire in particular was renowned for its *naskh* calligraphers, the most celebrated of whom was Sheyh Hamdullah, the tutor of the future Sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512) and alleged pioneer of the Ottoman *naskh* style.⁹ The art of calligraphy was so esteemed in the Ottoman and Safavid empires during the sixteenth century that several biographical dictionaries of famous calligraphers were compiled, such as Mustafa 'Ali's *Menakib-i Hünerveran* and the

Tūhfa-yi Sami by the Safavid prince Sam Mirza.

The interest in calligraphers' lives and the popularity of individual calligraphic specimens from the Timurid period onwards was concomitant with a new historicizing tendency and collecting impulse.¹⁰ Alongside famous illustrated manuscripts, albums containing specimens by famous calligraphers were frequently included in the highly prized gifts presented by Safavid envoys to the Ottoman courts in Istanbul and Edirne.¹¹ Calligraphic pages by famous Iranian artists were also sought after in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mughal India, where they were often remounted, decorated, and incorporated into albums of calligraphy and painting. Two of the most celebrated of such albums, commissioned by the Emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan, in addition to Iranian, Deccani, contemporary and earlier Mughal drawings and paintings, contained numerous calligraphy leaves, almost exclusively by the famous Herati calligrapher Mir 'Ali (d. 1528).¹² Assembling *muraqqa*' albums was one of the courtly pursuits taken up by local rulers in India, particularly in the eighteenth century, when the collapse of Mughal power made way for the flourishing of commerce and the arts outside the main imperial centres.

This exhibition at the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, represents over a thousand years of Islamic calligraphy, covering an area from Morocco in the West to Khoqand on the borders of China in the East and the Deccan in the South. Pride of place has been given to the Qur'an as the most continuously copied text in the Islamic world and therefore as one of the best prisms through which to view changes in calligraphy and manuscript production. The exhibition also aims to convey something of the huge diversity of literary traditions in the Islamic world and the way in which these interacted with a love of the visual to produce constantly changing and frequently surprising results.

1 Déroche 1992, pp. 27-29.

2 For the life and achievements of Ibn Muqla, see *ELI*, art. 'Ibn Muqla'.

3 For an account of the establishment of the tradition of the canon of six scripts, see Soucek 1979, pp. 10-16.

4 For a discussion of this legend in the context of the history of the introduction of paper to the Islamic lands, see Bloom 2001, pp. 42-45.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 47-50.

6 For the history of paper in North Africa and Spain, see *ibid.*, pp. 85-89.

7 For the emergence of *nast'aliq* and related chancery scripts, see Soucek 1979, pp. 18-32.

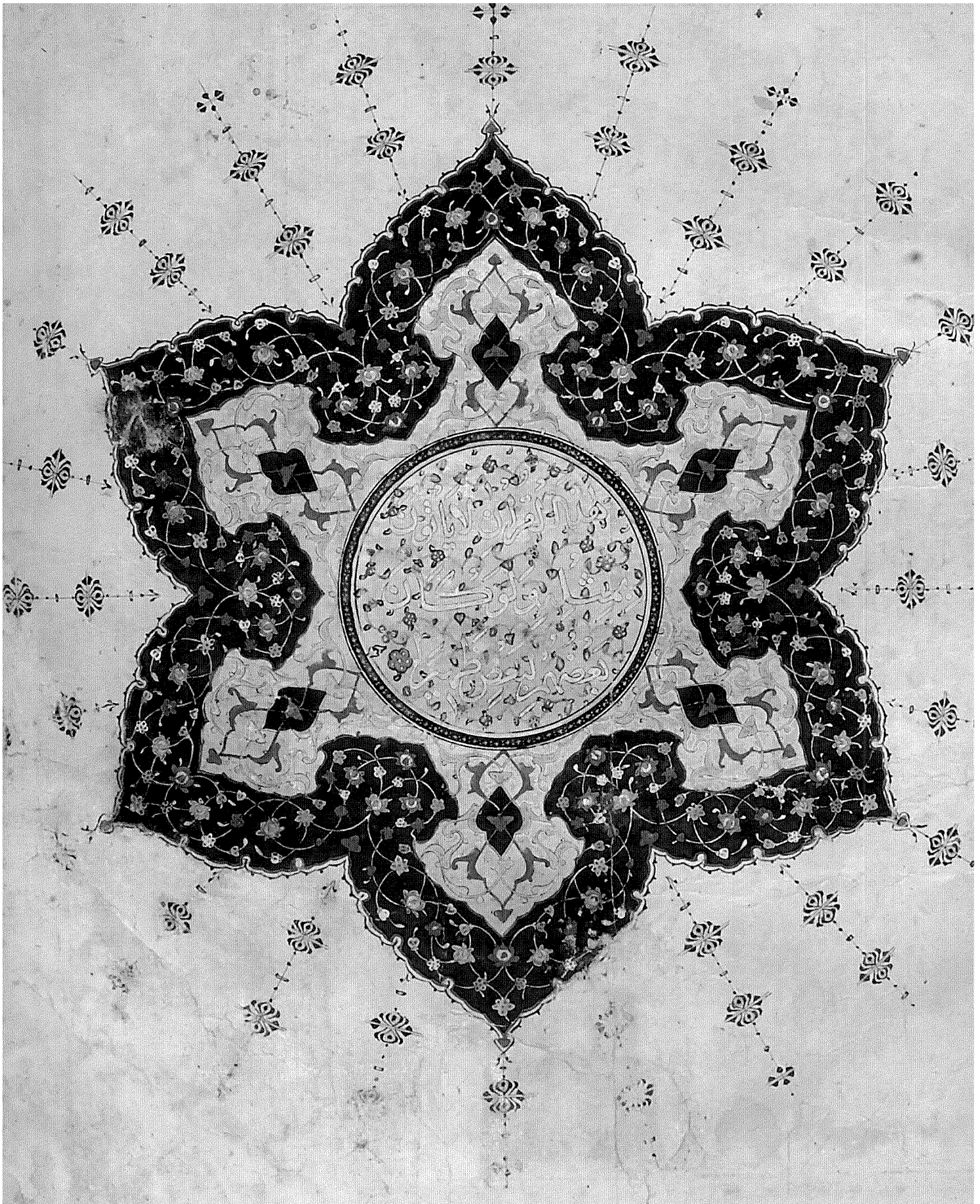
8 For the invention of the album in the Timurid period see Roxburgh 2005, esp. chapter 4, 'Reinventions of the Book', pp. 149-79.

9 For a brief biography of the life of Sheyh Hamdullah, see Rogers, 1996, p. 50. For the subsequent history of his tradition of *naskh* script, see Stanley 1995, pp. 31-39.

10 Roxburgh 2005, esp. pp. 54-61.

11 See *ibid.*, pp. 317-18; Dickson and Welch 1981, I, appendix II, pp. 270-01.

12 These are the so-called 'Berlin' and 'Kevorkian' Albums, in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, respectively. See Beach 1978, pp. 43-46.



Palimpsest Qur'an leaf in Hijazi script

Western Arabia or Syria
1st century AH / 7th century CE

The main, dark brown script of the present leaf consists of nine verses from Sura 2 (*Al-Baqara*): recto, from the word *al-Zakat* in verse 277 to the words *illa an* in verse 282; verso, from the word *tijarat* in verse 282 to the words *nasiyna aw* in verse 286. The earlier pale brown script consists of another part of Sura 2 (*Al-Baqara*). Although faint and partly obscured by the darker script, it is possible to read the consonantal outline of the earlier script and thus pinpoint the relevant passage from the Qur'an: recto, from the last two words of verse 206 to the second use of the word *fihi* in verse 217; verso, from the word *kabir* in verse 217 to the words *harthun lakum* in verse 223.

Palimpsest folio from an Arabic manuscript with twenty-four lines (recto) and twenty lines (verso) written in dark brown Hijazi script on parchment. Letter pointing (*i'jam*) is used only occasionally and consists of short angled dashes. There are no vowel marks and only one decorated roundel, marking a verse division coloured in green, red and brown. The subscript is also in Hijazi script in brown ink.
FOLIO 36.6 x 28.2 cm

The David Collection, Copenhagen, inv. no. 862003

This vellum leaf is one of the earliest surviving fragments of the Qur'an. Datable to the first century AH (mid- to late seventh century CE), it may have formed part of one of the 'Uthmanic codices, the earliest canonical copies of the Qur'an. Not only is this folio of tremendous religious significance as a relic of the earliest period of Islam and of the textual transmission of the Qur'an, but it is also an important milestone in the development of Arabic as a written language and the evolution of Arabic scripts.

The Qur'an leaf is a palimpsest consisting of a dark brown script superimposed on an earlier paler brown script. Both the upper text and the earlier one are from the Qur'an and both read from the top of the same side of the leaf. Soon after the first text was written on this leaf the parchment must have been scraped clean and the second script written over the top, in a related, but generally thinner and more slanted script. At the time of the writing of the second text the earlier script would have been wholly erased,

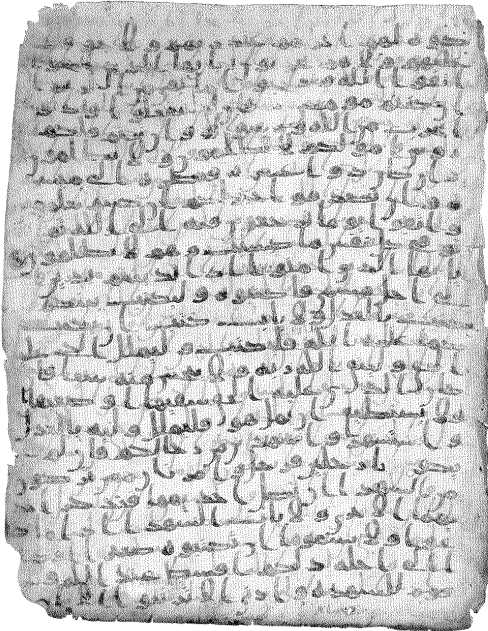
but the acidic properties of the ink (probably a form of iron gall ink, which was the most common type of ink in the medieval world) had indelibly etched the letter forms on to the parchment and a shadow of the earlier script re-appeared over time, leading to the current effect of one script superimposed on another. This is a known characteristic of western and oriental palimpsests. The present leaf is of the same size and format as the other original folios from this codex, three of which survive, one in Sana'a, Yemen (Dar al-Makhtutat),¹ and two in private collections.²

Little evidence remains of pre-Islamic Arabic script. Inscriptions on tombstones in the late Nabatean and early Arabic scripts dating from the third to sixth centuries CE give us the first clues about the development of the modern script. In chronological order these are: a tombstone from Umm al-Jimjal, dating to c. 250 CE; three graffiti on the temple of Ramm in Sinai dating to c. 300 CE; the tomb of the pre-Islamic poet Imru'l-Qays at Namarah, dated 328 CE; graffito at Zabad dated 512 CE; an inscription on the church of Hind at al-Hira of about 560 CE; an inscription on a rock at Harran dated 568 CE.³

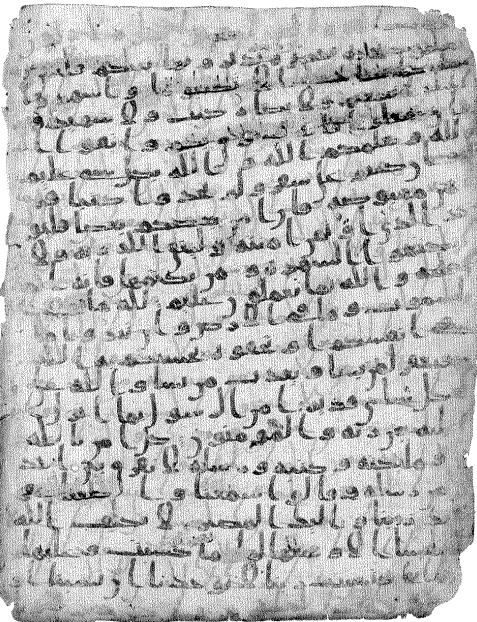
It is unlikely that by the end of the 6th century CE the Arabic script had yet formed into a homogenous style. Oral tradition was the predominant means of promulgating poetry and folklore and there were regional and tribal variations in the spoken language of Arabia.⁴ However, it is certain that the practice of writing was well known among the merchants of Mecca, Medina and other Arabian trading towns at the time of the Prophet's mission. Tradition has it that the script known as *jazm*, which was predominant among the tribes of the north-east Arabian peninsular and al-Hira and al-Anbar (towns on the Arabian borders of the Sassanian empire in the Mesopotamian basin) spread to the Hijaz in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, and was popularized a century later among the Quraysh (the leading tribe of Mecca and the tribe of the Prophet himself) by Harb b. Umayyah.⁵ Furthermore, there are several references in the Qur'an to the use of written records both in the religious context and in daily life (e.g. verse 282 of Sura *Al-Baqara*).

Arabic script at this stage has been referred to as a *scriptio defectiva* as opposed to the *scriptio plena* of modern Arabic.⁶ During the period of the Prophet's mission and the following decades the system of applying the diacritical and orthographic markings had not been standardized. According to traditional accounts, the use of a

Handwritten Arabic calligraphy in a dense, overlapping style, likely a form of Maghrebi script. The text is written in dark ink on a light-colored, textured background. The characters are highly stylized and interconnected, forming a complex, rhythmic pattern. The overall appearance is that of a dense, decorative text, possibly a religious or historical document.



Cat. I recto



Cat. I verso

comprehensive system of diacritical marks on consonants in the form of dots or vertical dashes (known as letter-pointing or *i'jam*) was devised by al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf, who died in 714 CE. This was an important development as it meant that consonants of identical form could be distinguished from one another. The other great aid to the development of an easily readable script was the invention of coloured dots to indicate vowels. This invention has been attributed to Abu'l-Aswad al-Du'ali, who died in 688 CE. However, it has been argued that the development of the *scriptio defectiva* into the *scriptio plena* could not have happened suddenly, as is implied by the accounts of al-Hajjaj and Abu'l-Aswad.⁷ At the date of the writing of the 'Uthmanic codices a comprehensive system of orthographic aids had probably not yet come into being. It is thought that rudimentary markings were used to differentiate between identical consonantal forms in early Arabic scripts, but usually only in essential cases, where there was a real possibility of consonantal confusion, not regularly.⁸ This supposition is borne out by the evidence of the scripts on the present Qur'an leaf.

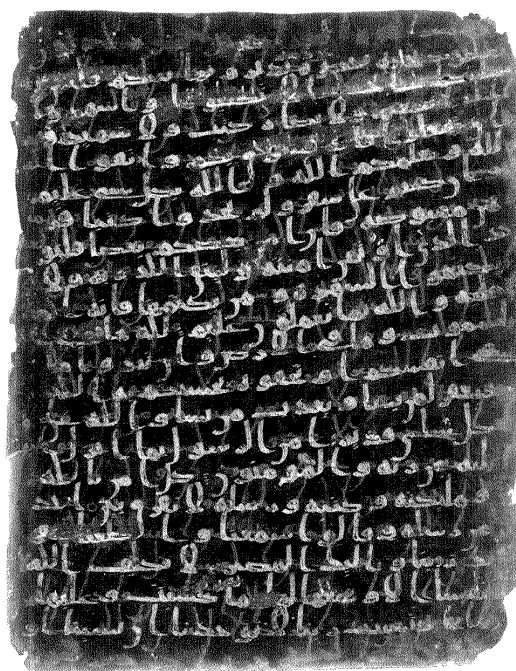
The upper script of the present folio is generally rounded, but shows occasional instances of angularity. The script does not 'lean back' like the later *ma'il* scripts, nor are the horizontals of the letters extended, as in *mashq*. The script can be compared with cursive graffiti at Mount Sala', near Medina, dated 625 CE.⁹ Certain characteristics of the present script are worth mentioning. The terminal *ya* often hangs limply below the line, but on other occasions folds back under the line. The terminal *alif maqsurah* also folds back slightly under the line. The tail of the terminal *qaf* hangs limply below the line. These characteristics are retained in later, more formal scripts such as Kufic and *ma'il*, but in the later instances they have begun to take on definite and intentional angular decorative qualities which are not present here. The intentional angularity begins quite early, as seen in the tails of the terminal *ya* on an important early section of the Qur'an in the British Library.¹⁰ Here the initial *alif* already has a short horizontal tail at the base. It has been pointed out that this was a distinguishing characteristic of early Meccan and Medinan scripts¹¹ and it can be seen clearly on a rock-cut inscription of the dedication of a dam built by the Caliph Mu'awiyah in 677 CE.¹²

The characteristics of the earlier, pale brown script on the present leaf are generally more slanting, and a thinner nib has been used, giving narrower vertical strokes and a slightly more 'spidery' character. The pale brown script can

again be compared with some of the graffiti at Mount Sala' and with the inscription dedicating Mu'awiyah's dam of 677 CE. For example, the medial 'ayn is formed by two separate, opposing curved forms which are not joined across the top, as they are in later scripts. This is a feature which goes back to pre-Islamic tombstone inscriptions and can also be clearly seen again in the dedication of Mu'awiyah's dam of 677 CE.¹³ It is noticeable that both scripts lack a linear discipline, *i.e.* the horizontal lines of the scripts are uneven and there is no strict line-base for the letters or words.

Regarding diacritical and orthographic markings, the dark brown script has no marks to indicate short vowels at all. There are some diacritical marks to differentiate between consonants of the same form, but they are not used on all the letters that would require them in modern Arabic. It is probable that the letter-points that are present are original to the script and were applied at the time of writing, since the width of the strokes of the dashes matches exactly the width of the vertical strokes of the script in general, and the ink matches, too. The marks take the form of angled dashes formed by placing the nib down once on the page. Thus the shape of the dashes indicates accurately the shape of the nib used. The pale brown script is essentially a consonantal skeleton, with no marks to indicate short vowels and only one letter, the *ta*, bearing a mark to differentiate it from others of the same basic form.

MF



Cat. 1 verso (colours inverted)

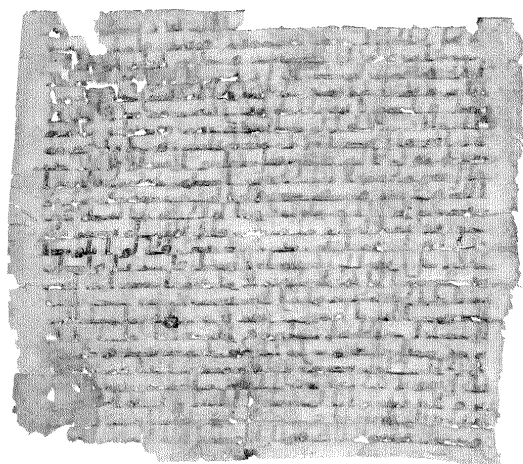
- 1 See Kuwait 1985, no. 4, p. 59, where the leaf is dated to the first half of the first century AH (621-70 CE).
- 2 See Sotheby's, 22 October 1993, lot 31; and Bonhams, 11 October 2000, lot 13.
- 3 Abbott 1939, pl. I; Safadi 1978, p. 6.
- 4 *EL2*, articles on 'Arabiyya', 'Khatt', 'Kitabar'.
- 5 Safadi 1978, p. 8.
- 6 Bell and Watt 1970, pp. 47-48.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 Safadi 1978, p. 13.
- 9 For a photograph of these graffiti see Safadi 1978, p. 15.
- 10 Or. 2165; see Lings and Safadi 1976, no. 1a, p. 20; Safadi 1978, p. 8.
- 11 See Munajjid 1972, p. 24.
- 12 Safadi 1978, p. 15.
- 13 *Ibid.*

2 Monumental Qur'an leaf in early Kufic script

Near East, perhaps Umayyad Syria
 About 700 CE
 Sura 11 (*Hud*), vv. 73-95

Folio from a large Arabic manuscript on parchment with twenty-five lines of Kufic script per page written in brown ink. The letter-pointing is original and consists of diagonal dashes of the same brown ink as the main text. There is no vocalization. The single verse divisions are marked with short diagonal clusters of angled dashes applied in the same brown ink as the main text. Tenth verse divisions are marked with square devices with narrow knotted border bands and an internal floral motif.

FOLIO 48 × 54 cm
 TEXT AREA 47 × 47 cm











This exceptional Qur'an leaf is notable for its unusually large size, for its square format and for the early style of script, which is close to calligraphy and epigraphy associated with the Umayyad dynasty.¹ Of all early Qur'ans in Kufic scripts on parchment only four others are of comparable or larger dimensions.² These four are also of a generally square format. The script of the present folio has characteristics that are less developed than any of these four, and is therefore possibly the earliest of these monumental manuscripts.

The folio was housed for around a hundred years in the library of the Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut, to which it had been brought by Duncan Black Macdonald (1863-1943), the eminent scholar of Islam, fellow of the University of Glasgow and Professor of Semitic Languages at the Hartford Seminary. The Duncan Black Macdonald Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at the Hartford Seminary is named in his honour. During his several study trips to the Middle East, Macdonald collected a variety of Arabic manuscripts, some Islamic and some Christian, including the present folio. It was de-accessioned by the Hartford Seminary in 2004.

The script of the present folio seems to be a transitional type between Hijazi and fully formed Kufic. Calligraphically it is generally quite neat and well disciplined both in terms of the parallelism of the vertical letters and in the horizontality of each line of script.³ The script shows individual characteristics of both Hijazi and Kufic styles. The Hijazi aspects are that the script slants slightly to the right, occasionally the tail of the terminal *qaf* hangs down limply below the line, the initial *'ayn/ghayn* is low to the line and lacks the rounded curve of Kufic forms, and the verticals of the *lam/alif* combination converge slightly. These features are very close to Déroche's Hijazi IV script, see most clearly on a fragment in the Bibliothèque nationale and on two fragmentary folios in the Khalili Collection (Table 1).⁴









TABLE 1: Hijazi letter forms

	Cat. 2	BNP Arabe 334	Khalili KFQ59, 61
Terminal <i>qaf</i>			
Initial <i>'ayn/ghayn</i>			
<i>Lam/alif</i> combination			

Paradoxically, these letter forms, and the independent *alif*, also resemble, in a more developed way, aspects of the script of the famous large-format architecturally decorated Qur'an discovered in the Sana'a Mosque cache and attributed to the Umayyad dynasty about 710-15 (Table 2).⁵ Three of these letter forms, the *qaf*, *alif* and *lam/alif*, are of a type which Déroche has categorized as style C.Ia, and which he attributes, cautiously, to the second half of the eighth century.

The square format of the folio is also an indication of a transitional type of manuscript. The majority of folios written in Hijazi scripts are of vertical format,⁶ whereas

TABLE 2: Early Kufic letter forms

	Cat. 2	Dar al-Makhtutat, Sana'a, inv. 20-33.1
CE Terminal <i>qaf</i> (close to type C.Ia)		
Initial <i>'ayn/ghayn</i>		
<i>Lam/alif</i> combination (close to type C.Ia)		
<i>Alif</i> (close to type C.Ia)		

ninth-century codices with fully mature Kufic script tend to be quite strongly horizontal in format.⁷ Significantly, other Qur'an manuscripts which have this generally square format include the Sana'a Umayyad Codex, carbon-dated to the late seventh century, but attributed by Bothmer to Umayyad Syria c. 710-15, and the Tashkent Qur'an, which has been carbon-dated to c. 700.⁸

Another calligraphic feature is the use of absolutely equal spacing between letters, not just between the last letter of one word and the first of the next, but between every letter within a word that is not joined with a ligature. On the present folio the space is almost invariably 1 cm. There is very little variation, and it seems certain that the scribe's intention was to space all the letters equally. This notion is supported by the fact that, if the whole word did not fit at the end of a line, the scribe split the word to keep the spacing even. As a result there is no spatial grouping of letters in words and no spatial differentiation between letters within a word and whole words. The same phenomenon is present on Umayyad epigraphic inscriptions in stone and

mosaic, including the gold mosaic Qur'anic inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock (completed 692; see fig. 1, page 11) and two milestones from the reign of 'Abd al-Malik, one dated 705 (see fig. 2).⁹ It quickly became a standard feature of Qur'ans written in Kufic script. Interestingly, this approach was also used by Byzantine scribes, particularly in royal manuscripts of the Gospels: the text pages of imperial, purple-dyed Bible codices made in Syria or Palestine during the sixth and early seventh centuries have defined text areas with equal spacing between all letters.¹⁰

There is no vocalization on the present folio, and this may be a further indication of a relatively early date. The traditional account of the invention of the red-dot system of vocalization by the grammarian Abu'l-Aswad al-Du'ali (d. 688) would indicate that it came into use during the reign of the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik (685-705). Even if this account is not wholly accurate, and the *scriptio plena* provided by vocalization developed more gradually,¹¹ it is certain that the majority of codices in Hijazi scripts do not have red-dot vocalization, and the majority of codices in fully formed Kufic do. Thus, the absence of vocalization here, on a script that lies somewhere between Hijazi and Kufic, is another indication of a transitional phase.

The letter-pointing consists of dashes of the same brown ink as the main text, applied by placing the nib on the parchment, but not drawing it along the surface, *i.e.* the shape of the dashes shows the shape of the nib-end. The incidence of letter-pointing appears to follow a formal set of rules. It is not used on all letters that use it in modern Arabic, but it is used on those letters where necessary to differentiate them from others of the same form within the same word, or to make certain of grammatical aspects such as the conjugation of verbs. For example, in the word *kuntum* in the second line of the verso the *nun* is not marked, but the *ta* is marked with two strokes above to differentiate it from the other letters of the same form (*nun* in this case) and therefore ensure the correct reading of the word. The system seems to be that, in a word with two letters of the same form, whichever letter comes first is not marked and the second is marked. However, there are exceptions. For example, in line 17 of the verso (verse 91) the word *bi-'aziz* has the first *za* marked, but not the second, and in line 10 of the verso the final word of verse 88 – *uniybu* – has no marks on either the *nun* or the *ba*, nor again on the *ya*.

However, where a word has a prefix that uses the same letter form as a letter within the word proper, *e.g.* the *bi* of

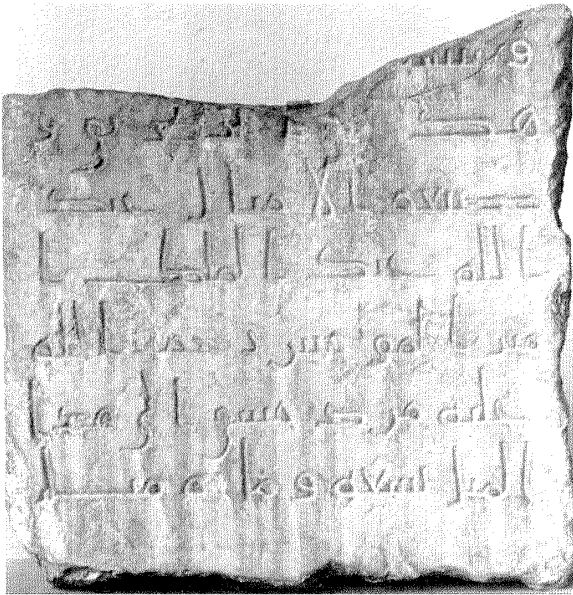


Fig. 2: Milestone, Umayyad, 685-705 CE

bi-hafizin, this is not counted as two letter forms within the same word, and neither is marked. Presumably knowledge of Arabic grammar and of the text of the Qur'an was advanced enough by this date to assume that a reader would know not to mistake a prefix for a letter in the word proper. Generally speaking *ya* never seems to be marked. In the word *yush'aybu* in the third line of the verso, for instance, neither *ya* is marked, but both the *shin* and the *ba* are marked. With respect to correct grammar the application follows similar lines and is most frequently employed to differentiate persons in the conjugation of verbs, e.g. in the word *natruka* in the fourth line of the verso both the *nun* and the *ta* are marked, presumably because grammatically it would be possible to mistake *natruk* (present tense first person plural of the verb *taraka*) for *yatruk* or *tatruk*.

The single and fifth verse divisions are marked with a short diagonal row of oblique dashes in the same brown ink as the main text. These are of a type often seen on early Kufic Qur'ans, including the Sana'a Umayyad Codex, the Tashkent Qur'an, and cat. 3 in this catalogue.

The decorative device that marks the tenth verse division is of square format with a narrow knotted border-band and an internal floral motif. It must have been drawn in brown ink first and then coloured, as the example on the verso has lost its colour and only the brown line drawing remains, whereas the example on the recto still retains its red pigment

and infilling of brown ink, showing that the outer areas were coloured and the floral motif left in reserve. The design of this device relates to verse markers and *sura* heading devices on other Qur'ans which have been attributed to the early eighth century, including cat. 4 and the Tashkent Qur'an.¹² MF

- 1 Another folio almost certainly from the same manuscript as the present example is in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad; see Munajjid 1972, fig. 45. An article on the textual aspects of this manuscript, entitled 'An Umayyad Fragment of the Qur'an', is being drafted for publication in the *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* by Dr Yasin Dutton.
- 2 (1. A Qur'an in the Dar al-Makhtutat, Sana'a, discovered in the Sana'a Mosque cache, published by Bothmer (Bothmer 1987) and attributed by him to c. 710-15; see also Amsterdam 1999, cat. 36-41. Its leaves are almost all damaged around the edges, but even in this condition they measure approximately 42 × 43 cm. (2. A very large fragmentary Qur'an known as the Tashkent Qur'an, of which the leaves measure, untrimmed, 54 × 69 cm; see Singapore 1997, p. 28; Déroche and Gladiss 1999, no. 5, p. 20; Paris 2001, no. 14, p. 37; London 2004, no. 1. (3. A very large codex in the Seyyidna al-Husain Shrine, Cairo; see Munajjid 1972, fig. 25. Its exact dimensions are not known, but the scale is similar to the Tashkent *mushaf*. (4. A fragment of a very large codex in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul; see Munajjid 1972, fig. 46. Its exact dimensions are not listed, but it is similar in scale to (2. and (3.
- 3 Contrast with cat.3.
- 4 See Déroche 1983, no. 9, pl. VII; Déroche 1992, cat. 3, pp. 32-33. The latter pair of fragments are dated by Déroche to the late eighth or early ninth century on the grounds that they are possibly a later, post-Hijazi "venerating archaism". The present author believes it more likely that they are, straightforwardly, products of the primary Hijazi styles of the late seventh and early eighth centuries.
- 5 Bothmer 1987; Amsterdam 1999, cat. 36-41.
- 6 See James 1980, no. 1, p. 14; Déroche 1983, pl. V; Kuwait 1985, nos. 3, 4, 11, 17; Singapore 1997, p. 26; Déroche and Noseda 2001.
- 7 E.g. the 'Amajur' Qur'an, dated before 875-76 CE, in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul; see Ettinghausen *et al.* 2001, p. 75, fig. 118.
- 8 For the Sana'a Qur'an see Bothmer 1987; Amsterdam 1999, cat. 36-41; for the Tashkent Qur'an see Singapore 1997, p. 28; Déroche and Gladiss 1999, no. 5, p. 20, Paris 2001, no. 14, p. 37; London 2004, no. 1. The exact statistics for the carbon-dating are as follows: 68% probability of a date between 640 and 705 CE, 95% probability of a date between 595 and 855 CE.
- 9 See Nuseibeh and Grabar 1996, pp. 94-95; Grohmann 1967, no.1, pl. IV; Safadi 1978, p. 11.
- 10 E.g. the Rossano Gospels (Codex Purpureus Rossanensis), the Codex Petropolitanus and the Vienna Genesis, all produced in Syria or Palestine in the sixth century CE; see Cologne 1992, no. 1, pp. 60-61; New York 1977, nos. 443, 444; Fingernagel and Gastgeber 2003, no. 1.2, pp. 42-53.
- 11 See Bell and Watt 1970, p. 47-48.
- 12 See Singapore 1997, p. 26.

3 Qur'an leaf in Kufic script

Hijaz, Yemen or Egypt

Qur'anic text written c. 720-50 CE, vocalization and colour added c. 10th century

Sura 88 (*Al-Ghashiya*), vv. 22-26; Sura 89 (*Al-Fajr*), vv. 1-30

Folio from an Arabic manuscript written in Kufic script in brown ink on parchment with fourteen lines per page. Letter-pointing is restricted to a very few instances, all with two angled dashes to differentiate the letter *ta*. The vocalization (probably added later – see below) is applied using red and green dots, with some pale pinkish dots which may be oxidized or faded brownish-yellow, occasional red *tashdid* symbols according to the system of Khalil b. Ahmad al-Farahidi, and further vocalization indicators in green. Original single verse divisions are marked with vertical rows of two or three dashes. There are later additions marking the verse divisions in red and green, with small *ha*-shaped motifs at the fifth verses and the word *madaniyan* in a small hand in Kufic script in brown ink (see below for explanation). Tenth verse divisions are marked with square or rounded knot-motifs outlined in brown ink decorated (probably later) in red, green and brownish-yellow. These three devices contain *abjad* letters in brown Kufic script to give the exact verse count. The *sura* heading of Sura 89 (*Al-Fajr*) is marked with a panel extending the whole width of the page. It is drawn in brown ink and the internal motifs are loosely vegetal and geometric. The central panel has been left blank (perhaps for the inclusion of a *sura* title) and the lower panel, also blank, has been filled with an inscription enumerating the verse, word and letter counts of the *sura* (see below for explanation). The majority of the heading panel has been coloured in red, green and brownish-yellow.

FOLIO 20.5 × 32.7 cm

TEXT AREA 13 × 24 cm

This folio has many unusual and interesting features, some dating probably from the Umayyad period (661-750 CE) and some which cannot have been added until at least the late eighth century, and probably not before the tenth. It appears either that the leaf was written at such an

early date that diacritic and orthographic markings were not yet in common use (perhaps 690-720 CE) and that coloured decoration within the *sura* heading was not commonplace, or that it was left unfinished at the original stage of production, with just the brown textual script and the outline design of the decorative features (the *sura* heading panel and the tenth verse markers) drawn in brown ink. All the colouring and certain other features seem to have been added by a scribe or scholar with considerable theological knowledge perhaps some two hundred years later. Analysing the various features and examining when they were applied is a useful exercise, for it increases our understanding not just of this folio, but more generally of the style and development of Qur'an manuscripts of the early period.

Terminal <i>mim</i>							
Close to	A.I	B.Ib	B.II	C.Ia	C.III		
Initial 'ayn							
Close to	B.II	C or D group					
Lam/alif							
Close to	B.II						
Terminal <i>qaf</i>							
Close to	C.Ia	D.I					
Alif							
Close to	A.I or C.III	Hijazi, A.I, C.III	B.Ia	B.Ia	C.Ia	C.Ia	C.Ia
Alif Cont'd							
Close to	C.III	C.III	D.IV	D.IV	D.IV	D.IV	D.Va
Instances of Hijazi-style letters							
	Terminal <i>lam</i>	Terminal <i>ya</i>	Independent <i>ya</i>	Independent <i>ya</i>	Terminal <i>nun</i>	Terminal <i>nun</i>	<i>Alif</i>

TABLE 3: Letter-form types in cat. 3

The irregularity and lack of uniformity of the script are notable. Several letters have widely varied forms within the twenty-six lines of this folio, even on adjacent words or lines. A few examples are worth noting, along with the categories of Déroche's system to which they relate (see Table 3).¹ There are several letter forms that are closer to Hijazi than to early Kufic or Kufic categories (for example, the terminal *lam*, which occasionally leans back in a *ma'il* style, and a few examples of the *alif*, the terminal *nun* and the terminal *ya*). In addition, the lineal discipline (*i.e.* the imaginary ruled straight line that runs under each line of script) is not yet strict. Finally, there is little parallelism among the vertical letter-forms, some sloping forwards, some back, and some rising straight.

All these characteristics imply that the script was written at a time when the development of Kufic had not been fully realised. Hijazi is generally accepted as being the first Arabic script used to copy the Qur'an; it was used from the first to the seventh century, perhaps surviving into the early eighth.² It is probable that the present example, with an erratic script containing elements associated with both Hijazi and Kufic and with relatively poor lineal discipline, dates from a stage of calligraphic development between Hijazi and fully formed Kufic. That would place it probably in the late seventh or first decades of the eighth century.

The basic design of the *sura* heading, with a long lateral panel extending across the page and a stepped increase in height at the left end, the upper step of which fills the space left in that line after the final word of the previous *sura*, is a type which can be seen on several Qur'an folios, all of which show archaic features and some of which have been generally accepted as dating from the Umayyad period.³ That this design type is early is supported by the existence of several other folios with related but even more primitive forms of *sura* heading panel, all of which have scripts of archaic type, with some features more in common with Hijazi.⁴

The present leaf must have been executed in two distinct phases, approximately two hundred years apart. The first stage, probably in the mid Umayyad period, saw the writing of a) the reddish brown script of the main Qur'anic text; b) the vertical rows of dashes marking the verse divisions in the same ink; c) the *abjad* letter *kaf* at verse twenty; and d) the brown ink outline of the decorative features – that is, tenth verse markers and the *sura* heading. The brown ink of the outline of the tenth verse markers appears to be applied on top of the 'three dashes' verse marker, but this was probably

a natural phasing of the original execution of the folio, for the scribe certainly left a larger space between words at these points than on single verse divisions, presumably to accommodate some form of decorative device. It is also noticeable that the device at verse 20 is slightly larger and more complex than those at verses 10 and 30 (even only in terms of the brown outline of the design, and disregarding the colour), and the verse 20 marker is also the one that contains an original *abjad* letter written in the same brown ink as the Qur'anic text.

We can tell from the verse count of Sura 89 (*al-Fajr*) marked on this folio that the original verse numbering was organized according to a Hijazi tradition. It has thirty-two verses, which was the verse count according to the Medinan and Meccan traditions,⁵ and originally there was no verse marker after the word *'ibadi* in the final verse (the green dots at that point appear to be later additions). This does not give us a firm geographical origin, but the Hijazi tradition (whether Meccan or Medinan) was most often used in the early centuries of Islam in the Hijaz, Yemen and Egypt. There were two chronological phases to the Medinan tradition: the early Medinan phase, which developed in the second half of the Umayyad period; and the late Medinan phase, which developed in the early 'Abbasid period. The Meccan tradition had developed in the first quarter of the eighth century. The verse count for Sura 89 (*Al-Fajr*) was the same for both Medinan traditions and for the Meccan tradition, but the scholar or scribe who annotated it had the advantage of being able to examine the whole codex, whereas here we are restricted to one folio. Thus it is likely that his indication of a Medinan rather than Meccan tradition is correct. The writing of the Qur'an text and the marking of the rows of dashes for single verses are both original to the folio; the folio cannot therefore pre-date the development of the Meccan verse-numbering tradition, and probably does not pre-date the development of the first phase of the Medinan tradition. Based, therefore, on the evidence of the verse numbering, the original phase of this folio could be estimated at 720-75 CE. Within this time-span, the primitive nature of the script and the archaic form of the *sura* heading panel would indicate an earlier date, probably c. 720-50 CE.

It appears that the *sura* heading panel was originally not coloured, either intentionally or because it was unfinished. It is probable that the outline and the internal designs of this feature and the tenth verse markers were drawn in brown ink at the original time of production, but not coloured in, and



that the colour was added at the stage of the later additions.⁶ This is suggested for two reasons, first that the red and green pigments of the *sura* heading panel and the tenth verse divisions are exactly the same as those of the red dot vocalization and the green additional verse division marker at verses 31-32, implying contemporaneous application;⁷ secondly, the original design of the *sura* heading panel left a large blank space in the central area which was probably intended to contain the wording for a *sura* title, or perhaps further coloured decoration.⁸ The upper tier of the panel and the left and right ends were coloured in red and green, but the majority of the lowest strip was left blank and now contains a later inscription. Why should the lowest tier of the panel have been left blank? Surely not for the *sura* title, because there was a better space for this in the main central part of the panel. At least four examples of uncoloured *sura* heading panels of similar design to this are published, which show what the present one might have looked like before the later addition of the colour. Significantly, two of these folios also lack vocalization.⁹

At a much later date, probably in the third century AH, several features were added to the original brown Qur'anic

text verse markers and *sura* heading outline: the folio was in effect brought up to date. It was annotated using different coloured inks probably, judging by the type of information added, by a Qur'anic scholar or a professional Qur'anic scribe. The additions consist of a) all the coloured vocalization (the dots, the *tashdids* etc.); b) the small stylized *ha*-shaped motifs in a greyish-brown ink that are positioned alongside the three vertical dashes at the fifth verse marks; c) the word *madaniyan* in tiny letters at the same locations; d) the vertical rows of red verse marker dots at the same points; e) the vertical rows of green verse marker dots in the final line of the verso; f) the small brown inscription written in a more cursive hand that has been squeezed into the lowest tier of the *sura* heading space. The wording of the later inscription in the *sura* heading panel is as follows:

“The chapter of the By the Dawn thirty and two [verses according to] the two Medinan [traditions] and thirty Kufan and twenty nine Basran the difference [between them] being four verses it was revealed at Mecca and it is one hundred and thirty seven words and it is five hundred and sixty one letters”

The later scholar or scribe has effectively annotated the

folio according to the Medinan, Kufan and Basran traditions of verse numbering.¹⁰ The Medinan verse count was the original, but he has spelt it out in words, and at the same time added the other two traditions in colours. The word *madaniyan*, which appears both in the explanatory inscription in the *sura* heading panel and at the fifth verse divisions, is diagnostic. It is the dual form of the word *madani*, meaning 'the two Medinan' traditions explained above, and it indicates not only that the scholar or scribe knew both forms of the tradition, but that he cannot have written it until both forms of the Medinan tradition were established, around 775 CE. In fact the inscription was probably written considerably later, because, although these traditions (and the Meccan, Kufa, Basran etc.) developed in the eighth century, they were not classified until the late ninth and early tenth century and their nomenclature was not widespread until well into the tenth century.¹¹ The scribe or scholar has used both the red and green dots of the traditional vocalization system (said to have been invented by Abu'l-Aswad al-Du'ali in the late seventh century and refined by his followers Nasr b. Asim and Yahya b. Ya'mur in the early eighth century) and certain symbols, particularly the red *tashdid*, of the system associated with Khalil b. Ahmad al-Farahidi (d. 786 CE). Like the traditions of the verse count, Khalil's diacritical and orthographic system, although apparently invented in the second half of the eighth century, does not seem to have come into common use on Qur'ans until the tenth century.¹² Thus the evidence of both the verse-count nomenclature and the use of the 'al-Khalil' system of diacritics would indicate a date for the additions to this leaf of around the middle of the tenth century. MF

1 Déroche 1992, pp. 38-47.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

3 They are as follows: (1. Dar al-Makhtutat, Sana'a, inv. nos. 15-18.1, described as early, and the script related to Hijazi; (2. Dar al-Makhtutat, Sana'a, inv. nos. 20-29.1, described as early; (3. Dar al-Makhtutat, Sana'a, inv. nos. 15-27.3, described as probably Umayyad, which also has a blank space left for a *sura* title in the central area of the panel; (4. Dar al-Makhtutat, Sana'a, inv. no. 20-33.1, described as Umayyad (this is the famous Umayyad

Qur'an manuscript with an architectural frontispiece, estimated by Bothmer to date from c. 710-15 CE); (5. A manuscript in two principal fragments, divided between the Haram al-Sharif, Jerusalem (inv. no. 5) and the Dar al-Makhtutat, Sana'a (inv.15-30.1), described as second century AH; this also has a probably later *sura* title squeezed in unnaturally between the panel and the *basmallah*. For all these folios see, respectively, Kuwait 1985 (Masahif Sana'a catalogue), nos 29, 35, 38, 45, 49; see also Bothmer 1987; Amsterdam 1999, nos. 39-41, 44; Khader 2001, pp. 49-55; and Déroche 1992, no. 17, p. 65.

- 4 (1. A folio from a Qur'an in the Topkapi Saray Library, inv. no. 194, in primitive Kufic script; (2. A folio in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, or. arabe 334, which is in a Hijazi script. (3. A folio, Dar al-Makhtutat, Sana'a, inv.no. 00-28.1. (4. A folio, Dar al-Makhtutat, Sana'a, inv.no. 17-25.1, which also has a space within the panel for the *sura* title. For illustrations of these see Munajjid 1972; Déroche 1983, no. 9, pl. VII, no. 51, pl. XIII; Kuwait 1985, nos. 17, 42.
- 5 I am indebted to Dr Yasin Dutton for his guidance on the subject of verse numbering traditions and their development and usage.
- 6 Déroche states that his study of early Qur'an manuscripts indicates that in most cases the artist first drew an outline of the illumination and decorative devices: Déroche 1992, p. 22.
- 7 The pigments were viewed under $\times 60$, $\times 80$ and $\times 100$ magnification.
- 8 Both options can be seen on other *sura* headings of similar style and from the same period; see the examples listed in note 3 above.
- 9 (1. A leaf in the Dar Al-Makhtutat, Sana'a, inv. 15-27.1; Kuwait 1985, no. 34. (2. A leaf in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, or. arabe 333; Déroche 1983, no. 56, pl. XV. (3. Two fragmentary folios in the Khalili Collection, inv. nos. KfQ27, 28, which also lack vocalization; Déroche 1992, nos. 7-8, pp. 53-55.
- 10 This approach is echoed in the use of different coloured vocalization dots on early manuscripts of the Qur'an to indicate variant readings of the text, according to the different traditions of the Seven, the Three after the Seven, and so on. This phenomenon has been analysed in detail in Dutton 1999-2000; see also Dutton 2001 and Dutton 2004.
- 11 The different traditions of verse numbering are distinct from but related to the traditions of the different 'readings' of the text, of which the classification into seven formal traditions is associated principally with the scholar Ibn Mujahid (859-935 CE).
- 12 Several Qur'ans of the tenth century use both systems, the earliest published example being dated 292 AH/905 CE (Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ms. 1417; James 1980, no. 12, p. 26). But the few datable Qur'ans of the ninth century still use only the coloured dots of the earlier tradition (e.g. the 'Amajur' Qur'an, datable to before 262 AH/875-76 CE; Ettinghausen *et al.* 2001, no. 118, p. 75).

4 Large Qur'an leaf in Kufic script

Near East or North Africa
8th century, probably Umayyad
Sura 4 (*Al-Nisa'*), vv. 123-30

Folio from an Arabic manuscript on parchment written in Kufic script with sixteen lines per page. There is no original letter-pointing. The letter-pointing now present, consisting of brown ink dashes, is a later addition. The vocalization consists of red and green dots. Single verse divisions are marked with a short row of three diagonal brown ink dashes. The fifth verse divisions are marked with a slightly larger letter *alif* drawn with a thin nib in brown ink and infilled with decoration in brown and green. (From other published folios of the same manuscript we know that the tenth verses were marked with a knotted motif also decorated in brown and green).¹ The ink on the verso, which is the hair side, has worn and been re-inked at a later date.

FOLIO 32.4 × 39.1 cm

TEXT AREA 24 × 31.5 cm

This folio comes from a widely dispersed manuscript of the Qur'an that is notable for its singular script and for several archaic features. The script is characterized by a strong degree of horizontal stretching (*mashq*), a very rounded form to the terminal *nun* that visually punctuates the page, and a relatively tightly spaced layout, both in terms of the number of words and letters per line and in terms of the number of lines per page. There are other idiosyncrasies of the script, such as the distinctive medial *fā/qaf* and *'ayn* that sit above the line of script, attached by a very thin ligature to the base line. All these have led François Déroche to assign the manuscript a script category all of its own.²

Déroche links the style to two inscriptions of the eighth century, one dated 100 AH/718-19 CE, the other dated 160 AH/776-77 CE.³ The terminal forms of the *'ayns* and *ghayns* in the present script are notable for their extended tail that loops back below the line further than in other styles. However, there are two manuscripts in which the terminal *'ayn/ghayn* form has at least some resemblance to the present example. One is a large fragment of eighty-one folios written in Hijazi script probably dating from c. 700 CE, and the other is a monumental copy of the Qur'an discovered in the Sana'a Mosque cache and attributed to the Umayyad dynasty c. 710-15 CE.⁴ A visual comparison of these three forms is useful (Table 4).




	Cat. 4
	Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg, inv. no. E-20
	Dar al-Makhtutat, Sana'a, inv. 20-33.1

TABLE 4:
Comparison of
terminal *'ayn/ghayn*

Other features of cat. 4 that might be associated with early styles include the lack of original letter-pointing. The letter-pointing now present is almost certainly a later addition, as it is applied in a much more crude and irregular manner than the script, and on the whole uses a darker ink. However, an examination of this ink under ×60 and ×100 magnification shows there to be a similar amount of drying and cracquelure as on the main script. It is likely therefore that the letter-pointing was applied within perhaps a century or two of the main script. If this manuscript does date from the eighth century then (as in cat. 3) the letter-pointing might have been added in the tenth century.

The single verse dividers consist of a row of three angled dashes applied in brown ink. This is a form that appears mostly on Hijazi and early Kufic material, later examples more often employing a small gold rosette or roundel between verses. Other manuscripts and leaves on which a row of angled dashes is used for verse markers include several fragments in Hijazi script, including the famous monumental Qur'an found in the Sana'a Mosque cache and dated by Bothmer to about 710-15 CE, another fragment from Sana'a also attributed to the eighth century, and several others probably from the eighth century (including cat. 2).⁵

In a similar vein, the fifth verse markers on this Qur'an leaf are unusual, consisting of a large letter *alif* drawn in brown ink and segmented internally in brown and green (the example on the present folio is faded, but other folios from this manuscript have retained the brown and green pigments). The most common device for marking the fifth verses, if indeed there was any special device, was a Kufic letter *ha* in gold, representing the number five in the *abjad* system. On some early Qur'ans, such as the monumental codex known as the Tashkent Qur'an, which has been carbon-dated to c. 700 CE, the fifth verse markers appear as small devices of circular or square format decorated predominantly in red, green and brown.⁶

Interestingly, the proportion of the width to height of the

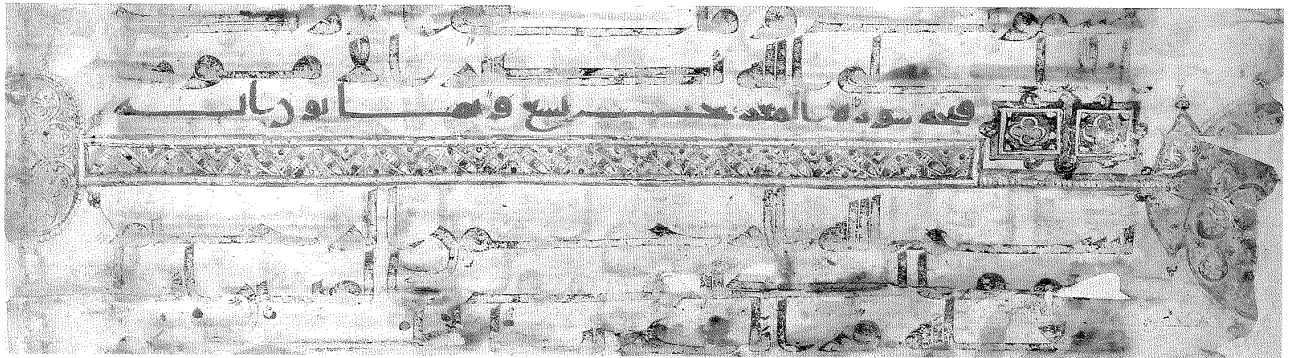


Fig. 3. *Sura* heading on another folio from the same manuscript as cat. 4 (private collection)

text area of cat. 4 is 1.33 (3:4 as a ratio).⁷ This proportion is known as the rectangle of Pythagoras, made up of two right-angles triangles.⁸ The study of the use of geometric forms and classical proportions in early Qur'ans (as well as early Islamic architecture) is an area of growing interest. Déroche mentions that several Qur'an folios in the Khalili Collection are organized along principles of Pythagorean rectangles and triangles, and he indicates that the Pythagorean proportion 1.33 was more often used on Qur'ans that are thought to be relatively early, perhaps dating from the eighth century CE.⁹

The *sura* heading panels of the present Qur'an also exhibit early features. The general design has a decorated horizontal panel as the main feature, with a palmette extending into the margin on the outer end and a similar root or base palmette at the inner edge. Neither the end palmettes nor the lateral panel shows any use of gold, the design being coloured with brown and green on reserved areas, with some use of red. It appears that the *sura* titles (see fig. 3), written in red Kufic script, were a subordinate aspect of the design as they were squeezed in above or below the main panel in a slightly smaller script.¹⁰ However, the calligraphic style of the red lettering is exactly the same as the brown script of the main text, and was probably written by the same original scribe. Another Qur'an fragment in a Kufic script that Déroche has dated to the late seventh or early eighth century has a similar instance of the *sura* title squeezed in in red ink.¹¹ In later Kufic Qur'ans of the ninth and early tenth century the *sura* headings were more often designed with the *sura* title as the main feature, often written in gold, with a palmette extending into the margin.¹²

One further notable feature of the decorated panels of this Qur'an, and a further pointer to its early date, is the pair of square devices with knotted borders and an internal

quatrefoil floral motif visible at the right side of the illustration above. This exact design also appears as the tenth-verse marker of cat. 2, the large (probably) Umayyad folio with primitive Kufic script.

MF

- 1 Déroche 1992, no. 66, p. 122.
- 2 Style F; see *ibid.*, pp. 46-47.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- 4 Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg, inv. no. E-20; see Paris 1995, no. 1, pp. 112-13; Dar al-Makhtutat, Sana'a, inv. no. 20-33.1, see Bothmer 1987; Amsterdam 1999, nos. 36-41.
- 5 See also Déroche 1983, no. 9, pl. VII; Déroche 1992, nos. 8, 11, 27; Munajjid 1972, fig. 45; Kuwait 1985, nos. 17, 25, pp. 56, 52; Bothmer 1987; Amsterdam 1999, nos. 35, 40, 43. A description and discussion of this feature is given in Déroche 1983, p. 27, and Déroche 1992, p. 21.
- 6 The statistics for the carbon-dating are: 68% probability of a date between 640 and 705 CE, 95% probability of a date between 595 and 855 CE. See Fendall 2003, no. 2; Christie's 1992, lot 225.
- 7 Taken as an average of the present folio and three other published folios.
- 8 The text area of cat. 5 has the same proportions.
- 9 Déroche 1992, p. 20-21. He indicates that proportions of 1.5 (2:3) and 2 (1:2) are used on later Qur'ans. Related ideas are being explored further by Alain Fouad George in a PhD thesis presented to Oxford University. For a geometric and proportional analysis of an early Mamluk Qur'an see Fraser 2005.
- 10 Other *sura* headings from this Qur'an are illustrated in Christie's, 15 October 1996, lot 47, and Sotheby's, 29 April 1998, lot 2 (here fig. 3).
- 11 Illustrated in Déroche 1983, no. 19, p. 68, pl. IV, A. The definition of the calligraphic style of that folio is Bl.b, which Déroche links to inscriptions of the late seventh and early eighth centuries; see Déroche 1992, p. 35.
- 12 The 'Amajur' Qur'an, datable to before 875-76 CE, uses this style; see Déroche 1983b; so does a manuscript in similar calligraphic style in Qayrawan, dated 907-09 CE; see Ettinghausen *et al.* 2001.

تَقِيْمُ النَّسَبِ اِلَيْكَ لَا تُؤْتُوهُنَّ مِمَّا
كُنَّ لهنَّ وَتَدْعُهُنَّ اِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ
مِنْ زَوْجِ الْمَسْتَكْبِرِ مِنْ مَنَاقِبِ لَوْ كُنَّ
اِنْ تَقُوْمُوا بِالْبَيْعِ بِالْمَقْسِيَةِ وَمَا
تَقُوْمُوا مِنْ حَيْدٍ فَاِنْ اَللَّهُ كَانَ رِيْبَهُ
عَلَيْكُمْ اَوْ اِنْ اَمَمْتَهُ خَافَ مِنْ بَيْعِهَا
لَسَوْدَ نَابُهَا جَاعِدٌ كَافٍ لَاحْتِاجِ
عَلَيْكُمْ اِنْ يَكُنَّ لَكُمْ اَللَّهُمَا كَلِمَةٌ
الْبَيْعِ حَيْثُ وَاحِدٌ كَلِمَةٌ
اَللَّهُ اَوْ اَللَّهُ وَ اِنْ يَكُنَّ اَوْ تَقُوْمُوا
فَاِنْ اَللَّهُ كَانَ مِمَّا تَقُوْمُوا مِنْ حَيْدٍ
اَوْ اِنْ يَكُنَّ اَوْ اِنْ يَكُنَّ اَوْ اَللَّهُ
وَلَوْ حَقٌّ كَلِمَةٌ وَ اَللَّهُ اَوْ اَللَّهُ
اَللَّهُ اَوْ اَللَّهُ وَ اَللَّهُ اَوْ اَللَّهُ
وَ اَللَّهُ اَوْ اَللَّهُ اَوْ اَللَّهُ اَوْ اَللَّهُ
وَ اَللَّهُ اَوْ اَللَّهُ اَوْ اَللَّهُ اَوْ اَللَّهُ

5 Large Qur'an leaf in gold Kufic script

Near East or North Africa

Late 8th–early 9th century

Sura 38 (*Sad*), vv. 4–22

Folio from an Arabic manuscript on paper written in gold Kufic script on parchment with fifteen lines per page. There are very few examples of original letter-pointing; these are very thin and faint and are applied in the same pale brown ink as the brown outline of the gold script – they appear to have been applied with the same nib. The dark, visually obvious letter-pointing is a later addition. The vocalization is applied using red and blue dots. Each individual verse division is marked with a diagonal row of gold dashes, each outlined in brown, placed so close together as to appear as a single diagonal line. Fifth verse divisions are marked with a stylized letter *ha* in gold Kufic script within a gold roundel. Tenth verse divisions are marked with an illuminated square device containing an *abjad* letter giving the exact verse count. The text area is surrounded by a band of plait motifs drawn in brown ink and illuminated in gold, red, green and blue on reserved ground. The corners and mid-points of the bands have square knotted motifs in gold and a stylized vegetal motif extends into the margin from the mid-point of the outer band.

FOLIO 27.4 × 36.8 cm

TEXT AREA 18.6 × 27.5 cm

BORDERED AREA 22.5 × 30 cm

This magnificent folio is from the second volume of a well-known Qur'an written entirely in gold script and with every page surrounded by an illuminated border. The entirety of the first volume and most of the second volume are in the Nuruosmaniye Library in Istanbul, while individual leaves from the second volume are found in major collections in Europe and the United States.¹

The technique of chrysography (writing in gold) differs from that of ordinary calligraphy in brown ink. Instead of dipping the nib of the stylus into ink and drawing it across the page to form the letters, the chrysographer first wrote the text in a liquid glue. Next the gold was applied on to the glue, automatically assuming the basic calligraphic form of the glue 'script'. As this would have left the script with a slight lack of definition and clarity, the letters were outlined and internally delineated in brown ink.

This folio is from one of only a handful of Qur'ans written in gold Kufic script.² The manuscript from which it came, along with the famous Blue Qur'an (see cat. 10), which is of similar dimensions, is much the largest of this group of Qur'ans. It is characterized by its richness and luxury, and must have been an extremely costly undertaking. It is almost inconceivable that it was commissioned by anyone lower in rank and wealth than a prince or powerful regional governor, and it is quite possible that it was a caliphal commission.

There was an early Islamic precedent for the writing of the Holy Word in gold. The tenth-century scholar Ibn al-Nadim, author of the *Kitab al-Fihrist*, tells us that in the early eighth century "the first person to write copies of the Qur'an at the very beginning and to be praised for the beauty of his script was Khalid b. Abi'l-Hayyaj [...] who composed the inscription on the *qibla* of the Mosque of the Prophet [...] in gold, from 'By the sun and its morning light' to the end of the Qur'an."³ It is also related that 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz⁴ said, 'I wish you to transcribe a copy of the Qur'an for me on the same lines', and he made him a copy, taking great pains about it. 'Umar began to leaf through it and to show his appreciation, but he found the price too high and returned it to him'.⁵

In addition to the obvious luxury aspects of the manuscript, there are several interesting features worth noting. The original letter-pointing is applied using thin brown dashes, of the same ink as the outline of the script. There are also sporadic additional instances of letter-pointing in black ink in a coarser hand, which appear to be later additions. The script has been identified as type D.IV of Déroche's categorization,⁶ but many letter forms are closer to type D.I. Certainly the D category offers generally the closest comparison.

The individual verses are marked by a diagonal row of three gold dashes, placed so close together that they appear almost as a single stroke. This form of verse marker is relatively archaic, and seems to have been used mostly on early Qur'anic manuscripts, several in calligraphic styles such as Hijazi that indicate an Umayyad origin. The row of

dashes on the present leaf is much neater and more carefully applied than these very early examples, but the form itself nevertheless seems to be an early one.⁷ The majority of Qur'an manuscripts written in what might be termed a mature Kufic script employ small gold roundels, illuminated rosettes or clusters of gold dots between verses.⁸ The tenth verse markers use the *abjad* system to record the exact verse count. Sadly, no folios have been published that show a sixtieth verse, from which we would be able to deduce whether the eastern or western *abjad* system was being used, and hence get some approximate indication as to the geographic origin of the manuscript.

An examination of the first volume of this manuscript reveals that the scribe demarcated several additional textual divisions. Many early Qur'ans had markers for single, fifth and tenth verses, *suras*, and sometimes *juz'* and *hizb* divisions. Some manuscripts also had markers (either decorative devices or explanatory words) for divisions of sevenths.⁹ The manuscript presently under discussion has marginal markers, in the form of explanatory words written in gold Kufic script, for fifths, sixths, sevenths and tenths, as well as the more usual thirtieths (*juz'*, pl. *ajza'*). However, these extra divisions are not always consistently noted, some being omitted for no apparent reason.

The *sura* titles are written in exactly the same script as the main body of the text and at exactly the same scale. No extra space has been left for a *sura* heading panel, so the decorative panel that has been drawn round the wording of the title is relatively small and tightly fitted to the space. It consists of repeating trefoil devices (vaguely resembling a floret of broccoli or cauliflower) in reserve on a green or orange ground.

The first volume, which is exactly half the Qur'an, numbers 208 folios. Thus the whole codex must have contained around 416 folios. The opening of the first volume has three double pages of illumination surrounding the opening text, and a series of illuminated tables containing Arabic letters in square compartments. The scribe has used a relatively tightly spaced style, with fifteen lines of script per page and several words on each line. The visual result is a block of gold on a pure white ground. The sense of a text 'block' is reinforced by the use of the border band to surround the text on every page, further delineating its edges. It is as if the border band provided a kind of sacred *cordon sanitaire* round the text, marking it out as an area of holiness, a calligraphic *haram*. The dimensions of the text block are also worth noting. Measured from the outer edge

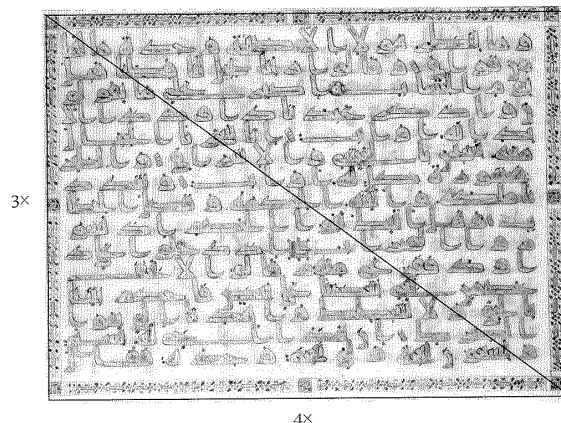


Diagram showing proportions of text block of cat. 5

of the border band, the dimensions are 22.5 cm high and exactly 30 cm across. This gives a ratio of exactly 3:4, or 1.33 recurring expressed as a quotient. This proportion is known as the rectangle of Pythagoras, made up of two right-angles triangles.¹⁰ In our case the two sides of the rectangle are 22.5 cm and 30 cm, and the length of the hypotenuse is exactly 37.5 cm. Thus the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the square of the other two sides.

The study of the use of geometric forms and classical proportions in early Qur'ans (as well as early Islamic architecture) is an area of growing interest. Déroche mentions that several Qur'an folios in the Khalili Collection are organised along principles of a Pythagorean rectangles and triangles, and he indicates that the Pythagorean proportion 1.33 recurring was more often used on Qur'ans that are thought to be relatively early, perhaps dating from the second half of the eighth century CE.¹¹ An eighth-century date for the present folio would accord with the slightly archaic single verse markers noted above, but would be an early example of the 'D' styles of Kufic script, the majority of which date from the second half of the ninth century.¹²

Another feature of the Gold Qur'an that can be associated with early manuscripts of the Qur'an is the presence of the continuous border-band surrounding the text on every page. Many Qur'ans in Kufic script have partial border-bands framing the text on particular pages, for instance where a *juz'* division or *sura* heading falls, and these range in date from the early eighth century to the tenth,¹³ but only one other published manuscript has the

border band on every page. This is a fragmentary codex discovered in the Sana'a Mosque cache, dated by Bothmer to the eighth century.¹⁴

The design of the marginal palmette that extends from the border band on every page of the present Qur'an is interesting and worth examining. The base of the device is flanked by two downward-curving motifs in green. Their form is essentially foliate, but also resembles the winged motifs, borrowed from Sassanian art, seen in much early Islamic art from the Umayyad period onwards. The upper part of these foliate motifs spreads laterally, forming a base from which 'grow' several essentially vegetal forms, which Déroche has called "golden pine cones" and "pomegranates".¹⁵ They are arranged roughly in two registers. The three larger motifs in the lower register do resemble pine cones, but they also echo the shape of a candle flame, and the smaller two in the lower register and all the motifs in the upper register do resemble stylized pomegranates, but they also resemble miniature glass mosque lamps.¹⁶ The resemblance between these forms – pine cone and candle, and pomegranate and mosque lamp – is convenient, and has probably been consciously exploited by the illuminator, who has chosen to mix the symbolism of trees with that of light and lamps, all of which are frequently mentioned in the Qur'an, to produce a kind of tree of light. This combination of symbolism is explicit in Sura 24 (*Al-Nur* – the Chapter of Light), v. 35:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a shining star. [This lamp is] kindled from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the East nor of the West, the oil of which would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light. Allah guideth unto His light whom He will"¹⁷ MF

14 An inventory records the first volume still in Istanbul in 1756, but it was in the United States by 1904, when it was acquired by Robert Garrett, a keen collector and bibliophile. It is not known how the volume arrived in the United States. Robert Garrett donated the manuscript to Princeton University, where it remained until 1942. In 1942 Princeton sold it to Robert's brother John Work Garrett. When John Work Garrett died a few months later, he bequeathed the manuscript, along with approximately 30,000 other rare books, to the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. In 2000 the manuscript was returned to the Nurusomaniye Library as a gift by the Johns Hopkins University to the Republic of Turkey, rejoining the second volume, which had remained in Istanbul. The first volume is complete, whereas the second has several lacunae. The majority of folios in the second volume have Ottoman-period catchwords written on the verso, probably added during a restoration or

binding process. However, several of the detached folios, including cat. 5, do not have these catchwords, implying that they were separated from their host volume beforehand (for other examples of this, see Déroche 1992, p. 91). Single leaves or bifolia from the manuscript are to be found in collections including those of the Cleveland Museum of Art, the David Collection, Copenhagen, and the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, London. For the latter two see Folsach 2001, p. 55; Déroche 1992, no. 41, pp. 90-91. The five folios in the Khalili Collection were also exhibited in the exhibition *Heaven on Earth: Art from Islamic Lands* at the Courtauld Institute in 2004; see London 2004, cat. 2, pp. 52-53.

2 Two others written in Kufic script on white parchment are published in Paris 1982, nos. 337 (ten lines per page, 18 × 26 cm) and 346-48 (five lines per page, 15 × 20.5 cm).

3 The phrase 'By the sun and its morning light' is Sura 91 (*Al-Shams*), v. 1.

4 Umayyad Caliph, reigned 717-20 CE.

5 *Fihrist*, I, p. 11, and Stanley 1995, p. 7. This quotation is interesting not just for the light it sheds on the copying of the Qur'an in gold in epigraphic and calligraphic form, but also for the fact that it implies that Khalid b. Abi'l-Hayyaj was asking to be paid for the work he had done. Despite that fact that he was asked (ordered?) to carry out this commission by the Caliph, he seems to have produced the manuscript on a speculative basis and then tried to sell it to 'Umar. This is surprising to say the least.

6 Déroche 1992, pp. 44-45, and specific reference on p. 90.

7 See the line drawings and discussions in Déroche 1983, p. 27, and Déroche 1992, pp. 21-23.

8 Déroche 1992, pp. 21-23; see also here cat. 8, 13, 14.

9 The famous Blue Qur'an (see cat. 10), for instance, was actually physically divided into sevenths and bound in seven volumes; see Stanley 1995, p. 10.

10 The text area of cat. 4 has the same proportions.

11 Déroche 1992, pp. 20-21. He indicates that proportions of 1.5 (2:3) and 2 (1:2) are used on later Qur'ans. Related ideas are being explored further by Alain Fouad George in a PhD thesis presented to Oxford University. A geometric analysis of an early Mamluk Qur'an is given in Fraser 2005.

12 Déroche 1992, p. 37.

13 The earliest is the well-known monumental manuscript with an architectural frontispiece discovered in Sana'a (see Bothmer 1987 and Amsterdam 1999, nos. 36-41). For a later example see James 1980, no. 7, p. 20, and Sotheby's 2000, lot 32. A continuous ruled frame round the text on a manuscript in the Khalili Collection, inv. no. QUR306, is a later addition; Déroche 1992, no. 59, pp. 112-13.

14 Amsterdam 1999, nos. 42-43, pp. 104-05.

15 Déroche 1992, p. 91.

16 That mosque lamps of that form were known in the early Islamic period is attested by their representation on the architectural frontispiece of the large Umayyad Qur'an discovered in the Sana'a Mosque cache; see Bothmer 1987, Amsterdam 1999, no. 36.

17 Translation by M. Pickthall.

6 Two large Qur'an leaves in Kufic script

Near East or North Africa

About 850-950 CE

Folio A: Sura 11 (*Hud*), vv. 17-41

Folio B: Sura 12 (*Yusuf*), vv. 29-54

Two large folios from an Arabic manuscript written in Kufic script in brown ink on parchment with eighteen lines per page. There is no letter-pointing. The vocalization employs an extended system in which red and green dots provide *fatha*, *kasra* and *damma*, and in addition the medial long *alif* is marked with a vertical red line (but not always where needed) and a horizontal green line marks *wash*; *tashdid* is sometimes a red circumflex and occasionally a red symbol close to the modern *tashdid* mark (like a tiny letter w), but often is not marked at all. There are no single or fifth verse divisions. Tenth verse divisions are marked with a simple red circle.

FOLIO 39.7 × 54 cm

TEXT AREA 31 × 41 cm

Although at first glance the script of these remarkably large folios has a slightly primitive feel to it, this probably does not indicate a particularly early date. On close examination of the letter forms it is apparent that the basic graphic elements are closest to styles D.i-D.va of Déroche's categorization, scripts mostly of the late ninth to early tenth century CE, while the *alif* and terminal *qaf* are closest to style C.i. There are one or two calligraphic idiosyncrasies, such as one instance of a terminal *min* that has a thin, drooping tail (v. 34r, line 9, final word).¹ The folio is unusually large, but the text area is well filled with eighteen lines of quite tightly spaced script.² Furthermore, there is almost no use of *mashq* (horizontal stretching of letters or ligatures), and no artistically inspired non-functional aspects of the script, except perhaps the terminal *ya*, which is enlarged and extended slightly beyond its functionally necessary form.

The vocalization is similar to that of cat. 12, but has here been applied in a very idiosyncratic way. Not every instance, for example, of a *tashdid* has the relevant marker, and this is the same for all the vocalization symbols.

The fact that there are no markers between verses is not necessarily an archaic feature. Even folios written in the Hijazi scripts, generally thought to be the earliest group of scripts, had some form of simple demarcation between verses, mostly a vertical, horizontal or diagonal row of brown ink dashes.³ Most of the Qur'an leaves that employ scripts of type D have more elaborate verse markers consisting of small gold rosettes or triangular clusters of gold or coloured dots.⁴ In this case there are no markers for individual verses, and some instances of tenth verses marked merely with a simple red circle, in this case verse 20 of Sura 11 (*Hud*) on folio A and verse 50 of Sura 12 (*Yusuf*) on folio B.

On line fifteen of the verso of folio A (v. 39), the scribe omitted the final word *yuzihi*, but realised his mistake straightaway and added it in small letters above the final *ba* of the previous word in the same brown ink as the rest of the text. Then, at the beginning of the next line he mistakenly included the word *min*, which he then partially erased, presumably at the same time. In three places on the recto of folio A the original scribe omitted words from the text which were added later in the same red ink as the vocalization dots.

These are line 10, *rabbihim*; line 11, *wa'l basiru*; line 15, *amthalna*.

The use of red ink written in a different, non-Kufic, hand to correct these latter three mistakes implies that they were corrected at a different stage of production from the brown Kufic correction mentioned above.

All these aspects would point to this folio and the manuscript from which it came having been a more functional production of the late ninth century. Like cat. 12 it was probably a Qur'an of which the primary role was scholarly rather than artistic, essentially a working copy of the Qur'an rather than a show copy.⁵ It may have been made for a mosque or *madrasa*, the extra vocalization marks being included as aids to reading, teaching or exegesis.

Furthermore, these features suggest that the script, vocalization and red corrections might have been applied at different, though probably temporally close, stages.⁶ The brown script may have been the work of a professional scribe, while the red vocalization and corrections would have been completed by the customer imam or shaykh on receipt of the codex. Perhaps it could have been the case that the patron wanted a copy of the Qur'an with just the basic consonantal script, on to which he could then add the vocalization and certain other annotations according to his own needs. He might have instructed a professional scribe, perhaps in a commercial scriptorium or in that of the mosque or *madrasa*, then have added the vocalization and variant words himself. It may be that this was a common system during the period, and there are several other Qur'an

manuscripts in Kufic script which have a similar system of vocalization and a general style corresponding to the present folios, not so much in terms of the exact letter-forms, but rather in their script's lack of artistic ambition, tight spacing of words on the line and lines on the page, and functional feel.⁷

MF

1 Cf. cat. 13, 14.

2 Compare, for instance, the number of verses of the Qur'an contained in this folio, *i.e.* 25, with the number in other folios which use the D group of scripts: cat. 9 has just over one verse, and cat. 14 has seven.

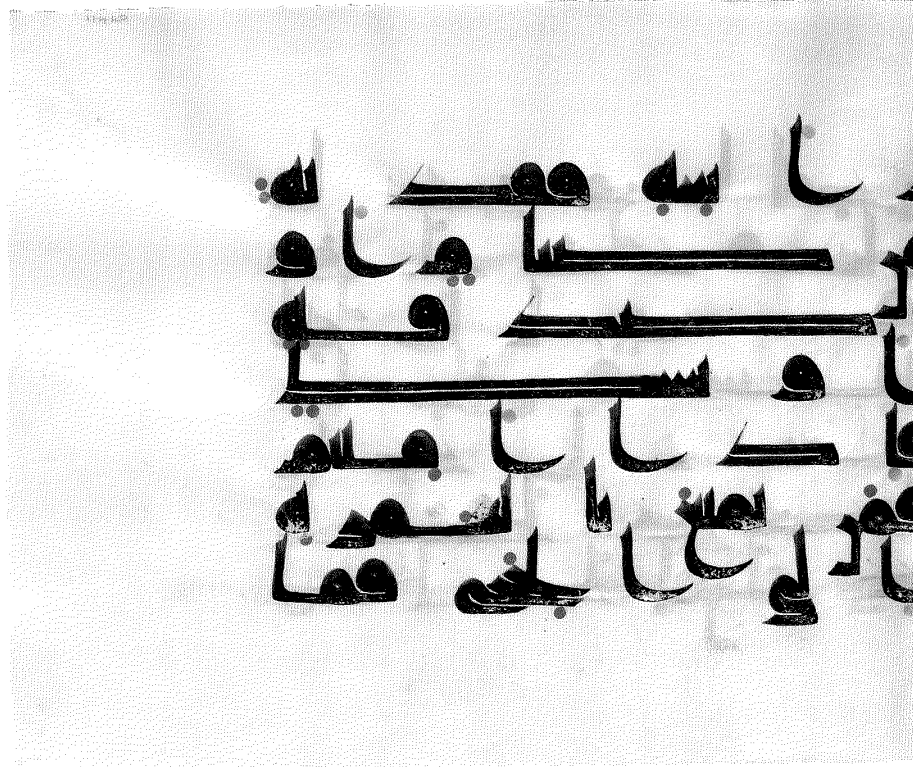
3 Déroche 1983, p. 7; Déroche 1992, p. 21.

4 Déroche 1992, pp. 22-23.

5 Contrast the visual and aesthetic impact of this folio with cat. 7, 8, 9.

6 As is implied by Stanley when he discusses another folio from this Qur'an: Stanley 1995, no. 2.

7 Cat. 12; a folio in the National Library in Tunis (see Paris 1982, no. 354); a folio published by Bernard Quaritch Ltd in 1995, see Stanley 1995, no. 1; Christie's, 14 October 1997, lots 38 and 41; Sotheby's, 22 April 1999, lot 2; and perhaps a second folio in the National Library in Tunis (Paris 1982, no. 340; Lings and Safadi 1976, no. 21).



7 Large illuminated Qur'an bifolium in Kufic script

North Africa or Near East
 Late 9th century
 Sura 2 (*Al-Baqara*), vv. 196, 199-200

Bifolium in Arabic in dark brown ink on parchment with seven lines of script per page. There is no original letter-pointing and the vocalization consists of red, yellow and green dots. Single verse divisions are marked with triangular arrangements of gold dots, and tenth verse divisions are marked with roundels in red and gold containing the exact verse count in gold Kufic script.

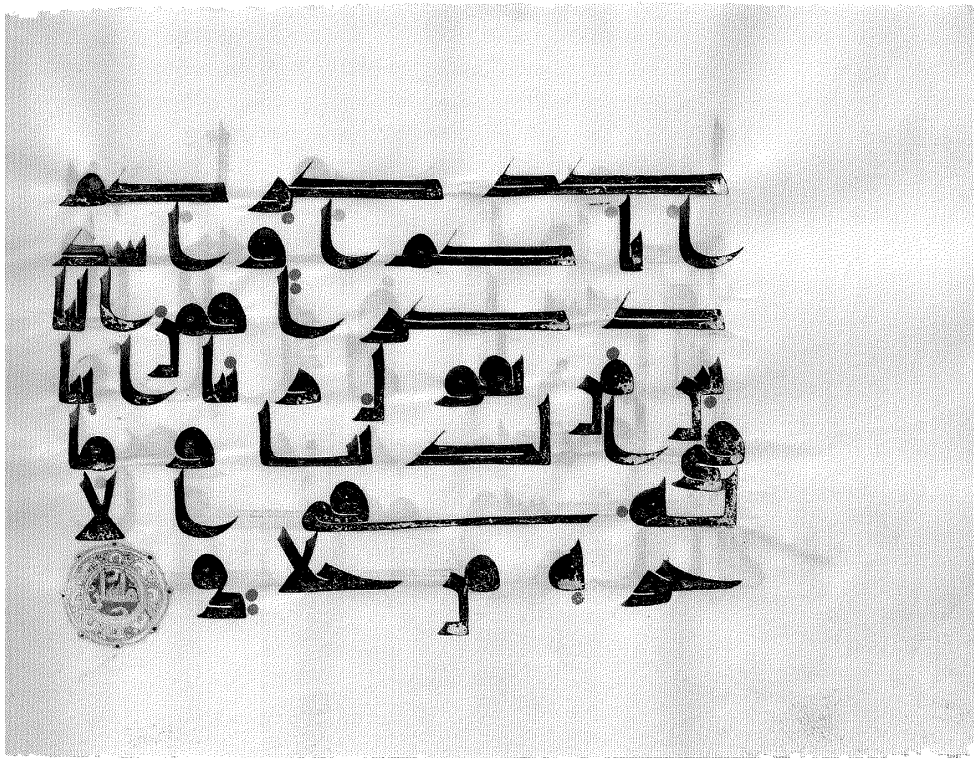
FOLIO 27.2 × 36.2 cm

TEXT AREA 14.3 × 23.5 cm

The script of this large bifolium is very close to that of the well-known Amajur Qur'an, a manuscript on parchment given as a *waqf* (endowment) to a mosque in Tyre by the 'Abbasid governor of Damascus, Amajur, in 875-76 CE. The Amajur Qur'an has only three lines of script per page, while here there are seven. However, the individual letter-forms are unmistakably similar.¹ A dating for the present bifolium in the second half of the ninth century is further supported by

several other Qur'ans written in a similar script which are either dated or have dated *waqf* inscriptions ranging from 847 to 911 CE.²

It is perhaps possible to define this style of script as the mature 'Abbasid Kufic (see also the scripts used on the present cat. 8, 9 and 11).³ It seems to occur approximately a century after the dynasty came to power, and lasts for nearly another century before innovations, such as elements of so-called Eastern Kufic, start to creep in. Its style can be characterized as follows - a well-executed, elegant script, with strong horizontal stretching (*mashq*) of letters and ligatures, and vertical letter-forms which provide a visual balance to the horizontal stretching, but are not yet in themselves a focus of emphasis (contrast this to the present cat. 14); a relatively wide and even spacing of the letters along the lines and of the lines on the page (often five or seven lines per page, sometimes three, and even in cases of nine or eleven lines per page the spacing is in proportion to the smaller script and still provides a feeling of spaciousness); a typical horizontal format for the text area and page; few or no original letter-points; a regular visual rhythm; *sura* headings, where present, of which the main



feature is often simply the title written in gold Kufic with an adjacent illuminated palmette, or sometimes the title in reserve on a panel of predominantly gold illumination.¹ There seems to be an emphasis on the graphic qualities and visual impact of the script itself, and the decoration of the *sura* headings is simplified to fit in with this aesthetic. The notion that this was an intentional artistic approach is supported by the absence of original letter-pointing on this and other scripts of this type. Where present, they are often very thin, faint nib touches, designed to be used for textual accuracy where absolutely necessary, but almost invisible unless closely inspected.² (The absence of letter-pointing in this case should not be confused with the quite separate and unrelated absence, or at least random application, of letter-pointing on early manuscripts in Hijazi script, which was due to the relatively primitive state of calligraphic and orthographic development in the seventh and early eighth century.) In the present case letter-pointing had been known and used for well over a century, but seems to have been intentionally omitted in many scripts of this type. These 'mature' Kufic scripts have an austere beauty which seems to emphasize the power and significance of the text,

underlining the centrality and iconic status of the word of the Qur'an. This is further enhanced by the slight abstraction of some letters through the use of *mashq*.

Two other folios from this manuscript are in the Museum of Islamic Arts, Qayrawan.

MF

- 1 For a photograph of the Amajur Qur'an see Ettinghausen *et al.* 2001, fig. 118, p. 75. For a clear description and visual depiction of this script, which Déroche describes as style D.I, see Déroche 1992, pp. 43-45.
- 2 See Déroche 1992, pp. 36-37.
- 3 This style would equate to Déroche's group D styles (D.I, D.II, D.III, D.IV and D.Va, but not D.Vb or c): see Déroche 1992, pp. 44-45.
- 4 For *sura* headings of this type see Paris 1982, nos. 325, 330, 334, 339, 351, 352; also Lings 1976, nos. 5, 7, 8.
- 5 See also cat. 8 and 11; the Amajur Qur'an, mentioned above; a Qur'an in the Bastan Museum, Tehran, Ms. 4289 (see Lings 1976, no. 5); and several Qur'ans in Tunis (Paris 1982, nos. 325, 328, 329, 332, 335, 339).

8 Qur'an leaf in Kufic script

Near East or North Africa

Late 9th century

Sura 69 (*Al-Haqqah*), vv. 18-20

Folio from an Arabic manuscript written in Kufic script in dark brown ink on parchment with seven lines per page. There is no original letter-pointing. The vocalization is rendered in red dots. Single verse divisions are marked with triangular clusters of six gold dots. Tenth verse divisions are marked with an illuminated roundel with radiating foliate motifs in red, green and gold containing the exact verse count (in this case *'ashara* – ten) in gold Kufic script on a reserved central space. Fifth verse divisions, although not evident on this leaf, are marked on other leaves from the same manuscript with a solidly coloured letter *ha* in gold (representing the number 5 in the *abjad* system).

FOLIO 23.4 × 32.4 cm

TEXT AREA 13.5 × 22 cm

This folio comes from a manuscript of which a section is in the Bastan Museum, Tehran.¹ The script is another example of the mature 'Abbasid Kufic also employed on the present cat. 7, 9 and 11. In this case the script would equate to Déroche's style D.I, with occasional instances, particularly in the *lam-alif* combination, of D.II.²

The artistic and aesthetic intentions of the scribe of this folio (and the scribes of the other folios of this calligraphic style) are evident in several aspects. As in cat. 7 and 11, there is a total absence of letter-pointing, an indication of the scribe's intention to produce a script the defining character of which was artistic rather than functional. The absence of letter-pointing allows the austere, skeletal beauty of the Kufic script to be exhibited to its greatest effect, and it may indicate that the primary function of the Qur'an was not, in this case, to be read through by scholars and students as a working copy of the text, but to be admired as an object of sacred beauty; it was perhaps commissioned by a prince or wealthy dignitary. That is not to say that it might not have been intended to be housed in a mosque. The donation of a three-line Kufic Qur'an in a similar script, also devoid of letter-pointing, to a mosque in Tyre by Amajur, the 'Abbasid governor of Damascus, in 875-76 CE is proof that aesthetically rather than functionally motivated manuscripts were valued in the mosque setting.

In the present case the scribe enhanced the calligraphic power of the script by the extreme use of horizontal stretching of letters (*mashq*). In the fourth line of the verso the scribe has stretched the word *dhanantu* (I knew, I supposed) for the whole length of the line, a distance of just over 22 cm.

MF

¹ Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran, no. 4289. For an illustration see Lings 1976, no. 5.

² See Déroche 1992, pp. 44-45.

كَلِمَاتٍ مَّا تَدْعُوهُنَّ لِيُخْرِجَنَّ
مِنْهَا سَائِرَ كَلِمَاتٍ مَّا تَدْعُوهُنَّ
لِيُخْرِجَنَّ مِنْهَا سَائِرَ كَلِمَاتٍ
مَّا تَدْعُوهُنَّ لِيُخْرِجَنَّ مِنْهَا
سَائِرَ كَلِمَاتٍ مَّا تَدْعُوهُنَّ
لِيُخْرِجَنَّ مِنْهَا سَائِرَ كَلِمَاتٍ
مَّا تَدْعُوهُنَّ لِيُخْرِجَنَّ مِنْهَا
سَائِرَ كَلِمَاتٍ مَّا تَدْعُوهُنَّ
لِيُخْرِجَنَّ مِنْهَا سَائِرَ كَلِمَاتٍ

٢١٠

9 Illuminated Qur'an leaf in Kufic script

Near East or North Africa
Late 9th century
Sura 28 (*Al-Qasas*), vv. 85-86

Folio from an Arabic manuscript on parchment written in Kufic script in brown ink with five lines per page. The letter-pointing, formed by placing the nib-end down once on the page, is applied in the same brown ink as the text and is original. The vocalization is applied with red, green, blue and yellow dots. The fifth verse division is marked within the text area by a letter *ha* (representing the numerical value 5 in the *abjad* system) in gold, and in the margin by a large illuminated medallion with a stylized radiating foliate design in gold and green containing the word *khams* in gold Kufic script. Other folios from the same manuscript show single verse divisions marked with small gold rosettes.¹

FOLIO 22.5 × 31.9 cm

TEXT AREA: 12 × 20 cm

The script on this large parchment Qur'an leaf is close in style to those of cat. 7 and 8 and is another example of the scripts described by Déroche as group D.² In this case the script exhibits aspects of styles D.I, D.II, D.III and D.IV, but is generally closest to D.III. These scripts are datable to the second half of the ninth century and the very early tenth century.³

Unlike cat. 7 and 8 the script on the present leaf has letter-pointing applied in brown ink, and it appears to be original to the manuscript.⁴ This is interesting since most scripts of this type have only occasional instances of letter-pointing, or none at all. It seems that the absence of letter-pointing at this period was related to the strong aesthetic intention of the scribes of these scripts to produce a flowing, rhythmic calligraphy with graphically precise lines uncluttered by the little brown dashes of the letter-pointing, thus maximizing their visual impact.⁵ In this case, the letter-pointing makes the script more immediately legible, but its cluttering effect is kept to a minimum by using relatively small, thin and unobtrusive nib-end dashes nestled close to the relevant letters.

Two other Qur'an fragments have very similar scripts and dimensions to the present leaf, and one or other of them may be from the same multi-volume manuscript. One of these is a section including parts of Sura 7 (*al-'Araf*) in the Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran,⁶ the other is a folio with the *sura* heading of Sura 22 (*al-Hajj*) in the Museum of Islamic Arts, Qayrawan.⁷ The Qayrawan folio is slightly closer in style to the present one and, significantly, has letter-pointing of a similar type, while the Tehran volume does not. MF

1 Sotheby's, 15 October 1997, lot 2; 12 October 2000, lot 6.

2 Déroche 1992, pp. 44-45.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

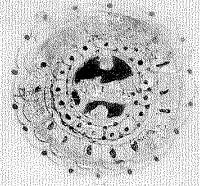
4 In the top line of the verso, below the word *mubiynin* (v. 85), one of the brown ink letter-points of the letter *ya* is partially covered by the red dot of the vocalization; this means that the letter-point must have been applied before the vocalization dot.

5 See the discussion in cat. 7 above.

6 Ms. 4289; see Lings 1976, no. 5, and Lings 2005, no. 6.

7 Paris 1982, no. 331, p. 248; Lings and Safadi 1976, no. 10, pp. 21, 24.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي
خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَالَّذِي يُضَوِّبُ الْمَوْتَى
إِنَّ رَبَّهُ لَسَدِيدٌ



10 Large Qur'an leaf in gold Kufic script on blue parchment

Ifriqiyya, Sicily or Maghrib

About 850-950 CE

Sura 2 (*Al-Baqara*), vv. 261-67

Folio from an Arabic manuscript written in gold Kufic script on blue-dyed parchment with fifteen lines per page. There are only three instances of original letter-pointing of short diagonal gold dashes¹ and no vocalization. The single verse divisions are marked with small silver florets (now oxidized to black). The fifth verse marker (verse 265 in this case) would have been marked with an illuminated roundel; there remains only a faint trace of it now on the lower right corner of the verso. There is also a faint trace of a large illuminated roundel in the upper left margin of the recto. This would have been a *hizb* marker, presumably with a silver roundel (there are traces of the oxidized silver) with the word *hizb* written in gold Kufic within the central space (there are traces of gold Kufic letters).

FOLIO 25 × 37 cm

TEXT AREA 19 × 28 cm

This leaf is from a manuscript of the Qur'an commonly known as the Blue Qur'an.² When complete it must have been one of the most expensive and luxurious manuscripts produced in the whole medieval Islamic world. The exact origins of the manuscript are not known, but the two most recent theories have suggested Fatimid Ifriqiyya in the tenth century³ and Umayyad Spain in the same period.⁴ Whichever of these is closer to the truth, a western Islamic production is strongly suggested by the use of the *abjad* letter *sad* to mark the sixtieth verses.⁵ The *sad* is only used to indicate the number sixty in the western *abjad* system. The eastern version uses the letter *sin* for sixty.

The earliest theory regarding the manuscript's origin, proposed by F.R. Martin in 1912, was that the dark colour of the dyed vellum was a symbol of mourning, and that the manuscript had been commissioned by the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun (r. 813-33 CE) for the tomb of his father Harun al-Rashid in Mashhad. This suggestion is now generally discounted, but Martin may well have been correct in one aspect of his theory – that the dyeing of the vellum a deep blue colour was not simply for luxurious decorative effect,

but that it carried a message. Other examples of dyed vellum, although very rare, are known to exist from the first few centuries of Islam. The few other extant examples are mostly saffron-yellow.⁶ There may be a connection to the late Sassanian and 'Abbasid practice, reported by al-Baladhuri in the ninth century, of presenting state tax accounts on saffron-dyed vellum.⁷

The use of blue-dyed vellum seems to have been much rarer in the Islamic world, although a 1294 inventory of the Great Mosque of Qayrawan lists possibly two separate Qur'an manuscripts on blue-dyed vellum; one is supposed to be the manuscript from which the present leaf originates, the second had only five lines to the page.⁸ However, indigo and murex had been used to produce dark blue or purple dyes since antiquity, when they were associated with royalty and power, especially in the Roman and Greek worlds. Purple was the colour associated with Roman emperors, and the Byzantine emperors and other European rulers inherited the tradition. In the context of Christian manuscript production, purple-dyed vellum was reserved for exceptional royal commissions and was undoubtedly imbued with imperial symbolism.⁹ Furthermore it seems to have been reserved for the writing of biblical subject-matter.¹⁰ Of the few extant examples that remain of these Christian manuscripts, six dating from the sixth century CE and two from the late eighth century all use silver ink on purple-dyed vellum with occasional lines in gold script. Of these eight manuscripts, two were produced in Italy, two in Aachen, and, significantly, four in the Levant, probably in Syria or Palestine.¹¹

The period 700-1000 CE was one of intense religious and political rivalry in the Mediterranean and Middle East, with the new and powerfully expansive Islamic empire (both Umayyads and 'Abbasids) vying with the Byzantine empire for ascendancy, and regional kingdoms such as the Umayyads in Spain and the Fatimids in North Africa adding further religious and political competition. It is plausible that the production of this copy of the Qur'an was intended as a politico-religious statement by the Muslim patron towards his Christian counterparts. The use of art or architecture for politico-religious propaganda by the Muslim dynasties at this period is well-known,¹² and several specific aspects of the Blue Qur'an can be seen as intentional one-upmanship over the Christian equivalents. When a work of art or architecture was designed for propaganda certain principles were followed: the manuscript, object or building had to be similar enough to the rival example to be obviously comparable, but subtly different and, importantly, better/bigger/grander/

taller/more expensive etc, so as to appear superior. In the case of the Blue Qur'an we have exactly these design principles. First in the choice of text – the purple-dyed Christian manuscripts were reserved exclusively for biblical texts, and this work bears the text of the Qur'an, which Muslims considered inherently superior. Secondly in the colour of the vellum – the dark blue of the Qur'an vellum provides an even greater visual contrast with the gold and silver lettering, and therefore a stronger aesthetic impact. Thirdly, in the ink – in the Christian examples the majority of the text was written in silver ink with gold ink reserved for occasional lines or headings; in the Blue Qur'an it is the other way round: the main text is in gold ink throughout, with silver used for *sura* headings and other text markers. The overall effect on looking at the manuscript is of gold on blue, and, while silver was a precious substance, gold was universally considered the more precious and expensive of the two. Fourthly, in the size of the manuscript – even taking into account the trimming of the edges of all these manuscripts over the centuries, the Blue Qur'an is substantially larger than any of the purple-dyed Christian examples. The largest of those is the Vienna Genesis, at 33.3 × 27 cm, while the leaves of the Blue Qur'an measure between 28 × 38 cm and 31 × 41 cm. This size comparison is not affected by the different formats of the Islamic and Christian manuscripts – horizontal for the Islamic and vertical for the Christian. Indeed this change in format could be seen as another of the subtly different features of the Qur'an manuscript. As well as constituting a straightforward glorification of the holy text of the Qur'an, the Blue Qur'an can be seen as a statement to Christian rulers of Europe and Byzantium of religious, artistic and political superiority, a piece of medieval superpower propaganda.

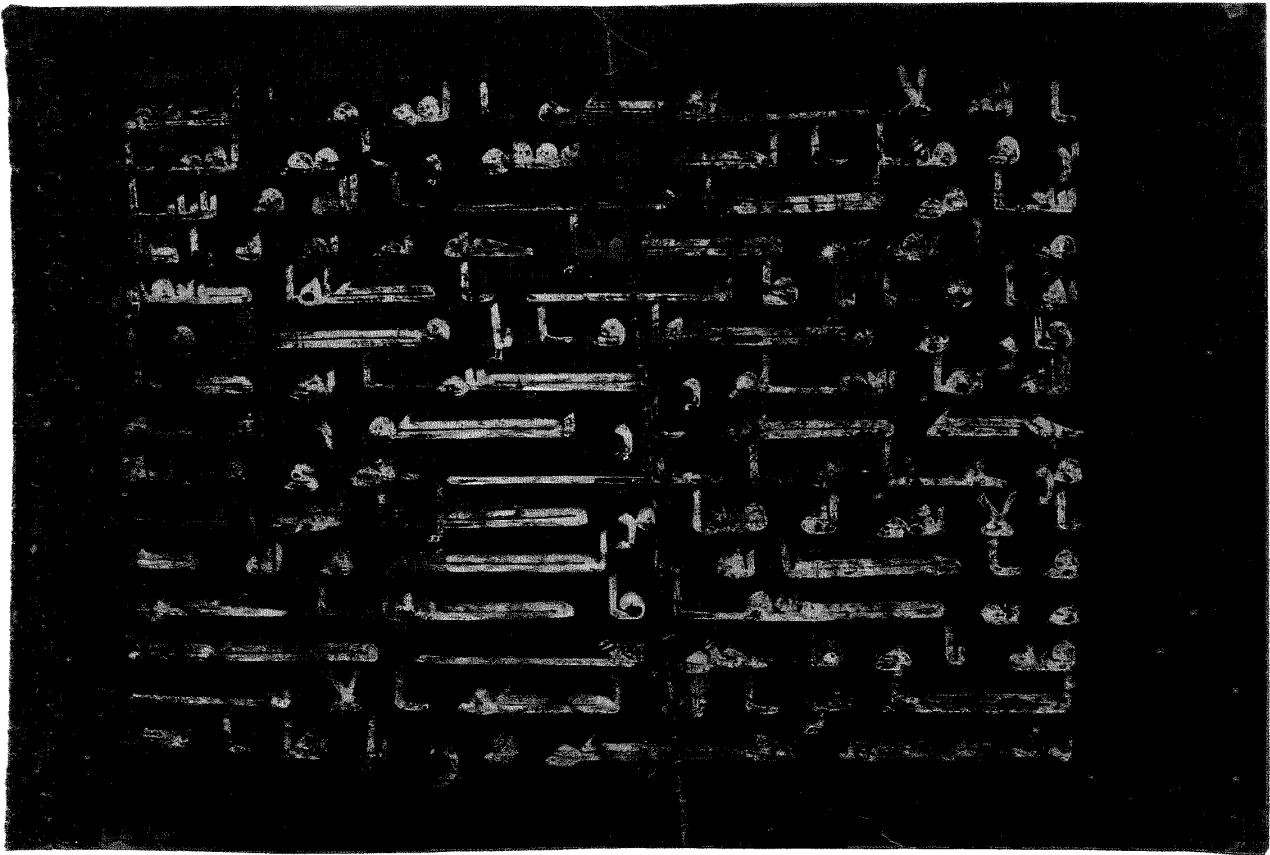
The political and artistic sophistication and financial expense of the production of the Blue Qur'an could only have been contemplated and achieved by a ruler of considerable power and wealth. If we allow that the use of the western *abjad* system on this manuscript does indeed indicate a geographical origin in Ifriqiyya or the Maghrib, which were the dynasties or rulers with the wealth and religious and political ambitions in relation to Christian rivals to have commissioned such a manuscript? Certainly the Umayyad dynasty of Spain had the wealth, the sophistication and a strong interest in books, science and learning.¹³ They also had powerful Christian neighbours to the north with whom they were in constant competition. Stanley links the manuscript to Spain on the grounds of the

use in it a grid of guidelines on each page, a technique not known in Islamic manuscripts outside Spain, and of the visual reference to the monumental gold lettering on blue ground to be found in the Great Mosque of Cordoba.¹⁴

The Fatimid dynasty of North Africa and Egypt also had the wealth and sophistication (again, the interest in science and the scholarship and bibliophilia of Fatimid rulers are well attested), and they also had strong contacts and competition with Byzantium and Christian dynasties on the northern side of the Mediterranean over a long period. The Fatimids are favoured by Bloom as the most likely patrons.¹⁵

There are two other dynasties which might conceivably have commissioned such a manuscript. Geographically sandwiched between these two Caliphates were two smaller dynasties, the Aghlabids of Ifriqiyya and Sicily, and later the Kalbids of Sicily. The Aghlabids were a vassal state of the 'Abbasids of Baghdad, although enjoying a great degree of autonomy, and the Kalbids were a governor sub-dynasty of the Fatimids. While neither the Aghlabids nor the Kalbids had the power or longevity of the Spanish Umayyads or the Fatimids themselves, they were both in constant military and political competition with the Christian rulers of Sicily and South Italy – both the Aghlabids and the Kalbids at different times held portions of Calabria and Puglia – and the wealth and cultural sophistication of Ifriqiyya and Sicily during the rule of these dynasties was very great indeed. Sicily, and particularly Palermo, was a major marketplace and crossroads for the whole central Mediterranean region, and the interaction of Islamic traditions and ideas with Christian ones was widespread.

The cross-fertilization of artistic and cultural techniques and styles in Sicily and southern Italy is seen to a great extent in metalwork, ivories, textiles and architecture of the period, and in this context a specific and intriguing link to the Christian manuscripts on purple-dyed vellum presents itself. The Rossano Gospels (Codex Purpureus Rossanensis), made by a Byzantine royal scriptorium in the mid-sixth century probably in Syria or Palestine, has been housed in Rossano, a town on the instep of Italy in the province of Calabria for over a millennium (see fig. 4, p. 48). It is thought to have been brought there sometime during the seventh or eighth century CE, when it entered the Cathedral library. Parts of Calabria and Puglia, including the town of Rossano, were captured and held by both the Aghlabids and the Kalbids for considerable lengths of time between 839 and 982 CE. Is it possible that one of the Muslim princes, generals or religious leaders who were



present in Calabria during this period might actually have seen the Rossano Gospels? If so, they might have described the manuscript to their overlords in Ifriqiyya (either Aghlabid or Fatimid), who might then have commissioned the Blue Qur'an as a response to this revered and glorious Christian book of the Gospels. Is it possible that the fact that the Rossano Gospels originated in the Levant, formerly under Christian rule, now under Muslim rule, might have added to politico-religious symbolism of the commission, almost rubbing salt in the Christian wound? It is a tantalizing possibility. If it were the case, the place of production of the Blue Qur'an would have been either Sicily or Ifriqiyya, most probably Qayrawan. Sicily at this period was quite sophisticated enough, and the copying there in 982-83 CE of a splendid copy of the Qur'an in a variant Eastern Kufic script on white vellum is proof that a scriptorium existed, at least in the late tenth century.¹⁶ Equally, Qayrawan was a well-established centre of

scholarship and literature with a known scriptorium. The present-day location of manuscripts is never a sure sign that they were originally produced in the same locality, but in this case a manuscript of the significance of the Blue Qur'an produced in Sicily or Tunisia could quite easily have found its way to the Great Mosque of Qayrawan during the medieval period and have appeared in their 1294 inventory. Both Bloom and Stanley believe the Blue Qur'an to be one of the manuscripts mentioned in the 1294 inventory of the Great Mosque of Qayrawan,¹⁷ and our present Ifriqiyya/Sicily theory would fit in with this rare piece of early documentary evidence.

Even if the Rossano Gospels manuscript was not specifically the inspiration for the Blue Qur'an, another of the six Syrian Byzantine purple-dyed codices known could have been seen by a Muslim ruler or reported to him by emissaries or ambassadors during the ninth or tenth centuries. Although the Rossano Gospels had apparently

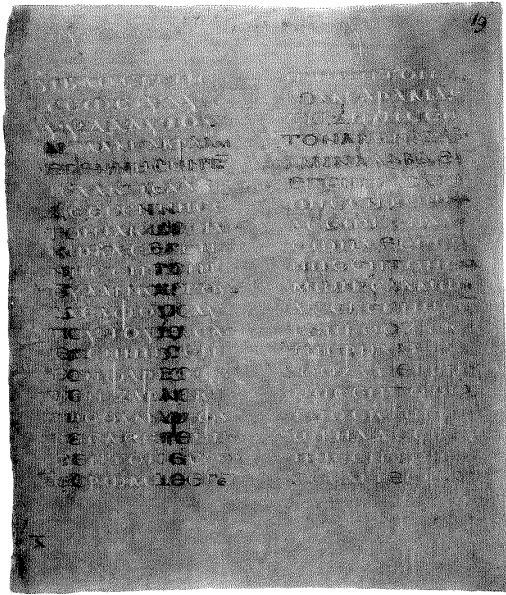


Fig. 4 The Rossano Gospels, 6th century, f. 10 (Rossano Cathedral)

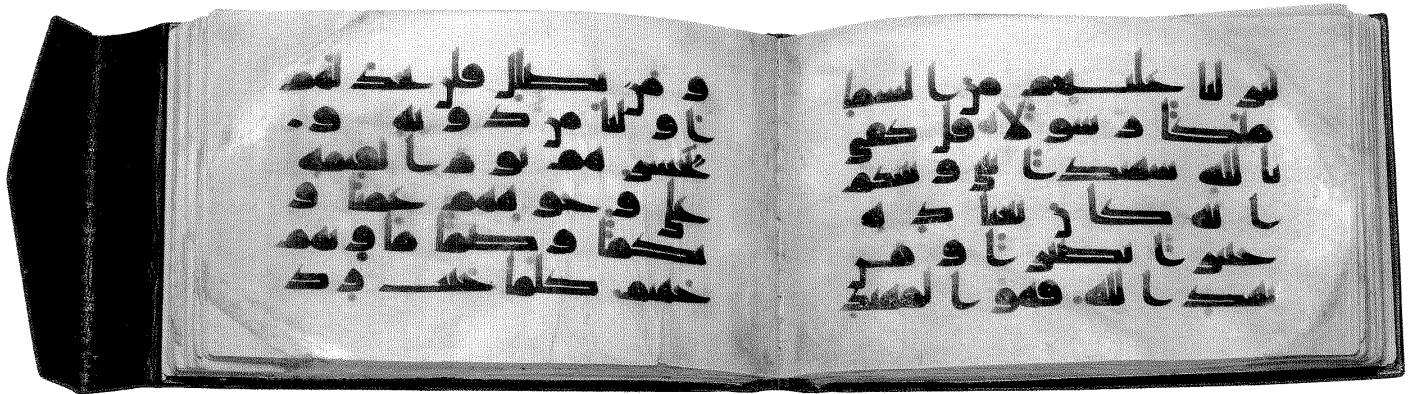
arrived in South Italy by the eighth century, most of the other purple-dyed royal manuscripts seem to have remained within the Byzantine Empire during the medieval period.¹⁸

Whatever the origins of the Blue Qur'an, it is undoubtedly one of the most important and spectacular manuscripts produced in the Islamic world in the early medieval period, and it will no doubt continue to intrigue and vex scholars well into the future. MF

- 1 Letter-pointing is used on this leaf only to differentiate between the *ta* and the *tha*, and not for every occurrence of these letters. The three instances of letter-pointing are on the second and thirteenth lines of the verso.
- 2 The majority of the manuscript is divided between the National Library and the Museum of Islamic Art, both in Tunis. That some of it was dispersed at least by the nineteenth century is attested by the fact that F.R. Martin acquired a group of leaves (said to have come from Iran) in Istanbul in 1912. Single leaves or fragments are now in the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin; and several private collections.
- 3 Bloom 1986, pp. 59-65; Bloom 1989, pp. 95-99.
- 4 Stanley 1995, pp. 7-15.
- 5 The sixtieth verse of Sura 2 appears on a leaf from this manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ms. 1405; see James 1980, no. 9, p. 22. The sixtieth verse of Sura 3 appears on a leaf in the Khalili Collection, inv. no. KFQ53; see Déroche 1992, no. 42, p. 94.
- 6 For instance, a Qur'an fragment in Kufic script on saffron-coloured

vellum in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; for an illustration of a leaf from the same manuscript see Déroche 1992, no. 11, p. 58.

- 7 Pope and Ackerman, p. 1709, note 2, and Stanley 1995, p. 8.
- 8 See Stanley's discussion of the exact translation of the inventory in Stanley 1995, p. 9. The 1294 inventory was published by Ibrahim Chabbouh in 'Sijill qadim li-maktabat jami' al-Qayrawan', *Majallat Ma'had al-Makhtutat al-Arabiyya*, II/2, 1956.
- 9 Walther and Wolf 2001, p. 79.
- 10 Walther and Wolf 2001, p. 58.
- 11 The eight manuscripts are: (1. The Codex Argenteus, Ravenna, c. 520 CE, Uppsala University Library; (2. The Vienna Genesis, Syria or Palestine, mid-sixth century CE, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Cod. Vin. theol. grec. 31; (3. The Rossano Gospels (Codex Papyrus Rossanensis), Syria or Palestine, mid-sixth century, Museo dell'Arcivescovado, Rossano Cathedral; (4. The Codex Petropolitanus, Syria, late sixth century, fragmentary and dispersed, folios and fragments in St Petersburg, London (Ms. Cotton Titus), Athens, Vatican (Codex Caesariensis), Patmos, Thessalonica, Vienna and New York (Pierpont Morgan Library M.874); (5. Codex Sinopensis, Syria, sixth century, fragment of 43 folios in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Suppl. Gr. 1286. (6. The Codex Brixianus, Italy, first half of sixth century, Biblioteca Civica Queriniiana, Brescia; (7. The Dagulf Psalter, Aachen, 772-95, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Cod. 1861; (8. The Vienna Coronation Gospels, Aachen, late eighth century, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Schatzkammer, inv. no. XIII 18. For illustrations and discussions of these manuscripts see Walther and Wolf 2001, pp. 58-63, 78-79; De Hamel 1986, nos. 33, 34, p. 44; De Hamel 2001, no. 10, p. 27; Cologne 1992, no. 1, pp. 60-61; New York 1977, nos. 410, 442, 443, 444; Fingernagel and Gastgeber 2003, no. 1.2, pp. 42-53; the online webpage for the Codex Argenteus is: www.ub.uu.se/arv/codex.cfm.
- 12 For example, the diameter of the dome of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, built by the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwan in 691-92 CE, is very slightly larger than that of the nearby Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and of the Pantheon in Rome, two of the most significant domed structures of the ancient and Christian worlds. Add to this the fact that the Dome of the Rock was built on the site of the Temple of Solomon and, during Christ's ministry, of Herod's Third Temple, which was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE, and the religio-political symbolism is clear.
- 13 The Umayyad-sponsored academies of Cordoba, employing Muslim, Christian and Jewish scholars, are well-known, as are the accounts of the great library of Cordoba, said to contain more manuscripts than any other library in Europe at the time.
- 14 Stanley 1995, pp. 7-15.
- 15 Bloom 1986, pp. 59-65; Bloom 1989, pp. 95-99.
- 16 This manuscript is now in the Nuruosmaniye Library, Istanbul, Ms. 23. A fragment is in the Khalili Collection, London; see Déroche 1992, no. 81, pp. 146-51.
- 17 Stanley 1995, p. 9.
- 18 For instance, the Vienna Genesis arrived first in Venice in the fourteenth century and then moved to Vienna, and the Codex Sinopensis was in Sinope, a town on the Black Sea, until 1899.



11 Qur'an section in Kufic script

Near East or North Africa

9th century

Sura 17 (*Al-Isra*), vv. 1–20, 29–111; Sura 18 (*Al-Kahf*)

Arabic manuscript on vellum, sixty-five folios. Six lines of elongated brown Kufic script to the page, vocalization in red. Fifth verse divisions marked in text with a gold *ha*, tenth verse divisions with a gold rosette pointed in green and red. Two *sura* headings in gold Kufic script outlined in black with illuminated palmettes extending into the outer margins. Modern green morocco binding with matching slipcase.

FOLIO 10.2 × 15.3 cm

TEXT AREA 7.5 × 11 cm

Small multi-volume Qur'ans in horizontal format with only a few lines of script to each page were popular in the ninth and tenth centuries. This *juz*' would have formed the fifteenth of a set of thirty, with a *juz*' for each day of the month. The verso of the final folio of the manuscript (f. 65v) contains a Safavid library inscription dated to 23 Ramadan 1014 AH/1 February 1606 CE, which is evidence of the

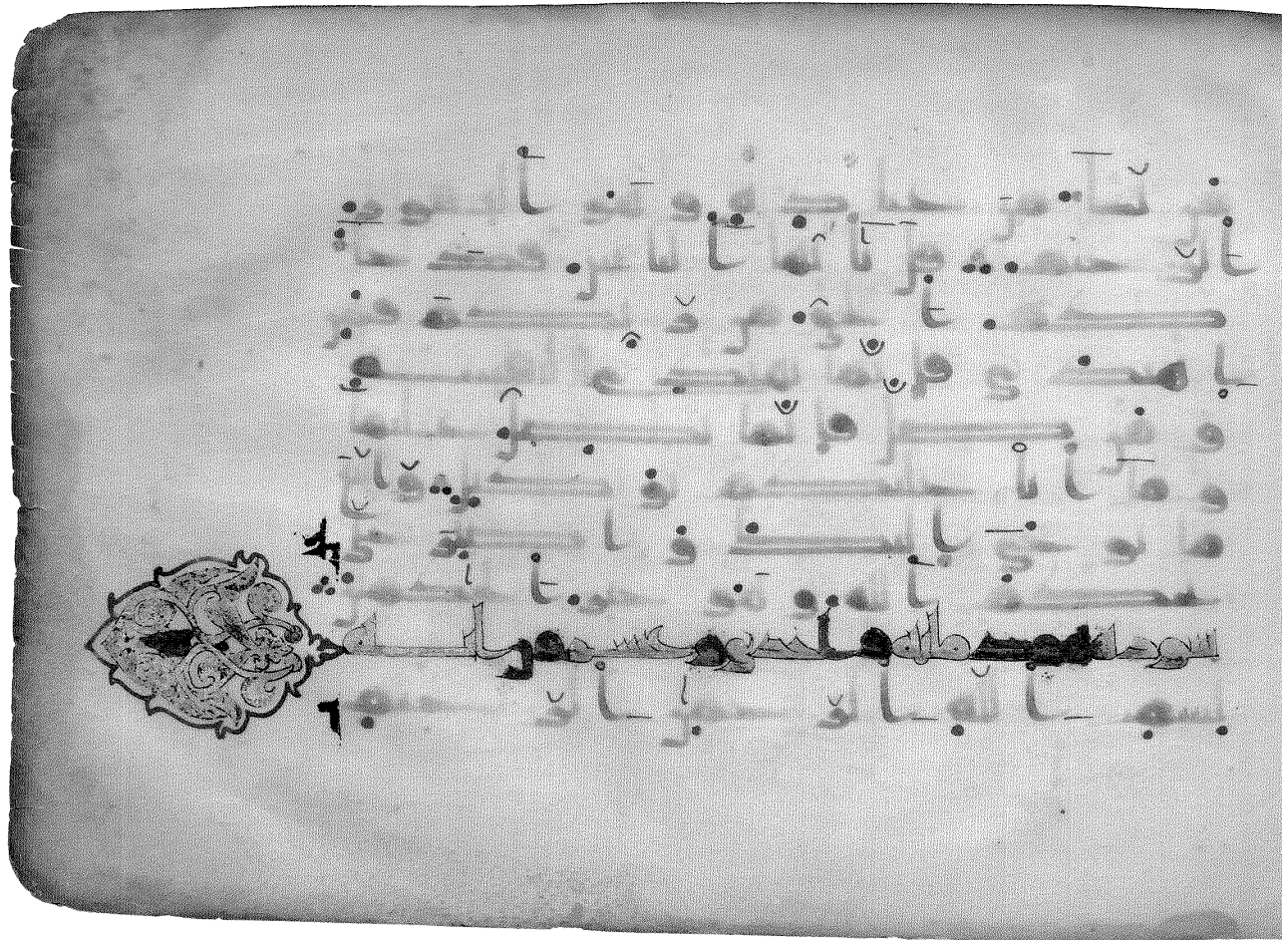
mobility of such manuscripts in the pre-modern period.

The script in this section is closest to the script called D.1 by François Déroche, and is found on a number of Qur'an sections and leaves, mostly dating from the ninth century.¹

The final bifolium contains only four lines of script on each page, leaving a space around the text block which was probably meant to be filled with illuminated panels. The style of illumination throughout the manuscript is strikingly simple, with discreet gold devices marking fifth and tenth verses and only red dots for the vocalization. The *sura* headings are also charmingly simple, with the name of the *sura* and verse count in barely differentiated gold script, from the last letter of which a gold palmette stretches into the margin.

WK

¹ For a discussion of D.1 see Déroche 1992, pp. 36–37. For leaves and sections from Qur'ans of a similar age, script and format, see the folio from the 'Amajur' Qur'an in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, discussed and illustrated in Ettinghausen *et al.* 2001, p. 74 and fig. 118. See also two leaves in the Khalili Collection, inv. nos. KFQ84, KFQ64, discussed and illustrated in Déroche 1992, nos. 19, 22, pp. 67, 70.



12 Qur'an bifolium in Kufic script

Near East or North Africa

Late 9th century

Sura 10 (*Yunus*), vv. 101-09, Sura 11 (*Hud*), *sura* heading and vv. 1-4

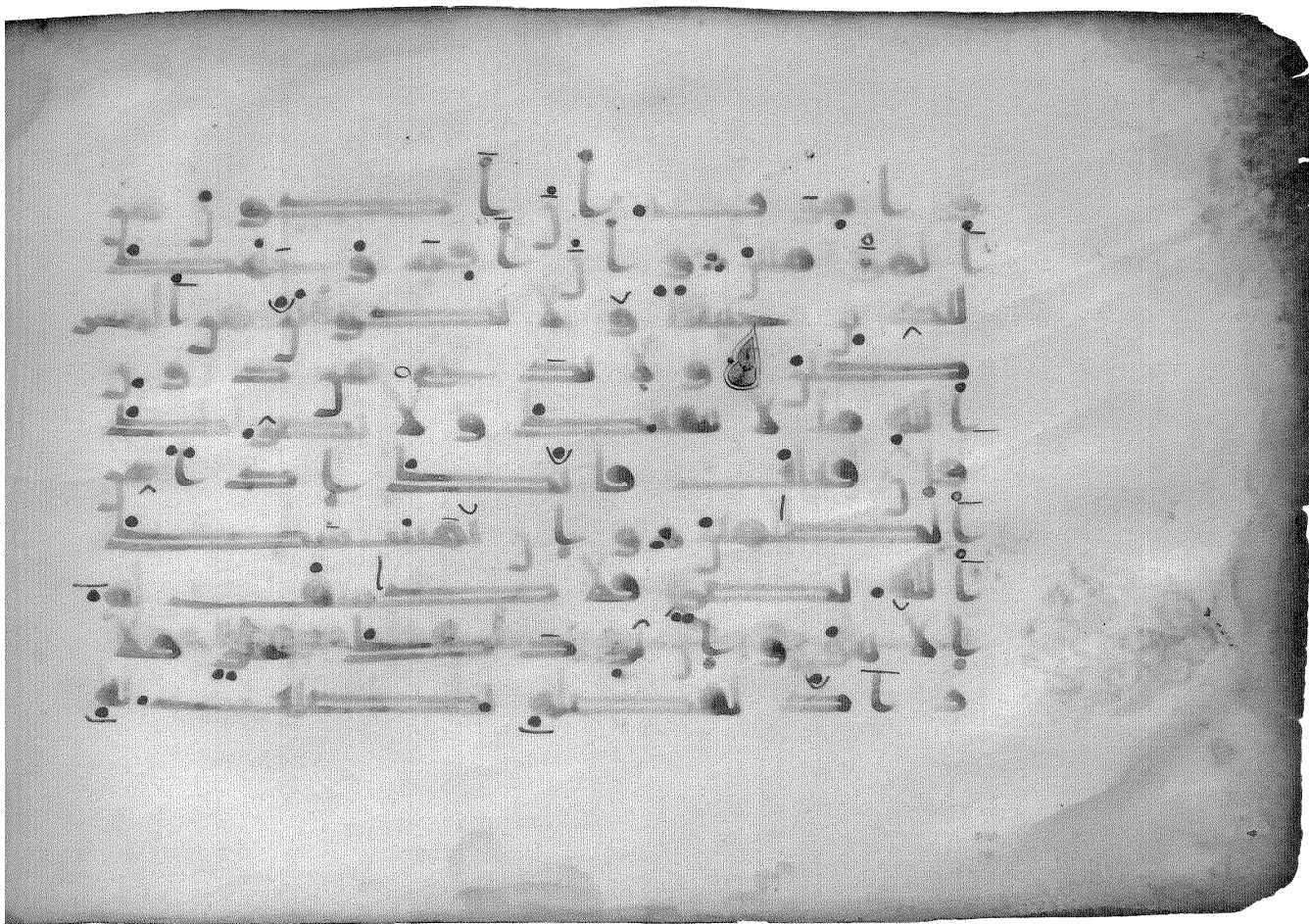
Bifolium from an Arabic manuscript written in Kufic script in brown ink on parchment. There is no letter-pointing. Vocalization is applied using red, yellow and blue dots and further symbols in red and blue (see below). The single verse divisions are marked with a small triangular cluster of three dots – red, yellow and blue. The fifth verse divisions are marked with a stylized letter *ha* (representing the number 5 in the *abjad* system) in gold. There is no tenth verse present on this bifolium. The *sura* heading for Sura 11 (*Hud*) is written in gold and silver Kufic script outlined in dark brown ink with a gold stylized palmette extending into the margin. The word *hizb* is written vertically next to the palmette in black ink.

FOLIO 17.5 × 26 cm

TEXT AREA 9.5 × 16.6 cm

The script of this bifolium is closest to styles D.ii and D.iii of Déroche's system of categorization. This script is associated with the second half of the ninth century and the early tenth century.¹ It is interesting to note that the scripts of cat. 7, 8 and 9 also belong to styles D.i, D.ii and D.iii, but the aesthetic impact and artistic qualities of those folios are more obvious than those of the present piece. The present bifolium is neat and essentially functional, while cat. 7, 8 and 9 are inspiring and majestic works of art, spacious, elegant and aesthetically striking. This shows how significant were the wealth and artistic objectives of the patron, the skill of the scribe and the amount of time and resources available, and how adaptable was the Kufic script.

There are several other interesting aspects of this Qur'an bifolium. The vocalization has been augmented by a further series of reading marks consisting of dashes, circumflexes and other symbols, as follows: *shadda* (*tashdid*) is marked with a red circumflex or inverted circumflex; a similar



symbol in blue seems to mark a *fatha*, but only on an initial *waw* or *ya* and not in every case; a miniature *alif* in red marks a long medial *alif*; a long red or blue horizontal dash marks *wasl*. The presence of this system of reading aids, which seem to be original, as they are applied with the same pigments as the coloured dot vocalization,² indicates a functional context for this Qur'an. The most likely candidate would have been the Imam of a mosque or other prayer leader, or perhaps a Qur'an scholar or teacher in a *madrasa*. The general style of the Qur'an would also support this proposition: the manuscript is relatively modest in size and has a script that is legible and neat, but is not an artistic *tour de force*, and the illuminated *sura* heading is, again, neat and attractive, but not overtly elaborate or glamorous.

However, the *sura* heading does have one distinctive feature. The words of the *sura* title and number of verses are written in alternating gold and silver ink. This is possibly unique to this manuscript.³ In addition, in the centre of the

marginal palmette is a motif like a pine cone, which is also in silver.

On the third line of folio 1r the scribe has made a mistake in the text, but must have realised more or less immediately, as he has erased the relevant letters by scraping or picking the ink off the parchment and has written in the correct letters so that the scraped parchment is partly covered and partly exposed.

MF

1 Déroche 1992, pp. 37, 44-45.

2 Viewing under magnification at $\times 60$ shows the pigments to be of the same type. For instance, the blue of the circumflexes and *wasl* dashes is the same as that of the blue vocalization dots, the blue dot of the verse division markers, the blue surround of the *sura* heading palmette and the blue dot in the centre of the palmette.

3 No other instances are known to the author.

13 Large Qur'an leaf in Kufic script

Ifriqiyya, Egypt or Western Syria
10th century
Sura 20 (*Tā Ha*) vv. 73-86

Folio from an Arabic manuscript written in Kufic script on parchment in brown ink with seven lines per page. There is some original letter-pointing, applied in thin dashes in the same brown ink as the text, and some later letter-pointing, applied in a paler brown ink and in a coarser hand. The vocalization consists of red and green dots. There are also occasional *tashdid* and *sukun* symbols of Khalil b. Ahmad's system which are original to the folio and written in a neat hand in the same brown ink as the text. Single verse divisions are marked with triangular clusters of six gold dots. The fifth verse division is marked with a large stylized letter *ha* in gold Kufic script. Tenth verse divisions are marked with large illuminated rosettes decorated in gold and green and containing the exact verse count in gold Kufic script.

FOLIO 33 × 46.2 cm
TEXT AREA 18.3 × 34 cm

This large and extremely fine folio comes from a Qur'an written in a script notable for its elegance and has interesting letter-forms and calligraphic style. Several pertinent features of the script link it to two other manuscripts of similar format and style. Indeed, the general style of the scripts and the more unusual idiosyncrasies are so close as to suggest that all three originated in the same place and period, or even in the same scriptorium. The three manuscripts are: a) the present seven-line example, of which several folios and fragments are in the National Library, Tunis, and the Museum of Islamic Arts, Qairawan;¹ b) a five-line Qur'an of which a fragment of fifty-three folios is in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, and a small number of single folios are dispersed (see fig. 5);² c) a three-line Qur'an of which many leaves are dispersed, including a single folio featured here (cat. 14).³ The different scale of each folio makes comparison difficult at first glance, but the similarity between the scripts can be seen in close-up details of single lines of script.

The pertinent aspects of the script which these three manuscripts share and which render them distinct from other examples include the oversized and emphatically

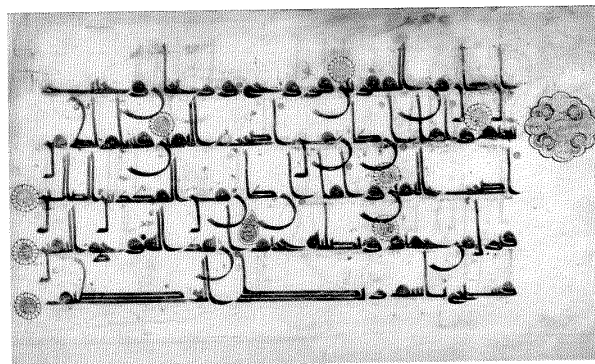


Fig. 5 Leaf of a five-line Qur'an (private collection)

rounded terminal *nun*, the thin, trailing tail of the terminal *mim*, and the strong, slender verticals of the relevant letters such as *lam* and *alif* (see details and Table 5). Déroche has categorized this script as style D.vc and links it cautiously to a *waqf* inscription from Damascus dated 298 AH/911 CE.⁴

A further aspect of the calligraphic style of this type is the wide variation in the angle at which the nib of the *qalam* has been drawn over the surface, creating strong variations



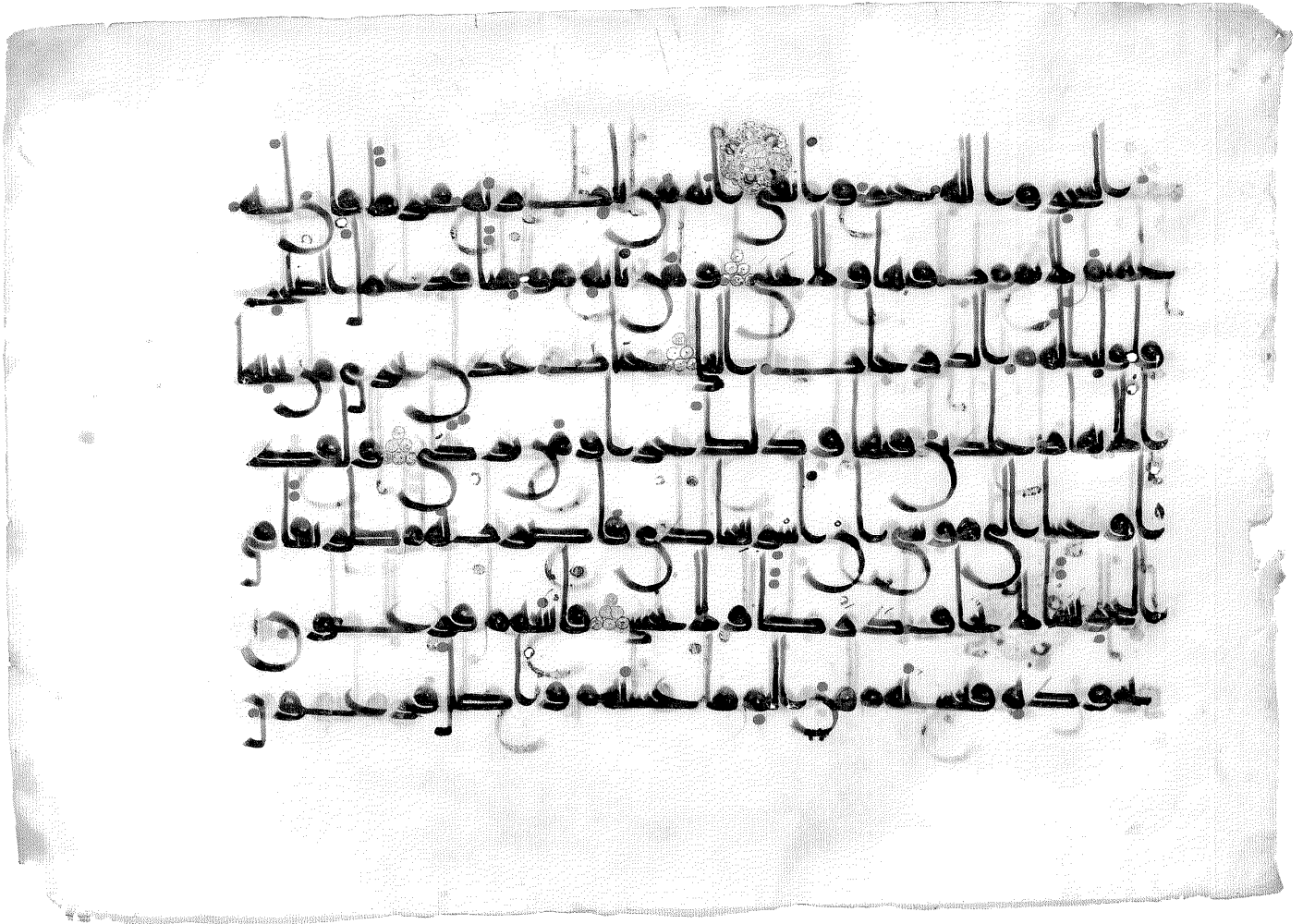
Detail of cat. 13



Detail of fig. 5



Detail of cat. 14



Ms. Type	7-line	5-line	3-line
Terminal <i>nun</i>			
Terminal <i>mim</i>			

TABLE 5. Comparison of letter forms

in the width of the strokes of certain letters and ligatures. For example, the starting point of the terminal *nun* has the nib held at an angle to produce the maximum width of stroke, perpendicular to the direction of the stroke. The nib is then angled gently towards the direction of the stroke so that by the half-way point of the letter the width of the stroke is much narrower. The angle of the nib is then turned perpendicular again as it nears the end of the letter, so that the end of the stroke is again the maximum possible width. The terminal *nun* is thus effectively symmetrical about its mid-point. The scribe has exploited the natural effect of a chisel-shaped nib as it is drawn round a curve, and has accentuated this to create a definite calligraphic motif.



Detail of cat. 13, demonstrating symmetry of terminal *nun*

Another example of the use of the angled nib can be seen on the terminal *mim* (see illustration above), where the solid circle of the head of the *mim* changes to a thin, almost invisible downstroke for the tail. This feature in itself is notable, since most Kufic scripts have the tail of the terminal *mim* as a short, almost stubby feature laid horizontally along the line of script. However, the terminal *mim* with a tail that drops below the line is a common feature of so-called Eastern Kufic scripts, which are known to have come into use for Qur'an manuscripts in both eastern and western Islamic lands during the tenth century.⁵

The fact that all of these distinctive calligraphic characteristics are shared by these three manuscripts, as well as a general similarity in the calligraphic style and the format of the folios (the text area of each type is approximately twice as wide as it is high)⁶ implies that these three manuscripts might be related in origin. It is possible that this was the 'house style' of a certain scriptorium at a certain time, or perhaps the favoured calligraphic style of a royal patron or dynasty – a court style. It may even be the distinctive style of an individual calligrapher. We shall never know, since these three manuscripts survive only in fragments dispersed widely in the Islamic world and the West, and none provides a colophon or any early documentary evidence. However, fragments in which this script appears are to be found in Damascus, Cairo and Qayrawan,⁷ but no pre-modern collections east of Damascus nor west of Qayrawan possesses any examples. This, coupled with the calligraphically related Damascene *waqf* inscription of 911 and fact that our script is still essentially a Kufic type but exhibits intermittent aspects characteristic of so-called Eastern Kufic (e.g. the terminal *mim*, the occasionally forward-slanting vertical of the *ta*, *za* and terminal *kaf*, and a few instances of inward-curving *lam-alif* combinations not present on this folio but visible on other published examples) might place the origin of all three manuscripts somewhere from Ifriqiyya to Syria in the first half of the tenth century.

Examination of other published folios from the same Qur'an as the present leaf shows that the wording of the *sura* titles was unusual. The folio exhibited in London in 1976

bears the *sura* title for Sura 21 (*al-Anbiya*).⁸ However, the wording does not state "*Sura al-Anbiya*", as was normal for the tenth century, nor even "*Al-Anbiya*", as was occasionally used, but describes it as follows:

"*Fatihat surat alati tadhkiru fiha al-anbiya mi'at wa ihda-
'ashar ayat* – the beginning of the *sura* in which are
mentioned the Prophets, one hundred and eleven verses"

By contrast, the folio exhibited in Paris in 1982 has a more usual wording for the *sura* title of Sura 23 (*al-Muminin*),⁹ although without the word *sura*.

"*Al-Muminin mi'a wa tis 'a-'ashr ayat* –
the Believers, one hundred and nineteen verses"

This indicates that the exact wording of the titles of the *suras* was not absolutely fixed during the first few centuries of the Islamic era, even as late as the tenth century.¹⁰ MF

- 1 Rutbi 52; see Lings and Safadi 1976, no. 24; Paris 1982, no. 358, pp. 274-5.
- 2 Ms. Arabe 334; see Déroche 1983, no. 179, pl. XX; Paris 2001, no. 31, p. 63; Paris 1987, no. 9, p. 3; Berlin 1980, no. 35, p. 54; Sotheby's, 23 April 1979, lot 9, 8 July 1980, lot 157, 29 April 1998, lots 10 and 11 (here fig. 5), 12 October 200, lots 30 and 31.
- 3 Other folios from this manuscript are in the Al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyya, Kuwait; see New York 1992, fig. 1, p. 117; the Tareq Rajab Museum, Kuwait, see Singapore 1997, p. 35; the Khalili Collection, London, see Déroche 1992, no. 58; and other private collections.
- 4 Déroche 1992, pp. 44-45.
- 5 A fully formed, but slightly cursive version of Eastern Kufic script is used on a Qur'an copied at Palermo in 372 AH/982-83 CE (see Déroche 1992, no. 81, p. 146), and individual elements are likely to have been borrowed earlier from non-Qur'anic manuscripts, for which Eastern Kufic script had been employed in titles and main texts since the ninth century.
- 6 To be exact, the quotient of width to height of the text areas is as follows: seven-line Qur'an = 1.85; five-line Qur'an = 2.1; three-line Qur'an = 2.2.
- 7 Déroche 1992, p. 42.
- 8 Lings and Safadi 1976, no. 24, pp. 29-30; Lings 1976, no. 9.
- 9 Paris 1982, no. 358, pp. 274-75.
- 10 Bell and Watt 1970, pp. 58-59.

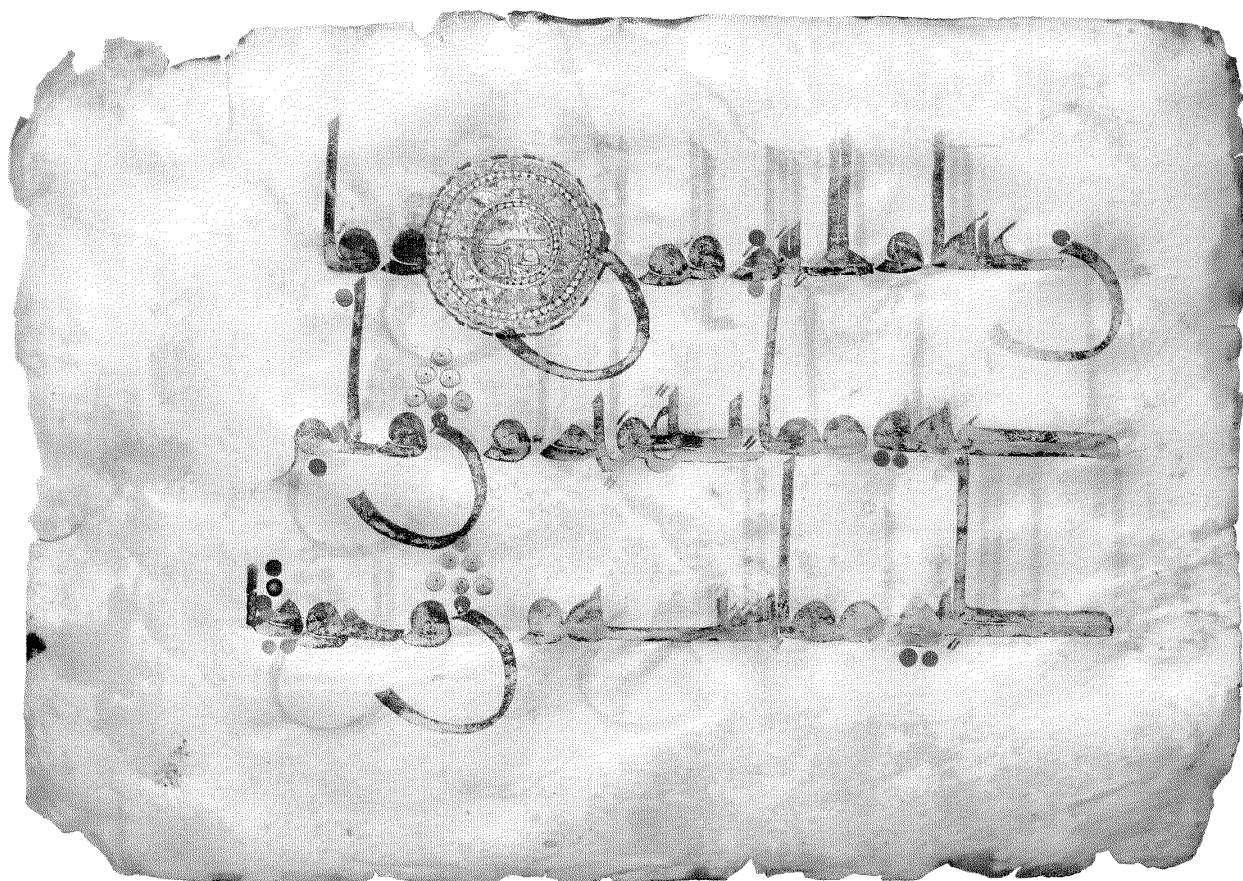
14 Illuminated Qur'an leaf in Kufic script

Ifriqiyya, Egypt or Western Syria
10th century
Sura 56 (*Al-Waqi'a*), vv. 19-24

Folio from an Arabic manuscript in Kufic script in brown ink on parchment with three lines of script per page. The letter-pointing is original and is applied in the same brown ink as the script. The vocalization consists of red, blue, green and yellow dots. The single verse divisions are marked with triangular arrangements of gold dots, the fifth verse divisions are marked with gold roundels outlined in blue

and yellow containing the word *khamis* in reserve, and the tenth verse divisions are marked with large gold roundels of radiating foliate design outlined in blue and yellow, containing the exact verse count in reserve.
FOLIO 23.8 × 33.1 cm
TEXT AREA 10 × 22 cm

The script on this Qur'an leaf is one of the most distinctive and elegant of all Kufic scripts.¹ The wide spacing of the lines and the fact that there are only three lines per page means that the whole Qur'an must have run to many hundreds of folios, employing an enormous amount of



parchment in the process.² This, and the fine quality of the script and illumination, point to a commission of great luxury and expense. The script relates very closely to only two other known Qur'an manuscripts, one example of which is cat. 13, where further discussion of the calligraphic style and origins can be found.

There are several features of cat. 14, in terms both of the calligraphy and of the illumination, worth examining in greater detail. There are two letter forms which the scribe has emphasized for calligraphic effect: 1) the strong verticals of the *alif* and *lam*, the *lam/alif* combination and the vertical parts of letters such as the *ta*, *za* and *kaf*; 2) the rounded sweeping curves of the terminal *nun*. These are the dominant features and are visually striking. They are the first thing one notices on looking at the page. To create such a strong visual emphasis must imply a specific aesthetic intention on the part of the scribe. The other letters appear almost diminutive in comparison, although finely formed. A further aspect of the calligraphic intentions of the scribe are apparent in the wide variations in the angle at which the nib of the *qalam* has been drawn over the surface, creating strong variations in the width of the strokes of certain letters and ligatures. For example, as in cat. 13, the starting point of the terminal *nun* has the nib held at an angle to produce the maximum width of stroke (perpendicular to the direction of the stroke). The nib is then angled gently towards the direction of the stroke so that by the half-way point of the letter the width of the stroke is much narrower. The angle of the nib is then turned perpendicular again as it nears the end of the letter, so that the end of the stroke is again the maximum possible width. The terminal *nun* is thus effectively symmetrical about its mid-point. The scribe has exploited the natural effect of a chisel-shaped nib as it is drawn round a curve, and has accentuated this to create a definite calligraphic motif (see detail on page 54).

Another example of the use of the angled nib can be seen on the terminal *mim*, where the solid circle of the head of the *mim* moves to a thin, almost invisible downstroke for the tail. This feature in itself is notable, since most Kufic scripts have the tail of the terminal *mim* as a short, almost stubby feature, laid horizontally along the line of script. However, the terminal *mim* with a tail that drops below the line is a common feature of so-called Eastern Kufic scripts.

The emphasis on the vertical letter forms is in contrast to the general thrust of the page. Although the horizontal stretching of the letters (*mashq*) is relatively measured in this case, the shape and proportions of the text area and the folio

as a whole are strongly horizontal. The text area is 10 cm high and 22 cm wide, *i.e.* more than twice as wide as it is tall.

In the context of the illumination, the roundels marking the tenth verses throughout the manuscript – in this case the twentieth verse of Sura 56 (*al-Waqi'ah*) – are very large relative to the script and the size of the text area (the roundel on this folio measures 4.8 cm in diameter). They dwarf the majority of the surrounding letters, only the vertical letter-forms and terminal *nun* offering any visual competition.

It seems that the scribe's specific aesthetic intention was to create a script of contrasts: the verticals (*lam*, *alif*, *ta*, *za*, *kaf*) contrast both with the horizontality of the text area and, in a slightly different way, with the rounded curves of the terminal *nun*; the angling of the nib creates further graphic contrasts within the actual letter forms; and the visual contrast of the outsized solidly coloured gold tenth-verse marker with the attenuated dark brown letters and the creamy white of the parchment. The aesthetic success of this is evident, and the artistic effect is almost mannerist.

As with most examples of Kufic script, we have no precise idea of the geographical origin of the folio, nor its date of production, but the presence of Eastern Kufic features in the script and provenance and calligraphic aspects of its sister script on cat. 13 would indicate a date in the first half of the tenth century and a geographical origin between Qayrawan and Damascus. MF

- 1 Déroche describes this script as style D.vc: Déroche 1992, no. 58, p. 109.
- 2 Cat. 14 contains six verses. The number of verses per folio of other published examples varies between one and ten (these examples are drawn from the beginning, middle and end of the Qur'an to account for the variations in the length of the verses throughout the Qur'an, in which the Medinan *suras*, arranged mostly in the first half of the Qur'an, have longer, and the Meccan *suras*, arranged mostly in the second half of the Qur'an, have shorter verses). Taking an average, therefore, of five verses per folio, we can roughly calculate that the whole text of this copy of the Qur'an would have required 1247 folios of parchment (6236 verses in the Qur'an divided by 5 per folio). This would certainly have meant that it was divided into several volumes. A seven-volume division would have meant around 178 folios per volume, while a thirty-volume division would have meant around 42 folios per volume.

15 Bifolium from the Nurse Qur'an (*Mushaf al-Hadina*)

Qayrawan

410 AH / 1019-20 CE

Copied by 'Ali b. Ahmad al-Warraq

Sura 6 (*Al-An'am*), vv. 40-41, 48-49

Bifolium from an Arabic manuscript on parchment written in Eastern Kufic script in brown ink on parchment with five lines per page. There is no letter-pointing. Vocalization is applied using the system developed by Khalil b. Ahmad al-Farahidi with *fatha*, *damma* and *kasra* in red, *shadda* (*tashdid*) and *sukun* in blue, and *hamza* and *madda* in green. In the present bifolium none of the single verse markers is visible, but other published leaves show them to consist of small illuminated rosettes set just above the end of the last word of each verse.¹

FOLIO 38 × 30.6 cm

TEXT AREA 27 × 20 cm

The manuscript from which this bifolium originates is one of the very few early Qur'anic manuscripts for which we know both the date and location of production and the identity of the person for whom the work was made. The manuscript was ordered for the nurse (*al-hadina*) of the Zirid Amir al-Mu'izz b. Badis in the year 410 AH/1019-20 CE. The Zirids were governors of Ifriqiyya and were based in Qayrawan. The manuscript was donated by the nurse to the Great Mosque of Qayrawan. Sections are now in the Museum of Islamic Arts and the Musée du Bardo, Qayrawan.²

The script of this manuscript is distinctive and stylistically extreme. It has been termed 'Western Kufic' in the past,³ with reference to its known origin, but there is no doubt that its script is a form of what is commonly termed Eastern Kufic, or New Style script.⁴ The use of fully formed Eastern Kufic scripts in the Mediterranean region is known as early as 982-83 CE, when a manuscript of the Qur'an in a small Eastern Kufic hand was copied at Palermo.⁵ In contrast the script of the Nurse Qur'an is large and lavish, with flourishes and exuberances which are calligraphically extreme in some cases. That it was copied on parchment indicates the relative conservatism of the Muslim west in matters of Qur'an production. In Iraq and Iran secular manuscripts had been copied on paper for two centuries.⁶

The present manuscript was certainly a sophisticated and expensive commission. The format is large and the script is monumental, as well as artistically outstanding. With only five lines per page the complete manuscript would have required an enormous amount of parchment, and the number of skilled artists and craftsmen in the scriptorium (the scribe, illuminator(s), ink makers, pigment makers, parchment preparers, binders etc.) required to produce such a manuscript would have been very great. With this in mind the context of the manuscript's commissioning becomes curious. This manuscript was made for a nurse. Admittedly she was the nurse of a prince-governor of a prosperous emirate and no doubt, as is often the case with bonds formed in infancy, the prince was very fond of his former nurse,⁸ but she was, nevertheless, a nurse, not a senior courtier or prince or ruler of another state. The emirate itself was not even a particularly powerful one, being a seat of governors of the Fatimid Caliphate rather than an independent kingdom. What a commission for a nurse! It makes one wonder what degree of luxury, what artistic sophistication, what monumental size and lavishness the Qur'ans ordered by the rulers themselves might have had. MF

1 See Paris 1982, no. 357, p. 273.

2 Paris 1982, nos. 356, 357; Lings 1976, no. 10; Lings and Safadi 1976, no. 25, p. 31; see also London 2004, no. 6, pp. 56-57. A leaf from the same manuscript is in the David Collection, Copenhagen, inv. no. 25/2003, illustrated in Déroche 2004, p. 49, fig. 10.

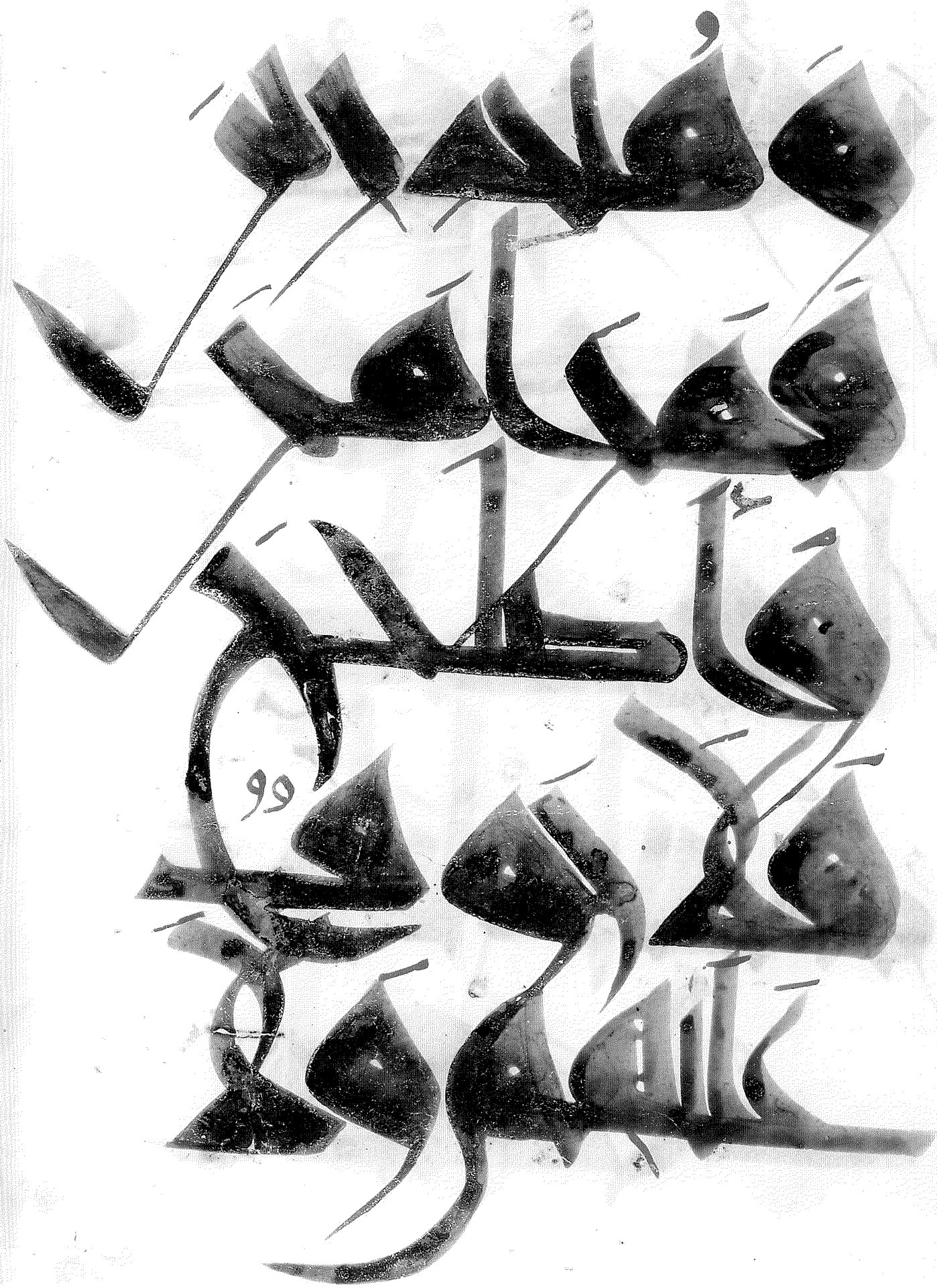
3 Lings and Safadi 1976, no. 25, p. 30; Safadi 1978, p. 23; Lings 1976, no. 10; Lings 2005, nos. 153-54, p. 82.

4 Déroche has re-named these scripts New Style (Déroche 1992, pp. 132-82) owing to the fact that they are not by any means exclusively eastern, nor do they appear necessarily to have developed in the east. Nevertheless, the term Eastern Kufic is still generally understood to describe the distinctive angular scripts of the category, and the term has been retained in this catalogue.

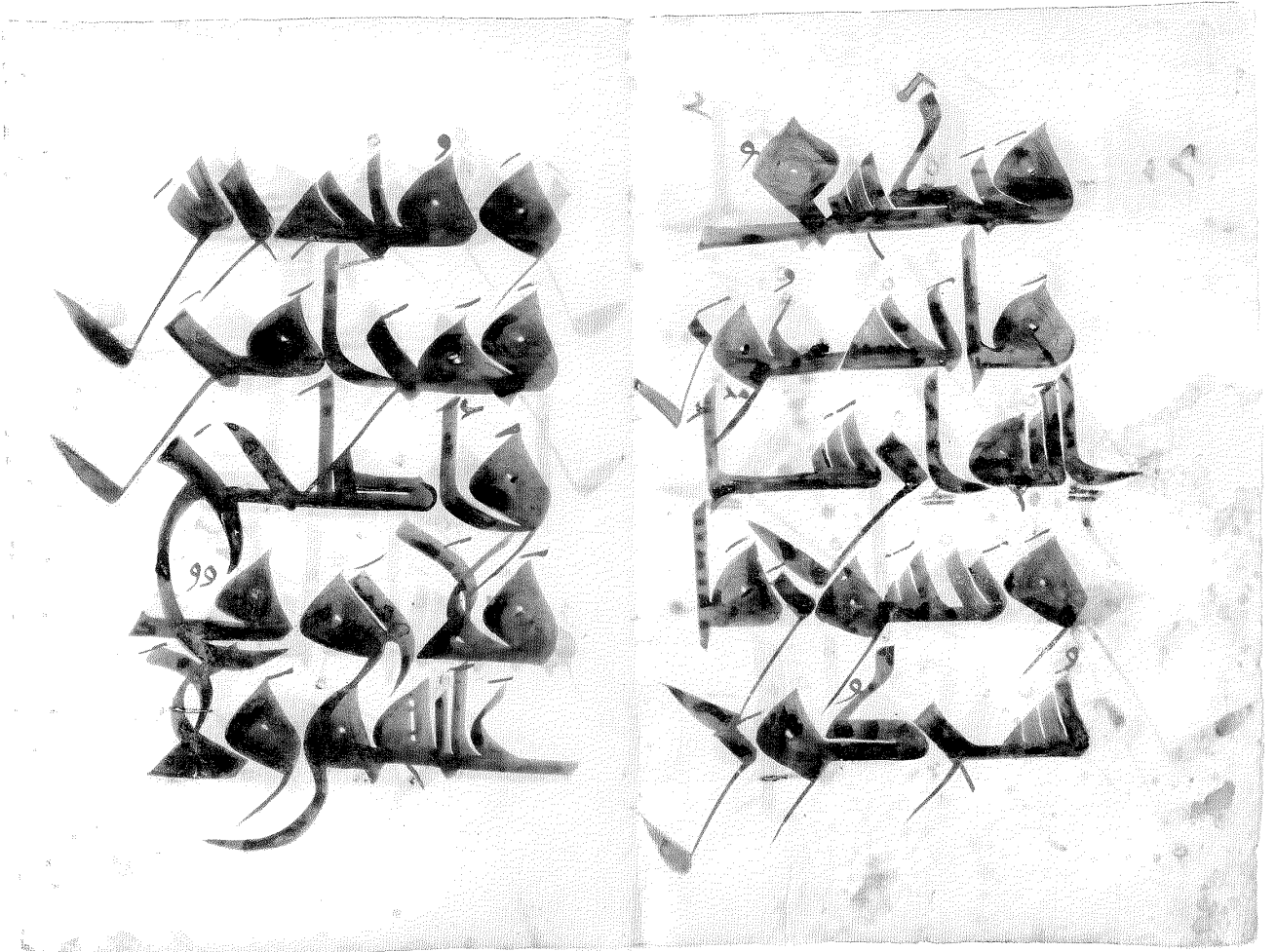
5 Nuruosmaniye Library, Istanbul, Ms. 23; Khalili Collection, London, inv. nos. QUR261, 368. See Déroche 1992, no. 81, pp. 146-51.

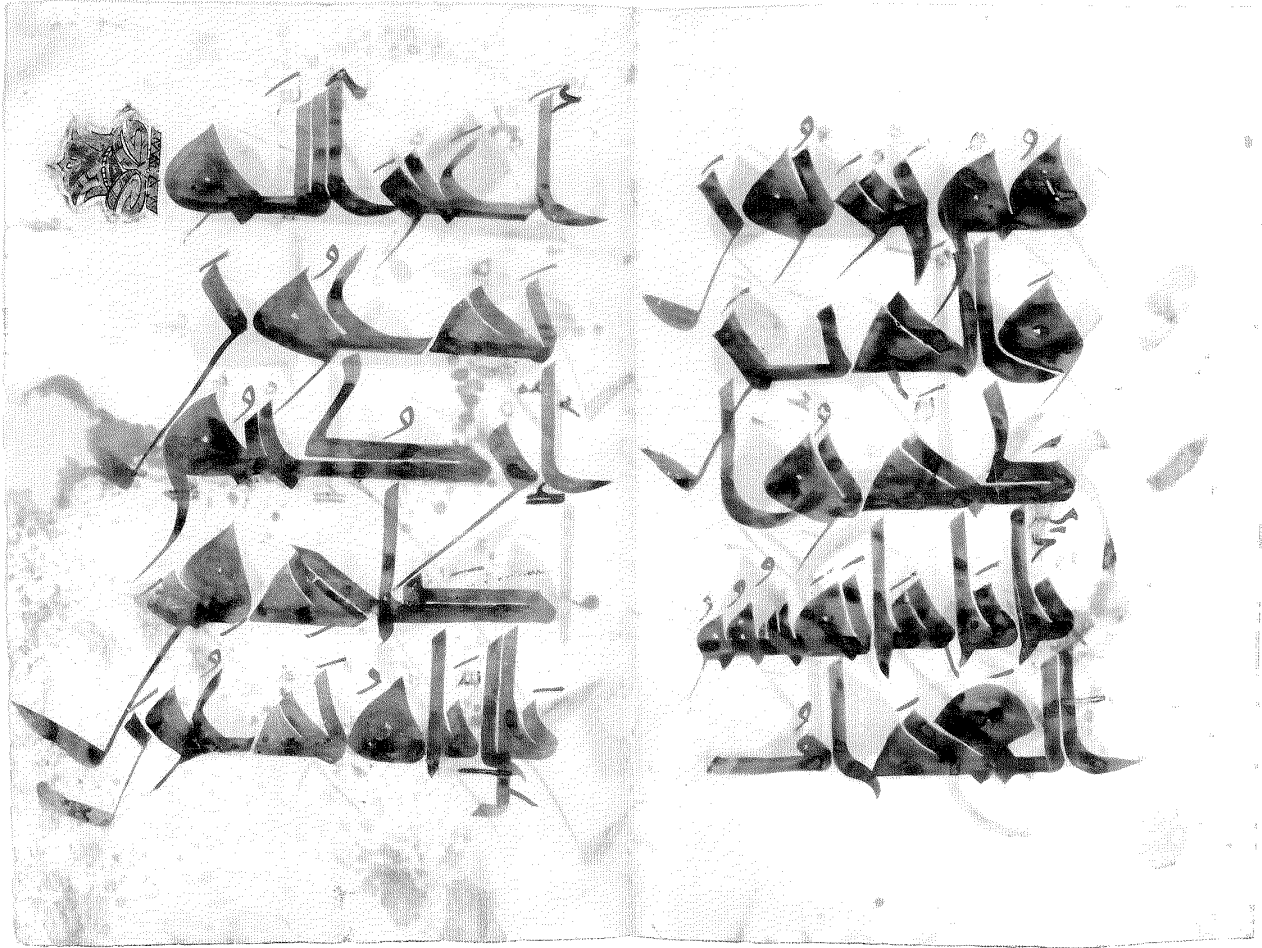
6 Examples are given in the following entry (cat. 16).

7 The Arabic word *hadinah* refers to a nursemaid or dry-nurse, not a wet-nurse. In this case it seems likely that she was the prince's nanny, perhaps throughout his childhood.



99





16 Qur'an bifolium in Eastern Kufic script

North Africa or Eastern Mediterranean region

Late 10th century

Sura 99 (*Zilzal*), vv. 2-8; Sura 100 (*Al-'Adiyat*), vv. 1-6; Sura 103 (*al-'Asr*), vv. 2-3; Sura 104 (*Al-Humaza*), vv. 1-9; sura heading only of Sura 105 (*Al-Fil*)

Bifolium from an Arabic manuscript written in Eastern Kufic script on parchment with seven lines per page. There is only partial use of letter-pointing. Vocalization is applied using the system of Khalil b. Ahmad al-Farahidi in red. There are no single verse divisions. Fifth verse divisions are marked with a stylized Kufic letter *ha*. Tenth verse divisions are marked in the margins with illuminated medallions containing the word 'ashara in gold.¹ Sura headings are written in gold Eastern Kufic script and each has a stylized palmette extending into the margin.

FOLIO 12.6 × 9.5 cm

This charming bifolium is probably an early example of the use of so-called Eastern Kufic script in the Mediterranean region around the late tenth century. We know that Eastern Kufic script was used in this region for Qur'ans in the late tenth century from a parchment manuscript copied at Palermo in Sicily in 982-83 CE.² The calligraphic style of the present example is a fairly standard Eastern Kufic type,³ but the fact that the material used is parchment is indicative of a western rather than eastern origin. Parchment continued to be used for the writing of Qur'ans in North Africa and the Maghrib later than in the east, witness the aforementioned Palermo codex and the famous *Mushaf al-Hadina* (Nurse Qur'an) copied on parchment at Qayrawan in 1019-20 (see cat. 15). In contrast, a Qur'an in a related Eastern Kufic script copied at Isfahan in 993 is on paper,⁴ as is the famous *naskh* Qur'an of Ibn al-Bawwab copied in 1001 at Baghdad.⁵ In Morocco and Islamic Iberia parchment continued to be used for Qur'an manuscripts until at least the fourteenth century (see cat. 21).

An unusual aspect of the present script is that it lacks almost all letter-pointing. The vocalization has been fully applied, so it cannot be that the manuscript was unfinished, as letter-pointing generally preceded the application of vocalization and, anyway, letter-pointing is present on twelve instances across the four pages. But the letter-points are

certainly not present on all letters that require them. This phenomenon has been noted in relation to Kufic scripts of the late ninth century (see cat. 7 and 8). It is also worth noting the unusually small size of this bifolium. The complete codex may well have been designed as a portable Qur'an for travelling. The closest comparisons in terms of size, calligraphy and illumination can be found in a *juz'* in the Khalili Collection.⁶

MF

- 1 Not present here, but visible on another bifolium from the same Qur'an; see Sotheby's, 14 October 1999, lot 1.
- 2 Nuruosmaniye Library, Istanbul, Ms. 23; Khalili Collection, inv. nos. QUR261, 368. See Déroche 1992, no. 81, pp. 146-51.
- 3 Déroche terms this script NS.1: see Déroche 1992, pp. 136-37.
- 4 Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, Mss. 453-56; Khalili Collection, inv. no. KFQ90. See Déroche 1992, no. 83, pp. 154-55.
- 5 Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ms. 1431. See Rice 1955.
- 6 Déroche 1992, no. 80, pp. 144-45. See also Christie's, 4 July 1985, lot 71; Quaritch 1991, no. 6; Sotheby's, 12 October 2000, lot 10.

ارمائه اجدده كل السدرو
البيكمه وما ادرى كما
الركفه ما را الله لموعدو
البيكف على الاعداء
فما عليه فهو صدمه
عند فده

الشمس والارض

واوت الارض اهلها
والاسرار ما لم يوسد
بهدت اجارها ما ريك
او جرها نوسد بصدور
الما سر اسماء البر والحق
فمر بمر معال دره جبر
ره وهر نعم معال ذره

سواء الله الورد من الريح
والعاهد مات صبيها
لهوديات قد بناها المعديا
ت صباها غيرة ربه
فوسد ربه هو الورد
سكار ليه لكونه وان

حسرا الورد اصبوا وعلمها
الصالحات وبقا صوابها
وهي صوابها
سواء الله الورد من الريح
وهي صوابها
مع الورد وبقا صوابها

17 Illuminated Qur'an leaf in Maghribi script

Spain, probably Granada or Valencia

13th century

Sura 64 (*al-Taghabun*), vv. 15-18; Sura 65 (*al-Talaq*), v. 1

Folio from an Arabic manuscript written in five lines of large brown Maghribi script on peach-coloured paper. Vocalization has been rendered in gold, outlined in black, and in green. Single verse divisions marked with gold roundels containing the exact verse count according to the *abjad* system. *Sura* heading consists of an illuminated panel containing the title and verse count in gold Kufic letters on a blue ground. An illuminated medallion projecting from the panel into the right margin contains the name of the *sura* in gold Kufic letters on a red ground. Endowment inscription reading *hubus* marked with pin pricks in top right margin.

FOLIO 25.8 × 33.6 cm

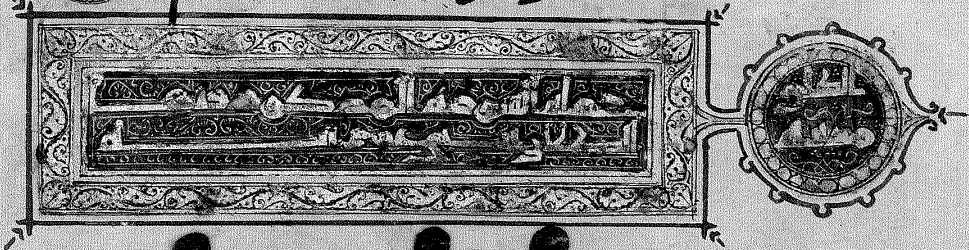
The Qur'an from which this leaf originates is one of the most celebrated western Islamic manuscripts in existence and was probably produced for a royal or noble patron in either Granada or Valencia.¹ Only a small number of Qur'ans copied on paper survive from the western Islamic lands, where vellum copies in square format were the standard for most of the medieval period. On the rare occasions that paper was used, it was normally coloured, and seems to have been reserved for luxury copies.²

The distinctive pink paper used for this Qur'an is generally thought to have been produced in Jativa (Arabic *Shatiba*), though it is possible that similar paper was also manufactured elsewhere. Jativa was home to the earliest recorded paper mill in Spain and was frequently praised by medieval writers for the quality of its smooth paper, which was exported all over the Mediterranean.³ It was from paper mills in Islamic Spain that papermaking was introduced to the Latin West. Though the paper for this Qur'an may have been made in Jativa before James I of Aragon's conquest of the town in 1244, it could have been imported to the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada from mills in Christian hands. Islamic paper was probably being imported to Christian Spain as early as the twelfth century, and with the Christian conquest of al-Andalus already existing paper-mills were maintained as well as new ones established.⁴

In addition to their coloured paper, leaves from this Qur'an are distinguished by the monumental, evenly spaced Maghribi script in brown ink and the richly detailed illumination. The illuminated *sura* heading on this folio is made particularly striking by the contrasting use of blue for the central compartment of the *sura* heading and red for the projecting medallion. The detail on the illumination is remarkably well preserved; the black vegetal scroll around the border of the illuminated *sura* heading, the white of the *abjad* letters in the verse markers and the ring of pointed black circles surrounding them stand out boldly against the gold ground, which has been pricked to catch the light. ❧

- 1 A partially complete volume from the same manuscript in the Bibliothèque Ben Youssouf, Marrakesh, inv. no. 431, is illustrated in New York 1992, no. 81, p. 31. For a bifolium in the David Collection, Copenhagen, see Folsach 2001, no. 5, p. 57. For a leaf exhibited in the 1985 *Treasure of Islam* exhibition in the Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva, see Geneva 1985, cat. 7, p. 39.
- 2 See, for example, a possibly Tunisian Qur'an copied in silver ink on chocolate paper in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, or. arabe 392, illustrated in Paris 2001, cat. 25, p. 49.
- 3 Bloom 2001, pp. 87-88.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 206-09.

عالم الغيب والشهادة
العزير الحكيم



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا السُّورَةُ الْكَلِمَةُ

18 Illuminated Qur'an leaf in Maghribi script

North Africa or Spain

About 1250-1350

Sura 7 (*Al-Araf*), vv. 205-06; Sura 8 (*Al-Anfal*), v. 1

Folio from an Arabic manuscript on vellum, seven lines of brown Maghribi script to the page. Vocalization in red, green and yellow. Individual verses marked with gold trefoil device, fifth verses marked with a gold *ha*. *Sura* heading consists of title and verse count in small gold ornamental Kufic on a blue ground within polygonal cartouches set in a panel of strapwork outlined in gold and gold vegetal scroll, with a gold palmette extending into the margin.

FOLIO 19.7 × 19.7 cm

Vellum Qur'ans of square format were the standard in North Africa and Spain from the middle of the twelfth century to the end of the medieval period. The standardization of Qur'an production in this period may well have been related to the preoccupation of the Berber Almohad dynasty (1145-1232) with regularizing worship and proclaiming the unity of God.

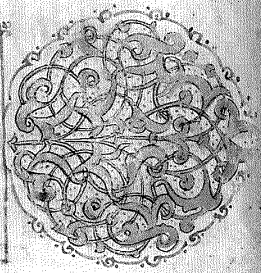
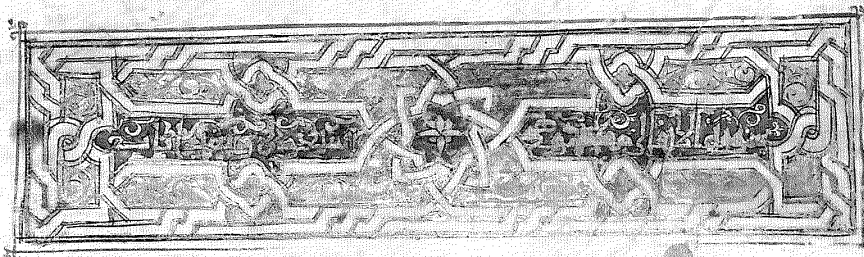
Qur'ans copied in this period continued to vary in size and the number of lines to the page, however. The thin, large Maghribi script and seven-line format of this Qur'an leaf can be compared with a bifolium of similar dimensions in the Khalili Collection,¹ and two volumes from a monumental Qur'an in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul.²

Unusually for Qur'ans of this format, the *sura* heading on the present leaf consists of the title in small gold ornamental Kufic contained in an elaborately illuminated panel of strapwork and geometric cartouches. The pattern of alternating stars and geometric cartouches found in the *sura* heading can also be seen in fourteenth-century wood-carving and stonework.³ More typical of manuscripts of this format were headings of large gold ornamental Kufic with no form of surround, such as those found on cat. 19 and both the Khalili and Istanbul manuscripts. WK

1 Khalili Collection, inv. no. QUR521; see James 1992a, no. 55, pp. 218-19.

2 Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, inv. no. T.360, illustrated in New York 1992, cat. 83, pp. 314-15.

3 See, for example, a wooden panel in the Museo de la Alhambra, Granada, inv. no. R.E. 4007, and a marble tombstone also in the Museo de la Alhambra, R.E. 238. Both are illustrated in Granada 1995, cat. 157, 168, pp. 399, 414.



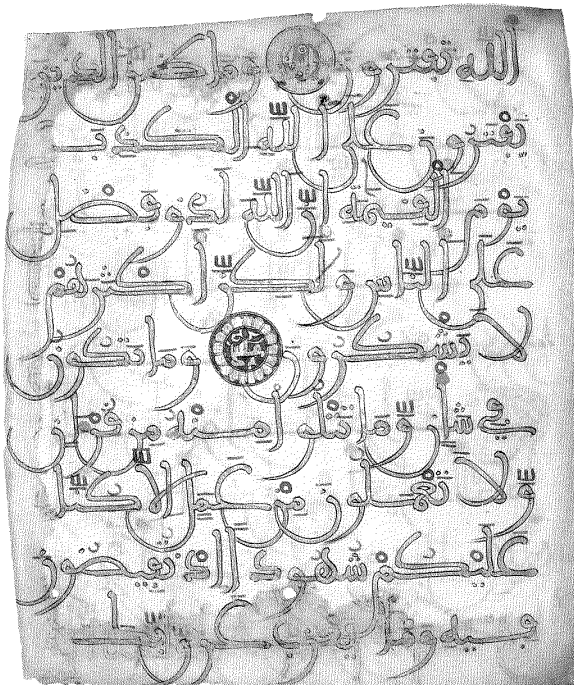
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَسْتَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْإِنْفَالِ
قُلْ الْإِنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ
فَاتَّبِعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرًا
بَيْنَكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ

19 Qur'an leaf in gold Maghribi script

Marinid Morocco or Nasrid Kingdom of Granada
About 1300
Sura 10 (*Yunus*), vv. 59-63

Folio from an Arabic manuscript written on parchment in gold Maghribi script with nine lines per page. The *tashdid* and *sukun* are marked in blue, *hamzat al-wasl* is marked with a green dot and *hamzat al-qat'* with a yellow dot. Each verse division is marked with an illuminated roundel within the text area containing the word *aya* reserved in Kufic script on a blue ground. From other published folios it is known that fifth verse divisions were marked with a winged roundel containing the word *khamis* in gold on a blue ground;¹ that tenth verse divisions were marked in the margin with an illuminated roundel containing the word *ashar* in reserve on a blue ground;² and that *sura* headings were written in bold ornamental Kufic script in blue outlined in gold, with an illuminated medallion of gold, red and blue interlace extending into the margin.³

FOLIO 19.5 × 17 cm

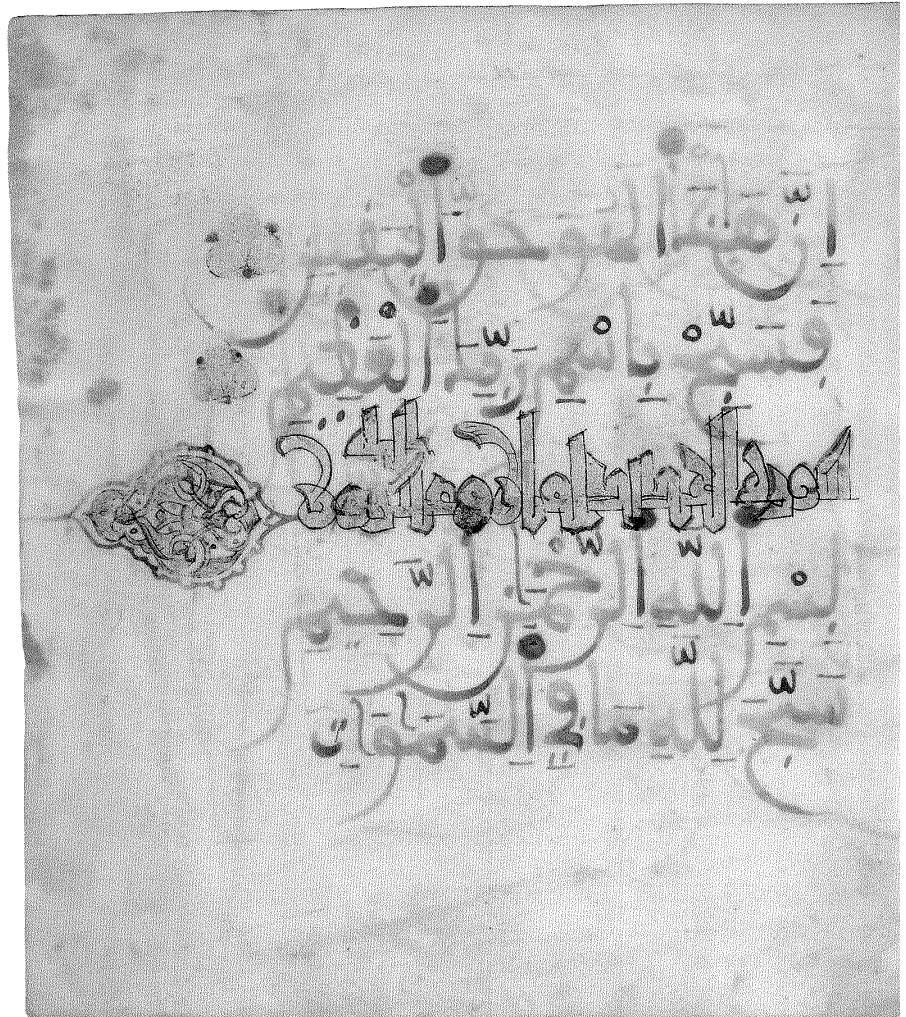


This impressive folio comes from a manuscript of the Qur'an written throughout in gold Maghribi script, one of only two Qur'ans in Maghribi script in which the entire text is written in original gold. The other is a manuscript in the John Rylands Library, Manchester University.⁴ The script of the present folio is of a large, looping type, with letter-pointing also in gold, and the manuscript must have originally been bound in several volumes. This would perhaps indicate an original function in a mosque or royal library.⁵ It has been suggested that this Qur'an was made for a king of Granada or Morocco,⁶ which is certainly a plausible origin for what must have been a gloriously grand manuscript when complete.

Other sections and leaves from the same manuscript are in the following collections: (sections) Topkapi Saray Library, Istanbul, EH219;⁷ Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ms.1424;⁸ Eton College Library, Windsor; Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, S.L. 217;⁹ the Keir Collection, London;¹⁰ (single folios) Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Ms.37.21;¹¹ Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan Collection, Geneva;¹² National Library, Cairo; Tareq Rajab Museum, Kuwait, QUR.0127.TSR;¹³ Khalili Collection, London, QUR 520.¹⁴

MF

- 1 Sotheby's, 29 April 1998, lot 15; Tareq Rajab Museum, Kuwait, inv. no. QUR.0127.TSR.
- 2 James 1992a, p. 215.
- 3 Déroche 1985, no. 304, pl. III.
- 4 Ms. 18 (Lings 1976, no. 96), although other Maghribi Qur'ans have certain significant pages of text written in gold: see Sotheby's, 12 October 2000, lot 39.
- 5 For a discussion of the different types of Maghribi script see cat. 21.
- 6 James 1992a, p. 214.
- 7 Lings 2005, nos. 161-63.
- 8 Arberry 1967, no. 119, pl. 43; Lings 1976, no. 95, pp. 205-06; James 1980, no. 91.
- 9 Paris 1987, no. 11, pp. 36-37; Déroche 1985, no. 304, pl. III.
- 10 Robinson 1976, no. VII.7, p. 288, pl. 140.
- 11 New York 1992, no. 84, p. 315.
- 12 Welch and Welch 1982, no. 2, pp. 22-23.
- 13 Sotheby's, 29 April 1998, lot 15.
- 14 James 1992a, no. 53.



20 Bifolium from a Qur'an in Maghribi script

North Africa or Spain

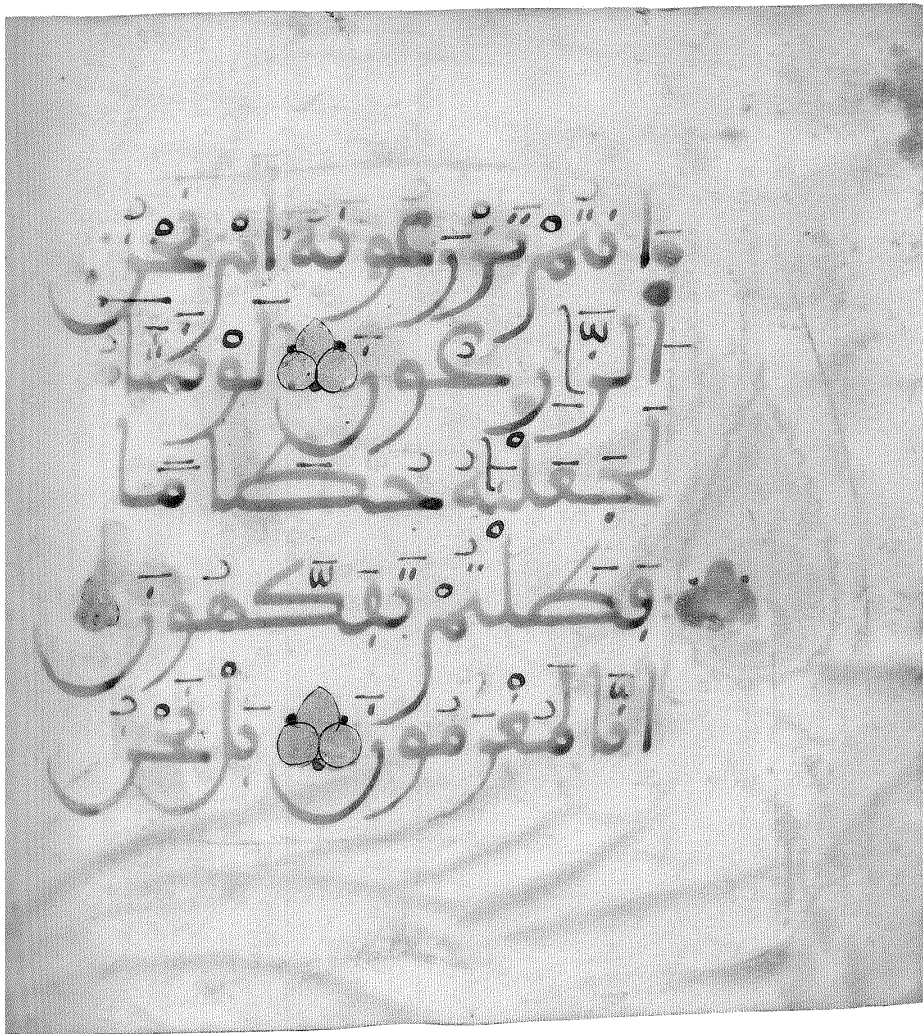
About 1250-1350

Sura 56 (*Al-Waq'ia*), vv. 61-66, 95-96; Sura 57 (*Al-Hadid*), vv. 1-2

Bifolium from an Arabic manuscript written in five lines of large brown Maghribi script on vellum. Vocalization has been rendered in blue, green and red. Single verse divisions marked with gold trefoil devices pointed in blue and red. Tenth verses marked in margin with gold teardrop containing roundel with the word 'ashar in white Kufic script on a blue ground. Sura heading of Sura 57 (*Al-Hadid*) is marked with sura title and number of verses in sura in dense gold Kufic script highlighted in red with illuminated palmette extending into the margin.

FOLIO 41.6 × 22 cm

Multi-volume Qur'ans in nearly square format in few lines of outsize brown Maghribi script were popular in Spain and North Africa in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, though it is possible that such copies were being produced as early as the second half of the twelfth century.¹ Both this large 'Maghribi' script and its smaller counterpart, often referred to as 'Andalusi', appear to have taken shape in the second half of the eleventh century, perhaps in connection with the rise of the Berber Almoravid dynasty which founded Marrakesh in 1062 and assumed control of Spain in 1090. The geographical distinction implied by these names is probably misleading, however, as the confluence of artistic traditions in Spain and North Africa reflected the political and cultural integration of the whole area.²



Most Qur'an leaves and manuscripts of comparable dimensions and script have been dated to c. 1250-1350.³ Of the same size and format as the present bifolium is a thirty-volume Qur'an apparently written by the Marinid Sultan Abu'l-Hasan 'Abdallah b. 'Ali and endowed to the al-Aqsa Mosque in 1344.⁴ Sultan Abu'l-Hasan's Qur'an also shares many decorative elements with this bifolium, including the red highlighting around the *sura* heading in compact Kufic script and the trefoil verse markers pointed in red and blue. Though the script in the Sultan Abu'l-Hasan manuscript is a much darker brown, the thick hand is similar and shares the exaggeratedly extended tooth of the initial *ba* of the *basmallah*.

WK

¹ See discussion in Stanley 1995, pp. 22-23.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

³ For similar Qur'ans, see James 1992a, no. 55, pp. 218-19; Stanley 1995, no. 18, pp. 111-12.

⁴ Al-Haram al-Sharif Islamic Museum, Maghribi Rab'ah, inv. no. 3; see Khader 2001, pp. 66-83.

21 Large Qur'an manuscript in Maghribi script on parchment

Commissioned by Abu Talib b. al-Shaykh Abu'l-Faris 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Sa'id bin Isma'il bin 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Sa'id al-Juhani
Probably Marinid dynasty, Morocco, Marrakesh or Fez
Dated end of Rabi' al-Awwal 718 AH / late May 1318 CE

Arabic manuscript on parchment with 163 folios written in dark brown Maghribi script with twenty-one lines per page, and two blank folios. *Hamzat al-wasl* is indicated by green dots and *hamzat al-qat'* by yellow dots that have faded to a thin brown colour. The single verse divisions are marked with gold trefoil devices made up of three small overlapping circles. The fifth verse divisions are marked in the text with small gold winged vegetal motifs and in the adjacent margins with larger devices of similar design containing the word *khamis* in small gold letters. The tenth verse divisions are marked in the text with small gold rosettes and in the adjacent margin with gold roundels containing the word *'ashar* in small gold letters. *Hizb* and *juz'* divisions are marked in the margins with large illuminated medallions of geometric or radial design containing the relevant word in red letters. The *sajda* loci are marked in the margins with large elaborate devices of a variety of designs (see below). *Sura* headings are written in gold ornamental Kufic script with red edging and with stylized palmettes of gold vegetal interlacing extending into the margins. The *sura* headings for Sura 1 (*Al-Fatiha*) and Sura 2 (*Al-Baqara*) are more elaborate, with large rectangular illuminated panels containing the *sura* title in tall ornamental Kufic script in blue or gold and stylized palmettes of vegetal interlace extending into the margins. There are two fully illuminated double pages. The opening double page has large square panels with central lobed roundels containing geometric interlace surrounded by gold inner border bands and four spandrels of vegetal interlace in gold. A palmette medallion of similar interlace extends into the margin from each outer border. The closing double page has large square panels of geometric interlace punctuated by panels and roundels of white interlace on blue ground. Again there are two palmette medallions extending into the margins. The colophon on the final folio of text (f. 162r) is written in large and bold white cursive script of a *thulth* type on a ground of gold scrolling interlace on a blue background. The binding is contemporary with the manuscript and appears to be the original binding. It is of brown leather with central medallions and border bands of blind-stamped reticulated knot-work punctuated with small gold-stamped florets.

FOLIO 28.6 × 28 cm

This magnificent copy of the Qur'an is a superb example of manuscript production from the western Islamic lands and a

rare survival, with a colophon informing us of the patron and date of production. It is notable for its large size, its exquisite and abundant illumination, its remarkably good state of preservation and its original leather binding.

The individual who commissioned this Qur'an is described in the colophon (see overleaf, page 74) in the fullest and most respectful terms. The wording is as follows:

"Kumila al-mushaf al-mubarak al-musbih li'l-talib al-nabih al-nabil al-arfa' al-abqa al-azhar al-asma Abi Talib b. al-Shaykh al-arfa al-azhar al-'ala 'alam al-'ilm wa tur al-su'dud wa'l-hilm Abi Faris 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Sa'id b. Isma'il b. 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Sa'id al-Juhani wa dhalika fi'l-'ushr al-akhir min shahr Rabi' al-Awwal min 'am thamaniya 'ashr wa sab' mi'at wa sala Allah 'ala Sayyidna Muhammad.

"The blessed glorious manuscript was completed for the noble, the most exalted, the most steadfast, the brightest, the highest seeker, Abu Talib, son of the most exalted, the brightest, the highest, the luminary of knowledge, the pinnacle of power and understanding, Shaykh Abu Faris 'Abd al-'Aziz son of Sa'id son of Isma'il son of 'Abd al-'Aziz son of Sa'id al-Juhani and that was in the last tenth of the month of Rabi', the first of the year seven hundred and eighteen, and God's blessing on our Lord Muhammad."

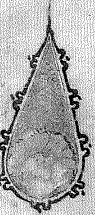
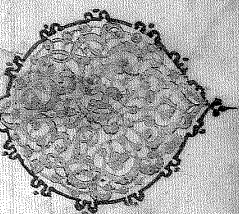
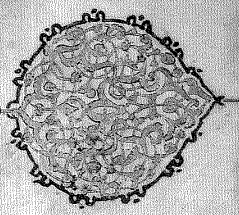
The wording and information in the colophon tell us a good deal about the patron. His family name was al-Juhani. This was the name of an Arab tribe that had been prominent in Iraq and Syria during Umayyad times; some of them no doubt emigrated west with the remnant Umayyad dynasty in 750 CE. The colophon lists six generations of the family, which, with an average of around twenty-five years per generation, takes us back to the last quarter of the twelfth century. We cannot identify for certain who our patron was, but there was a *qadi* of Marrakesh called Abu Faris 'Abd al-'Aziz in the late thirteenth century who might well have been the father of our patron. This would account for the very laudatory terms used to describe our patron and his father. Furthermore, the terms indicate a respect and eminence more in the religious or legal line than in the political, military or dynastic context, and this, too, would fit with a family of religious *shaykhs* and *qadis*. If our patron was the son of the Qadi of Marrakesh, then he very probably would

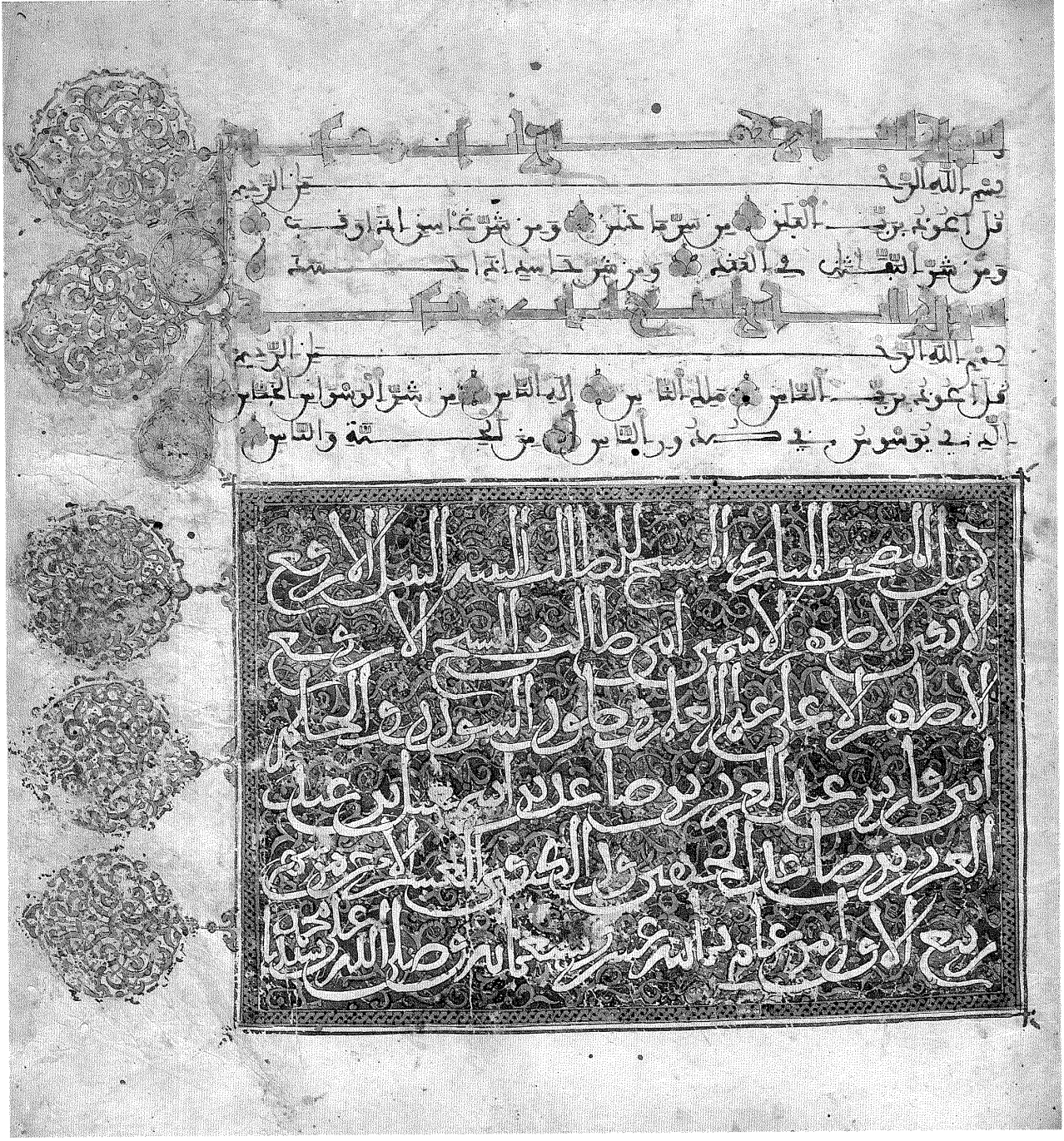
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
 اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَكَ الَّذِي نَحْمَدُكَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَصِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّلَالَةَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ لَهُ الْحَمْدُ كَمَا لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ
 اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ لَهُ الْحَمْدُ كَمَا لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ
 اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ لَهُ الْحَمْدُ كَمَا لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ





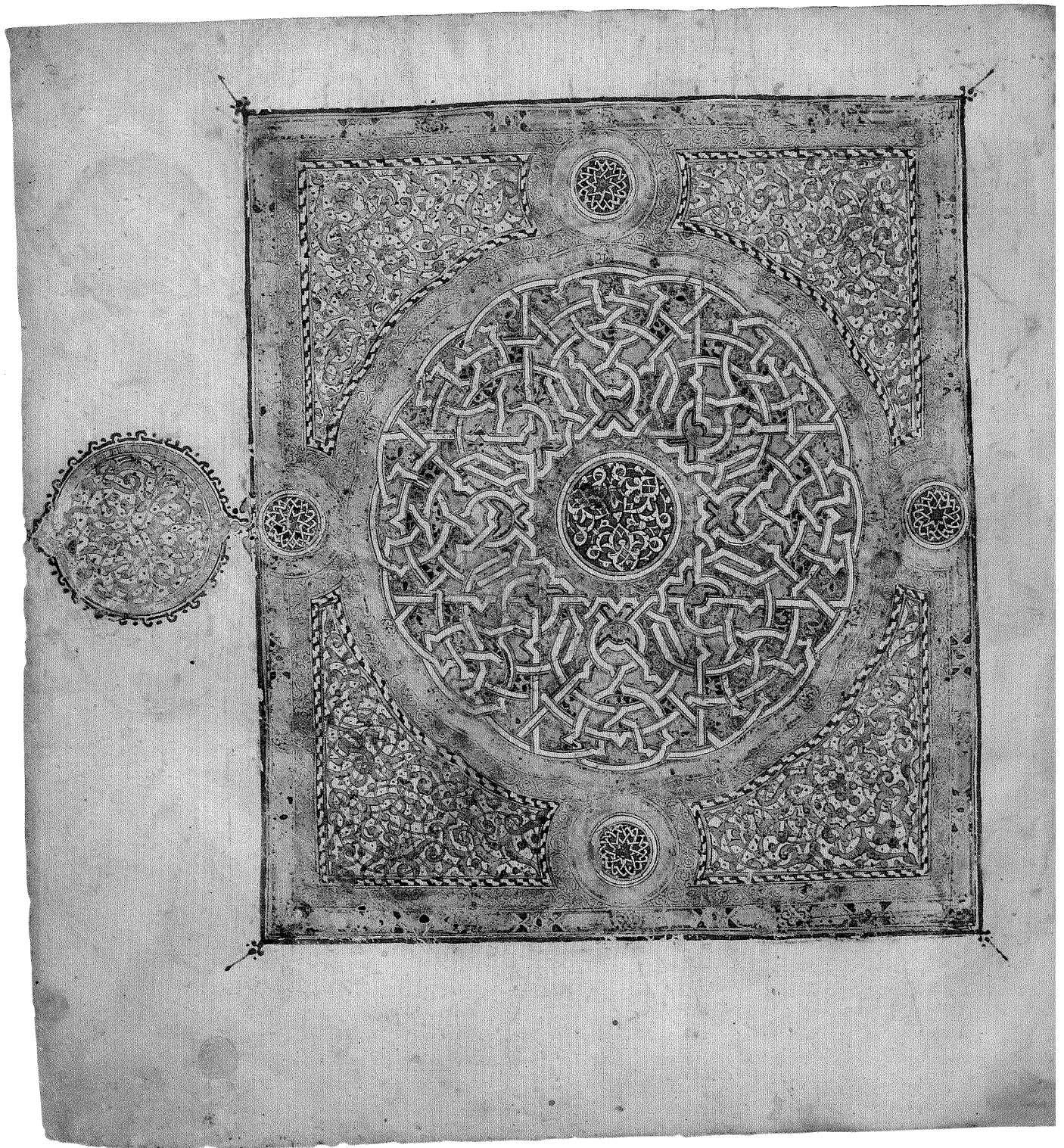
have followed him into the world of religious or legal orders, whether he remained in Marrakesh or moved to Fez or any other of the major Marinid cities, where this codex was probably copied and illuminated. However, without an absolutely positive identification of the patron we cannot discount the possibility that he was based at the Nasrid court of Granada and that the codex was produced there, even though stylistic evidence also points more towards Marinid Morocco than Nasrid Granada (see below).

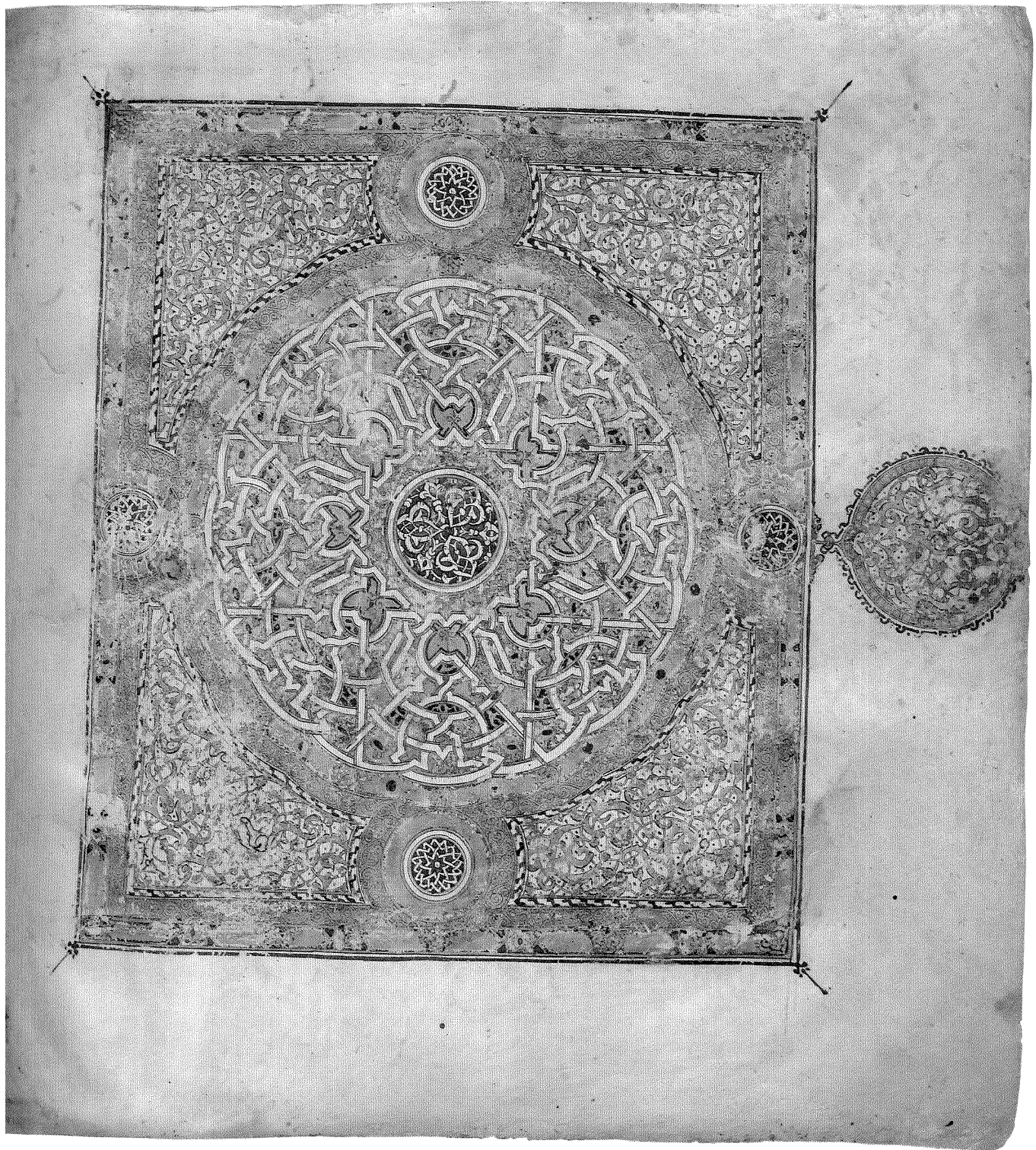
The main script of this manuscript is of medium size in relation to the scale of the manuscript, and the nib of the stylus must have been a rather pointed one as the script has a relatively thin and wiry appearance. There appear to have been three principal types of 'Maghribi' script used on Qur'ans in the Muslim west. The classic 'Maghribi' script is a large-scale, emphatically looped script applied with a wide nib and often used with only five or seven lines per page; it can be seen for instance in cat. 17 and 18. Secondly there is the very small, rather neat script applied with a thin, pointed nib that is often known as 'Andalusi' script and is associated with several small format Qur'an manuscripts made at Valencia in the late twelfth century.¹ Thirdly there is a medium-scale script applied with a relatively thin nib that is somewhere between the first two in style, spacing and proportion. The script of the present Qur'an is a good example of this third type, which was also used in another Qur'an of remarkably similar size, illumination and orthographics.² In the past scripts from the Muslim west have been given names based on their possible geographical origins – 'Andalusi' for the very small, neat script and 'Maghribi' (meaning north-west Africa as opposed to the Iberian peninsula) for the large, looping script – but there are no firm grounds for this convention, save perhaps that the majority of manuscripts which have colophons locating their production in Islamic Iberia are in the small neat script, particularly the group made in the scriptorium at Valencia between 1156 and 1200. However, these codices are all of a small, single-volume format that would anyway have required the use of a small neat script with tightly spaced lines in order to fit the whole text of the Qur'an into a single volume. Certainly both scripts were used in both regions during the whole period of the eleventh to fourteenth centuries.³ Furthermore, medieval non-Qur'anic religious manuscripts such as Malik b. Anas's *Kitab al-Muwatta* and secular texts from the Muslim west were very often copied in a small, neat so-called 'Andalusi'-style script wherever they were produced, and there are numerous extant

examples from both Morocco and Iberia, and further east as far as Boujje (Bijaya) in Algeria.⁴ Indeed the presence all over the Muslim west of both styles of script is not surprising, since both Morocco and southern Iberia were ruled by the same dynasties during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries and scribes certainly moved around the different regions taking styles and influences with them. Furthermore, with the gradual re-conquest of Iberia by the Christian kingdoms, many Islamic scribes emigrated to North Africa. Again, the two main styles of script cannot be classified by period or dynasty, since both scripts were used from the eleventh century onwards, and continued to be used through to the modern era in Morocco and Algeria.

It seems likely that the type and scale of the different 'Maghribi' scripts had more to do with function than with region, dynasty or period. The majority of manuscripts in small 'Andalusi' scripts are of a small square format, typically measuring between 15 and 20 cm in height and breadth. They are all single-volume codices. It seems likely that they would have been designed for personal use, perhaps as portable Qur'ans for travelling. The larger looped scripts are predominantly written in five or seven lines per page, and the manuscripts in which they are found are therefore usually multi-volume codices, even though the dimensions of each folio are often not very much larger than the so-called Andalusi format. But their multi-volume format would have made them bulky and difficult to transport, and they are more likely to have been produced for mosques, *madrāsas* and palace libraries – institutions where they could stay permanently and would not need to be moved far or often, and perhaps where the need to read the text aloud from a clear and well-spaced text was of greater importance.

The different functions of these Qur'ans may also account for the survival rates of the manuscripts themselves. When the Christians re-conquered southern Iberia between the twelfth and fifteenth century they are known to have destroyed Islamic manuscripts, and particularly Qur'ans, in a shockingly vandalistic way. Legend has it that when Granada finally fell in 1492 the Christian commander ordered that all copies of the Qur'an be burnt. Because the Christians soldiers could not read the language, they assumed that every manuscript in Arabic was a Qur'an, and apparently countless Islamic manuscripts were burnt in the town square in one night. Add to this the biblioclasm that often accompanied the change of Muslim dynasties, especially if the new dynasty did not quite agree with the theological approach of the previous one,⁵ and the local





squabbles between princedoms, and the scope for destruction was enormous. In this context, multi-volume Qur'ans that were housed in institutions – mosques, *madrasas* etc. – would have been difficult to carry away and were more likely to have been left to the marauding forces to be looted and destroyed. Thus, today, we find numerous fragments, single sections (*ajza'*) and single folios surviving from multi-volume Qur'ans written in the large, looped 'Maghribi' script, but very few complete multi-volume sets. In contrast, the personal, portable manuscripts in small, 'Andalusi' script would have been easier to carry away and more likely to have been saved, and in the circumstances of warfare and looting it is more likely that someone would take their own possessions with them before thinking of the contents of the mosque library or *madrasa*. Thus, today, we find about twenty to thirty, if not more, surviving complete single volume Qur'ans in this small script.

The script on the present Qur'an lies somewhere between the two described above, but the size of the codex itself is larger than that of most other Qur'ans from this region. However, it is a single-volume codex. The commissioning inscription at the end indicates that its original function was for private use, but its size and bulk would probably preclude it from having been a travelling copy for portable use.

In many ways the most striking aspect of the present Qur'an is its illumination. It is remarkable for the quantity of illuminations, the size of the panels and devices, the intricacy of the detail and the variety of designs. The designs of the individual illuminated devices are typical of Western Islamic illumination in general, and comparable examples are found on manuscripts from the twelfth to the fourteenth century. This reflects the conservative nature of manuscript production in the Maghrib, especially of Qur'ans. The use of parchment as the main material for Qur'anic manuscripts in Morocco and Islamic Iberia as late as the fourteenth century is another indication of this phenomenon.

The marginal devices are predominantly roundels or foliate 'winged' roundels. These latter devices mark the text every five verses and echo the smaller *ha*-shaped devices used within the lines of text to indicate fifth verse divisions, which in turn represent the *abjad* value 5. The roundels mark the text every ten verses and echo the similar smaller devices used within the lines of text to mark the tenth verse divisions. These devices are typical of many Qur'an manuscripts from the Maghrib and Islamic Iberia. However, there are other more distinctive forms within the

illumination that can be usefully compared with other manuscripts and also with works of art in other media.

The *sura* headings are written in ornamental Kufic script in gold, the letters edged in red. Each one has an illuminated medallion filled with gold foliate interlace placed adjacent in the margin. At first glance the internal designs of these medallions appear the same, but a closer inspection reveals many subtle variations on the theme of foliate interlace, with scarcely any single design repeated in exactly the same form (see Table 6).

There are several types of marginal device marking the *sajda* points (points for prostration). These are of a wide variety, but are principally of a triangular design augmented with circles and knots, or of a teardrop-shaped design with a roundel as a base and a cone-shaped upper part. In both cases they contain the word *sajda* in red or gold lettering. Occasionally a *sajda* point coincides with a *hizb* division or a tenth verse mark, in which case the device is generally more elaborate and contains all the relevant words in red or gold (see Table 7).

Further textual divisions are also marked in the margins: the *hizb/juz'* divisions are indicated with two types of medallion. One has a design based on three eccentric circles with a central gold roundel bearing the word (e.g.) *hizb* in red lettering. The outermost of the circles is filled with a radiating band of scalloped waves.

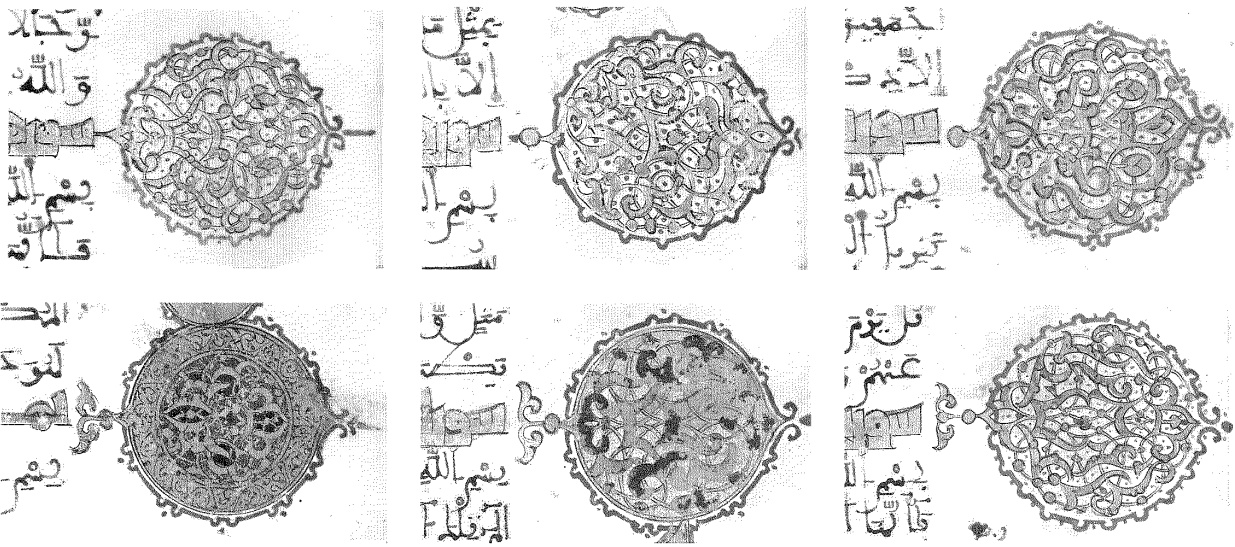
The second type consists of geometric roundels containing the word *hizb* or *juz'* in gold ornamental Kufic script on a ground of blue and white interlace. These devices are more distinctive and compare very closely with verse division medallions in a very large codex of the Qur'an in 'Maghribi' script in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul.⁶ This manuscript has no colophon or documentary information, but has been attributed to both Nasrid Granada and Marinid Morocco. The internal geometric designs of both manuscripts are worth illustrating to show their similarity (see Table 8).

The opening double page of illumination in cat. 21 has large square panels with central lobed roundels containing geometric interlace surrounded by gold inner border-bands and four spandrels of vegetal interlace in gold. A palmette medallion of similar interlace extends into the margin from each outer border. The popularity and longevity of this general design in the Muslim west can be seen by comparing the present example to an illuminated page in a Qur'an manuscript written at Valencia in 578 AH/1182 CE,⁷ and to a Spanish binding of the fifteenth century (see figs. 6 and 7).⁸

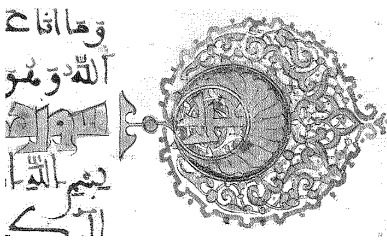
The geometric design within the lobed circle contains an eight-pointed star. This form was quite common and appears in various media over several centuries, including the rib structure of two Marrakesh buildings, the Qubbat Baruddiyin of 1120 and the Kutubiyya Mosque of 1162, and the monumental Andalusian textile known as the Las Navas de Tolosa Banner, of the first half of the thirteenth century.⁹ The design of the banner is particularly close to that of the present illumination, since the eight-pointed star is contained within a circle, the circle within a square, and both have four corner spandrels (see detail and fig. 8).

The illumination of the final folios of cat. 21 compares quite closely to that of a Qur'an copied in 703 AH/1303 CE, which has been loosely attributed to Nasrid Andalusia, but on no firm grounds (see detail and fig. 9).¹⁰

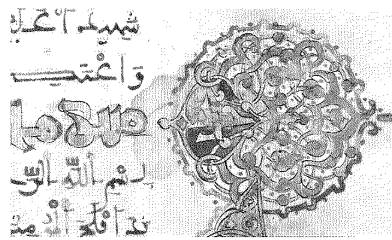
In relation to more specific forms within the illumination, there are three royal Qur'ans copied in Fez in the first half of the fourteenth century which are stylistically comparable to the present work. One was copied in 1306,¹¹ one in 1344,¹² and one in 1348-58.¹³ All of them show stylistic similarities with cat. 21, but only the 1344 manuscript is published in any detail. It was apparently



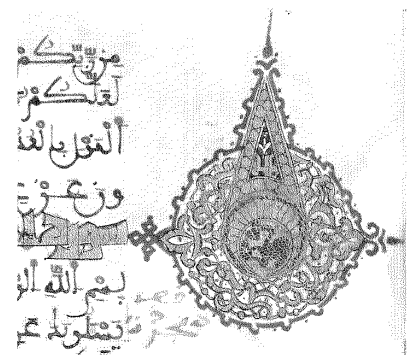
I-VI: *Sura* heading medallions



VII: A *sura* heading medallion coinciding with a *hizb* division



VIII: A *sura* heading medallion coinciding with a *hizb* division



IX: A *sura* heading medallion coinciding with a *sajda* point

TABLE 6: *Sura* heading medallions in cat. 21

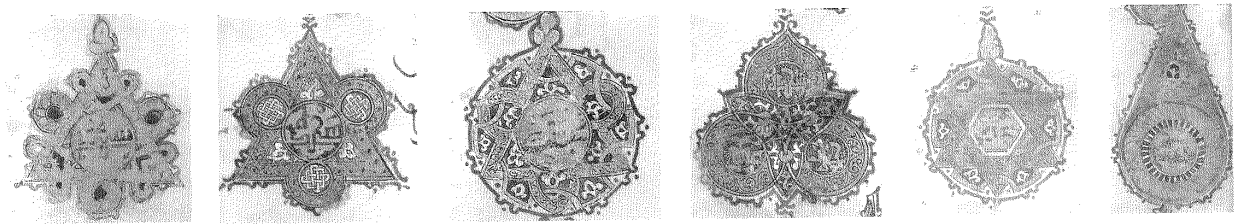


TABLE 7: *Sajda* point markers in cat. 21

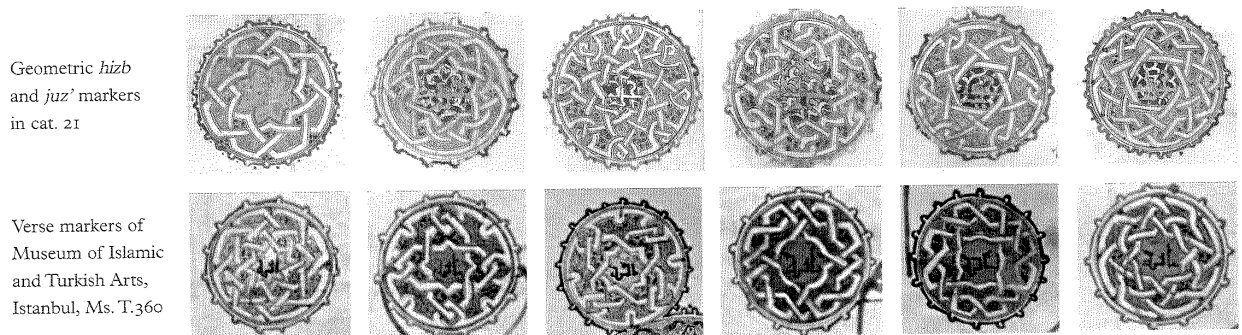


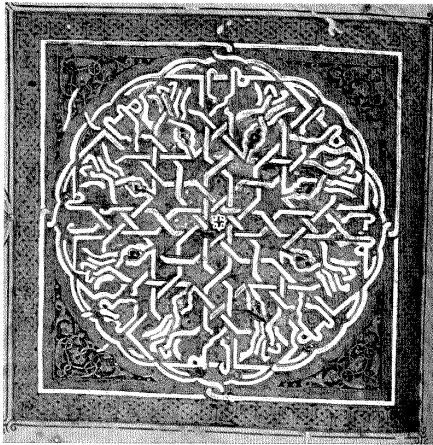
TABLE 8: Medallions in cat. 21 compared to those of a Qur'an in Istanbul

copied by the Marinid Sultan 'Ali b. 'Uthman II (r. 1331-48) himself, who sent it as a pious gift to the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem. At 21.5 × 19.5 cm it is somewhat smaller than the present codex (which is perhaps surprising, considering it was a royal production for a *waqf* of the highest importance), but it does contain several decorative elements that compare rather closely to the present examples (see Table 9).

There is a propensity to assign sophisticated western Islamic manuscripts of the later medieval period to Granada, because it is associated popularly with Moorish romance and the swansong of a glamorous civilization. The survival of the great palace of the Alhambra and the romantic place in more recent European literary and cultural history that it has assumed further enhances this mystique. However, Morocco, and especially Fez during the Marinid dynasty, was equally a place of great wealth and sophistication. The Marinid dynasty was extremely rich, thanks chiefly to the fine wool that it exported to Europe,¹⁴ but it also traded luxury African goods to Europe, including salt, ivory, ostrich feathers, incense and other perfumes, pepper, ambergris and, significantly, large amounts of gold in ingot and powder form. As well as a wealthy and cultured royal family, there was a large aristocracy of political, religious and military families, which was sophisticated and fond of luxury, but also devout and very keen on artistic and architectural

patronage, especially in a religious context. During the early fourteenth century numerous mosques, *madrasas* and libraries were endowed in Fez, not just by the Sultan, but by wealthy aristocrats and merchants.¹⁵ "The material prosperity of the Marinid state and the image that it adopted at this time, as champion of Maghribi Islam, explains the large number of pious donations (*waqf*) made by members of the dynasty to the benefit of public institutions in their own towns and in captured towns, as well as those of the holy cities of the East."¹⁶ Marinid Fez itself was a "metropolis of humanities, sciences and arts",¹⁷ and within this context scriptoria and libraries flourished, as did the crafts and tradesmen associated with such activity. Even in the eleventh century Fez had 104 paper factories. By the thirteenth century that figure had increased to over 400.¹⁸

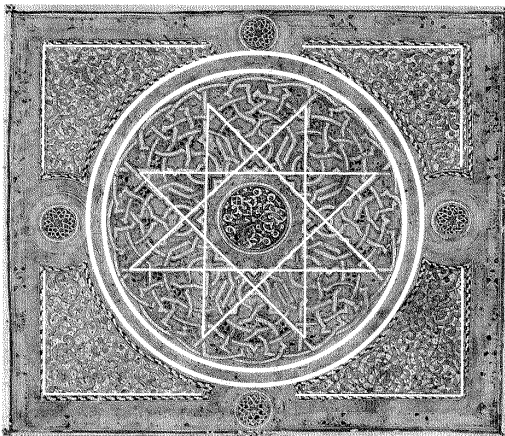
The underestimated sophistication and artistic patronage of the Marinid rulers and aristocracy provides an appropriate context for the production of a luxury copy of the Qur'an like cat. 21. It may also lead us in time to attribute a larger number of late medieval luxury 'Maghribi' manuscripts to Marinid Morocco rather than to Nasrid Granada, which, despite the cultured milieu of Granada itself, was a kingdom in general decline, surrounded by hostile and aggressive Christian neighbours, and often at odds even with its Muslim brethren in Morocco.



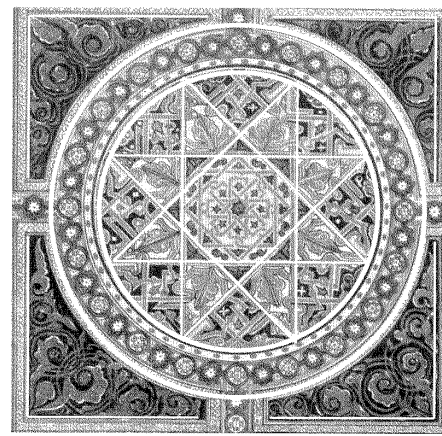
FAR LEFT
 Fig. 6 Illuminated page
 from a Qur'an written at
 Valencia in 1182 CE
 (Istanbul University
 Library, Ms. A.6754)



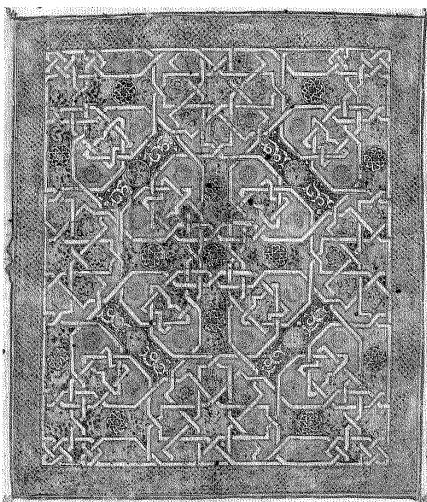
LEFT
 Fig. 7 Central panel of a
 leather bookbinding,
 Spain, 15th century
 (Museum of Art and
 Archaeology, Barcelona)



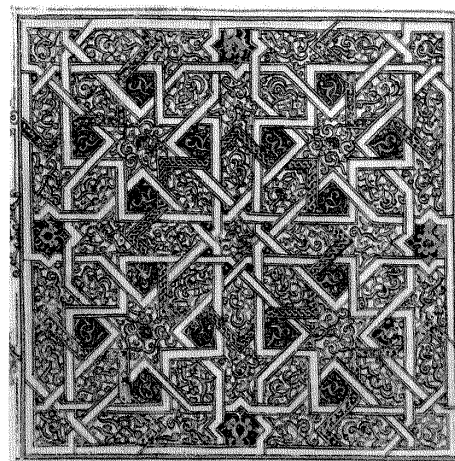
FAR LEFT
 Detail of
 opening
 illumination of cat. 21,
 with diagram of
 geometry



LEFT
 Fig. 8 Central panel of
 the Las Navas de Tolosa
 Banner, c. 1200-50, with
 diagram of geometry



FAR LEFT
 Finispiece of cat. 21



LEFT
 Fig. 9 Finispiece of
 manuscript dated 1303
 (Bibliothèque
 nationale, Paris,
 Ms. or. arabe 385)

Cat. 21 was certainly in Morocco in the post-mediaeval period, for several ownership inscriptions list births and deaths of members of the Sa'did and 'Alawi families. The earliest is dated 13 Rajab 1006 AH/23 March 1598 CE and records the birth of a certain 'Ubayd b. 'Abd al-Salam in the palace of Rabat. At that time Rabat was under the control of the Sa'dids, although it was a time of great unrest, with three brothers, Zaydan, 'Abdallah and Muhammad, all vying for power. The next inscription is over a century later, dating to the early 'Alawi dynasty, and mentions the name 'Abd al-Wahid and the date 27 Muharram 1110 AH/7 August 1698 CE. The next mentions no names but the date 28 Rajab

1112 AH/10 January 1701 CE. The next mentions the names 'Abd al-Wahid ibn Muhammad and Sultan Isma'il (r. 1682-1727) and the date 23 Rajab 1139 AH/18 March 1727 CE. This inscription no doubt refers either to the Sultan himself, who died in the year the inscription was written, or possibly to one of his sons (this part of the inscription is illegible). The final inscription mentions perhaps another son of Sultan Isma'il, who, we are told, died in Rajab or Sha'ban 1141 AH/ February-March 1729 CE. MF

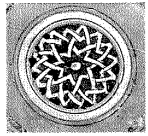
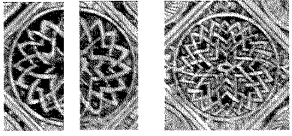
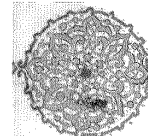
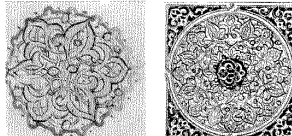
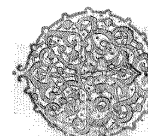
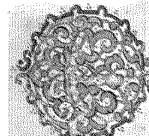
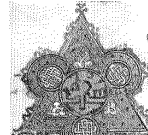
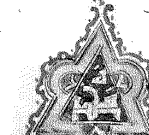
Cat. 21	Haram al-Sharif Islamic Museum, Jerusalem, no. 3
	
Medallion within the opening illumination	Medallions in the opening illumination
	
Symmetrical radiating sura heading medallion	Symmetrical radiating medallions
	
Sura heading medallion	Opening marginal medallion
	
Sajda marker	Sajda marker

TABLE 9: Medallions in cat. 21 compared with those of a royal Qur'an copied at Fez in 1344 CE

- 1 See, for instance, New York 1992, no. 76, p. 306, or James 1992a, no. 20, pp. 92-93.
- 2 See Sotheby's, London, 26 April 1995, lot 20.
- 3 Two manuscripts from Andalusia in the large looping script are a copy of the *Shihab al-Akhar* in the Royal Library, Rabat, Ms.1810, copied at Valencia in 568 AH/1172 CE, exactly the period when the group of small format Valencian Qur'ans was being produced (see New York 1992, no. 77, p. 307); and a single *juz'* of the Qur'an copied at Valencia in 602-30 AH/1205-32 CE, see Sotheby's, London, 13 October 2004, lot 5. Three manuscripts from Morocco in the small 'Andalusi' script are two Qur'ans copied at Marrakesh, one in 599 AH/1202 CE and one in 635 AH/1238 CE, and one copied in Ceuta in 587 AH/1191 CE; see James 1992a, p. 89.
- 4 The Moroccan and Iberian examples are too numerous to list, but there are many of Iberian provenance in the Escorial Library and many of Moroccan provenance in the Royal Library, Rabat. For the Boujje manuscript see Quaritch 1999, pp. 36-37.
- 5 As was the case with the Almohads and the Almoravids.
- 6 Ms. T.360. Single folios of this manuscript are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund 1942 (42.63), and the Cleveland Museum of Art. This is by far the largest and most grandiose Maghribi Qur'an to have survived. Its leaves measure 53 x 60 cm. For the Marinid attribution see New York 1987, no. 40, p. 57; for the Nasrid attribution see New York 1992, no. 83, p. 314.
- 7 Istanbul University Library, inv. no. A.6754.
- 8 Museo d'Art i d'Arqueologia, Barcelona.
- 9 See New York 1992, no. 92, p. 326.
- 10 Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, or. arabe 385; see Paris 2001, no. 62, pp. 94-95, and Lings 1976, no. 105.
- 11 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Arab. 2.
- 12 Haram al-Sharif Islamic Museum, Jerusalem, inv. no.3; see Khader 2001, pp. 66-83.
- 13 Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, or. arabe 423; see Paris 2001, no. 63, p. 96.
- 14 The name 'Merino' wool comes from Marinid dynasty, whose farmers and wool merchants developed this type of fine wool from their sheep and introduced it to Italy and other European nations.
- 15 For instance, the 'Attarin Madrasa, 1310-31, the Mashabiya Madrasa, 1346, and the Qarawwiyn Library, 1350.
- 16 *Etz*, art. 'Marinids'.
- 17 *Mezzine* 2002, p. 91.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 108.



و موسی و هرون واسمه در بر عرش جنات بعد در کل زمین دعا الله عزوجل و لذا او پروردگار من است

عَاقِرًا وَهَبَ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَبَنَاتًا يَرْتَضِي وَ

و نازاینده است پس به من از نوزاد خویش فرزندی صالح که نماز نظر در کند و از من پسندید برده است

يَرْثُ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ وَاجْعَلْهُ رَبِّي رَضِيًّا

و نبوت را و از آل یعقوب میراث بده علم و نبوت و بخت او را ای پروردگار من مستند به دعای دین تو و صلاح

يَا زَكَرِيَّا إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ اسْمُهُ يَسَّى لَمْ

ایجاب کند خدای تعالی دعا را و در وقت ای زکریا ما بشارت می دهیم ترا بفرزندی که نام او یسعی است

يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ اسْمِيآءَ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي كُنتُ

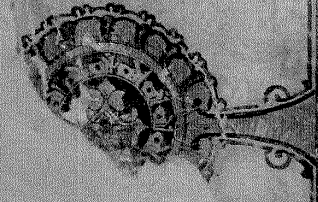
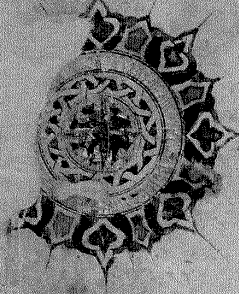
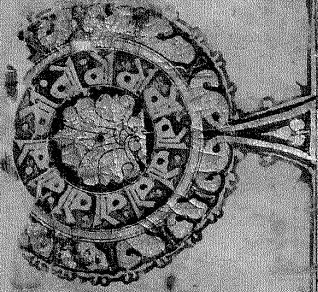
مفکریم ما پیش ازین او را هم نام یعنی پیش ازین هیچ ادوی را تعیین نکرده بودم

إِنِّي كُنتُ مِنَ الْغُلَامِ وَكَانَتْ أُمُّهُ عَاقِرًا وَوَقَدْ بَلَغَتْ

مردا بر من که بودم زان من عیقم و نازاینده در رسیدن من

مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتْيًا قَالَ كُنَّا لَكَ قَالِ

در بزرگی تعجب است و سخت بیرونده گفت خدای که این کار چنین است که ترا گویم که بپیری ترا فرزندم



22 Large illuminated Qur'an in *naskh* script

Eastern Iran
About 1200

Arabic manuscript on buff paper, 337 folios. Eleven lines of black *naskh* per page, intermittent recitation marks in red, accompanied by a Persian interlinear translation in small black *naskh*. Individual verses marked by a gold rosette, pointed in red and green. Fifth verse divisions are marked within the text by a gold teardrop motif, pointed in red and green, and in the margin by a large upright 'palmette-trees', illuminated with gold and red, a green dot in the middle, and outlined in blue. Tenth verse divisions are marked in the margin by a large medallion, gold and polychrome, flecked and pointed around its circumference, and containing an inscription in gold Kufic relating to the number of verses passed. Fifth and tenth verses also marked in the margins with red letters, *kha* and 'ayn respectively. *Juz'* and *sub'* divisions are marked in large silver Kufic in the margins. There are other marginal annotations in red and silver throughout. The edges of some pages are neatly restored. *Sura* headings are in gold Kufic. Mid-point of the Qur'an is marked by unusual bifolium, illuminated predominantly in red and gold, with six lines of *naskh* within a knotwork frame, with panels above and below containing the *sura* heading in white Eastern Kufic on a ground of red and blue, decorated with gold and white arabesques. Three large medallions, gold and polychrome, protrude from the frame into the outer margin of each folio, the central one unattached. Incomplete at beginning and end, with traces of fire damage, in a modern green leather binding, filleted and with four gold corner motifs on the central field.

FOLIO 39.5 × 40 cm

This imposing Qur'an, remarkable for being almost complete and for the unusual style of its illuminated central bifolium, belongs to a small group of manuscripts copied in Eastern Iran in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Like the other manuscripts in this group, it marks a point of transition between the Qur'ans copied in Eastern Kufic in the eleventh and twelfth century and those in the *khutut al-yabisah* or 'dry' scripts, i.e. *naskh*, *muhaqqaq* and *rayhani*, which by the end of the thirteenth century dominated Qur'an production in the eastern Islamic lands.¹ The angular *naskh* script, dark buff paper, marginal and intertextual devices and dimensions all bear close comparison to those of a Qur'an copied in 1270 CE and attributed by David James to Eastern Iran or North India.² In this manuscript James

notes the angular, archaic form of the letter *kaf*, which harks back to Eastern Kufic script. The same feature is found in the present manuscript, along with other features of Eastern Kufic Qur'ans, such as the *sura* headings, which consist only of the title in gold Eastern Kufic script, and are unmarked by any device in the margin. The distinctive 'palmette-trees' found both in this manuscript and the 1270 Qur'an, as well as the more usual medallions with projecting finials marking every tenth verse and the teardrop-shaped fifth verse markers, are also features found in Eastern Kufic Qur'ans from eastern Iran. The presence of these features in the present manuscript confirms David James's observation that the move from Eastern Kufic to *naskh* Qur'ans was a gradual transition.³

The richly illuminated bifolium that marks the mid-point of the text, however, is strikingly different from contemporary surviving examples. Though the overall symmetrical design, consisting of illuminated panels above and below the framed text block, is not unusual in Qur'ans of this period, the loose knotwork forming geometric patterns that fills the text frame and the square corner pieces in the bottom panels is quite distinctive. Another feature that sets the illumination apart is the repetition of the word 'Allah' in small white Eastern Kufic to fill the borders of the cartouches of the upper panels as well as the inner rings of the medallions projecting into the margins.

The interlinear Persian translation, the imposing size, as well as the marginal commentary on Qur'anic recitation (*qira'a*), suggest that the Qur'an may have been for institutional rather than personal use. WK

- 1 For a discussion of eastern Islamic Qur'ans from this period, see James 1992a, pp. 22-23.
- 2 Khalili Collection, inv. no. QUR628; see *ibid.*, no. 18, pp. 82-85.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

23 Monumental Qur'an in *naskh* script

Iran

About 1200-50

Arabic manuscript on cream paper, 255 folios. Fifteen lines of strong black *naskh*, vocalization in black, recitation marks in red. *Sura* headings in thick gold *thulth*, outlined and vocalized in black or red. Individual verses marked with gold rosettes pointed in blue and red. Tenth verse divisions marked with marginal medallions, with gold geometric or palmette device on red or coppery gold ground within gold and blue concentric circles. Tenth and fifth verse divisions marked in the margin with red *'ayn* and *kha* respectively. *Sajda* (prostration) points marked in margins with word *'sajda'* in gold *thulth*. Illuminated opening page consisting of gold panel filled with interlocking circles and semi-circles filled with gold quatrefoils, foliate scrolls and knotwork stars on blue and coppery-gold ground. Illuminated double-page frontispiece containing *Sura 1 (Al-Fatiha)* and beginning of *Sura 2 (Al-Baqara)*. Text on ground of pink hatching with interlinear blue-shaded trefoil devices, framed above and below by rectangular panels of interlocking circles and gold knotwork. On final folio (f. 255v) Qur'anic text is followed by illuminated panel containing phrase *Sadaqa Allah al-'Azim* ('God the Almighty has spoken') in white *thulth* contained in a gold 'cloud' cartouche on a coppery gold ground. Some staining and damage to edges, some of the tenth verse markers eroded due to verdigris corrosion. In a modern Mamluk-style brown morocco binding with gold interlocking circles on outside covers and flap.

FOLIO 47 × 32 cm

This impressive Qur'an draws on a variety of decorative motifs found in Iranian Qur'ans from the eleventh to thirteenth century and represents the culmination of a tradition of Qur'an production that was to undergo radical changes during the Ilkhanid period. Among the most significant of these changes was the rise of *muhaqqaq* as the script for large-scale Qur'ans. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries *naskh* was restricted to small-scale copies, though its pre-eminence as the Qur'anic script for copies of all dimensions was once again established in the sixteenth century.

The most striking feature of the present manuscript is the lavish illumination, dominated by a design consisting of large interlocking circles and semi-circles. The design derives from models most frequently associated with eleventh- and twelfth-century Eastern Kufic Qur'ans, but is also encountered on a variety of thirteenth-century manuscripts.¹ Interestingly, either a work-in-progress sketch of the design or the attempt of a later artist to replicate was made at the top of f. 3r.

Also typical of pre-Ilkhanid illumination are the dense foliate scrolls on grounds of deep blue and coppery gold, the large rectangular cornerpieces of loose gold strapwork, and the rigidly geometric format of the opening bifolium. The textual arrangement of the opening *suras*, with *Sura 2 (Al-Baqara)* beginning immediately after *Sura 1 (Al-Fatiha)* on f. 2v, was discontinued in the fourteenth century in favour of placing the two *suras* on facing pages. The use of pink cross-hatching in the text block of the opening bifolium is the only feature of the illumination that remained a staple of fourteenth-century Qur'an production, and its presence here corroborates the hypothesis that this Qur'an represents the very culmination of the pre-Ilkhanid tradition. WK

1 See the discussion of this style of illumination in connection with a Qur'an in *naskh* in Quaritch 1999, no. 10, pp. 19-20.

ذَاتْ هَبٍ وَإِمْرَانَهُ حَمَالَةَ الْحَطْبِ فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِنْ مَسَدٍ

سورة الاخلاص وهي اربع آيات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ لَمْ يَلِنْ لَهُ لَفُؤًا

سورة الفلق احد خمس آيات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ وَمِنْ

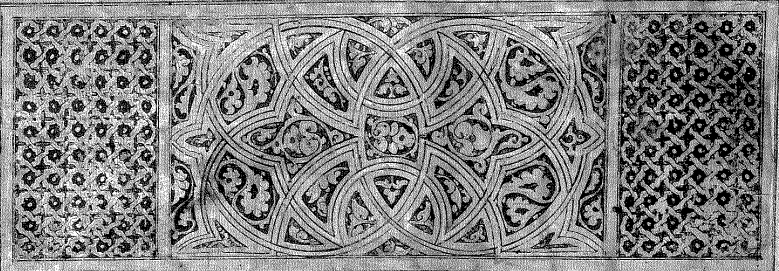
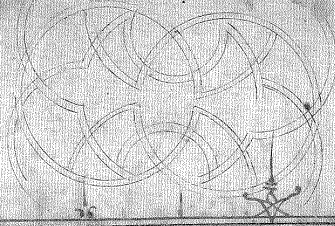
النَّاسِ شَرِّ الْنَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ ست آيات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

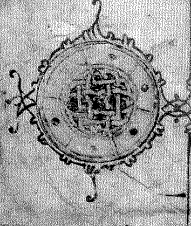
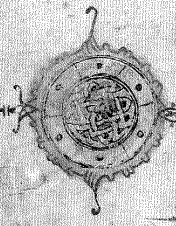
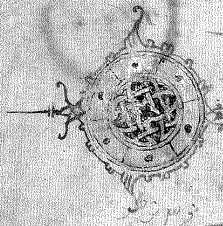
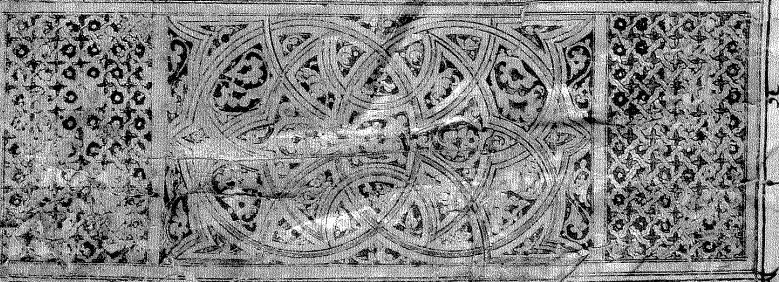
قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ

الْخَنَّاسِ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ مِنَ الْغَيْثِ وَالنَّاسِ

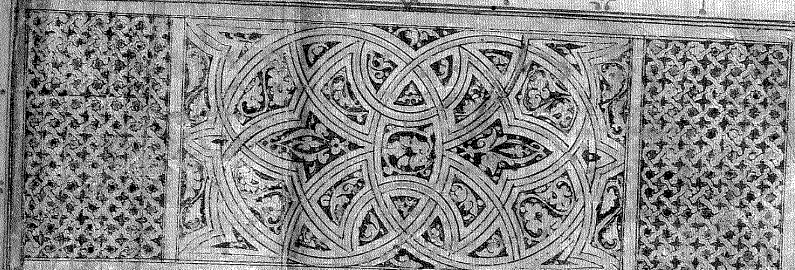




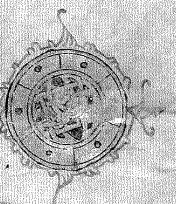
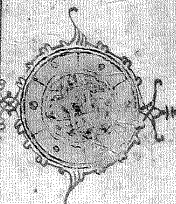
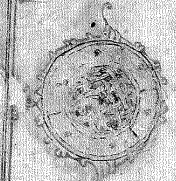
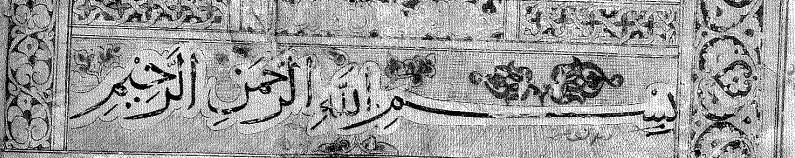
المزدك الكناز لا ريب فيه هدى للمتقين
 الذين يؤمنون بالغيب ويقيمون الصلاة وما
 آزرناه من يقفون والذين يؤمنون بما أنزل
 اليك وما أنزل من قبلك وبالآخرة هم يوقنون
 أولئك على هدى من ربهم وأولئك هم المفلحون
 إن الذين كفروا سوا عليهم أند لهم أنزل
 نزلهم لا يؤمنون ختم الله على قلوبهم وعلى



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الحمد لله رب العالمين
الذي هدانا لهذا
الذي كنا لنهتدي لولا
أن هدانا الله
لكن الله ذو الجلال والإكرام



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الحمد لله رب العالمين
الذي هدانا لهذا
الذي كنا لنهتدي لولا
أن هدانا الله
لكن الله ذو الجلال والإكرام



24 *Khabar Mawlana al-Qa'im*

Perhaps Alamut or Syria
Late 12th century

Arabic manuscript, a book of prayers, on paper with ten folios, each with ten lines of neat *naskh* script in brown ink on buff paper. The verses are divided by small gold rosette. There are three headings written in gold *thulth* script within rectangular panels decorated with scrolling foliate motifs and cloud bands in brown ink. The opening page has a gold panel containing the title written in white *thulth* script, below which is a panel containing a dated inscription and further documentary information (see below). The corners of the panel are decorated with split palmettes in brown and black ink.

FOLIO 17.5 × 13 cm

This manuscript contains a selection of prayers and *hadith*. It is one of a small group of three manuscripts, all of them containing Shi'i prayers and pious tracts. One of the other two is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the second is in a private collection.¹

The inscription on the opening page of the present manuscript records that it was read to a nobleman in the city of Ghazna in the month of Sha'ban in the year 602 AH/March 1206 CE. However, this note is in Persian, and in a different hand and a different ink from the main text, which is in Arabic. It does not necessarily locate the place of production as Ghazna, and since Ghazna and indeed all eastern Iran and Afghanistan was strongly Sunni under the muscular orthodoxy of the Ghurid dynasty and their Seljuk overlords, it is perhaps unlikely that a manuscript of strongly Shi'i prayers would be produced there.

What, therefore, are the likely origins of this manuscript? A clue is given in the illuminated headings at the beginning of the Metropolitan Museum volume mentioned above, which consist of the title and *basmallah* written in very fine Eastern Kufic script on a ground of gold scrolling floral motifs. Both the Eastern Kufic script and the scrolling decoration are distinctive, but very close in style to similar heading panels in the well-known illustrated copy of the *Kitab al-Diryaq* (Book of Antidotes) of Pseudo-Galen, produced in Mosul in the year 1199 CE, and now in the Bibliothèque nationale.² Given that the present manuscript

and its two sister volumes were produced under the influence of the Mosul school of about 1200, where might they have been produced? The two Shi'i centres closest to Mosul around the year 1200 were the Isma'ilis at Alamut in north-western Iran and the Nizari Isma'ilis in the mountains of Syria. This was an interesting period in Isma'ili history. In 1164 the Imam of Alamut, Hassan II 'Ala Dhikrihi'l-Salam, introduced the doctrine of *qiyama*,³ and after this proclamation he hinted that he was the Qa'im al-Qiyama. His son and successor Muhammad II (r. 1166-1210) placed the doctrine of Qiyama at the centre of his imamate and represented himself as the figure of the Imam al-Qa'im.⁴ Is it possible that the prayers in cat. 24 were associated with either Hassan II or Muhammad II? The title of cat. 24 – *Khabar Mawlana al-Qa'im* – does not appear in the listings of known Isma'ili texts, but the date of the manuscript (about 1200) fits very well into the chronology of the doctrine of qiyama and the figure of the Qa'im al-Qiyama at Alamut. It should be noted that the doctrine of qiyama was also declared by the Nizari Isma'ilis in Syria. Could this prayer book have been the product of one of these Isma'ili centres, echoing the artistic style of northern Iraq, but adapted to a much more petite and portable format? The portability of these prayer books would have suited the lifestyle of the Isma'ilis, being, as many were, peripatetic and often secretive in their proselytizing activity. Perhaps there was a scriptorium in either Alamut or Syria producing Shi'i texts specially for itinerant Isma'ili emissaries and agents, to be carried with them on their travels and missions.

But what was the manuscript doing in Ghazna in 1206? A possible explanation is to be found in the context of Isma'ili activity in Afghanistan and the Punjab at this period. During the late twelfth and early thirteenth century the Ghurid armies under Ghiyath al-Din Muahmmad (r. 1163-1203) had sacked the two Isma'ili strongholds at Multan and Quhistan, and in the early thirteenth century there was Isma'ili propagandizing and missionary activity in the mountainous regions between Ghazna and Lahore and down to the plains of north-west India around Multan. It is probable that this activity was organized by Isma'ili emissaries of the Imam of Alamut.⁵ Furthermore, the Sunni Ghurid Sultan Mu'izz al-Din was assassinated near the Indus on his way back from the Punjab in the year 1205, allegedly by an Isma'ili assassin – just a few months before the opening inscription in this manuscript was written.⁶ MF

1 The Metropolitan Museum manuscript is *Munajat Mawlana* of Ali b. Abu Talib; see Sotheby's, London, *Oriental Manuscripts and*



Miniatures, 26 April 1995, lot 54; the manuscript in a private collection is *Da'wat Qunut Mawalina al-A'imma*, see Sotheby's, London, *Arts of the Islamic World*, 3 May 2001, lot 27.

2 Ms. Arabe 2964; see Ettinghausen 1962, pp. 84-85; Paris 2001, pp. 112-13, 116-17, 130.

3 The term *qiyama* refers to resurrection on the Day of Judgement.

4 Daftary (1990, p. 565) describes *qiyama* and *Qa'im al-Qiyama* as follows: "The Nizaris of the Alamut period interpreted the *qiyama* spiritually as the manifestation of the unveiled truth in the spiritual reality of the current Imam, who was also called *Qa'im al-Qiyama*".

5 See *Elz*, art. 'Isma'iliyya', sub-section 'Nizariyya'.

6 See *Elz*, art. 'Ghurids', sub-section 'Ghurids as an imperial power'.

25 Illuminated folios from a large Ilkhanid Qur'an

Western Iran or Iraq

About 1275-1315

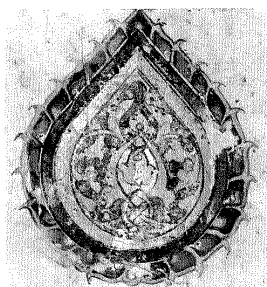
Sura 84 (*Al-Inshiqaq*), v. 10–Sura 86 (*Al-Tariq*), v. 17; Sura 89 (*Al-Fajr*), v. 14–Sura 90 (*Al-Balad*), v. 9

Three folios from an Arabic manuscript on paper with nine lines of *muhqaq* script per page written in black ink. The diacritics are marked in the same black ink. Single verse divisions are marked with gold rosettes. Fifth verse divisions are marked with large illuminated teardrop devices in the margins. Tenth verse divisions are marked in the margins with large illuminated medallions. The *sura* headings are written in gold *thulth* and *rayhani* scripts within elaborately illuminated rectangular panels.

FOLIO 48 × 35 cm

These large and grand folios are interesting survivals of what must have been an extremely fine and lavish manuscript of the Qur'an, made probably for a high-ranking courtier of the Ilkhanid dynasty at the end of the thirteenth or early in the fourteenth century. The illumination of the *sura* headings and the fifth and tenth verse markers, which is notable for its glowing colours and unusual motifs, relates closely to Ilkhanid illumination on court manuscripts of the period.

The earliest comparable manuscript is a copy of al-Jurjani's medical encyclopaedia, the *Kitab-i Zakhira-yi*



Detail of fifth verse marker of cat. 25

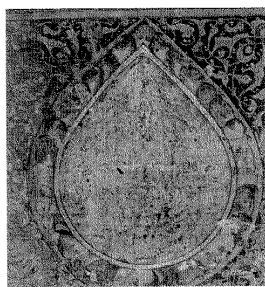


Fig. 10 Detail of the frontispiece of an Al-Jurjani manuscript dated 1273 (private collection)

Khwarazmshahi, dated 671 AH/1273 CE, in which the title page contains a large teardrop-shaped motif extremely similar in design to the fifth verse markers on the present fragment (see fig. 10).¹ The choice of a teardrop shape for the fifth verse markers of a Qur'an manuscript is not in itself unusual – the shape had been used for centuries to imitate Arabic letter *ha*, which has the numerical value 5 in the *abjad* system – but here the individual motifs are strikingly similar, particularly the lobed lotus-petal border.

The illuminated motifs of the *sura* heading panels of the present fragment are related to those of the *sura* heading palmettes on a copy of the Qur'an dated 702 AH/1303 CE written by the scribe al-Husayn bin Muhammad al-Husayni.²

One of the *sura* heading panels on the present fragment has a knotted trellis pattern of a type which has a distinctive chain-link design. The closest comparisons can be found on the illumination of a manuscript in the Bibliothèque nationale – a monumental copy of Rashid al-Din's *Kitab Jami' al-Tasanif al-Rashidi* (Collected Writings of Rashid al-Din), dated 707-10 AH/1307-10 CE and illuminated by Muhammad Ibn al-'Afif al-Kashi,³ and in the *shamsas* of both the Edinburgh and the London volumes of an illustrated *Jami' al-Tavarikh* (World History) of Rashid al-Din, dated 714 AH/1314-15 CE.⁴

Further comparisons to the illumination in the present fragment can be found on two royal Ilkhanid Qur'ans made for Sultan Oljeytu Khan between 1306 and 1313, one at Mosul and one at Baghdad.⁵

MF

1 Sotheby's, 14 October 1999, lot 21.

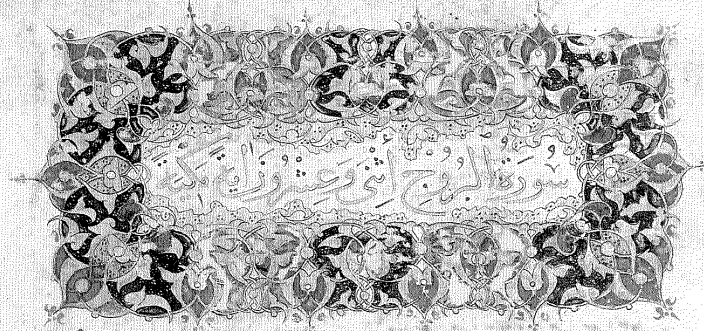
2 Sotheby's, 15 October 1998, lot 20.

3 Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Mss or. arabe 2324; see New York 2002, p. 56, fig. 54.

4 Edinburgh University Library, Ms. Arab 20; for this specific motif see f. 149r, illustrated in Talbot Rice 1976, p. 184; and Khalili Collection, London, Ms. 727; see Blair 1995, colour illustration f. 259a.

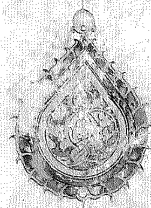
5 The Mosul Qur'an, originally bound in thirty volumes, is now dispersed between the Topkapi Sarayi Library, Istanbul, Ms. EH 232; Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, Mss. TIEM 539-41; Bayazit Library, Amasya, Ms. K1052; Suleymaniye Library Haji Selim Aga, Ms. K22; Shah Ni'matullah Library, Kirman; British Library, London, Or. 4945; Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Mss. 1613. See James 1988, no. 42, p. 108, fig. 72.

The Baghdad Qur'an, originally bound in thirty volumes, is now dispersed between the Topkapi Sarayi Library, Mss. EH 234, 243, 245; Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, Ms. TIEM 339; Royal Library, Copenhagen, inv. no. N7; Karl Marx University Library, Leipzig, inv. no. XXXVII KL; Dresden Library, Ms. 444. See James 1988, no. 40, p. 87, fig. 54.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ ۝ وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ ۝ وَشَاهِدٍ
وَمَشْهُودٍ ۝ قِيلَ أَصْحَابُ الْأُخْدُودِ ۝ النَّارِ ذَاتِ
الْوُقُودِ ۝ أَذْهَبَ عَلَيْهَا وَعُودٌ ۝ وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ
بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ ۝ وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ
الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ۝ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتِنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



26 Bifolium from a Qur'an in *muhaqqaq* script

Central Asia
About 1330-50
Sura 5 (*Al-Ma'ida*), vv. 27-29

Bifolium from Arabic manuscript on buff paper in three lines of large black *muhaqqaq* script. Persian interlinear translation in small black *naskh* script. Single verses marked in the text with gold rosettes pointed in red with a green centre. Outer margins filled with inscriptions from *hadith* in archaic red and white Kufic script on a ground of gold foliate scrolls and blue or green quatrefoil devices. Large medallions of gold, blue, red and black interlace in the top and bottom outer corners of the page.

FOLIO 28.8 × 18.5 cm

The Qur'an from which this bifolium originates has been attributed to locations as distant as Anatolia and India.¹ The most recent research, however, has pointed to Central Asia, of which the situation on the Eastern border of the Islamic world would account for the survival of certain archaic features.² These include the retention of the three-line format and the unusually narrow outsize *muhaqqaq* script, which is reminiscent of Iranian Qur'ans of the pre-Ilkhanid period.³ In this respect, the present Qur'an bears comparison to the Chinese Qur'ans of the Ming period that remained similarly isolated from developments in Qur'an production in Iran.⁴

The striking marginal illumination found on this bifolium was certainly added at a later date, as other leaves from the same manuscript bear examples of what was clearly, by contrast, the original illumination.⁵ The present bifolium and the other folios containing marginal inscriptions from prophetic *hadith* in archaizing red and white Kufic all come from the sixth *juz'* of the Qur'an. As this *juz'* was in an Iranian collection in the nineteenth century, it has been suggested that it was at this point that the illumination was added.⁶ The illumination is not at all typical of Qajar work, however, and it is possible that it was added at an earlier date.

The present bifolium is a flamboyant example of this manuscript's unusual script. The calligrapher's pleasure in playing with the form of the letters is seen to particular effect in the extension of the letter *ya* into the right margin and the gathering on top of one another of the curved bases of the letters of the final words in the lines on the left-hand page.

WK

1 James 1992a, p. 208; Losty 1982, p. 10.

2 Quaritch 1999, no. 11, p. 22.

3 *Ibid.*, and James 1992a, p. 208.

4 Stanley 1999, pp. 12-15.

5 See e.g. James 1988, no. 60, p. 171, fig. 120.

6 Quaritch 1999, p. 22.

وَفِيهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
 اِرْبَابًا تَبَوَّأَتْهُمُ
 تَعْلَمُ كَيْفَ يَنْصَرِفُونَ
 وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ
 بَيْتَاتِهِمْ
 اَصْحَابَ النَّارِ وَكَذَلِكَ
 لَسْمَاءُ لِلْاَوْثَرِ

وَفِيهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
 يَدِي إِلَى الْاِقْتِلَالِ
 جَسَدًا نَجِيًّا
 اِنْ اَخَافُ اللهَ
 سَبِيلَهُمْ
 رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
 بِرَبِّهِمْ
 وَفِيهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ



27 Illuminated Qur'an section in *muhaqqaq* script with extensive contemporary marginal commentary

Illumination attributable to Muhammad b. Mubadir
Mamluk, probably Cairo
About 1298-1310 CE

Arabic manuscript, thirty folios, seven lines per page written in bold *muhaqqaq* script in brown ink on finely burnished cream paper. *Basmallahs* written in gold throughout. Verse divisions marked within text area with illuminated roundels, fifth verse divisions marked with cone-shaped illuminated devices in gold and red in margin, tenth verse divisions marked with large illuminated roundels in gold and red in margin. *Sura* headings written in blue *thulth* script on elaborately illuminated rectangular panels with stylized palmettes extending into margins. Further illuminated devices in margins marking *juz'* and *hizb* divisions and *sajda* loci. Extensive marginal commentary consisting of *tafsir*, *qira'at* and *i'rab* written in *naskh* script in red, brown and blue ink arranged horizontally, diagonally and vertically with visible impressed guide rules. Ff. 28v and 29r with additional marginal illuminated panels surrounding text of Sura 114 (*al-Nas*) and closing prayer, f. 29r with illuminated border bands and a large square illuminated panel beneath the closing prayer, ff. 29r and 30v with textual description of marginal commentary surrounded by an illuminated band with roundels extending into the margin, f. 30b with a full-page illuminated panel with a roundel and cusped arms extending into the outer margin. Modern green morocco binding in Mamluk style.

FOLIO 47 × 33 cm

This is the final volume (*Juz' 30*) of an exceptional Mamluk Qur'an. Being the final section of the Qur'an, it contains the shortest *suras* and therefore the highest number of decorated headings of any section. These, in addition to the fully illuminated finispieces, demonstrate just how rich and artistically luxurious the manuscript as a whole must have been. Furthermore they afford us a considerable amount of stylistic evidence for the origin and date of production of this Qur'an. Careful analysis reveals the Qur'an to be a masterpiece of geometric planning and execution and a highly important work of early Mamluk art. The overall quality and invention of the illumination points to the work of a master artist, and several factors point more specifically to the work of Muhammad b. Mubadir, one of the leading

illuminators in Mamluk Cairo at the turn of the thirteenth to the fourteenth century.

An unusual and significant feature is the presence of an extensive contemporary commentary in the margins, which was undoubtedly included as part of the original scheme. It presents three different types of Qur'anic exegesis, relating to the meaning, reading and grammar of the Qur'an, and its presence was considered important enough within the general design of the manuscript to have been laid out with the same careful geometric and proportional principles underlying the whole production. The result is simultaneously complex and simple, powerful and refined, and deserves to be ranked alongside the greatest examples of early Mamluk manuscript production.

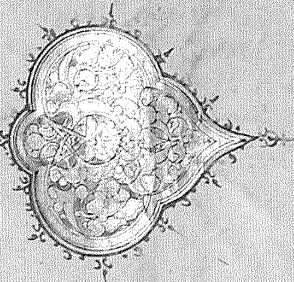
The presence of this commentary raises the question of the intended function of this copy of the Qur'an. On the whole copies of the Qur'an with commentaries written in them were used for teaching and were not particularly glamorous or expensive productions. Grand copies of the Qur'an such as this one, on the other hand, were very rarely provided with commentaries at the time of their production, although some had commentaries added in later decades or centuries. Here the commentary clearly preceded the illumination. Could the Qur'an have been commissioned by a powerful scholar for his own use, or perhaps for a renowned scholar by his wealthy patron, or even by a prince or sultan for a *madrasa* or other teaching establishment?

The manuscript displays significant and unusual qualities in every aspect of its design and illumination. Each of the three main parts of the design is meticulously planned with a sense of proportion and spatial harmony; the main text area is in strict proportion to the overall dimensions of the page; the marginal commentary is arranged in spatial relation to the main text area and to the overall dimensions of the page as well as according to its own internal geometric system; and the illumination is a *tour de force*, striking the eye with its interplay of geometry and vegetal motifs, balance of abstract and organic features, and sheer quality and richness of execution.

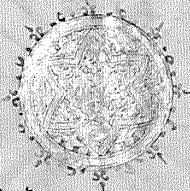
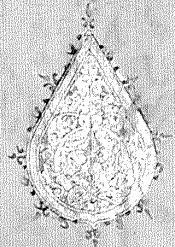
The various indications of the most likely date and place of origin for the Qur'an can be summed up as follows:

ثلاثون حرفا في الاعمى من ان جاء الاعمي في ان لم يكن مضمونا في قوله رجل والنبي عليه السلام
 معقل على رجل من عظماء المشركين تعرض عليه الاسلام فخطب ان ام مكرم بنو النبي عليه السلام استدعى
 برسوال الله ورسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم تعرض عنه فانه لا يعلم من المنسرين كما قالوا
 وعلموا بعيسى النبي عليه السلام لان ام مكتوم وعرض عنه لانه اشار الى الذي كان يترون
 ان يكفنه وبعده ان لم يتكلموا قال عطاء بن ابي رباح ان اقبل عليه السلام عنه من ربيعة
 وقال قفاضة كان لي من نيات جاهد اولاد عتبه ورتبعه وان رطفت
 الشورى فان الله على السلام مع عه القاس قال النوري قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم
 بعد ذلك اذا راى من اهل بيوتهم سبطا لرداه وقاتل امرجاء من عتبي فيه ذلك
 وما يدري اهل بيوتهم اني اهل بيوتهم ان يظهر من عتبه من اهل بيوتهم

سورة عبس في اربعين وايات ملكه

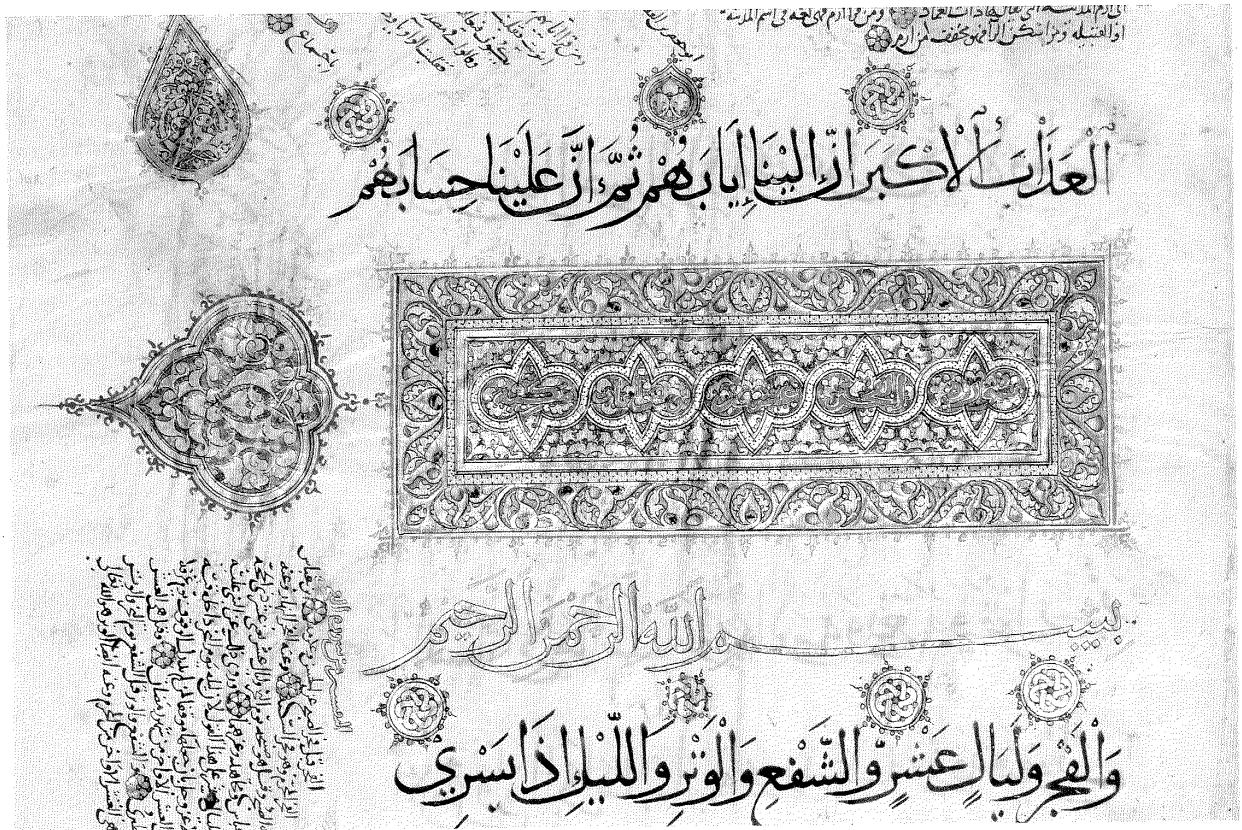


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى إِذْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ أَعْلَاهُ يَدْرِي
 أَلَمْ يَلْقَ سَفْعَهُ الْذَّيْبِ لِأِمَامِنِ اسْتَعْجَلْتَهُ تَصَدَّقْ وَمَا
 عَلَيْكَ الْإِنزِيلِ وَالْإِمَامِنِ جَالِيسِعِي وَهُوَ خَشِيَ فَأَنزَلْ عَنهُ
 تِلْكَ قَوْلًا إِذْ هَا أَتَى مَسَازِيرُهُ فَاسْتَفْهِمِ مَرْفُوعَهُ



الاعمى
 من قران الجاه الاغمى على الحب فان لم يمتنع صوتي لانه الفاعل لا يتبع
 اليه كانه قال لا ترون عي الاغمى الله عز وجل الفاعل الاول ص ما يحسن
 وكون قول من جره فاشانه فالذوق للانس من استمع من خلفه بعد
 هذوف واغلب عليه قول اللطوي ان امرجاء وعقوب بن نوفل بن عبد الله بن ابي
 رسول ولا يرون عليه على الاعمى من قوله من خطب منعه الذليل جملته جملته
 لعله لا يمتنع صوتي بعد قوله من قوله من خطب منعه الذليل جملته جملته
 فاعلم وان شئت فقل فاعلم ان من الامم التي اهلها من عتبه الامم التي

المستحق الجاه الاغمى على الحب فان لم يمتنع صوتي لانه الفاعل لا يتبع
 اليه كانه قال لا ترون عي الاغمى الله عز وجل الفاعل الاول ص ما يحسن
 وكون قول من جره فاشانه فالذوق للانس من استمع من خلفه بعد
 هذوف واغلب عليه قول اللطوي ان امرجاء وعقوب بن نوفل بن عبد الله بن ابي
 رسول ولا يرون عليه على الاعمى من قوله من خطب منعه الذليل جملته جملته
 لعله لا يمتنع صوتي بعد قوله من قوله من خطب منعه الذليل جملته جملته
 فاعلم وان شئت فقل فاعلم ان من الامم التي اهلها من عتبه الامم التي



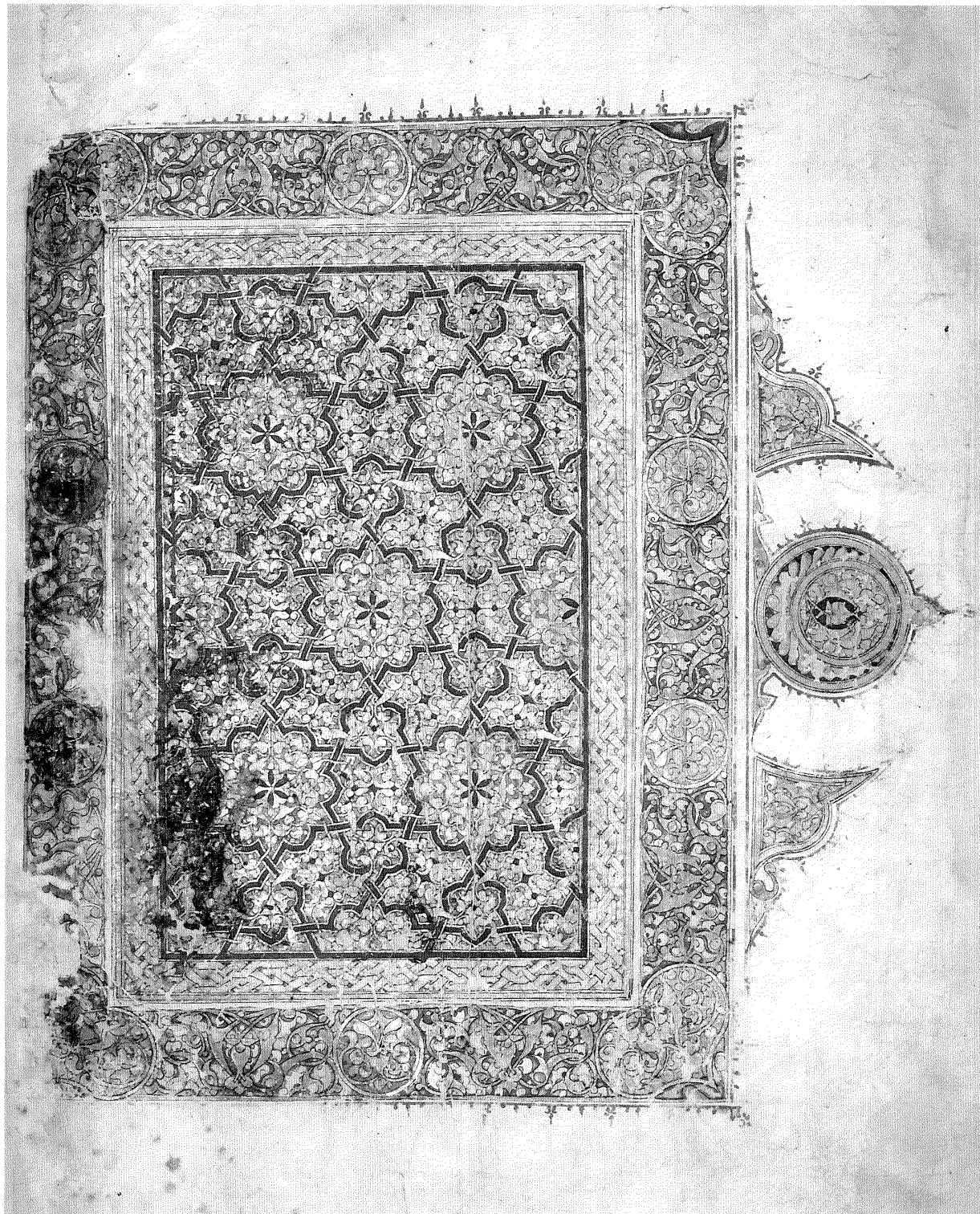
a) the use in the illumination of a particular type of shaded globule that appears in other dated manuscripts would give us relatively wide parameters of c. 1304-46 in either Cairo or Damascus; b) the use of *muhawraq* script for the main body of the text was certainly established by 1320 in Cairo and is likely to have been in use before that date; c) the particular style of *naskh* script used for the commentary provides parameters of c. 1300-25, since it compares closely to a Cairo manuscript of 1306-15; and d) the style of illumination and its relation to the work of Muhammad b. Mubadir would point to Cairo around the years 1298-1310. Among the distinctive stylistic traits in the illumination consonant with Muhammad b. Mubadir's known work there is one particular feature which appears to be unique to his oeuvre and to the first decade of the fourteenth century, and that is the extension of the illuminated borders around all four sides of an illuminated page.

David James suggests that Muhammad b. Mubadir's

main patron was Rukn al-Din Baybars.¹ Could the present manuscript, as the work of Muhammad b. Mubadir, have been made for the same patron? Unless another fragment of the manuscript containing a colophon or further information is discovered, we will probably never know the exact provenance of the manuscript. On the basis of analysis alone, however, it is more than probable that the inventive and technically brilliant illumination was the work of Muhammad b. Mubadir and was completed in Cairo around 1298-1310 CE, and very possible that the manuscript was produced under the patronage of Baybars, either as Vizier or as Sultan.

The above is an abridged version of a separate monograph devoted to the present manuscript section: see Fraser 2005. MF

¹ For a description and discussion of Mubadir's work and style see James 1998, pp. 40-47, 104.



28 Monumental Qur'an leaf in *muhaggaq* script

Egypt or Syria, Mamluk
Mid-14th century
Sura 18 (*Al-Kahf*), vv.26-42

Folio from an Arabic manuscript written in *muhaggaq* script in black ink on cream paper with eleven lines of text per page. Letter-pointing and diacritics are also in black ink, with occasional additional marks in red or blue. Individual verse divisions are marked with gold rosettes decorated with green and blue dots. In the lower outer margin of the recto is a half-*hizb* marker in the form of an illuminated ovoid medallion decorated in blue and gold containing the words *nusf hizb* in white *thulth* script.

FOLIO 71.5 × 52 cm

The patronage of very large Qur'an manuscripts was popular among Mamluk sultans and viziers during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The largest Mamluk example in the world is a manuscript made for Sayf al-Din Sirghitmish b. Abdallah al-Ashrafi in Cairo in 1374 CE, which measures 105 × 77 cm.¹ The largest Mamluk Qur'an in the British Isles measures 86 × 54 cm.² At least ten Mamluk Qur'ans of this very large scale were produced in the Mamluk Empire during the second half of the fourteenth century,³ but the practice seems for the most part to have died out by the fifteenth century.⁴

This phenomenon may have been due to specific political, financial and military factors. The Mamluk dynasty was always robust militarily, but it was not until the second quarter of the fourteenth century that the major threats from outside receded. By the end of the thirteenth century the final remnants of the Crusader bases in Palestine and Syria had been taken by the Mamluks. In 1260 they had defeated Hulegu's Mongol armies at Ain Jalut. The Ilkhanids continued to be a threat and a source of rivalry into the first decades of the fourteenth century, but with the passing of Sultan Abu Sa'id, the last great Ilkhanid ruler, in 1335 the threat from that dynasty significantly lessened. With the simultaneous gradual fragmentation of Mongol rule in Iraq and Iran the Mamluk dynasty was able to dominate the

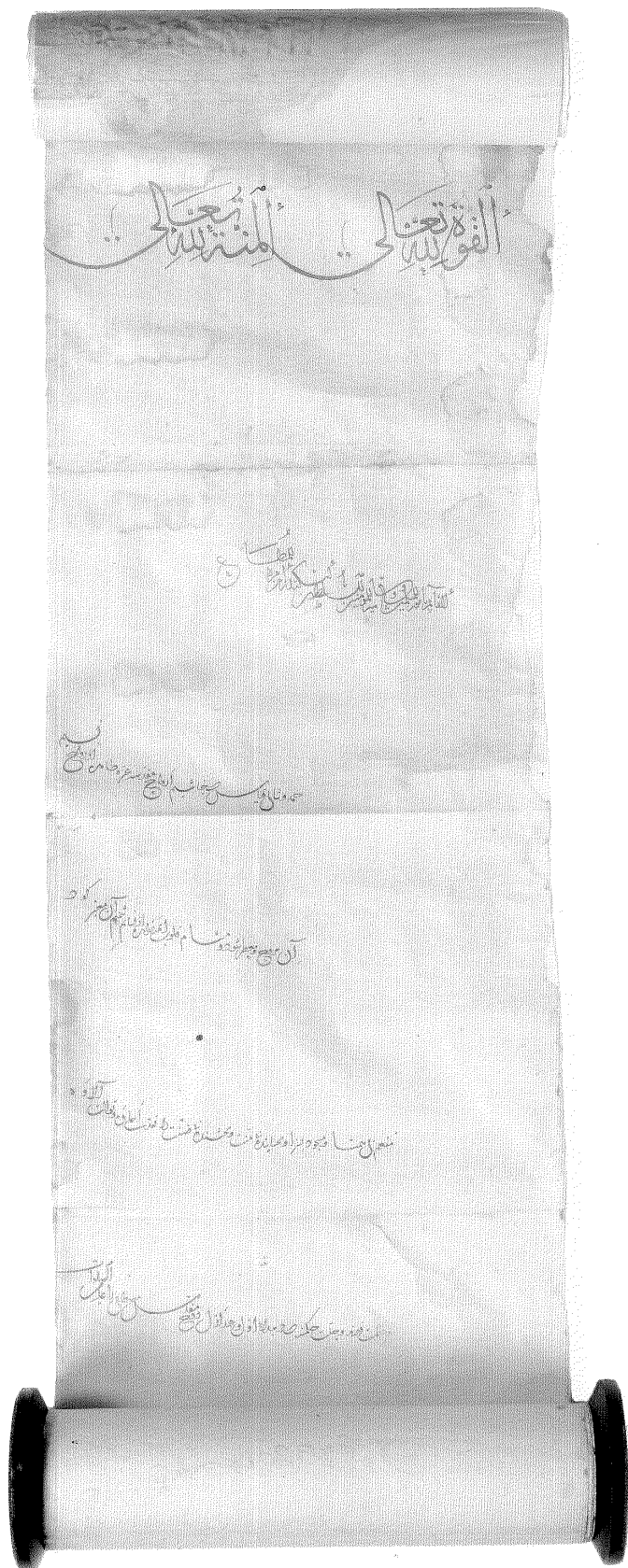
political scene in the Middle East for the following decades, and it was during this period (c. 1340-80) that the majority of very large Mamluk manuscripts were produced. The size and grandeur of these manuscripts may have been a reflection of the religious, political and military confidence of the dynasty. There may also have been a more direct response to the large royal Qur'ans and secular manuscripts produced by the Ilkhanids in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, which had no doubt come to the notice of the Mamluks.⁵ The very large Mamluk Qur'ans may therefore have been both a statement and affirmation of the power and religious steadfastness of the Mamluk dynasty in general and specifically a symbol of their emergence as the more enduring power in the region in comparison to the Ilkhanids.⁶ The reasons for the decline in the production of such large-scale Mamluk Qur'an manuscripts in the fifteenth century may be the general lessening of Mamluk prosperity and stability under the Burji line and the gradual emergence of the Ottomans as a growing threat.

MF

- 1 National Library, Cairo, Ms. 15; James 1988, no. 34.
- 2 John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, Ms. 704; Mingana 1934, no. 42.
- 3 National Library, Cairo, Mss. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 54; Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, Ms. 445 (other fragments Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, inv. no. 1629; Keir Collection, Ham, inv. no. VI.II); see James 1988, nos. 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33; the present folio; Sotheby's, 13 April 2000, lot 6.
- 4 There are, however, two notable examples from the late fifteenth century, a Qur'an made for Sultan Qa'it Bey in 1488 that measured 66.7 × 46.7 cm (see Sotheby's, 26 April 1982, lot 37) and the aforementioned manuscript in the John Rylands Library, Manchester, which, though undated, stylistically relates to fifteenth-century manuscript production.
- 5 The largest Ilkhanid Qur'an was made for Sultan Oljeytu in Baghdad in 1306-13 and measured 72 × 50 cm. Others typically measured between 45 and 60 cm in height and around 35 cm wide. Several of these are published in James 1988, nos. 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 46, and New York 2002, figs. 121, 156, 158, 245. Secular royal and court manuscripts produced under the Ilkhanids were also often on a large scale: the *Kitab Jami' al-Tasanif al-Rashi*, produced in 1307-10, measures 53.5 × 38.5 cm (Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Mss. or. Arabe 2324; see New York 2002, cat. 5, fig. 54); the two sections of the famous *Jami' al-Tavarikh* of Rashid al-Din of 1314-15 measure 43 × 32 cm (Edinburgh University Library, Ms. Arab 20, and Khalili Collection, Mss. 727; see New York 2002, cat. 6 and 7, figs. 130, 172, 162, 174); and the folios of the Great Mongol *Shahnama* must have measured around 50 × 35 cm, since the dimensions of the written area were 41 × 29 cm (New York 2002, cat. 36, p. 254).
- 6 The very large Mamluk Qur'ans are almost all larger than the equivalent Ilkhanid manuscripts.

لهم من زينة من وحي ولا يشرك في حكمه أحدا * ونال ما أوتي اللد من
 ربك كما صدك لك لما نه ولزيت من زينة المتكلا وأصغر نفسك مع اللد
 يدعون زينة الغلاة والعشبي يبدون وجهه ولا تعد عينك عن غير زيد
 زينة الحياة الدنيا ولا تطع من أغفلنا قلبه عن ذكرنا وتبع هواه وكان
 أمره فرطا * وقال الحومر زرك فمزشا فليومز ومنشأ فليكفرت
 أخذنا الأظالمين ناراً أحاط بهم سرادقها * وانس غيها يعاها أمراكها
 يشوي الوجوه بيسر الشرب وسات من تقا * أزال الذين آمنوا وعملوا
 الصالحات أتلافيع أجر من أحسن عملا * أولئك لهم جنات
 تجري من تحتها الأنهار غشورقها من أمانهم ذهب ويلسوا فيها
 خضر من سندس وأسندق من كزيب على الأراك نغم الثوب وحسنت
 مرتقا * وأضر بهم مثلاً جليل جعلنا لأهلها جنتين من أعقاب





29 Decree of Iskandar Sultan

Iran, probably Isfahan
Dated 816 AH / 1414 CE

Persian manuscript on highly burnished cream paper, 6.5 m × 43 cm. Three lines of monumental *tawqi'* script in gold with vocalization in blue, followed by thirty-nine lines of gold *ta'liq*. Two gold seals on lines 40 and 41, ten seals in black ink on the bottom of the verso. Dated 816 AH/1414 CE on line 40. First two lines of opening Qur'anic text fragmentary, otherwise complete. Scrolled around modern wooden roller. SCROLL 6 m × 50 cm

This huge royal decree, over six metres in length, was issued at the court of one of the leading patrons of the arts of fifteenth-century Persia, Iskandar Sultan b. 'Umar Shaykh. The grandson of Timur, Iskandar Sultan was governor of Shiraz from 1409 to 1414, at which point he was removed from his position and blinded by his overlord and uncle, Shahrukh. When Iskandar continued to foment trouble by joining forces with his brother Bayqara, hoping to seize Shiraz, Shahrukh eventually had him captured and executed.

The root of Shahrukh's quarrel with Iskandar Sultan lay in the latter's territorial ambitions and repeated unauthorized campaigns. Already during Timur's lifetime a raid into the Mughulistan region resulted in his being brought before his irate grandfather and subjected to the *bastinado*. In 1414, the year in which this decree was issued, Iskandar Sultan had extended his control over Hamadan, Yazd, Kerman and Isfahan, making the last his capital. This unauthorized expansion, as well as his use of his own name on coinage and in the *khutba*, the sermon preceding Friday prayers, was tantamount to open rebellion against Shahrukh.¹

Iskandar's territorial ambitions were matched by an ambitious and daring artistic vision. Shiraz was much less affected by the Mongol invasions than other parts of Iran, one factor which led to its prominence as a centre of book production and architectural design. Iskandar also seems to have used the opportunity to attract artists from the Jala'irid domains, who were no doubt in search of employment following the demise of that dynasty. He succeeded in attracting calligraphers such as Ma'ruf al-Baghdadi and

الفقر إلى الله
المستجيب

لكننا من الفقراء
برادولح ابينا
اصطفا بروق
من افنا
وغيره

Mahmud al-Husayni to his court, and the extraordinary anthologies produced under his patronage showed a cosmopolitan taste that drew on Ilkhanid and Jala'irid models. It has been noted that a desire to stress royal myth underpinned the choice of many of the subjects for illustration in the anthologies. In fact, Iskandar Sultan must be credited as one of the chief pioneers of the princely model that equated royal glory with artistic patronage – a model that was to be one of the enduring legacies of the Timurid dynasty.²

The grand nature of this decree is consistent with the biography of Iskandar that has come down to us. The monumental *tawqi'* script of the verse from the Qur'an at the head of the roll, the gold ink, and the huge length of the scroll, all bespeak imperial ambitions. Though the format of such decrees, distinguished by the upward curve of the line and the large spaces between the lines, has a pedigree in the Islamic world stretching back to the Fatimids, this roll would have been modelled on Ilkhanid and early Timurid precedents. Though the invention of *ta'liq* script is commonly attributed to Taj al-Din Salmani, a scribe working at the court of Timur, a decree issued by Ilkhan Gaykhatu, dated 1292, shows that a form of the script was already in use in the Ilkhanid period. The use of shorthand features, such as the joining of ligatures between certain letters and words, as well as the compact nature of the script, probably intended to preclude later additions to the text, reflect the origins of *ta'liq* in the chanceries of the Turco-Mongol dynasties of Iran. The rise of chancery scripts such as *ta'liq* and *nasta'liq* in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries reflects the important roles assumed by Persian administrators and secretaries in Mongol and post-Mongol Iran.³ It was not unusual for imperial decrees such as this one to bear the name or seal of the head of the administration along with those of the ruler; in the right-hand margin, parallel to line 41, is a note validating the document, accompanied by the seal of the Iskandar's chief minister, or *sadr*, Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad, also known as Hafiz Ra'i. Hafiz Ra'i himself was a patron of the arts and a sponsor of public buildings.⁴

The presumptuous titles taken by Iskandar in the decree betray the spirit of audacity that must have led Shahrukh to take action against his nephew. In line 4, Iskandar is described as "He who takes charge of the affairs of the Muslims" (*Al Qa'im bi-umur al-Muslimin*), "Sultan", and "Commander of the Faithful", titles that carry imperial and even caliphal overtones. The gold seal impression that has been stamped over the date bears the name Iskandar b.

"Umar Shaykh" and the legend *Rasti Rasti*, or "Rectitude is Deliverance", the very legend used by Timur and Shahrukh – further evidence of Iskandar Sultan's aspirations to pre-eminence in the Timurid dynasty. The use of gold for the entire text of the document is another indication of Iskandar Sultan's regal pretensions, and a practice that also seems to have drawn on Ilkhanid imperial models.⁵

The text of the decree confirms the immunity of sayyids, descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, from paying poll tax, and orders state officials to offer them protection and assistance. An unusually high number of royal decrees from the Mongol and post-Mongol period are concerned with protecting the interests of local, usually religious, figureheads, who were probably frequently menaced by predatory government officials.⁶ That this was the case here is suggested by the detail that the "Head of All Sayyids" and his two sons had made a visit to the royal court, presumably with some complaint of maltreatment. It is thought that the Mongol and Timurid rulers of Iran extended protection and immunities from taxation to religious figureheads, especially the heads of Sufi orders, in return for their providing the ruling dynasty with some sort of legitimacy. Iskandar Sultan is known to have been an associate and supporter of Shah Ni'matullah Vali Kirmani, to whom he granted land revenues for the construction of a *khanqah*. Religious figureheads, in theory at least, were able to offer a degree of protection to the mass of the population, who probably bore the brunt of often oppressive taxation and frequent warfare. The period saw a marked rise in the veneration of descendants of the Prophets as well as of the Twelve Shi'i Imams among a population that was Sunni at large. After his initial removal from power, Iskandar is known to have spent a period of ascetic retirement at an *imamzada*, the shrine of the descendant of a Shi'i imam, outside Isfahan.⁷ WK

1 For an account of Iskandar's reign, see Soucek 1996.

2 For Iskandar's patronage of the arts, see Soucek 1992; Gray 1979, pp. 122–36. For Iskandar's use of Jala'irid artists, see Gray 1979, p. 122, Lentz and Lowry 1989, p. 114. For Iskandar's use of royal myth, see *ibid.*, pp. 116–17.

3 See *ibid.*, p. 35; Soucek 1979, pp. 18–32.

4 Soucek 1996, p. 83.

5 On imperial Ilkhanid *farmans*, see Soudavar 1992, p. 79.

6 For a *farman* of comparable nature, see *ibid.*, no. 28, pp. 79–80.

7 For the veneration of *sayyids* in this period and for the relationship between rulers and the leaders of Sufi and other religious organizations, see Aubin 1956; Lentz and Lowry 1989, pp. 28–30. For Shahrukh and Iskandar's involvement with Sufi and spiritual movements, see *ibid.*, pp. 93–94.

آقزل
زلاله
الحوا
اطول العالم
نكند مشهور
وخالصه ومان بن از و اليت اند خاف ايشان حجر و صف و
نكند مشهور

مؤرخ و كطون ابن از ايد ب علم الدين ابن الكلب
و كطون خزان نكند مشهور
مؤرخه
نكند مشهور
نكند مشهور

30 Qur'an in *bihari* script

India
About 1500

Arabic manuscript on paper, 665 folios. Thirteen lines of *bihari* script in gold, black and blue. Commentary in small black and red *naskh*, written diagonally in outer margin. Ruled in red, blue and gold. Individual verses marked in text with small gold rosettes pointed in blue. Tenth verse divisions marked in margins with large gold roundels with the letter 'ayn in white in centre within gold and coloured concentric circles. Larger divisions (*juz'*, *rub'*, *nisf*) marked in margins with gold or red roundels within large coloured teardrop devices. *Sura* headings in gold *thulth* or white *riqa'* within gold cartouches set within a band of coloured panels. Opening folio (f. 1r) illuminated with lozenge-shaped medallion within a panel bordered by red and blue illuminated teardrop devices. Text of opening, central and closing bifolia (ff. 1v-2r, 331v-332r, 664v-665r) set within panels of pink cross-hatching with gold and coloured borders. Later red leather binding with gilt decoration.

FOLIO 30 × 21.5 cm

Only a small number of Islamic manuscripts have survived from the pre-Mughal period in India in anything other than fragmentary form. Unfavourable climatic conditions and political instability probably account for the widespread destruction of manuscripts from this period. The present large Qur'an is a rare example of an intact manuscript and a superb illustration of the vibrancy of the pre-Mughal tradition of Qur'an production.

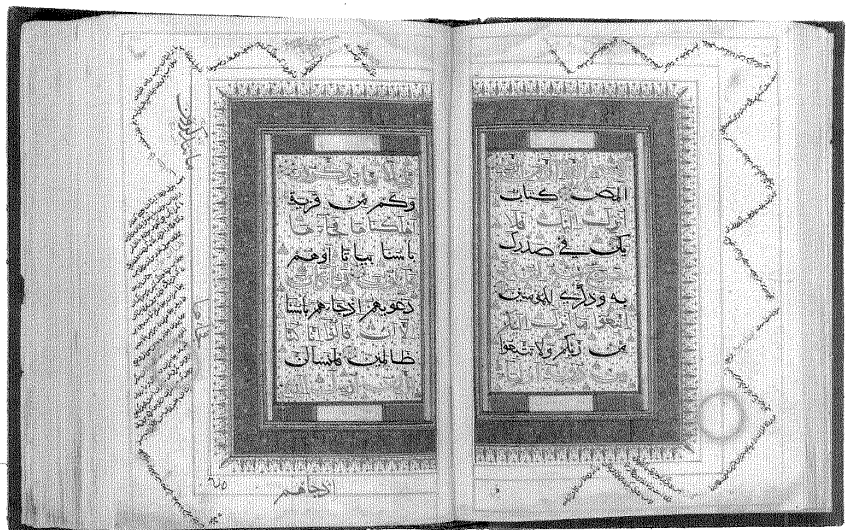
A number of features in the illumination indicate North India's political and cultural ties with Iran. The floral sprays that enliven the grounds of many of the illuminated details and the pink cross-hatching that surrounds the text on the illuminated double-pages are common features of fifteenth-century Timurid and Turkoman Qur'ans.¹ Indian Qur'ans of the period can easily be distinguished, however, by the idiosyncratic version of *naskh* script

they employ, frequently referred to as *bihari*. This term of obscure origin is unlikely to refer to the Bihar region of India, where no tradition of manuscript copying and few great mosques or *madrasas* existed.² The tradition of copying Qur'ans in *bihari* script appears to have been short-lived, coinciding with the period between the collapse of the Delhi sultanate in the last years of the fourteenth century and the consolidation of Mughal power in the middle of the sixteenth.³

This Qur'an incorporates many of the most colourful and unusual features associated with *bihari* Qur'ans. The Qur'anic text has been copied in three different colours, with every two lines of black script inserted between alternating single lines of gold or blue script. Also typically *bihari* is the Persian commentary that zigzags around the space between the margins.

WK

- 1 For an introduction to Timurid and Turkoman styles of Qur'an production, see James 1992b, pp. 14-15.
- 2 Losty 1982, p. 39.
- 3 James 1992b, p. 104.



31 Ottoman Qur'an in *naskh* script

Ottoman

About 1520-50

Arabic manuscript on polished cream paper, 291 folios. Fourteen lines of black *naskh* script, recitation marks and some marginal commentary in red. Margins ruled in gold, blue and orange. Individual verses marked with gold rosettes pointed in blue and red. Fifth verse divisions marked with blue roundels with gold foliate device in centre, surrounded by gold ring edged in blue with extending blue finials. *Sura* headings in gold *riqa'* in 'cloud' cartouches on a pink ground, enclosed in illuminated panels. Illuminated double-page frontispiece (f. 1v-2r) with Qur'anic text framed by panels containing *sura* headings in gold cartouches on a gold and blue ground filled with gold and coloured floral scrolls and palmettes. Border of frontispiece contains orange and green star-shaped quatrefoils with gold hasps projecting from the mid-point into the outer margins. In the original leather binding with gold block-stamped central panel and smaller border panels. Doublures of gold filigree over coloured grounds.

FOLIO 24.5 × 37.2 cm

Ottoman manuscript illumination was highly eclectic in the first half of the sixteenth century, reflecting the presence in the Ottoman Empire of artists from all over the Islamic world.¹ The illumination in this Qur'an shows the strong influence of Eastern Iranian traditions, an attested feature of a group of Ottoman manuscripts dating from c. 1520-50.² This influence is particularly visible in the frontispiece, where the illuminated panels with black borders above and below the text and the gold hasps projecting into the margins from the centre of the smooth border are reminiscent of early sixteenth-century Herati and Bukharan work.³

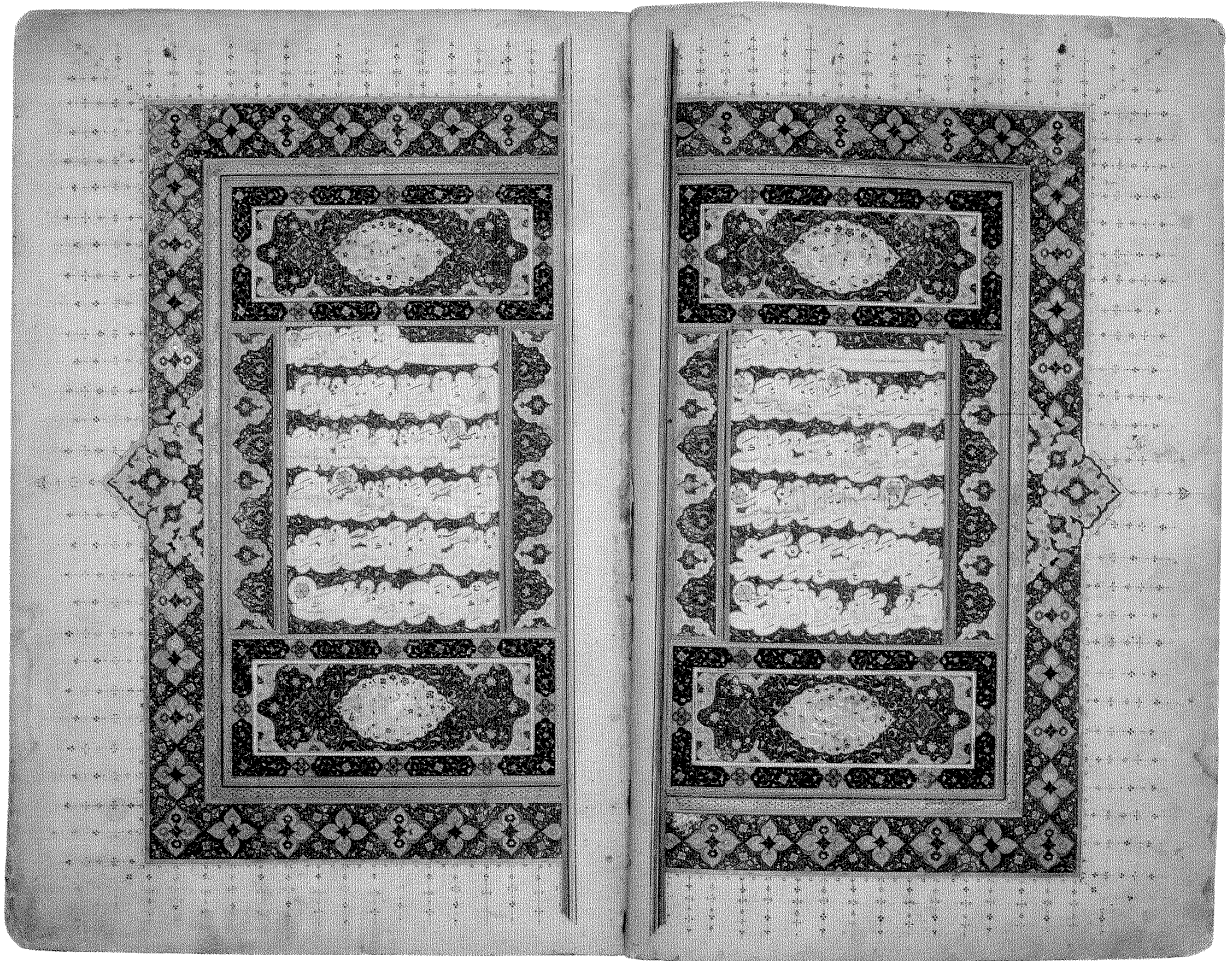
Certain features, however, particularly the scrolls of black lotus flowers in the gold cartouches of the frontispiece, the pink shaded areas of the *sura* headings, and the combination of red and pale green throughout the illumination, are associated with Ottoman manuscripts of the period. This attribution is supported by Arabic notes pertaining to the sale of the manuscript in an Ottoman *ruq'a* hand on f. 1r. An unusual feature of the illumination is the row of orange and green star-shaped quatrefoils running inside the border of the frontispiece, in place of the more usual split palmettes. This feature, in the same green and gold combination, is found in the details of same late Timurid Herati work.⁴ WK

1 For the cosmopolitan nature of Ottoman manuscript production in the period, see Atil 1987, pp. 29-36.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

3 For a classic example of late Timurid Herati illumination of this type, see the illuminated frontispiece to a copy of the *Divan* of Sultan Husayn Mirza in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, inv. no. 1926, illustrated in Lentz and Lowry 1989, no. 148, pp. 268-69, 359. Very similar and contemporary to the frontispiece of the present manuscript is the illumination in a Herati or Bukharan Qur'an in the Khalili Collection, inv. no. QUR114, illustrated in James 1992a, no. 33, pp. 124-25.

4 See, for example, a leaf from the same copy of the *Divan* of Sultan Husayn Mirza, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Nasli M. Heeramaneck Collection, inv. no. M.73.5.599, illustrated in Lentz and Lowry 1989, no. 149, pp. 270, 359.



32 Verses from Sa'di's *Gulistan*

Eastern Persia

Dated 950 AH / 1543-44 CE

Signed by Sultan Muhammad Khandan

Sa'di, *Gulistan*, Chapter 2, Story 48

Six lines of Persian in black *nasta'liq* script against a gold cloud-band on cream paper, central panel illuminated with blue and black tendrils containing a floral scroll with interstices filled with gold, margins filled with eight illuminated cartouches containing Persian verses, signed "Faqir al-Mudhnib Sultan Muhammad Khandan, Year 950" in bottom right corner of central panel.

FOLIO 23.8 × 16.3 cm

TEXT AREA 21.8 × 14 cm

This calligraphic panel bears the signature of Sultan Muhammad Khandan, one of the most talented pupils of the calligrapher Sultan 'Ali Mashhadi and a member of the circle of the leading luminary of the Herat court, 'Ali Shir Nava'i. The accomplished *nast'aliq*, as well as the typically Herati illumination marked by bold turquoise and black, are entirely consistent with the style and quality associated with this artist. According to Bayani, it was in executing *qit'as*, individual album leaves like the present composition, that he excelled.¹

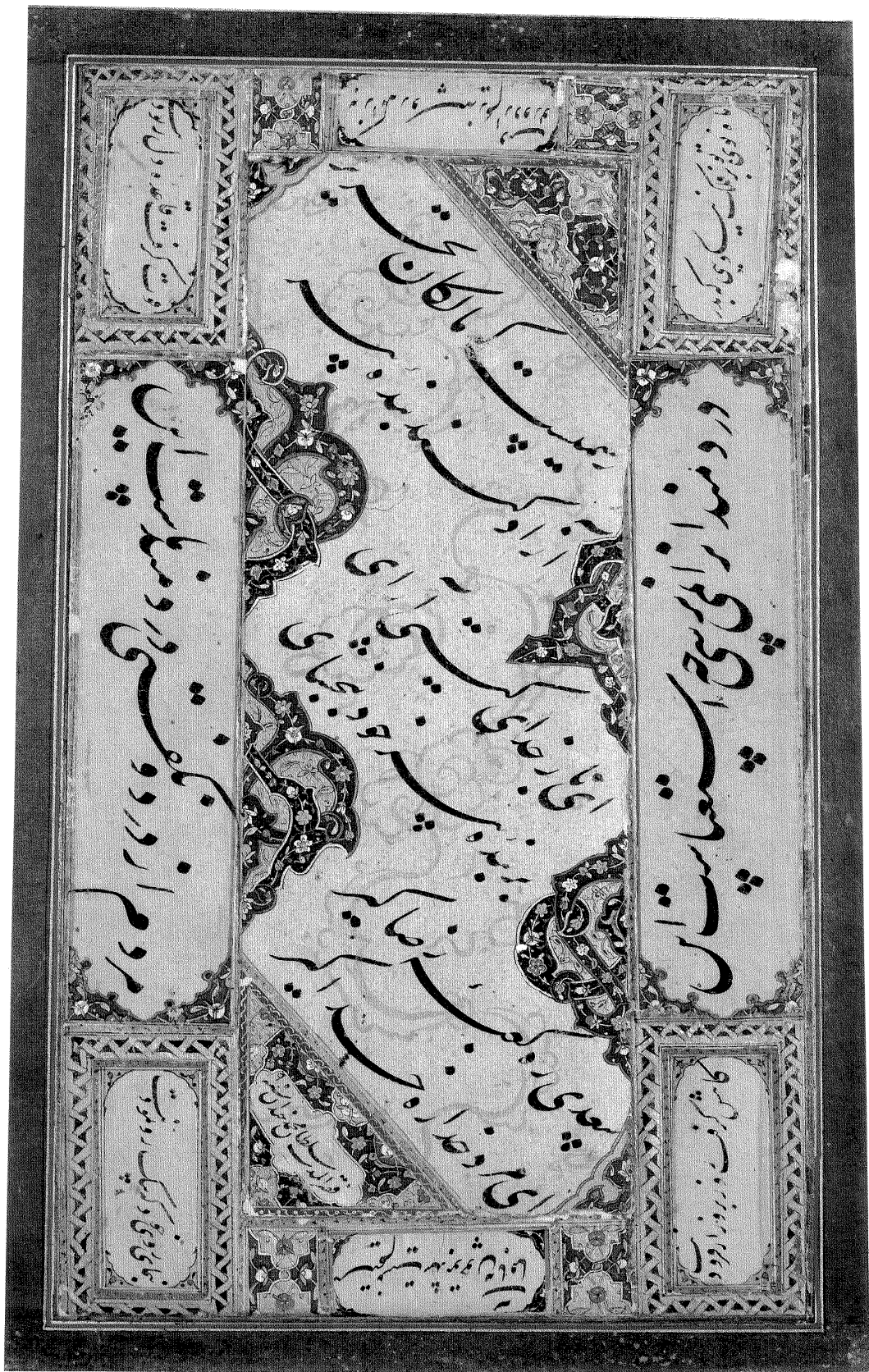
His contemporaries gave Sultan Muhammad the epithet *khandan*, or 'laughing', on account of his carefree and light-hearted nature, which 'Ali Shir reported to be verging on madness. Sultan Muhammad passed his entire life in Herat, continuing to reside there during the turbulence that followed the death of the Timurid Sultan Husayn Bayqara in 1506 as the city passed back and forth between the Safavids and their Uzbek rivals. Though there is disagreement amongst the sources concerning the date of Sultan Muhammad's death, a signed *qit'a* dated 957 AH/1550 CE in Istanbul provides us with a *terminus post quem*.²

The cultured city of Herat pioneered the compilation of calligraphic albums in the first half of the fifteenth century. While the earliest albums collated both old and recent specimens taken from other manuscripts, by the end of the century artists such as Muhammad Khandan were producing decorative leaves (*qita's*) specifically intended for such compilations.³ The verses of this *qita'* are taken from Sa'di's *Gulistan* (The Rose Garden), one of the most frequently copied and quoted works from the Persian literary canon. Completed in 1258, the *Gulistan* contains didactic verse stories interspersed with poetry, containing advice for kings, lovers and mystics. WK

1 Bayani 1966-69, vol. 1, no. 384, pp. 268-71.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 268-71.

3 Roxburgh 2005, p. 11.



33 The 'Prayer of 'Ukkasha'

Ottoman Empire
Early 16th century

Arabic manuscript on cream paper, sixty-one folios. Ff. 3v-51r: two lines of large *thulth*, one above other, below central text block of five lines of *naskh* script in black ink, vocalization in black and red, followed by two pages in black *naskh*. Ff. 51v-60r: three lines of large *muhaqqaq* in black ink. Text contains (ff. 3v-11r) Suras 36 (*Ya Sin*), (11v-19v) 48 (*Al-Fath*), (ff. 19v-25r) 56 (*Al-Waq'ia*), (ff. 25r-33v) 58 (*Al-Mujadila*), (ff. 33v-37v) 67 (*Al-Mulk*), (ff. 37v-40v) 78 (*Al-Naba'*); (ff. 40v-50r) prayers for each day of the week; (50v-51r) *Sharh* (Explanation) of the *Prayer of 'Ukkasha*; (ff. 51v-60r) the *Prayer of 'Ukkasha*, followed (51v) by a page of notes in Ottoman Turkish. Qur'anic and poetic verses marked with gold rosettes pointed in red and blue. Illuminated *sura* and chapter headings on ff. 3r, 11r, 25r, 33v, 37v, 40v, 42r, 43v, 44v, 46r and ff. 47v, 48v, 50r, and illuminated endpiece on f. 60r. Occasional repairs and water staining. Brown morocco binding, probably eighteenth-century, filletted in gold, paper doublures decorated with green and brown stars.

FOLIO 24.5 × 15 cm

The eclectic illumination of this manuscript is characteristic of early sixteenth-century Ottoman manuscript production. The opening illumination (f. 3r), bearing the title of Sura 36 (*Ya Sin*), is reminiscent of Shirazi and central Iranian work of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century; the *sura* title in red *riqa'* is contained in a gold cartouche with scalloped edges set in a panel of deep blue with gold cornerpieces. The panel is surmounted by a fleshy gold headpiece with a lobed border from which blue finials project into the upper margin. The remaining illumination, however, has a more archaic feel, drawing on a decorative repertoire established as early as the late fourteenth century and made popular in the second half of the fifteenth. Though features of this style continued to be used in western Iran in the late fifteenth century, it is only in Ottoman manuscripts that this style is combined with later Timurid and Turkman traditions, giving early Ottoman manuscripts their famously experimental feel. The headings in the second, more archaic, style in the manuscript all consist of the *sura* or chapter headings in red *riqa'*, set in a gold panel with lobed edges ending in a point; the surrounding panels, ruled in gold or orange, are filled

with the gold floral sprays on the deep blue ground so characteristic of this style.

Other typically Ottoman features of the manuscript include the highly burnished, near-white paper, marked with small flecks. In places, a creamier, smoother paper has been used to provide a deliberate contrast, a feature found in other Ottoman manuscripts of the same period.

A variety of formats and scripts is also employed throughout the manuscript. The first section of the prayer book is taken up with a selection of Qur'anic verses, which are written in five lines of neat *naskh* between two lines, one above, another below, of large *muhaqqaq* script. This practice of copying Qur'ans in different scripts stretches as far back as the eleventh century, but only became widespread in the Timurid period. During the course of the fifteenth century the practice became almost standard, the most common combination of scripts being *muhaqqaq* and *naskh*. The final section of the manuscript, containing a prayer, is written in three lines of elegant and measured *muhaqqaq*. This was a format used for Qur'ans in the fourteenth century that had dropped out of favour by the time this manuscript was copied. The intention here was perhaps to indicate the special status of the prayers but to differentiate them from the Qur'anic verses that precede them.

The prayer in question is entitled 'The Prayer of 'Ukkasha'. According to the Ottoman Turkish *sharh*, or explanation, that precedes the prayer, the Angel Gabriel informed Muhammad that 'Ukkash's piety was greater than that of any of his contemporaries. On asking 'Ukkasha for an explanation for this, Muhammad received the answer that a simple prayer recited in the morning and evenings was 'Ukkasha's only act of worship. The Prophet then stated that whoever recited the same prayer would have his sins cleansed and his obedience appreciated in the eyes of God. The inclusion of such prayers in such highly polished manuscripts as the present one is an indication of the degree to which 'popular' religious traditions were found at all levels of Ottoman society. WK

اللَّهُمَّ اعْرِضْ لِي

الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تُغَيِّرُ النَّعْمَ
وَالذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تُورِثُ النَّدَمَ
وَالذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تُنْزِلُ الْبَكَاءَ وَتَجْعَلُ
الْقَسَمَاءَ وَالذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تُظْلِمُ
وَتَمْنَعُ عَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ أَنْ تَنْظُرَ إِلَى كَلْبَتِي

الرفق بين المؤمنين

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لِي
وَبِدَائِهِ الْيَوْمَ كُنْ لِي وَالْقَالَ الْيَوْمَ
كُنْ لِي عَلَامَتَهُ وَسِرَّهُ مُبْحَثَانِ
ذِي الْمَلِكِ وَالْمَلَكُوتِ سُبْحَانَ
ذِي الْعَرْشِ وَالْجَبَرُوتِ سُبْحَانَكَ

الحج الذي لا يموت

34 Qur'an illuminated in Herati style

Herat

Ramadan AH 965 / June-July 1558 CE

Copied by Muhammad b. Mirak

Arabic manuscript on cream paper, 390 folios. Ten lines of black *naskh* script between three lines of large gold *muhaqqaq*. Vocalization in black, recitation marks in red. *Sura* titles in white *tawqi* in gold cartouches set in illuminated panels. Individual verses marked with gold rosettes pointed in blue and orange. Fifth and tenth verse divisions marked with marginal medallions containing word *kham*s or *'ashar* respectively in white Eastern Kufic on blue or gold ground, contained in concentric blue, green or orange and gold rings. Panels dividing text ruled in gold, entire text block ruled in blue, red, green and gold. Text of opening bifolium enclosed by illuminated panels above and below, framed by large illuminated border with large gold hasps projecting into the outer margins. Occasional illuminated devices in space between ruled text block and frame (e.g. f. 71v). Final folio (f. 390v) contains colophon in *ta'liq* script giving date of completion as Ramadan 965 (June-July 1558 CE) and the name of the scribe as Muhammad b. Mirak. Modern dark brown morocco binding.

FOLIO 26 × 17.5 cm

Though very few Qur'ans survive from this turbulent period in the history of the city of Herat, this example is a testament to the continuation of the tradition of copying and illuminating manuscripts of the highest quality. The city's undisputed heyday came in the late fifteenth century, when under the rule of the cultivated Timurid Sultan Husayn Bayqara it was home to famed artists, poets and calligraphers such as Bihzad, Jami and Sultan 'Ali Mashhadi. Following the Uzbek invasion of 1506, Herat found itself on the border between the rival Safavid and Shaybani Uzbek empires, and passed frequently between the two powers. As a result, many artists migrated or were forcibly removed to cities such as Safavid Tabriz or Shaybanid Bukhara. It was in the latter city in particular that many of the fifteenth-century Herati traditions of bookmaking, painting and illumination were perpetuated.¹

Despite this movement of artists and the relegation of Herat to a provincial capital in the sixteenth century, the city never lost its reputation for artistic excellence. Artists such as Sultan Muhammad Khandan and Sultan Muhammad Nur

continued the calligraphic tradition established there by their master, the celebrated Sultan 'Ali Mashhadi, and the tastes and patronage of Safavid princes such as Bahram Mirza and the future Shah Tahmasp seem to have been shaped significantly by their sojourns as governor of the city.²

The delicate illumination and well-proportioned scripts in this Qur'an attest the continued excellence of manuscript production in the city. The illuminated frontispiece displays many characteristic features of Herati and Bukharan illumination, particularly the strong blacks, reds and turquoise, the smooth-edged border and the panels of blue and gold tendrils on either side of the text block. A colophon on the final folio names the scribe as Muhammad b. Mirak, a name not recorded elsewhere. The patronymic 'Ibn Mirak', however, suggests the possibility that the scribe was the son of one of two famous sixteenth-century artists called Mirak. The first was Mirak-i Naqqash, or 'Mirak the Painter', a painter, illuminator and calligrapher at the court of Sultan Husayn Bayqara.³ The other was Aqa Mirak, one of the most celebrated painters in the atelier of Shah Tahmasp, who was in Mashhad at the time the Qur'an was copied.⁴ Revealingly, the colophon refers to Herat as "Mihnatabad", or the 'City of Trials', alluding presumably to the tribulations suffered in the city as a result of the warfare between Safavids and the Shaybanids.

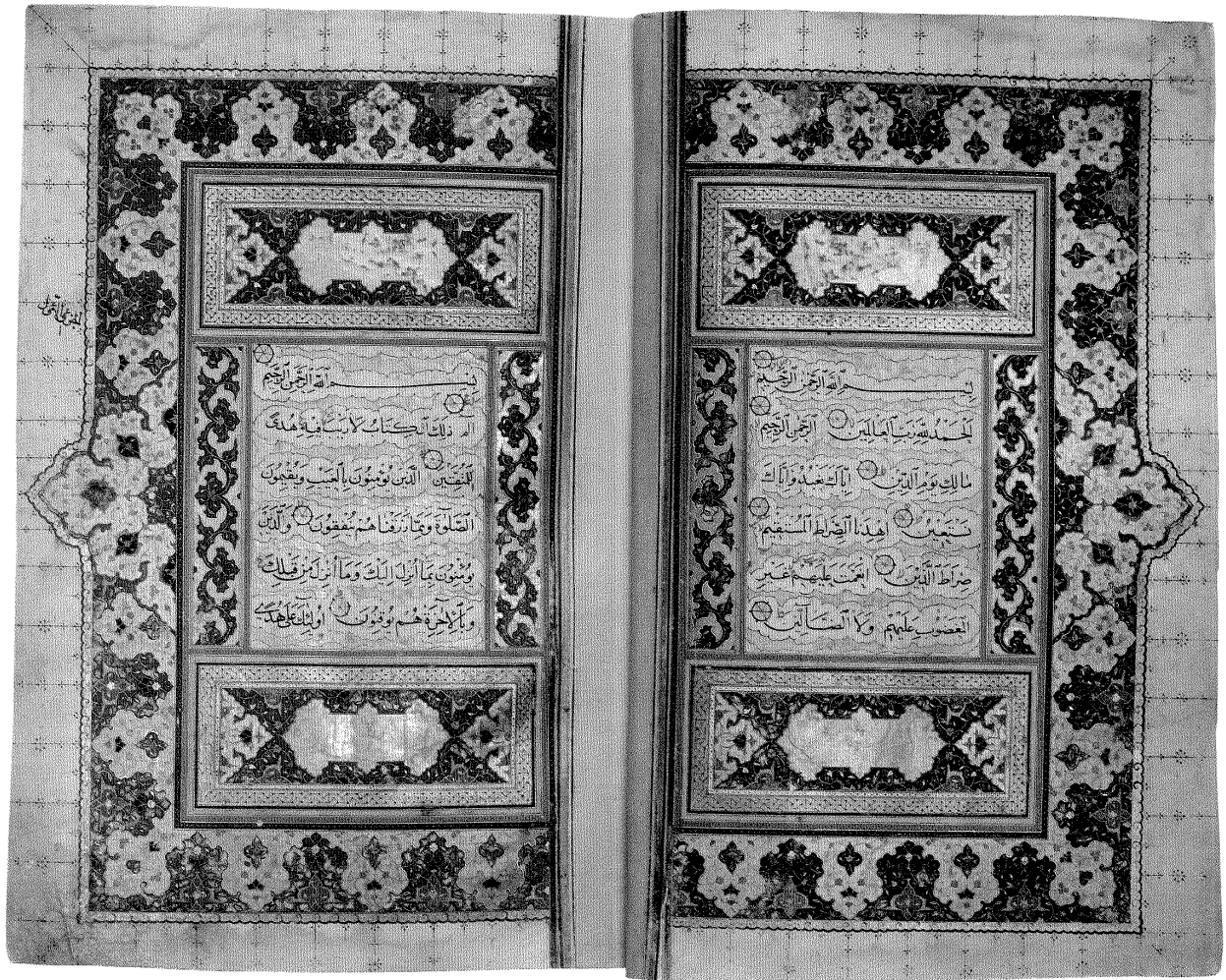
WK

1 See Ashrafi-Aini 1979; Soudavar 1992, pp. 189-90.

2 For the formative role of Herat in the princes' artistic education, see Roxburgh 2005, pp. 30, 277; S.C. Welch 1972, p. 53.

3 For the life of Mirak Naqqash, see Soudavar 1992, pp. 110-11.

4 For the life of Aqa Mirak, see S.C. Welch 1972, pp. 65-67; A. Welch 1976, pp. 156, 157; Soudavar 1992, pp. 178-79.



للمؤمنين

فمن قرأ القرآن
أجره مثل أجرهم
ولم يجزهم
والذين آمنوا
وكانوا مسلمين
ولم يفتروا
كذبا على الله
ولا على رسوله
ولا على ما
أنزلنا من
القرآن ولا
على ما أنزلنا
من قبله
ولا على ما
أنزلنا من
القرآن ولا
على ما أنزلنا
من قبله

فمن قرأ القرآن
أجره مثل أجرهم
ولم يجزهم
والذين آمنوا
وكانوا مسلمين
ولم يفتروا
كذبا على الله
ولا على رسوله
ولا على ما
أنزلنا من
القرآن ولا
على ما أنزلنا
من قبله
ولا على ما
أنزلنا من
القرآن ولا
على ما أنزلنا
من قبله

35 Monumental Qur'an made for an Ottoman patron

Iran
About 1560

Arabic manuscript on cream polished paper, 305 folios. Twelve lines of black *naskh* script. Vocalization in black, reading marks in red. Margins ruled in gold, orange, red, blue and green. Individual verses marked in text with gold rosettes pointed in green and blue. Fifth and tenth verse divisions marked in margins with blue roundels within concentric gold and red circles with projecting blue finials. *Sura* headings consist of *sura* title in white *riqa'* in a gold cartouche within an illuminated panel. *Juz'* divisions marked in gold letters in the margin. Illuminated double-page opening with a large blue and gold *shamsa* on each page. Opening bifolium of Qur'anic text set in gold medallions within illuminated panels filled with coloured cloud-bands and gold foliate scrolls on a blue ground, bordered by rows of gold split palmettes and large projecting *hasps*. Text of opening bifolium of Sura 2 (ff. 3v-4r) set in cloud-cartouches on a gold ground, the right-hand page surmounted by illuminated panel containing the *sura* title. Text of midpoint of Qur'an (ff. 147v-48r) set in cloud-cartouches on a gold ground, bordered with rows of interlocking green and orange palmettes on a blue ground. Final bifolium of Qur'anic text set in gold cartouches within large illuminated rectangles filled with gold cloud-bands and coloured floral scrolls on a blue ground, bordered by rows of orange palmettes on a blue ground, outlined thickly in gold. *Waqf* inscription in gold and black recording name of donor as Hüseyin Pasha, son of Grand Vezir Mehmed Pasha, on ff. 1v-2r. Original leather covers with stamped latticework design and medallion border, with original doublures of gold and brown filigree over coloured grounds, set into modern leather binding.
FOLIO 40.7 × 26.6 cm

The popularity among the Ottoman elite of grand copies of the Qur'an in the Iranian imperial style is attested by the presence of Ottoman ownership inscriptions, or, as in the case of the present Qur'an, *waqf* (endowment) inscriptions. The present Qur'an bears the endowment inscription of Hüseyin Pasha, who was Ottoman governor of Damascus from 1582 to 1583, during the reign of Sultan Murad III. As the *waqf* inscriptions on ff. 1v-2r remind us, however, Hasan Pasha was best known as the son of one of the most famous and powerful Grand Vezirs of the Ottoman Empire, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. A *devshirmë* recruit of Serbian origin,

Mehmed Pasha reached the apex of his career in the reign of the ineffective Selim II (r. 1566-74), during which he was *de facto* ruler of the Empire. Hasan had accompanied his father on the Szigetvar campaign in Hungary in 1565, during which Mehmed successfully concealed the death of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent on the day prior to the Ottoman victory.¹

Copies of the Qur'an, as well as illustrated manuscripts, formed part of the trade that passed over the Ottoman-Safavid border in spite of the hostile relations between the two empires for much of the sixteenth century. That Safavid Qur'ans such as this one were particularly prized in the Ottoman realms is demonstrated by their inclusion among the list of objects brought as gifts by Safavid envoys to the Ottoman court. The most celebrated of these embassies was the one sent by the Safavid Shah Tahmasp, which reached the court of Sultan Elim II in Edirne in 1586.² In addition to the copy of the most famous Safavid copy of the *Shahnama*, the so-called *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp, the Ottoman Sultan was presented with several copies of the Qur'an.

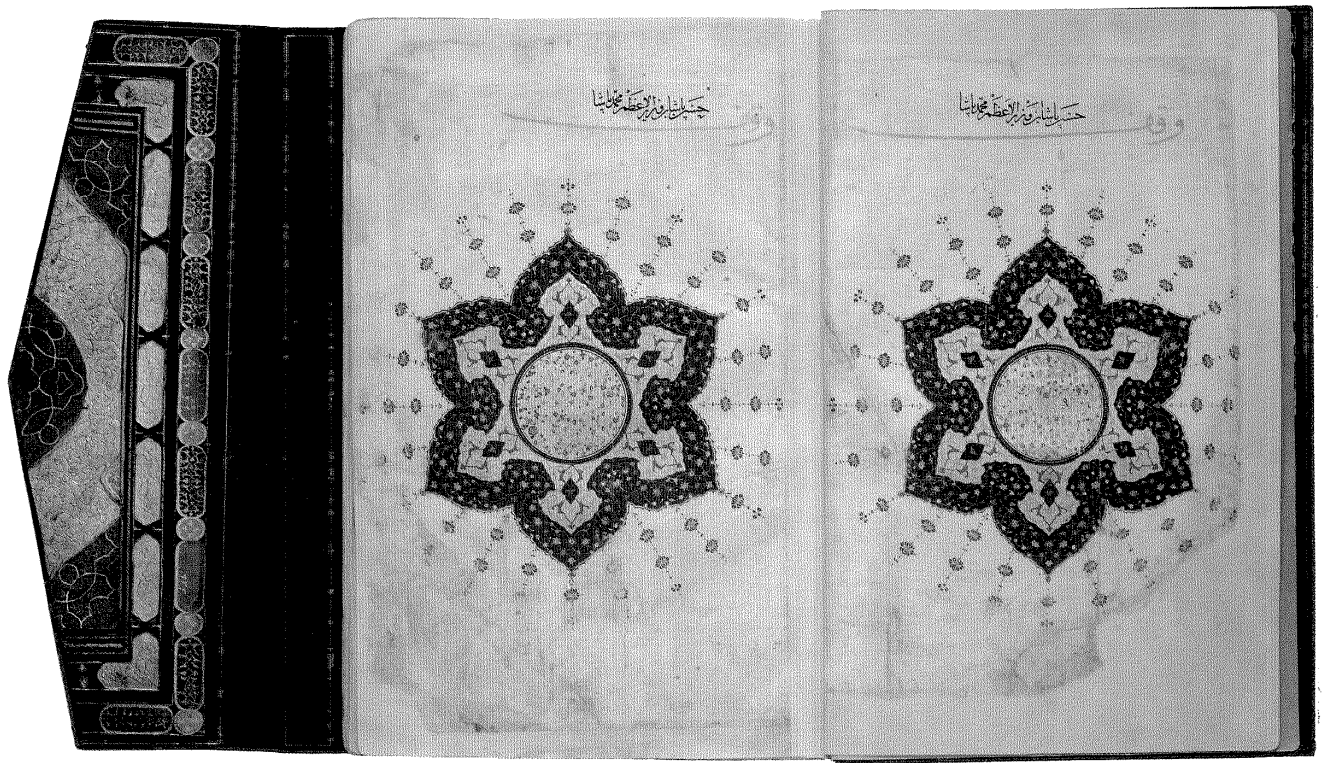
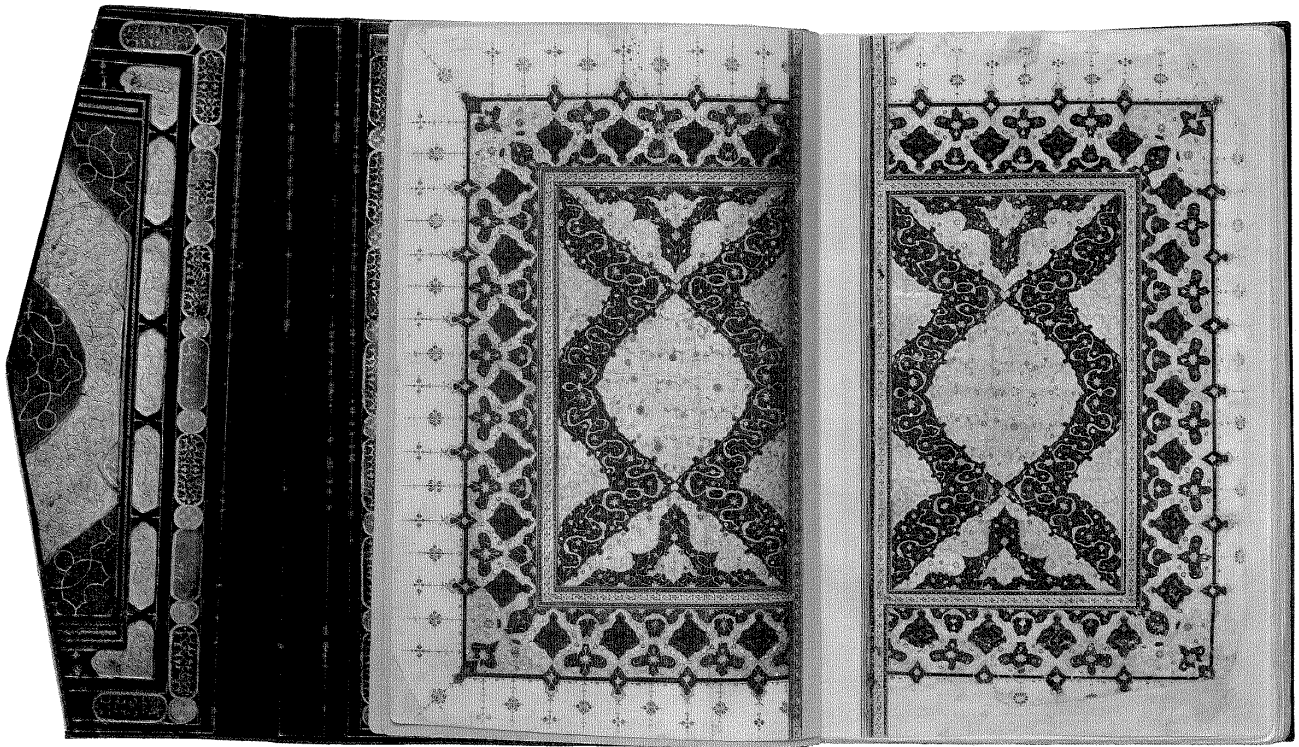
Interestingly, Hüseyin Pasha's Qur'an bears striking resemblance to a Qur'an thought to have been among the copies presented to Selim II by Shah Tahmasp's envoy. Copied by a well-known Iranian scribe in the atelier of Shah Tahmasp, the Qur'an also bears a *waqf* inscription of Selim II, endowing the manuscript to the Mosque of Edirne.³ Similar in style and size, Selim II's copy also shares many specific features with Hüseyin Pasha's Qur'an, including the illuminated *shamsas* (star-shaped medallions) on the opening bifolium, the frontispiece illuminated in an ornate Shiraz style, the leather covers with tooled latticework, and the colourful filigree doublures. Taken together, the two Qur'ans provide us with an insight into the luxury tastes of the Ottoman elite of the second half of the sixteenth century.

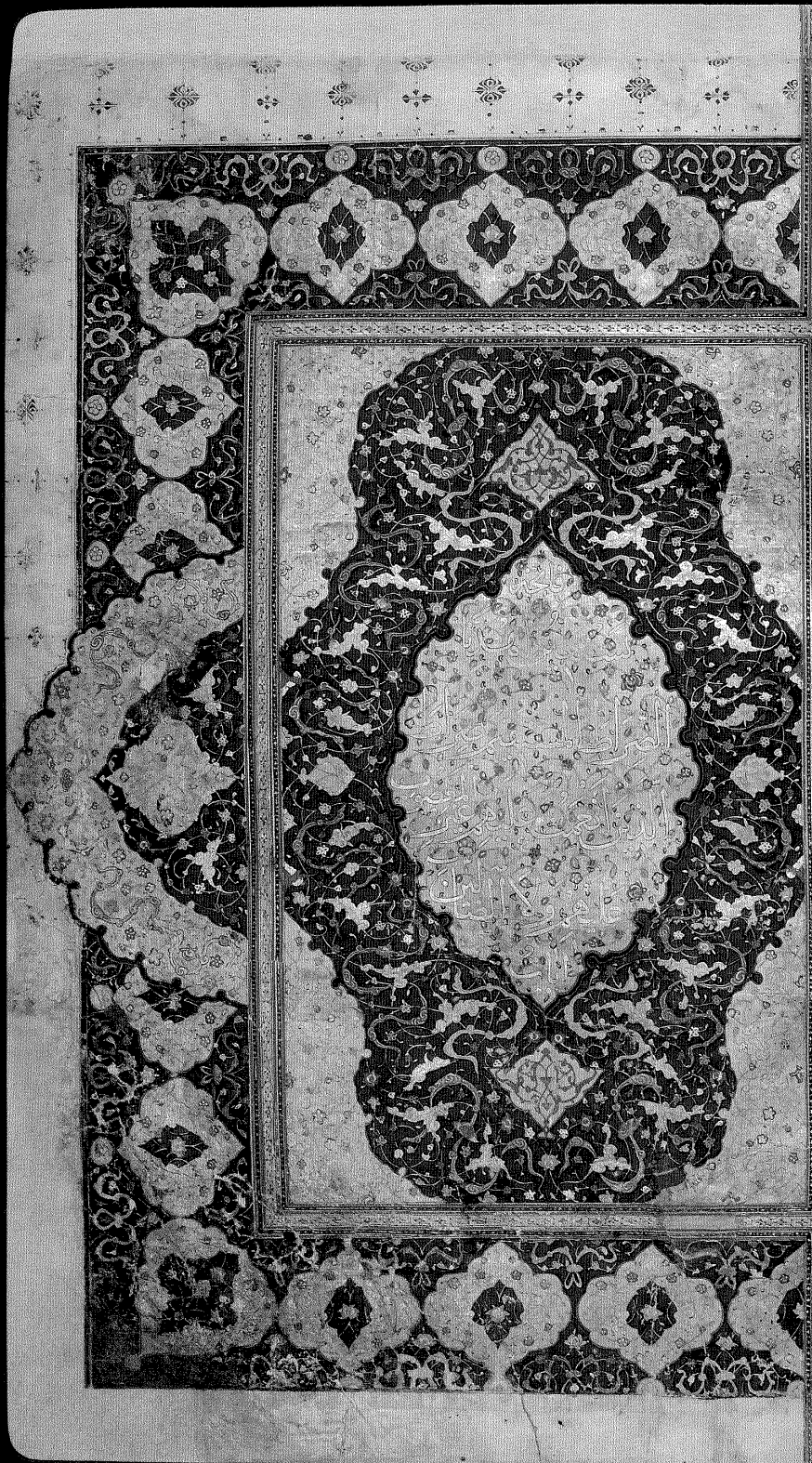
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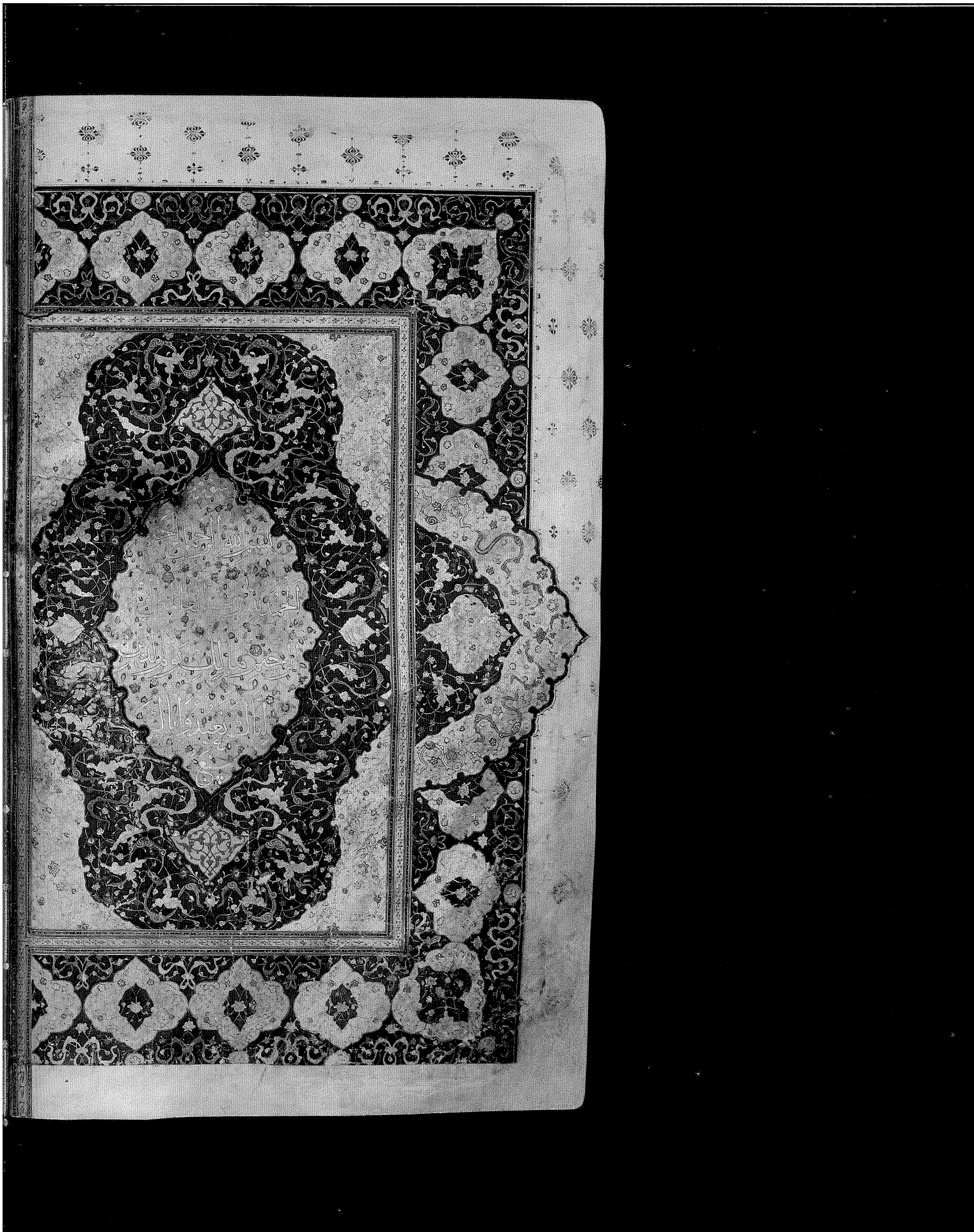
1 See *EtZ*, art. 'Sokollu Mehmed Pasha'.

2 For an account of this embassy see Dickson and Welch 1981, I, appendix II, pp. 270-71.

3 Sotheby's, London, *Arts of the Islamic World*, 12 October 2000, lot 17.







36 Persian poetry in an illuminated border

Central Asia or India
About 1600-50

Persian manuscript on gold-sprinkled paper. Black *nasta'liq* running horizontally and diagonally across the page. Margins ruled in blue, green and gold. Framed in a blue-green border filled with scrolls of gold lotus flowers.

FOLIO 36 × 24 cm

TEXT AREA 23.7 × 13.9 cm

The intimacy of artistic relations between Central Asia and India reflected the origins of much of the northern Indian political elite in the eastern Islamic lands. The cultural integration of the two zones deepened with the consolidation of Mughal rule in the Subcontinent in the first half of the sixteenth century.¹

The solid illuminated border as well as the thickness of the *nasta'liq* script suggest a Central Asian or North Indian origin for this page of Persian poetry. The border, which was originally a darker hue, is of a type normally associated with Central Asia in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, though also found in contemporary Mughal work as well as Central Asian manuscripts imported into the Mughal realms.²

The leaf appears to have once formed part of a larger text. Though such leaves were frequently detached, remounted and included in albums, entire poetic works were occasionally copied and immediately remounted using such decorative borders. That this might have been the case is supported by the evident attention given to the illumination and decoration of the text block. The ground has been lightly sprinkled with gold swirls, giving the paper the impression of being marbled, and the text itself has been carefully arranged diagonally and vertically across the page.

WK

1 For the interrelation of Central Asian and Mughal élites, see Foltz 1998. For the relationship between Central Asian and Indian painting in the period, see Skelton 1995. The influence of Central Asian illumination and calligraphy on one another is a less explored topic.

2 For this type of border on Herati and Bukharan work that later made its way to India, see a leaf in the Read Albums in the Pierpont Morgan Library, inv. no. M.458.36, illustrated and discussed in Schmitz 1997, p. 173 and fig. 239. For a Bukharan manuscript with illuminated borders of this type taken to India, see National Museum, New Delhi, inv. no. L.53-2/7, f. 28b, illustrated and discussed in Losty 1982, no. 56, pp. 86-87 and pl. xx.

37 Two calligraphy leaves on marbled paper

India, Kashmir

End of Rabi' al-Awwal 1069 AH / December 1658 CE

Arabic manuscript on marbled paper. Eight and twelve lines of black *nasta'liq* script. Mounted on card.

FOLIO 30 × 12.7 cm

These two leaves come from an album of calligraphy known to have been written in Kashmir in December 1658 by the calligrapher Muhammad Ashraf al-Razavi. Though al-Razavi is not mentioned in the standard sources on calligraphers, the flowing and firm *nasta'liq* script indicates that he was a calligrapher of considerable accomplishment.

The opening line of the first of the leaves gives the title of the text as the 'Munajat-i Hazrat 'Ali', which are prayers in honour of 'Ali, the son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet Muhammad. The combination of a Shi'i text in praise of 'Ali and the use of marbled paper occurs in another album leaf, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, attributed to Kashmir or the Deccan.¹ The coincidence is probably not fortuitous, as both Kashmir and the Deccan were places of Iranian influence, which made itself felt both in artistic techniques and in the adoption of Twelver Shi'ism by the ruling élite. The Chak dynasty, who ruled Kashmir from 1561 until the Mughal conquest under Akbar in 1586, had been converted to Shi'ism by a Nurbakhshi Sufi missionary from Iran at the end of the fifteenth century.² The beginning of Iranian artistic influence in Kashmir is associated with the reign of Sultan Zayn al-'Abidin (1420-70), who was said to have sent local craftsmen to Iran, initiating Kashmir's long association with crafts such as paper-making, wood-carving and carpet-making.³

Little is known about the production of marbled paper in the Islamic world. It has been suggested that the practice, called *abri*, from *abr*, cloud, in Persian, originated in Tabriz in the fifteenth century,⁴ though the earliest surviving example comes from eastern Persia around the turn of the sixteenth century.⁵ A group of drawings and calligraphy leaves on marbled paper attest that the practice became popular in India in the first half of the seventeenth century.

These have been attributed largely to the Deccan, though in most cases colophon information is lacking.⁶ The album from which these leaves derive is therefore important not only for being a Kashmiri example, unequivocally establishing the use of marbled paper there, but more generally for containing such precise information concerning the scribe, origin and date of completion. WK

1 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Richard S. Perkins Gift, 1986, inv. no. 1986.109.2; see Schimmel 1992, p. 41, fig. 50.

2 See *Elz*, art. 'Kashmir'.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Martin 1912, pp. 93-94, 106-08.

5 See Lentz and Lowry 1989, no. 136, p. 243. See also Barbara Schmitz's discussion of a marbled border on a calligraphic page (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, inv. no. M.458.34) in Schmitz 1997, no. 50, pp. 171-72.

6 See *ibid.* and Zebrowski 1983, pp. 135-38.

مناجات حضرت علی
و کم ندمن لطف نبی
دیو خفنا عین فهم الرتو
و کم لیسیرت من عبد
مفرح کر قلب سبحی
و کم امرت صبا جا
فما تیک المسر و ما
اذا ضاقت ک الاحوال

اللهم انی قضیت نسی و اہستنی
فما حیلتی تا رب ام کف اصنع
اللہ حلیف الحب للباہل سایہ
یا حی ویدعووا لمنغفل صحیح
اللہ مستینسی حاجی سلاۃ
وقم خطیبی علی شیخ
و کلمہ رجوتوا کب راجیا
رحمتک العظمی و فی الخلد یطمع
اللہ فالعن فو فو ک مسعدی
والا فبالذنب المد مرصرع
اللہ یحی الہاشم و اب

38 Zuhuri's *Khwan-i Khalil*

Deccan, probably Bijapur
1080 AH / 1669-70 CE

Persian manuscript on alternating yellow, mauve, cream and salmon paper, twenty-six folios. Ten lines of black *nast'aliq* ink written diagonally across the page, each line enclosed in 'cloud' cartouche against a gold ground, margins ruled in gold. Dated 1080 AH (1669-70 CE) on final folio (f. 26r) with erased seal impression. Contemporary light brown morocco binding with stamped central medallions of leather inlay decorated with red and gold flowering plants. FOLIO 18 × 10 cm

Zuhuri's *Khan-i Khalil*, or 'Table of the Friend of God', constitutes the most revealing insight into life at the court of the greatest patron of the arts in the Deccan, and one of the few Islamic sources dealing with the life and work of artists. Under Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II (1579-1621), the Deccani kingdom of Bijapur witnessed an extraordinary efflorescence in the arts, thanks in great part to the creative temperament of Ibrahim himself. Like his contemporary, the Mughal Emperor Akbar, Ibrahim was a religiously tolerant ruler with mystic inclinations and a strong interest in Hindu culture. The eclecticism of his tastes reflected the cosmopolitan nature of his court and Deccani society at large, in which Iranian, Turkish, Mughal and local traditions fused to produce some astonishingly vibrant results, particularly in the field of painting.¹

An important role in the cultural life of the period must be assigned to the waves of Iranian artists and writers that emigrated to the wealthy courts of the Deccan in search of new sources of patronage. The poet Zuhuri himself was one such emigré. Born in Turshiz in Khurasan, he left Iran for the Deccan in 1580, following disappointment at his failure to establish himself at the court of Shah 'Abbas. Following a period of residency at the court of Shah Burhan Nizam at Ahmadnagar, for whom he composed a *mathnavi* dealing with kingship, mysticism and music – the *Saqi-nama*, or 'The Book of the Cup-Bearer' – he succeeded in attracting the attention of Ibrahim II. For this ruler Zuhuri composed his *Se Nathr*, or 'Three Essays', all relating to the Ibrahim, his court, and the arts practised there. The *Khwan-i Khalil* is

the last of these essays, and in addition to praising Ibrahim and his skill as a musician, calligrapher, painter and patron Zuhuri eulogizes the six outstanding members of his court. These were the *vazir* and mathematician Shah Nawaz Khan, the poet Malik Qummi, the calligrapher Shah Khalilullah, the painter Farrukh Hussain, the wit Malik Khuddam Mullah Haidar al-Zuhri and, finally, the author himself.²

The title of the work serves to identify Ibrahim II with his namesake, the Prophet Abraham, who was also frequently called 'Khalil', meaning 'friend of God'. In this way the reference to the *khwan*, or table, in the title refers both to Abraham's position as an intimate of God and to the luminaries assembled at the court of Ibrahim II. This is in keeping with the title of the second essay, the *Gulzar-i Ibrahim*, or 'Rose Garden of Ibrahim', which alludes simultaneously to the garden Abraham created out of Nimrod's fire and Ibrahim's stellar court.

In keeping with the content that exalts the arts and artistic patronage as royal and almost religious virtues, the manuscript has a jewel-like quality and was clearly meant to be an object of aesthetic value in itself. The most striking aesthetic considerations are the folios of different colours – yellow, lilac, cream and salmon – and the arrangement of the text in cloud-shaped cartouches running diagonally across the page. The cloud cartouches separating the lines are frequently joined, either in the middle of the line or along the left margin, leading the eye down the page and imparting a sense of fluidity to the text. The ground of the entire text block has been illuminated with gold, which has the effect of making the text appear to float on the surface of the page. The flowering plants in the centre of the covers, made from red and gold leather inlay, relate to contemporary enamel and enhance the manuscript's status as a luxury, physical object. WK

1 For the court, tastes and achievements of Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II, see Zebrowski 1983, Chapter 3, 'Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1579-1627), patron of the arts', pp. 67-121.

2 For the life and works of Zuhuri, see *ibid.*, pp. 68-70.

39 'The Spectacles of the Chameleon'

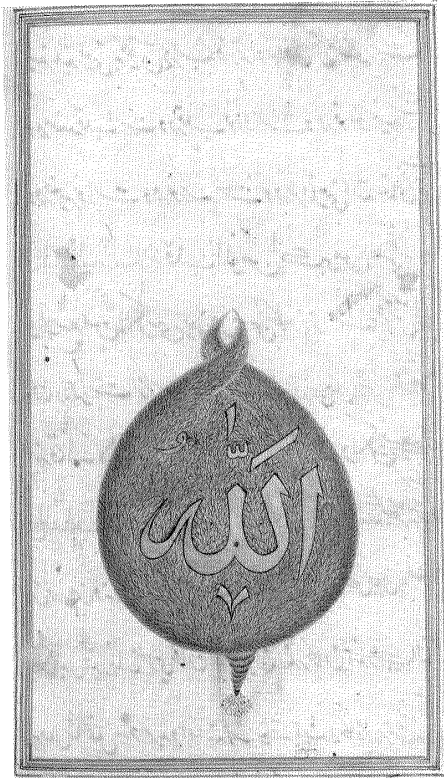
Hyderabad, India

Dated 1172 AH / 1758-59 CE

Copied by Sayyid Muhammad Sharif

Persian manuscript on cream paper, forty-eight folios. Eleven lines of black *nasta'liq* script. Qur'anic quotations in black and red *naskh*, headings and incidentals in red, marginal commentary in black *nast'aliq*. Text block ruled in red, gold and blue. Three double-sided calligraphic panels in black, gold, blue and mica with the names Muhammad, 'Ali, Hasan and Husayn arranged in human forms (ff. 111r-v, 131r-v, 151r-v), one further mystical diagram (ff. 23v). Later bifolium with diagrams of 'good' and 'evil' trees inserted where some text is missing (ff. 34-35). Later binding with purple velvet covers.

FOLIO 23 × 14.5 cm / 23.8 × 15.6 cm



The introduction to this extraordinary manuscript states that the work was composed at the behest of "Asaf al-Dawla Sayyid Muhammad Khan Bahadur Zafar Jang". This is none other than Salabat Jang, the Nizam of Hyderabad from 1752 from 1762, and the first Nizam to enter into a treaty with the British East India Company. Having been placed on the throne with the assistance of the French East India Company, Salabat Jang turned to the British, whose power and influence was on the rise. The alliance did not prove fruitful for Salabat Jang, however; after he was forced to cede territories to the Maharathas he lost the support of the nobility, and was deposed and imprisoned by his brother, Nizam 'Ali Khan, again with the assistance of the British.¹

The introduction states that the manuscript is a collection of Sufi wisdom from the teachings of a certain Hafiz Shah Muhammadi, compiled for Salabat Jang by Hassan b. Sayyid Muhhiy al-Din b. Sayyid 'Abdallah Shahid Bukhari. A colophon on the final page of the text states that work was completed in 1172 AH/1758-59 CE and copied by a certain Sayyid Muhammad Sharif. The dating of the manuscript to a year in the middle of the reign of Salabat Jang, as well as the highly unusual nature of the manuscript – making it unlikely that multiple copies of the work were produced – indicate that this was the copy of the Nizam himself.

The exact relevance of the title, *Risala-yi Aynak-i Buqlamun*, or 'The Treatise on the Spectacles of the Chameleon', is not clear. It is likely, however, to be connected to the outstanding feature of the work – three anthropomorphic calligraphic designs made from the names of Muhammad, 'Ali, Hasan and Husayn. These are in the form of double-sided images, with the same diagram on both the recto and verso of the page. In one of these the letters are in gold, but in the other two they are made from translucent mica. Though calligraphic designs in the shape of lions, birds, or other non-human figures were not uncommon in the eastern Islamic lands in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such anthropomorphic designs were extremely rare and usually confined to the Shi'i tradition in places like Safavid and Qajar Iran, or the Deccan.²

WK

¹ See Alikhan 1991, pp. 88-91.

² For another such anthropomorphic design, also from the Deccan, see Sotheby's, London, 3 May 2001, lot 46.

يا اعلیٰ السلاسل من رانی فتدماهی الحقی فرمود عیادت نام
 یعنی هر که دیدم را پس بچیت دید حق تعالی را و تفصیل اربع عناصر
 این است • اول خاک • دوم آب • سوم آتش • چهارم
 باد • چند چیز از خاک برآورد استخوان رگ گوشت پوست
 سوی رنگ زرد کرد • لذت زفت داد • چند چیز از آب برآورد •
 عرق • خوی • خون • بول • آب منی • رنگ سرخ کرد • لذت بلخ
 داد • چند چیز از آتش برآورد • کربنکی • تشنگی • مستی • خواب • لذت
 رنگ سید کرد • لذت تلخ داد • چند چیز از باد برآورد •
 لرزیدن • جنبیدن • دیدن • نشستن • دراز کشیدن •
 رنگ سبز کرد • لذت ترش داد • دیگر چند چیز از هوا برآورد • حرص • غصه • وسوسه
 خوف • لطف • رنگ کمبود داد • لذت شیرین داد و غیر عناصر از هوا برآورد



این چهار عنصر است که در این کتاب
 شرح شده است و در این کتاب
 نیز آمده است

40 Leaf from a 'Polier' Album

Delhi and Lucknow
1196 AH / 1781-82 CE

Four lines of Persian in black *nasta'liq* script in cloud cartouches on a ground of gold foliate scroll. Text block surrounded by large border of polychrome floral scrolls. Verso consists of a painting of lady reclining on a low seat with a maid in attendance, also surrounded by a border of large polychrome floral scrolls. Calligraphy signed "Muhammad 'Ali 1196" (1781-82 CE).

FOLIO 39.6 × 28 cm
TEXT AREA 21.5 × 12 cm

The colourful floral borders on this album leaf immediately identify it as a leaf from one of the albums compiled by Antoine Polier, a Swiss military engineer who served in the British East India Company and in the courts of the Nawabs of 'Awadh in the second half of the eighteenth century. Polier became immersed in the courtly culture of North India, using the fortune he amassed there to collect manuscripts and patronize Indo-Persian art forms such as calligraphy and painting.¹

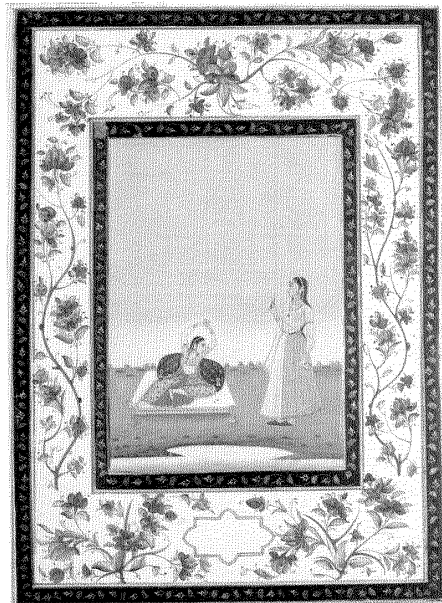
The bottom left corner of the calligraphy leaf is signed "Muhammad 'Ali 1196" (1781-82 CE). Muhammad 'Ali was a well-known calligrapher at the court of the Mughal Emperor Shah 'Alam II (r. 1759-1806) and a tutor to the Emperor's son.² Polier may have met the calligrapher during his own period of service at the court of Shah 'Alam II following his removal from office and dismissal from Faizabad in 1775 as a result of political intrigue in Calcutta. Polier was able to re-enter the East India Company with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and return to 'Awadh in 1782, first to Faizabad and then to Lucknow, where he stayed until his return to Europe in 1788.³

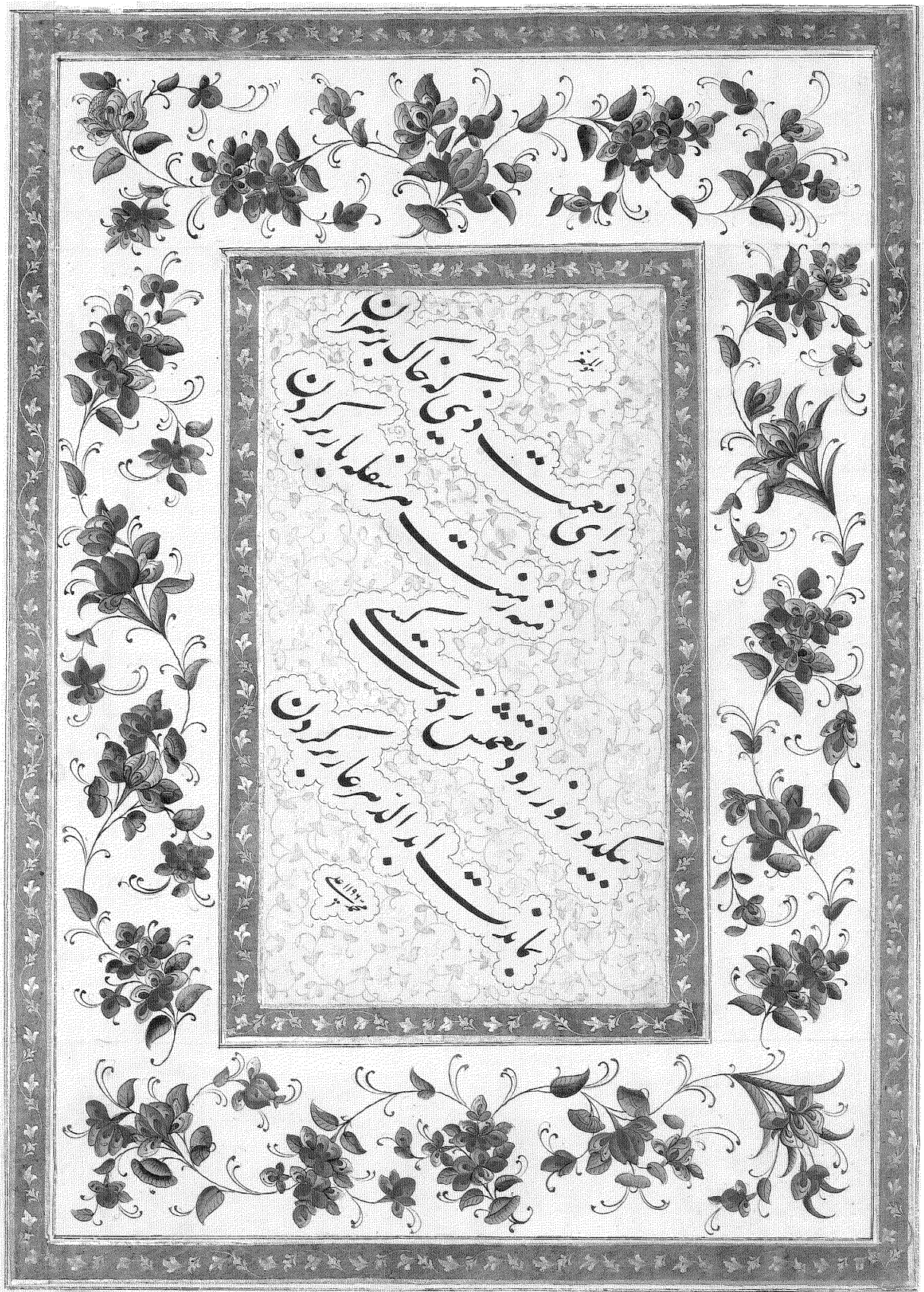
It was during this last period of residence in Lucknow that Polier commissioned a team of artists headed by the celebrated artist Mihr Chand to assemble numerous colourful albums of paintings and calligraphy that included both antique leaves as well as work commissioned by Polier himself.⁴ On his return to Europe Polier sold the albums to the English collector William Beckford, from whose

collection eleven of them eventually found their way to the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin.⁵ It seems, however, that Beckford parted with some of the albums at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which accounts for the presence of loose leaves such as the present one.

The style and subject of the painting of a court lady with a maid in attendance on the reverse of the calligraphy is typical of Lucknow painting of the 1780s. WK

- 1 See the biography of Polier by Muzaffar Alam and Seema Alavi in the introduction to Polier's collected correspondence, the *I'jaz-i Arsalani*: Alam and Alavi 2000, pp. 1-9. See also S.C. Welch 1978, p. 88.
- 2 Bayani 1966-69, vol. 3, no. 1149, p. 78.
- 3 Alam and Alavi 2000, p. 5.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6, 52-56. For Mihr Chand's work and his association with Polier, see Losty 2002, pp. 44-49; Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 233-35; Canby 1998, pp. 180-81.
- 5 For details of the Polier Albums in Berlin, see Hickmann 1979, pp. 5-9.



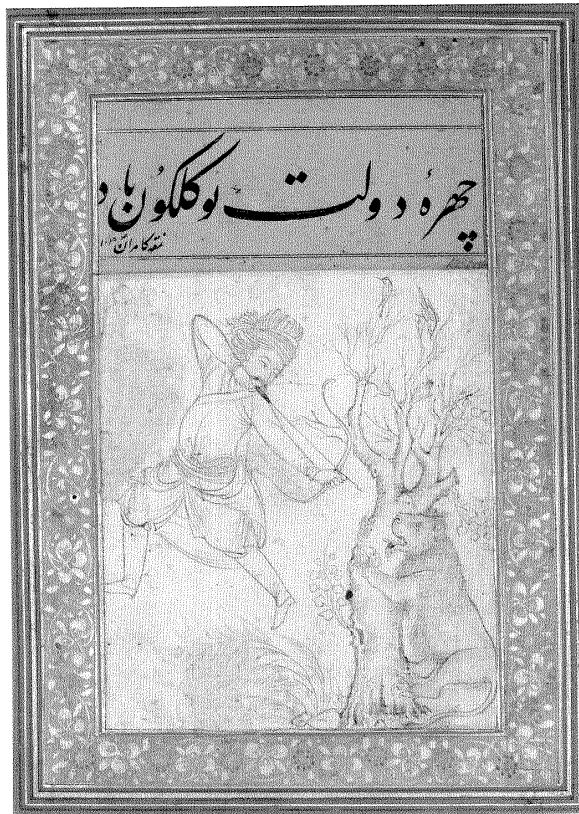


41 Album of painting and calligraphy

Iran and India
16th-19th century

Album of forty-four calligraphic specimens, fourteen Indian paintings, ten Persian paintings and drawings, mounted on coloured borders illuminated with gold and polychrome floral scrolls. Mounted on card, glued together with strips of material into a concertina device. Nineteenth-century Qajar leather covers decorated with floral lacquered medallions and corner-pieces, with sixteenth-century leather doublures with medallions and cornerpieces of gold and brown filigree on blue paper.

FOLIO 29.5 × 19.5 cm



This album represents the culmination of the long-lived tradition in the eastern Islamic lands of compiling volumes of new and antique paintings and calligraphic specimens. Like many of the artistic traditions that were popular in the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires, the practice seems to have evolved in the cultivated courts of fifteenth-century Iran and Central Asia.¹ The popularity of albums was concomitant with changing attitudes towards book-making and authorship, also visible in the rise of other new textual forms such as the anthology.²

Albums also reflected a new interest in historicizing artists and their work, and the major albums commissioned by royal patrons such as the Timurid Baysunghur and the Safavid Bahram Mirza were visual histories of the traditions of calligraphy and painting.³ In the Mughal Empire, the didactic purpose of royal albums, especially those commissioned by Shah Jahan, seem to have been more dynastic than art historical.⁴

The present album seems to have had the dual purpose of presenting the work of some of the major calligraphers from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century and of entertaining the reader with a narrative of contrasting colours, scripts and subjects. Attention has been paid to the layout of the album, so that the same scripts do not repeat themselves from one opening to another. The subject-matter is also consistently varied, so that a bifolium of Qur'anic text in firm *naskh* is followed by a bifolium of poetry running diagonally across the page in a fluid *nast'aliq*.

A similar approach is evident in the pictorial cycle, where bearded mullahs alternate with Indian court ladies amusing themselves at social gatherings, amorous adventures and hunting scenes. The inclusion of paintings of European ladies being visited by cherubs, Hindu subjects such as Krishna and the cowherds, and scenes of Islamic instruction can also be construed as a deliberate attempt to entertain or surprise the reader through variety and contrast.

The majority of the album is made from calligraphic specimens, which include examples of *naskh*, *nast'aliq*, *shikasta* and *tal'iq*. The earliest piece of calligraphy, and the only one in the album to stretch across a double page, is part of an early Safavid royal decree in a beautiful *ta'liq* hand. At

the bottom of the left page the document is dated “3 Dhu’l-Hujja 926” (6 December 1518 CE) and signed “Abu’l-Ghazi Sultan Bahadur Mirza Surumiz”, who by his titles would appear to be a Safavid prince. A grandson of Shah Isma’il and son of Bahram Mirza was called Husayn, though this is not a possible identification as Bahram Mirza himself would have been aged only one at the time of the writing of this document. A Sultan Abu’l-Ghazi Husayn is mentioned in a Safavid document dated 1553-54 with reference to a campaign in Georgia,⁵ though again this seems to be rather late to be referring to the scribe of the present document.

Three pieces of calligraphy in the album bear the signature of Mir ‘Ali, the famous calligrapher and follower of the style of Sultan ‘Ali Mashhadi, who was among the artists removed from Herat to Bukhara by the Uzbek ruler ‘Ubaydallah Khan. It was above all for individual album pages in *nast‘aliq* that Mir ‘Ali was famed, and these were eagerly sought after in Iran, India and the Ottoman Empire. A high value seems to have been put on pages by Mir ‘Ali in the Mughal Empire in particular, where they constituted virtually the entire calligraphic component of famous imperial albums such as the ‘Berlin’ and ‘Kevorkian’ albums, compiled by Jahangir and Shah Jahan respectively.⁶

Of the other calligraphers whose work appears in the album, mention should be made of ‘Abd al-Majid Taliqani (d. 1771), whose signature appears on an album page of *nasta‘liq* calligraphy and another of *shikasta*. It is primarily for his work in *shikasta* that ‘Abd al-Majid is remembered, with a general agreement among contemporary and later biographers that he was the pre-eminent exponent of that script.⁷ *Shikasta*, literally ‘broken’, was the last to develop and most ornamental of the scripts used by Iranian calligraphers. *Shikasta* grew out of *nasta‘liq*, and like that script is frequently written diagonally across the page. *Shikasta* is more fluid and pictographic than its forebear,

however, and is characterized by extreme density and the exaggeratedly extended horizontal curves of certain letters.⁸

The album also contains a single leaf in *nast‘aliq* by the peripatetic calligrapher Mir ‘Imad al-Hasani, who eventually settled in Isfahan, where he was engaged by Shah ‘Abbas. The most famous showcase for ‘Imad al-Hasani’s work is another Qajar period album also assembled from a mixture of Iranian and Indian contents, the ‘St Petersburg’ *Muraqqa’*.⁹ The inclusion of a high number of Indian paintings in both albums attests India’s status as a centre of the arts in general and painting in particular under the Mughals and their satellite courts. Since the fifteenth century, new sources of patronage had been attracting a steady stream of scholars, painters, poets and calligraphers from Iran to the increasingly wealthy courts of India. The effect of this ‘brain drain’ on Iran and India is demonstrated by the dominance of the *Sabk-i Hindi*, the ‘Indian style’, an ornate style of Persian poetry developed in the courts of India, in Safavid Iran.¹⁰ However, the use of exclusively Iranian calligraphy in many seventeenth-century Mughal albums, as well as the St Petersburg *Muraqqa’* and the present album, demonstrates Iran’s unrivalled reputation as the home of the calligrapher. WK

1 Roxburgh 2005, esp. pp. 21-35.

2 *Ibid.*, Chapter 4, ‘Reinventions of the Book’, pp. 149-79.

3 *Ibid.*, Chapter 2, ‘First Sighting’, pp. 37-83, and Chapter 6, ‘Bahram Mirza’s 1544-45 Album’, pp. 245-307.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 320-22.

5 Fekete 1977, no. 73, p. 414. I am grateful to Manijeh Bayani for drawing my attention to this reference.

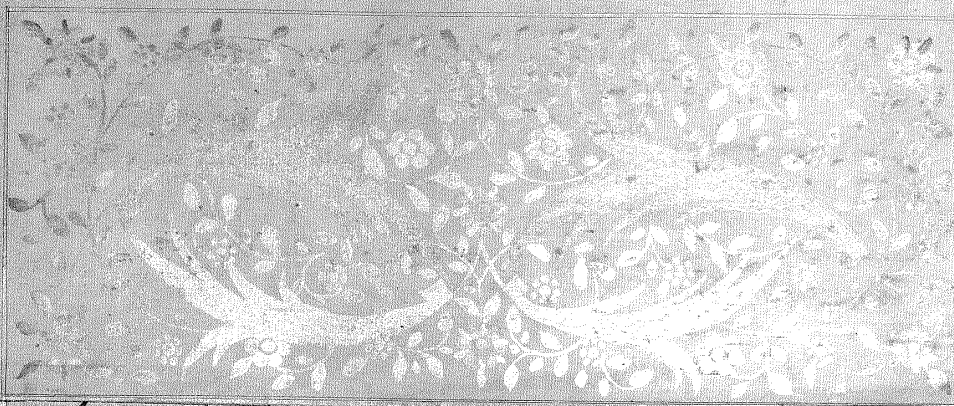
6 On Mir ‘Ali, see Bayani 1966-69, vol. 2, no. 203, pp. 493-517; S.C. Welch *et al.* 1987, pp. 32-35.

7 Bayani 1966-69, vol. 2, no. 575, p. 414; Safadi 1978, p. 30.

8 See Safadi 1978, p. 30; Safwat 1996, p. 106.

9 See Akimushkin 1994.

10 Rypka 1968, p. 114.



فصل في معرفة حكم وضع وصية في وصية من قبل الموصي

فصل في معرفة حكم وضع وصية في وصية من قبل الموصي

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فصل في معرفة حكم وضع وصية في وصية من قبل الموصي

البرهان في الشريعة الإسلامية سنة ١٢٢٤

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله الذي جعلنا من آل أبي طالب
الذين هم خير آل الله

الذين هم خير آل الله
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42 *Dala'il al-Khayrat*

Central Asia, probably Khoqand
23 Sha'ban 1308 AH / 3 April 1891 CE
Copied by Hajji Muhammad Niyaz b. Nur Muhammad Khuqandi

Arabic manuscript on cream silver-sprinkled paper, 171 folios. Nine lines of clear *naskh* script in black ink, keywords picked out in red. Headings in red Eastern Kufic on ground of intertwining blue floral motif. Interlinear rules in silver, text block ruled in green, blue and gold, outer margins ruled in gold. Chapters and quarter-sections marked in margins with illuminated teardrop and circular devices. Twenty-three coloured drawings in gouache (ff. 3v, 4r, 33v-34r, 34v, 35r, 35v, 36r, 36v, 37r, 37v, 38r, 38v, 39r, 39v, 40r, 40v, 41r, 41v, 42r, 155v-156r, 160r), illuminated frontispiece with scrolling roses in vibrant colours on gold ground (ff. 5v-6r). Four illuminated *shamsas* containing text in blue *thulth* (ff. 4v, 5r, 33v-34r). Illuminated calligraphic bifolium containing colophon giving name of copyist and date of completion in red *thulth* (f. 156v-157r), followed by *khatima* (conclusion) in black *shikasta* script (f. 160v-161r). Text followed by nineteen pages of Chagatai verses (ff. 162-171v). Some waterstaining and creasing, otherwise in good condition. Red morocco binding with stamped central medallions decorated with floral motifs, flanked by smaller medallions containing the name of the binder, Mulla Pir Muhammad Sunun.
FOLIO 20.2 × 13.2 cm

The *Dala'il al-Khayrat* of Muhammad ibn Sulyaman al-Jazuli (d. c. 1465) was one of the most widely read prayer books in the later Islamic period and enjoyed popularity not only in al-Jazuli's native Morocco but also in the rest of North Africa and the Ottoman Empire. Copies from the eastern Islamic world are much less common, however. This manuscript is a rare Central Asian copy in which the strikingly original colourful illustrations and diagrams are much more numerous than those in western copies.

The work, of which the full title is *Dala'il al-Khayrat wa Shawariq al-Anwar fi Dhikr al-Salat 'ala al-Nabi al-Mukhtar* (Indications of Good Works and Rays of Light Concerning Prayers for the Chosen Prophet) consists of a prayer for the Prophet Muhammad, a description of his tomb in Medina and a discussion of his various names. In North Africa it became common to illustrate the Prophet's tomb, along with other holy sites in Medina such as the tombs of the Caliphs Abu Bakr and 'Umar and the *minbar* (pulpit) in the Mosque

of Medina. In Ottoman copies the repertoire was frequently expanded to include depictions of the holy sites of Mecca, of which no mention is made in al-Jazuli's original. The expansion of the illustrative programme of copies of the *Dala'il al-Khayrat* accompanied the work's growing popularity as a guide for pilgrims about to undertake the *hajj*.¹

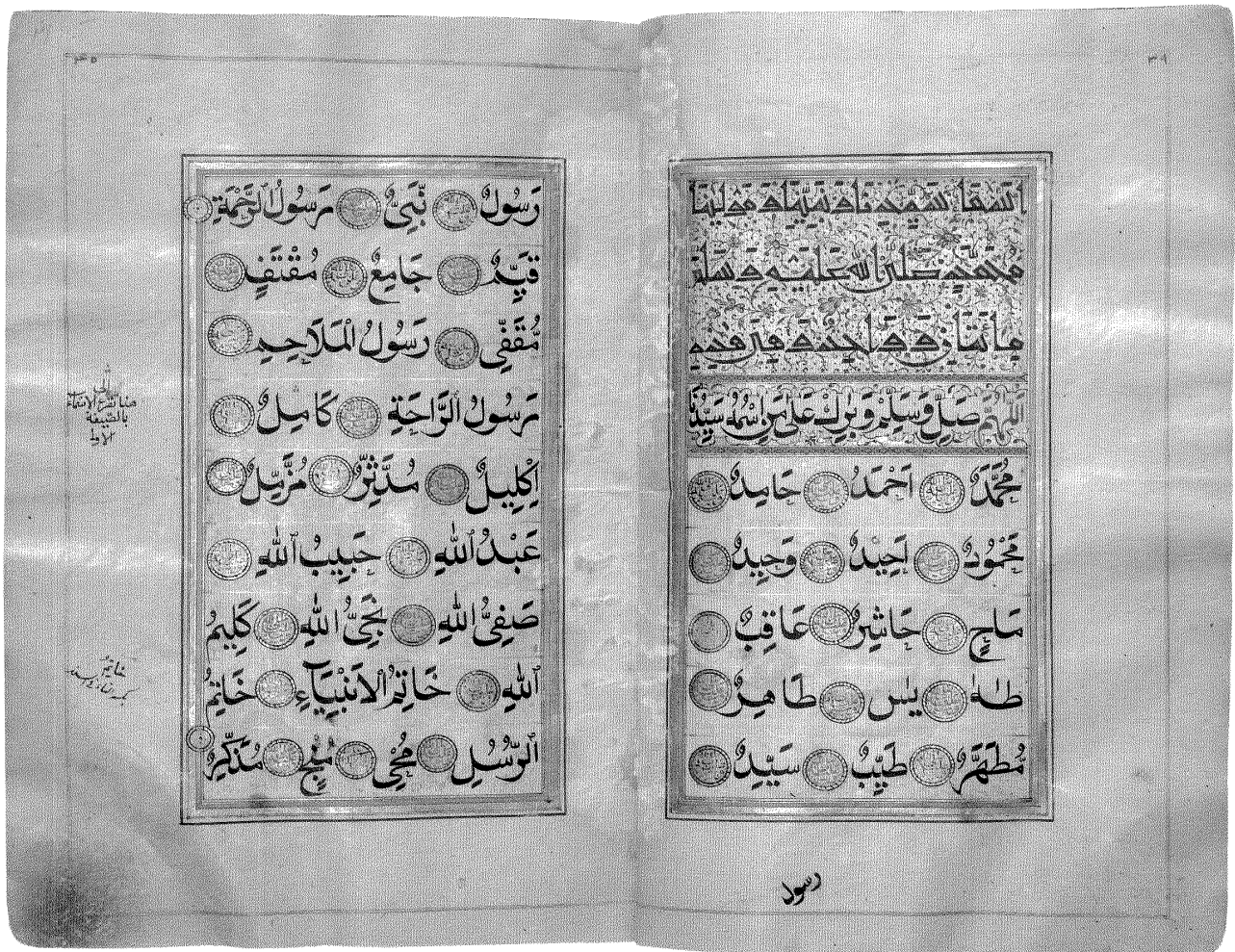
In the present copy, the illustrative programme has been even further extended to include pilgrimage sites and paraphernalia not normally found in *Dala'il al-Khayrat* manuscripts. Many of these additional illustrations, such as those of the various mountains around Mecca and Medina and the *Suq al-Layl*, the area of Mecca in which Muhammad was born, are found in the great Persian pilgrimage guide of the period, Muhyi al-Din Lari's *Futuh al-Haramayn*, which was widely read in the eastern Islamic lands.² The designs for other illustrations, such as those of the al-Aqsa mosque and the soles of the Prophet's feet, probably derive from images found on other media such as Ottoman tiles and pilgrimage charts made in the Holy Cities, largely, it seems, for the Indian market.³ The wide illustrated repertoire, clearly culled from a variety of sources, suggests that the manuscript was intended to be some sort of comprehensive guide to the most important Sunni pilgrimage sites.

The decoration of the manuscript also suggests that the artists drew from multiple sources. Some surprisingly archaic elements, such as the use of Eastern Kufic script for the titles and of illuminated *shamsas* (medallions), suggest that the artists were copying elements from sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Persian or Ottoman manuscripts. Other elements, however, are strikingly original – the tree with red blossoms that opens the manuscript, the colourful scrolling roses that fill the ground of the illuminated frontispiece, and the rose bush that closes the manuscript would seem to be inspired more by Central Asian textiles than manuscript production. Other unusual features in the design include distinctly Chinese-looking architectural elements in many of the illustrations, as well as a genealogical tree of the author, assembled in the shape of a tapering mosque.

The script of the main body of the text is a firm and measured *naskh*, similar to the type popular in North India, particularly Kashmir, though thicker and more compact.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ
وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ
وَمَكَانَتِهِ لَدَيْكَ وَحَبَّتِكَ
لَهُ وَحُبَّتِهِ لَكَ وَبِالسَّلَامِ الرَّحِيمِ

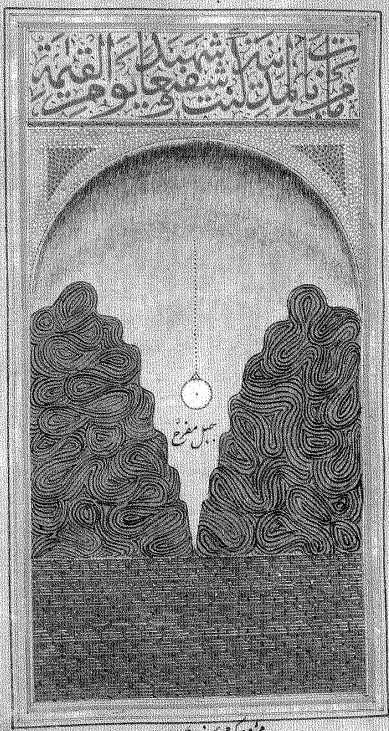
بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ أَنْتَ أَنْزَلْتَهُ
وَتَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ
وَضَاعَفَ اللَّهُ حُبَّتِي فِيهِ
وَعَرَّفَنِي بِحَقِّهِ وَمُرْتَبِهِ وَوَقْفَتِي
لِاتِّبَاعِهِ وَالْقِيَامِ بِأَدْبِهِ وَ



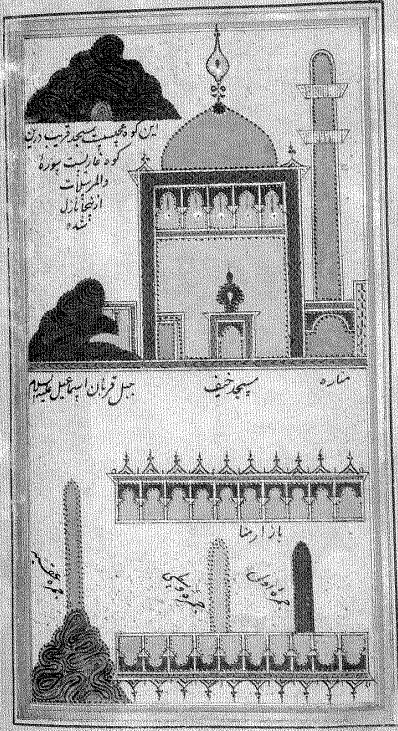
The steadiness and regularity of the hand is seen to particular effect in the section detailing the ninety-nine names of God, with each name separated from the next by a small gold roundel. The calligrapher has also demonstrated his skill in the opening *shamsa*, in which the contents of the *Dala'il al-Khayrat* are listed in blue *thulth* in a circular motion around the centre of the device.

A double-page colophon in red *thulth* gives the date of the completion of the manuscript as 23 Sha'ban 1308 (3 April 1891 CE) and the name of the scribe as "Hajji

Muhammad Niyaz b. Nur Muhammad al-Khuqandi". The scribe's *nisba*, al-Khuqandi, suggests that the manuscript was copied in Khoqand in the Ferghana valley, an attribution consistent with the quality of the work and the Chinese influence apparent in some of the design. From the late eighteenth century Khoqand was the seat of an independent khanate that annexed Tashkent in 1809 and rivalled Bukhara in power. Thanks to its strategic location in the fertile Ferghana valley on the border of Chinese Turkistan, the khanate prospered from its agricultural hinterland and trans-



مژده که هر بهشت سعید
کسب در خضر شد از چنان بزم



این کوچه مسجد است که در این
کوه خاریست نورانی
و المهرتابت
از خضر نازل
شده

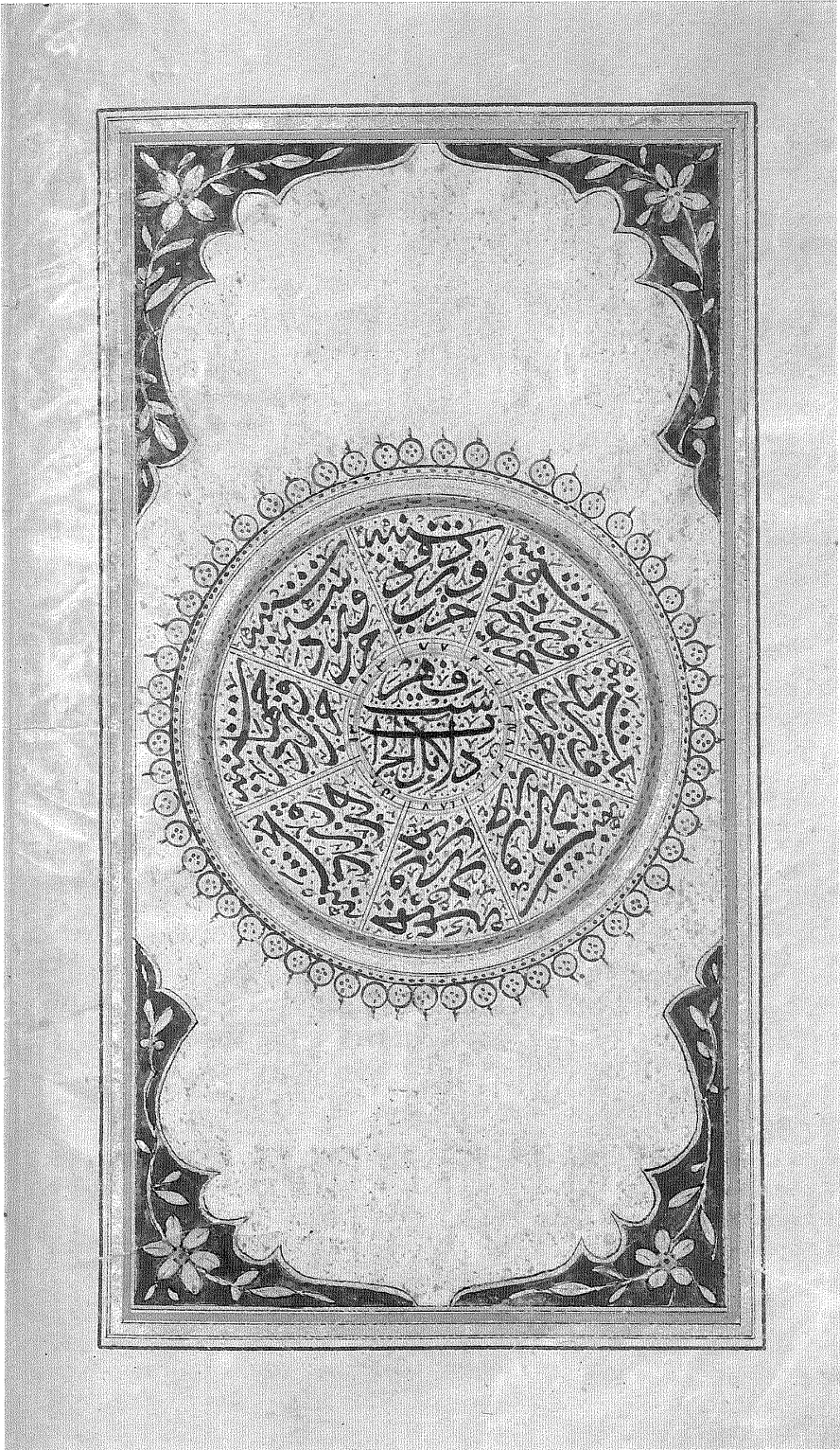
ساره سحر خریف
سیر قرآن استایل کتیب

از ارشاد
سوره مدثر
سوره نوح

Eurasian trade and was home to a vigorous commercial and cultural life despite its turbulent politics. In 1876 the whole khanate was annexed by the Russians, who were eager to establish direct control over such a strategically sensitive area. This manuscript, completed more than a decade after the annexation, is an example of the continuity and development of Islamic traditions in the earliest period of Russian imperialism.⁴

W K

- 1 See J.M. Rogers on Nahla Nassar's discussion of *Dala'il* manuscripts from North Africa and the Ottoman Empire in Rogers 1996, p. 106.
- 2 For an illustrated copy of Lari's text, see State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. VP-941, illustrated in St Petersburg 2000, no. 18, p. 112.
- 3 For such pilgrimage paraphernalia, see *ibid.*, nos. 18-20, pp. 112-16.
- 4 See *EL2*, art. 'Khokand'.



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Front Cover Detail of cat. 21, Large Qur'an in Maghribi script on parchment

Back Cover Detail of cat. 21, *sura* heading medallion coinciding with a *hizb* division

Half title Cat. 33, The Prayer of 'Ukkasha'

Frontispiece Cat. 13, Large Qur'an leaf in Kufic script

Page 4 Cat. 41, Album of painting and calligraphy

Page 5 Details of cat. 21, *sura* heading medallion and geometric marker

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Sam Fogg Ltd
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London W1S 4JZ
Tel. +44 (0) 20 7534 2100
Fax +44 (0) 20 7534 2122
Email info@samfogg.com
www.samfogg.com

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