

A Rediscovered Almoravid Qurʾān in the Bavarian State Library, Munich (Cod. arab. 4)

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Abstract

This article examines and contextualizes a small Quranic manuscript, copied in al-Andalus in 533/1138–1139, whose importance has so far gone unrecognized. Among its many interesting features are: its early date; its lavish illumination; its colophon and the information contained therein; its system of notation and textual division; its use of different calligraphic styles, including Maghribī *thuluth*; and a series of didactic notes written at the beginning and end of the codex. Presented in the appendix is an updated list of the extant Qurʾāns in Maghribī scripts dated to before 600/1203–1204, aimed at encouraging the digitization, publication, and comparative study of this still largely uncharted material. The advancement of scholarship on the arts of the book, the transmission of the Qurʾān, and the consumption of Quranic manuscripts in the Islamic West depends upon the analysis of these and many other surviving codices and fragments, related to Cod. arab. 4 of the Bavarian State Library and its context of production.

Keywords

Al-Andalus – Almoravids – Maghribī scripts – Qurʾān – illumination – calligraphy

1 Cod. arab. 4¹

Among the lesser-known treasures of the Bavarian State Library in Munich is a small Qurʾān, kept under the shelf mark Cod. arab. 4, which once belonged to

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the German humanist Johann Albrecht Widmannstetter (1506–1557).² Despite its unassuming appearance, this manuscript represents an essential piece in the complex jigsaw of the arts of the book in the Western Islamic world.

The codex has a roughly square format (17.3 × 16 cm) and comprises 130 thin parchment folios sewn into ternions and arranged according to Gregory's law, with the flesh side of each folio always facing the flesh side of the following one.³ The left and right margins of each page are scored in dry point, delimiting a written area that measures 11 × 10.5 cm and features 23 lines of miniature Maghribi calligraphy. The codex is profusely illuminated with verse dividers and marginal vignettes, and the text of the Qur'ān is preceded and followed by an impressive set of frontispieces and finispieces. These include four polychrome carpet pages (ff. 2b–3a, 128b–129a), a lavishly ornamented page spread containing the colophon (ff. 127b–128a), and a series of didactic notes written in gold at the beginning and end of the book (ff. 1b–2a, 129b).

The codex has been variously attributed to the 11th, 12th, 13th, and even 14th century, which is indicative of the still inadequate state of scholarship on the history of Quranic calligraphy and illumination in al-Andalus and the Maghrib.⁴ However, a careful reading of the colophon [fig. 1] gives not only a precise year for the completion of this copy, but also the name of one of the artists involved in its making:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ / وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى / النَّبِيِّ الْكَرِيمِ مُحَمَّدٍ / وَعَلَى أَهْلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ
شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ / وَالْمَلَكُ وَالْعِلْمُ قَائِمًا / بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ / الْحَكِيمُ
صَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ

2 The manuscript was first catalogued in Gustav Flügel, "Katalog der arabischen, türkischen, persischen, syrischen und äthiopischen Handschriften aus der Hoff- und Staatsbibliothek in München", *Jahrbücher der Literatur* 47 (1829), 1–46: 35, no. 137 (80), and subsequently in Joseph Aumer, *Die arabischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in Muenchen* (Munich: Palm, 1866), 2. It has also appeared in the following publications: Emil Gratzl, *Islamische Bucheinbände des 14. bis 19. Jahrhunderts: Aus den Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek* (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1924), no. 6; *Das Buch im Orient. Handschriften und kostbare Drucke aus zwei Jahrtausenden*, catalogue of the Munich exhibition, 16.11.1982–5.2.1983 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1982), 125, no. 57; *Prachtkorane aus tausend Jahren*, catalogue of the Munich exhibition, 7.10–28.11.1998 (Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 1998), no. 5.

3 Between f. 26 and f. 27 two quires are missing, originally containing Q. 5:12–6:77. This lacuna predates the 19th-century foliation of the codex.

4 Gratzl, *Islamische Bucheinbände*, "beginning of the 14th century"; *Das Buch im Orient*, "probably 13th-century"; *Prachtkorane*, "12th–13th centuries". The online catalogue of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek gives the date "ca. 11th century": <https://opacplus.bsb-muenchen.de/title/BV035403092> (last accessed: 06.03.2020).



FIGURE 1 Munich, BSB, Cod. arab. 4, ff. 127b–128a. Illuminated colophon with calligraphy in reserve over a leaf-gold background. Maghribī *thuluth* (centre) and Kufic script (frames)

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تَهَمُّ بِإِقَامَةِ هَذَا / المصحف لنفسه ثم / لابنه من بعده ال... أ... / ...
 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ / مما ذهبه وسفره زكريا / ابن محمد بن زكريا القرشي / وكان الفراغ
 منه سنة ثلث وثلثين وخمسة مائة

After a series of religious formulae and pious invocations, we learn that the manuscript was copied in 533/1138–1139, and that it was “illuminated and bound (*dhahhaba-hu wa-saffara-hu*)” by a certain Zakariyā b. Muḥammad b. Zakariyā al-Qurashī. This name, not attested in any of the published sources, must have belonged to an exceptionally skilled artisan if we consider the inventiveness, chromatic richness, and meticulousness of his geometric and calligraphic compositions [fig. 2]. Unfortunately, the codex is no longer bound in its original cover: its current blind-tooled leather binding can be attributed to the 15th century on the basis of similarities with other Islamic bindings from this period.⁵ While Zakariyā signed and dated his work in the rectangular frame of the colophon, the central panel was originally occupied by the name of the patron and first owner of the manuscript, who “took care of the realisation of this Qur’ān, for himself and for his son after him ...”, but this was later scraped off the page in a puzzling act of effacement.

⁵ Thus Gratzl, *Islamische Bucheinbände*, no. 6. It is possible that the codex was re-bound in 15th-



FIGURE 2 Munich, BSB, Cod. arab. 4, ff. 3a (left), 3b (right). Geometric frontispiece and beginning of the Qurʾān (1:1–5) with a calligraphic rendition of the *Fātiḥa* in Maghribī *thuluth*, framed by pious invocation in Kufic

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2 The Patron

It is not unusual to find in the colophons of 12th-century Andalusī Qurʾāns references to the patrons for whom they were produced. In Valencia, the calli-

century Tunisia, from where some of Widmannstetter's Arabic manuscripts came to Europe (e.g. Cod. arab. 1).



graphers ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Ghaṭṭūs (active between 556/1160–558/1163) and Yūsuf Ibn Khaldūn (active in 596/1199–1200) copied Qur’āns of similar size and format for three local notables: Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Madhḥijī al-Lawshī, called “the most glorious vizier (*al-wazīr al-ajall*)”;⁶ a certain Yāsīn b. Lub b. Yāsīn;⁷ and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Bīṭash

6 Cairo National Library, Ms. 196 مصحف (18.5×17.5 cm), copied by ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Ghaṭṭūs in 557/1161–1162, on which see Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd Sharīfī, *Khuṭūṭ al-maṣāḥif ‘ind al-Mashāriqa wa-l-Maghāriba* (Algiers, 1982), 259–265; Élisabeth Dandel, “Ibn Ghaṭṭūs: une famille de copistes-enlumineurs à Valence (Espagne)”, *Histoire de l’art* 24 (December 1993), 13–24: 15. This member of the Banū Sa‘āda al-Madhḥijī may have served as vizier under Ibn Mardanīsh, who ruled over Murcia and Valencia when this Qur’ān was produced.

7 Tunis National Library, Ms. 18791 (17.5×16 cm), copied and illuminated by ‘Abd Allāh Ibn

al-Makhzūmī, a member of the Valencian family of the Banū Bīṭash (or Bīṭish).⁸ A fourth important example of patronage comes from a slightly larger codex dated 599/1203, completed in Marrakesh through the joint efforts of the calligrapher (“*nāsikh*”) Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Sharishī and his son-in-law Yūsuf, the illuminator (“*al-mudhahhib*”).⁹ This is a royal Qur’ān, which, according to its colophon, was produced to celebrate the birth of the Almohad prince Abū Ya’qūb, the son and heir apparent of the caliph al-Nāṣir (r. 595/1199–610/1213).

There is more than one way in which these manuscripts, including the Munich Qur’ān, refer to their dedicatees and the role they played in their realization. The Qur’ān copied for the prince Abū Ya’qūb features the simple expression “*mimmā ‘amala-hu [...] li-[...]*”, translatable as “made by [...] for [...]”, and a similar turn of phrase appears in the Qur’ān dedicated to Ibn Bīṭash al-Makhzūmī (“*kāna kamālu-hu li-[...]*”, meaning “completed for [...]”). In both these colophons, the calligrapher’s name appears before that of the patron, and the patron is not the subject of any verb; in other words, his agency is somewhat downplayed. On the contrary, in the two Qur’āns copied by ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Ghaṭṭūs, the patron’s name is mentioned before that of the copyist and is introduced as the grammatical subject of the sentence: the vizier Abū Muḥammad al-Madhḥijī “commanded the realization of this Qur’ān (*amara bi-iqāmat hādhā al-muṣḥaf*)”, a verb particularly fitting to someone in a position of power, while Yāsīn b. Lub “realized it for himself (*aqāma-hu li-naḥsi-hi*)”. This ambiguous expression could be taken to indicate a hands-on involvement, were it not for the immediately following statement that Ibn Ghaṭṭūs “wrote and illuminated it (*kataba-hu wa-dhahhaba-hu*)”. As we have seen, in the Munich Qur’ān the patron’s (missing) name is preceded by the curious circumlocution “*taham-mama bi-iqāmat hādhā al-muṣḥaf*”, which I have translated as “he took care

Ghaṭṭūs in 558/1162–1163, on which see Sharīfī, *Khuṭūṭ al-maṣāḥif*, 266–269; Dandel, “Ibn Ghaṭṭūs”, 15–16. The dedicatee was apparently the son of a Christian named Lope (or Llop in the Catalan-Valencian dialect, meaning “wolf”).

8 Khalili Collection, Ms. QUR.318 (17×16 cm), copied by Yūsuf b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. Yūsuf b. Khaldūn, on which see David James, *The Master Scribes. Qur’ans of the 10th to 14th Centuries*, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, 11 (London: The Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1992), 92–95.

9 Topkapı Palace Library, Ms. R. 33 (22.3×18 cm), on which see Fehmi E. Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi Arapça Yazmalar Kataloğu*, vol. 1: *Kur’an, Kur’an ilimleri, tefsirler* (İstanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, 1962), 1, 83, no. 299; Martin Lings, *The Quranic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1976), 216–219, pls. 102–103; *Al-Andalus. The Arts of Islamic Spain*, catalogue of the New York exhibition, 1.7.1992–27.9.1992 (New York: Abrams, 1992), 309, no. 79.

of the realization of this Qur'ān". This is because the fifth form of the verb *hamma* conveys a sense of attention and solicitude perfectly reflected in the manuscript's extraordinary features, discussed below.¹⁰

The appearance of the verb *aqāma* (with its verbal noun *iqāma*) in the colophons of these three last Qur'āns suggests that the term was used in connection with patrons and dedicatees, at least in the context of 12th-century Andalusī manuscripts. Supporting evidence comes from the copy of an Andalusī work of Ash'arī theology completed in 540/1146–1147, which ends with a colophon stating: "*fa-rahīma Allāh man aqāma-hu li-nafsi-hi wa-man kataba-hu wa-man qara'a fī-hi*", translatable as: "may God have mercy upon [the person] who realized it for himself, and [upon the person] who wrote it, and [upon the person] who read it".¹¹ Here again, whoever "realized" the manuscript did not actually copy it, but had it copied by someone else: the terminology may appear ambiguous to us, but it was likely not so for a 12th-century Andalusī reader. We are thus left with a tantalizing question: if Zakariyā al-Qurashī simply illuminated and bound the Munich Qur'ān, and if the patron did not take an active part in its creation, then who was responsible for its calligraphy? The absence of any reference to the act of writing or to the copyist in a colophon that gives the names of both the patron and the illuminator is a unique occurrence in this period, and indeed difficult to rationalize. It is tempting to imagine that the special care with which the patron tended to the creation of this codex, as mentioned in the colophon, meant that he personally copied and vocalized the text of the Qur'ān, and then entrusted Zakariyā al-Qurashī with its illumination and binding.

While this cannot be proven, it seems reasonable to suggest that Zakariyā did not copy the text of the Munich Qur'ān: had he done so, he would likely have mentioned it, as was customary. We are thus confronted with a manuscript that, although small, likely resulted from a collaboration between (at least) two individuals, a calligrapher and an illuminator, just like the Qur'ān dedicated to the prince Abū Ya'qūb. This adds to the extraordinary features of the codex, especially since we know that, in 12th-century al-Andalus, Quranic copyists were also skilled illuminators, perfectly able to see to all aspects of book production. The already mentioned 'Abd Allāh Ibn Ghaṭṭūs and his son Muḥammad (d. circa 610/1213–1214), for instance, both signed their work with the expression

10 Reinhart Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (Leiden: Brill, 1881), 11, 763.

11 Rabat National Library, Ms. 98 Q (3), on which see Sa'īd Al-Murābiṭī, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc—Tome VII: fonds Q* (Casablanca: Maṭba'at al-Najāḥ al-Jadīda, 2001–2002), 172–173, No. 171.

“written and illuminated by [...] (*kataba-hu wa-dhahhaba-hu ...*)”.¹² Similarly, a miniature Maghribī Qur’ān in the Saxon State and University Library of Dresden was completed in 580/1184 by a certain Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī al-Murri (or al-Marī, i.e. from Almería), who “wrote, vocalized, and illuminated it (*kataba-hu wa-ḍabaṭa-hu wa-dhahhaba-hu*)”.¹³

3 The Notation System

If, as it seems, the copyist and the illuminator of the Munich Qur’ān were not the same person, it is anything but straightforward to determine which of the two did what exactly. The Andalusī biographical dictionaries claim that Quranic calligraphers were first and foremost religious scholars, trained in Quranic recitation (*tajwīd*) and variant readings (*qirā’āt*), and praised on account of their accuracy in vocalizing (*ḍabt*, *tanqīṭ*) the text of the Revelation.¹⁴ In the Andalusī-Maghribī tradition, however, the practice of Quranic vocalization also had considerable aesthetic connotations, given the rich polychromy that characterizes this system, which differs significantly from that of coeval manuscripts from the eastern Islamic world. The distinctive Andalusī way of vocalizing the Qur’ān, based on the practice of early Medinan scholars, seems to have developed in the recitation circles established by Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795), and was later adopted in the lands where the Mālikī school of law became predominant, especially Muslim Iberia.¹⁵ In his treatise *al-Muḥkam fī naqṭ al-maṣāḥif* (“The Precise on the Vocalisation of Qur’āns”), the Denian scholar Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān al-Dānī (d. 444/1053) insists on the specificity of the dotting employed by the “vocalizers of our country (*nuqqāṭ bilādi-nā*)”. He refers to the authoritative model established by Ḥakīm b. ‘Imrān al-Muqri’, “the

12 On Ms. 18791 of the Tunis National Library see above, note 7. A second Qur’ān in the same library, Ms. 13727 (16.5×16 cm), was copied and illuminated by Muḥammad Ibn Ghaṭṭūs in 564/1168–1169: see Sharifi, *Khuṭūṭ al-maṣāḥif*, 272–274; Dandel, “Ibn Ghaṭṭūs”, 18; *Le Maroc medieval: un empire de l’Afrique à l’Espagne*, catalogue of the Paris exhibition, 17.10.2014–19.01.2015 (Paris: Hazan & Musée du Louvre, 2015), 354–355, nos. 208–209.

13 Ms. Ea. 293 (10×9.5 cm), on which see Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium Bibliothecae Regiae Dresdensis* (Leipzig: Vogel, 1831), 44.

14 Umberto Bongianino, “Quelques remarques sur l’origine des écritures coraniques arrondies en al-Andalus (v^e/xi^e–vi^e/xii^e siècles)”, *Al-Qanṭara* 38 (July 2017), 153–187: 163–164.

15 Alain George, “Coloured Dots and the Question of Regional Origins in Early Qur’āns—Part 1”, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 17 (January 2015), 1–44: 7–11; Yasin Dutton, “Red Dots, Green Dots, Yellow Dots and Blue: Some Reflections on the Vocalisation of Early Qur’anic Manuscripts—Part 1”, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 1 (January 1999), 115–140: 117–120.

vocalizer of the people of al-Andalus (*nāqīṭ ahl al-Andalus*), in a codex written in 227/842, described in the *Muḥkam* as follows:

The vowels were indicated by red dots, the *hamazāt* by yellow [dots], and initial *alifāt al-waṣl* [i.e. the “connected” *alif* without glottal stop] by green [dots]. *Ṣilāt*, *sukūn*, and *tashdīd* were marked with a thin red pen (*bi-qalam daqīq bi-l-ḥumra*), in the way that we have related about the vocalizers of our land. The *ṣila* was above the *alif* if preceded by a *fatha*, below it if preceded by a *kasra*, and along its middle if preceded by a *ḍamma*. *Alifs* omitted in the *rasm* (*al-alifāt al-maḥdhūfāt min al-rasm*) were included in an abbreviated form (*ikhtisār*) in red. There was a small circle in red for unpronounced letters (*ḥurūf zawā'id*) and lightened letters (*ḥurūf mukhaffafa*), as in “*an[ā]*”, “*la'awḍa'ū*” [Q. 9:47], “*a-fa'im mitta*” [Q. 21:34], “*ūl[ā]'ika*” and “*a-man huwa q[ā]nitun*” [Q. 39:9], as we have shown about the people of Medina, and as it has become the custom of the people of our land.¹⁶

In his work, al-Dānī refers to Quranic manuscripts vocalized through dots, but during the 11th century, Andalusī Qur'āns saw the introduction of a new vocalization system featuring the symbols for *ḍamma*, *fatha*, and *kasra* still in use today. In Andalusī Qur'āns, however, these symbols continued to be penned in red ink. Moreover, the use of coloured dots was maintained in two cases: yellow (or orange) dots marking the *hamza* above or below *alif*, and green dots signalling *alif al-waṣl*. This is precisely what we see in the Munich Qur'ān [fig. 3], and in virtually all the other Quranic manuscripts produced in al-Andalus and the Maghrib in the 12th century. As mentioned by al-Dānī, several other symbols continued to be traced “in a thin red pen”: horizontal strokes for *ṣila* and *madda*, vertical ones for dagger *alif*, and small circles for *zawā'id* and *mukhaffafa* letters.

In the Munich Qur'ān, a significant deviation from al-Dānī's description is that the symbols of *sukūn* and *tashdīd* are traced in blue ink, and not in red. This practice, not mentioned in any of al-Dānī's treatises, is first referred to in the work of the Sevillian scholar Ibn Wathīq (d. 654/1256) as an alternative to the use of red.¹⁷ From the surviving manuscripts, it is clear that this was by far the

16 Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd al-Dānī, *al-Muḥkam fī naqṭ al-maṣāḥif*, ed. 'Izzat Ḥasan, (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1960), 87. This passage is translated and discussed in George, “Coloured Dots”, 8–9. See also Dutton, “Red Dots”, 119.

17 Muḥammad al-Idrīsī al-Ṭāhirī, *Istīmāl al-alwān fī iṣṭilāḥāt ḍabṭ al-maṣāḥif 'ind 'ulamā' al-*



FIGURE 3 Munich, BSB, Cod. arab. 4, f. 5b. Full-text page (2:35–56)

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preferred choice of Andalusī vocalizers since the end of the 11th century, as demonstrated by a codex dated 483/1090 in the Uppsala University Library.¹⁸ These scholars, therefore, had to produce and employ four different coloured

Andalus wa-l-Maghrib: bayn al-taʿšīl al-fiqhī wa-l-taṭbīq al-manhajī (Casablanca: Maṭbaʿat al-Najāh al-Jadida, 2009), 68.

18 Ms. O. Bj. 48 (17×14.5 cm), for which see Carl J. Tornberg, *Codices arabici, persici et turcici*

inks (red, blue, yellow, and green) in addition to the black ink they used for transcribing the consonantal text of the Qur'ān (*rasm*), which definitely blurs the line between a copyist's job and that of an illuminator. For this reason, Quranic scribes and vocalizers were also artists and perceived as such, and their work was appreciated for its accuracy and reliability as well as for its beauty. This is evident from medieval accounts such as that of Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. al-Ṣayyād al-Fāsī, dated 726/1325–1326 and transmitted by the Mamluk historian al-Ṣafadī (696/1297–764/1363), which describes the work of Muḥammad Ibn Ghaṭṭūs in these terms:

I myself saw a Qur'ān, or possibly more, penned by him [i.e. Muḥammad Ibn Ghaṭṭūs], and it was indeed a marvellous thing, for the beauty of its execution (*ḥusn al-waḍ'*) and the exquisiteness of the strokes (*ri'āyat al-marsūm*). Each vowel was marked very neatly with one colour: the *shadda* and the *jazm* [i.e. the *sukūn*] with blue (*lāzaward*); *ḍamma*, *kasra*, and *fatha* with the colour of [red] lac (*lakk*); green (*al-akhḍar*) was used for *hamza* with *kasra*, and yellow (*al-asfar*) for *hamza* with *fatha*. Everything was executed without blemishes, and there was not a single *wāw*, or *alif*, or any other letter or word in the margin (*fī al-ḥāshiya*) or outside [the text block]. It was as if every imperfection had been removed.¹⁹

This description could very well be applied to the Munich Qur'ān, although produced some thirty years before Muḥammad Ibn Ghaṭṭūs began his career in the 1160s. In this codex, moreover, the anonymous calligrapher went as far as to mark every single recitation pause (*waqf*) with superscript letters traced in the same blue ink used for *sukūn* and *tashdīd*: a miniature *tā'* indicates the “perfect pause” (*al-waqf al-tāmm*), a miniature *kāf* signals the “sufficient pause” (*al-waqf al-kāfī*), and a miniature *ḥā'* marks the “good pause” (*al-waqf al-ḥasan*). This unique feature is explained in detail in a prefatory note written in gold ink and enclosed in two illuminated frames on folios 1b–2a [fig. 4], which reads:

Bibliothecae Regiae Universitatis Upsaliensis, (Lund: Berling, 1849), 245–246, no. CCCLXXI; *Le Maroc médiéval*, 224, no. 127.

- 19 Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aḃbak al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, ed. Aḃmad al-Arnā'ūt and Muḥammad Turkī Farḥān (Beirut: Dār Iḃyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2000), III, 280–281, no. 1433. Note that al-Ṣafadī misunderstands the function of green and yellow dots: instead of *hamza* with *kasra* and *hamza* with *fatha*, they mark *hamzat al-qaṭ'* and *hamzat al-waṣl*. For a Spanish translation and discussion of this passage, see José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, *La aventura del cálamo: historia, formas y artistas de la caligrafía árabe* (Granada: Edilux, 2007), 165–167.

إِلْمُ وَقَفْنَا اللَّهُ وَإِيَّاكَ أَنَّ الْقُرْءَ الْحَافِظُ / أَبَا عَمْرُو عُثْمَانَ بْنِ سَعِيدِ بْنِ عُثْمَانَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ
 / أَلْفَ كِتَابًا سَمَّاهُ بِالْمَكْتَفَى فِي مَعْرِفَةِ الْوَقْفِ / التَّامِّ وَالْوَقْفِ الْكَافِي وَالْوَقْفِ الْحَسَنِ فِي كِتَابِ
 اللَّهِ / عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بَيَانِ مَعَانِيهِ وَشَرْحِ مُشْكَلِهِ اقْتَضَى ذَلِكَ / مِنْ أَقَاوِيلِ الْمُفَسِّرِينَ وَمِنْ كُتُبِ
 الْقُرَاءِ وَالنَّحْوِيِّينَ وَالْعِلْمَاءِ / مِنْ شَيْوَحِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ إِذْ وَرَدَتِ السَّنَةُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
 عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِاسْتِعْمَالِهَا وَالْحُضِّ عَلَى تَعْلِيمِهَا فَقَسَّمَهَا أَقْسَامًا / يَطُولُ شَرْحُهَا وَاخْتَارَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ
 الْأَقْسَامِ الْأَقْسَامَ / الثَّلَاثَةَ الْمَذْكُورَةَ بَعْدَ هَذَا وَقَالَ بِهَا أَعْنِي الْوَقْفَ التَّامَّ / وَالْوَقْفَ الْكَافِي
 وَالْوَقْفَ الْحَسَنَ وَقَدْ نَبَّهْتُ عَلَى جَمِيعِهَا / فِي هَذَا الْمَصْحُفِ بِعَلَامَةٍ رَسَمْتُهَا عَلَى كُلِّ / وَقْفٍ مِنْهَا
 بِاللَّازِرِ وَرَسَمْتُ عَلَى الْوَقْفِ / التَّامِّ تَاءً وَرَسَمْتُ عَلَى الْوَقْفِ الْكَافِي / كَافًا وَرَسَمْتُ عَلَى الْوَقْفِ
 الْحَسَنِ حَاءً لِيَعْلَمَ / الْقَارِئُ وَقَفَّهُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعَ ذَلِكَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ / وَيَقِفْ عِنْدَهُ

God help us! Know and be aware that the master reciter Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān b. Sa‘īd b. ‘Uthmān [al-Dānī] wrote a treatise which he entitled *The Adequate [manual] for the knowledge of the perfect pause, the sufficient pause, and the good pause in [the recitation of] the Book of God almighty*, with an explanation of its meanings and elucidation of its difficulties. He did so by drawing upon the opinions of the exegetes and the works of the reciters, grammarians, and religious scholars from among his masters, since the Prophet—peace be upon him—established the use [of these pauses] and encouraged their study. [Al-Dānī] divided them into categories, the explanation of which would be too long and, from these categories, he selected the three that we shall mention, namely the perfect pause, the sufficient pause, and the good pause. I have marked all of them in this manuscript, using symbols that I have traced in blue above each pause: a *tā’* above the perfect pause, a *kāf* above the sufficient pause, and a *hā’* above the good pause. Let the reciter be aware of all this, and may God help him, and may he stick to it, God willing.

This extraordinary document attests to the degree of competence and perfectionism achieved by our anonymous scribe, and possibly by other 12th-century Quranic calligraphers whose work has unfortunately not survived. Moreover, it confirms the enduring currency of the treatises on Quranic recitation and variant readings authored by al-Dānī in the previous century, as well as his unchallenged reputation as the foremost Andalusī authority on these matters.²⁰ Indeed, there is copious evidence that his work on recitation pauses

20 On al-Dānī and his work see Juan Manuel Vizcaino Plaza and Muḥammad Fakhri al-Wāṣif,



FIGURE 4 Munich, BSB, Cod. arab. 4, ff. 1b–2a. Prefatory note in Maghribi *thuluth*, enclosed in two illuminated frames with marginal vignettes

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continued to be transcribed and taught in al-Andalus until the fall of Granada, while Aljamiado translations of other treatises by the same author circulated within the Morisco communities of 16th-century Spain.²¹ Just like al-Dānī, whoever commissioned the Munich Qur'ān was also interested in the different traditions discussing the number of verses, words and letters contained in the Revelation, as suggested by another note written in gold ink and enclosed in a similar illuminated frame, after the finispieces (f. 129b):

عدد آي القرآن في المدني ستة آلاف آية ومائتا آية / وسبع عشرة آية بفاتحة الكتاب وهو المدني
الأول / وصاحبه شيبه بن نصاح مولى أم سلمة زوج النبي وعدد / آي القرآن في المدني الآخر
وصاحبه إسماعيل بن جعفر ستة / آلاف آية ومائتا آية وأربع عشرة آية وهو في البصري
وصاحبه / عاصم المجدي ستة آلاف آية ومائتا آية وست وثلاثين آية وفيه / من الحروف
في المدني الأول ثلاث مائة ألف حرف واحد وعشرين ألف / حرف ومائتان وخمسون حرفا

²¹ "Al-Dānī, Abū 'Amr", in *Biblioteca de Al Andalus*, ed. Jorge Lirola Delgado and José Miguel Puerta Vilchez (Almería: Fundación Ibn Tufayl de Estudios Árabes, 2004–2012), I, 308–322.

²¹ Juan Pablo Arias Torres, "Un fragmento del *Kitāb al-Muktafā* de al-Dānī entre los libros árabes de Cútar (Málaga)", *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 26 (2015), 19–28: 23.

وهو في عدد الكوفي كذلك وفيه خمس وسبعون / ألف كلمة وثلاث مائة كلمة وثلاث عشرة
كلمة وفي القرآن ست مائة عشر / وثلاثة وعشرون عشرا وسبع آية وفي القرآن ألف ومائتا
خمس وسبعة وأربعون خمسا وأيتان

The number of verses in the Qurʾān according to the Medinan [tradition] is 6 217 including the *Fātiḥa*. This is the first Medinan [tradition], attributed to Shayba b. Naṣṣāḥ, client to Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet. The number of verses in the Qurʾān according to the second Medinan [tradition], attributed to Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, is 6 214, while in the Basran tradition established by ʿĀsim al-Jaḥḍarī [the number of verses] is 6 236. According to the first Medinan [tradition], the number of letters in the Qurʾān is 321 250, and likewise according to the Kufan [tradition]. [The Qurʾān] is comprised of 75 313 words. In the Qurʾān, there are 623 groups of ten verses, remainder 7, and 1 247 groups of five verses, remainder 2.

The striking way in which scholarship and calligraphy are combined in these explanatory notes reflects the professionalism of the manuscript's maker(s), but also the interests and mentality of its patron and first owner. He must have been a competent scholar of the Qurʾān, who instructed Zakariyā the illuminator to include these highly technical texts at the beginning and end of the book, and asked the anonymous scribe to note the additional recitation marks. Even if not mentioned explicitly, these counts are drawn from another treatise by al-Dānī, titled *al-Bayān fī ʿadd āy al-Qurʾān* ("Elucidation of the Number of Verses in the Qurʾān").²² It would indeed be difficult to imagine a better example of the interconnection between scriptural erudition, recitational practices, and aesthetic thinking which characterized the medieval Islamic West.

4 The Calligraphy

The winding calligraphic style of both these notes, the *Fātiḥa* [fig. 2], and the central parts of the double colophon [fig. 1] differs noticeably from the angular Kufic script used in the *sūra* headings and the outer frames of the colophon and the *Fātiḥa*. Even though *fāʾ* and *qāf* are dotted according to the Maghribī system (one dot below the *fāʾ* and one above *qāf*), this script clearly

22 Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd al-Dānī, *al-Bayān fī ʿadd āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. Ghānim Qaddūrī al-Ḥamad, (Kuwait: Markaz al-Makḥṭūʾāt wa-l-Turāth wa-l-Wathāʾiq, 1994), 73–83. I wish to thank Juan Pablo Arias Torres for this and other precious suggestions.

imitates the calligraphy of the Islamic East, with its distinctive letter shapes, ligatures, and ductus. For this reason, it is generally referred to as Mashriqī script or Maghribī *thuluth*, after the name of one of the most famous eastern styles, *thulth* or *thuluth*, “the principal chancery script with pronounced curvilinear features”.²³ Another definition of Maghribī *thuluth* developed by modern Moroccan scholarship is that of *Mashriqī mutamaghrab* (“Maghribized Mashriqī”), which emphasizes the creative reinterpretation of eastern models carried out by most Maghribī calligraphers.²⁴ The Munich Qur'ān represents the earliest dated evidence for the use of this calligraphic style in an Andalusī manuscript, standing at the beginning of a long tradition that would become fully established in the second half of the 12th century. At least twelve Qur'āns produced between 534/1139 and 600/1204 (including those copied by 'Abd Allāh and Muḥammad Ibn Ghaṭṭūs) feature colophons, dedications, and didactic notes written in Maghribī *thuluth*.²⁵ This was apparently intended as a ‘display script’ and a calligrapher’s show of bravura, as demonstrated by the fact that it is always artistically executed either in chrysography outlined in black ink, or in reserve over a blue or leaf-gold background.

With the exception of the *Fātiḥa*, the suras of the Munich Qur'ān were copied in the miniature Maghribī style common to all the 12th-century Quranic codices in small square format that survive from the Islamic West. This script is characterized by thin threadlike strokes produced by a small *qalam* with a sharp nib, possibly made of metal. Once labelled ‘Andalusī’ to distinguish it from other types of Maghribī scripts, this peculiar style was equally employed by Quranic copyists on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar, hence the wise

23 See “*Thuluth* script” in Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), 274–275. For Maghribī *thuluth* and the use of Mashriqī scripts in the Maghrib, see Muḥammad al-Manūnī, *Ta'riḥ al-wirāqa al-Maghribiyya. Šinā'at al-makhṭūṭ al-Maghribī min al-'aṣr al-wasīṭ ilā al-fatra al-mu'āṣira* (Rabat: Jāmi'at Muḥammad al-Khāmis, 1991), 47; 'Umar Afā, and Muḥammad al-Maghrāwī, *Al-Khaṭṭ al-Maghribī: ta'riḥ wa-wāqī' wa-āfāq* (Rabat: Wizārat al-Awqāf, 2013), 63–64.

24 Al-Manūnī, *Ta'riḥ al-wirāqa*, 14; Afā & al-Maghrāwī *Al-Khaṭṭ al-Maghribī*, 63–64.

25 Three interesting examples are: Ms. RES/272 of the Madrid National Library (8×7 cm), a miniature Qur'ān copied in Almería in 534/1139, with a colophon in Maghribī *thuluth* chrysography, on which see Bongianino, “Quelques remarques”, 176–178; the above-mentioned Ms. R. 33 of the Topkapı Palace Library, with a Maghribī *thuluth* dedication to the Almohad prince Abū Ya'qūb executed in reserve over a leaf-gold background (see above, note 9); and Ms. 934 ج of the Rabat National Library (24.6×22.5 cm), a Qur'ān copied in 598/1202, with a note included in the two finispieces (ff. 145b–146a), which gives the number of verses, letters, words, dots, groups of ten verses, groups of five verses, prostrations, and chapters in the Qur'ān, written in Maghribī *thuluth* in reserve over a blue background (see Sharifi, *Khuṭūṭ al-maṣāḥif*, 281–285).

decision to abandon this misleading geographical designation.²⁶ Despite the opinion of some scholars, the fact that *fāʾ*, *qāf* and *nūn* in final position always bear a diacritical dot is not exclusively associated with this style.²⁷ What sets this miniature script aside from all the other Maghribī hands is its angular aspect, obtained through the complete suppression of the oval bodies of *ṣād*, *ḍād*, *ṭāʾ*, and *ẓāʾ*, and of the rounded variant of initial and medial *kāf*, with its semi-circular stem. These elements are all replaced by parallel horizontal lines, often extremely elongated, joined together by short strokes, either vertical or oblique. The frequent elongation of letters (and of ligatures between letters) in the Munich Qurʾān harks back to the ancient Abbasid scripts used in early Qurʾāns, and must have also functioned as a visual encouragement to pronounce each word carefully, thus adding solemnity to the recitation [fig. 5].²⁸ The calligrapher's aim was arguably to give the script an archaizing aspect by evoking the angularity of Kufic, but also to impress the readers with his skills and mastery of even the most minute strokes. It should be noted that similar scripts are sometimes also found in non-Quranic manuscripts produced in the same period and region, mostly combined with illumination, as a means of visually conveying the prestige and authoritativeness of a particular recension of a work.²⁹

The only attempt at a palaeographic analysis of this calligraphic style, made by the Algerian scholar Muḥammad Sharīfī in 1982, was based on the script employed by ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Ghaṭṭūs in a Qurʾān dated 557/1161–1162, but can perfectly be applied to the Munich Qurʾān, too [fig. 6].³⁰ In addition to the frequent elongation of certain letters and ligatures, Sharīfī remarks on the use of a double baseline in some words, through the rightward elongation of the body of medial and final *jīm*, *ḥāʾ*, and *khāʾ*, in the shape of a line stretching below

26 See "Andalusī script" in Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, 8–9; Tim Stanley, *The Qurʾān and Calligraphy. A Selection of Fine Manuscript Material* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1996), 21–22.

27 See, for instance, Muḥammad al-Manūnī, "Taʾrīkh al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf bi-l-Maghrib", *Majallat Maʿhad al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿArabīyya* 1 (May 1969), 3–47; 16; David James, *The Master Scribes. Qurʾāns of the 10th to 14th Centuries*, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, 11 (London: The Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1992), 89–91.

28 See "Early Abbasid scripts" in Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, 97–98.

29 See, for instance, a copy of the exegetical work *al-Hidāya ilā bulūgh al-nihāya* by Makki b. Abi Ṭālib al-Qaysī al-Qurtubī, dated 485/1092 (Rabat National Library, Ms. 337 ل); a copy of al-Zubaydī's dictionary *Mukhtasar al-ʿAyn*, dated 518/1124 (Fes, Qarawiyyīn Library, Ms. 1238); and a copy of the *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* dated 573/1178 (Rabat National Library, Ms. 586 ج).

30 Cairo National Library, Ms. 196 مصحف (18.5 × 17.5 cm), on which see Sharīfī, *Khuṭūʿ al-maṣāḥif*, 259–265.



FIGURE 5 Munich, BSB, Cod. arab. 4, f. 100b, detail. End of *Sūrat al-Shūrā* (42:52–53) and beginning of *Sūrat al-Zukhruf* (43:1–8). Illuminated heading of *Sūrat al-Zukhruf*, with marginal vignette and title in gold Kufic script. Note the elongations of certain letters and ligatures on ll. 1–2, and of the *basmala* on l. 4.

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the preceding letters.³¹ The same effect is sometimes achieved through the horizontal extension of the tail of final *yā' rāji'a* ("yā' turned backwards").

Other calligraphic traits observable in the script of the Munich Qur'ān, common to most contemporary Quranic manuscripts from al-Andalus and the Maghrib, are:

- The leftward inclination of the head serifs of *alif*, *lām*, and final *kāf*;
- Final *bā'*, *tā'*, *thā'*, and *fā'* terminate with a long horizontal stroke without the upward denticle at the end;
- Long, oblique stems of *ṭā'*, and *ẓā'*;
- Ample initial 'ayn traced with an oversized curl;
- Final *mīm* always has a long, plunging tail curled leftwards;
- Isolated *lām-alif* is always drawn as two separate strokes, both curved, intersecting near the baseline;
- The baseline ligatures between the letters *bā'*, *tā'*, *thā'*, *sīn*, *shīn*, 'ayn, *ghayn*, *fā'*, *qāf*, *lām*, *nūn* and *yā'* present an accentuated saw-toothed profile. The same can be said about the lower part of medial 'ayn, *ghayn*, *fā'*, and *qāf*, often rendered as an open space in the shape of a triangle.

The resemblance between the script of the Munich Qur'ān, that of 'Abd Allāh Ibn Ghaṭṭūs 23 years later, and that of other 12th-century Andalūsī calligraphers whose work has survived is indeed remarkable. This suggests that a well-codified and widely accepted mode of Quranic calligraphy—or rather, micrography—was among the hallmarks of Maghribī visual culture and religious praxis. But the characteristic script, format, and system of vocalization of

31 Sharīfī, *Khuṭūṭ al-maṣāḥif*, 277.

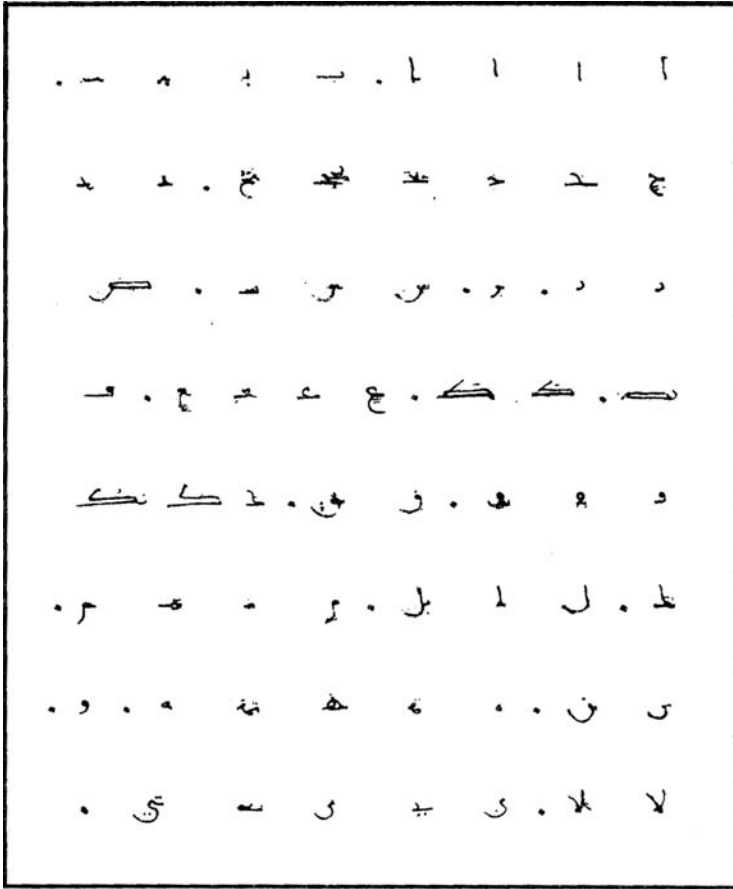


FIGURE 6 Muḥammad Sharīfī's palaeographic table for the script used by
'Abd Allāh b. Ghaṭṭūs
FROM SHARĪFĪ, *KHUṬŪṬ AL-MAṢĀḤIF*, 264

these Qur'āns find parallels in a number of equally distinctive textual features, first and foremost the adherence to the Medinan reading (*qirā'a*) of Warsh from Nāfi', which is also the one followed in the Munich Qur'an.

5 Sūra Titles and Textual Divisions

A second interesting feature shared by Maghribī Quranic manuscripts is the preference for certain *sūra* titles different from those used in the contemporary Islamic East. For instance, in the Munich Qur'an the title of *sūra* 26 is *al-Zūlla* ("the Shadow"), and not *al-Shu'arā'* ("the Poets") as in the eastern tra-

dition; *sūra* 98 is called *al-Bariyya* (“the Creatures”), and not *al-Bayyina* (“the Clear Evidence”); *sūra* 104 is titled *al-Ḥuṭama* (“the Crusher”), not *al-Humaza* (“the Slanderer”), and so forth. As already remarked by Juan Pablo Arias Torres and François Déroche, these apparently trivial variations could help us date and identify regional trends or the work of specific scribes just as much as paleographic and codicological analyses, and are therefore very important to record and compare.³² Some of these specifically Maghribī titles are mentioned and employed by al-Dānī in his treatises, but others seem to be found exclusively in Quranic manuscripts. Also, the number of verses in each *sūra* (which is always indicated in *sūra* headings) presents conspicuous idiosyncrasies. The copyist of the Munich Qur’ān followed what al-Dānī calls “the first Medinan count” in his *Bayān*, a system transmitted by the early Medinan scholar Nāfi‘ that departs noticeably from other eastern counts, such as the Basran or the Kufan.³³ What follows is a complete list of *sūra* titles and verse counts as given in the Munich Qur’ān; all differences from the 1924 Cairo edition—which follows the reading of Ḥafṣ from ‘Āsim and the Kufan verse count—are highlighted in bold:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Fātiḥat al-Kitāb</i> (7) | 13. <i>Al-Ra’d</i> (44) |
| 2. <i>Al-Baqara</i> (285) | 14. <i>Ibrāhīm</i> (54) |
| 3. <i>Āl ‘Imrān</i> (200) | 15. <i>Al-Ḥijr</i> (99) |
| 4. <i>Al-Nisā’</i> (175) | 16. <i>Al-Naḥl</i> (128) |
| 5. <i>Al-Mā’ida</i> (122) | 17. <i>Al-Isrā’</i> (110) |
| 6. – missing – (167) | 18. <i>Al-Kahf</i> (105) |
| 7. <i>Al-A’rāf</i> (206) | 19. <i>Maryam</i> (99) |
| 8. <i>Al-Anfāl</i> (76) | 20. <i>Ṭā’ Hā’</i> (134) |
| 9. <i>Al-Tawba</i> (130) | 21. <i>Al-Anbiyā’</i> (111) |
| 10. <i>Yūnus</i> (109) | 22. <i>Al-Ḥajj</i> (76) |
| 11. <i>Hūd</i> (122) | 23. <i>Al-Mu’minūn</i> (119) |
| 12. <i>Yūsuf</i> (111) | 24. <i>Al-Nūr</i> (62) |

32 Juan Pablo Arias Torres and François Déroche, “Reflexiones sobre la catalogación de ejemplares alcoránicos (a propósito del ms. 1397 de El Escorial)”, *Al-Qanṭara* 32 (January 2011), 243–260; 248–250. For a discussion of *sūra* titles in the Islamic tradition and a useful list of variants based on medieval sources see Lamya Kandil, “Die Surennamen in der offiziellen Kairiner Koran Ausgabe und ihre Varianten”, *Der Islam* 69 (1992), 44–60. In this connection, see also Arent Jan Wensinck, *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane*. Tome VIII. *Indices* par Wim Raven et Jan Just Witkam (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 369–421.

33 Al-Dānī, *Al-Bayān*, 139 ff. It should be noted that in *sūra* 58, 62, 90, 91, 101, and 110, the verse count stated in the headings does not match the actual number of verses in the text: these are probably scribal mistakes.

25. *Al-Furqān* (77)
26. *Al-Zulla* (226)
27. *Al-Naml* (95)
28. *Al-Qaṣaṣ* (88)
29. *Al-Ankabūt* (69)
30. *Al-Rūm* (60)
31. *Luqmān* (33)
32. *Al-Sajda* (30)
33. *Al-Aḥzāb* (73)
34. *Saba'* (54)
35. *Fāṭir* (46)
36. *Yā' Sīn* (82)
37. *Al-Ṣāffāt* (182)
38. *Dā'ūd* (86)
39. *Al-Zumar* (72)
40. *Ghāfir* (84)
41. *Fuṣṣilat* (53)
42. *Al-Shūrā* (50)
43. *Al-Zukhruf* (89)
44. *Al-Dukhān* (56)
45. *Al-Sharī'a* (36)
46. *Al-Aḥqāf* (34)
47. *Al-Qitāl* (39)
48. *Al-Fath* (29)
49. *Al-Hujurāt* (18)
50. *Qāf* (45)
51. *Al-Dhāriyāt* (60)
52. *Al-Ṭūr* (47)
53. *Al-Najm* (61)
54. *Al-Qamar* (55)
55. *Al-Raḥmān* (77)
56. *Al-Wāqī'a* (99)
57. *Al-Ḥadīd* (28)
58. *Al-Mujādila* (25)
59. *Al-Hashr* (24)
60. *Al-Mumtaḥana* (13)
61. *Al-Ṣaff* (14)
62. *Al-Jum'a* (12)
63. *Al-Munāfiqūn* (11)
64. *Al-Taghābun* (18)
65. *Al-Ṭalāq* (12)
66. *Al-Tahrīm* (12)
67. *Al-Mulk* (30)
68. *Al-Qalam* (52)
69. *Al-Ḥāqqa* (52)
70. *Al-Ma'ārij* (44)
71. *Nūḥ* (30)
72. *Al-Jinn* (28)
73. *Al-Muzzammil* (18)
74. *Al-Muddaththir* (56)
75. *Al-Qiyyāma* (39)
76. *Al-Insān* (31)
77. *Al-Mursalāt* (50)
78. *Al-Naba'* (40)
79. *Al-Nāzi'āt* (45)
80. *Abasa* (42)
81. *Kuwwirat* (29)
82. *Infatārat* (19)
83. *Al-Muṭaffifīn* (36)
84. *Inshaqqat* (25)
85. *Al-Burūj* (22)
86. *Al-Ṭāriq* (17)
87. *Al-A'lā* (19)
88. *Al-Ghāshiyā* (26)
89. *Al-Fajr* (32)
90. *Al-Balad* (25)
91. *Al-Shams* (16)
92. *Al-Layl* (21)
93. *Al-Duḥā* (11)
94. *Nashrah* (8)
95. *Al-Tīn* (8)
96. *Al-'Alaq* (20)
97. *Al-Qadr* (5)
98. *Al-Bariyya* (8)
99. *Zulzilāt* (8)
100. *Al-'Ādiyāt* (11)
101. *Al-Qārī'a* (8)
102. *Al-Takāthur* (8)
103. *Al-'Aṣr* (3)
104. *Al-Ḥuṭama* (9)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 105. <i>Al-Fīl</i> (5) | 110. <i>Al-Fath</i> (4) |
| 106. <i>Quraysh</i> (5) | 111. <i>Al-Masad</i> (5) |
| 107. <i>Al-Dīn</i> (6) | 112. <i>Al-Ṣamad</i> (4) |
| 108. <i>Al-Kawthar</i> (3) | 113. <i>Al-Falaq</i> (5) |
| 109. <i>Al-Kāfirūn</i> (6) | 114. <i>Al-Nās</i> (6) |

If similar lists could be drawn for all the dated Maghribī Qur'āns known to us, they would provide an invaluable benchmark for attributing undated manuscripts to specific contexts and periods with more confidence. However, most of these Qur'āns are kept in Middle Eastern and North African libraries that only grant very limited access to their collections, and the single survey published to date covers a limited sample that only includes one manuscript from the 12th century.³⁴

A third and final idiosyncrasy of Maghribī Qur'āns is found in their complex system of textual division. In the Munich Qur'ān, the standard verse separator is represented by a cluster of three gilded roundels arranged into a triangle. However, every fifth verse is marked with a gilded Kufic *hā'* (representing the digit 5 in the Arabic alphanumeric system or *abjad*), and every tenth verse ends with a gilded roundel surrounded by eight alternating blue and red dots. Each tenth-verse marker in the text block is always accompanied by a corresponding gilded medallion in the margin, consisting of a petalled circle enclosing a roundel in which the verse number is spelled out in Kufic chrysography (*‘ashara* for the tenth verse, *‘ishrūn* for the twentieth, and so forth). The text of the Qur'ān is then divided into sixty equal parts (*aḥzāb*, sing. *ḥizb*), which are signalled by larger illuminated medallions in the margins, enclosing a roundel with the word *ḥizb* in Kufic chrysography. While these are all rather standard features, the Munich Qur'ān is further divided into ten equal parts, as well as ninths, eighths, sevenths, sixths, fifths, fourths, thirds, and halves, all of which are accurately indicated in the margins in bold Kufic chrysography, dotted and vocalized in blue [fig. 7]. Once again, it seems that the scribe placed all these division marks in accordance with the instructions provided by al-Dānī in his *Bayān*, with only very rare and minor departures.

In addition, the text is further divided into 27 equal sections called *tajzi'āt Ramaḍān*, rather than into the canonical thirty *ajzā'* (sing. *juz'*). These sections refer to the first 27 nights of the holy month of Ramaḍān, and allow to recite the entire Qur'ān during *tarāwīḥ*, or night prayer, ending on the 27th night of the month, known as *Laylat al-Qadr* (the “Night of the Decree”), when the prophet Muḥammad received his first revelation. The end of each *tajzi'a* is indicated by

34 Arias & Déroche, “Reflexiones”, 255–270.



FIGURE 7 Munich, BSB, Cod. arab. 4, f. 48b, detail. Part of *Sūrat Yūsuf* (12:47–56). In the margin is a *ḥizb* medallion (25th *ḥizb*, 12:53), a smaller medallion marking the 50th verse of the *sūra*, and two notes marking the completion of the second fifth and fourth tenth of the Qurʾān.

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illuminated trilobed devices in the margins, containing the last word of the relevant passage in Kufic chrysography over a green background [fig. 8]. This kind of textual division, unparalleled in the Islamic East, seems to be specific to a group of Qurʾānic manuscripts produced in al-Andalus and Northwest Africa that await further study.³⁵ The Munich Qurʾān represents one of the earliest surviving witnesses of this practice, which lasted until the early 17th century among the Moriscos living in Habsburg Spain.³⁶

6 Conclusions

Based on these elements, it is possible to draw some conclusions regarding the nature and purpose of this and other similar Qurʾānic manuscripts from the same period. As we have seen, the patron and/or copyist of the Munich Qurʾān must have been a religious scholar competent in Qurʾānic sciences, but also

35 See Carlo Alberto Anzuini, *I manoscritti coranici della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana e delle biblioteche romane* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2001), 412; Teresa Espejo Arias, Juan Pablo Arias Torres, *El corán de Cútar, Málaga: estudio introductorio* (Seville: Junta de Andalucía, 2009), 84–85.

36 The use of *tajziʾāt Ramaḍān* is documented, for instance, in the aljamiado translation of the Qurʾān preserved in Ms. T235 of the Castilla-La Mancha Library in Toledo, completed in 1606. For a critical edition of this manuscript, see Consuelo López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo. Edición y estudio del manuscrito 235 de la Biblioteca de Castilla La Mancha* (Gijón: Ediciones Trea, 2011).



FIGURE 8 Munich, BSB, Cod. arab. 4, details of ff. 40b, 50a, 82b. Examples of *tajzi'at Ramaḍān* in the margins

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a man deeply concerned with producing an exemplar of the highest possible accuracy and visual appeal. The use of the atypical expression *tahammama bi-iqāmat hādhā al-muṣḥaf* (“he took care of the realization of this Qur’ān”) in the colophon emphasizes the patron’s commitment to the task, confirmed by his choice to employ a professional illuminator—Zakariyā b. Muḥammad b. Zakariyā al-Qurashī—to provide the manuscript with lavish frontispieces and finispieces. The Munich Qur’ān was not commissioned to be endowed to a mosque or religious institution, but for the owner’s private use (*“li-naḥsi-hi”*) and for his son after him, and was arguably meant to become a cherished family heirloom handed down from father to son. Codices such as this probably functioned as personal or travel copies, to be read from during acts of familial devotion, especially in the holy month of Ramaḍān, as suggested by the division into 27 *tajzi’āt*. However, they also had a strong pedagogic purpose, since the extra-textual notes and the profusion of vocalization and orthoepic notation were clearly intended to instruct the reader in the art of correct recitation and memorisation. The plethora of textual divisions would have allowed different types of learners to tackle the Quranic text at different paces: *ḥizb* by *ḥizb*, tenth by tenth, seventh by seventh, and so forth. While larger Qur’āns in multiple volumes were endowed to Andalusī and Maghribī mosques by the ruling elites for public recitation, it was through small manuscripts such as this that students and scholars prayed and exercised their reading in a domestic environment.

The Munich Qur’ān was produced at a turbulent time when the fortunes of the Almoravid dynasty were declining, and yet the cities of al-Andalus witnessed in this period a renewed cultural effervescence brought about by the rise of new local families of governors, judges, and jurists. The effacement of the owner’s name may point to a moment of regime change, possibly coin-

ciding with the downfall of the Almoravids, the second *tāʾifa* period, and the Almohad conquest of Iberia (1147–1172). The obliteration of names of patrons, owners, or calligraphers from medieval Maghribī colophons is an extremely rare phenomenon, and cannot simply be explained in terms of changes of ownership. A new owner would have added their name at the beginning of the book or after its colophon, without any need to erase someone else's name and titles from it. The only other instance of effacement in a 12th-century Andalusī manuscript (that I am aware of) was carried out at the expenses of an Almohad prince in a luxury copy of the *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* produced for his library in 573/1178, in Murcia.³⁷ His name, titles, and lineage were entirely expunged from the colophon, without any attempt to replace them with those of a new owner, while the signature of the calligrapher and the indication of the date and place of production were left intact. It is therefore possible that the patron of the Munich Qurʾān was also a governor, appointed by the Almoravid emir, or at least an Almoravid supporter of some consequence—perhaps the *imām* or preacher at a major mosque—whose memory had to be eradicated.

Even if just speculatively, it is tempting to attribute the Munich Qurʾān to the scholarly and artistic milieu of Córdoba, the Almoravid capital of al-Andalus, based on the striking similarities in format, layout, and script with a codex copied and illuminated in Córdoba five years later, in 538/1143–1144 [Fig. 9].³⁸ This, too, is a lavishly illuminated manuscript penned by an anonymous calligrapher, who added after the colophon two handsome finispieces emblazoned with the words: “Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ghāfiqī al-Shārī was born in Murcia, in the month of Shawwāl of the year 537, may God make him happy and successful”. The scion of the important Murcian family of the Banū Yaḥyā al-Ghāfiqī, Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Shārī became a renowned transmitter of works of *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* and a scholar of *qirāʾāt*.³⁹ This manuscript was evidently commissioned to celebrate his birth, probably by his proud father. Similarly to the Munich Qurʾān, this is a fascinating example of a personal codex imbued with a sense of familial self-assertion and domestic intimacy. Interestingly, its copying and illumination were not

37 Rabat National Library, Ms. 586 ج.

38 Istanbul University Library, Ms. A 6755 (18.2 × 17.8 cm), on which see Fehmi E. Karatay, *İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Arapça Yazmalar Kataloğu* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1951), I, 5, no. 13; *Al-Andalus*, 304–305, no. 75.

39 For a biography of Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Shārī see Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Abbār al-Qudāʾī, *Al-Takmilā li-Kitāb al-ṣila*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām al-Harrās (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995), II, 128, no. 331.



FIGURE 9 Istanbul University Library, Ms. A 6755, ff. 3b–4a, with the *Fātiḥa* and the beginning of *Sūrat al-Baqara* (1:1–2:25)

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entrusted to a Murcian master but to a Cordoban one, which might indicate the pre-eminence of this city in the arts of the Qur'ān during the last decades of Almoravid rule.

For its historical and art historical significance, the Munich Qur'ān can be considered one of the most remarkable artefacts to have survived from 12th-century al-Andalus, and should be given pride of place within the increasingly growing corpus of the earliest Maghribī Qur'āns known to us. Appended to this article is a list of dated Qur'āns in Maghribī script copied until the year 600/1203–1204, which updates the previous lists published by David James in 1992 and by François Déroche in 2001.⁴⁰ A comparative study of these 27 manuscripts and their textual, codicological, and aesthetic features would be crucial to the advancement of scholarship on the arts of the book and the transmission of the Qur'ān in the medieval Islamic West, and should not be deferred any further. An important piece has been added to the jigsaw, but a lot more remains to be done as new material waits to be identified in libraries, museums, and private collections all over the world.

⁴⁰ James, *The Master Scribes*, 89; François Déroche, "Cercles et entrelacs: format et décor des Corans maghrébins médiévaux", *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 145 (January 2001), 593–620: 612.

Appendix: A List of Dated Qur'āns in Maghribī Script Arranged in Chronological Order⁴¹

- I. **Rajab 398/1008.** Single folio from a codex in horizontal format (14.8 × 20.2 cm). Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, Inv. ŞE 13216/1.⁴²
- II. **Şafar 432/1040.** Single folio from a codex in horizontal format (14.4 × 17.5 cm). Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, Inv. ŞE 13644/1.⁴³
- III. **Ramaḍān 470/1078.** Single-volume codex in miniature square format (7.9 × 7.9 cm), copied in Córdoba for the *wazīr* 'Abd al-Malik b. Sirāj. Present location unknown.⁴⁴
- IV. **Jumādā I 483/1090.** Last volume from an eight-volume set in small rectangular format (17 × 14.5 cm). Uppsala University Library, Ms. O.Bj. 48.⁴⁵
- V. **488/1094–1095.** Single-volume codex in small square format (15 × 15 cm), copied by 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Baṭalyawsī. Medina, King 'Abd al-'Azīz Public Library, Ms. 19.⁴⁶
- VI. **533/1138–1139.** Single-volume codex in small square format (17.3 × 16 cm), illuminated and bound by Zakariyā b. Muḥammad b. Zakariyā al-Qurashī. Munich, Bavarian State Library, Cod. arab. 4.⁴⁷

41 Four manuscripts have been excluded from the list:

- A) Topkapı Palace Library, Ms. R. 2, a paper codex in vertical format dated 509/1115 and 532/1137, which was not written in Maghribī script despite what is stated in Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi*, 1, 84–85, no. 302.
- B) Topkapı Palace Library, Ms. R. 29, a paper codex in Maghribī script that, although mentioning the year 555/1160 in its colophon, must date from the 10th/16th century, based on its calligraphy and style of illumination (Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi*, 1, 83, no. 297).
- C) Istanbul University Library, Ms. A 6756, a miniature paper codex (10.5 × 10 cm) with a colophon dated 500/1107, but which is in fact a 19th-century copy of an earlier manuscript (Karatay, *İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi*, 1, 4, no. 12).
- D) Escorial Library, Ms. D. 1397, copied in Malaga by Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad b. Mufaḍḍal in the year 701/1302, but repeatedly misdated to 500/1106–1107 (Déroche, "Cercles et entrelacs", 611) and to 601/1204 (*Le Maroc médiéval*, 360, no. 213). A correct reading of its date has been provided in Arias & Déroche, "Reflexiones".

42 François Déroche, "Deux fragments coraniques maghrébins anciens au Musée des arts turcs et islamiques d'Istanbul", *Revue des Études Islamiques* 59 (1991), 229–236.

43 Déroche, "Deux fragments coraniques".

44 This manuscript was auctioned twice: *Islamic and Indian Art*, Bonham's, London, 6.4.2006, lot 5; *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds*, Christie's King's Street, London, 7.10.2008, lot 97. The date allegedly given in the colophon remains to be ascertained.

45 See above, note 18.

46 I thank Professor 'Abd Allāh al-Munif for having shared with me some images of this manuscript. The date seems plausible but it can no longer be verified, since the codex has apparently lost its colophon page.

47 See above, note 2.

- VII. **Jumādā I 534/1139.** Single-volume codex in miniature square format (8×7 cm), copied by Aḥmad b. Ghalinduh in Almería. Madrid, National Library of Spain, Ms. RES/272.⁴⁸
- VIII. **538/1143–1144.** Single-volume codex in small square format (18.2×17.8 cm), copied in Córdoba. Istanbul University Library, Ms. A 6755.⁴⁹
- IX. **556/1160–1161.** Single-volume codex in small square format (17×16.5 cm), copied by 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī [Ibn Ghaṭṭūs] in Valencia. Present location unknown.⁵⁰
- X. **557/1161–1162.** Single-volume codex in small square format (18.5×17.5 cm), copied by 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī [Ibn Ghaṭṭūs] for the *wazīr* Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abd Allāh al-Madhḥijī *thumma* al-Lawshī, in Valencia. Cairo National Library, Ms. 196 مصحف.⁵¹
- XI. **558/1162–1163.** Single-volume codex in small square format (17.5×16 cm), copied and illuminated by 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī [Ibn Ghaṭṭūs] for Yāsīn b. Lubb b. Yāsīn, in Valencia. Tunis National Library, Ms. 18791.⁵²
- XII. **559/1163–1164.** Single-volume codex copied by Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. Ḥizb Allāh in Valencia. Tetouan, Library of the Higher Institute, Ms. 1.⁵³
- XIII. **564/1168–1169.** Single-volume codex in small square format (16×16.5 cm), copied and illuminated by Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad [Ibn Ghaṭṭūs] in Valencia. Tunis National Library, Ms. 13727.⁵⁴
- XIV. **Rajab 565/1170.** Single-volume codex in small square format (15×15.7 cm). Isle of Bute, Mount Stuart, Collection of the Marquess of Bute, Ms. 359;⁵⁵

48 See above, note 25.

49 See above, note 38.

50 This manuscript was auctioned twice: *Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures*, Sotheby's, London, 30.4.1992, lot 336; *Arts of the Islamic world*, Sotheby's, London, 22.4.1999, lot 12. See also Dandel, "Ibn Ghaṭṭūs", 13–15.

51 See above, note 6.

52 See above, note 7.

53 Sharīfī, *Khuṭūṭ al-maṣāḥif*, 270–271. Sharīfī examined the manuscript on the 6th of February 1973. Since then, it has probably been transferred to the Tetouan University Library (*Kullīyyat Uṣūl al-Dīn*), although I have so far been unable to locate it.

54 See above, note 12.

55 Mentioned in James, *The Master Scribes*, 89. The manuscript appears in the typewritten checklist compiled for the 4th Marquess of Bute, titled *A Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library at 5, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh* (August 1935).

- XV. **Ramaḍān 573/1178.** Single-volume codex in small square format (16.5 × 15.5 cm). Kuwait City, Tareq Rajab Museum, Inv. QUR.0059.TSR.⁵⁶
- XVI. **578/1182–1183.** Single-volume codex in small square format (18.2 × 17 cm), copied by Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ghaṭṭūs in Valencia. Istanbul University Library, Ms. A 6754.⁵⁷
- XVII. **Sha‘bān 580/1184.** First volume of a two-volume set in miniature square format (10 × 9.5 cm), copied, vocalized, and illuminated by Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī al-Murri. Dresden, Saxon State and University Library, Ms. Ea. 293.⁵⁸
- XVIII. **Sha‘bān 586/1190.** Single-volume codex in small square format (18 × 15.5 cm). Istanbul University Library, Ms. A 6752.⁵⁹
- XIX. **Muḥarram 587/1191.** Single-volume codex in large rectangular format (31.5 × 26.2), copied by Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Shu‘ayb al-Anṣārī in Ceuta. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, Ms. R. 27.⁶⁰
- XX. **Şafar 591/1195.** Single-volume codex in small square format (18.4 × 17.2 cm). Uppsala University Library, Ms. O. Vet. 77.⁶¹
- XXI. **Muḥarram 595/1198.** Single-volume codex in small rectangular format (21.5 × 18 cm). Médéa (Algeria), private collection, unknown shelf mark.⁶²
- XXII. **Şafar 595/1198.** Second half of a single-volume codex in small square format, copied in Ceuta. Timbuktu, Library of the Ka’ti Foundation, unknown shelf mark.⁶³
- XXIII. **Muḥarram 596/1199.** Single-volume codex in small square format (16.5 × 16.5 cm), copied in Valencia. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, Ms. R. 36.⁶⁴

56 *Tareq Rajab Museum* (Kuwait: Tareq Rajab Museum, 1994), 27. The manuscript was previously kept in the Royal Library of Rabat, under the shelf mark 12609 (see Sharīfī, *Khuṭūṭ al-maṣāḥif*, 275–277; *Al-Andalus* 1992, 308, no. 78).

57 Karatay, *İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi*, 1, 5, no. 14; Lings, *The Quranic Art*, 214–215, pls. 100–101; Dandel, “Ibn Ġaṭṭūs”, 18–19; Mustafa Derman, Nihad Çetin, *The Art of Calligraphy in the Islamic Heritage* (Istanbul: IRCICA, 1998), 204, no. 18.

58 See above, note 13.

59 Karatay, *İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi*, 1, 6, no. 15.

60 Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi*, 1, 83, no. 298; Derman & Çetin, *The Art of Calligraphy*, 205, no. 21; Zeren Tanındı, “Başlangıcından Osmanlı’ya tezhip sanatı”, in *Hat ve tezhip sanatı*, ed. Ali Rıza Özcan (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2015), 243–281: 249, fig. 4.

61 Tornberg, *Codices arabici*, 245, no. CCCLXX.

62 Sharīfī, *Khuṭūṭ al-maṣāḥif*, 278–280. I have so far been unable to locate this manuscript.

63 Miguel Camacho Ramírez, *Fondo Kati: una biblioteca andalusí en Tombuctú* (Seville: Junta de Andalucía, 2002), 46. I thank Professor Juan Pablo Arias Torres for having provided me with a few images of this manuscript.

64 Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi*, 1, 84, no. 300.

- XXIV. 596/1199–1200. Single-volume codex in small square format (17×16 cm), copied by Yūsuf b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Wāḥid b. Yūsuf b. Khal-dūn for Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Bīṭash al-Makhzūmī, in Valencia. London & Geneva, Nasser D. Khalili Collection, Inv. QUR.318.⁶⁵
- XXV. Dhū al-Qa'da 598/1202. Single-volume codex in small rectangular format (20.5×17.5 cm). Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, Ms. R. 31.⁶⁶
- XXVI. Dhū al-Ḥijja 598/1202. Single-volume codex in medium rectangular format (24.6×22.5 cm). Rabat, National Library of Morocco, Ms. 934
ج.⁶⁷
- XXVII. Jumādā II 599/1203. Single-volume codex in small rectangular format (22.3×18 cm), copied by Muḥammad al-Sharīshī and illuminated by Yūsuf b. ... (?) al-Mudhahhib, for Abū Ya'qūb, son of the Almo-had caliph Abū 'Abd Allāh [al-Nāṣir], in Marrakesh. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, Ms. R. 33.⁶⁸

65 James, *The master scribes*, 92–95.

66 Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi*, 1, 83, no. 296.

67 Sharīfī, *Khuṭūṭ al-maṣāḥif*, 281–285. The results of the pigment analyses carried out on this manuscript have been presented in Patricia Roger, Malika Serghini, François Déroche, "Les matériaux de la couleur dans les manuscrits arabes de l'Occident musulman. Recherches sur la collection de la Bibliothèque générale et archives de Rabat et de la Bibliothèque nationale de France", *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 148 (April-June 2004), 799–830.

68 Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi*, 1, 83, no. 299. See also Lings, *The Quranic Art*, 216–219, pls. 102–103; *Al-Andalus* 1992, 309, no. 79.