

# **The Pink Qur'an: A Reverse Biography**

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## **Abstract**

Among the most famous and easily recognisable Quranic leaves circulating on the Islamic art market today are undoubtedly those of the so-called “Pink Qur'an”, a Maghribi manuscript generally attributed to al-Andalus (Muslim Iberia). Over time, its fragmentation and dispersal worldwide have contributed to the partial erasure of its history, and to its dissociation from its context of production and the city where it was kept for centuries – namely, Marrakesh – causing misunderstandings as to its provenance and date. The present article aims to redress these misunderstandings, demonstrating that the Pink Qur'an is an Almohad artifact from the second quarter of the thirteenth century CE, and arguing for its North African (rather than Iberian) origin. The article traces the manuscript's dispersal and reconstructs its biography in reverse chronological order, based on the close examination of the volumes still in Marrakesh and their lacunae. The Pink Qur'an is here considered in its entirety for the very first time, revealing its two distinct styles of calligraphy and illumination, its extremely detailed system of textual division and verse counting, its later history of re-endowments and restorations under the Marinid, Saadian, and Alawite dynasties, and its paramount importance for the study of the arts of the book in the Islamic West.

## **Introduction**

The so-called “Pink Qur'an” is one of the very few Maghribi Qur'ans to have made a name for itself.<sup>1</sup> While the manuscript tradition of the Islamic West remains a sorely neglected field of interest, most students and collectors of Islamic art have become familiar with the immediately recognisable pink paper folios, featuring five lines of large Maghribi script, which are exhibited in several museums worldwide and regularly sold at auction. The same students and collectors are probably also familiar with the traditional attribution of the Pink Qur'an to al-Andalus (Muslim Iberia), and more specifically to the papermaking centre of Xàtiva (a small town near Valencia), as routinely repeated in auction and museum catalogues. Over time, the manuscript's fragmentation and dispersal around the globe have contributed to the partial erasure of its actual history, and to its dissociation from its context of production and the city where it was kept for centuries – namely, Marrakesh – causing misunderstandings as to its provenance and date. The present article aims to redress these misunderstandings,

demonstrating that the Pink Qur'an is an Almohad artifact from the second quarter of the thirteenth century CE, and arguing for its North African (rather than Iberian) origin. In the following pages, we shall trace the manuscript's dispersal and reconstruct its complex biography in reverse chronological order, based on the close examination of the volumes still in Marrakesh and their lacunae. The Pink Qur'an is here considered in its entirety for the very first time, revealing its two distinct styles of calligraphy and illumination, its extremely detailed system of textual division and verse counting, its later history of re-endowments and restorations under the Marinid, Saadian, and Alawite dynasties, and its paramount importance for the study of the arts of the book in the Islamic West.

### **1. Tracing the Pink Qur'an's dispersal (1975–2024)**

The Pink Qur'an first came to the attention of European audiences and collectors in October 1975, when one of its volumes (containing 215 folios) was auctioned at the Hotel George V in Paris. The auction catalogue dated the manuscript to the fifteenth century and gave as its provenance the collection of marshal Hubert Lyautey (1854–1934), the first French Resident-General in Morocco from 1912 to 1925. The volume was then bound in a brown leather cover stamped with gold (probably dating from the nineteenth century), and the text was correctly identified as running from *sura* 8 *al-Anfal* to *sura* 12 *Yusuf*.<sup>2</sup> The same volume was auctioned again at Sotheby's, London, the following year. In the Sotheby's catalogue, the Pink Qur'an was attributed to "Andalucia or North Africa, thirteenth–fourteenth century".<sup>3</sup> On that occasion, the volume was apparently acquired by an art dealer who later dismembered it and started selling it piecemeal: thirteen detached folios or bifolios from Lyautey's volume were acquired by private collections during the 1980s (such as the David Collection and the Aga Khan Collection) and appeared in more auctions from the end of the 1990s (Table 1).<sup>4</sup> Several leaves with the same provenance are today on display in the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and in the Cincinnati Art Museum (Table 2). Interestingly, the two bifolios currently in the MET and MIA feature consecutive portions of text without breaks, but their leaves are pasted together and do not form part of the same paper sheet (Fig. 1). If they ever did, then they would have belonged to the central bifolio of a quire which was at some point cut down the middle, perhaps when the volume was re-bound. It is more likely, however, that these "artificial bifolios" were created after 1976, from consecutive loose folios of the disbound manuscript that were never part of the same paper sheet.

**Table 1. Sales of Lyautey's volume and related folios (chronological order)**

<b>Auction House</b>	<b>Number of folios</b>	<b>Dimensions (height x width)</b>	<b>Text</b>
Boisgirard, 30 October 1975, lot 488	215	320 x 245 mm	8:42–12:49
Sotheby's, 14 April 1976, lot 247	215	327 x 257 mm	8:42–12:49
Sotheby's, 23 April 1997, lot 42 <sup>5</sup>	1	326 x 258 mm	11:55–7
Sotheby's, 23 April 1997, lot 43	1	326 x 257 mm	10:33–5
Sotheby's, 18 October 2001, lot 19	1	326 x 256 mm	10:104–6
Christie's, 1 May 2001, lot 2 <sup>6</sup>	1	317 x 250 mm	10:44–6
Christie's, 6 October 2009, lot 41	2	325 x 257 mm	9:100–3
Sotheby's, 6 October 2011, lot 11 <sup>7</sup>	2	320 x 257 mm	10:35–9

**Table 2. Folios of Lyautey's volume in heritage collections (sequential order)**

<b>Institution or Private Collection</b>	<b>Provenance</b>	<b>Number of Folios</b>	<b>Dimensions (height x width)</b>	<b>Text</b>
Copenhagen, David Collection, 31a/1989 & 31b/1989	Anonymous gift	2	324 x 256 mm	10:18–19 10:22–3
Bashir Mohamed Family Collection	Malaysian private collection	1	326 x 256 mm	10:[24]–6
Cincinnati Art Museum, 2016.369a-b <sup>8</sup>	Gift of Jo Lynn M. and Byron W. Gustin	1	–	10:26–7
Toronto, Aga Khan Museum, AKM258 <sup>9</sup>	Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan Collection	1	326 x 256 mm	10:27–9
Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, MS.806.2011	Purchased at auction (Sotheby's 06/10/2011)	2	320 x 257 mm	10:35–9
Detroit Institute of Arts, 2008.23	Purchased at auction (Sotheby's 09/04/2008)	1	317 x 250 mm	10:44–6
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2017.232 <sup>10</sup>	Bookseller David Spode (Sydney) until 2013; Art Passages (San Francisco) between 2013–17	2	318 x 251 mm	10:46–50
Bashir Mohamed Family Collection	Malaysian private collection	1	326 x 256 mm	10:108–11:1
Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, MS.346.1999	Collection of Jasim al-Homeizi	1	328 x 259 mm	11:40–2

During the 1980s and early 1990s, the Pink Qur'an gained some popularity in Europe and the United States thanks to three significant exhibitions of Islamic art. In 1985, one folio from Lyautey's volume from the Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan Collection (now in the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto) was exhibited in Geneva and described as produced in "Spain, probably Granada, 13<sup>th</sup> century". The author of the catalogue entry, the American art historian Antony Welch, emphasised the rarity of Granadan manuscripts, "generally on tinted paper, ranging in color from purple to pink".<sup>11</sup> In 1988, a second exhibition in Geneva featured two other leaves from Lyautey's volume, also attributed to thirteenth-century Granada. The two folios belonged to a private collection in Malaysia and are currently part of the Bashir Mohamed Family Collection.<sup>12</sup> In 1992, the MET exhibition *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* revealed for the first time the existence of another complete volume of the Pink Qur'an in the Ibn Yusuf Library in Marrakesh. A folio featuring the end of *sura 4 al-Nisa'* and the heading of *sura 5 al-Ma'ida* was published in the exhibition catalogue and said to belong to the "Bibliothèque Ben Youssouf, Marrakesh, ms. 431". The specialist in charge of the entry, Sabiha Khemir, assumed that the manuscript was divided into 20 volumes, and described the support as "*al-waraq al-Shatibi*", namely "paper of Xàtiva/Játiva".<sup>13</sup> The extent of Lyautey's volume, however, suggests that the Pink Qur'an was originally a set of ten volumes, the fourth of which was owned by Lyautey. Although rebound at a later stage and possibly incomplete, its content from *sura 8 al-Anfal* to *sura 12 Yusuf* accords with a division into ten volumes rather than 20.<sup>14</sup> The volume in Marrakesh discussed by Khemir, containing the end of *sura 4 al-Nisa'* and the beginning of *sura 5 al-Ma'ida*, would thus correspond to vol. II. These exhibitions increased the prestige of the Pink Qur'an and turned it into a coveted object for Islamic art collectors. However, the circulation and public display of detached folios from Lyautey's volume was only the beginning of the manuscript's rise to fame. Since the late 1990s, many more loose leaves have regularly appeared on the international art market, in two main phases: the first ran from 1998 to 2002; the second began in 2006 and is still continuing to the present day.

### **1. i A new set of folios (1998–2002)**

At the end of the 1990s, loose folios from a completely different section of the Pink Qur'an began to appear on the London art market. The relatively close sequence of text featured in these folios ran from *sura 60 al-Mumtahana* to *sura 104 al-Humaza*, falling fair and square within the final tenth of the Qur'an. A number of folios from this group were auctioned publicly, while others (including sets of numerous leaves) circulated among, and were sold by,

art dealers and galleries. Although relatively short, this phase was characterised by a steady supply of folios to auction houses: every year between 1998 and 2002 one or more folios came up for sale either at Christie’s or Sotheby’s, for a total of fourteen folios. They most likely shared the same provenance, namely a dealer who owned the tenth volume of the Pink Qur’an and sold it piecemeal. After an apparent break between 2002 and 2006, the sale of more folios from vol. X resumed and is still in full swing (Table 3).

**Table 3. Sales of folios from volume X (chronological order)**

Auction	Number of folios	Dimensions (height x width)	Text
Christie’s, 13 October 1998, lot 20 <sup>15</sup>	4	335 x 265 mm	83:13–30 84:22–85:12
Sotheby’s, 15 October 1998, lot 10	2	338 x 262 mm	77:37–78:1
Sotheby’s, 15 October 1998, lot 11	1	338 x 260 mm	89:10–18
Sotheby’s, 22 April 1999, lot 7	1	339 x 261 mm	80:29–8
Sotheby’s, 22 April 1999, lot 6 <sup>16</sup>	1	338 x 263 mm	80:39–81:4
Sotheby’s, 14 October 1999, lot 2	1	340 x 261 mm	80:10–21
Sotheby’s, 14 October 1999, lot 3	1	339 x 261 mm	80:21–9
Christie’s, 10 October 2000, lot 2	1	337 x 260 mm	79:41–80:1
Christie’s, 16 October 2001, lot 4	1	338 x 260 mm	80:1–[9]
Christie’s, 23 April 2002, lot 7 <sup>17</sup>	1	330 x 240 mm	78:38–79:4
Sotheby’s, 5 April 2006, lot 3	1	–	65:2–4
Christie’s, 8 April 2008, lot 17	1	337 x 265 mm	81:15–23
Sotheby’s, 9 April 2008, lot 18 <sup>18</sup>	1	336 x 264 mm	81:23–82:0
Christie’s, 7 October 2008, lot 102	1	337 x 265 mm	79:26–34
Sotheby’s, 5 October 2011, lot 57 <sup>19</sup>	1	350(?) x 260 mm	103:3–104:4
Bonham’s, 23 October 2017, lot 6 <sup>20</sup>	2	334 x 255 mm	98:5–99:2
Plakas Auctions, 9 November 2022, lot 3 <sup>21</sup>	1	330 x 250 mm	65:4–5
Ader, 10 February 2023, lot 124	1	338 x 252 mm	81:5–14
Christie’s, 24 October 2024, lot 18 <sup>22</sup>	3	335 x 261 mm	96:16–98:4

The same source could have been responsible for supplying not only auction houses, but also private dealers. Many other folios from the same volume that circulated on the art market between 1998 and 2002 are today in museums or private collections, but they were never bought at auction. Although it would be impossible to trace all the folios from vol. X that were sold to private collectors, we have been able to locate at least some of them, in particular a substantial set of 52 folios – all separate, without binding – containing portions of *sura* 60 *al-Mumtahana* to *sura* 65 *al-Talaq*, from *sura* 87 *al-A’la* to *sura* 96 *al-’Alaq*, and from *sura* 99

*al-Zalzala* to *sura* 103 *al-‘Asr*, purchased in London in 2003 and currently in private hands (Table 4).

**Table 4. Folios from volume X in museums and private collections (sequential order)**

Institution or Private Collection	Provenance	Number of folios	Dimensions (height x width)	Text
London, Private Collection	Purchased in London, 2003	52	335 x 254 mm	60:4–61:14 62:8–11 63:4–9 64:3–11, 14–16 65:1 87:16–96:15 99:3–103:3
Detroit Institute of Arts, 2007.120.1 <sup>23</sup>	–	1	330 x 254 mm	61:14–62:1
Ithaca, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, 2000.141.002 <sup>24</sup>	–	2	337 x 248 mm	63:9–64:3
Los Angeles, LACMA, M.2006.141 <sup>25</sup>	Purchased from Sam Fogg ( <i>Ink and Gold</i> 2006, cat. 17)	1	336 x 258 mm	64:16–65:1
Kuwait, Collection of Mahmud ‘Abd al-Khaliq al-Nuri	–	1	–	65:5–6
European Private Collection	Purchased from Sam Fogg, 20 June 2001	1	–	79:18–26
Singapore, Asian Civilisations Museum, 1999-00797	Purchased at auction (Sotheby’s 22 April 1999)	1	338 x 263 mm	80:39–81:4
Detroit Institute of Arts, 2008.22	Purchased at auction (Christie’s 8 April 2008)	1	337 x 265 mm	81:15–23
Detroit Institute of Arts, 2007.120.2 <sup>26</sup>	–	1	330 x 254 mm	82:1–82:8
Dubai Trade	Purchased from Sam Fogg ( <i>The Illuminated Word</i> 2008, cat. 26)	1	332 x 260 mm	83:31–6

Lygo Collection (as of 2013)	-	2	332 x 260 mm	84:14–22 85:3–7
Kuala Lumpur, Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, 2011.9.1	Purchased at auction (Sotheby's 5 October 2011)	1	350(?) x 260 mm	103:3–104:4

It can thus be argued that the 88 known folios from vol. X landed on the London art market in the late 1990s. All these leaves, including those that feature consecutive portions of text without breaks, are individual folios detached from the others. In one instance – namely, the fragment in the Herbert F. Johnson Museum – two consecutive yet detached folios have been stitched together to create an “artificial bifolio” (Fig. 2). The average size of these leaves, 337 x 259 mm, is broadly consistent. These dimensions slightly exceed those of vol. IV (i.e. Lyautey’s volume) whose folios measure around 327 x 257 mm. It can therefore be suggested that vol. X was not trimmed and re-sized, as Lyautey’s volume was, during a later re-binding operation.

#### 1. ii Generalised dispersal (2012–2024)

A new phase in the dispersal of the Pink Qur’an begun in 2012 and still continues today. Just like in the previous phase (1998–2002), this longer period of over twelve years is characterised by a regular supply of loose leaves to auction houses, mainly in London, which have been offering them for sale on a regular basis, sometimes as many as seventeen leaves in the same year (2023). With the exception of a continuous sequence of seven leaves enclosed in a modern binding,<sup>27</sup> the auctioned folios are almost always singletons, and when bifolios appear, they are formed by two separate leaves pasted or sewn together. Unlike the previous phase, the fragments auctioned since 2012 feature a wide variety of Quranic passages, ranging from *sura 2 al-Baqara* to *sura 56 al-Waqi‘a* (Table 5). To this group also belong leaves that were never publicly auctioned, for instance two recently published folios in the Abdul Rahman Al Owais Collection in Sharjah, with portions of Q41:1–5 and Q49:17–50:1.<sup>28</sup> Considering the vast extent of the text they cover, these fragments certainly belonged to different volumes of the original manuscript. However, the number of dispersed leaves is not homogeneous and varies greatly from one volume to another: no loose folios are known from vol. II and V; only one from vol. III; more (between seven and fifteen folios) from vol. I, VII, VIII, and IX; and a significant number (41 folios) from vol. VI. Interestingly, the folios’ dimensions vary according to the volume they originally belonged to. Folios from vol. III, VII, VIII, and IX are always smaller – with average dimensions of 303 x 236 mm – than those

from vol. I and VI (which measure on average 333 x 261 mm). As mentioned above, the dispersed portions of vol. X also belong to this second group of untrimmed leaves.

**Table 5. Sales of folios from Volumes I, III, VI, VII, VIII, IX (sequential order)**

Auction	Number of folios	Dimensions (height x width)	Text	Original volume	
Sotheby's, 27 October 2020, lot 402	7	338 x 270 mm	2:206–17	I	
Millon, 23 May 2016, lot 150 <sup>29</sup>	1	300 x 240 mm	6:59–61	III	
Christie's, 26 April 2012, lot 136	1	338 x 267 mm	20:134–21:3	VI	
Christie's, 4 October 2012, lot 86 <sup>30</sup>	10	336 x 260 mm	21:44–87		
Bonham's, 21 May 2024, lot 2	1	315 x 245 mm	21:93–6		
Marc-Arthur Kohn, 23 June 2014, lot 78	10	-	22:37–[62?]		
Sotheby's, 3 October 2012, lot 17 <sup>31</sup>	2	333 x 262 mm	22:78–23:9		
Sotheby's, 8 October 2014, lot 5	2	-	23:105–11		
Sotheby's, 24 April 2013, lot 1 <sup>32</sup>	2	-	23:116–24:2		
Christie's, 26 October 2023, lot 48 <sup>33</sup>	6	333 x 264 mm	24:2–14		
Sotheby's, 24 April 2013, lot 8 <sup>34</sup>	6	333 x 264 mm	24:15–26		
Plakas Auctions, 29 June 2023, lot 7 <sup>35</sup>	1	335 x 265 mm	24:26–8		
Christie's, 27 April 2023	1	306 x 235 mm	25:40–42	VII	
Sotheby's, 8 April 2014, lot 13	1	-	25:77–26:4		
Christie's, 9 October 2014, lot 22 <sup>36</sup>	1	304 x 233 mm	26:29–34		
Christie's, 24 October 2019, lot 22 <sup>37</sup>	1	305 x 235 mm	26:109–14		
Millon & Associés, 1 June 2015, lot 94	1	310 x 235 mm	27:24–6		
Christie's, 27 October 2014, lot 24	1	303 x 245 mm	27:26–30		
Christie's, 8 October 2015, lot 21 <sup>38</sup>	4	305 x 232 mm	27:30–6 29:15–19		
Christie's, 26 October 2017, lot 66 <sup>39</sup>	1	305 x 235 mm	28:50–3		
Christie's, 2 May 2019, lot 13 <sup>40</sup>	1	304 x 233 mm	28:73–6		
Sotheby's, 1 May 2019, lot 3	1	303 x 235 mm	29:12–14		
Christie's, 10 April 2014, lot 50	2	305 x 235 mm	29:68–30:7		
Marc-Arthur Kohn, 23 June 2014, lot 80 <sup>41</sup>	1	304 x 233 mm	33:72–34:0		VIII
Mayfair Auction House, 28 October 2023, lot 3	1	305 x 232 mm	35:45–36:2		
Sotheby's, 7 October 2015, lot 204 <sup>42</sup>	1	-	37:0–6		
Christie's, 8 October 2015, lot 21 <sup>43</sup>	2	303 x 237 mm	37:38–47 40:70–4		
Oriental Art Auctions, 14 December 2022, lot 9	1	-	37:119–25		
Oriental Art Auctions, 8 June 2021, lot 141	1	305 x 238 mm	38:16–20		
Christie's, 10 October 2013, lot 70	1	304 x 236 mm	38:85–39:2		
Plakas Auctions, 25 April 2023, lot 19	1	304 x 233 mm	40:24–6		
Christie's, 26 April 2018, lot 5	1	305 x 238 mm	40:34–5		
Sotheby's, 25 October 2017, lot 4	1	-	42:41–43:4	IX	

Christie's, 8 October 2015, lot 21 <sup>44</sup>	4	305 x 232 mm	43:11–13 43:58–61 50:2–5 56:27–36
Christie's, 26 April 2018, lot 5	1	305 x 238 mm	44:30–5
Christie's, 23 April 2015, lot 29	1	304 x 235 mm	44:57–45:3
Christie's, 25 April 2013, lot 79	1	304 x 237 mm	46:35–47:2

This final phase of generalised dispersal represents a turning point in the disconcerting diaspora of folios from the Pink Qur'an. Besides vol. IV and X, there are now six other volumes (I, III, VI, VII, VIII, IX) affected by mutilation and dismemberment. However, how can we explain the fact that dozens of leaves from vol. VI have been circulating on the art market, but only one from vol. III, and none from vol. II and V? As we shall see below, this uneven rate of dispersal – just like the variations in the folios' dimensions – is linked to the state of conservation of each volume in their original location: a volume that is no longer bound is more affected by the disappearance of leaves than one in good condition.

A major consequence of the dismemberment and dispersal of the Pink Qur'an for lucrative reasons has been the loss of information associated with the object itself. Paradoxically, the more popular (and expensive) its folios become, sale after sale, the more we lose sight of the manuscript's actual value and historical significance.<sup>45</sup> While its hypothetical Andalusí origin is systematically repeated without any evidence to support it, the question of its provenance is consistently minimised, if not intentionally avoided. The only information usually provided by auction catalogues is that a portion of the manuscript was already sold in 1975 and 1976, even if the folios that have been flooding the art market since 1998 clearly come from other volumes. The history of Lyautey's volume suggests that the dispersal of the Pink Qur'an has its roots in Morocco, during the French Protectorate (1912–56). This Moroccan connection became evident in 1992, when the exhibition *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* showcased vol. II of the Pink Qur'an, on loan from the Ibn Yusuf Library in Marrakesh. Two years before, Latifa Benjelloun-Laroui had already mentioned the Pink Qur'an among the most precious manuscripts of the Ibn Yusuf Library: “*Un Coran andalou dit Coran de Jativa... écrit sur du papier rose pastel de Jativa*”. The Moroccan scholar was certain that “the manuscript was brought [to Marrakesh] by an Andalusí exile in his luggage”.<sup>46</sup> In order to verify this claim, we shall now delve into the pre-1975 history of the Pink Qur'an.

## 2. The Pink Qur'an in Marrakesh

While only vol. II of the Pink Qur'an was featured in the 1992 exhibition *al-Andalus*, Benjelloun-Laroui mentioned four extant volumes in the Ibn Yusuf Library in 1990.<sup>47</sup> In fact, the library currently holds eight volumes of the Pink Qur'an (vol. IV and X are the only ones missing) under the shelf mark 431. Was the whole manuscript originally kept there, or only part of it? How far back can we trace its presence within this institution? The history of the Ibn Yusuf Library over the course of the twentieth century can shed light on the conditions in which the Pink Qur'an was preserved, and the circumstances in which parts of it disappeared.

### 2.i The Ibn Yusuf Library in the twentieth century

The Ibn Yusuf Library is today located in the centre of the medina of Marrakesh, next to the Ibn Yusuf Mosque, a monument founded in the 1120s but entirely rebuilt in the early nineteenth century. While this is indeed the library's historic location, the vicissitudes of its manuscript collection are complex and far from clear. At the end of the nineteenth century, the library of the Ibn Yusuf Mosque was housed in a large room (*maqsura*) entered through the *qibla* wall, measuring 13 x 7 m. The room was built by order of the Alawite sultan al-Hasan I (r. 1873–94) to house not only the manuscripts already in the mosque, but also those collected from other sites, including the Muwassin Mosque, the Kutubiyya Mosque, and the Zawiya of Sidi Abu al-'Abbas.<sup>48</sup> As more caches of manuscripts continued to be discovered in various parts of Marrakesh during the first decades of the twentieth century, they were brought to the *maqsura* of the Ibn Yusuf Mosque, which in 1920 was refurbished and provided with a second door allowing access without passing through the prayer hall.<sup>49</sup> It is currently impossible to know whether the Pink Qur'an belonged to the original nucleus of manuscripts from the Ibn Yusuf Mosque, or if it was brought there from another repository in the city.

For all the manuscripts brought to the *maqsura* of the Ibn Yusuf Mosque, many also left it. Under al-Hasan's successor 'Abd al-'Aziz (r. 1894–1908), the sultan's brother and governor of Marrakesh 'Abd al-Hafiz transferred numerous precious manuscripts from the Ibn Yusuf Mosque to his palace.<sup>50</sup> After 'Abd al-Hafiz dethroned his brother and became sultan, a checklist of the library's holdings was compiled in 1329/1911 (*al-Fihris al-Hafizi*) but it only listed 11 Qur'ans, a remarkably small number showing that the library had suffered significant looting.<sup>51</sup> Since his appointment as pasha of Marrakesh in 1907, the avid book collector al-Tahami al-Glawi (d. 1956) also took manuscripts from the *maqsura* of the Ibn Yusuf Mosque.<sup>52</sup> It is in this context that Lyautey could have acquired, or been gifted, vol. IV of the Pink Qur'an, during his tenure as French Resident-General (1912–25).<sup>53</sup> In fact, we know for

sure that he owned a portion of another Almohad Qur'an kept in the Ibn Yusuf Mosque: vol. VIII of the so-called Qur'an of al-Murtada.<sup>54</sup> This manuscript was auctioned in Paris in June 1975, just a few months before Lyautey's volume of the Pink Qur'an, and is today in the Bruschetti Collection.<sup>55</sup> At least two other portions from the Qur'an of al-Murtada (vol. II and part of vol. VII) were seized by al-Glawi, and after his death they were transferred to the National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco in Rabat.<sup>56</sup>

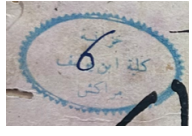



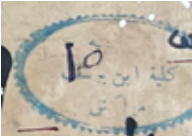
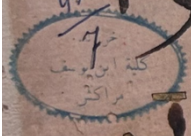

In 1932, the director of the General Library of Rabat Christian Funck-Brentano visited the *maqsura* of the Ibn Yusuf Mosque and decided to send many precious manuscripts to the General Library for restoration.<sup>57</sup> Among them were the remaining volumes of the Qur'an of al-Murtada, but also two other thirteenth-century Qur'ans copied in Málaga and Seville, which were returned to Marrakesh years later: four fragments of the Qur'an of al-Murtada are today in the Ibn Yusuf Library (ms. 432/1–4), as well as one volume of the Málaga Qur'an (ms. 430) and one of the Seville Qur'an (ms. 429).<sup>58</sup> Indeed, all these manuscripts bear traces of restoration that may well date from the period of the French Protectorate. Joseph Luccioni, who saw the list drawn by Funck-Brentano, also mentioned a mysterious “*Coran de Cordoue*” transferred from Marrakesh to Rabat, which may be tentatively identified with the Pink Qur'an. As we shall see, five volumes of the Pink Qur'an feature restorations comparable with that of the manuscripts just mentioned. It is also worth noting that a volume of the Qur'an of al-Murtada underwent restoration in Paris in 1954.<sup>59</sup>

In 1938, Gaston Deverdun lamented the disorganisation of the library and remarked that the most precious manuscripts still in the *maqsura*, including “*quelques magnifiques exemplaires du Coran*” were kept in an old trunk, possibly dating from the Saadian period.<sup>60</sup> In 1944, he noted that the Qur'an of al-Murtada had entirely disappeared from the library, which suggests that the volumes sent to Rabat had not yet been returned.<sup>61</sup> In 1953, the modern building of the Library was inaugurated behind the *qibla* wall of the Ibn Yusuf Mosque, and all the remaining manuscripts were transferred there.<sup>62</sup> The Pink Qur'an must have been among them, since it is in the new Library that Deverdun and Mhammed Ghiati saw one of its volumes – the sixth – and published the text of its Almohad endowment certificate in 1954 (Fig. 3a). The two scholars noted its division in ten volumes but, tantalisingly, they did not mention its most striking feature, namely its pink paper.<sup>63</sup> It is probably for this reason that the dating of the Pink Qur'an remained open to conjecture even after the publication of Deverdun and Ghiati's article: the endowment certificate of 650/1252 was known, but it was not associated with the Pink Qur'an. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that it belongs to this manuscript and no other: the image published in 1954 coincides with what survives of the

document today, preserved at the beginning of vol. VI (Fig. 3b). The endowment is written on the recto of a fragmentary folio that features, on the verso, the heading of *sura* 19 *Maryam*, exactly as expected from the sixth volume of a ten-volume set (Fig. 3c).

Surprisingly, Deverdun and Ghiati also wrote that, at the time of their visit to the Ibn Yusuf Library, vol. VI was the only surviving volume they could find: “*il ne reste que ce volume*”.<sup>64</sup> A minor detail, however, reveals that at least six other volumes of the Pink Qur’an belonged to the library’s collection but were perhaps temporarily transferred to Rabat. The image of the endowment certificate from vol. VI published by Deverdun and Ghiati shows an oval library stamp with an indented border and the number 9 written in pen in its centre (Fig. 3a). With the exception of vol. III – which subsequently lost its first folio(s) – all the other volumes in Marrakesh feature the same stamp, bearing the words “*khizanat kulliyat Ibn Yusuf Marrakush*”, which must therefore date from before 1954. It is possible that these stamps were applied in the 1920s or 1930s, as part of cataloguing initiatives mentioned by Deverdun and others.<sup>65</sup> What is sure, is that vol. I, II, V, VI, VII, VIII, and IX were inventoried in the Ibn Yusuf Library before 1954. Puzzlingly, however, the numbers written in pen in the centre of these stamps do not correspond to the manuscript’s division into ten volumes (Table 6).

**Table 6. Old stamps of the Ibn Yusuf Library on the Pink Qur’an**

Vol. I (Ms. 431/1)	Vol. II (Ms. 431/2)	Vol. V (Ms. 431/5)	Vol. VI (Ms. 431/4)
			
Vol. VII (Ms. 431/6)	Vol. VIII (Ms. 431/7)	Vol. IX (Ms. 431/8)	
			

In 1960, an exhibition of Moroccan manuscripts was organised in the Qarawiyyin Library of Fez, featuring one volume of the Pink Qur’an.<sup>66</sup> The exhibition handlist records its provenance as the Ibn Yusuf Library (ms. 431) and describes it as an Andalusī *mushaf* on “paper of Xātiva (*waraq Shatibi*)”. A photograph of the visit of King Muhammad V to the exhibition provides evidence of the condition of the borrowed volume of the Pink Qur’an at

the time (Fig. 4). The page spread in the photograph belongs to vol. VII (ms. 431/6, fol. 69b-70a), and it is possible to see that the volume had not yet been rebound and trimmed. The 1960 exhibition can therefore be taken as *a terminus post quem* for the dispersal of the leaves from vol. VII (which were all trimmed when the volume was re-bound). Finally, in 1969 Muhammad al-Mannuni published an article revealing that the Ibn Yusuf Library housed eight volumes of the Pink Qur'an. In the same article, the Moroccan scholar defined the pink paper of this manuscript as "*waraq Shatibi*" and identified its origin as al-Andalus.<sup>67</sup> This means that vol. X must have left the library before 1969. In the subsequent decades, the Pink Qur'an became increasingly known among Moroccan scholars: a photograph taken in the early 1990s, for instance, shows the historian Muhammad Hajji leafing through vol. V in its modern binding, and with its folios trimmed (Fig. 5). In 1991, al-Sadiq Ibn al-'Arabi published the complete catalogue of the manuscripts in the Ibn Yusuf Library, giving the eight volumes of the Pink Qur'an the following shelf marks: 431/1 (vol. I), 431/2 (vol. II), 431/3 (vol. III), 431/4 (vol. V), 431/5 (vol. VI), 431/6 (vol. VII), 431/7 (vol. VIII), and 431/8 (vol. IX).<sup>68</sup> However, a registration mistake occurred, and two shelf marks were swapped: ms. 431/4 corresponds today to vol. VI, while 431/5 corresponds to vol. V.

## **2.ii The surviving volumes in the Ibn Yusuf Library**

The eight surviving volumes of the Pink Qur'an today in Marrakesh are in varying states of preservation. Vol. I and VI are in precarious condition as they have almost entirely separated from their bindings. These are ancient leather bindings, probably dating from the sixteenth or seventeenth century (see below), heavily damaged and with the top board detached. The dimensions of the folios in these two volumes are very similar, ranging from 320–330 mm high to 230–250 mm wide, and only slightly smaller than those of vol. X, the only other volume that was not trimmed and re-bound during the past two centuries. Vol. II roughly shares the same dimensions as vol. I and VI, but it was re-bound – perhaps at the time of the French Protectorate – in an undecorated brown leather cover, and its folios were trimmed ever so slightly during the operation. This is probably the volume currently in the best condition, without lacunae save for the final 2–3 folios. Vol. III, V, VII, VIII, and IX feature the exact same type of brown half-leather binding, with four raised bands on the spine and marbled card boards, probably dating from after 1960 (Fig. 6). These five volumes were more drastically trimmed, reducing the size of their folios to approximately 300–305 mm high by 230–240 mm wide. These dimensions match those of the dispersed folios from vols. VII, VIII, and IX, which means that they were detached after the Marrakesh volumes were re-bound in their

present half-leather binding. It is also important to note that vol. IX was re-bound together with the first folios of vol. X, which apparently remained in the library after the rest of the volume was removed from it; in other words, the last 28 folios of vol. IX originally belonged to vol. X, as confirmed by their different style of calligraphy and illumination. The table below (Table 7) shows the size, extent, and lacunae of the eight volumes today in Marrakesh.

**Table 7. The eight surviving volumes in the Ibn Yusuf Library**

<b>Volume and shelf mark</b>	<b>Number of extant folios</b>	<b>Dimensions (height x width)</b>	<b>Extant text</b>	<b>Lacunae</b>
Vol. I (Ms. 431/1)	219 (fol. 1 is a later replacement)	320–330 x 220–230 mm	1:4–3:91	1:0–4; 2:189–200, 206–17; 3:84–6 (14–16 missing folios)
Vol. II (Ms. 431/2)	232 (fol. 1 is a later replacement)	310–320 x 230–250 mm	3:92–5:74 [...]	5:74–82 (4–5 missing folios)
Vol. III (Ms. 431/3)	225	280–305 x 230–250 mm	[...] 5:97–8:35 [...]	5:83–97; 6:57–61; 8:35–40 (12–15 missing folios)
Vol. V (Ms. 431/5)	248 (fol. 1 is a later replacement)	300 x 230 mm	[...] 12:53–18:109 [...]	12:52–3; 18:109–10 (a loose folio contains 18:106–9) (2 missing folios)
Vol. VI (Ms. 431/4)	154	325–330 x 240–250 mm	19:0–25:19 [...]	20:130–21:28; 21:39–22:17; 22:34–23:9; 23:101–24:28; 25:19–20 (~80 missing folios)
Vol. VII (Ms. 431/6)	226 (fol. 1 is a later replacement)	300–305 x 240 mm	25:21–33:30	25:40–2, 54–7; 25:77–26:4; 26:29–34, 109–14; 27:24–36; 27:93–28:4; 28:10–12, 50–3, 73–6; 29:12–19; 29:68–30:7; 32:28–33:1 (12–15 missing folios)

Vol. VIII (Ms. 431/7)	215 (fol. 215 is a later replacement)	300–305 x 240 mm	[...] 33:33–41:46	33:31–2, 51–3; 33:72–34:0; 34:19–21; 35:45–36:2; 36:46–8, 66–9; 37:0–6, 11–16, 38– 47, 119–25; 38:0–4, 16–20, 33– 7, 65–70; 38:86–39:2; 39:31–4, 63–6; 40:7–9, 24–6, 34–5, 40–3, 70–4; 41:0–5 (~25 missing folios)
Vol. IX (Ms. 431/8)	254 (including 28 folios from vol. X)	300–305 x 240 mm	[...] 41:53–60:3 [...]	42:33–6; 42:52–43:4; 43:11–13, 58–61, 75–80; 43:86–44:0; 44:30–5; 44:57–45:3; 45:35–46:0; 46:35–47:2; 47:19–21; 47:38–48:2; 49:17–50:5; 50:45–51:6; 54:20–4; 55:16–23; 56:27–36; 57:27–58:5 (a loose folio contains 58:5– 7) (~25 missing folios)

The volumes in Marrakesh also show some (rather crude) restorations made with strips of white paper, possibly at the time of the French Protectorate. These strips were applied to reinforce the edges and gutter area of some particularly damaged folios, but also to join parts of the same folio that had come apart (e.g. in the first folios of vol. I). The last folio of vol. I was pasted onto a white paper sheet, on whose verso a clumsy hand rewrote the text on the previous two pages at an unknown date. The same clumsy hand left scrawls and squiggles in the margins of several folios throughout the volumes in Marrakesh.

Before concluding this section, it should be pointed out that the Pink Qur'an is an extremely rare example of a multi-volume Qur'an (*rab'a*) that was preserved intact over the centuries, until the time of the French Protectorate: all of its ten volumes must have been kept firmly together – despite perhaps a few missing leaves – for almost 700 years, until vol. IV and X

were removed from the set during the last century. The eight volumes in the Ibn Yusuf Library, whose systematic mutilation only seems to have started after the 1970s, represent a striking exception in the context of Moroccan libraries, where Quranic manuscripts are usually preserved as fragments, or as odd volumes that have lost most of their siblings over the course of their complicated history. This suggests that the Pink Qur'an travelled less than other similar manuscripts, and that it was stored and treated with more care.

Could it be because it was produced in Marrakesh and never left the city? It is tempting to think so, especially by comparison with the above-mentioned Qur'ans from Málaga (dated 620/1223) and Seville (dated 632/1235): although both originally divided into 20 volumes, only one volume from each set has survived in the Ibn Yusuf Library. Conversely, the Qur'an copied in Marrakesh by al-Murtada (dated 654/1256) has come down to us with nine of its original ten volumes, which were probably all still kept in the Ibn Yusuf Mosque (the original place of endowment) in the early twentieth century.<sup>69</sup> This is not the only thing that the Pink Qur'an and the Qur'an of al-Murtada have in common, as will be shown below. For now, we should attempt to trace the relation between the Pink Qur'an and the local milieu of Marrakesh one further step back in time.

### **3. The Pink Qur'an between the Saadian and Alawite periods**

Many of the religious buildings whose manuscripts were taken to the Ibn Yusuf Library in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century had been founded by the Saadians, a dynasty who ruled from Marrakesh between 1525 and 1659, reviving the religious and cultural scene of the city. 'Abd Allah al-Ghalib (r. 1557–74), for instance, erected the renowned Ibn Yusuf Madrasa, where 400 manuscripts were “rediscovered” in 1920 and transferred to the Ibn Yusuf Library across the road.<sup>70</sup> Other manuscripts, as already mentioned, came from the depositories of the Muwassin Mosque (also founded by al-Ghalib) and the Zawiya of Sidi Abu al-'Abbas, whose mosque dates from the reign of Abu Faris al-Wathiq (r. 1603–9).<sup>71</sup> The Moroccan historian al-Ifrani reports that al-Wathiq “erected the congregational mosque next to the shrine of Abu al-'Abbas al-Sabti and founded the library on its *qibla* side, stocking it with rare and precious books”, in order to attract the saint's blessing and be cured of his illness.<sup>72</sup> It is possible that the Pink Qur'an passed through one of these endowed Saadian libraries, where it was restored and brought back into use for a period of time.<sup>73</sup>

What survives of the binding of vol. VI (ms. 431/4) can be fairly securely dated to the Saadian period on stylistic grounds. Not much is known about Saadian bindings, but the few published examples show a similar use of the central stamped medallion, almond-shaped and polylobed,

containing floral and foliated designs.<sup>74</sup> This Ottoman-inspired motif began to appear in the repertoire of Moroccan bookbinders in the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>75</sup> The leather cover of vol. VI is very similar to that of the Seville Qur'an (ms. 429), which was probably also rebound in the Saadian period, but also to that of a manuscript copied in Marrakesh in 977/1570 and presently in the Escorial Library: in particular, one can observe the same almond-shaped central medallion and the vertical lines that join it with the outer frame, dividing the board in half (Fig. 7).<sup>76</sup> Although lacking any stamped decoration, the (heavily damaged) binding of vol. I also seems to date from before the nineteenth century. Its doublure is missing, and the inner side of both boards is lined with reused paper folios from an unidentified medieval manuscript.

It may have been around the sixteenth or seventeenth century that some lacunae at the beginning and end of several volumes were restored, with the addition of folios featuring the missing portions of text. That can be seen at the beginning of vol. I (ms. 431/1, fol. 1), vol. II (ms. 431/2, fol. 1, parts of fol. 2–3), vol. V (ms. 431/5, fol. 1), vol. VII (ms. 431/6, fol. 1), and at the end of vol. VIII (ms. 431/7, fol. 215). The replacement folios are made of beige European paper, characterised by the vertical arrangement of laid lines and the presence of two different watermarks, one depicting an ewer and the other an open hand surmounted by a star.<sup>77</sup> The Saadian calligrapher imitated the bold, large script of the original folios, but the style of illumination betrays a later date, in particular at the beginning of vol. II and VII, where a yellow pigment is used instead of gold (Fig. 8).<sup>78</sup> On these two replacement folios, the Quranic text appears on the verso only, preceded by a rectangular decorated heading flanked by a marginal vignette. The word *hizb* is inscribed in the rectangular heading at the beginning of vol. II, while the heading of vol. VII contains the *ta'awwudh* (i.e. the pious formula *a'udhu bi-Allah min al-shaytan al-rajim*, "I seek refuge in God from Satan the accursed"), and the word *hizb* appears in a marginal medallion. The impression of the original illuminated heading is still visible on fol. 2 of vol. II, and it is likely that the replacement folios imitate the features and arrangement of the lost originals. Presumably in the same period, some words originally omitted from Q6:164 were carefully added in the margin of vol. III (ms. 431/3, fol. 104b), in blue ink vocalised in red (Fig. 9).

The care shown towards the Pink Qur'an during this restoration phase fits well within the context of Saadian Marrakesh, where fresh impetus was given to the recitation and study of the Qur'an, the establishment of new libraries and learning institutions, and the development of the arts of the book.<sup>79</sup> In fact, the restored Pink Qur'an may have spurred a renewed taste for pink-coloured paper in the production of deluxe manuscripts, as was the case of a lavish

Qur'an copied for the library of 'Abd Allah al-Ghalib in 975/1568, which features alternating beige, yellow, and pink pages.<sup>80</sup> It may be significant to note that the Qur'an of al-Murtada was also restored during the Saadian period, most notably with the addition of a new illuminated colophon and finispiece at the end of vol. IV (now kept under shelf mark 432/4, fol. 7).<sup>81</sup>

#### 4. The Pink Qur'an in the Marinid period

One conspicuous feature shared by all the original folios of the Pink Qur'an – whether they are still in Marrakesh or dispersed around the world – is found in their upper margin, where a series of prick-holes are carefully lined up to form the word *hubs* (or *habs*), the Maghribi equivalent of *waqf*, meaning “endowment”.<sup>82</sup> Based on the close examination of many consecutive folios, we could reconstruct the process by which these holes were created as follows: a roughly horizontal line was scored in the upper margin of the recto of a given folio, to serve as a guideline; then, the folio was lifted together with the following four, five, or six folios, and a buffer was inserted between them and the rest of the volume; finally, the lifted folios were pierced together, as a group, with a single needle, following the scored guideline, between 28 and 30 times; the operation was then repeated with the next group of folios, until the end of the volume. This unusual system was probably put in place so as to render the endowment more difficult to break: notes or certificates simply written in ink could be erased, but the pricking of every folio would have been harder to conceal or ignore, acting as a deterrent against selling, stealing, or removing the manuscript from its intended location. Clearly, this safety measure proved useless in the long run, as it was unable to prevent the manuscript's transfer to the Ibn Yusuf Library and its eventual dismemberment. However, these perforations are significant because they reveal another phase in the history of the Pink Qur'an. When were they made, and by whom?

The fact that the replacement folios at the beginning of volume II, V, VII and at the end of volume VIII were not marked in this idiosyncratic way indicates that the pricking was carried out before the Saadian restoration phase (Fig. 8). Luckily, the Pink Qur'an is not the only Maghribi manuscript to feature perforated endowment marks: about twenty other instances are known, where the holes are arranged to form the word *hubs* in various shapes, as well as the expression *hubs li-llah* (“endowment to God”), and in one unique case, the name of the place where the manuscript was endowed, *jami' Malaqa* (i.e. the congregational mosque of Málaga).<sup>83</sup> The perforations of the Pink Qur'an are characteristic in the way they consistently stretch the baseline for the letter *ha'* backwards and employ three stacked holes for each

denticle of the letter *sin*. These diagnostic features are found in eight other Qur'ans, presumably pricked at around the same time and in the same context:

1. Cairo, Azhariyya Library, ms. 92670 *Maghariba*; Rabat, National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco, ms. K 2949/20;
2. Cairo, Azhariyya Library, ms. 92671 *Maghariba*;
3. Doha, Qatar National Library, HC.MS.03149, 172, 173;
4. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, mss R. 21–22–23–24;
5. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, ms. E. H. 221;
6. London, British Library, ms. Or. 11780; Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 619/1;
7. Madrid, National Library of Spain, ms. 18613–18614/4;
8. Rabat, National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco, ms. J 1.

Of these eight manuscripts, number 1 and 4 contain useful information about their date and endowment history. The former is a parchment Qur'an originally in 30 volumes, made for the library of the Marinid sultan Abu Sa'id (r. 1310–31), as stated in the surviving colophons of vol. I and XVI.<sup>84</sup> It was probably copied and illuminated in Fez, the Marinid capital. The colophons themselves are undated, but the perforations must have been carried out after 1310, when the manuscript was removed from the Marinid royal library and endowed to an unknown mosque, either by Abu Sa'id or by one of his successors. The latter (no. 4) is a large paper Qur'an in four volumes, and as will be shown below, it was probably copied by one of the two calligraphers responsible for the Pink Qur'an. All the available evidence suggests that this manuscript was produced in Almohad Marrakesh, in particular the four long certificates at the end of each volume, which declare that the Almohad prince Abu Ishaq Ibrahim, brother of the future caliph al-Murtada, endowed this Qur'an to an unspecified building in Marrakesh, in 635/1238. The perforations, however, overlap the Almohad endowment certificates, and were most likely added half a century later, when the Marinid sultan Abu Ya'qub Yusuf seized and re-endowed the manuscript, this time in Fez, in 696/1297.<sup>85</sup>

Based on this evidence, we can confidently say that the kind of pricking found in the Pink Qur'an dates from the Marinid period, probably from the very end of the thirteenth century or the first decades of the fourteenth. Al-Mannuni attributed this idiosyncratic endowment practice to the Almohads, presumably because it is attested in several Almohad manuscripts such as the Pink Qur'an.<sup>86</sup> However, earlier Qur'ans from the tenth and eleventh centuries also had their margins pricked at some point, suggesting that this system was mostly employed in the re-endowment of older manuscripts. The first Marinid sultans were keen to showcase their victory over their predecessors, the heretic Almohad caliphs, and seem to have

broken a number of pre-existing endowments for propaganda purposes, confiscating assets and revenues and re-endowing them to their own religious foundations.<sup>87</sup> The tombs of the Almohad caliphs and their family members were either desecrated and destroyed, or they ceased to function as places of worship and visitation. The Marinids seized the Qur'ans that had been endowed to these places – like the Pink Qur'an – and transferred them to their own mosques, madrasas, and shrines, without encountering any real hindrance. It is probably for this reason that they decided to stamp these manuscripts with an indelible kind of mark, so as to render their own endowments more durable than those of their predecessors.

## 5. The original Pink Qur'an

As already mentioned, the earliest piece of internal evidence in the Pink Qur'an is its Almohad endowment certificate (*tahbis*) dated 650/1252, which Deverdun and Ghiati published in 1954 (Fig. 3a).<sup>88</sup> The document was probably transcribed on the recto of the first folio of every volume, but all the original first folios are now missing, with the important exception of that of vol. VI, which still survives despite suffering more damage since 1954 (Fig. 3b–c). It may be worth repeating here Deverdun and Ghiati's edition of the text, with an English translation:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم صلى الله على [سيدنا ومولانا محمد ...]
2. [هذه الربة المباركة الكريمة حبسها سيدنا ومولانا الإمام أبو [حفص عمر المرتضى أمير المؤمنين]
3. [ابن سيدنا ومولانا الأمير الطاهر<sup>89</sup> أبي إبراهيم ابن سيدنا ومولانا الـ[خليفة] الإمام [أمير المؤمنين ابن سيدنا ومولانا الخليفة]
4. [الإمام] أمير المؤمنين أيده الله ونصره ونفعه بمقصده الجميل خُبساً [مؤيداً ...]
5. [...] ونص ما في الأول منها هذه الربة الكريمة [حبسها] الخليفة [...]
6. [...] أم ولدنا إسحق رحمها الله تغلى وهداه ما دام قبرها المذكور في مستعتب رحمته [...]
7. [...] تكون محبسة على من يقرأ [فيها] ويكون ذلك راجعا إلى نظر الخطيبين [...]
8. [عمر]ها [الله] تغلى بذكره<sup>90</sup> والله سبحانه ينفع بذلك ويـ[...] وكتب [ذلك بخط يمينه] الفانية [...]
9. [عبد الله] تغلى أمير المؤمنين وذلك في صفر عام خمسين وستمائة وهي محتوية على عشرة [أجزاء ...]
10. ذلك المنتسخ فوق هذا فكان له مماثلا حرفاً بحرفٍ وتحقق أنه مخطوط باليمين المباركة الكريمة [...]
11. [...] من الخط الكريم الصادر عنهم رضي الله تغلى عنهم وعلم الإذن الكريم بالشهادة على مضمونه وذلك [...]
12. أحمد بن محمد بن أحمد بن [الحاج؟] على مصلح حروفه (؟) له وعبد الحق بن أحمد بن (؟) ويحيى بن محمد بن أحمد الأركشي
13. [...] بن عبد الله بن علي بن عمر الجزولي (؟)

1. In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. May God pray upon [our lord Muhammad...]

2. [This] blessed and noble [Qu]r'an has been endowed by our lord and master, the imam Abu [Hafs 'Umar al-Murtada, commander of the faithful],
3. [son of our lo]rd and master, the emir al-Tahir Abu Ibrahim, son of our lord and master the [cali]ph, imam, and [commander of the faithful, son of our lord and master the caliph],
4. [im]am and commander of the faithful, may God almighty assist him, support him, and make him profit from his good intention, as a [perpetual and...] endowment,
5. [...] and this is the text [of the endowment certificate written] at the beginning [i.e. on the first volume]: "This noble Qur'an [has been endowed] by the caliph [...]"
6. [... tomb belonging to] the mother of our son Ishaq, may God almighty have mercy upon her, and guide him on the right path for as long as the aforementioned tomb [of his mother] abides in God's gracious mercy [...]
7. [...let it] be endowed to those who wish to recite [from it], under the supervision of the two preachers [of the mosque...]
8. [...may God fill it] with invocations to Him. God – may he be praised! – bestows favours for [...]. Written by the ephemeral [hand of...]
9. [the servant of God] almighty, the commander of the faithful, in Safar of the year 650 [=April/May 1252]. The Qur'an comprises ten [volumes...]"
10. [We have verified?] what has been transcribed above, and it is identical to the original, truthfully written by the blessed and noble hand [...]
11. [...] in the noble handwriting emanating from them – may God almighty be pleased with them – and knowledge of the noble order concerning the witnessing of what is [here] contained, and that [...]
12. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ahmad b. [al-Hajj? has verified] that it is a literal [copy?], and 'Abd al-Haqq b. Ahmad b. (?) and Yahya b. Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Arkushi
13. [and... 'Abd] Allah b. 'Ali b. 'Umar al-Jazuli (?)

This lacunose yet important document demonstrates that the penultimate Almohad caliph al-Murtada (r. 1248–66) owned the Pink Qur'an and endowed it to the tomb of one of his wives, most likely in Marrakesh. This would presumably have been located in the vicinity of a congregational mosque such as the Mosque of al-Mansur or the Kutubiyya Mosque, where the two preachers and overseers of the Quranic endowment would have performed their function. The Qur'an endowed fourteen years earlier by al-Murtada's brother, the prince Abu Ishaq Ibrahim, was also placed under the guardianship of a preacher, a certain Abu Muhammad

‘Abd al-Wahid b. Makhluḥ b. Musa, who “shall give it to whomever he wishes for the purpose of reading from it, [...] and he shall take it [back] whenever he wishes”.<sup>91</sup>

Despite the irreversible political decline of the Almohad caliphate, the reign of al-Murtada was marked by a certain cultural vitality that sparked, among other phenomena, the production and circulation of luxury manuscripts inside and outside the court of Marrakesh (which by the 1250s was the only city left under stable Almohad control). Al-Murtada was an intellectual and a keen bibliophile who surrounded himself with scholars and men of letters, commissioned works of prose and poetry for his library, and endowed multi-volume Qur’ans to several religious buildings.<sup>92</sup> These included the mosque and dynastic sanctuary of Tinmal in the High Atlas mountains, where he endowed the Seville Qur’an in 649/1251; and the mosque of ‘Alī Ibn Yusuf in the medina of Marrakesh, where in 656/1258 he placed the ten-volume Qur’an that he had copied in his own hand two years earlier, “for the use of all Muslims, day and night”.<sup>93</sup> The Pink Qur’an – endowed in 650/1252 – thus belonged to this group of deluxe manuscripts owned by the penultimate Almohad caliph, but unlike the Seville Qur’an and the Qur’an of al-Murtada, its colophon has not survived, and nothing is known for sure about the place, date, and circumstances of its production. In order to shed light on the matter, a detailed analysis of the manuscript’s textual, palaeographic, and codicological features will be provided in the following pages.

### **5.i Textual divisions and illumination**



The division of the Pink Qur’an into ten volumes follows the instructions given by the eminent Andalusī scholar Abu ‘Amr ‘Uthman al-Dani (981–1053) for the division of the Qur’an into ten *‘ushr* of equal length, with one sensible adjustment: the end of the fifth *‘ushr* is duly marked at the end of Q18:74, but the beginning of the sixth volume was made to coincide with the beginning of *sura* 19 *Maryam* (Fig. 10a–b).<sup>94</sup> Also, the ninth volume does not end at Q57:21 as recommended by al-Dani, but continues until Q60:3. As mentioned above, this is due to the fact that the first quires of vol. X were appended to the end of vol. IX when the latter was re-bound, probably after 1960. In fact, the calligraphy and illumination of the final 28 folios of vol. IX resemble that of the surviving folios of vol. X, but they differ from the rest of vol. IX. The original extent of vol. IX is impossible to reconstruct precisely, but here too the indications of al-Dani were not followed to the letter: the extant leaves reach beyond Q57:21 until Q57:27, after which a lacuna interrupts the text, and the first known folio from the original vol. X begins with Q58:5. It is therefore likely that vol. IX ended with the










last verse of *sura 57 al-Hadid* (Q57:29, coinciding with the end of *hizb* 54 according to al-Dani), and that vol. X began with *sura 58 al-Mujadila*.








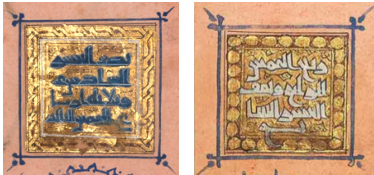

An impressive panoply of illuminated devices accurately divides the text into 60/60 (*hizb*), 27/27 (*tajzi`at Ramadan*), 24/24 (*qirat*), 14/14 (*nisf al-sub`*), 12/12 (*nisf al-suds*), 9/9 (*tus`*), 8/8 (*thumn*), 7/7 (*sub`*), 6/6 (*suds*), and 4/4 (*rub`*). The division in 24/24 is unique among the extant Maghribi Qur`ans, and al-Dani reports that the Egyptians called each of its parts *qirat*, precisely the term used in the Pink Qur`an.<sup>95</sup> Vol. VI, VII, and IX contain additional divisions and marginal devices: first of all, every *hizb* is further divided into halves (*nisf al-hizb*) and quarters (*rub` al-hizb*); secondly, marginal verse markers are introduced every hundred verses between 2,300 and 3,500, counting the verses of the whole Qur`an according to both the first and second Medinan count (Fig. 11); thirdly, these volumes are subdivided into halves (*nisf al-`ushr*) and quarters (*rub` al-`ushr*), and so are the fifth, sixth, and eighth *tus`* (5/9, 6/9, and 8/9), the fifth, sixth, and seventh *thumn* (5/8, 6/8, 7/8), and the fifth and seventh *sub`* (5/7 and 7/7). It is important to stress that subdivisions such as *rub` al-`ushr* (40/40), *rub` al-tus`* (36/36), and *rub` al-thumn* (32/32) are not mentioned by al-Dani and reflect an extremely advanced system attested exclusively in the Pink Qur`an.

The few published leaves of the fourth volume bear the same kind of additional divisions (*nisf al-hizb*, *rub` al-hizb*, *rub` al-`ushr*), suggesting that its illumination was planned and/or executed together with that of vol. VI, VII and IX. It is therefore possible to suggest that the ten volumes of the Pink Qur`an were illuminated in two distinct phases or by two distinct individuals, since the division system of vol. I, II, III, V, VIII, and X differs slightly from that of vol. IV, VI, VII, and IX. Not only does this second group include additional divisions, but here every sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth is marked at the beginning of the corresponding portion of text (e.g. “*awwal al-suds al-sadis*” in vol. IX), while in the first group they are marked at the end (e.g. “*akhir al-suds al-thalith*” in vol. V). Moreover, in the first group the division into 24/24 follows the *qirat* system, while in the second group every sixth is subdivided into quarters (*rub` al-suds*), making the *qirat* system redundant (Table 8).







**Table 8. Illuminated text dividers in the Pink Qur`an**

Type of marker	Illuminator A (vol. I–III, V, VIII, X)	Illuminator B (vol. IV, VI, VII, IX)
Single verse		

<p>Fifth verse</p>		
<p>Tenth verse</p>		
<p><i>Rub' al-hizb</i> (240/240)</p>	<p>—</p>	
<p><i>Nisf al-hizb</i> (120/120)</p>	<p>—</p>	
<p><i>Hizb</i> (60/60)</p>		
<p><i>Rub' al-'ushr</i> (40/40)</p>	<p>—</p>	

<p><i>Rub' al-tus'</i> (36/36)</p>	<p>—</p>	
<p><i>Rub' al-thumn</i> (32/32)</p>	<p>—</p>	
<p><i>Rub' al-sub'</i> (28/28)</p>	<p>—</p>	
<p><i>Tajzi'at Ramadan</i> (27/27)</p>		
<p><i>Qirat / Rub' al-suds</i> (24/24)</p>		
<p><i>Rub' al-khums / nisf al-'ushr</i> (20/20)</p>	<p>—</p>	
<p><i>Nisf al-tus'</i> (18/18)</p>	<p>—</p>	

<p><i>Nisf al-thumn</i> (16/16)</p>		
<p><i>Nisf al-sub'</i> (14/14)</p>		
<p><i>Nisf al-suds</i> (12/12)</p>		
<p><i>Tus'</i> (9/9)</p>		
<p><i>Thumn</i> (8/8)</p>		
<p><i>Sub'</i> (7/7)</p>		
<p><i>Suds</i> (6/6)</p>		

<p><i>Rub‘</i> (4/4)</p>		
<p><i>Thulth</i> (3/3)</p>		
<p><i>Sajda</i></p>		

The *sura* headings are all written in angular script within rectangular cartouches, flanked by a marginal vignette. Each *sura* title is introduced by the expression *jumlat al-sura*, “the whole of the *sura*”, an idiosyncrasy only found in other three Maghribi Qur’ans.<sup>96</sup> The name of the *sura* is not given in possessive construction (e.g. *surat Maryam*, “Maryam’s *sura*”) but through a periphrasis, as in *jumlat al-sura allati yudhkar fi-ha Maryam*, literally meaning “the whole of the *sura* in which Maryam is mentioned”. This practice is recommended in religious texts such as the introduction to al-Qurtubi’s *Tafsir* (mid-thirteenth century).<sup>97</sup> The illuminator of vol. IV, VI, VII and IX used the periphrasis *jumlat al-sura allati yudhkar fi-ha*, while the illuminator of vol. I, II, III, V, VIII, and X used the shorter formula *jumlat al-sura al-madhkur fi-ha* (Fig. 12a–b). In a few instances, this second illuminator omitted the word *jumla* (as in the title of *sura* 81 *al-Takwir*), and in one case (*sura* 4 *al-Nisa’*) he omitted the whole periphrasis. As is to be expected, the titles of many *suras* differ from those commonly used in the central and eastern Islamic world. Some idiosyncrasies, however, are also evident by comparison with the titles employed in the modern Moroccan editions of the Qur’an in the recension of Warsh from Nafi’. Thus, for instance:

- *Sura 5* is called *al-‘Uqud* instead of *al-Ma‘ida*;
- *Sura 17* is called *Banu Isra‘il* instead of *al-Isra‘*;
- *Sura 35* is called *al-Mala‘ika* instead of *Fatir*;
- *Sura 40* is called *al-Mu‘min* instead of *Ghafir*;
- *Sura 42* is called *Ha‘ Mim ‘Ayn Sin Kaf* instead of *al-Shura*;
- *Sura 45* is called *al-Shari‘a* instead of *al-Jathiya*;
- *Sura 47* is called *al-Qital* instead of *Muhammad*;
- *Sura 54* is called *al-Sa‘a* instead of *al-Qamar*;
- *Sura 99* is called *Idha Zalzalāt* instead of *al-Zalzala*.

Each *sura* title is followed by an indication of the number of verses it contains, according to the first Medinan count. This numbering system counts 6,217 verses in the Qur’an, and al-Dani attributes it to Abu Ja‘far Yazid b. al-Qa‘qa‘ and Shayba b. al-Nassah. He also associates it with the oldest companions of Nafi‘, and with the recension of Warsh.<sup>98</sup> It is on this count that all the textual divisions of the Pink Qur’an are based. Thus, for instance, *sura 18 al-Kahf* is considered to have 105 verses, while other counts divide it into 107, 110, and even 111 verses. The illuminator of vol. I, II, III, V, VIII, and X simply spelled out the number of verses, without using any periphrasis. On the contrary, the illuminator of vol. IV, VI, VII and IX introduced the number with the formula *wa-hiya ta‘udd fi al-Madaniyyayn*, meaning “and according to both Medinan counts, it [the *sura*] counts...”. The use of the dual is justified by the existence of two Medinan counts, which the illuminator of vol. IV, VI, VII and IX mentions separately whenever they diverge. Thus, for instance, the title of *sura 30 al-Rum* is given as *jumlat al-sura allati yudhkar fi-ha al-Rum wa-hiya ta‘udd fi al-Madani al-awwal sittin aya wa-fi al-Madani al-akhir tis‘ wa-khamsin aya*, “the whole of the *sura* in which the Byzantines are mentioned, which counts 60 verses in the first Medinan count, and 59 in the second”. Al-Dani attributes the second Medinan count to Isma‘il b. Ja‘far al-Madani, and he associates it with the recension of Qalun. Both Medinan counts were known in the Maghrib, and sometimes the minimal differences between the two caused disagreement and confusion.<sup>99</sup> Towards the end of *sura 2 al-Baqara*, for instance, there are three passages where the first Medinan count places the end of a verse that is not marked in the second Medinan count, and three more passages where the opposite occurs. It seems that both the calligrapher and the illuminator had initially followed the second Medinan count in the division of the *sura*, but soon thereafter several verse markers were erased, added, or modified to conform to the first Medinan count (Fig. 13). Numerous slips into the second Medinan count are attested throughout the manuscript.

The marginal vignettes next to the *sura* headings repeat the title of the *suras* and specify whether they were revealed in Mecca (*Makkiyya*) or in Medina (*Madaniyya*). The illuminator of vol. IV, VI, VII and IX also noted those cases in which some Medinan verses appear in a Meccan *sura*, as reported by al-Dani and others. Thus, for instance, in the vignette next to the heading of *sura* 31 *Luqman*, we can read *Surat Luqman Makkiyya wa-qila illa ithnayn wa-qila illa thalath ayat nazalna bi-l-Madina*, meaning “Surat Luqman: Meccan, but it is also said: except two verses, and it is also said: except three verses, which were revealed in Medina” (Fig. 12b).

The abundant illumination and complex system of textual division and *sura* headings found in the Pink Qur’an are evidence of a supremely sophisticated manuscript, the work of (at least) two distinct individuals well-trained in Quranic sciences. In the outer margins of some folios, it is still possible to read minute annotations meant as reminders of what fractional markers should be positioned where: the illumination was clearly carried out after the text was written down, but it must have been carefully planned from the start. It is likely that a manuscript of this quality and accuracy was commissioned by a wealthy patron, in order to serve as an authoritative copy to be recited from and consulted by discerning readers, interested in the science of Quranic divisions. Significantly, the Qur’an of al-Murtada is the only other known Maghribi Qur’an divided into ten volumes, written on paper, and copiously illuminated with markers for *nisf al-hizb*, *rub’ al-hizb*, and *tajzi’at Ramadan* (Fig. 14). This is one of the clues that points to the same place of production for both manuscripts, namely Marrakesh, and to the same source of patronage, namely the Almohad court. The main difference, of course, lies in their level of penmanship: The Qur’an of al-Murtada, copied by the caliph himself in 654/1256, falls evidently short of the calligraphic standard set by the Pink Qur’an, as it was not penned by a professional. Its script is more akin to a common bookhand, with a ductus that lacks the studied grandeur of its counterpart.

### 5.ii Calligraphy and notation system

The bold calligraphic style employed in the Pink Qur’an is known as Maghribi *mabsut* (in the sense of “dilated”, “expanded”), a term used by the Nasrid secretary Ibn Simak al-‘Amili (d. after 1417) to describe “the Quranic script used nowadays”.<sup>100</sup> Despite its uniformity, two distinct hands can be discerned: a more elegant one that employed a *qalam* with a finer nib and traced some letters with thinner and more controlled strokes in vol. I, II, III, V, VIII, and X (Fig. 2); and a slightly less controlled hand which used a *qalam* with a thicker nib in vol. IV, VI, VII, and IX (Fig. 1). Because of this division of labour, it seems likely that the two

distinct illuminators were also responsible for the calligraphy of their respective volumes. Alternatively, the Pink Qur'an could be the result of two distinct teams formed by one calligrapher and one illuminator each, for a total of four artists involved in its production. While this latter hypothesis seems less economical, and therefore less likely, it is clear that the illumination was carried out not only after the text was written down, but also in a different medium: microscopic examination under infrared and ultraviolet light shows that the calligraphy was traced in an iron gall ink, while a carbon ink was used for the black outlines and filler patterns of the illuminated devices (verse markers, *sura* headings, etc.) as well as in the contours of the gilded vowel marks and the other recitation symbols.

As already observed elsewhere, the polychrome notation and vocalisation system of Maghribi Qur'ans blurs the line between a calligrapher's job and that of an illuminator, and this is especially true for the Pink Qur'an.<sup>101</sup> A plethora of marks and symbols can be found above and below the main text, and while they are obviously inseparable from it on the level of recitation, they were all added at a later stage, together with the manuscript's illumination. These marks include: gilded diacritic dots in gold, outlined in carbon black ink; symbols for the three short vowels (*fatha*, *damma*, and *kasra*) also in gold with black outlines; additional marks for *madd*, dagger *alif*, and the lengthening of vowels in pronominal suffixes, also in gold with black outlines; blue symbols for *tashdid* and *sukun*; yellow circles with black outlines for *hamzat al-qat'*; green circles for *hamzat al-wasl*; silver symbols with black outlines for additional *hamza* and *sukun* according to the reading of Qalun, where Wash has *naql* or *sila* (i.e. the omission of the glottal stop); silver superscript letters with black outlines for additional orthoepic marks such as *tarqiq* (*qaf*), *tafkhim* (*fa'*), *ikhfa'* (*kha'*), and *idgham* (*mim*). If the two illuminators were not also the calligraphers, they clearly rivalled them in their knowledge of Quranic recitation and pronunciation.

The bolder and less controlled hand responsible for copying vol. IV, VI, VII, and IX shows striking similarities with the calligraphy of the monumental Qur'an endowed by al-Murtada's brother, the prince Abu Ishaq Ibrahim, in 635/1238 (Fig. 15). In fact, the script is so close in terms of size, ductus, letter shapes, and vocalisation, that it may very well be the work of the same calligrapher. While it is likely that the Pink Qur'an and the Qur'an of prince Ibrahim were produced in the same place and around the same time, they also shared part of their later history: both manuscripts were endowed, in Marrakesh, by members of the Almohad caliphal family; and both of them were also re-endowed under the Marinids, when the word *hubs* was pricked in the upper margin of their folios. The Qur'an of prince Ibrahim found his new home

in Fez, the Marinid capital, where it was re-endowed in 696/1297 by the sultan Abu Ya‘qub Yusuf (r. 1286–1307);<sup>102</sup> the Pink Qur’an remained in Marrakesh.

### 5.iii Quire structure

As already mentioned, the vast majority of the dispersed fragments of the Pink Qur’an consist of individual folios, and when bifolios appear, they were artificially created at a later date by pasting, taping, or sewing two separate folios together (Fig. 1–2). Any codicological investigation into the original quire structure is therefore impossible without considering the eight volumes in Marrakesh. Despite the fact that these volumes were all rebound at different times, and perhaps more than once, it is possible to observe some original bifolios that have come unbound (e.g. in vol. III, ms. 431/3, fol. 52–3, 62–3, 92–3, and 112–13). These formed the middle of quires made of five bifolios, known as quinions, sewn together down their central fold on at least two sewing stations. The original quires in the Pink Qur’an are indeed mostly quinions, composed of either bifolios or, occasionally, isolated folios attached with pink paper stubs (e.g. in vol. VI, ms. 431/4, fol. 82–3). The fold of most visible bifolios appears particularly fragile and prone to split (e.g. in vol. III, ms. 431/3, fol. 152–3), which may explain why not a single bifolio has survived in its original state outside the Ibn Yusuf Library. A great number of leaves and quires have been consolidated in their inner and outer folds at various times, by pasting strips and tabs of beige and white paper onto the damaged parts. That is especially visible in vol. VI (ms. 431/4), which has almost completely detached from its binding and suffered the most damage and losses. Unfortunately, no trace of the original bindings could be found, if indeed they ever existed.

A noteworthy feature in the quire structure of the Pink Qur’an is the use of mid-quire notation, namely symbols added to the central bifolio of each quire, presumably with the purpose of facilitating the binder’s task. This practice has been observed in Maghribi manuscripts dating from the beginning of the twelfth century until the seventeenth or even eighteenth centuries, where the number 5 was inscribed in *ghubar* numerals in the top outer corner of the right page of the open central bifolios, as well as in the bottom outer corner of the left page.<sup>103</sup> The same symbol appears throughout the Pink Qur’an, thinly written in brown ink, but inscribed on the left page of the central bifolios.<sup>104</sup> In most volumes it is found in the top outer corner of the left page (Fig. 16, left), but in vol. IX it can be seen in the bottom outer corner.<sup>105</sup> In vol. II, III, IV, and VI, another number 5 was added to the top outer corner of the right page of the bifolios, probably at a later stage and by a different hand (Fig. 16, right). This seems confirmed by the fact that the first 60 folios of vol. VI show a discrepancy in the placement of

the two symbols: those on the right systematically appear two folios after those on the left. The current sewing of the first six quires corresponds with the notation on the right pages, not with that on the left ones, indicating that the hand responsible for the symbols on the right pages intervened at a later stage in the manuscript's history, when vol. VI had already suffered some losses and was being restored and rebound. The bifolios in these quires were reconstructed using beige paper stubs, but because the first two folios were likely already missing, a misalignment occurred in the reconstitution of the quires. It is tempting to suggest, then, that the mid-quire notation on the left pages is the original one, added at the time of the manuscript's production.

To complicate things even further, vol. VII and IX also feature two parallel diagonal scores traced in dry point in the top outer corner of the left page of the central bifolios (Fig. 17). The placement of these secondary marks does not seem to bear any relation to the *ghubar* numerals on the same pages: in vol. VII they can be found next to, above, below, or even overlapping them, while in vol. IX the *ghubar* numerals were inscribed in the bottom outer corners, as mentioned above. However, the scores do generally fit within the tail of the letter *sin* of the perforated word *hubs* marking the Marinid re-endowment of the Pink Qur'an. Is this simply a coincidence, or were they added as part of a later re-binding operation? Interestingly, vol. VII of the Qur'an of al-Murtada features a very similar system of mid-quire notation, with two parallel diagonal scores mostly placed in the top outer corner of the right page of the central bifolios (Fig. 18). This may indicate an Almohad date for the marks on both Qur'ans, although more comparative research would be required to confirm our hypothesis.

#### **5.iv The paper of the Pink Qur'an**

Since al-Mannuni's 1969 article, the smooth coloured paper of the Pink Qur'an has attracted the attention of scholars and collectors alike, eliciting fantasies about its Andalusí provenance and its association with the medieval paper mills of Xàtiva (whence the label "*waraq Shatibí*").<sup>106</sup> In the mid-twelfth century, the geographer al-Idrisi mentioned the paper manufactured in Xàtiva, stating that "it is of such quality that cannot be found anywhere else in the world, and it is popular in both the East and the West".<sup>107</sup> However, the notion that Xàtiva monopolised the production of high quality paper in the western Mediterranean is a historiographical fallacy, fuelled by the ample material and textual evidence of its appreciation at the court of the kings of Aragon, who conquered the town around 1244. As Robert Burns put it, "Pertinent random items in the registers of Jaume [I el Conqueridor, r. 1213–76] and his immediate successors take decisive note of Játiva's paper industry; they

refer to no other by name, or even in a general way, except as ambiguously “Valencian”. These items reveal the Játiva industry’s breadth and prosperity, the crown’s consistent determination to favor and protect it, and the primacy of Muslim craftsmen there long after the conquest”.<sup>108</sup>

The fact that the finest paper available to the Aragonese chancery and administration was made in Xàtiva, however, does not mean that equally fine paper was not produced elsewhere in al-Andalus or North Africa, for the Islamic book market. In Seville, for instance, papermakers had been active since at least the early twelfth century, as reported by the jurist and market inspector Ibn ‘Abdun.<sup>109</sup> In 629/1232, a fair manuscript of Arabic grammar was produced in Seville using a smooth coloured paper similar to that of the Pink Qur’an, and there is no reason to believe that this support was imported from Xàtiva rather than made locally (Fig. 19).<sup>110</sup> Other manuscripts on fine paper, occasionally coloured in hues of ochre, orange, and pink, were copied between 492/1099 and 667/1268 not just in Xàtiva and Seville, but also in Almería, Béjaïa, Ceuta, Córdoba, Elche, Fez, Granada, Huelva, Majorca, Málaga, Marrakesh, Menorca, Murcia, Tlemcen, Sijilmasa, and Valencia. Only a meticulous analysis of the paper of the Pink Qur’an and its closest comparanda can shed light on its manufacturing process and allow us to approach the question of its origin with some confidence.

The original sheets of paper (i.e. the bifolios) used in the Pink Qur’an reach a maximum size of 338 x 530 mm. They are larger than the bifolios employed in most contemporary Maghribi manuscripts, with the notable exception of the Málaga and Seville Qur’ans – whose heavily trimmed bifolios measure 355 x 450 mm – and of the monumental Qur’an of prince Ibrahim, made of bifolios of 575 x 990 mm coloured in an orange-pinkish hue (Fig. 15). They are also slightly larger than the most common size for Xàtiva paper sheets in the Archive of the Crown of Aragon, which is 320 x 480 mm.<sup>111</sup> The structure of the laid paper was examined with the help of a light sheet across approximately 50 folios from various volumes of the Pink Qur’an. Our observations have revealed a lightly impressed ribbed pattern with barely distinguishable horizontal laid lines, which makes it extremely challenging to count them accurately. On three folios from vol. X we were able to count ten–fourteen laid lines across 20 mm. The chain lines, similarly faint, are spaced between 50 and 68 mm apart from each other, but even in the same sheet they are not always equidistant.

Clear zigzag marks are visible near the fold of some bifolia, but their placement makes it difficult to detect them in bound volumes, unless the quires have come loose (Fig. 20). Zigzag marks are a common feature of Andalusí and Maghribi paper from the twelfth and thirteenth

centuries, and they can be described as a series of scratches running from the upper to the lower margin, quickly made with a pointed tool during the paper production process, after the sheets were lifted off the mould.<sup>112</sup> Their purpose is debated: some believe they were used on particularly thick paper sheets to make the gutter area of the quires thinner and more foldable, and therefore minimise the difference between the thickness of the fore edge and the spine of the text block.<sup>113</sup> Alternatively, they may have been a kind of trademark, or the result of handling, counting, or stocking practices followed by Maghribi stationers.<sup>114</sup> While they do appear frequently in Xàtiva paper, there are also attested in manuscripts copied in Valencia, Córdoba, Seville, Granada, Elche and Barcelona, as well as in Ceuta and Marrakesh. In fact, the paper of the Qur'an of al-Murtada, presumably produced for the use of the Almohad caliph in Marrakesh, features particularly evident zigzag marks. In the fourteenth century, they also appear in some Arabic diplomatic letters sent from the sultans of Granada, Fes, Tlemcen, and Tunis to the kings of Aragon.<sup>115</sup> It is highly unlikely that all this paper came from Xàtiva, or even from al-Andalus: North African cities must have been equally able to produce fine paper to sustain the local book market, and some of this paper had zigzag marks impressed on it.

Overall, the paper of the Pink Qur'an exhibits a relatively low porosity and a glossy sheen, suggesting the application of starch-based size followed by substantial burnishing. However, the folios that are more damaged and worn – particularly those at the beginning and end of the volumes in Marrakesh, and most of the dispersed folios of vol. X – have lost their glossy appearance and rigidity, becoming dull and soft. The fabric of the paper contains thread particles and fibre inclusions that are especially visible when backlit. These features are also found in Xàtiva paper, which Maria Carme Sistach described as retaining a high alkaline reserve due to the addition of calcium carbonate to the size.<sup>116</sup> XRF analyses of a Pink Qur'an folio in the Detroit Institute of Arts have revealed the presence of calcium carbonate (CaCO<sub>3</sub>), likely corresponding to the alkaline reserve observed by Sistach, though the exact amount could not be determined.<sup>117</sup> Sistach identified the fibres of the Xàtiva paper in the Archive of the Crown of Aragon as primarily linen with some hemp; future analyses might confirm the use of similar raw materials in the Pink Qur'an, although they cannot possibly be solely associated with the workshops of Xàtiva.

The pigmentation of the paper used in the Pink Qur'an varies in hue and intensity across the ten volumes and even within one same volume, ranging from a pale rosy beige to a saturated reddish pink. The colourant was applied to the sheets only superficially after they had been lifted off the mould, scraped with zigzag marks, and had probably dried: this is visible from

the damaged or scraped-off areas of some folios, where the pink pigment has worn away exposing the white fibres below (Fig. 21). Conversely, if zigzag marks are present, they appear to have absorbed more of the dye because of their concavity (Fig. 20). The pigmentation on the surface of each folio is not perfectly uniform, and sedimented orange particles can be seen under a microscope, in higher concentrations around the more intensely coloured areas (Fig. 22). It is not uncommon to find areas where the pink pigment has worn away or was applied in minimal quantities, if at all, probably due to the swiftness of the dying process. Further chemical analyses conducted on the four folios in the Detroit Institute of Arts revealed the use of an inorganic pigment with a predominant presence of lead, most likely due to the use of minium (lead oxide,  $Pb_3O_4$ ), as well as traces of iron, silicon, and potassium.<sup>118</sup> Three of the Detroit folios (Inv. 2007.120.1–2 and 2008.22) come from vol. X and feature a light pink hue, while the fourth folio (Inv. 2008.23) belongs to vol. IV and has a more saturated pigmentation. Besides minium, this folio was also coloured with vermilion or cinnabar (mercury sulphide,  $HgS$ ).<sup>119</sup> Particles of both lead and mercury are clearly distinguishable under the microscope: orange specks for minium, and red specks for cinnabar (Fig. 23).

The pink paper in the Archive of the Crown of Aragon which is most closely related to that of the Pink Qur'an comes from the third volume of the *Llibre del Repartiment*, a register of owners of houses in the city of Valencia compiled shortly after its conquest in 1238, on quires of Xàtiva paper. Here, the first sixteen folios are made of burnished pink paper which was described in detail by Oriol Valls i Subirà, but never analysed chemically.<sup>120</sup> The only pigment analyses were carried out by Sistach on two distinct groups of diplomatic letters sent by Muslim rulers to the kings of Aragon. The first group consists of ten letters from Nasrid Granada written in Castilian between 1306 and 1310: some of them feature an intense red pigmentation, containing significant quantities of minium ( $Pb_3O_4$ ) with traces of silicon and calcium; others have a pink hue resulting from iron-rich ochre pigments (i.e. clay with ferric oxide,  $Fe_2O_3$ ).<sup>121</sup> The second group consists of six diplomatic letters in Arabic, five of which written in Granada and one in Tunis, between 1309 and 1346: here, too, the pink hue results from iron-rich ochre pigments (hematite with clay or feldspar).<sup>122</sup> What the Detroit folio shares with these coloured papers (none of which was probably produced in Xàtiva) is the presence of minium, the superficial application of the pink colourant, and the unevenness of the pigmentation, marked by sedimented orange particles that are more prevalent in the more saturated areas. The use of expensive vermilion or cinnabar, however, is not attested in the coloured papers of the Archive of the Crown of Aragon, and even in the Pink Qur'an, it seems

to have only been used in certain folios across nine of the ten volumes. Sistach remarked that the dyeing of the papers she analysed likely occurred after production, either by immersion or superficial application, before the sheets were sized and burnished. In the case of the Pink Qur'an, microscopic observation reveals a superficial application of the colourant, possibly with a brush, given its shallow penetration into the fibres.

Sistach ventured two complementary explanations for the use of coloured paper in diplomatic correspondence: it could have been meant as an authenticating device for the official documents of a ruler's chancery (especially the Nasrid chancery of Granada), but also as an aesthetically pleasing feature that highlighted the importance of the text and the cultural refinement of the sender.<sup>123</sup> In the case of the Pink Qur'an, aesthetic and symbolic aspects surely played an important role in the choice of paper, but a more practical motivation is also possible: the lead oxide and mercury sulphide in the pigmentation seem to have acted as disinfectants and prevented bookworms from attacking the folios, which are generally much less damaged than those of contemporary paper manuscripts where colourants were not applied, such as the Qur'an of al-Murtada.

### **5.v Pink paper in Almohad Marrakesh**

Can the tinted paper of the Pink Qur'an reveal anything specific about its context of production? As we have seen, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries pink paper was not only produced in Xàtiva, but most likely also in Andalusí cities such as Seville (Fig. 19) and Granada. However, a series of clues discussed above suggest that the Pink Qur'an was copied in Marrakesh, partly by the same calligrapher who worked on the Qur'an of prince Ibrahim (Fig. 15), and according to the same ten-volume format of the Qur'an of al-Murtada, which represents its closest extant relative. Luckily for our argument, a growing corpus of manuscript evidence indicates that pink paper was also employed, and most likely produced, in Northwest Africa just as much as in Iberia, already in the thirteenth century. For instance, a paper copy of the Sufi treatise *Risala fi al-tasawwuf* by al-Qushayri, made in Fez in 616/1219, features two pink-coloured folios of a hue similar to that of the Pink Qur'an.<sup>124</sup> The calligrapher here whimsically included a tinted bifolio in one of the quires, perhaps to add an extra touch of refinement and please the manuscript's patron, the Almohad prince Abu 'Abd Allah b. Abi Zakariyya' b. Abi Hafs b. 'Abd al-Mu'min (a second cousin of al-Murtada). Later on, pink paper was occasionally used in deluxe Marinid manuscripts probably also copied in Fez.<sup>125</sup> It was in Marrakesh, however, that pink paper became especially appreciated during the final decades of Almohad rule.

Among the literary works commissioned by the caliph al-Murtada was a poem in 6,300 verses in praise of Muhammad and his miracles, titled *Nazm al-durar bi-ay Ahmad ajall al-bashar*, composed by a certain Abu al-Hasan al-Rahuni.<sup>126</sup> The unique manuscript of this work – probably a holograph – was copied in 661/1263 in Marrakesh, for the library of al-Murtada, and it partly features pink paper folios of the exact same hue as the Pink Qur'an (Fig. 24).<sup>127</sup> Another pink manuscript produced for the library of al-Murtada contains the work *al-Ahkam min ay khayr al-anam* by Abu Muhammad Hasan Ibn al-Qattan, a scholar and historian affiliated with the Almohad court.<sup>128</sup> The structure and pigmentation of the paper in both cases is very similar to what can be observed in the Pink Qur'an, with the same faint laid lines, irregularly spaced chain lines, visible thread particles, and superficial application of the colourant (Fig. 25). There can be little doubt that the three manuscripts belong to the same context of production – a milieu where pink paper, probably made locally, was used in books that were commissioned by, or dedicated to, the penultimate Almohad caliph, and stored in the library of his palace in Marrakesh.

A fourth pink manuscript seemingly connected to Marrakesh should also be mentioned here: it is a calligraphed copy of *al-Ahkam al-shar'iyya al-kubra* by Ibn al-Kharrat al-Ishbili, originally in eight volumes, two of which are today kept in the Ibn Yusuf Library with the eight extant volumes of the Pink Qur'an.<sup>129</sup> The manuscript was copied in Shawwal 664/1266, four months before the assassination of al-Murtada by order of his cousin Abu Dabbus, who reigned as the last Almohad caliph (r. 1266–69).<sup>130</sup> Was this the last of a series of manuscripts on pink paper produced for the library of al-Murtada? Unfortunately, the colophon does not mention the place of copying, but the quality, texture, and pigmentation of the paper are the same as in the other manuscripts discussed above, with zigzag marks and sedimented orange particles visible under the microscope (Fig. 26). These commonalities reinforce our theory of a network of papermaking centres where pink colourants were applied to the support according to the same technique and using similar pigments, both in al-Andalus and Northwest Africa, already in the first half of the thirteenth century. Despite its political isolation during the final decades of Almohad rule, the city of Marrakesh seems to have been fully plugged into this network, and the local production of manuscripts on coloured paper is just another indicator of the affinity between Andalusi and Maghribi artisanal practices and material culture in this turbulent yet fertile period.

## Conclusion

This article has aimed to provide not just a description, but an exhaustive biography of the Pink Qur'an and its vicissitudes over the past 800 years. Despite reaching the twentieth century virtually unscathed, this Almohad artifact subsequently fell prey to looting and systematic dismemberment from the time of the French Protectorate onwards, which had so far precluded its study as a whole. Its likely place of production, the city of Marrakesh, should be reappraised as one of the capitals of Quranic scholarship and the arts of the book during the thirteenth century, on a par with Andalusí centres such as Seville, Málaga, and Valencia, and other North African cities such as Ceuta and Tunis. A product of the final turbulent decades of the Almohad caliphate, the Pink Qur'an shows that high-quality calligraphy and illumination were not affected by political turmoil and continued to thrive as expressions of creativity, piety, and culture under a dynasty that had lost virtually all its power. As argued in this article, the manuscript's most prized and distinctive feature, namely its pink paper, was probably manufactured in Marrakesh by applying a minium-based dye with occasional additions of cinnabar to the surface of the sheets after they had dried, following a local recipe developed in tandem with other Andalusí and Maghribí papermaking centres. Xàtiva was only one of these centres, and the analysis of more Arabic manuscripts copied on "*waraq Shatibí*" will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the scale and breadth of the phenomenon of coloured paper in the western Islamic world.<sup>131</sup>

After the fall of the Almohads, the Pink Qur'an was removed from its original location and re-endowed to a different institution, probably a mosque, in the Marinid period. A systematic study of re-endowment practices as evidenced in Maghribí manuscripts, especially if they involved the pricking of pages, is a necessary next step to undertake in order to better date, locate, and identify these interventions, and therefore shed light on the later circulation and consumption of the manuscripts themselves. As demonstrated by the Saadian restoration of the Pink Qur'an, precious books from the past were not discarded but continued to be sought after and cherished, and the way later users interacted with them by replacing damaged parts or adding textual and decorative elements is as revealing of their world view as their commission and production of new books. Luckily, the field of Saadian manuscript culture seems to be attracting increasing attention, and the Ibn Yusuf Library of Marrakesh will undoubtedly prove a fertile environment for new research on the subject.<sup>132</sup> Finally, the detailed account of the dismemberment and commodification of the Pink Qur'an presented here, which occurred during the past 100 years as a consequence of colonial interference and outright theft, is hoped to sensitise the reader about the enduring dangers faced by Moroccan

manuscripts, and about the problems of dating and attributing disjointed fragments of unknown provenance without first tracing their reverse biography. The obfuscation of the Pink Qur'an's links with Marrakesh, whether deliberate or unintentional, has not only contributed to the partial erasure of its recent history, which we now hope to have rescued from oblivion, but also to its misattribution to Xàtiva, Valencia, or Granada, which we hope to have convincingly refuted. Our reappraisal of the Pink Qur'an as an African artifact, rather than as an Iberian or even a "Spanish" one, will perhaps raise more awareness of the cultural and artistic achievements of the medieval Maghrib vis-à-vis the justly acclaimed splendour and sophistication of al-Andalus.

## Captions

Figure 1: Pink Qur'an, artificial bifolio from vol. IV (Q10:36–8). Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, MS.806.2011. © Qatar Museums

Figure 2: Pink Qur'an, artificial bifolio from vol. X (Q63:9–64:3). Ithaca, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, 2000.141.002. © Cornell University

Figure 3: Pink Qur'an, endowment certificate on the first folio of vol. VI, as published in 1954 (a) and as it appears today (b), with the heading of *sura* 19 *Maryam* on the verso (c). Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 431/4, fol. 1a–b. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 4: King Muhammad V visiting an exhibition of Moroccan manuscripts in the Qarawiyyin Library, Fez, in 1960. Vol. VII of the Pink Qur'an is on the table, to the far left. © Direction des Archives Royales

Figure 5: Muhammad Hajji leafing through vol. V of the Pink Qur'an in the early 1990s. © Ministère des Habous et des Affaires Islamiques

Figure 6: The four types of binding of the Pink Qur'an volumes in Marrakesh: (a) undecorated red leather binding of vol. I, pre-nineteenth century; (b) stamped brown leather binding of vol. VI, sixteenth or seventeenth century; (c) undecorated brown leather binding of vol. II, first half of twentieth century; (d) modern half-leather binding of vol. VIII, post-1960. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 7: Stamped medallions on the binding of vol. VI of the Pink Qur'an (a), vol. XVI of the Seville Qur'an (b), and ms. árabe 211 of the Escorial Library, copied in Marrakesh in 977/1570 (c). © Éléonore Cellard and Patrimonio Nacional

Figure 8: Pink Qur'an, beginning of vol. II (Q3:92–3), with sixteenth-century restoration of the right folio and outer edge of the left folio. Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 431/2, fol. 1b–2a. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 9: Pink Qur'an, sixteenth-century addition of missing words in the margin of vol. III (Q6:162–4). Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 431/3, fol. 104b–105a. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 10: Pink Qur'an, beginning of vol. VI (left), and end of the fifth tenth (Q18:74) marked in the margin of vol. V (right). Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 431/4, fol. 1b, and ms. 431/5, fol. 236b. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 11: Pink Qur'an, vol. IX, verse 4,600 of the Qur'an marked at the end of Q49:7 according to the first Medinan count, and at the end of Q49:8 according to the second Medinan count. Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 431/8, fol. 126b. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 12: Pink Qur'an, *sura* heading of Q8 *al-Anfal* by illuminator A (above) and of Q31 *Luqman* by illuminator B (below). Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 431/3, fol. 210b, and ms. 431/6, fol. 181a. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 13: Pink Qur'an, verse markers erased or altered to conform to the first Medinan count. Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 431/1, fol. 109a, 139a, 141a. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 14: Qur'an of al-Murtada', page spread from vol. VII (Q25:74–26:7). Marrakesh, 654/1256. London, British Library, ms. Or. 13192, fol. 3b–4a. © Umberto Bongianino

Figure 15: Qur'an of prince Abu Ishaq Ibrahim, page spread from vol. I (Q6:160–165). Marrakesh, before 635/1238. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, ms. R. 21, fol. 227b–228a. © Milli Saraylar Başkanlığı

Figure 16: Pink Qur'an, prick-holes forming the word *hubs* in the upper margin of vol. II, probably added around 1300. Also note the different mid-quire notation marks. Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 431/2, fol. 14b–15a. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 17: Pink Qur'an, vol. VII, mid-quire notation in ink and as two parallel diagonal scores traced in dry point. Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 431/6, fol. 93a. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 18: Qur'an of al-Murtada', vol. VII, mid-quire notation as two parallel diagonal scores traced in dry point. London, British Library, ms. Or. 13192, fol. 18b. © Umberto Bongianino

Figure 19: Sibawayh, *Kitab fi al-nahw*, copied in 629/1232, most likely in Seville. Royal Library of the Monastery of El Escorial, ms. árabe 1, fol. 263b–264a. © Patrimonio Nacional

Figure 20: Pink Qur'an, vol. VI, visible zigzag marks along the inner margin of the folio. Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 431/4, fol. 47a. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 21: Pink Qur'an, vol. VIII, abrasion of the paper showing the white fibers below the pink surface. Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 431/7, fol. 142b. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 22: Pink Qur'an, vol. X, sedimented orange particles of minium under the microscope. Detroit Institute of Arts, Inv. 2008.22. © Detroit Institute of Arts

Figure 23: Pink Qur'an, vol. IV, orange particles of minium and red particles of cinnabar under the microscope. Detroit Institute of Arts, Inv. 2008.23b. © Detroit Institute of Arts

Figure 24: Abu al-Hasan al-Rahuni, *Nazm al-durar bi-ay Ahmad ajall al-bashar*, with dedication to the library of al-Murtada'. Marrakesh, 661/1263. Fez, Qarawiyyin Library, ms. 291, fol. 170a. © Ministère des Habous et des Affaires Islamiques

Figure 25: Abu Muhammad Hasan Ibn al-Qattan, *al-Ahkam min ay khayr al-anam*. Marrakesh, mid-thirteenth century. Note the paper structure in the backlit image (left) and the superficial coloration of the pink paper (right). Fez, Qarawiyyin Library, ms. 292, fol. 1b, 27a. © Éléonore Cellard

Figure 26: Ibn al-Kharrat al-Ishbili, *al-Ahkam al-shar'iyya al-kubra*. Marrakesh (?), 664/1266. Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 5, fol. 5b–6a. © Éléonore Cellard

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The research underlying this article was first presented at a stimulating colloquium entitled "*Quand un Coran se fait un nom : trajectoires et implications*", organised by Alya Karame at the Collège de France, Paris, on 11 October 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Boisgirard, *Miniatures et manuscrits orientaux*, Hotel George V, Paris, 30 October 1975, lot 488. The volume was sold for 30,000 francs. The catalogue description read: "Écriture andalouse. Cinq lignes. Points diacritiques et de vocalisation bleus et or. Pages roses. (Certaines restaurées). Enluminures : cartouches et rondeaux or. Reliure moderne en cuir brun à décor estampé or. XVe siècle. 32 x 24,5 cm".

<sup>3</sup> Sotheby's, *Catalogue of Fine Oriental Miniatures, Manuscripts, and Qajar Paintings*, London, 14 April 1976, lot 247.

<sup>4</sup> Toronto, Aga Khan Museum, Inv. AKM258. Copenhagen, David Collection, Inv. 31 a-b/1989: see von Folsach 2001, p. 57.

<sup>5</sup> This lot and the following one were auctioned again in 2010: see Christie's, *The Arcana Collection Part II: Important Rare Books and Manuscripts*, London, 27 October 2010, lots 41 and 42.

<sup>6</sup> This folio was auctioned again a few months later at Christie's, *Islamic Art and Manuscripts*, London, 16 October 2001, lot 3, and again at Sotheby's, *Arts of the Islamic World Including Fine Carpets and Textiles*, London, 9 April 2008, lot 19.

<sup>7</sup> This bifolio (previously in the Welch collection) is today in Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, MS.806.2011.

<sup>8</sup> The folio is accessible here: <https://www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org/art/explore-the-collection?id=24980683>.

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- <sup>9</sup> The folio is accessible here: <https://collections.agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/quran-folio-akm258>.
- <sup>10</sup> The folio is accessible here: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/751641>.
- <sup>11</sup> Falk 1985, p. 39, cat. 7. Because of the lack of pink manuscripts attributed to Nasrid Granada, it is likely that Welch had in mind the dyed paper of some Nasrid diplomatic letters: see Labarta 2021, vol. I, p. 48.
- <sup>12</sup> James 1988, pp. 66–9, cat. 8a–b. The exhibition then travelled to Dublin, London, Zurich, and Amman.
- <sup>13</sup> Dodds 1992, p. 311, cat. 81. The exhibition also travelled to Granada.
- <sup>14</sup> Al-Dani 1994, p. 305. Note that the Pink Qur'an is still erroneously considered a set of 20 volumes in Lintz, Déléry & Tuil-Leonetti 2014, pp. 356–7, cat. 210.
- <sup>15</sup> Two folios from this set (featuring Q84:22–85:2 and 85:9–12) were auctioned again by Sotheby's, *Arts of the Islamic World*, London, 12 October 2005, lot 7. A third folio (featuring Q85:3–7) was in the Lygo Collection in 2013: see Kwiatkowski 2013, p. 92, cat. 53.
- <sup>16</sup> This folio is today in Singapore, Asian Civilisations Museum, Inv. 1999-00797.
- <sup>17</sup> This folio was auctioned again at Christie's King Street, *Arts of Islam*, London, 5 October 2012, lot 556.
- <sup>18</sup> This folio was auctioned again at Sotheby's, *Arts of the Islamic World and India*, London, 24 April 2024, lot 18.
- <sup>19</sup> This folio is today in Kuala Lumpur, Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, Inv. 2011.9.1.
- <sup>20</sup> These folios were auctioned again at Sotheby's, *Arts of the Islamic World*, London, 23 October 2019, lot 106, and again at Christie's, *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds including Rugs and Carpets*, London, 24 October 2024, lot 18, together with three more folios.
- <sup>21</sup> This folio was auctioned again at Rim Enchères, *Encre et or*, Paris, 10 March 2023, lot 6.
- <sup>22</sup> Auctioned together with two more folios from previous sales.
- <sup>23</sup> The folio is accessible here: <https://corpuscoranicum.de/en/manuscripts/1947/page/1v?sura=61&verse=14>
- <sup>24</sup> The folios are accessible here: <https://museum.cornell.edu/collections/search-result/artwork/?artwork-id=36805>
- <sup>25</sup> The folio is accessible here: <https://collections.lacma.org/node/212735>.
- <sup>26</sup> The folio is accessible here: <https://corpuscoranicum.de/en/manuscripts/1947/page/1v?sura=61&verse=14>
- <sup>27</sup> Sotheby's, *Arts of the Islamic World & India including Fine Rugs and Carpets*, London, 27 October 2020, lot 402.
- <sup>28</sup> Butler-Wheelhouse et al. 2024, p. 81, cat. 43b–c.
- <sup>29</sup> This folio was auctioned again at Bonham's, *Islamic and Indian Art*, London, 25 April 2017, lot 11, but wrongly read as Q39:58–60.
- <sup>30</sup> One folio from this sequence (containing Q21:49–52) was auctioned again at Millon, *Arts d'Orient et de l'Inde*, Paris, 15 June 2022, lot 130, then at Sotheby's, *Arts of the Islamic World and India, including Fine Rugs and Carpets*, London, 26 April 2023, lot 11, and again at Mayfair Auction House, *Islamic Lands of Art*, 31 October 2024, lot 46.
- <sup>31</sup> These folios are today in Kuala Lumpur, Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, Inv. 2012.25.2.
- <sup>32</sup> This bifolio was purchased by Sam Fogg and then sold to the J. Paul Getty Museum in 2021 (Ms. 122, Inv. 2021.44). It can be viewed here: <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/10A2A4#full-artwork-details>
- <sup>33</sup> Auctioned together with seven other folios from previous sales.
- <sup>34</sup> This set of folios was auctioned again (with additional folios containing Q24:2–14 and 24:26–8) at Christie's, *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds including Rugs and Carpets*, London, 26 October 2023, lot 48.
- <sup>35</sup> This set of folios was auctioned again (with additional folios containing Q24:2–26) at Christie's, *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds including Rugs and Carpets*, London, 26 October 2023, lot 48.
- <sup>36</sup> This folio was auctioned again at Christie's, *Calligraphy: Art In Writing*, London, 7 April 2021, lot 13.
- <sup>37</sup> Currently in the Belbagi Collection.
- <sup>38</sup> These four folios were bound together with six other folios from vol. VIII and IX. The two folios containing Q27:30–36 were later disbound and auctioned separately at Sotheby's, *Arts of the Islamic World*, 26 April 2017, lot 23, and they are now in Doha, Qatar National Library, HC.MS.2017.0097; the two folios containing Q29:15–19 were later disbound and auctioned separately at Christie's, *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds including Rugs and Carpets*, 25 October 2018, lot 22.
- <sup>39</sup> This folio is today in Kuala Lumpur, Islamic Art Museum Malaysia.
- <sup>40</sup> Currently owned by the Ministry of Culture of Saudi Arabia, IA 2019.4: see Abdeljaouad et al. 2021, pp. 46–7, cat. 26.
- <sup>41</sup> This folio was auctioned again at Christie's, *Art of the Islamic & Indian Worlds*, London, 21 April 2016, lot 62.
- <sup>42</sup> Currently in the Al Thani Collection, ATC757.3.
- <sup>43</sup> These two folios were bound together with eight other folios from vol. VII and IX, but they were later disbound and auctioned separately at Sotheby's, *Arts of the Islamic World*, London, 25 April 2018, lot 4.

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<sup>44</sup> These four folios were bound and auctioned together with six other folios from vol. VII and VIII. Two of these four folios (containing Q50:2–5 and Q56:27–36) were later disbound and auctioned separately at Sotheby's, *Arts of the Islamic World*, London, 25 October 2017, lot 10.

<sup>45</sup> On average, a single leaf fetches around £12,200, but this average can vary widely depending on the quality of the leaf (presence of illumination, conservation of the paper), the auction house, and market fluctuations. In 2013, for example, with the rise in the Islamic art market, Sotheby's sold a single leaf of the Pink Qur'an for £21,250. Prices soar when it comes to a bifolio: the record was set by Christie's in 2012, when two attached leaves fetched £91,250. In total, some 93 leaves of the Pink Qur'an have been publicly auctioned – and sometimes re-auctioned – on the London art market since 2006, fetching more than £800,000.

<sup>46</sup> Benjelloun-Laroui 1990, pp. 200–1.

<sup>47</sup> Benjelloun-Laroui 1990, p. 207, note 82: “Il reste quatre volumes sur les dix qu'il comportait”.

<sup>48</sup> Deverdun & Messaoudi 1939; Ibn al-'Arabi 1994, pp. 16–17.

<sup>49</sup> Luccioni 1982, p. 277.

<sup>50</sup> Deverdun & Messaoudi 1939, p. 874.

<sup>51</sup> Ibn al-'Arabi 1994, p. 18.

<sup>52</sup> It was apparently due to al-Glawi's hunger for manuscripts that Lyautey requested an inventory of the manuscript libraries in Marrakesh: see Clément 1994, p. 17.

<sup>53</sup> On the manuscripts that Lyautey received as gifts from members of the royal family during his visit to Marrakech in 1913 (including a Qur'an dated 1282/1866) see Clément 1994, p. 16. A Saadian Qur'an dated 966/1559, also owned by Liautey, was auctioned by Boisgirard, *Art d'Orient*, Hotel Drouot, Paris, 23 June 1975, lot 106.

<sup>54</sup> On the Qur'an of al-Murtada, copied by the penultimate Almohad caliph in 654/1256, see most recently Lintz, Déléry & Tuil-Leonetti 2014, pp. 371–5, nos. 218–22, and bibliography. The manuscript is mentioned in an inventory of the library of the Ibn Yusuf Mosque dated 1111/1700: see Deverdun 1944, p. 57.

<sup>55</sup> Étude Couturier Nicolay, Hotel Drouot, Paris, 27 June 1975, lot 156.

<sup>56</sup> Rabat, National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco, ms. J 658 and J 1278: see Lintz, Déléry & Tuil-Leonetti 2014, pp. 374–5, nos. 221–2. Part of vol. VII (with the original binding) was auctioned at Sotheby's London (01/07/1969, lot 366) and acquired by the British Library, where it is still kept today, under the shelf mark Or. 13192.

<sup>57</sup> Luccioni 1955, p. 240; Ibn al-'Arabi 1994, p. 19.

<sup>58</sup> On the Málaga and Seville Qur'ans, see Lintz, Déléry & Tuil-Leonetti 2014, pp. 358–9, nos. 211–12, and bibliography.

<sup>59</sup> Deverdun & Ghiati 1954, p. 414, footnote 5; al-Mannuni 1969, p. 22. Deverdun identified it as vol. IX, al-Mannuni as vol. IV.

<sup>60</sup> Deverdun & Messaoudi 1939, p. 874.

<sup>61</sup> Deverdun 1944, p. 57.

<sup>62</sup> Luccioni 1982, p. 279.

<sup>63</sup> Deverdun & Ghiati 1954, pp. 411–23.

<sup>64</sup> Deverdun & Ghiati 1954, p. 411.

<sup>65</sup> Deverdun & Messaoudi 1939, p. 875; Ibn al-'Arabi 1994, pp. 18–19.

<sup>66</sup> *Qa'ima li-nawadir al-makhtutat* 1960, p. 5.

<sup>67</sup> Al-Mannuni 1969, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> Ibn al-'Arabi 1994, pp. 38–40. Note that the volumes are not correctly identified in the catalogue.

<sup>69</sup> Al-Mannuni 1969, pp. 20–4. The Qur'an of al-Murtada was described as complete in 1736 (see Deverdun 1944, p. 57); in 1933, Prosper Ricard reported to have seen only four of its volumes in the Ibn Yusuf Library, probably because one (or more) had been seized by Lyautey, and two by al-Glawi.

<sup>70</sup> Luccioni 1982, p. 277. Ibn al-'Arabi 1994, p. 17, dates the “rediscovery” to the year 1944.

<sup>71</sup> Almela 2021, pp. 192–4.

<sup>72</sup> Al-Ifrani 1888, p. 191.

<sup>73</sup> On the libraries of Saadian Marrakesh, see Hajji 1967, vol. I, pp. 216–17.

<sup>74</sup> Déroche, de Castilla & Tahali 2022, vol. I, pp. 405–7.

<sup>75</sup> De Castilla 2019.

<sup>76</sup> Royal Library of the Monastery of El Escorial, ms. árabe 211.

<sup>77</sup> On the frequent hand watermark in Saadian manuscripts, see Déroche, de Castilla & Tahali 2022, vol. I, p. 343; the closest comparanda for the ewer watermark are found in French paper produced in Normandy around 1534–1560: see Briquet 1907, vol. IV, p. 634, nos. 12660–2.

<sup>78</sup> Compare the calligraphy and illumination of these added folios with a Qur'an endowed in Fez in 949/1542: Qarawiyyin Library, ms. 879.

- <sup>79</sup> Jallab 2024, vol. II, pp. 165–80; al-Mannuni 1991, pp. 75–109; Hajji 1967, pp. 65–6, 145–6, 166–7, 214–29.
- <sup>80</sup> London, British Library, ms. Or. 1405. Another Saadian Qur’an partly copied on pink paper is in Fez, Qarawiyyin Library, ms. 5 (copied before 1020/1611).
- <sup>81</sup> See also Ricard 1933, p. 113, footnote 1: “Mais notre Coran a fait l’objet de soins spéciaux : à une époque indéterminée par exemple, ainsi qu’en témoignent le cuir et le papier, il a été réparé”.
- <sup>82</sup> In some dispersed folios, the holes were closed with Japanese paper at a later date: see, for instance, the bifolio in the J. Paul Getty Museum (Ms. 122, Inv. 2021.44).
- <sup>83</sup> Cellard 2025, pp. 233–4.
- <sup>84</sup> Four folios from vol. XVI (including the final colophon) are kept in the National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco, ms. K 2949 (20): see al-Mannuni 1969, pp. 24–6; Sharifi 1982, pp. 303–5; Dandel 1994, vol. III, pp. 413–20; Bongianino 2024, pp. 59–61. Vol. I of the same Qur’an (including the final colophon) is kept in the Azhariyya Library (64 folios in total, some restored in the eighteenth or nineteenth century).
- <sup>85</sup> The endowment and re-endowment certificates of this manuscript are edited and discussed in Bongianino 2024, pp. 53–55 and 58–59.
- <sup>86</sup> Al-Mannuni 1969, p. 26.
- <sup>87</sup> Bongianino 2024, pp. 55–61.
- <sup>88</sup> Deverdun & Ghiati 1954, pp. 411–14.
- <sup>89</sup> Deverdun and Ghiati read “al-Zahir”, but according to the sources, the *laqab* of al-Murtada’s father was al-Tahir: see Huici Miranda 1956–7, vol. II, p. 625.
- <sup>90</sup> Deverdun and Ghiati read *nafa’a-na Allah ta’ala bi-dhikri-hi*, but this formula makes little sense. Given that the only clearly legible word is *bi-dhikri-hi*, we suggest a new reading of the formula as referring to the mosque where the two preachers were employed.
- <sup>91</sup> Bongianino 2024, pp. 53–4.
- <sup>92</sup> Benjelloun-Laroui 1990, pp. 30–1; Binebine 1992, pp. 40–1.
- <sup>93</sup> Bongianino 2024, pp. 50–3; Ayt Umghar 2019; Lintz, Déléry & Tuil-Leonetti 2014, pp. 371–5; al-Mannuni 1969, pp. 6, 20–4; Deverdun & Ghiati 1954, pp. 414–23.
- <sup>94</sup> Al-Dani, *Al-Bayan fi ‘add ay al-Qur’an*, p. 319.
- <sup>95</sup> Al-Dani, *Al-Bayan fi ‘add ay al-Qur’an*, p. 307.
- <sup>96</sup> These are: Paris, BnF, ms. Arabe 389–92; Rabat, National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco, ms. D 1304; Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Pococke 444.
- <sup>97</sup> Al-Qurtubi 2006, vol. I, p. 51.
- <sup>98</sup> Al-Dani 1994, p. 67.
- <sup>99</sup> Al-Dani 1994, pp. 121–3.
- <sup>100</sup> Ibn Simak al-‘Amili 2004, p. 48.
- <sup>101</sup> Bongianino 2020, p. 273.
- <sup>102</sup> Bongianino 2024, pp. 57–9.
- <sup>103</sup> Déroche et al. 2005, p. 100. On *ghubar* numerals see Gacek 2009, pp. 112–13.
- <sup>104</sup> Not enough folios from vol. IV are known to be able to verify whether this practice was followed in it too, but there is no reason to believe that it was not.
- <sup>105</sup> With the exception, of course, of the last 28 folios, which originally belonged to vol. X, as mentioned above.
- <sup>106</sup> Al-Mannuni 1969, p. 7.
- <sup>107</sup> Al-Idrisi 1970–84, vol. V, p. 556. Al-Idrisi’s account is mirrored in the work of the Syrian geographer Yaqut al-Hamawi (d. in Aleppo in 1229), who wrote that in Xàtiva “the best paper is manufactured” and exported to the rest of al-Andalus: see Burns 1981, p. 5.
- <sup>108</sup> Burns 1981, p. 8.
- <sup>109</sup> Bongianino 2022, pp. 176–7.
- <sup>110</sup> Royal Library of the Monastery of El Escorial, ms. árabe 1. It is a copy of Sibawayh’s *Kitab*, bearing a transmission licence (*ijaza*) for its copyist and owner written by the Sevillian grammarian Abu ‘Ali ‘Umar al-Shalawbin: see Humbert 1995, pp. 156, 277–8.
- <sup>111</sup> Sistach 1999, p. 108.
- <sup>112</sup> Gacek 2009, pp. 297–8.
- <sup>113</sup> Estève 2001.
- <sup>114</sup> Le Léannec-Bavavéas 1999, p. 125.
- <sup>115</sup> Sistach 1999, pp. 111–13.
- <sup>116</sup> Sistach 1999, p. 110.
- <sup>117</sup> Detroit Institute of Arts, Inv. 2007.120.1.
- <sup>118</sup> The analyses were conducted by Christina Bisulca, Andrew W. Mellon conservation scientist in the Conservation Department at the Detroit Institute of Arts, whom we thank for her invaluable help. X-ray

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fluorescence spectroscopy was conducted on a Bruker Tracer 5g handheld XRF; visible-near infrared fiber optics spectroscopy (VNIR FORS) was conducted on a Malvern Panalytical ASD Fieldspec 4 spectroradiometer (350-2500 nm) using the contact probe; and digital microscopy was conducted on a Keyence VHX-7000 digital microscope. The identification of minium ( $Pb_3O_4$ ) is based on the presence of Pb in XRF and an inflection point at ~560 nm in the VNIR FORS visible spectrum.

<sup>119</sup> The identification of vermilion/cinnabar (HgS) is based on the presence of Hg in XRF and an inflection point at ~600 nm in the VNIR FORS visible spectrum. The presence of Pb on Inv. 2008.22 was confirmed through Raman spectroscopy during previous analyses.

<sup>120</sup> Valls i Subirà 1978, pp. 136, 215–16.

<sup>121</sup> Sistach 1997, pp. 75–76.

<sup>122</sup> Sistach, 1999, pp. 113–15.

<sup>123</sup> See also Labarta 2021, vol. I, p. 48.

<sup>124</sup> Doha, Qatar National Library, HC.MS.00196, fol. 23 and 30: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021667378>.

<sup>125</sup> For instance, a copy of al-Ya‘furi’s *Mukhtar al-jami‘ bayn al-Muntaqa wa-l-Istidhkar* made of mixed quires of parchment and pink paper folios: Fez, Qarawiyyin Library, ms. 174 (vol. I and II). Vol. III of the same manuscript was auctioned at Christie’s London, *Islamic Manuscripts featuring the Mohamed Makiya Collection*, 18 April 2016, lots 137 and 141. For another manuscript copied on pink paper in Fez, in 672/1274, see al-Mannuni 1999, vol. II, p. 664.

<sup>126</sup> The work is a versified rendition of a treatise by Abu Muhammad Hasan Ibn al-Qattan, titled *al-Ahkam min ay khayr khirat al-anam*: see al-‘Abid al-Fasi 1960, pp. 13–14.

<sup>127</sup> Fez, Qarawiyyin Library, ms. 291: see al-‘Abid al-Fasi 1979–89, vol. I, pp. 288–9.

<sup>128</sup> Fez, Qarawiyyin Library, ms. 292: see al-‘Abid al-Fasi 1979–89, vol. I, p. 289; Ibn al-Qattan 1990, pp. 26–45.

<sup>129</sup> Marrakesh, Ibn Yusuf Library, ms. 5. Other two volumes of the same manuscript are in Rabat, Royal Library, ms. 5380.

<sup>130</sup> Huici Miranda 1956–7, vol. II, pp. 562–6.

<sup>131</sup> For a preliminary list of manuscripts copied on *waraq Shatibi*, see al-Mannuni 1999, vol. II, pp. 663–4.

<sup>132</sup> Déroche, de Castilla & Tahali 2021; Benyahia 2021, pp. 221–36; de Castilla 2019.