

سُورَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ مَائَةٌ وَتِسْعُونَ وَكُحْفٌ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مُدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ ثُمَّ أَتَى النَّاسَ  
فَرُؤُا بَيْنَهُمْ كَيْدِلُونَ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ غَضَىٰ أَحْلَا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى  
ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تَمُوتُونَ وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ  
كُومٍ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُونَ وَمَا نَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا  
رَاضِينَ قَدْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَنْبَاءُ مَا كَانُوا  
مُزْعِزُونَ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا هَلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قُرُونٍ مَكَانَهُمْ فِي  
مَا لَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَهُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِدْرَارًا وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَنْهَارَ  
تَحْتَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ نُدُوبُهُمْ وَأَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُونًا آخَرِينَ وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَنُغَارِكَنَّ كِتَابًا  
طَائِرٍ فَلْيَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْحَابٌ مَبِينٌ  
وَلَا أَنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ وَكُومًا أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكَ الْفُضَىٰ الْأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يَنْظُرُونَ



## Shaping the Word of God: Visual Codifications of the Qur'an between 1000 and 1700

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Today, a printed copy of the Qur'an looks distinctly unlike any other type of book written in Arabic script.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Book of Islam, the Word of God for Muslims, often is published in a single volume, with a dense display of text on the page and a limited selection of standardized fonts: *naskh* for the text, *thuluth* for the chapter (sura) titles. The modern, mass-produced *mushaf* (plural: *masahif*), the Arabic word for a written copy of the Qur'an, is a singular book object, unique in style and format. When Muslims and non-Muslims alike are asked to picture the Qur'an, often what comes to mind is an austere book, with both text and decorative elements rendered in black and white. Such elements include the opening double-page spread with the first sura on the right and the beginning of the second chapter on the left page. All the subsequent chapter titles are presented in framed and decorated headings (*unwan*). The text on every page is also enclosed in a simple framing border. Throughout the book, inscribed medallions in the margins indicate divisions of the text. Appearing often, though not always, are numerical markers of the thirty-section divisions (*juz*; plural: *ajza'*), and more occasionally their subdivisions: *rub'* (quarter), *nisf* (half), *thalatha arba'* (three-fourths) as well as the fourteen indications of prostration (*sajda*). Finally, small, identical devices inserted in the text separate verses (*aya*) and present the position number of the preceding *aya*.

Such is the standard presentation of the modern printed Qur'an. It originated with the Cairo edition established under King Fu'ad I of Egypt in 1923–24 and printed in Giza (fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> Although it is not the oldest printed version of the Qur'an in existence, the Cairo edition has had a fundamental impact on the printing of the Qur'an through to the present day, for it adopted only one of



1. Printed Qur'an, suras 7:203-207, 8:1-9. Egypt, Cairo, Bulaq, 1924, pp. 226-27. William Smith Morton Library, Union Presbyterian Seminary.

the canonical variant readings *qira'a* (pl. *qira'at*).<sup>3</sup> Less acknowledged, however, is the way the Cairo edition affected the look of subsequent editions with its fixed visual canon through the choices of fonts, formats, and decorated devices. The physical appearance of the Cairo edition fits into the long tradition of handwritten copies of the Qur'an, and it falls within the production of *masahif* characterized by a plain layout and created on a large scale, particularly in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ottoman and Safavid Empires.<sup>4</sup> Yet the process of standardization started centuries before and can be seen as the ultimate outcome of different visual solutions that often were used simultaneously.

This essay examines the physical changes to the *mushaf* between the year 1000, when rounded cursive scripts first were used to copy the Word of God, and the 1700s. During this period, regional, cultural, and artistic factors resulted in multiple visual presentations of the Qur'an, with a considerable variety of formats, page layouts, and scripts, all underlined and enhanced by lavish illuminations, a quality that modern copies of the Qur'an do not convey. The relatively somber and standardized appearance of the Qur'an we now perceive was unknown until modern times.

## From the Line to the Page: Calligraphy and the Text Area

As scholars have long acknowledged, several changes and innovations led to critical transformations of Qur'an codices in the tenth and eleventh centuries: the introduction of paper, which gradually replaced parchment; the transition from angular to rounded cursive scripts; and the switch in

orientation from a horizontal to a vertical format.<sup>5</sup> It is still unclear what kind of impact these three developments had on each other, but they certainly may have been intertwined. This development is particularly illustrated in manuscripts copied in the New Style scripts (also called eastern *kufic* or broken *kufic*).<sup>6</sup> Prior to the rise of the New Style in the tenth century, most Qur'ans were produced in a horizontal format on parchment leaves and penned in a wide variety of angular *kufic* scripts.<sup>7</sup> With only a few words per page and distinct spacing between letters and words, some of these Qur'ans must have been enormous and composed of several thousand folios. They likely served not only as aide-mémoire, as has been argued, but also to express the patron's prestige.<sup>8</sup>

The evolution of calligraphy was certainly another cause of the *mushaf's* transformation. Written sources attribute the calligraphic reform to Abu Ali Ibn Muqla (died 940), who elaborated the canon of the "proportioned script" (*al-khatt al-mansub*).<sup>9</sup> It was neither a sudden nor a swift revolution but a slow process during which different formats with various calligraphic styles were used at the same time. For instance, most early examples in the New Style—regardless of the manuscript dimensions or the placement of the text—have a few lines per page, generally three, five, or seven, following the older tradition of copies in the early Abbasid *kufic* script. This can be seen on small parchment copies attributed to the tenth century, such as a *juz* (cat. 11) with four lines per page, and on later manuscripts on paper from eleventh-century eastern Iran, like a section of the Qur'an (cat. 16) with five lines and another one with four lines (cat. 17). Codices from the late tenth century onward show the dominance of the vertical format; yet the oblong shape was still in use, as exemplified by a four-volume *mushaf* on paper completed in Isfahan in 993–94 (AH 383) by Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Yasin (cat. 12). These examples demonstrate not only the persistence of the older tradition, although the Isfahan copy may be a unicum, but also the conservatism that characterized the production of Qur'anic manuscripts.<sup>10</sup>

The turn of the tenth century witnessed a tremendous burst of experimentation. Indeed, it was one of the most creative periods in the history of the Islamic arts of the book, a moment embodied by Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Hilal, known as Ibn al-Bawwab (died 1022). Active in Baghdad, he was the calligrapher responsible for the oldest extant Qur'an in cursive script.<sup>11</sup> Dated 1001 (AH 391), the manuscript embodies Ibn al-Bawwab's achievements. Following Ibn Muqla's method, he successfully codified the script by combining harmoniously fluid strokes with the principles of geometry that had been applied to earlier angular *kufic* scripts. Furthermore, his Qur'an was the first to employ a consistent system of diacritical dots above or below the eighteen letter shapes (graphemes) of the Arabic alphabet as well as signs of vocalization.<sup>12</sup> Even more so than his illustrious predecessor, Ibn al-Bawwab was praised as a paragon in later treatises on calligraphy. Considered the epitome of extraordinary artistic skills and moral virtues, he became a model for other calligraphers to emulate. Ibn al-Bawwab composed his own treatise on calligraphy and eventually became associated with the codification of round cursive scripts later known as the "six pens" (*al-aqlam al-sitta*).<sup>13</sup> These can be divided into two groups based on their strokes—either "wet" (round), i.e., *thuluth*, *tawqi'* and *riqa'*, or "dry" (rectilinear), i.e., *naskh*, *muhaqqaq*, and *rayhan*. They also can be paired, one as a majuscule form of a similar style and the other as a minuscule one: *thuluth* with *naskh*, *muhaqqaq* with *rayhan*, *riqa'* with *tawqi'*. By the early twelfth century, cursive scripts were used to copy the Qur'an almost everywhere in the central and eastern Islamic lands, but in Iran the New Style continued to be equally favored.

A Qur'anic manuscript in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts (TIEM), includes an altered colophon with the forged signature of Ibn al-Bawwab, the date of 1010 (AH 401), and the city of Baghdad as the place of completion (cat. 13, fig. 2). A close look at the colophon reveals the name



2. Single-volume Qur'an, suras 23:72–24:8. Calligrapher Abu'l-Qasim Ali ibn Abdallah. Probably eastern Iran or present-day Afghanistan, Ghaznavid period, ca. 1020–30. Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, TIEM 449, ff. 81b–82a (cat.13).

of the original calligrapher of this manuscript—Abu'l-Qasim Ali ibn Abdallah. Active in the first half of the eleventh century, he signed at least one other copy of a Qur'an.<sup>14</sup> The TIEM manuscript is copied in a script similar but less fluid than Ibn al-Bawwab's, and the text is more densely organized. Each page comprises twenty-three lines, but they are lightened by the regularity of the script and the even spacing between letters and words, which all contribute to the legibility of the text.

One major if not fundamental outcome of cursive scripts was the evolution of the text area (*matn*) with the implementation of a ruling board (*mistara*). Threads—usually of silk—were stretched and put at regular intervals on a cardboard. The sheet of paper then was rubbed on the *mistara*, and the threads left an imprint in light relief; they provided the baseline on which the calligrapher placed the writing.<sup>15</sup> The same *mistara* generally was used for an entire manuscript. The script(s) selected for each Qur'anic copy dictated the distance between two lines, and thus they regulated not only the format and dimensions but also the layout of the *matn* and ultimately the overall look of the codex. Moreover, by playing with the elongation (*mashq*) of some letters and the spacing, the calligrapher determined the visual aspect of the line and by extension the entire text area on the page. The choice of script and the calligrapher's ability to adapt it to the constraints of the Qur'anic text eventually provided each copy with its own distinctive visual identity.

In the second half of the thirteenth century, the celebrated Yaqut al-Musta'simi (died circa 1298), who later received the honorific title “cynosure of the calligraphers” (*qiblat al-kuttab*), recodified Ibn al-Bawwab's “six scripts.”<sup>16</sup> Numerous examples copied by him in *naskh* or *rayhan* are known, as are a greater number of manuscripts with forged signatures. As exemplified by one Qur'an dated 1286–87 (AH 685), Yaqut's *rayhan* is finer and more balanced than that of Ibn al-Bawwab and his contemporaries, probably because of the way he trimmed his pen (cat. 21, fig. 3). The grace and fluidity of his style also result from the combination of the even spacing and careful transcription of each letter

and word. Furthermore, there are fewer lines on the page (fifteen versus twenty-three), although the text area in the previously mentioned Qur'an by Abu'l-Qasim Ali (cat. 13) and in Yaqut's Qur'an have similar proportions.

Both the *rayhan* and *naskh* scripts were considered well suited for "small" format copies, at which Yaqut excelled.<sup>17</sup> As such, Yaqut's style not only was admired, it was emulated, especially in fifteenth-century Iran during the rule of the Timurids, and the Qaraqoyunlu and Aqqoyunlu Turkmen dynasties (cat. 35, 36). For example, Shams al-Baysunghuri, a famous calligrapher active at the Herat-based court of the Timurid prince Baysunghur (died 1433), signed a sumptuous Qur'an in *naskh* (cat. 33), which follows Yaqut in style and layout.<sup>18</sup> It was among the Ottomans that the *naskh* style of the Yaquti tradition, however, became the favorite script for copying Qur'ans. In the early phase of what became known as the Ottoman school of calligraphy, Shaykh Hamdullah (died 1520), a master calligrapher par excellence, who was active under Bayezid II (reigned 1481–1512), recodified Yaqut's *naskh*. After 1500, the vast majority of Ottoman Qur'ans were copied in the manner of Shaykh Hamdullah.<sup>19</sup> Whether a Quran was of modest (cat. 56) or large dimensions (cat. 63), the zone of text usually comprised thirteen or fifteen lines, following the Ottoman master's standards for *naskh* script.

Among the "six styles," *thuluth* and *muhaqqaq* are considered to be large-size scripts. *Thuluth* often was used for architectural inscriptions and because of its monumental character was favored for sura titles and inscriptions in illuminations, as for instance in Ibn al-Bawwab's Qur'an. Nevertheless, some deluxe copies were copied in *thuluth*, often in gold. The oldest-known example was completed in 1028 (AH 419) by Husayn ibn Abdallah (cat. 14), most certainly in the Fatimid capital of Cairo, the rival city to Abbasid Baghdad. The evenly spaced and consistent lines of text, which number nine per page, unfold elegantly across the page. The *rasm* (consonantal skeleton) is chrysographed (written

3.  
Single-volume Qur'an,  
suras 19:76–20:26.  
Calligrapher Yaqut  
al-Musta'simi. Iraq,  
Baghdad, Il-Khanid  
period, 1286–87.  
Museum of Turkish and  
Islamic Arts, TIEM 507,  
ff. 124b-125a (cat. 21).





4. Single-volume Qur'an, suras 26:156–84, 23:10–24:5. Calligrapher Zarin Qalam. Probably Iran, Seljuq period, 1186. Chester Beatty Library, Is 1438, ff. 124b–125a.

in gold) and outlined in black, while the diacritical dots and vowels are marked in red; other signs of vocalization appear in blue and in a color that now is oxidized. Later examples—a Mamluk copy from Cairo (cat. 37) dated 1313–14 (AH 713) and an Ottoman *mushaf* from circa 1460 (cat. 54)—were both copied with eleven lines per page. Monumental and majestic by nature, *muhaqqaq* became the favorite script for copying Qur'ans beginning in the thirteenth century. It was widely used in Iran under the Mongols and their successors, the Timurids (circa 1370–1506) and Safavids (1501–1722); in Egypt under the Mamluks (1250–1517); and in Ottoman Anatolia until the late sixteenth century. Manuscripts of the Qur'an in *muhaqqaq*, more so than in any other style, show a great variety of text layouts and number of lines, with five (cat. 19, 20), seven (cat. 53), nine (cat. 52), or ten (cat. 44, 46).

The close relationship between the text area and the calligraphy highlights the pivotal role of the calligrapher in the overall conception of the *mushaf*: the selection of one script over another ultimately dictates the *mistara*. It is thus no surprise that particular proportions, such as the Pythagorean and golden rectangles, were preferred for the written surface.<sup>20</sup> There were most certainly regional preferences as well. For example, beginning in the sixteenth century, manuscripts from Safavid Iran (cat. 52) and Ottoman Turkey (cat. 56) sometimes had a double-square format, which also can be seen in secular manuscripts, notably literary works.<sup>21</sup>

By the second half of the twelfth century, calligraphers developed more complex text layouts by combining several scripts on a page.<sup>22</sup> An early example is a Qur'an (fig. 4) dated August 3, 1186 (AH 15 Jumada I 582) by Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Bakr ibn Abd al-Rahim, better known as Zarin Qalam ("Golden Pen").<sup>23</sup> Each page has nineteen lines of text; the first, tenth, and nineteenth lines are written in large and bold *muhaqqaq*, and the two blocks sandwiched in between each comprise

eight lines in smaller *rayhan*. The three lines in *muhaqqaq* occupy more of the horizontal space, expanding into both lateral margins, while the two blocks are compressed. As a result, the ruling does not have two lateral vertical lines but four. This intricate composition created an unprecedented visual dynamism in the Qur'anic text. The elaborate system was used at least until the sixteenth century for deluxe copies, mainly in Iran and Turkey. A Qur'an attributed to Abdallah al-Sayrafi, one of the famous "six students" of Yaqut al-Musta'simi (cat. 25) is a highly refined example and follows the model implemented by Zarin Qalam. It also features lines of text in different colors; the middle one in large *muhaqqaq* is written in gold, and the two upper and lower lines are in black, as are the three lines in *naskh* in the two middle blocks. The sura titles, written in a very elegant *kufic*, alternate in blue, black, and gold. This Qur'an differs from Zarin Qalam's copy, however, in that every line has the same horizontal length. Numerous later examples attest to the success of this layout formula, especially in Iran. An interesting example from the Ottoman Empire is a copy by Khalil Allah ibn Mahmud Shah, completed in September 1517 (AH Ramadan 923), probably in Istanbul (cat. 55). Written entirely in gold, it was laid out following a pattern similar to the one used by Zarin Qalam, i.e., alternating three large *thuluth* lines with two blocks of midsized *muhaqqaq*. The simultaneous use of several scripts on the page was also favored in sixteenth-century Safavid Iran, where copies with this layout were produced, notably by Ruzbihan Muhammad al-Tab'i, the famous calligrapher/illuminator from Shiraz.<sup>24</sup>

Calligraphy thus played a central role in determining the Qur'anic text's particular formal and visual structure. Moreover, Qur'ans copied by famous calligraphers were not ordinary manuscripts and often were commissioned by the elite. In addition to representing human attempts to transcribe the Divine Message, these codices were considered the calligraphers' *tours de force*. As Vlad Atanasiu notes, "Qur'anic specificities strike as artistic exploits. As such they are efficient embodiments of the theological concept of the inimitability (*i'ajaz*) of the Qur'an, which usually refers to its content and language, but under the patronage of calligraphers extends to script."<sup>25</sup> This idea of inimitability extended to the page and the text area, for it was the calligrapher who gave the *mushaf* its physical appearance.

## The Qur'anic Codex and the Design of the Page

The development of Qur'anic cursive scripts in the early eleventh century was accompanied by another major technological modification: the replacement of parchment with paper.<sup>26</sup> The two changes paved the way for the production of a *mushaf* in a single-volume codex, such as Ibn al-Bawwab's Qur'an and the copies by his contemporary Abu'l-Qasim Ali ibn Abdallah (cat. 13). With fifteen to twenty-five lines per page, resulting in more than 100 words, such codices consisted of 150 to 300 folios, a formidable economy when compared to earlier enormous volumes.<sup>27</sup> Even with the possibility of creating single-volume Qur'ans, multiple sets, which were divided according to *juz*, continued to enjoy great popularity. Some were small, such as an eleventh-century example from Iran (cat. 17); others were large, as is exemplified by a copy made in Timurid Shiraz in the 1430s (cat. 31, 32; fig. 5). Sets of half *juz*—i.e., Qur'ans divided in sixty parts (*hizb*)—also exist, although they are rarer and usually have modest dimensions (cat. 16).<sup>28</sup> Sometimes, the text was divided into seven parts (*sub'* or *manzil*), each seventh intended for a different day of the week.<sup>29</sup>

Other divisions of the Qur'an were used less frequently. Examples include the two-volume format, which seems to have been popular from the eleventh through the thirteenth century, as demonstrated by a set dated 1028 (AH 419) from Fatimid Egypt (cat. 14), a second volume in





5. Twenty-fourth section of a thirty-part Qur'an, sura 39:32–39. Iran, probably Shiraz, Timurid period, ca. 1430–40. Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, TIEM 565, ff. 1b–2a.

the New Style probably originating from the Ghaznavid sultanate in eastern Iran (cat. 15), and a sumptuous two-part Qur'an (cat. 19) made in Baghdad in 1204 (AH 600). Occasionally Qur'ans in four parts (one for each week of the month) were also produced, especially in the eastern Islamic world. The set completed in Isfahan in 993–94 (AH 383) is an early example of this type (cat. 12). More unusual are copies in three volumes, such as the sets copied, illuminated, and bound by Mahmud ibn Ramadan and attributed to Seljuq Anatolia, circa 1280 (cat. 20).

Between the late tenth/early eleventh century and the end of the fifteenth century, Qur'anic codices were primarily produced in two formats: single-volume Qur'ans with relatively modest dimensions and large-size copies in thirty volumes. The production of volumes in two, three, four, seven, or other sections may indicate occasional and special commissions rather than a broader trend. Yet regional, dynastic, or sectarian, preferences certainly may have influenced the physical structure of the *mushaf*. In Iran and Anatolia for instance, this two-fold production of Qur'ans was particularly prevalent, and it primarily reflected the destination of the copies: following the format developed by Ibn al-Bawwab, small codices were made for private consumption. Large codices divided into *ajza'*—which exemplified patronage of the elite, especially during the reigns of the Il-Khanids and their successors—were meant for public display and use.<sup>30</sup> In Syrian and Egyptian Mamluk regions, however, large-size, single volumes—combining the essential characteristics of the two aforementioned *mushaf* formats—were preferred for both private and public usage.<sup>31</sup>

After about 1500, the single-volume *mushaf* predominantly became the favored format. If multi-set Qur'ans were still common in the fifteenth century, their production dramatically decreased in Safavid Iran and the Ottoman Turkey, notably in Anatolia, in the following century.

Yet, many of the single-volume *masahif* indicate divisions, especially the *juz* and its subdivisions, with decorative devices (marginal medallions and cartouches), a system that had been implemented as early as the year 1000.

In single volumes, division of the text into two, three, four, or seven sections was indicated with lavish illuminated borders. The two-volume Fatimid Qur'an (cat. 14) is an early example divided into four parts: in each volume, the central double page is treated the same way as the opening and closing folios. This idea of a single *mushaf* presenting the sectional divisions seems to reflect regional or dynastic trends, as demonstrated by a group of large Qur'ans from the Safavid period. In these examples, the two-part divisions (cat. 44, 47, 49, 50) and, to a lesser extent, the four-part divisions (cat. 46) are marked with elaborate illuminated double-page borders. As a result, the illuminations, whose primary function is to enhance the Word of God, now also focus the reader's attention on the physical structure of the codex and offer them different visual elements to locate their place within the codex.<sup>32</sup>

The Qur'anic text is continuous, and there are no disruptions between the first and last suras. Much like "steps," one of the meanings of the word *sura*, the chapters follow each other on the page. In other words, the beginning of a *sura* always dovetails the end of the previous one. A chapter does not appear at the top of a new page if the previous chapter does not end at the bottom of the previous page, because that would interrupt the text. As a result, at the end of the Qur'an, readers see several of the shortest suras on the same page. To indicate the separation between chapters, illuminators marked the earliest copies with simple, narrow decorated bands. Beginning in the ninth century, the bands were replaced with larger, illuminated rubrics that provide the title of the *sura* they precede (cat. 9).<sup>33</sup> Sometimes the title has no decoration and is simply written out (cat. 22, fig. 6, and cat. 60). In these instances, it appears in a different script than the one used for the Qur'anic text and in a different color, usually in gold. Most often, *sura* headings are inserted into an illuminated panel. Apart from small roundels or rosettes that separate verses, they are the only illuminated elements in the text area, and their size and overall design are determined by and based on the layout of the text area. In other words, the grid of the *mistara* not only provides the lines for the text but also for the illumination design. Within a manuscript, the height of the rubrics can vary, and they can occupy a space corresponding to one, two, or three lines of text.

Illumination played an essential role in the opening folios of the Qur'an codex. As the point of entry into the text, the first *sura*, *al-Fatiha*, and the beginning of the second one, *sura al-Baqara*, were the focus of special attention and care. From the early eleventh century (cat. 13) to the thirteenth century (cat. 21), the arrangement followed the scheme used for the whole codex: *al-Fatiha* and the first verses of *al-Baqara* are displayed on the same page, i.e., the verso of the first folio; and the facing page, i.e., the recto of the second folio, presents *al-Baqara*'s subsequent verses. The double page is set in illuminated borders, but the presentation of the text is identical to that of the rest of the volume. After the fourteenth century, the verses of suras 1 and 2 follow a distinct layout, which was widely adopted throughout the Islamic world. Occupying a narrower space, the text

6.  
Single-volume Qur'an,  
suras 67:25–68:2.  
Calligrapher Ferhad  
Pasha. Probably Turkey,  
Istanbul, Ottoman  
period, 1571. Museum of  
Turkish and Islamic Arts,  
TIEM 388, f. 424a.



now is set in broader illuminated frames. Usually, the first chapter is on the right, with its seven verses arranged in four lines, and sometimes, as in some examples from the Timurid period, there may be as many as seven lines. The end of the Qur'an received similar attention, often mirroring the opening. The closing double page, with its sequence of short chapters, is at times inserted into an illuminated border similar to the one at the beginning of the volume (cat. 55). Frequently, the last double page, however, is less exuberantly illuminated. In multivolume Qur'ans, each section (*juz*) begins with an identical opening, both in terms of number of lines and illuminated frames (cat. 31, 32; fig. 5). The calligraphy, the illumination, and their placement on the page, therefore, lend the manuscript a visual coherence. Whether created as a single or multiple volumes, there is a strong sense of formal unity in the overall conception—from the choice of script and the layout of the words to the arrangement of the codex as a whole.

The complex design of the manuscript and the relationship between calligraphy, illumination, and layout underscore the critical role of the makers. One individual occasionally served both as calligrapher and illuminator, although this occurred more frequently before 1400 than in later centuries.<sup>34</sup> As already mentioned, Mahmud ibn Ramadan copied, illuminated, and even bound a three-volume copy of the Qur'an (cat. 20), probably in thirteenth-century Anatolia. In the early fourteenth century, however, the Islamic world witnessed the increased professionalization of the arts of the book, and deluxe Qur'ans were produced collaboratively in workshops.<sup>35</sup> Who then decided how a *mushaf* should look? Did a single person develop the overall design, or was it the work of a team? Furthermore, these skilled artists produced copies of the Qur'an as well as literary manuscripts for the court and members of the elite, drawing on a shared language of design. In other words, a *mushaf* and a *divan* (collection of poetry) may have written surfaces of analogous proportions and show similar styles of illumination. Scholars, however, have rarely focused on the growing visual relationship between Qur'ans and secular manuscripts after the fifteenth century in Iran and Turkey.<sup>36</sup> An exceptional Qur'an, completed in 1538 (AH 945) by Shah Mahmud Nishapuri, a calligrapher working in the Safavid royal atelier, exemplifies this convergence of production.<sup>37</sup> Copied in *nasta'liq*, a script that was developed in Iran for writing Persian poetry, this Qur'an integrates features of literary and Qur'anic manuscripts. On the page that presents the last sura and the beginning of an eulogy to Ali ibn Abi Talib, for example (fig. 7), the text in Arabic is entirely vocalized as it is in every Qur'an, while the eulogy, composed in Persian, is not, because vowels are never noted in Persian. It is preceded by an illuminated *unwan*, narrower than the sura headings, which gives the name of the illuminator, Hasan al-Baghdadi. The text area is sprinkled with gold, similar to any deluxe manuscript produced in princely and royal workshops, and is set in gilded and colored rulings, a common feature in both Qur'anic and literary works. Although Shah Mahmud's *mushaf* is not the only copy to incorporate visual elements from secular texts, it is one of the finest copies to commingle the two traditions in such an original and seamless manner.

### Straddling the Ruled Border: The Sacred and the Profane

In every manuscript, the page layout (*mise-en-page*) invariably follows the same pattern: the *matn* is not displayed at the exact center of the page. Instead, it is placed closer to the spine, leaving more space on the three outer margins (*hashiyya*). This was done more for practical than aesthetic reasons and kept the text as safe as possible from external damage. This format is all the more important to the Qur'an, as the Word of God must be protected from any defilement. As mentioned above, by at least the twelfth century, copyists used a *mistara* to set the text properly in the *matn*. They wrote on

the horizontal lines (also called the baselines), often piling up letters, syllables, and words at the end in order *not* to extend the Qur'anic text into the margin. As a result, the reader has the impression that the Qur'anic text is enclosed within an invisible frame. Although a few examples from earlier periods are known, only in fourteenth-century Iran were the borders of the *matn* defined with colored and gilded lines.<sup>38</sup> These ruled borders, called *jadwal* lines, were always added after the copy was completed, and they served as a liminal demarcation, separating what was situated inside the *matn* (the text of the Qur'an) from what was located outside in the margins (what was *not* the Qur'an). Before the Il-Khanid period, only some parts of the text (mainly the beginning and the end) were framed with illuminated strips rather than lines to highlight their importance. After the mid-fourteenth century, the reverse occurred: the Qur'anic text on the page was isolated with *jadwal* lines. The page now had two visually distinct zones. The practice of "framing" spread during the Timurid and Turkman periods, and after the sixteenth century became the norm for Safavid and Ottoman Qur'ans.

The constraints of the justification (also called lineation) highlight the way the calligrapher inscribed the Qur'anic text on a line, by compressing the text and reducing the space between letters, which could ultimately result in writing the last word or letters vertically, to ensure the text fits the frame (cat. 23, fig. 8). In other words, the relationship of the Qur'anic text to the *matn* became such an intrinsic part of the visual code that it ultimately gave the page a dual nature: a sacred area surrounded by a profane zone. If one considers the codex as a whole, the same principles apply to any words before the first sura and after the last one, which are not part of the Revealed Message. It also explains the different scripts chosen for Qur'anic and non-Qur'anic texts, such as prayers (*du'a*), divination tables (*falnama*), the dedication, and ex libris. Indeed, the Qur'anic text is always written in a calligraphic style that is distinct from the ones used for inscriptions and extra texts, whether located within or outside the *matn*. Furthermore, the size of the Qur'anic text is always larger than the script used for additions. These features underscore how calligraphers established a hierarchy of value within a *mushaf* and visually rendered, in an unequivocal way, the primacy of the Divine Word.

As a result of these developments, the preeminence of calligraphy as the undisputed and supreme form of art in the Islamic world became inextricably linked to the Qur'an. Special and careful attention was paid to the fact that the Word of God had to be transcribed without alteration.



7. Single-volume Qur'an, sura 114. Calligrapher Shah Mahmud Nishapuri and illuminator Hasan al-Baghdadi. Iran, probably Tabriz and Herat, Safavid period, 1538. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, H.S.25, f. 36ob.

السَّمِيعِ الْعَلِيمِ بِمَا قَالُوا  
أَضْغَاثُ أَجْلَامٍ بِدَافِئِهَا  
بَلْ هُوَ شَيْءٌ مِمَّنْ قَوْلِهَا  
أَنْبِيَائُ الْأَوَّلِينَ مَا أَمَنْتَ  
قَبْلَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ



لَاهِيَةً قُلُوبِهِمْ وَأَنْتَ وَالنَّجْمُ

الَّذِي تَطَّلَمُ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا كَشْرٌ

مِثْلُكُمْ أَفَتَأْتُونَ الشَّجَرَةَ

وَأَنْتُمْ تَبْصُرُونَ قُلُوبٌ يَجْعَلُ

الْقَوْلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ

8. Sections of a thirty-part Qur'an, sura 21:3-6. Iraq, Baghdad, Il-Khanid period, ca. 1307-8. Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, TIEM 538, ff. 147b-148a (cat. 23).

9. Single-volume Qur'an (detail). Calligrapher Abu'l-Qasim Ali ibn Abdallah. Probably eastern Iran or present-day Afghanistan, Ghaznavid period, circa 1020–30. Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, TIEM 449, f. 78a (cat. 13).



A sumptuous *mushaf* commissioned by the Mamluk sultan al-Nasir Muhammad and dated 1313–14 (AH 713) (cat. 37) is a rare example that provides the name of the reviewer, who was a different from the calligrapher. When an error was made, there were several ways to correct it. In the copy by Abu'l-Qasim Ali (cat. 13, fig. 9), mistakes were covered with an illuminated band. Later solutions included pasting a strip of paper over them and copying the correct wording.<sup>39</sup> The most frequent “errors,” however, were omissions of words. In these instances, the omissions were inscribed into the margins. The development of *jadwal* frames in the fourteenth century created an ingenious way for attaching marginal text to the *matn*. In a Qur'an dated 1340–41 (AH 741) and copied in *muhaqqaq* by Arghun al-Kamili, a disciple of Yaqut al-Musta'simi (cat. 26, fig. 10) an omitted word on the penultimate line was added right above the place it was supposed to appear. It was written with the same pen used for inscribing the vocalization. The lack of space on the final line meant that the last word of the sura was transcribed vertically within the implied ruling.

When *jadwal* lines were traced, they carefully avoided covering the large gold diacritical strokes that ran above the words. Thus, the ruled border encompasses the word within the *matn*. This idea is further developed in subsequent copies. In a Mamluk Qur'an from the late fifteenth century (cat. 41), the full verse 68 of sura *Yusuf* (Joseph) was left out and added later in the margin. Here again, the text, perpendicular to the *matn*, is penned in a smaller *naskh* than what is used for the Qur'anic text. *Jadwal* lines frame the marginal addition. As a result, although the cartouche is physically located in the margin, it belongs to the *matn*.

Another text in the *matn* might be a translation in Persian or Turkish, a feature that appeared in some Qur'ans after the eleventh century in Iran and Iraq (cat. 19, 22)<sup>40</sup>; as well as in Turkey and in Egypt (cat. 41). Interlinear text might also be transcribed in another style of script; in an Ottoman *mushaf* dated 1457–58 (AH 862; cat. 53), the Arabic is in a large and bold *muhaqqaq*, while the Persian translation is penned in a small, angular *naskh*. Explanations and translations of Arabic words in vernacular languages, which are occasionally added to the end of volumes, are sometimes copied in the same script as the Qur'anic text. However, as they are *not* the Word of God—the language of the Qur'an is Arabic only—the size of the letters is smaller, and the text usually is written on a diagonal.

Other non-Qur'anic elements within the *matn* are also inserted in a way that signals their difference. These elements include letters and abbreviations for punctuation and variant readings, which are usually rendered in a different ink color than the main text and placed above the lines of writing. Medieval copies often feature signs of several *qira'at*, sometimes all of them at once.



10.  
Single-volume Qur'an,  
sura 107:1–4 (detail).  
Calligrapher Arghun  
al-Kamili. Probably Iraq,  
Baghdad, Jalayirid  
period, 1340–41. Museum  
of Turkish and Islamic  
Arts, TIEM 452, f. 371b  
(cat. 26).

After the second half of the fifteenth century, however, the number of variant readings in a copy of the Qur'an narrowed down to two or three and, after circa 1600, they were completely omitted, especially from Ottoman copies (cat. 62, 63). Only one variant reading was consequently used—the one found later in the 1923–24 Cairo edition.

Sura titles are another important non-Qur'anic feature within the text area. They can be integrated into illuminated *unwans* or written simply across the page. In both cases, the name of the chapter, the number of verses, and the place of its revelation are inscribed in a different script than the Qur'anic text. Finally, the colophon, which acknowledges the completion of a copy and sometimes provides the name of the calligrapher and the place and date of production, also falls into the category of non-Qur'anic features. Colophons always follow the last sura. After the eleventh century, several examples suggest that they could be written in the same script than the Qur'anic text.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, certain visual elements always differentiate the colophon from the Qur'anic text. It can be set in a gold cartouche (cat. 62) or separated by a simple gold line or an *unwan*, often inscribed with the traditional invocation noting that the reading of the Qur'an has been completed (cat. 21). The colophon in a Jalayirid *mushaf* dated 1385 (AH 787), which was both copied and illuminated by the same artist, combines these different features (cat. 27, fig. 11). Supporting the idea of the *matn* as a sacred space in which non-Qur'anic content is distinguished, colophons often were copied in a different script, such as *thuluth* (cat. 63) or more frequently *tawqi'* (cat. 33, 60). In other instances, the text is written diagonally (cat. 62) or placed within a shape, such as a triangle (cat. 61).

Borders, or empty areas that protected the *matn*, soon became natural places for presenting extra Qur'anic elements. Marginal text seldom appears in deluxe manuscripts and generally consists of commentary on variant readings. In the Qur'an copied in Baghdad in 1204 (cat. 19), the calligrapher used a different script, a small *naskh* written in brown ink, and displayed the text in blocks of a few lines or in original zigzag lines. The most common devices indicate numerical divisions: markers of five and ten verses and the *juz* and its subdivisions. When those markers are simply written in the margins, they are transcribed in another script and color so they cannot be mistaken for Qur'anic text (cat. 59).

Every copy includes different motifs with specific functions, but the system and style adopted for each *mushaf* remain consistent throughout. Illumination became the essential marginal component, not only for highlighting the Qur'an's text divisions and the "architecture of the page" but also ultimately for distinguishing its sacred and profane components.<sup>42</sup> Although rarely noted, the two spheres seem to be intrinsic to Qur'anic manuscripts and one of their most essential





11. Single-volume Qur'an, suras 113–114. Calligrapher and illuminator Al-Hajj Majd al-Din ibn Ahmad al-Qazvini. Iran, Tabriz or Iraq, Baghdad, Jalayirid period, 1385. Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, TIEM 11, f. 318a (cat. 27).

12. Opposite Section of a thirty-part Qur'an, sura 33:29–30. Calligrapher Ali ibn Muhammad al-Alawi al-Husayni. Iraq, Mosul, Il-Khanid period, 1310. Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, TIEM 540, f. 57a (cat. 24).

characteristics. The contours of the *matn*, which became gradually visible through the means of *jadwal* lines, represent the border between the two. The idea of different conceptual zones on a page of the Qur'an finds its ultimate expression in a *juz* completed in 1310 (AH 710) (cat. 24, fig. 12). Here, the Qur'anic text is transcribed in majestic gold *muhaqqaq* and arranged in five lines per page. The final one includes the last line of the *matn* and the colophon, which is written in small gold *rayhan* script and enclosed in a frame. The reader is left with the impression that the sacredness of the Word of God radiates and fills the entire page, while the profane and non-Quranic element is confined within a framed rectangle.

## Conclusion

Over the course of about seven centuries, between the years 1000 and 1700, the Qur'an codex underwent a tremendous evolution. From Egypt to Afghanistan, artists of the book, primarily calligraphers, developed original solutions and refined the visual presentations of the Word of God. Two parallel formats became the norm: the one-volume *mushaf* of modest or large size and the multivolume copy, generally in thirty sections, whose dimensions increased with time beginning in the fourteenth century. The layout and design of the book was often determined by its destination, depending on whether it was

commissioned for personal or public use. In both instances, the function had an impact on the arrangement of the text and the selection of the script(s).

After the sixteenth century, however, Qur'anic manuscripts became more standardized, and comprised single-volume codices. At first glance, a monumental Safavid copy (cat. 52), dated 1599 (AH 1007) and written in nine lines per page in *muhaqqaq*, which alternate between black and gold, looks different from a large Ottoman *mushaf* (cat. 63), completed in 1644, with thirteen lines of text per page in black *naskh*. Yet both manuscripts represent the idea of a "standardized *mushaf*." Despite their stylistic variations, the two relatively plain copies are indeed quite similar. The *matn* contains only Qur'anic text, often in one of the variant readings, without the paraphernalia of signs noted in earlier copies. Few elements appear in the margins; usually these are small illuminated medallions that mark the *juz*, *hizb*, and every fifth or tenth verse. Only the opening double page, with the first sura on the right and the beginning of the second one on the left, are fully illuminated. Omitted from these copies are the marginal decorations that typically indicate other numerical divisions and additional glossed text.

The process of visual codification, or simplification of the *mushaf*—noticeable in fifteenth-century copies from Mamluk Egypt, Timurid Iran, and Ottoman Anatolia—was fully achieved by

مِنْكَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا يَا نَسَا الْبَنِي

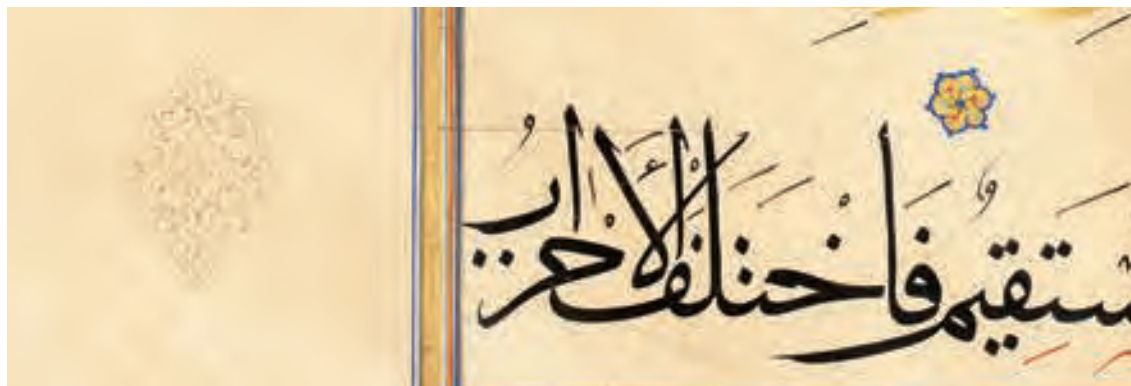
مَرِيَاتٍ مِنْكَ بِفَلْحِشَةٍ مَبِينَةٍ

وَيَضَاعُ عَنْهَا الْعَذَابُ ضَعْفَيْنِ

وَكَانَ زَيْلًا عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا

كُتِبَ هَذَا الْجُزْءُ الْمُبَارَكُ مِنْ أَصْلِ ثَلَاثِينَ جُزْءًا  
قَبْلَهُ وَمَا عُدَّةُ الْيَوْمِ الْفَقِيرِ لِي اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلِيٌّ  
مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْعَلَوِيُّ  
الْحَسَنِيُّ وَكَانَ الْقَدْحُ مِنْهُ فِي بَيْتِ نَهْ عَشْرَةَ

13.  
Single-volume Qur'an,  
sura 19:36–37 (detail).  
Calligrapher Khan  
Ahmad Sayri. Iran,  
Shiraz, Safavid period,  
1599. Museum of Turkish  
and Islamic Arts, TIEM  
531, f. 263a (cat. 52).



the seventeenth century.<sup>43</sup> It eventually culminated in the 1923–24 Cairo edition, whose formal appearance relied on principles already visible in the relatively plain Safavid and Ottoman copies. Yet there are fundamental features in the transcribed manuscripts that are not conveyed in the printed copy. Each manuscript is still unique with its own format, page layout, and calligraphy. No two Qur'ans present the same program of marginal devices and non-Qur'anic text, if there is any. The illumination may be similar in style, but it is never identical; even within one *mushaf*, sura headings are often differentiated in format and design. All these features are nowhere to be seen in the Cairo edition or the subsequent printed editions of the Qur'an, which offer a plain, standardized, and indistinguishable look. Their mechanically reproduced appearance further represents a disruption with the millenary tradition of manually producing Qur'ans. The character of each *mushaf* rested upon the talents and style of the calligrapher and the illuminator, with occasional "imperfections," such as corrections, additions, or omissions in the text and its decoration. (cat. 63, fig. 13). In this way, each handwritten Qur'an manuscript narrates a singular and visually memorable story.

## NOTES

1. I am grateful to Sana Mirza for her help with the bibliography and her insightful comments on the earlier draft of this essay.
2. For a general introduction to the history of printing the Qur'an, see Michael W. Albin, "Printing of the Qur'an," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, vol. 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 264–76.
3. The Cairo edition of the Qur'an relied heavily on the Ottoman tradition and thus favored the variant reading of Hafṣ (died in 796) after his teacher Asim (died in 745); this became the dominant model, not only in Egypt but also in almost every part of the Islamic world; Keith E. Small, *Textual criticism and Qur'an manuscripts* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), pp. 169–170. See also Fred Leemhuis, "From palm leaves to the Internet," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 151–52; and François Déroche, "Written transmission," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'an*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 183–84.
4. The Cairo edition's format seems to be based on Mamluk-influenced Ottoman models developed in Egypt. For other types of standardization of Qur'an manuscripts, notably in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, see Tim Stanley, "Page-setting in late Ottoman Qur'ans: An aspect of standardization," *Manuscripta orientalia* 10, no. 1 (2004), pp. 56–63; and Jan Just Witkam, "Twenty-nine rules for Qur'an copying: A set of rules for the lay-out of a nineteenth-century Ottoman Qur'an manuscript," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 26, no. 2 (2002), pp. 339–48. On the development of the Ottoman school of calligraphy in Egypt and the impact of the Istanbul production on the Cairene one, see François Déroche, "Istanbul seen from Cairo," in *M. Uğur Derman Festschrift: Papers Presented on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. Irvin Cemil Schick (Istanbul: Sabancı University, 2000), pp. 261–70.
5. Prior to the development of copies in oblong format, Qur'ans of the late seventh–early eighth century written in *hijazi* scripts presented a vertical format; see "In the Beginning" by François Déroche in this volume and François Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads: A First Overview* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 75–105. Alain George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy* (London: Saqi Books, 2010), pp. 40–49.
6. François Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition: Qur'ans of the 8th to the 10th centuries AD (The Nasser D Khalili Collection of Islamic Art)* (London: Azimuth Editions, 1992), pp. 132–35 and more recently, George, *Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, pp. 115–25.
7. See "In the Beginning" by François Déroche in this volume.
8. François Déroche, "Les emplois du Coran, livre manuscrit," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 218, no. 1 (2001), pp. 51–56; David J. Roxburgh, *Writing the Word of God: Calligraphy and the Qur'an* (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2007), p. 8; Sheila S. Blair, "Transcribing God's Word: Qur'an Codices in Context," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 10, no. 1 (2008), pp. 78–79.
9. Ibn Muqlā's works and achievements are known only from mentions in various sources and treatises; George, *Rise of Calligraphy*, pp. 134–37. See also Yasser Tabbaa, "Canonicity and Control: The Sociopolitical Underpinnings of Ibn Muqlā's Reform," *Ars Orientalis* 29 (1999), pp. 91–100; and Valery V. Polosin, "Ibn Muqlā and the Qur'anic Manuscripts in Oblong Format," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 59 (2006), pp. 309–17.
10. The production of *masahif* has been a major preoccupation for legal scholars since the early times of Islam. Few primary sources and documents have been published and studied: Adam Gacek, "The Copying and Handling of Qur'ans: Some Observations on the Kitāb Al-Maṣāḥif by Ibn Abī Dā'ūd Al-Sijistānī," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 59 (2006), pp. 229–52; Abdelouahed Jahdani, "Du fiqh à la codicologie: Quelques opinions de Mālik (m. 179/796) sur le Coran-codex," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 59 (2006), pp. 269–80; Giovanni Canova, "Considerazioni di Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ sull'etica di lavoro di cartai, copisti, rilegatori e decoratori di libri (XIV secolo)," *Quaterni di Studi Arabi*, n.s. 3 (2008), pp. 219–36. On the economics of Qur'ans before 1000, see Delia Cortese, "The commodification of the muṣḥaf in the early centuries of Islam," in *Writings and writing: investigations in Islamic Text and Script: in honour of Dr. Januarius Justus Witkam, Professor of Codicology and Paleography of the Islamic World at Leyden University*, ed. Robert M. Kerr and Thomas Milo, (Cambridge: Archetype, 2013), pp. 41–65.
11. Of six manuscripts allegedly penned by Ibn al-Bawwab, only this Qur'an is ascertained to be truly by his hand. Now kept in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, it has been the subject of much scholarly research: David S. Rice, *The Unique Ibn al-Bawwab Manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library* (Dublin: Emery Walker, 1955); Sheila S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 160–73; Blair, "Transcribing God's Word," pp. 81–85; Elaine Wright, *Islam: Faith, Art, Culture: Manuscripts of the Chester Beatty Library* (London: Scala, 2009), pp. 124–33; George, *Rise of Calligraphy*, pp. 127–32.
12. For an introduction to the paleography of Arabic scripts, see François Déroche et al., *Islamic Codicology: An Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script* (London: al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2006), pp. 205–24. On the introduction and early developments of vocalization, see Yasin Dutton, "Red dots, green dots, yellow dots and blue: some reflections on the vocalisation of early Qur'anic manuscripts (Part I)," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 1, no. 1 (1999), pp. 115–40 and Yasin Dutton, "Red dots, green dots, yellow dots and blue: some reflections on the vocalisation of early Qur'anic manuscripts (Part II)," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 2, no. 1 (2000), pp. 1–24. See also Alain George, "Coloured Dots and the Question of Regional Origins in Early Qur'ans (Part I)," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 17, no. 1 (2015), pp. 1–44.
13. Yasser Tabbaa, "The Transformation of Arabic Writing: Part I, Qur'anic Calligraphy," *Ars Orientalis* 21 (1991), pp. 130–40. On this idea of preeminent master calligraphers, and Ibn al-Bawwab in particular, as model to follow and emulate, even centuries after their death, see David J. Roxburgh, "On the Transmission and Reconstruction of Arabic Calligraphy: Ibn al-Bawwab and History," *Studia Islamica* 96 (2003), pp. 39–53.
14. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H.S. 89. The Qur'an is dated 1021–22 (AH 412). See the entry by Oya Pancaroğlu in David J. Roxburgh (ed.), *Turks. A journey of a thousand years, 600–1600* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005), p. 389 no. 50.
15. "Ruling and Page Layout," in François Déroche, *Islamic Codicology*, pp. 159–184 and Yves Porter, *Painters, Paintings and Books: An Essay on Indo-Persian Technical Literature, 12–19th Centuries* (1994; repr. New Delhi: Manohar, 2007), pp. 57–59.
16. On Yaquṭ al-Musta'simi, his works and legacy, see David James, *The Master Scribes: Qur'ans from the 10th to the 14th century* (London: Azimuth Editions, 1992), pp. 58–75; Sheila S. Blair, "Yāqūt and his Followers," *Manuscripta Orientalia* 9, no. 3 (2003), pp. 39–47; and Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, pp. 242–47.
17. The small-format Qur'ans generally measure 20 to 25 cm high by 12 to 15 cm wide.
18. Works by Yaquṭ and his disciples were later avidly collected by elites and emulated by master-calligraphers working under their patronage; David J. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 80–83.

19. On Shaykh Hamdullah and the inception of an Ottoman school of calligraphy, see Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, pp. 479–83. Muhittin Serin, *Hattat Şeyh Hamdullah* (Istanbul: Kubbealtı Akademisi Kültür ve Sanat Vakfı, 1992) provides an exhaustive study of the calligrapher's works. The tradition implemented by Shaykh Hamdullah continued until the seventeenth century, when the master Hafız Uthman (d. 1698) followed first Shaykh Hamdullah's method and then developed his own; for a brief overview of Hafız Uthman's life and works, see M. Uğur Derman, *Letters in Gold: Ottoman Calligraphy from the Sakıp Sabancı Collection, Istanbul* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), pp. 72–77.
20. Manuscript formats in general and in Qur'ans in particular as well as dimensions and ratios of the written surface have received little attention so far; Déroche et al., *Islamic Codicology*, pp. 169–71. A preliminary enquiry on Qur'ans from Sultanate India by Éloïse Brac de la Perrière shows promising results and underscores the importance of such investigations for the history of production of Qur'anic copies. Éloïse Brac de la Perrière, *L'art du livre dans l'Inde des sultanats* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2008), pp. 117–21.
21. For example, a volume comprising the *Gulistan* and *Bustan* of Sa'di copied by Abd al-Wahhab al-Husayni in 1554 (AH 961) for Shah Tahmasp (Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H.673) presents a ratio of the text area corresponding to 1.99, nearly a perfect double square. Lâle Uluç, *Turkman governors, Shiraz artisans and Ottoman collectors: Sixteenth-century Shiraz manuscripts* (Istanbul: Türkiye Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2006), pp. 68–74.
22. Experiences with various sizes of a script were already conducted earlier as demonstrates a page from a Qur'an attributed to eleventh-century Iran; Oleg Grabar, "The Qur'an as a source of artistic inspiration," in *Word of God, Work of Man: The Qur'an and Its Creative Expressions*, ed. Fahmida Suleman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 29–30 and fig. 2.1.
23. Chester Beatty Library (CBL), Dublin, Is. 1438; see David James, *Qur'ans and Bindings from the Chester Beatty Library: A Facsimile Exhibition* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1980), p. 35 and Wright, *Islam*, p. 109.
24. Wright, *Islam*, pp. 134–45.
25. Vlad Atanasiu, "Inimitable handwriting: Graphical specificities of the Qur'an", <http://www.waqwaq.info/atanasiu/studies/atanasiu2010iajaz.pdf>, p. 1, accessed April 13, 2016.
26. An overview of this technological revolution for Qur'an codices is provided in Jonathan Bloom, *Paper before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 99–116.
27. Roxburgh, *Writing the Word of God*, p. 27, and George, *Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, pp. 144–46.
28. Another sixty-volume copy commissioned by Nur al-Din Zangi for his madrasa was completed in 1166–67 (AH 562) in Damascus; Sophie Makariou, ed., *L'orient de Saladin: l'art des Ayyoubides* (Paris: Institut du monde arabe, 2001) pp. 206–7.
29. A fine example is the fifth set of a Qur'an copied by Uthman ibn Muhammad in AH 505/1111–12 in Bost (present-day Afghanistan), a city then under the sovereignty of the Ghaznavid sultan Mas'ud III; see Francis Richard, *Splendeurs persanes: Manuscrits persans du XIIIe au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1997), p. 37. Another famous and sumptuous seventh-volume Qur'an, now in the British Library (Add. 22406), was made for the Mamluk sultan Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Jashnagir in Cairo between 1304 and 1306; James, *Qurans of the Mamluks*, pp. 34–73.
30. On the issue of levels of production in fourteenth-century Iran, see Nourane ben Azzouna, "La question des niveaux de production à travers trois études de «codicologie comparée» (Iraq, Iran occidental, XIII<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> s.)," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 6 (2015), pp. 133–56.
31. James, *Qurans of the Mamluks*, pp. 31–33. Bernard O'Kane, "Monumentality in Mamluk and Mongol Art and Architecture" *Art History* 19, no. 4 (December 1996), pp. 499–522.
32. For an overview of the stylistic evolutions of Qur'anic illuminations, see Zeren Tanındı's essay in this volume. Numerous studies and publications investigate the forms and roles of illuminations in Qur'ans; Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan Bloom, "Ornamentation and Illumination," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2003): III, pp. 593–603, and Grabar, "The Qur'an as a source of artistic inspiration," pp. 31–33.
33. These inscriptions also contain the number of verses that constitute the chapter and the place where it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, either Mecca or Medina.
34. Sheila Blair recently suggested, for instance, that Ibn al-Bawwab was responsible not only for the calligraphy in his Qur'an but also the illuminations; Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, p. 165.
35. For the Mamluk sphere, see James, *Qurans of the Mamluks*, and Marcus Fraser, *Geometry in Gold: An Illuminated Mamluk Qur'an Section* (London: Sam Fogg, 2005). On the atelier in Iran and the Persianate world, see Porter, pp. 151–68. A good overview of the functioning and the production of the Ottoman atelier is Zeren Tanındı, "Manuscript production in the Ottoman Palace Workshop," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 5 (1990–91), pp. 67–98. On the complex conception and making of a deluxe sixteenth-century Ottoman Qur'an, see Filiz Çağman, "The Ahmed Karahisari Qur'an in the Topkapı Palace Library in İstanbul", in *Persian Painting from the Mongols to the Qajars. Studies in Honour of Basil W. Robinson*, ed. R. Hillenbrand (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), pp. 57–73.
36. Grabar, "The Qur'an as a source of artistic inspiration," p. 29, and Robert Hillenbrand, "The Qur'an Illuminated," *Studies of the Islamic Art of the Book* (London: Pindar Press, 2012), pp. 300–301. On illuminations in a Safavid Qur'an based on secular Timurid models, see Anna Contadini, "Travelling pattern: a Qur'anic illumination and its secular source," in *Safavid Art and Architecture*, ed. Sheila R. Canby (London: The British Museum Press, 2002), pp. 58–66. Elaine Wright also examined the connections between Qur'ans and secular manuscripts in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Iran; Elaine Wright, *The Look of the Book. Manuscript Production in Shiraz, 1303–1452* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, 2012), pp. 14–30, 45–62.
37. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H.S. 25; Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, pp. 433–34.
38. Each page in a fragmentary part of a sixty-volume Qur'an attributed to twelfth-century eastern Iran is framed by a large border; David James, *The Master Scribes: Qur'ans of the 10th to 14th centuries AD (The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, volume II)* (London: Nour Foundation, 1992), pp. 30, 32–33.
39. For instance, a Qur'an attributed to Gujarat circa 1430–50 features in numerous places strips of paper pasted onto the mistakes and covered with the correct text by the calligrapher himself. On this *mushaf*, see Simon Rettig, "A 'Timurid-like Response' to the Qur'an of Gwalior? Manuscript W563 at the Walters Museum, Baltimore," in *Le Coran de Gwalior: Polysémie d'un manuscrit à peintures*, ed. Éloïse Brac de la Perrière and Monique Buresi (Paris: de Boccard, 2016), pp. 187–201.
40. Interlinear translations are not always contemporaneous with the copy of the Qur'an in which they are enclosed. For instance, the 1204 *mushaf* completed in Baghdad (cat. 19) presents an incomplete translation (only at the beginning and the end of the volume) and the writing suggests an addition at a later date.
41. These include the copies by Abu'l-Qasim Ali (cat.13), Yaquut al-Musta'simi (cat. 21), and Madj al-Din ibn Ahmad (cat. 27). An Ottoman *mushaf* dated AH 1029/1619–20 and copied by Khalid ibn Isma'il (see cat. 62) shows the permanency of this model.

42. The expression "architecture of the page" comes from Alain George; George, *Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, pp. 95–114.

43. Tim Stanley, "Istanbul and its scribal diaspora: The calligraphers of Müstakim-zade," in *The Decorated Word: Qur'ans of the 17th to 19th centuries (The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, volume IV, part 1)*, ed. Manijeh Bayani, Anna Contadini, and Tim Stanley (London: Nour Foundation, 1999), pp. 60–123.