expenses, in contrast to the "rightly guided caliphs" who are said to have tried to support themselves (see caliph).

Similarly, a group of early Sunnis (see sunni and the qur'an) criticized the Umayyads for their lavish lifestyle. The obligation to earn a living (al-kharāj) was particularly advocated by scholars like the Hanbali scholar ibn al-Haytham (d. 872/873) who criticized the rulers for their奢华 lifestyle and the expenditure of public funds on unnecessary projects.

Nevertheless, the Qur'an itself does not provide a clear and consistent picture of the relationship between the divine and the temporal worlds. It is possible to interpret the text in different ways, and scholars have often disagreed on the meaning of specific passages. For example, the concept of "jurisprudence" (siyāsa) is closely related to the idea of the "rightly guided caliphs" (tabi'in), and the role of the legal scholars (ma'ālim) in interpreting the text has been a topic of much debate.

In summary, the history of the Qur'an is a complex and multifaceted one, influenced by a wide range of factors, including the social, political, and intellectual contexts in which it was produced and circulated. The Qur'an remains a central text in Islamic thought and practice, and its interpretation continues to evolve over time.
of such a Qur'an was kept in the Great Mosque (al-Harazi), Al-Kindi al-Farabi, 15; Ş. al-Manaijil, Ruh, 45-50). Judging from the manuscripts that have survived, the attribution is fairly based on a note by a later hand but sometimes a colophon does seem to lend support to this claim. Ş. al-Manaijil has attempted to counter such claims, maintaining that the material involved is later, dating mainly from the third/ninth century (see for instance Topkapı Sarayi Museum, TK 3.83, or Türk İslam Eserleri Müzesi, TİEM 438 — both in Istanbul). Additionally, the above-mentioned colophons sometimes contain gross mistakes (in Istanbul, for example, one example is found at the Topkapı Sarayi Museum, TK 3.83: the copist is supposed to be 'Ali b. Abdullah b. Fith). His name is written at a right angle to the normal disposition of the text. Original expressions of worship developed around these relics: in Cordoba, two servants took the bound volume with the leaves from a treasury in the Great Mosque; a third man, carrying a candle, walked in front of them. They all went to the place where the imam (q.v.) stood for prayer in order to lay the volume on a Qur'an stand (al-Maqṣūr, Sīh, 1; 396; see entries under q.v.) (350). A. Grohmann has compiled a list of dated early Qur'anic manuscripts (Problemes, 216 n. 17): the oldest dates from 942/98-2 but this Qur'an has never been published and there is considerable doubt about it. Qur'anic palimpsests have also been said to antedate the Uthmanic edition (Mingana and Lewis, Leaves).

The Hijayt and Un哥哥dCodices

The earliest Qur'anic manuscripts and fragments do not contradict the information provided by the Islamic sources about the "edition" of an official recension of the Qur'an by the third caliph, 'Uthman (573-344/644-65). Attempts to assign codex fragments to an earlier period have not been conclusive; the palimpsests published by A. Mingana and A. Lewis are certainly among the earliest fragments preserved, but nothing indicates that they necessarily predate many others. The same also holds for the two palimpsests sold at an auction in 1992. The oldest text on both is written in the so-called "Hijayt" script, a designation coined by M. Amari in the middle of the nineteenth century — he spoke of "scripture du Hijayt" — on the basis of Ibn al-Nadim's (d. ca. 975/995) description of the earliest Arabic scripts:

The first of the Arabic scripts was the script of Makki, the next of al-Madnîna, then of al-Basrah, and then of al-Kufa. For the script of the scripts of Makki and al-Madnîna there is a turning of the hand to the right and straightening of the strokes, one form having a slight slant (trans. B. Dodge).

The study of the early Qur'anic manuscripts and fragments in the Paris collection enabled Amari to identify those fragments that demonstrated the various features noted by Ibn al-Nadim. Unfortunately, his work has remained largely ignored, and research on these documents did not advance significantly until N. Abbet's contribution to the subject (Rés de l'arc. Arab. Script. 3) The methodical publication of facsimiles of these early Qur'ans was begun in 1983 (cf. Dresse and Novara [eds.], Sources de la transmission du texte coranique.

The name of the script — Hijayt — (like the designation "Kufic") does not mean that these manuscripts were transcribed in the Hijayt. The bulk of the material presently known comes from three repositories of old Qur'anic codices, in Damascus, Fustat and Syrian (the present locations of these codices also cannot be taken as a conclusive argument as to their origin, which remains for the moment uncertain.) On the other hand, the fact that the collection in Qayrawân does not contain such material only has the value of an argument a silent. Preliminary survey shows that the script varies widely — as if the peculiarities of the individual hands were of little concern to the scribes, the patrons or the readers. This diversity might be ascribed to regional habits, but this does not sufficiently explain why, in manuscripts written by more than one scribe from the same region, the hands of the various scribes are so different from one another that they can be recognized at first glance (e.g. Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arabe 1318 f. 3a and b [for f. 3a see Fig. I], or Dir al-Madhîna, Inv. no. 41-11-1). A common standard concerning the script had probably not yet developed, and it would thus be safer to speak of Hijayt style, rather than Hijayt script. For the sake of convenience, we shall use here the designation of Hijayt codices.

The dating of this material relies mainly on paleographic arguments: slant and shape of the 'alif elongation of the shadta, but also the similarities with the script of the earlier copy, as pointed out by M. Amari and later by A. Grohmann. So far, no direct evidence — for instance, a colophon — has been found. One could perhaps expect confirmation from a Carbon 14 analysis of the parchment, but since the geographic provenience is not clear, such results could only be taken as an indication of its age. The dating to the second half of the first/seventh century can therefore only be tentative, and further research might throw light on the chronology of the Hijayt codices. The definitive writing of the 'alif (pale instead of fâ‘ instead of ‘â‘ being the best known instance) adds weight, however, to the early dating of these manuscripts and fragments, some of which count the harmala (q.v.) as a verse

(see Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arabe 1318). With the exception of these peculiarities, most of the manuscripts currently known are very close to the canonical text. Some fragments of Hijayt codices found in Sarû' are said to include some textual variants which were not recorded by later literature (see readings of the Qur'ân), and to offer an order of the sûras differing from the arrangements of both the canonical text and the codices of Ibn Mas'ûd and Ubayy (Pain, Observations, 111; see form and structure of the Qur'ân).

In these Hijayt codices [of Sarû'], the script is slender and regularly spread out on the page. The spaces between characters, regardless of whether the said character is part of a word or not, are always identical; as a consequence, words can be divided at the end of a line. Clusters of dots show the ends of verses but groups of five or ten verses do not seem initially to have been singled out. Nowhere are recorded and diacritical dots are used in varying degrees by the copyists; when two or more copied a text together, they do not appear to have agreed on common rules but dotted the letters according to their own habits (compare for instance Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arabe 1318 f. 2b and 3a). The number of lines varies from one page to another, even though the copyists used ruling. A blank space is left between sûras, but some of the fragments suggest that crude decorations in ink were already allowed (if they do not belong to a second stage of the Hijayt codices). The sûra titles found on these manuscripts are often in red ink; they were added later. There are a few instances of division of the text into seven parts, with the indication within the written area itself — i.e. British Library, BL Or 1659, where such division is indicated in green ink. This is in contrast to the later practice
of adding the indications of the textual divisions in the margins [the indications that do not appear in the margins are also additions but the shortness of these marks makes it impossible to date them, and thus to assess how much time had elapsed between their addition and the copying of the qur’anic text itself].

The material available to us shows that early Muslims made a choice which was to shape the history of the Qur’an in a manuscript: they adopted for their own scriptures the kind of book which was common at that time, namely the codex, and started copying the text in long lines — whereas in other book traditions of the Middle East the texts were arranged in columns. Most of the Hijājī codices are in the then usual vertical format, except a few, which are in the oblong format that was to become the rule for Qur’ānic codices during the second/eighth century: as the script of these latter manuscripts is more regular than in other Hijājī codices, it has been suggested that they belong to a later stage of development — perhaps the end of the first/seventh or the beginning of the second/eighth century.

All of the earliest qur’ānic manuscripts that have come down to us were written on parchment. The amount of text on the few fragments of papyrus published by A. Ghebremes is too small to establish whether Qur’ānic codices on papyrus existed side by side with parchment ones or not; these fragments could just as well have come from extracts. As is the case with the script, the way in which the parchment was used to produce quires varies greatly from one manuscript to another — inasmuch as enough folios remain to allow a reconstruction of the original quires. The anticipated use of the various Hijājī codices cannot be determined: the size of many of them would suggest a public use, in a mosque (q.v.) for instance. Judging by the evidence of a Paris manuscript (Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arabe 391a; see Fig. 6), these codices seem to have been cared for over a long period of time: some pieces of this manuscript where the ink appears to have faded have been written over by a hand which can not be dated to earlier than the end of the third/ninth century.

By the end of the first/seventh or beginning of the second/eighth century, a new trend was changing the appearance of the qur’ānic codices. As far as can be determined by the best reconstructions of the chronology of the qur’ānic scripts, it was the Umayyad period that witnessed the emergence of a style in which the letter forms were more regular and the shafts more vertical. This may be linked with the reforms of ʿAbd al-Malik who decided that the chancery of the empire should use Arabic instead of Greek and Persian, thus promoting the use of the Arabic script. On the other hand, one consequence of these administrative decisions could have been the emergence of the concept of specifically qur’ānic scripts. The script of the papyri of the first/seventh century and that of the Hijājī codices have similarities; this will no longer be the case in the following period, and the gap between qur’ānic and secular scripts will widen. Another argument for the dating of this style to the Umayyad period are stars headbands of a Qur’ān found among the Damascus fragments (Türk İslam Eserleri Müzesi, TİEM 5/321) which are clearly related to the decorative repertoire of the mosaics on the Dome of the Rock (see agal agal). Ornament is thus making its way into the qur’ānic manuscripts (the evidence that is available today indicates that this is the first instance of the use of gold in qur’ānic ornamentation). Other experimental manuscripts are documented in this group of manuscripts and fragments in some of them, as was usual at that time, a blank line has been left between two stasas, but the place is highlighted by the use of colored inks (red, yellow, or green) for the first lines of the beginning of the stasas and sometimes also for the last lines of the preceding one. This is also when groups of ten verses begin to receive a special marker, in some cases only a letter with numerical value ( edição). In one fragment (Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arabe 391c), it is written in gold. Other attempts which can be attributed to this period or somewhat later are worth mentioning: for example, calligraphers used colored inks developing over the writing surface. The orthography itself was changing: it is far from homogeneous from one manuscript to another, and sometimes even changes within the same manuscript, but overall it does show an evolution towards the scriptus plana.

Another Qur’ān attributed to the Umayyad period is more difficult to evaluate; some fragments (119 al-Malikī, lim. 85-551) are the only remnants of a large manuscript (45 x 47 cm), which originally contained about 920 folios. The impressive illuminations (particularly the two representations of the Prophet and the Quranic text forming part of a manuscript) are in line with the scriptus plana developments; an elaborate frame surrounds the written area on the first folios of the text (for examples of these fragments, see Figs. 1 of vittoria and 1 of ornamentation and illumination).

The qur’ānic codex in early ʿAbdīrīd times

One of the achievements of the Qur’ān of the third/ninth century, which includes a few dated manuscripts, is fairly developed. The earlier part of the ʿAbdīrīd period, however, remains somewhat unclear as the information about it is still very scarce. Here again, the dating of Qur’ān to the second/eighth century relies mainly on paleography. But, as compared with the evidence from the first/seventh century, we are on surer footing in this century, since more paleographic evidence has survived. The qur’ānic scripts of that period are traditionally known as ʿKhīrī,” but “early ʿAbdīrīd scripts” would be more accurate; the linking of any of them with the town of Kūtā remaining unclear. As a whole, the scripts bear witness to the emergence of a body of highly skilled scribes and a complex set of rules concerning the use of the various styles. In the eighties of the twelfth century, a tentative typology was created in order to classify the materials: it defines six groups of scripts (called A to F), subdivided into a varying number of styles (for instance B II or D IV); see Déroche, Abūlābābāū, 34-47; id., Cais- lagh, II/1. Au cours de la caligraphie arabe, 35-45. The terminology and results of this typology have been used here in order to provide clarity to the following account.

A major development of this period is the introduction of a system for the presentation of the verses. These are indicated through the positioning of red dots with respect to the consonants: an "a" — ʾālīka — above the letter, an "i" — ʾašā — below it or a "u" — ʿuwa — after it; the case ending (tawwās) is noted by a duplication of the dot. Although it was reportedly invented by Abū l-ʿAwāl al-Duʿay (d. 697/1298), this system does not seem to have been used before the end of the first/seventh century. Qur’āns from the Umayyad period have red dots; but are they contemporaneous with the script itself? Since the dots were necessarily an addition (neither the ink nor paint nor the writing implement were those used for the copy of the unadorned orthography, i.e. rasm), doubt always remains about the time that elapsed between the copying of the text and the addition of the dots. The system was later perfected with the addition of dots for the glottal stop — ʾahnā — (green
or yellow) and the ornamental duplicator — ḍahala — (yellow, orange or blue); sometimes their modern form is written with colored ink. The sign for the absence of a vowel — ʾaḏrāʾ — is rarely indicated. Other signs were used in the Maghribī in order to note more accurately the pronunciation (see Nussomianīyāt (35) in Philem 394/395-6). This system remained dominant until the end of the fourth/tenth century and was apparently still used late into the tenth/twelth century for a Yemeni Qurʾān. In the Maghribī, but also in qurʿānic manuscripts in Subḥān script, the kāṣāma was indicated by a dot until very recently (see Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arabe 516, dated 1195/1781).

Early in the period under discussion here, some Qurʾāns were still in the vertical format: the B I group of scripts could be typical for the early part of the second/eighth century (see Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg, IOS 2295; Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arabe 931) and bear witness to the transition from the Hijāzī code — to which its somewhat slender script is probably related — to the early ‘Abhābid one. Alongside this tradition, which was gradually fading out, another stranger kind of script was used in some Qurʾāns. In the so-called ‘Abhābid code, the qurʿānic text is composed of the bidental form of the script, which was used for the “script of the book” and for the script of the Qurʾān. In the case of the ‘Abhābid script, the texts are composed of the bidental form of the script, which was used for the “script of the book” and for the script of the Qurʾān. In the case of the ‘Abhābid qurʿānic script, the texts are composed of the bidental form of the script, which was used for the “script of the book” and for the script of the Qurʾān.
shape: they are indeed closer to bones than to any kind of binding previously known. The boards are made of wood and are covered with leather, often decorated, in front of the three outer edges, a continuous strip of leather glued onto the lower board protects the Qur’ān. When the upper board is down and the book is closed, a leather thing fastened to the gutter side of the lower board can be tied over a metal peg projecting out of the edge of the upper board: the manuscript can thus be kept tightly closed. Bindings of non-Qur’ānic manuscripts are almost unknown for this period, making comparison impossible; but it has been suggested that the bindings described here were specifically made for the Qur’ān.

A century of change

During the fourth/tenth century, the appearance of the Qur’ānic code is altered by various developments, some of which were already in evidence by the end of the third/ninth century. The first one involves the scripts: a new style, connected to scripts already in use in non-Qur’ānic manuscripts and administrative documents, received increasing acceptance as a Qur’ānic script, only to be superseded—slightly later—by naskhi and naskhi-related scripts.

This new style is the last script to have been in use in Qur’ānic manuscripts all over the Islamic world. While variants appear in the execution, it basically relies on well-defined aesthetics and a clear repertoire of letterforms. The names given to the more refined versions of this script—Persian Kufic, Oriental Kufic—are somewhat misleading: the earlier name of “Kufic muḥāt” is a better descriptive since the basic shapes are closer to the so-called “cursive.” The earliest Qur’ān in this script is a multi-volume set copied on parchment before 292/905, possibly in a Persian speaking area; in addition to the script, its vertical format foreshadows the changes of the next decades (Chester Beatty Library, CBL 145). The new style was nevertheless also used in manuscripts with an oblong format, like the Qur’ān copied on parchment in Palermo in 372/982 (Nurmuṣiyye Library 23; see Fig. 11 of ORNAMENTATION AND ILLUMINATION) or on paper in Fihalān in 385/995 (Türk İlimi Eserleri Müzesi, TİEM 433).6

The calligraphic possibilities of the new style might explain why it remained in use for a considerable period of time. Whereas the last dated Qur’ān in early ‘Abbāsid script from the central Islamic lands was—according to the current state of our knowledge—written in 512/923, the latest dated Qur’ānic manuscript in the new style was finished in 592/1195 (Mashhād, Aštān-i Qad 84). One cannot exclude the existence of later copies since it remained a favorite script among illuminators, and was used, for instance, in titles. A short excerpt of the Qur’ān was even written in a highly ornamental variant of the script as late as 599/1199 (Topkapı Saray Library, TKS R. 18 in Istanbul).

A major evolution of the fourth/tenth century is the use of so-called curves, commonly called muḥāt, as Qur’ānic scripts. The earliest dated example of a muḥāt-related script for a Qur’ān originates from Upper Mesopotamia or northern Syria; it is dated to 592/995. Somewhat later in the same century, a parchment fragment in the oblong format with the last sura in an unmistakably Maghāribi hand bears a colophon stating that the copy was ended in Rajab 592/March-April 995. This evidence indicates a growing trend towards making the Qur’ānic code more legible to the ordinary people, and towards closing the gap between the script of the Qur’ānic codex and that which was used in daily matters, a gap which had opened during the second half of the first/early of the

seventh, beginning of the eighth century, but was gradually disappearing. It also documents the emergence of a split between the eastern and western parts of the Islamic world represented by the Maghārib script, which would become the hallmark of the manuscript production in the Maghārib and in Muslim Spain. Interestingly enough, the earliest Maghārib fragment shows a greater respect for the material aspects of the Qur’ānic codex tradition, namely the oblong format and the parchment. Once again the transition to the “modern” scripts was by no means a quick one, as is witnessed by the production of Qur’āns in the “new style” during a long period, albeit in decreasing numbers; further research will have to investigate the possible use in the Maghārib of early ‘Abbāsid scripts after the end of the fourth/tenth century. Even if calligraphers of the early ‘Abbāsid period skipped the very small script succeeded in reducing the number of pages and the size of the Qur’ān in early manuscripts in muḥāt (for instance British Library, BL Add. 7214; see Fig. 11) attained an even greater compactness, perhaps explaining the success of these last-named copyists (which may also have been less expensive).

The development of grammar (see GRAMMAR AND THE QUR’ĀN) led to the invention of systems that were increasingly precise in order to note the correct pronunciation of the Qur’ān. The modern system of vowels was used on the Qur’ān of 292/905, but since the older system of red dots is also present on that manuscript, it is highly probable that the modern vowels are a later addition. The Palermo Qur’ān, on the other hand, is fully punctuated: vowels but also other orthographic signs indicate the correct pronunciation. The modern system of vowels and orthography came into use during the fourth/tenth century. During this period, the modern signs
for shadalah and zabala, both in color, were associated with the red-dot vocalization. Modern vowels and orthoepics were written in color by the copyist of the "Name's Qur'an" in Quraistan in 969/1079-80; the document recording his work states that he vocalized the manuscript. The same "Uthmān b. Ḥusayn al-Warrāq completed a thirty-volume Qur'an in 466/1075-6, probably in eastern Iraq; he also recorded that he added vowels and orthoepics — in color — to the text (Mashhadi, Aṣītta-i Quds 436). The famous "Qur'an of Ibn al-Fawwād" contrasts with this practice: vowels and orthoepics are written with the same ink as the rest of the text (Chester Beatty Library, CBL 1431, dated 997/1000-1; this is also the case in the manuscript of 387/997. The western Islamic world followed another path, as will be shown below.

The second major development of the period is the introduction of paper, which gradually replaced parchment — at least in the east. The earliest dated Qur'an on paper was completed by the end of the first half of the fourth/eighth century; almost a century later than the earliest non-Qur'anic Arabic manuscript on paper. The increasing use of this material also altered the appearance of the Qur'anic codex. The third development, perhaps connected with the second, has to do with the format of the text: a return to a vertical format is seen in this period. Even if, as evidenced by the Iṣtafāt Qur'an, it was possible to produce paper Qur'ans in the oblong format, the majority were now in the vertical format, thus suggesting that it was better adapted to the new material. All these changes did not go hand in hand, even if they seem somewhat interrelated, and they did not meet with general acceptance overnight. Their economic implications also need to be evaluated. Paper was less expensive than parchment, even if we do not know exactly how much cheaper it was. Should we assume that books became more affordable for a larger number of people, even though they remained a luxury, and that therefore their production pace had to increase? There were two ways in which the need for more manuscripts could be met: the first one being an increase in the copyist’s speed, the second one an increase in the number of copyists. There is finally another question that arises: was the new style more legible for readers as well as faster for copyists, since it was easier to write?

The new vertical sizing also forced the Qur'anic manuscripts to adopt new formats for complete page illumination. It appears that this was not simply a matter of rotating the existing compositions by ninety degrees since the relationship between height and width had changed. Rather, this changed dimension of the illuminations is possibly the reason why compositions based either on a central circle or on the repetition of a small pattern in order to cover the surface became increasingly popular. Another evolution was the introduction of the compartmentalized liturgical opening page: the earliest instances are not clearly dated (perhaps already at the end of the third/ninth century) but a few dated manuscripts of the fourth/eighth century include on the opening double-page information about the number of aya, verses, words and letters found in the Qur'an.

Few manuscripts document the continued production of large Qur'ans during this period. Multi-volume sets, however, remain quite common. The Iṣtafāt Qur'an had four volumes and The Name D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art Qur'ans, which is perhaps slightly later, had originally seven; many had thirty. All are of a comparatively small size, particularly those composed by division into thirteenth (juz'). The "Name's Qur'an" attests to the production of large-
Early Qur’anic manuscript in wasli script (dated 427/1036) exemplifying the degree of compactness such manuscripts attained. Q 16:31-72 is seen here. Courtesy of the British Library, London (BL Add. 7216, f. 95b).
[v] Qurʾān manuscript from the western Islamic world (on parchment, dated 703/1304), with a marginal ornament indicating the daily readings for the month of Ramadan in the lower part of the margin. The text contains Q 26:220-27:29. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris (BNF Arabe 385, f. 80a).

[iv] Example of a Qurʾanic manuscript in which the lines of script alternate in height and length (dated to 382/1190). Q 18:93-110 is shown here. Reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (CBL 1438, f. 109a).
Example of a qur'anic manuscript (dated 923/1517) in which "Ahmad" of Q 61:6 appears in larger writing. Q 60:12 – 61:7 is shown here. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris (BNF Arabe 413, p. 466).
sized Qur’āns in the western part of the Islamic world. In 416/1025-26, the otherwise unknown scribe Jawma' Allāh Almad, wrote the thirty-page Qur’ān in Qayrawān; he was also responsible for its vowel signs, illumination and binding. 552 pages of this work have been preserved; they measure 43 × 29 cm and have only five lines of text on a page. The set was kept in a large wooden box that contains an inscription commemorating its being donated to a mosque by Feizīn, the nurse of the Ziyād ruler al-Mu’izz b. Badīs.

Towards the modern qur’ānic codes

Over the following centuries and down to the present day, Qur’āns were written in a wide variety of the so-called “cursive” scripts, some of them—such as sahīh (see Topkapi Sarayi Museum, TKS HS 45, dated 854/1448-49)—used only in exceptional cases. A few styles were more frequently used for qur’ānic manuscripts than other documents. Even if scribes would also transcribe other texts with these styles, their designation as “qur’ānic” texts retained their validity. In the central Islamic lands, the manuscripts of higher quality were more frequently written in the scripts which the literature about calligraphy calls naskh (also nashīh), mawqīf, muqarn (also mawqīf) and thulūt (also shufā). Regional varieties of scripts emerged in other areas. In India, for instance, Bihārī was in use during the late eighth/ninth and the ninth/tenth century. Classical styles could undergo regional modifications: the script typical of Chinese Qur’āns of the ninth/tenth century has been described as a peculiar form of mawqūf deriving from earlier Persian models. The Bihārī might in turn have been imitated on the eastern coast of Africa, where the influence of India is known to have been felt (see Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art Qur’ān 106, dated 1162/1749).

The particular script usually remains homogeneous from the beginning to the end of a manuscript—this also applies to copies with alternating lines in two or three different styles. In some cases, the word Allāh or even entire sentences are highlighted: they are either written in larger letters or in ink different from that of the rest of the text itself (see for example John Rylands University Library, UL 760-773). Other manuscripts are more puzzling: in some, only the names Allāh (q. 61.3) and Muḥammad (q. 42.4-5) are written in larger letters (see Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arabic 415 [see Fig. 7]), and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, MMA Rogers Fund 1940). Such features could be related to specific forms of religious behavior, which still need to be investigated.

Page setting was seen by copyists and patrons as a way of enhancing the appearance of the text. At the beginning of our period, the Qur’āns were apparently all written in long lines of identical height and length. Later, the copyists started playing with both elements, perhaps influenced by chancery traditions that are apparent in pilgrimage certificates from Sulṭān times found in Damascus. An early example of this revised page setting is Chester Beatty Library, CBL 1458, dated 520/1126-27 (see Fig. 7). In some Qur’āns of Bihārī script, the copyists used two sizes of script side by side, the larger one for the first and last lines of each page, the smaller one for the rest of the text (Leiden University Library [Oriental Department], Or. 1820 dated 811/1408-9). Later manuscripts document the use of various colors of ink in order to achieve a more complex effect on the whole page. In Persianate areas, but also in Turkey, a complex grief, usually with three larger lines framing two groups of smaller script written in black ink became popular; the larger lines, in white, blue, red or gold, contrast sharply with the text. This page
setting is also known in Chinese Qur’ans where the difference between the lines is somewhat subdued — in terms of size as well as of color, black being used throughout the page. From the eleventh/seventeenth century onwards, Indian Qur’anic manuscripts feature a page setting which looks like that found in Qur’ans from Sunni Iran: the written surface, defined by a golden frame, is divided into identically-sized large bands in which the text is written, and which are separated from one another by smaller bands that could contain a translation. A second frame, close to the edge of the page and larger than the former one, marks off an area surrounding the text which may either be blank — with the exception of markers for the groups of verses or such indications — or contain a commentary to the Qur’an.

It is obviously difficult to summarise here the “rules” of Qur’anic illumination: the material is too vast and offers many variations. The following, therefore, are only a few of what may be termed “general guidelines.” One rule is strictly observed: the Qur’anic manuscripts was never left unmarked — to date, the only published example of an “illuminated” Qur’anic manuscript (Gottfried, Illustrated copy, 21-29) is a fake. Even if scholarly interest has been primarily focused on the works of master illuminators found on the most expensive manuscripts, one has to remember that many Qur’ans received an ornament of some kind, even if it was only a rubricated frame for the beginning of the text. The concept of the double-page played a major role in Qur’anic manuscripts, especially in their illumination: the artists tried to balance the composition, overcoming the physical division of the two pages and giving it an overall unity. Whatever its quality may be, illumination held more or less the same role and place which had been progressively agreed upon during the first centuries. The function of the ornament is primarily to indicate the beginning of the end of a part of the text; it can be the beginning of the manuscript and, since these Qur’ans have no title page, the ornament is meant to send a kind of signal or, with the help of Qur’anic quotations, to “name” the book. q. 5:67-73 is perfectly suited to this task: “That this is indeed a Qur’an most honorably in a roll (q. v.) well-guarded, which none shall touch but those who are clean.” After the preliminary pages — one double-page in some cases of pure ornament, with or without writing — illumination occurs in various ways: within the written surface are the divisions into verses or groups of verses but also the titles of the sūras. In the margins are indicators for the verse groupings (more developed than those already mentioned), for the various divisions of the text into equally-sized parts, or for the visual interruptions (breaks, arrows, and divisions, between q. 5:5 and the q. 5:6). And the sūra headings, and the vignettes corresponding to the sūra headings. The beginning and the end of the text itself can also be highlighted by an illuminated frame: for the beginning of the q. 5:1, the main option is either to have the opening sūra, the Fāṭimah (q. v.), on a double page and the first verses of sūra 2 on the next one, or to have the Fāṭimah facing the beginning of sūra 2 on the same double page. In some early multi-volume Qur’ans, the Fāṭimah is repeated at the beginning of each q. 5:1. The last sūra may also be set within a frame; some Qur’ans have additional illuminated pages with a prayer and/or a divination formula (bīl-māṭa). In some multi-volume Qur’anic manuscripts, a first-page illumination may provide the number of the volume within the series, the end of each volume may receive an ornament with q. 8:23-26.

The repertoire of ornamentation inherited from the previous period relisted mainly on geometric and vegetal forms. Illuminations were geometrically structured until the end of the ninth/tenth century, when more fluid forms of ornament were introduced. These broad orientations were translated in various ways in the different parts of the Islamic world: this is reflected in the studies on Qur’anic illumination which usually present the material according to periods and regions. Such categorizations are often decisive in determining the provenance of a Qur’an. One should nevertheless be aware that some areas have not yet been sufficiently investigated, or offer various difficulties. This, for instance, is the case of India, where the existence of many centers of Qur’anic production with local orientations, as well as lasting ties with Afghanistan or Iran may have confused the researchers, often unable — at least for the moment — to distinguish Qur’ans copied in India from others imported from the north. For areas like China or Indonesia, the study of illumination is only beginning and, even if its features seem as a whole quite distinctive, it has to be remembered that some periods remain unexplored.

The early Qur’anic bindings that have been preserved were apparently meant to distinguish the Qur’ān from any other manuscripts. When this practice came to an end is not clear: bindings from the ninth/tenth century indicate that Qur’āns of that time were bound in the same manner as other manuscripts, but solutions had to be found in order to identify easily the sacred book of Islam. According to authors like al-‘Almavat (d. 598/1203), the etiquette concerning book storage recommended that Qur’āns should be put on top of the pile. But this might have been insufficient (in medieval times, books were stored horizontally), hence the practice of using Qur’ānic quotations in lieu of a title on the binding. The fore-edge flap was likely the primary place for such a quotation: stamping a text on bindings was not completely new, since some early bindings for Qur’āns already had inscriptions on their boards — usually collogues like al-walī dīallā (“God is the dominion”) — and later bindings of multi-volume sets bore the number of each volume on the fore-edge flap: the Qur’ān in ten volumes completed in Marrakesh by ‘Umar al-Murtuza in 654/1257 bears witness to this practice (see British Library, BL Or. 1392). Mamluk bindings show early instances of the use of Qur’ānic verses therein (Museum für Islamische Kunst, SMFK 1, 512a). The stamping of texts was facilitated by the development of the binders’ techniques which led to the introduction of plates in the stamping process on later bindings, it became customary to use q. 5:57-77 on the fore-edge flap; q. 10:95 is more unusual in this place. On the boards, there was room for more developed texts: around the field, a series of cartouches could contain Qur’ānic verses (q. 2:255; 5:62; 7:14; 11:15; 13:63; 21:47, 7-8; 32:23; 33:30; 39:35; 3:125; 57:1; 65:12, 14; 107:12-13; 114:2-5, 21-22). The same technique was used for the marginal decoration, which was meant to indicate the Qur’ān’s place in this manuscript, most often the center of attention.
technique limited their size to what craftsmen were able to handle in and out of the pastorate, while the fixed form, although not as efficient as the formers in production levels, could help in the manufacture of very large sheets of paper. On the other hand, pasting was opening possibilities unknown to papermakers. The development of very large Qur’ans benefited from these technical advances during the seventh/nineteenth and eighth/nineteenth centuries. Both single and multi-volume Qur’anic manuscripts are involved: the Qur’an in thirty jāz—as has five lines of text on pages reaching 72 x 50 cm, and the pages of the so-called Bayyounah Qur’an measure 127 x 100 cm. The latter has been related to an accompanies recorded by Qādī Ahmad, showing Tusire depicting a miniature Qur’ān written by a calligrapher who, a few months later, came back with a Qur’an so huge that it had to be carried on a cart. In Mamluk Egypt, a number of very large single-volume Qur’ans—they usually measure about 100 cm high or more—were ordered for the mosques by wealthy patrons. The use of multi-volume Qur’anic manuscripts is attested by the documents of religious endowments (mawqif) they established in Cairo. The text of these legal documents show that readers were appointed for daily recitation of the jāz; a knapsack in charge of the manuscripts would also distribute them among the readers. Rashīd al-Dīn’s provisions for his own tombs in Tūhit included Qur’ānic reading by three persons.

In the fourth/ninth century, some of the manuscripts begin to include “scientific information” about the text itself. Previously, such information had been limited to the stria titles and possibly to their verse count. Now, on double page illuminations, global data about the text and its various components (stāras, verses, work, letters, and so on) are available. At the same time, concordances (in fact, methodical repetitions of verse endings) often register an increasing wealth of information for each stāra; for example, the various verse counts and the relative position within the revelation. Together with the title, this information, which may also have been available in contemporary works of exegesis (tafsīr), found its way into Qur’ānic manuscripts possibly during the fifth/eleventh century. As far as we know, Qur’āns with alternative readings (jāz wa matn or jāz wa qaf) were produced during the sixth/seventh century. The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art Qur’an 572 was provided in 572/1176 with abbreviations in red within the text and nouns in the margins giving information about the correct recitation of the text and its variants. At the end of the manuscript, the Qur’ānic text is followed by a series of short pamphlets on subjects like the revelation of the Qur’an, the authorized readings (here, the Ten) as well as the differences in verse counts according to the various schools or the chronology of the revelations. This tradition of scientific information continued in other texts. As stated above, there are early examples of literature related to the correct reading of the text, as well as indications of its components (the number of stāras, verses, letters, etc.). Often at the end of the Qur’an, there is the prayer that is recited upon the completion of the recitation/reading of the text. Its length and appearance vary: in luxury copies, it is written on a double page in gold letters, within an illuminated frame (see, for instance, Chester Beatty Library, CBL 1544 or Museum für Islamische Kunst, Iso Nr. 1, 49/88). Other prayers are also found in this position in the manuscript at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arabic 448, one of the earliest attributed to al-Qādīzādī (d. 1055/1111), the manuscript is adapted for magical operations (see magic); a second prayer, which adds in falling asleep, is also provided. Other texts are also related to the Qur’ān, like the various divination formulas (jihāl al-ma‘arif) found in numerous manuscripts (see Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arabic 418; see Fig vii).

The Qur’ānic codex in the western Islamic world and in Western Africa

In the handwritings tradition of the Qur’ān, regional developments can be recognized but nowhere do they seem so pronounced as in the Western Islamic world. The first Qur’ānic codices in Maghribi script were written as early as the end of the fourth/ninth century, but further study of the Qasrāvīn collection might show that distinctive Maghribī features—i.e., script, decoration, but also techniques—were already present at an earlier stage. The earliest fragments are written on parchment, but material which remained in use until the eighth/nine-teenth century. They are of the oldfashioned format, although most Maghribī Qur’āns are in a square format reminiscent of that used for a group of manuscripts of the tenth/ninth-eighth/eighth century. This square shape is found in manuscripts copied on vellum, but small Qur’āns of the thirteenth/nineteenth century written on paper still preserve this peculiar format (see The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art Qur’an 452). Nevertheless, when paper became the material commonly used for copies of the Qur’ān, the manuscript as a whole changed to the vertical format.

The script has many varieties, a small hand commonly known as Andalusi being used for single-volume Qur’āns; larger scripts are found in multi-volume manuscripts. For a long time, the vessels retained the red color which was the rule in early Qur’āns; dots were still in use on the
earliest Maghribi copies, but in the fifth/eighth century the modern signs became the rule. For an extended period, dots were also used for the qa‘a (yellow); see Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arab. 576, dated 955/1548) and sometimes for the kasra (green); other orthoepics, with their modern shape, are in blue (or sometimes in red).

Illuminations were produced over a long period of time according to patterns, some of which were already in use during the fourth/fifth century; in this respect, geometry played a major role with full-page illuminations, and the inscriptions were often exceptionally integrated into the illuminated opening pages (see Istanbul University Library A. 6745). Not infrequently, the text was followed by an illuminated page containing a prayer or a caliphon written within a frame in a script very different from that of the Qur’anic text itself (see Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arab. 389; see Fig. vi). Gold and silver were also used in copying the text itself: Bibliothèque nationale, Smith-Leesoff 217 contains a few folios of a delicate example of Maghribi chirography, and a second-volume Qur’an was written in silver ink on paper dyed purple (Bibliothèque nationale, BNF Arab. 319-322 are such folios). The manufacture of dyed papers for Qur’anic manuscripts continued for some time, a fact to which some manuscripts on blue and green paper witness (see Bibliothèque Générale et Archives, BGA B 1309).

The large Qur’an tradition was alive in the western Islamic world as shown by the above-mentioned “Nure’s Qur’an” and by two volumes now in Istanbul (Türk İslam Eserleri Müzesi, TEM 355 and 360, 51 x 55 cm): their 994 remaining folios, with seven lines to the page (one line is roughly 6.5 cm high) and their richly illuminated sūra titles indicate that a colonial investment was needed to carry out this project.

Qur’anic manuscripts in Süleymaniye script are only known in recent times — from the second half of the eleventh/seventeenth century onwards. The Süleymaniye is reminiscent of Maghribi scripts and is rather conservative. The vowels are often in red, the kasra being indicated by a yellow dot. Illuminations are usually geometrical and seem to rely only on colors — gold has so far not been reported. The beginning of the Qur’an is often highlighted with a larger ornament in the shape of a frame; on top of it, outside the frame, there is sometimes the haraka (q. w.) and also the šadda. In other manuscripts, the ornament separates the first sūra from the second nine. Other larger illuminations are usually found at the beginning of the second half of the Qur’an (in Süleymaniye tradition this is equivalent to q. 12), but also, in addition to that, at the beginning of the second and fourth quarters (see, for instance, Leeds University Library, Arabic ms. 301). Even if the divisions into seven and sixty parts (hizb), as well as the subdivisions of the latter into eight sections, are frequently indicated in the margins, in this handwritten tradition, the four parts are evidently of greater importance.

These Qur’anic manuscripts are also set apart by their traditional binding: the flap is overflown — in extremity almost reaching the back of the volume when it is closed — and terminates with a leather thong that can be rolled several times around the book in order to keep it closed. Moreover, in a number of cases the manuscript was provided with a leather pouch (in those instances in which it is missing, it may have been lost), which was intended as an external protection for the Qur’an. These peculiarities may be related to another feature of Süleymaniye manuscripts, namely the fact that they were written on bi-folios or even folios that were left loose; with neither quires nor sewing, a very protective binding was the only solution against the folios being lost or mixed up.

Later developments

With the exception of the já‘ (thirteenth) and the hik (sixteenth), some of the divisions of the text into parts of identical size fell into disuse and were only rarely indicated in the margins of single-volume Qur’ans. Sets of four or seven volumes became rare, even if some examples could still be found; a seven-part Qur’an was written in India by the end of the twelfth/thirteenth century (The Nasir al-Din Khalil Collection of Islamic Art Q. 30). While four-volume sets are known in the Maghrib during the same period (see Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arab. 585 and 6589). In contrast, the já‘ became more important for organizing the text, even in single-volume Qur’ans. As early as the beginning of the ninth/tenth century, a Qur’an in Râ‘î script in one volume is distinguished by the use of developed illumination in the margins of each opening corresponding to the beginning of a já‘ (Leiden University Library Q. 95, dated 453/1060-1), a practice which became common in later Persian and Turkish manuscripts of the thirteenth/twelfth century (see Chester Beatty Library, CBL 1245 or Staatsbibliothek, SB 1999). In less expensive copies only the middle of the text is indicated in this way (Bibliothèque nationale, BNF Arab. 431 or Chester Beatty Library, CBL 1344). Qur’ans in thirty volumes are plentiful, ranging from the more modest to gorgeous ones, and can be found from the Maghrib to China. This evolution may possibly be connected to a wider practice of Qur’an reading. Other elements point in the same direction: in Iran, and also in India, according to historical records, copies used a minute script in order to fit each já‘ to the space available on a double page;
appeared in almost the same position on every opening. While keeping the text division previously described, some copyists succeeded in moving those words or groups so that they appeared on both pages of every opening on the same line and in a symmetrical position, highlighted in red ink. In the case of q. 6, half verses were treated in this fashion. Attempts to trace this peculiar page layout back to specific milieus or to speculations on the Qur’anic text have so far been unsuccessful. Its diffusion was not restricted to the Ottoman empire (Turk Islam Edebiyat Muzesi, TİEM 466); it was also known in the Maghrib, where Ottoman influence was felt (National Library, NL 14 276, in Tunis). Some manuscripts contain only selected parts of the Qur'ān. The excerpts are usually chosen because they may be recited during a prayer, but the choice is not always so simple to explain, as shown by a copy of Surat al-Fātihah in a highly stylized and elaborated style (Topkapı Sarayi Museum, TKS R. 18, dated 909/1903). In the Ottoman empire, these small volumes were called ʿrāz, since they usually begin with an extract from q. 6 (Surat al-Aʿrāf), property of the Frailīa; the selection and may vary but in many cases ends with the last stanzas. q. 39 is also popular and is sometimes the first of the volume. In Iran and India, this stanzas appear as the first in Qur’ānic selections (followed by q. 4:8, 56, 67 and 78; see The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art 390). Obviously, the choice was not restricted to these stanzas, and a survey of this material would certainly give some insights into Muslim prayer of later centuries — most of the manuscripts so far published seem to date from the tenth/twelfth century or later.

Production and conservation

Matters of manuscript production are still largely ignored by scholars, as are the economic aspects. Is it lawful to sell or buy a Qur'ān? Is it permissible to copy the Qur’ānic text for a fee? The debate about these issues arose at an early date and was quickly answered in the affirmative. Many anecdotes are told about the high prices commanded by copies written by famous calligraphers. But the cost of a more ordinary Qur'ān remains obscure, as does the importance of the diffusion of the Qur’ānic manuscripts in the Islamic lands. For more recent times, a study of the archives and of what remains of the production may provide limited though very valuable answers, but it seems difficult to determine how much access the Muslims of the eleventh/seventeenth century, for instance, had to a copy of their sacred text. How much time was needed to copy a Qur'ān? Information found in the manuscripts themselves is scattered but could give more concrete data according to the colophons of the ʿjām of an Egyptian Qur’ān dated 1373/1374, the copyist was writing it in eight days (Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF Arabe 545). Some Ottoman copyists indicate the number of Qur'ān they had so far transcribed.

The price of the manuscripts was high, and they were usually used over a long period of time. They were treated with reverence, and when they fell into decay special care had to be taken about their fate. Some scholars considered that the parchment or the paper could be reused for the preparation of the boards of a Qur'ān binding, while others insisted that the manuscript should be buried or burned. There are also instances of depots, as in Qayrawān, Cairo or Damascus, which are close to the Jewish practice of the genizah. Attempts have been made to relate the manuscripts to specific milieus (Whelan, Writing the word or to correlate a change in the script with religious developments

(Tableaux, The transformation), but the lack of comprehensive surveys of the material handled such approaches. As a result, we still know too little about the role played by Qur’ānic manuscripts within the Islamic world until a comparatively later period.

François Déroche

Bibliography

Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān

Volume Three
J–O

Jane Dammen McAuliffe, General Editor

Brill, Leiden–Boston
2003