WRITING THE WORD OF GOD: SOME EARLY QUR'ĀN MANUSCRIPTS AND THEIR MILIEUX, PART I

By ESTELLE WHELAN

One is left wondering how anyone dares to date a MS. from the writing alone.

—A. S. Tritton

Western scholars coming to grips with Arabic manuscripts for the first time after years of striving to master the language from printed texts often find the experience disheartening. Not only are they cast adrift among the idiosyncrasies of individual handwriting, their firm grasp of grammar sabotaged by scribal ignorance or carelessness and their confidence shaken by violations of the orthographic rules (connection of supposedly unconnected letters, for example), but they are also unlikely to have received from either their teachers or their books much guidance in how to deal with their perplexity.

After such an initiation, the opportunity to work with early Qur'ān manuscripts of the type commonly called "Kūfic" seems to promise refreshment. Here are bold, clean letter forms, neatly laid out in spacious lines, uncluttered by ornamentation, and hardly affected by scribal quirks. Even the vocalizations are of a pattern so unfamiliar that they need not distract attention for more than a moment or two. It comes as a shock, then, to discover that at first these folios can hardly be read at all, even that a careful search is required to find, on any given page, recognizable words to help identify the correct Qur'ānic passage. Pondering this situation leads to some unexpected conclusions.

Study by Western scholars of early Arabic script is nearly as old as Orientalism itself. Generations of scholars have struggled to determine conclusively whether or not it originated in ancient Nabatean or Syrian writing and to identify specific calligraphic and monumental types from inadequate and even garbled descriptions in early Arabic texts. Although some progress has been made, it must be admitted that these issues remain shrouded in darkness. Perhaps most frustrating of all, however, have been the slight results achieved by paleographers who have tried to date the fragmentary earliest Qur'ān manuscripts by comparing individual letter forms with those found in the handful of inscriptions that survive from the first and second hijrī centuries, on one hand, and a number of early papyri of no monumental significance on the other.

Without recapitulating the entire history of these efforts, it is worth noting some of the highlights here. The first important distinction recognized was that between the angular scripts called "Kūfic" and the cursive scripts of the calligraphers. In 1911 Bernhard Moritz commented, rather confusingly, "it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the difference between the two types was chiefly due to the nature of the material written on, though at the same time there existed a tendency to create a separate monumental script." Nabia Abbott attempted to identify some of the early Qur'ānic scripts from brief textual descriptions. For example, a single phrase in the fourth-/tenth-century Fihrist of Ibn al-Nadim led to her identifying Hijżī script by three rather general traits, none of them exclusive to it. She then defined Kūfic by the absence of this combination of traits and went on to propose two subcategories—one angular, one rounded. Without denying the value of Abbott's work, it must still be admitted that her findings, at least those related to Kūfic script, are too theoretical to be of much help in the study of existing early Qur'ān manuscripts.

More recently French scholars in particular have revived an inductive approach, based on close examination of large collections of early Qur'ān manuscripts. The method involves recording minute variations in the letter forms, subsequently grouping manuscripts according to perceived similarities in these letter forms, and finally arranging the groups in a sequence implying chronological development. Carefully constructed as they are, however, such detailed classifications have not yet provided a viable framework for analysis of Qur'āns from the earliest period. A primary difficulty in identifying the main lines of development is the sheer quantity of surviving material, most of it inadequately published; the vast number of variations in detail even within single manuscripts tends to blur the picture still further.

It has long been accepted that, for writing the Qur'ān, "Kūfic" script was superseded by "broken Kūfic" in the course of the fourth/tenth century. The prevailing chronological framework for "Kūfic" Qur'āns themselves, however, is based not on paleography but on organization of ornament; manuscripts lacking ornamental divisions between sūrahās have been considered the earliest, followed by those with purely ornamental divisions at the ends of sūrahās and only later by those with ornamental headings containing the written titles of the sūrahās. Since the formulation of this rather crude schema earlier in this century scholars have striven to place individual manuscripts in relation to it, but they have been largely unsuccessful in refining the model itself. The resulting frustration has sometimes
led to what seem counsels of despair: "There is no scientifically defensible position other than to suspend ... all judgement until there have been made, with the most minute observations of detail, regroupings by families, which comparisons and careful indexing will perhaps enable us to apportion chronologically and geographically."11

Nevertheless, the author proposes to try another tack, applying classical art-historical methods to the paleography of some early Qurʾānic manuscripts as a modest first step toward a more thorough revision of the framework for study of such monuments. It is curious that, over many decades, such methods have not been systematically applied to Qurʾānic script but only to ornament. After a brief general analysis of the script generally labeled "Kūfic," two small but distinct groups of Qurʾānic manuscripts, selected from the much larger body of surviving material, will be analyzed in detail; they have been chosen because their paleographic and codicological differences offer a kind of test of the validity of the prevailing chronological model. It is hoped that such close analysis of a circumscribed selection of material will provide signposts for further, and more productive, exploration of the entire corpus. In a subsequent study the ornament of these same manuscripts will be considered, in an effort both to confirm the distinctions observed here and to help localize the production of the two groups.

Characteristics of Early Qurʾānic Script

To return for a moment to those hapless scholars struggling to read their first "Kūfic" Qurʾānic manuscripts, it is worth trying to isolate the source of their difficulty. It can hardly be the letter forms, for they are sharply drawn and unambiguous; the similarity between dāl/dhāl and kāf may at first cause some confusion (e.g., Figs. 2, ll. 2, 3, 5; and 20, l. 8), but otherwise the letters are more distinct than in some printed texts. Assuming that these scholars know the Qurʾān well enough, why is it so difficult to pick out familiar words and phrases?

The answer is obvious yet seldom taken into account in discussions of "Kūfic" script. The typical early Qurʾānic is not written in words and phrases: It is written in groups of connected letters separated by spaces.12 To compound the difficulty, isolated letters are treated as groups in this sense and are preceded and followed by spaces of the same width. It takes some practice before the scholar learns to allow for this spacing and to regroup the letter clusters into familiar verbal expressions.

It is indeed a striking characteristic of most of the earliest Qurʾāns that the spaces between groups of connected letters are relatively uniform within a given manuscript, much more so than some letter forms and the connecting lines themselves. These spaces thus provide a kind of skeleton, which is fleshed out by the letter clusters. Several other characteristics of the writing underscore the importance of this skeleton.

First, the letters and connecting lines were written with fairly broad and uniform strokes except for tiny hairline diagonals at the beginning of dāl/dhāl, initial and medial kāf, and initial and isolated ʿayn/ghayn.

Second, there was considerable flexibility in drawing the connecting lines and the letter bodies that lent themselves to horizontal extension (dāl/dhāl, sīd/dād, jīr/jīrāʾ, kāf).13 Although this flexibility was not unlimited, it was sufficient to permit really broad variations within a single manuscript and even on a single page, sometimes within a single line (e.g., Figs. 8, 11, 15, and 22).

Third, flexibility was greater in the direction of expansion than in that of contraction. Occasionally, the expandable letters might be contracted to quite small proportions, particularly at the ends of lines (e.g., Figs. 18, l. 3; and 20, l. 12), but this solution seems to have been considered undesirable, for it occurs relatively seldom in the finer manuscripts. On the other hand, the dimensions of other letters—particularly looped letters like ʿayn, kāf, mīm, ḥāʾ, tāʾ marbūṭah, wāw—were rarely altered, even at the ends of lines, possibly because the uniform width of the stroke allowed little scope for contraction beyond eliminating the lines connecting such letters, which resulted in their tangential alignment. Occasionally, when the scribe intended to make two letters tangential, he inadvertently left a narrow channel between them; then a tiny hairline stroke was inserted to connect the two letters at their closest points (e.g., Figs. 10, l. 1; 12, l. 5; and 19, l. 17). This solution was usually so subtly executed that the reader scans the lines without noticing that a potentially disturbing gap has been closed in this way.

Fourth, words (never connected letter groups) were freely divided between lines, without respect for natural breaks in sense or pronunciation, in contrast, for example, to syllabic division in English.14 One corollary is that uneven side margins, particularly on the left, are quite common, though occasionally, when a line fell too far short of the ideal margin, a little marker was inserted to lengthen it.15

What has been defined so far should be understood as a general system, never absolute in detail. Spaces between connected groups of letters do vary, as is only to be expected from work dependent upon the human eye and hand rather than upon machines. When there is greater variation, it usually takes the form of slight compression toward the end of a line or broadening to
accommodate a descender from the line above. The latter adjustment naturally occurs more frequently when the space between lines is smaller. In only one situation do much larger intervals occur consistently; it will be discussed later in this article. Otherwise, it is generally true that the spaces along lines remain uniform, as do looped letters, and that horizontally expandable letters and connecting lines are adjusted to the required lengths.

How did this system work in practice? Some questions immediately suggest themselves. Did the calligraphers rule their lines and side margins, then block out the letter groups before writing the text? It seems not. François Dé로che has commented that, of the Qurʾānic manuscripts from the earliest period now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris—he has catalogued 295—only a few show any trace of rulings, and the proportion seems equally low in the Istanbul collections with which he has been working. Of twenty-four "Kāfīc" Qurʾān fragments in The Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, ranging from one to 201 folios, only one reveals such rulings. Dé로che has considered the possibility that scribes erased their rulings so carefully as to leave no trace. This hypothesis seems inherently improbable, however, especially as no such reticence was shown in the illuminations, where rectangles, diagonals, and circles were often scored so deeply into the parchment that the scars remain visible through the text on the reverse sides of the folios. It is further belied by close scrutiny of the writing itself: Though seldom actually disturbing, the sloping, sagging, and bulging of the written lines on most early Qurʾān pages are visible to the naked eye and even more apparent when a straightedge is applied along the base lines. Even the right-hand margins are rarely perfectly straight. Clearly, then, the scribe most often wrote "freehand," relying upon his "eye" to assemble his text on the page.

Once again the question poses itself: How, without the help of prior layout, was it possible to achieve the spacious, unhurried, monumental style of these great Qurʾāns? The spaciousness was, as already noted, built in. For the whole system to work, however, the "building blocks" from which the scribe constructed the text page had to be both standardised and flexible.

This reasoning leads to a fifth aspect of most early Qurʾānic scripts—the varying combinations of stereotyped strokes required to produce the entire alphabet and thus the entire text. Long ago Samuel Flury devised an analytical method primarily for the study of monumental inscriptions. He reduced the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet to eighteen groups, each containing letters that, though different in sound, are identical in form: 1) alif, 2) bāʾ/lāʾ/ḥāʾ, 3) jī/mī/ḵāʾ, 4) dāl/dhāl, 5) ṭāʾ/ṣāʾ, 6) sīn/shīn, 7) sād/dād, 8) ṣād/dād. Illustration 1. Forms of fāʾ and qāf in Different Positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>fāʾ</th>
<th>qāf</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>initial</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="fāʾ initial" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="qāf initial" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medial</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="fāʾ medial" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="qāf medial" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terminal</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="fāʾ terminal" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="qāf terminal" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9) ʾayn/ghāyn, 10) fāʾ/qāf, 11) hāʾ, 12) lām, 13) mī, 14) nūn, 15) hāʾ, 16) wāw, 17) yāʾ, 18) lām-ʾāf. For each inscription he included within each group all the apparent permutations, arranged in order of increasing ornamental complexity, arguing that this sequence gives a clearer picture of the general character of a script than would a more "schematic" arrangement by position (initial, medial, terminal, and isolated). Flury’s system has been emulated or adapted by other scholars working with monumental and decorative inscriptions.

In 1966, however, Lisa Volov pointed out that Flury’s method of classifying letters is not really satisfactory for studies of paleographic ornament. She telescoped his eighteen groups into five, defined by the predominant character of the irreducible letter forms—vertical, rectangular, round, low, or oblique. This simplification permitted her to focus more directly on ornamental modifications in both the bodies and the appendages of various letters.

Classifications designed primarily to highlight ornamental development are, however, not helpful in analysis of the earliest Qurʾānic scripts, which are distinguished by an absence of paleographic ornament. Indeed, even reliance primarily on letter bodies as the classifying principle is somewhat misleading, for in such scripts the position of a given letter, deliberately set aside in Flury’s system, must be taken into account along with its body form. For example, in initial and medial positions fāʾ and qāf are indistinguishable in form; in terminal and isolated positions, however, fāʾ shares the tail extended along the base line with some of the toothed letters (bāʾ/lāʾ/ḥāʾ) and mī (e.g., Figs. 11, l. 2; and 22, l. 11), whereas the tail of qāf descends below the line in a sickle-shaped curve or is stylized in the form of a small dāl/dhāl (e.g., Figs. 1, l. 1; 15, l. 6; and 19, l. 20; see Illustration 1). In the same way, isolated and terminal sīn/shīn and sād/dād have tail forms identical to
isolated and terminal نَن (e.g., Figs. 9, ll. 3, 5; 14, ll. 2, 29, 12, 13; and 22, l. 17; see Illustration 2). Of all the letters in the alphabet يَاء offers the richest set of such connections. Although its initial and medial forms are indistinguishable from those of the other single-toothed letters, in terminal and isolated positions it can take any of three alternative tails (Illustration 2): a tail in the shape of a terminal نَن (e.g., Figs. 4, l. 1; 14, l. 6; and 18, l. 5), like those of سَنْ/شَنَّ and ضَاد/ضَاد; a tail in the shape of a small دَل/دَل (e.g., Fig. 4, l. 5), like that of قَاف; or a reversed tail joined to the body by a curve (e.g., Figs. 6, l. 3; 15, l. 3; and 20, ll. 10–13), a type that usually occurs on terminal جِم/هَاء/خَاء (e.g., Fig. 8, ll. 3–5) and occasionally terminal قَام/غَام as well. Because the network of such paleographic relations helps to define this category of early Qurʾānic scripts, a method based on separation of letter bodies from their appendages can actually hamper analysis.

In examining the structure of early Qurʾānic paleography, it does indeed seem useful to pursue some aspects of these relations. To begin with, the اَلِف sets the upper limit of each line, beyond which no other tall letter extends. Although in most instances زَاء and لَام (as well as terminal كَاف) may be equally tall, as connected letters they are subject to influences that can affect their height. The source of such alterations is a peculiarity of جِم/هَاء/خَاء. In this group the letter body is formed by a stroke that begins above the line and slopes or curves down to the right, where it joins the base line. Preceding letters are usually connected to this upper stroke, which requires that they be raised on a secondary base line (e.g., Figs. 7, ll. 3–4; 19, l. 20; and 20, l. 8) level with the upper horizontal strokes of دَل/دَل, ضَاد/ضَاد, زَاء/زَاء, and كَاف. When زَاء and لَام are thus raised before جِم/هَاء/خَاء, their ascenders are thus correspondingly shortened so as not to rise beyond اَلِف, which, as an unconnected letter, is not affected by what follows it. Second, the looped letters seem to be proportioned in relation to اَلِف, though the proportions can vary from manuscript to manuscript. To cite one instance, مِم, when on the base line, may rise to one quarter, one third, or one half the height of اَلِف as it is drawn exactly the same size, regardless of position, when raised before جِم/هَاء/خَاء it rises correspondingly higher in relation to اَلِف. The same principle applies to هَاء, which is generally slightly taller than مِم. On the other hand, single-toothed letters can vary in height, depending on their positions in relation to other letters; these variations are particularly clear when several such letters appear in sequence (e.g., Figs. 11, l. 2; and 19, l. 17). Third, in addition to the means for fitting text to page already mentioned (compression of space at the ends of lines, expansion and contraction of the base line, division of words between lines), a further, purely paleographic device was also used. As mentioned earlier, there is one striking exception to the generally uniform spacing between letter groups in these early Qurʾānic scripts; it involves the most dramatic form of terminal and isolated يَاء. Sometimes a much larger than normal space was left between the end of one letter group and the first letter of the next, when the latter terminated in يَاء. In this instance, too, the letters of the second group were raised on a secondary base line, whereas the tail of terminal يَاء was turned to the right and drawn out, on a slightly rising trajectory along the main base line, past the initial letter of the group and toward the first group, thus reducing the enlarged space to a normal, or even slightly narrower, interval (e.g., Figs. 8, l. 5; 15, l. 3; and 21, ll. 1, 5, 8–9). The spacing between letter groups must thus be defined as the distance between the end of the first letter group and the closest element of the second, which is not always the first letter. Curiously, though terminal and isolated جِم/هَاء/خَاء have a similar curving, turned-back tail, it is usually short and does not appear to have functioned in the same way (e.g., Fig. 8, l. 4).

Before proceeding farther, it will be useful to focus the discussion on two specific groups of manuscripts. Although both conform to the pattern described so far, they also differ in ways that may illuminate the larger question of Qurʾān copying in the earliest period.

**Manuscript Group 1**

The type manuscript for the first group is in several fragments scattered among a number of museum and
library collections. Déroche identified several of them: 1407 in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, four folios; 350a in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 144 folios; 23 in the Aya Sofya Library, Istanbul, sixty-seven folios; Eminet Hazine 26, ff. 14–19, in the Topkapı Sarayi Library, Istanbul, six folios; XL. (formerly 5) and XLII (6c) in the Royal Library, Copenhagen, thirty-one and three folios respectively; and 449 and 452 in the Gotha State Library, totaling seven folios. Additional fragments are I.2211 in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin-Dahlem, twenty-two folios; 37.6 in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., thirty-two folios; Marsh 178 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, twenty-two folios; and Cod. Guelph. 12.11 Aug. 2° in the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, six folios. The Wolfenbüttel fragment was a gift from the noted Orientalist of the University of Leiden Jacobus Golius (Jacob Gool) in 1655 or 1656; the Bodleian manuscript was also in Golius’ possession as early as 1656. Indeed, the text of the two fragments is partly contiguous. These two fragments can thus be taken as evidence of the original, or at least an early, condition of the manuscript, without “improvements” made for the modern market and can serve as a “check” on features present in other extant fragments and in related manuscripts the provenience of which cannot be traced back so far.

A total of 344 folios is known from this Qur’ān. Among them the illuminated opening and closing of one juz’ can (the twenty-first) can be identified. The double-page opening is shared between Berlin I.2211 (f. 22b; f. 22a is blank) and CBL 1407 (f. 1a); the closing is in CBL 1407 (ff. 3b–4a; f. 4b is blank). Furthermore, this juz’ is nearly complete: Ninety-three folios are known, including the opening and closing illuminations, probably there are three still unaccounted for (containing XXIX:68–69 and the heading for Sūrah XXX; XXXII:17–20; and XXXIII:1–3), which would bring the total to ninety-six. Thirty ajār of approximately equal length would thus have totaled close to 2,880 folios, of which those known to survive constitute almost 12 percent. The manuscript seems to have been composed of gatherings of eight sheets (sixteen folios) each, six gatherings to a juz’.

This Qur’ān is written on skin in horizontal format; the text, five lines of dark brown ink on each side, covers an area of 12.7–13 x 22.3–22.8 cm. The lines are spaced well apart, so that the tips of the dāl, dāl; dāl, and other tall letters do not approach the base line above and descenders rarely impose spatial adjustments on the line below. Except for slight tapering at terminals and angles, the stroke is generally of uniform width, whether tracing letters or connecting lines. Some letters are “pointed” with thin strokes in the same ink in which the text is written. In addition, diacritics are indicated by large red and dark greenish-brown dots. The use of markers at the ends of short lines is rare. The tail of terminal qāf is always in the form of a small dāl/ghāl, and this tail also occurs on yā. More common tails on terminal yā are, however, that in the shape of terminal nūn and the turned-back form, the latter particularly though not exclusively in stereotyped combinations like the word fi. The upper stroke of ji m/ha/ku is always gracefully curved and preceding connected letters raised on a secondary base line.

Nine sūrah openings are preserved, most consist of richly illuminated bands of vegetal ornament in gold, sephia, and dark brown laid out on a geometric grid. The band is surrounded by a complex frame, from which an elaborate illuminated palmette projects into the outer margin. Against the ornamental grid the title and number of verses are written in gold outlined in sepia; a contour line reserved from the ornament helps to set the script off from the background. The letter forms in the headings are identical to those in the text, including some “pointing” by means of diagonal strokes. The only spacing between letter groups, however, is that resulting from the abutted contour panels of adjacent groups; each line thus constitutes a continuous band resembling an inscription. The opening of juz’ 21 is a double-page illumination in the same style as the sūrah openings, including palmettes, but more elaborate in design; there is no title or text of any kind. The closing also consists of a double-page illumination, with palmettes; it is constructed from design elements similar to those in the opening but arranged in a somewhat different pair of compositions.

The end of each ayah, or verse, is marked by a small gold rosette (e.g., Figs. 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 12). After every fifth verse there is a gold hā, the abjad symbol for the numeral 5, with a sephia contour line. The scribe did not usually leave extra space for this mark, which was drawn larger than the letter hā in the text itself; it thus had to be crowded into the normal interval between letter groups and often overlaps the flanking letters. After every tenth verse there is a large gilt rosette with a reserved center in which is written the cumulative total of verses from the beginning of the sūrah ten, twenty, thirty, and so on. When such divisions fell within the text line, extra space was usually left for the ornaments, which makes it certain that they were planned and are contemporary with the elegant illuminated headings in the manuscript; when a tenth verse ends with the line, the rosette is a marginal ornament (e.g., Figs. 1 and 11). In longer sūrahs there are also very large, fine rosettes in gold after each one hundred verses, with the cumulative number inscribed in the center (e.g., Fig. 3). These rosettes also can fall in the margins, but, when they occur in the middle of text lines, wider spaces have
been left. To all these systems there are occasional exceptions—omission of some ʿaynah marks, failure to leave room for large rosettes, and the like. The style and execution of all the illuminations will be discussed in Part II of this article.

Ornament is also used to mark points in the text other than cumulative verse totals. For example, in Marsh 178, a marginal rosette with the word sajdah inscribed in the center indicates a prostration after XXXVIII:24, one of fourteen such prostrations prescribed in the Qurʾān.49 There should be a similar ornament at the end of XXXII:15, which occurs in Aya Sofya 23 in Istanbul, but the author has not examined this manuscript. More intriguing are two details in Copenhagen XL (5), which contains portions of Sūrah XXIII (al-Munʿimūn, “The Believers”) and XXIV (al-Nūr, “Light”), and the Washington manuscript, which contains a portion of Sūrah II (al-Baqarah, “The Cow”), the longest in the entire Qurʾān. In Copenhagen XL (5) a small rosette inscribed with the word miʿah (one hundred) has been crowded in at the appropriate point in Sūrah XXIII, on f. 13b, where no space was left for it (Fig. 3); on f. 16a, however, where verse 110 ends with the first line of text, a larger and more elaborate rosette inscribed miʿah wahā ʿashr (one hundred and ten) has been placed in the margin (Fig. 4). The only major division of the text that falls near this point is the beginning of the fifth seventh, which is said to occur in the middle of either Sūrah XXII or XXIII or at the end of XXIII, certainly too far away for this ornament to be intended to mark it.46 Sūrah XXIII ends after eight more verses, on the fourth line of f. 18b, and the heading for Sūrah XXIV falls on the last line; no room was left for the ornamental band that frames most sūrah headings in this manuscript,47 and the illuminator had to content himself with placing a palmette in the margin. It is tempting to conclude that the copyist had a lapse while working on this section of the text and simply neglected to leave space for ornaments, but doubt is cast on this conclusion by a somewhat parallel situation in the Washington fragment. A large rosette with miʿalān (two hundred) written in the center occurs on f. 8b, in the margin at the end of a line (Fig. 1). Verse 210 ends with the last line on f. 8b, but, instead of a rosette in the margin there, a much more elaborate rosette, inscribed with the words miʿalān wahā ʿashr (two hundred and ten), has been placed at the beginning of verse 211 on the first line of text on folio ma, which was indented significantly to allow for it (Fig. 2). Again no standard large division of the Qurʾān occurs anywhere near this point, but the fact that space was left at the beginning of a line for a minor division mark remains extremely puzzling.

In associating other manuscripts with group 1 it has seemed best to include only those that share all the features of the type manuscript; undoubtedly other extant examples also belong to this group, but at present they are either too fragmentary (lacking parts of the text where major illuminations would fall, for example) or too incompletely published for certainty. To err on the side of caution seems preferable.

One of the most important manuscripts to be assigned to group 1 is a fragmentary Qurʾān divided among at least five collections: 1421 in The Chester Beatty Library,48 M712 in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York,49 EH 16 in the Topkapi Sarayi in Istanbul,50 47 in the Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi in Istanbul,51 and A.338 in the National Museum, Damascus.52 It was written in very dark brown ink (sometimes verging on black), nine lines to a text page measuring approximately 12.7 x 21.5 cm. The script is very close to that of the type manuscript, but, because of the larger number of lines per page, the spacing between them is tighter, and more frequent adjustments in spacing between letter groups were required to accommodate descenders from above. The copyist has also more often used markers at the ends of very short lines than did the copyist of the type manuscript. The letters are pointed with small crescents, though these markings seem to have been restored and supplemented at a later date. Other differences from the type manuscript include the use of a pyramid of six small gold disks rather than a rosette to mark ʿaynah endings, the absence of contour panels around khamshah marks, the inclusion of green in the illuminations, and the addition of red and green dots between the petals of the rosettes at the end of each ten verses. The script, however, is so nearly identical that one might be tempted to assign the two manuscripts to a single copyist. Only such minute details as a slightly freer “swing” to the alfʿ and sharper tapering of the shaft of terminal nūn in the type manuscript and a tendency to displace the central dot of space in mīm, fāʾ/ qaʾ, and wāw to the right in CBL 1421 et al. reveal the presence of distinct “hands” (Figs. 15 and 16).

The fact that Topkapi EH 16 contains just half of juzʿ 11 (according to the Cairo edition) in thirty-nine folios53 suggests that each juzʿ consisted of seventy-eight folios. Morgan M712 in New York, however, consists of gatherings of eight sheets, that is, sixteen folios; if that pattern prevailed throughout the manuscript, then the length of a juzʿ was probably eighty folios.54 Four of the fragments contain notices that the Qurʾān had been made a waqf in the Great Mosque of Damascus by one ‘Abd al-Munʿīm in 298/911.55 In addition, hubbisa lilīlāh (“reserved for God”) is written at the top of folio 5a and 20a of Morgan M712 (Figs. 15 and 16).

The paleography of these notices calls for comment. Déroche has noted that in the waqf notices in Topkapi EH 16 and CBL 1421 (with which Damascus A.338
should be included) _alif_ consists of a vertical stroke, without a bend to the right at the bottom, and terminal _mim_ has a short vertical tail, whereas in TIM 47 the _alif_ does bend to the right and the _mim_ has a horizontal tail. On the other hand, the curve of terminal _nin_ (apparently a full semicircle in EH 16) differs in all three (four) from the angular form in the Qur'ān text itself. The same is true of the related terminals. Other differences from the script of the Qur'ān text itself may be noted. For example, in contrast to the generally uniform width of the stroke that characterizes the text, in the _waqf_ notices base-line strokes are notably thinner than those forming the letters. The _alif_ varies considerably in height. _Dāl/dhūl_ has been reduced to minute proportions in relation to both vertical and looped letters. In the word _Allah_ the second _lām_ is shorter than the first and sometimes bends slightly forward toward _hā_. In CBL 1421, in the group _li-=_ _abdl_, the scribe hesitated ed over connecting _lām_ and _'ayn_; he first wrote _'ayn_ as an initial letter requiring the raising of preceding _lām_, which in the Qur'ān script it does not, but finally settled on. Indeed, the conception of the raised secondary base line seems to have escaped him entirely, for in _li-msajid_ he has written the first two letters on the main base line, which necessitated lowering _ji/m-dāl_. The two briefer notices in Morgan M712 are still more revealing. That on folio 5a shows the same thinner base line and curving tail on terminal _sīn_ as in the longer _waqf_ notices (Fig. 15). The expression _li-lilāh_ offers some new features, however. The second _lām_ is shorter than the first, as in the notices, but the line connecting it to _hā_ traces an acute angle below the base line. _Hā_ itself has a hollow center rather than the pinpoint opening characteristic of the manuscript. Most striking is the inclusion of "serifs" on the tops of both _lāms_. The notice on folio 20a, however, though retaining the hollow _hā_, lacks the serifs and acute-angled ligature; most striking is the tail of the terminal _sīn_, for which an angular form was adopted in apparent imitation of the same letter in the first line of the text immediately below (Fig. 16).

This evidence of deliberate imitation is not unique; similar traces can be observed in other _waqf_ notices from the Great Mosque at Damascus, notably those in the Qur'ān of Amājūr, which Déroche attributes to the period in which the manuscript was restored (314/ 926–27), and in the Qur'ān of Abū-l-Najm Badr, which may have been deposited in the Great Mosque before 289/902. Perhaps more significant is the fact that the characteristics betraying the scribes all belong to a style of cursive script common in the third/ninth century.

Several other manuscripts in the Chester Beatty Library may belong to group 1, but they are too fragmentary to contain all the diagnostic features outlined (Figs. 17 and 18). As already noted, there are undoubtedly manuscripts in other collections that, after more complete publication and careful study, will prove to belong to group 1. In the meantime, before exploring the implications of the observations made about this group here, it will be useful to examine a second group of early Qur'ān manuscripts.

**Manuscript Group 2**

The type manuscript for group 2 is 1404 in the Chester Beatty Library, consisting of 201 large parchment folios in vertical format, twenty lines to a side, covering an area 39.2–40.8 x 30.3–31.5 cm., in brown ink (Figs. 19–22). No other fragment of the manuscript has been identified. This portion was in Fāh in the Egyptian delta in 1905, when Moritz published details of the twenty ornamented pages contained in it. It is in very poor condition; many leaves are tattered, and the ink has eaten through the parchment in a great many places. In addition, both text and ornament have been retracted, amended, annotated, and replaced in a variety of hands and in different-colored inks through the centuries. Pasted inside the binding, which is of the Mamlūk period, is a notice, written in a cursive hand in black ink on paper, declaring that in the year 1140/1727 Amīr Muhammad Jūbbāt (Corbaci) Ghanim Azabān ordered the book, considered to be in the hand of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, to be restored by means of pasting the torn fragments onto sheets of paper. There are indeed torn and truncated pages that have been pasted to pieces of paper of the same kind as that on which the restoration notice itself is written. Because of the extent of the damage and repairs to the individual folios it is almost impossible to reconstruct the original formation of this manuscript. Nevertheless, in two instances, ff. 56–57 and 65–66, the connections at the inner margins are at least partially preserved, and it can be determined that single skins were folded in the middle to produce two folios. Furthermore, whenever there is a continuous sequence of text over several pages, it is clear that the prevailing pattern was for hair sides and flesh sides to face each other in alternation. The manuscript was thus probably made up originally of single folded sheets.

The lines of text are rather closely spaced, necessitating frequent adjustments to accommodate descenders from the line above, including altered spacing and shortened ascenders. The _alif_ sets the limit of the line but is squatter than in group 1, so that more lines can be fitted onto the page. The stroke of the pen is slightly thinner in the elongated connecting lines than in the letters. Some letters are "pointed" with thin strokes (peculiarly _lāf_ is often marked with only a single stroke,
as is, of course, nūn; these strokes are in the same ink as the text and appear to be original. The spacing between letter groups, though following the general principles already outlined, is generally narrower than in group 1; furthermore, though very long extensions of the base line are less common, greater use has been made of the elongated, turned-back terminal yāʾ and of markers, in a variety of shapes, at the ends of short lines (Figs. 20 and 21). There are also several striking differences in the script from that of group 1. For example, a curved upper stroke on jīm/hāʾ/kāʾ is rare; more often it is straight. Furthermore, though preceding connected letters are usually raised on a secondary base line, another solution, in which they are connected to the base-line stroke, has also been adopted. In these instances the diagonal stroke crosses the base line (e.g., Fig. 20, ll. 11, 16). The tail in the form of a small dāl/ḍāl on terminal yāʾ and qāf seems to be entirely lacking. Instead, terminal qāf always ends in a curvilinear form resembling a sickle (e.g., Figs. 17, ll.1, 4; 19, l. 20; and 21, l. 2). Furthermore, terminal yāʾ only occasionally ends in a tail shaped like that of terminal nūn; far more frequent is the turned-back tail. It is clear, then, that the interrelations among letters were defined slightly differently in the manuscripts of groups 1 and 2.

Verse endings are marked by three or more diagonal strokes in the same ink as the text (e.g., Fig. 21, l. 16); there is no indication of five or tens in the original text (Figs. 20 and 21). Subsequently, however, crude circular ornaments in black ink, often combined with colors, were added to mark the ends of groups of ten verses.

One of the most significant contrasts with manuscripts in group 1 is the absence of sūrah headings and titles. The endings of sūrah are, however, marked by ornamental bands in colors, originally without gold (Fig. 22). That these bands were intended as terminal decorations is clear from the fact that they fill out short lines at the ends of sūrah but never occur on the beginning line of a sūrah. If a particular sūrah ends in a nearly full line, then space has been left for a decorative band to separate it from the beginning of the next sūrah. Sometimes both solutions are combined, so that the ornamental band has a stepped shape. The bands contain no text. Sixteen of thirty juzʾ endings occur in the manuscript, but the text is written continuously at those points, and the ajzaʾ are not marked or ornamented in any way.

A. S. Yahuda, from whom CBL 1404 was purchased, dated it to the first hijrī century. Moritz, in the legends to his photographs, dated it to the second or third century, and Joseph Karabacek, in a highly critical review of Moritz's volume, insisted on the third century. In fact, there is no external evidence to support any date. Yahuda compared this Qurʾān to a manuscript from the mosque of ʿAmr ibn al-Šāṣ, now in the Dār al-Kutub in Cairo, 18953. Although the latter manuscript has often been mentioned, little of it has been published. In the anonymous catalogue of the Cairo collection issued in 1310/1893 it is listed as having 568 folios, all in "Kūfī," 340 written in an early hand with twelve lines to a side and the remainder written in 1246/1830 with eleven lines to a side. 72 According to a note at the end of the manuscript the latter folios were the work of Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Ṭanbūlī73 al-Shāfīʿī al-Azhari with the support of Muḥammad Ṭīl Pasha.74 From a close examination of Moritz's plates, it seems that the ornaments shown on plates 6–12 are of a markedly different character from those shown on plates 1–5.75 As for those on plates 1–5, it seems clear, even from the photographs, that some alterations have been made.76

The format of the text page in this Cairo manuscript is slightly horizontal, almost square, in contrast to that of CBL 1404. The script in the very small sample provided on plates 1–5 is clearly similar to that of group 2, but there are several variations, including a slight but noticeable slant to the right77 and at least one instance in which the terminal lām rests on the line (pl. 1, l. 3), though the more familiar terminal below the line also occurs. There are rosettes at the ends of five verses (pl. 1, l. 1) and quatrefoils in square frames at the ends of ten verses (l. 6), and it is clear that extra space was left for these ornaments. Despite the similarities noted by Yahuda, it thus seems that differences in format, paleography, organization of text ornament, and so on preclude the assignment of Cairo 18953 to the same group as CBL 1404.

On the other hand, among a large number of early Qurʾān fragments included in the cache of manuscripts discovered by Paolo Costa under the roof of the Great Mosque of Sānʿāʾ in 1973 there is at least one that does seem to belong to group 2.78 These manuscripts are currently undergoing study and preservation by a team of German and Austrian scholars and conservators, but so far only small and tantalizing samples have been published.79 The most widely discussed fragment is 20–33,1 a group of twenty-five parchment folios that include a splendid double-page frontispiece with architectural paintings, as well as an ornamental closing to the entire Qurʾān, among the very rare extant survivals of this kind.80 In a recent study of this manuscript H.-C. von Bothmer ascribed the paintings and illuminations to Umayyad Damascus.81 Although his arguments will be discussed in detail in Part II of this article, it should be emphasized here that the hoard from the Sānʿāʾ mosque included materials from a variety of periods, including nineteenth-century printed books,82 that there appears to be no wāqf notice or other indication of a date in the manuscript itself; and that the presumption of an Umayyad attribution seems to have
Writing the Word of God

...sharply limited the range of comparative materials taken into consideration. As the author hopes to demonstrate, there are parallels suggesting a date later than the Umayyad period. On the other hand, judging by the small segments of the text itself that have been illustrated, the fine paleography, with slightly thinner connecting lines, a squat alif; and closely spaced lines; the multiple strokes at the ends of āyāt; and the uninscribed polychrome ornamental bands after sūrāh, belong to group 2. The ornaments marking five and ten verses were apparently added to the manuscript sometime after it was completed. There is at present no external evidence for dating the manuscripts of group 2.

A Note on Vocalization

The manuscripts in both groups 1 and 2, like most “Kufic” Qur’āns, are only partly vocalized, according to a simple system that differs from the one currently in use. The prevailing practice was to use large red dots: One dot above the letter (or to the side near the top of a tall letter) indicated fathāh, one dot below the letter a kasrāh, and one dot following the letter a dammāh. Two dots in any of these positions indicated a tāʾānīn. Other vocalizations—hamzah, maddāh, tashdīd, sukūn—were not indicated in this system.

Abbott cited sources to the effect that these other vocalizations were often indicated by marks of different colors, a statement that seems to be borne out by some later manuscripts. The dots of other colors (usually green) found in some “Kufic” Qur’āns do not seem to fit this pattern, however. They were applied according to the same principles as the red ones, which they appear to supplement and even “correct.” For example, the following instances of supplemental dots have been drawn from the Bodleian fragment of the type manuscript for group 1 (Marsh 178):

XXXVIII:57 wa-ghassāqun; no red dots; a green dot placed above sin, indicating a fathāh
XXXVIII:58 wa-ākhārū; a red dot indicating final dammāh; a green dot to top left of alif, indicating fathāh
XXXVIII:83 al-mukhlāṣina; a red dot indicating kasrāh on sād; a green dot to top left of lām, indicating fathāh
XXXVIII:84 fa-ʔaqqū; a red dot indicating fathāh on ḥā; a green dot after qāf, indicating dammāh
XXXIX:6 sulumātún; no red dots; a green dot after lām, indicating dammāh

Although in two of these instances green dots are associated with doubled letters, their positions are not the same; it is therefore unlikely that they are meant as tashdīdūs, especially as green dots appear in similar positions beside letters where there is no question of doubling. Similarly, one green dot occurs in a context where it might indicate a maddāh, but others are positioned in the same way next to letters where no maddāh could occur. Nor would hamzah or sukūn be appropriate where many of the green dots appear. On the other hand, their placement conforms precisely to the correct vocalization established for the red system. The two colors are thus clearly applied according to identical principles.

This point is of particular importance, for it makes it possible to conclude that, when green dots appear on letters already marked by red dots, corrections are intended. In XXXVIII:41 bi-nuṣibin, for example, the red dot has been placed after the nūn, indicating a dammah, which is correct according to the Cairo edition; a green dot has, however, been added above the nūn, changing the reading to bi-ṇaṣibin. In XXXVIII:23 tisʿun wa-tisʿūnāh the red dots are beneath the two tāʾs, correctly indicating kasrāh; green dots have, however, been added above the same two letters, changing the reading to tāʾun wa-tasʿūnāh.

At times a sort of “dialogue” seems to have been conducted between the adherents of variant readings. For example, in XXXIII:30 (CBL 1407; Fig. 11, l. 2), the original scribe wrote yudāʾīf in a defective spelling without alif but with two strokes under the yāʾ in the brown ink of the text and a red dot above ʿayn to indicate fathāh; this reading conforms to that in the Cairo edition. Subsequently, in green, the yāʾ was corrected to nūn, alif was added after dād, and a dot was placed below ʿayn, converting the reading to nuḏāʾif. Later still, the yāʾ was restored with the addition of two red strokes below the original brown ones.

Most of these changes were made as additions, with no attempt to erase or cross out earlier vocalizations or diacritical marks. Perhaps the most common alteration in this manuscript, as well as in several others examined, is the inexplicable emendation of the kasrāh correctly marking genitive endings to dammāh, which occurs in a variety of words but especially frequently in words like alayhi and fihi, thus altering them to alayhu, fihu, and the like (e.g., Marsh 178, XXXVIII:31, XXXIX:19).

The author does not have the training necessary to evaluate or interpret these indications, but it seems worthwhile to call attention to them. The manuscripts in question probably belong to the period when variant readings of the text proliferated, before the reforms of Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324/936) in the early fourth/tenth century, which led to adoption of the "seven canonical readings," but the period of the green additions is unclear. They may represent an early phase in the development toward more comprehensive and
systematic presentation of alternative readings, as exemplified in some later manuscripts.92

The Professional Milieu

Investigations up to this point have established a series of consistent paleographic and other features that distinguish the manuscripts of groups 1 and 2; these features are summarized in Table 1. Many of these criteria have been recognized in the past, singly or severally, but the interrelations among them have not previously been emphasized. Obviously the two limited groups defined here, though they can surely be expanded through further study, encompass only a tiny proportion of the extant manuscripts of “Kufic” Qurān. Because of clear-cut differences on several dimensions, however, it has seemed useful to try to locate the two groups more precisely in both place and time than has previously been possible. Once that task has been accomplished with some degree of success, it should be easier to classify manuscripts that share some but not all of the features of the type groups. In this respect it is already clear that, paleographically, group 2 has far more extensive and more varied connections among other Qurān manuscripts than does group 1.93 Furthermore, it may become possible to assess patterns of cross-fertilization among extant manuscripts that share features of both. The very absence of such common features in the type groups, however, clearly suggests two separate traditions of copying the Qurān.

As far as the author is aware, only one text other than the Qurān was written in a script that fits into the general category of “Kufic.” It is a fragmentary genealogical work that has not yet been conclusively identified.94 Its uniqueness is sufficient evidence that the general style of script known as “Kufic” was specifically a Qurānic one. The normally accepted view has been that for copying the Qurān this script was superseded by the type known as “Persian Kufic” or “broken Kufic,” which developed from it probably some time in the fourth/tenth century.95 The earliest dated Qurān codex in “broken Kufic”96 is that copied on paper by ʿAlī b. Shāhīd al-Rāzī al-Bayyīf (sic) in 361/972.97 “Broken Kufic” was not specific to the Qurān, however. Indeed, fifteen years later, in 376/986, the same scribe copied a secular text, Kitāb akhbār al-nahwiyīn al-baymīyīn by Abū l-Safīd al-Hasan al-Sīrāfī (ca. 290–368/905–79),98 it is written in a combination of “broken Kufic” and cursive script. An autograph manuscript of al-Nißārī’s Mawāqif dated 349/955–56, in the collection of The Chester Beatty Library, appears to be the earliest known Islamic secular work written in “broken Kufic” script.99 Although the history and development of this script have yet to be studied in detail, it is clear that it was in use for various purposes well before it was adopted for copying the Qurān.100

In this connection, it is useful to review again some of the literature that has been brought to bear on discussions of Qurānic script. Ibn Durūstūyah, an ʿAbbasīd court secretary of the fourth/tenth century,101 expressly exempted the copying of the Qurān from the principles of orthography and writing that he set forth in his Kitāb al-kuttāb. Indeed, he noted that letters of the alphabet were given different shapes in the scripts used by copyists of maṣūḥīf, other copyists (al-warrāqūn), and secretaries (al-kuttāb).102 Even had he not done so, it would have been instantly clear from a survey of his text that the prescribed principles differ sharply in many respects from those extrapolated from the script of “Kufic” Qurān themselves.

Rather than submitting Ibn Durūstūyah’s entire text to close analysis, it seems sufficient to select his instructions for the treatment of terminal ʿay, a letter that has been singled out here because of its variability in early Qurānic script. Ibn Durūstūyah particularly focused on situations in which it is preferable to turn the tail of terminal ʿay back, to the right (al-radd, “return”), and those in which it is preferable to write it with a forward curve, to the left (al-ṭarīq, “curve”).103 Briefly, the tail of this letter must be extended forward after another letter with the same terminus and after ḥāʾ, ʿayn, or kāf; when two successive words end in ʿay, one of them must extend forward. Conversely, after initial fāʾ/qāf it is preferable to turn the tail back, and the same is true after madādah (except in certain instances in rhyme). After letters like dāʾ/dhāʾ and alif or when preceded by connecting letters the tail of ʿay can be turned in either direction, so long as there is no “obstacle” (presumably an adjacent descender). At any rate, the turned-back ʿay should not be so long that it extends beyond (the letter group to which it belongs). That the violation of this last principle is one of the defining characteristics of the earliest Qurānic scripts is abundantly clear, however, both from the discussion here and from examination of the manuscripts. The forward extension to which Ibn Durūstūyah refers does not, strictly speaking, occur in “Kufic” script at all, but, if it is equated with the tail in the form of terminal nūn or dāʾ/dhāʾ, then it is not difficult to find instances of initial fāʾ and qāf followed by terminal ʿay in these forms (e.g., Fig. 7, II. 1, 5) and of the apparently more egregious turning back of the tail after ḥāʾ (e.g., Fig. 10, I. 2, yūḥāʾ).

Ibn Durūstūyah included copyists of the Qurān among the “ulamāʾ, which is also confirmed by the manuscripts themselves. In group 1 the division into thirty ajzāʾ, to facilitate the reading of the entire Qurān in one lunar month, and such liturgical aids as the marking of the
**Table 1. Distinguishing Features of Two Groups of “Kufic” Qurʾān Manuscripts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>group 1</strong></th>
<th><strong>group 2</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>horizontal format</td>
<td>vertical format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relatively small format</td>
<td>large format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divided into ʿajzāʾ</td>
<td>not divided into ʿajzāʾ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>illuminated ʿarak openings in gold, sepia, and dark brown (occasionally with the addition of green), with titles in gold with reserved contours</td>
<td>polychrome ornamental ʿarah endings without gold and with no titles; some gold in frontispieces and borders of opening pages of Qurʾān (one surviving example)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liturgical divisions and verse groups marked</td>
<td>liturgical divisions and verse groups not marked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>odd number of lines per page</td>
<td>even numbers of lines per page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fairly wide line spacing and taller vertical letters</td>
<td>tighter line spacing and squatter vertical letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generally uniform stroke for letter bodies and connecting lines</td>
<td>base-line stroke slightly thinner than stroke for letter bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tail of qāf in form of small ʿāl/akhāl</td>
<td>tail of qāf sickle-shaped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿay with any of three tails</td>
<td>ʿay with either of two tails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upper stroke of ǧī/m/kāʾ/khāʾ curved; preceding connected letters always raised on secondary base line</td>
<td>upper stroke of ǧī/m/kāʾ/khāʾ straight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sajdās, are evidence that these manuscripts were intended for use in mosques. Perhaps also the inclusion of the numbers of verses in the sūrah headings was primarily for the convenience of members of the ṣulṭān, who would have been abreast of the alternative numbering systems current at the time. The manuscripts of group 2, though they lack all these features, are of a monumental size implying that they were intended to be set on large kūrās, probably in mosques; the frontispieces of Sānʿāʾ 25–33.1, which contain actual representations of mosques, also suggest such a setting.

That the secretaries, on the other hand, were generally not even very devout is the conclusion to be drawn from another Kūtāb al-kutṭāb, composed by ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Baghdādī in the mid third/ninth century. In his description of the kinds of learning necessary for a good secretary the “Islamic sciences”—knowledge of the Qurʾān, traditions, religious law, and so on—are conspicuously absent. He also recounted an anecdote in which one of his predecessors, Sālim b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, secretary to the Umayyad caliph Hishām (105–25/724–43), presided over literary discussions in the mosque at Manbij. Dominique Sourdel has commented that when ʿAbdallāh himself was writing, a century later, “la caste des Sénètrées n’a plus aucun rapport alors avec les ṣayḥs.” In fact, ʿAbdallāh’s great contemporary al-Jāḥiẓ (ca. 160–255/776–869), in his Risālah fi ḏhāmm al-kīṭāb, attacked the secretaries for their pretension and ignorance of, even contempt for, religion: “The proof is that no one has ever seen a secretary make of the Qurʾān his bedtime reading or of its commentaries the basis of his wisdom or of religious law his specialization or of the knowledge of traditions the foundations of his science.”

The gulf that existed between Qurʾān copyists and secretaries appears to be confirmed by other evidence as well. ʿAlī ibn Khalaf, a secretary in the ḍwān under the late Fāṭimids whose Mawād al-bayān is known only through citations by al-Qālqashandī, commented that, though copyists of the Qurʾān and the warrāqān customarily broke words at the ends of lines, the competent scribe would plan his work so that such breaks were unnecessary. Somewhat earlier Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (act. Baghdad late fourth/tenth century), a student of Ibn Abī Dāʾūd, claimed that brown ink was never used by good scribes; brown ink was clearly preferred, however, by the copyists of “Kufic” Qurʾāns. This evidence bears out Ibn Durustūyah’s distinction among the different types of scribes; in fact, it is possible to discern in the cited comments by secretaries, with their different professional interests and broader intellectual connections, an underlying disdain for the practices of Qurʾān copyists. As it was the secretaries who composed the manuals on good writing that survive, it is clear that their prescriptions can provide only oblique, and largely negative, evidence related to early Qurʾānic scripts.

**Chronological Considerations**

Even those who copied the Qurʾān professionally worked in two quite different milieus: Those who wrote in “Kufic” were religious scholars who specialized in...
copying the sacred text on parchment; those who wrote in “broken Kufic” on paper served a variety of patrons, for whom they copied a broad range of texts. Although “broken Kufic” was not fully developed until the fourth/tenth century, there is at present no convincing evidence that these two groups of copyists worked in direct chronological succession. Ḥāli ibn Khalaf’s observation in the late Fāṭimid period that Qurʾān copyists were still breaking words at the ends of lines, a practice found only in the earliest dated examples of “broken Kufic,” suggests that “Kufic” Qurʾāns may have continued to be written for some time after the turn of the fifth/eleventh century, which has been considered the terminus ante quem for their production. This possibility has further implications for the internal chronology of the “Kufic” manuscripts themselves. It must be reiterated that no external evidence so far known—no colophon, waqf notice, or other datable element—permits a definitive attribution of any extant Qurʾān manuscript or group to a period earlier than the third/ninth century. Chronological conclusions must thus be based, at least partly, on formal analyses of script and ornament. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, a three-phase sequence of development from sūrah divisions without ornaments to full-fledged headings with sūrah titles has long been assumed; if that assumption is valid, then the manuscripts of group 2 must be considered to belong to the phase preceding that of group 1.

In assessing the validity of this simple model, one detail of the manuscripts in group 1 seems particularly significant. Each sūrah heading includes, along with the title, the number of verses in the sūrah, written in words but in a sequence—hundreds, tens, and units—that is contrary to standard Arabic usage (see Fig. 5, 1. 5 siṭṭān wa ḏanā` ʿayy), as codified by the grammarians who dominated Muslim intellectual circles in the third/fourth/ninth–tenth centuries and as reflected in the earliest known inscriptions and documents of the Islamic period. This feature suggested to Abbott a “ritualistic or sacred mode of expression which is conservative and often archaic.” As she pointed out, numbers were sometimes expressed in this way in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry and were common in other Semitic languages spoken in the areas where Arabic developed, but in the Islamic period such numbers occurred only in divisions of the Qurʾān. C. F. Beckingham explored the question in greater depth, demonstrating that numbers were indeed typically written in this fashion in most Semitic languages; he concluded that the custom of writing the units after the tens

occurs not only in languages which are philologically very close to Arabic, but in at least three which were at one time or another spoken in some part of Arabia, Sabaean, Nabataean and Ethiopic. It would not be surprising to find that it occurred in Arabic also at a time when the rules of grammar had not been formulated or any attempt made to standardize the usages of the language. . . . (It is in the verse-counts of the Qurʾān and as a poetic licence that the practice in question survives in classical Arabic.\(^{115}\)

In view of the linguistic evidence, the central question perhaps ought to be why the archaic sequence of writing numbers was reversed in the early Islamic period.\(^{114}\) For the purposes of this study, however, the important point is that the practice of including verse counts in archaic form in sūrah headings must have been introduced at a time and place where this tradition of enumeration had remained in continuous use; it is unlikely that it had died out and was then revived only after the opposite system had become firmly established, as it had done in the first decades of the Islamic period. Furthermore, it would have had to survive as a written tradition, for there is no evidence that verse counts, or even the titles of sūrahs, have ever been included in the oral recitation of the Qurʾān. But, if divisions with written verse counts were in use almost from the beginning of the Islamic period,\(^{115}\) then there was no substantial interval in which two successive earlier phases without written sūrah divisions would fit. The inevitable conclusion is that the accepted model does not provide a viable chronological framework for “Kufic” Qurʾān manuscripts.

Although at first this negative conclusion may appear to represent a step backward in the study of these puzzling manuscripts, in fact it helps to clear the way for new approaches. It may now be possible to construct more firmly grounded criteria for determining the origins of particular manuscripts, criteria that must certainly include paleographic and codicological features, as well as details of ornament. As for groups 1 and 2 in particular, it has already been suggested that they represent two distinct traditions of copying the Qurʾān; their clear-cut differences on a number of dimensions are more consonant with production in two geographical centers, rather than in two successive phases of a single line of development.

Furthermore, some significant geographical indicators can be drawn from the evidence presented up to this point. Among the criteria that distinguish group 1, several are related to the written text itself and its divisions (see Table 1). In the first three centuries of Islam the main arenas for discussion and elaboration of aspects of the Qurʾānic tradition, particularly as related to the written text, were Iraq and the Hījāz. The ajzāʾ, for example, were introduced by al-Hajjāj while he was governor of Iraq; although they seem to have found some limited acceptance there, they apparently did not become widespread until much later.\(^{116}\) Variant readings of the Qurʾānic text, as represented by the
different systems of colored dots, proliferated until the reforms of Ibn Mujahid at Baghdad. Furthermore, of the seven canonical readings adopted as part of those reforms four had originated in Iraq, two in the Hijaz, and one in Damascus; of the “three after the seven” and the “four after the ten” five were developed in Iraq, two in the Hijaz.\textsuperscript{117} Finally, there is the problem of the old Semitic form in which the verse counts of group 1 are given. Although it has not yet been possible to determine where this tradition remained vital, there are indications that the correct numbers of verses were an object of lively interest and inspired a considerable literature, again particularly in Iraq and the Hijaz. Specifically, Ibn al-Nadim provided a substantial list of works on the “numbers” of Qur\'anic verses by writers from al-Madina, al-Kufah, and al-Basrah, as well as three by Syrians.\textsuperscript{118} Such textual indications are not in themselves conclusive, but they do strongly suggest that group 1, in which all these features can be found, belongs to a tradition that was evolving in Iraq or al-Madina. In 1941 Abbott criticized Arthur Jeffery for being “unable to view this problem of Koranic scripts on its own merits and apart from the parallel problem of Koranic texts,”\textsuperscript{119} but with the passage of time scholars have come to recognize, on the contrary, that isolating one aspect of a body of material from its context is methodologically unsound. In fact, when so many liturgical features associated with a particular area are found in a particular subcategory of manuscripts, it is impossible to escape the hypothesis that those manuscripts were written in the same area. The suggestion that group 1 was produced in the Hijaz or Iraq—the latter, as a center of both art and patronage, is the more probable—thus demands further investigation. Group 2, on the other hand, appears to represent a “school” of copyists who did not concern themselves with the same set of textual and liturgical issues.

A final attempt at identifying more precisely the centers where these separate traditions flourished must await the analysis of ornament to be presented in Part II of this article, but two important conclusions have already emerged. First, the traditional chronological model for “Kufic” Qur\'an manuscripts, based on a presumed three-phase evolution in the organization of ornament, must be discarded, and approximate dates for individual manuscripts must be established according to a broad array of criteria: paleographic, codicological, textual, and ornamental. Second, even the very limited comments offered here on such matters as vocalization and the writing of numbers are sufficient to reveal that, apart from description and commentary in Arabic sources, early manuscripts themselves constitute a body of material that, though barely exploited, is extremely promising as evidence for the early history of the Qur\'an as a written text.
Notes

I wish to thank the trustees of The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, and Wilfred Lockwood, Librarian, for permission to study and photograph the splendid collection of Qur'ān manuscripts in their care; the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, which supported my research in Dublin for three years; and Dr. Patricia Donlon, Judith Kolbas, Dr. Lutz Richter-Bernburg, Dr. P. O. Skjærvø, and Dr. Richard N. Verdery, whose assistance at many points cannot be properly acknowledged here but is warmly appreciated.


7. In fact, in Abbott's analysis the crucial difference between Hijāzī and Kūfic script seems to have been that Kūfic was written vertically rather than with a slant. For a major critique of her study and her reply, see A. Jefferies, Review of *The Rise of the North Arabic Script...*. 8. and Abbott, "Arabic Paleography," *Ars Islamica*, v. 8, 1941, esp. pp. 73–79. See also Déroche, "Écritures," pp. 213–17.


9. The rationale for this approach has been outlined by Sourdell-Thomine, "Khatt," pp. 1117–18, who has also emphasized the deficiencies of relying exclusively on specialized texts about writing. A more explicit statement of the method can be found in Déroche, "Écritures," pp. 225–24.


13. Initial and medial kāf is identical in form to dāl/dhāl, and it is possible for the reader to confuse these letters. In a given manuscript, however, though dāl/dhāl may frequently be rather extended and kāf contracted, when the two appear in close proximity, kāf is almost always noticeably wider (e.g., Fig. 12, ll. 1–4).

14. In this connection, 'Alī ibn Khāfī remarked that breaking words between lines (he was referring to the division of words between letter groups) was found mainly in Qur'āns and in the work of "copyists" (fi maṣāhq al-asrāf wa-khuṣṣ al-wurāfān), as a result of insufficient space at the ends of lines. He recommended that the good "scribe" (kāhā) apply his "eye" to drawing out letters earlier in the line to avoid the necessity for such divisions at the end (wa min hūna āḥāf al-kāhāfia‘l-maṣār fi dhālik bi'rjām wa‘l-maṣāq min hini sharahi‘ fi kitābati‘ awwal al-asrāf ‘alā mā taqaddam; al-Qalqashandi, *Subh*, v. 3, p. 147).

15. Déroche, *Catalogue*, p. 21, argued that "la facilité avec laquelle les scribes pouvaient allonger les ligatures de l'écriture" explains the relative rarity of this solution. He also assumed that the marker served as a kind of hyphen in words that had to be separated between lines. This observation seems incorrect in relation to some manuscripts, however. In 1410 in The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, for example, the marker occurs at the end of nearly all notably short lines; in some but not all instances words are broken at these points (see also Figs. 19, l. 11; 20, l. 18; and 21, l. 9). In the same manuscript...
many words broken at the ends of lines are not marked in this way, even though the lines fall slightly short. It seems that the markers' main function was visual: to fill out exceptionally short lines, regardless of sense.


17. The term "Kufic" was used by A. J. Arberry in *The Koran Illuminated: A Handbook of the Korans in the Chester Beatty Library*, Dublin, 1967, pp. xvi–xviii, 3–9. CBL 1405 consists of three folios from the famous "blue" Qur'an; one of these folios shows rulings, as light lines against the dark surface of the parchment, but that folio is tinted a darker, more opaque blue than the other two and may have been restored at some point.

18. Déroche, *Catalogue*, p. 16, noted the same characteristic; see also Déroche, "Collections," p. 146.


21. For references, see Sourdol-Thomine, "Khâṭît," p. 1117. Grohmann has used a variant of this approach in constructing comparative charts, drawn from groups of inscriptions and designed to demonstrate ornamental development in such particular features as hastae and rounded letters from the 'Abbâsid period onward; see *Arabische Paläographie*, v. 2, pp. 93–188 *passim*.


23. The letter body can be defined as an irreducible minimum form that remains unchanged whatever the position in the word and whatever appendages and ornamentation are added. See Volov, "Plaited Kufic," p. 109.

24. Déroche, *Catalogue*, p. 17, has noted this connection. That such echoing of forms was integral to this style of script is clear from manuscripts in which terminal nûn has a completely rounded tail, which is echoed in terminal  sûn/shân and şâd/fâd, see, for example, 1401 in The Chester Beatty Library (Fig. 14).

25. Variations in this letter have sometimes been used to define scripts; see especially the discussion of Abbott's definition of Hijâzî and Kufic scripts in n. 6 above. Scope for such variations is, however, quite limited: The  a’dâf is never altered (except in âm-âlîf, which is more appropriately treated as a separate entity), regardless of position. It thus seems particularly ill suited to a diagnostic function.

26. There should be no confusion between these proportions and the fractional names of scripts like thulûth, thulūḥayn, and niṣṭa. According to one of al-Qalqashandî’s sources, Şuhb, v. 3, p. 48, the latter were defined by the width of the stroke in relation to that of the  sûn sûr script, which was drawn with a pen (qalam) twenty-four horse hairs wide (ṣâh); the stroke for thulûth would thus be eight hairs wide and so on. See Abbott, *Rûq*, p. 52.

27. There may have been systematic principles determining these variations, but, as they do not seem useful in distinguishing manuscript groups, they will not be explored here.

28. *Catalogue*, pp. 88–89, no. 76; pp. 52–53. The author is grateful to Dr. Déroche for information on the Istanbul fragments and to Dr. Stig Rasmussen for information on those in Copenhagen.

29. The connection between the Oxford and Dublin fragments was initially remarked by D. S. Rice in unpublished notes for a projected catalogue of the Qur'ân manuscripts in The Chester Beatty Library, which was unfortunately never completed. The author is grateful to Dr. David James for permission to photocopy his copy of these notes; the original is in the L. A. Mayer Memorial Institute for Islamic Art in Jerusalem. Marsh 178 is part of a gift of eastern manuscripts made to the library by Narcissus Marsh, Archbishop of Armagh, who died in 1713. It was first catalogued by J. Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium... Catalo...*, Oxford, 1877, pt. 1, "Codices Manuscripti Arabici," p. 40, no. XVI; a sample of paleography from the manuscript was published by A. Nicoll in *Bibliothecae Bodleianae Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium...*, Oxford, 1835, pp. 3, v. 2, pl. I top, but, as it consisted of six lines copied from two folios, it had not previously been recognized that this manuscript has only five lines to the page and is in fact part of the Qur'ân under discussion. The original hand copy reproduced by Nicoll is bound with the manuscript.

30. The author wishes to express sincere thanks to Dr. Klaus Brisch and Dr. Elke Niewohner for generously providing a complete set of photographs of the Berlin fragment and to Dr. Jens Kröger for additional information; to Dr. Glenn Lowry and James Smith for making the Freer folios available for examination and to Dr. Esin Atil for assistance in obtaining a photograph of folio ma; and to Dr. Niewohner for information and references on the Wolfenbüttel manuscript.

31. W. Piper, *Die Welt der Araber in Büchern einer alten Bibliothek*, Braunschweig, 1963, p. 24, no. 1. Piper has compared this fragment with a single page of five lines published by Kopp, *Bilder*, p. 288. The script is indeed very similar. The illustrated text passage is from Sûrah L:4–6, which is not otherwise extant in CBL 1407 et al. The problem of identification is complicated, however, by the fact that, according to Kopp, p. 287, the letters and lines were illustrated in their original size; if that is correct, then the text page is too small to have been part of the type manuscript. Unfortunately, Kopp gave no indication of where he had seen the fragment, though it seems to have been in a German collection.

32. Golius mentioned, in *Arabiae Linguae Tyrocinium, id est, Thomas Empenis Grammatica Arabica*, Leiden, 1556, p. 185, two fragments of Qur‘âns written in "very old characters" on parchment that belonged to him; cf. J. H. Houttinger, *Promtuarium; sive, Bibliotheca Orientalis: Catalogum, sive, Centurias aliquot, tam Authorum, quam Librorum Hebraiorum, Syriarum, Arabicorum, Aegyptiorum, Aethiopiorum, etc.*, Heidelberg, 1658, pp. 105–6. Marsh is known to have purchased,
through Edward Bernard, a large portion of Golius' collection, which was sold at auction in 1696, more than twenty-five years after the Dutch scholar's death in 1667; see M. McCarthy, All Graduates and Gentlemen: Marsh's Library, Dublin, 1980, pp. 25, 47, 49; cf. T. Houtsma, Uit de oosterse Correspondentie van Th. Erpenius, Jac. Golius en Lev. Warner: Een Bijdrage tot de Geschiedenis van de Beoefening der oosterse Letteren in Nederland, Amsterdam, 1887, pp. 54–55. In the auction catalogue, Catalogus Insignium in omni facultate, linguistique, Arabicæ, Persica, Turkica, Chinseni &c. Librorum M.SS. quos Doctissimus Clarisimississe Vir D. Jacobus Golius . . . Quorum auctio habebitur in Aedibus Johannis du Vivix, Bibliopola . . . Leiden, 1696, one of two "Küfic" Qur'āns listed, no. 1 on p. 23, is described in Arabic as "a fragment of the Qur'ān in large Küfic script" on parchment and in Latin as "Fragmentum Corani litteris, Coufi dictis, conscriptum sub membrana." The author is grateful to Dr. J.J. Witkam for copies of this catalogue and an earlier inventory of Golius' collection and for information that an auctioneer's note on March 178, "N. 1 Inc. qto.," identifies it with this entry in the sale catalogue.

33. That such "improvementa" have been perpetrated on early Qur'ān manuscripts is clear from examples like 45.16 in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. This single folio contains thirteen lines of dark brown ink per page, the text measuring 18.8–19.3 x 29–30.05 cm.; the text is XII:104–XXII:2. The parchment has been tinted a dark blue, now quite faded, with rather fuzzy contour paneling in reserve around the letters. In 1984 Dr. Ati suggested that the tint might be a modern addition. Subsequently, it was possible to identify this folio with a fragment of twenty folios in The Chester Beatty Library, 1401 (see Fig. 14), which contains XIII:34–41, XV:29–49, XVI:14–26, 61–75, 81–90, XVI:29–99, and XVIII:54–69, 89–110. The dimensions of the text page are identical, as are the distinctive ribbon-like terminals, the triple brown strokes following verses, and the geometric ornaments in four colors (red, green, ochre, brown) following each tenth verse. The Dublin folios, however, have not been tinted and thus lack the concomitant contouring around the letters. Indeed, there is still another folio from this manuscript in the Freer collection, 29.72, containing X:24–31, which is also tinted. Furthermore, the script on the tinted side of 45.16 has been retraced incorrectly in several places (all terminal mima redrawn as wāw and the words ḥāmīn ḥammālah wa ṣaḥāra wa mā ḥum bi-sukāra changed into nonsensical 'ālimin ḥammāhi auwr al-'ālmin sukāra wa al-hawā bi-sūkār), and letters can clearly be seen to have been erased (see illustration in Aul, Art of the Arab World, Washington, D.C., 1975, pp. 16–17). These errors and alterations seem to reflect a modern reworking for the market rather than a pious restoration from an earlier date.

34. Unfortunately, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions about the place from which the two fragments that belonged to Golius were brought to Europe. The Copenhagen fragments cannot be traced back earlier than 1780, when Adler, Description, p. 22, mentioned them; cf. Codices Orientales Bibliothecae Regiae Hafniensis jussu et auspiciis regis enumerati et descripti: Pars altera, Codices Hebraicos et Arabicos Continens, Copenhagen, 1851, pp. iii, 42–43. The seven leaves in Golius were brought to Europe by H. Moor, Catalogus Librorum tam manu manuscriptorum quam impressorum qui jussu Divi Augusti Duci Saxo-Gothani a Beato Seetzenio in Oriente Emi in Bibliotheca Gotthana asservantur Sumpibus Divi Frederici, Ducis Saxo-Gothani, v. 1, Gotha, 1825, pp. iii, and Mooeller, Paläographische Beiträge aus den Herzoglichen Sammlungen in Gotha, v. 1, Erfurt, 1844, pls. IX top, X bottom. It seems no longer possible to match Mooeller's descriptions with Seetzen's own numbers; cf. Seetzen, Verzeichniss der für die orientalische Sammlung in Gotha zu Domsach, Jerusalem usw. angekauften orientalischen Manuscripte und gedruckten Werke, Kunst- und Naturprodukte u.w., Leipzig, 1810, passim, esp. p. 30, no. 1490. The folios in Paris were collected by J. L. Asselin de Cherville in Egypt in the early nineteenth century and came into the Bibliothèque Nationale (then the Bibliothèque Royale) in 1835; M. de Slane, Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Manuscrits, Catalogue des manuscrits arabes, Paris, 1885–95, p. ii. CBI. 1407 was purchased from F. R. Martin after 1912. According to information supplied by Dr. Kröger, Berlin I.221 was acquired by gift in 1912; it had been part of the estate of Adalbert Freiherr von Lanna of Prague, who died in 1909. It is probable that both the Dublin and Berlin fragments had come from Istanbul. Not only do they belong to a juz′ of which the larger part is in the Aya Sofya collection, but also Martin is known to have sold a number of manuscripts that had been in Istanbul, including several other manuscripts in The Chester Beatty Library. For wry but generally undocumented comments on Martin's activities, see S. C. Welch, "Private Collectors and Islamic Arts of the Book," Treasures of Islam, London, 1985, p. 26; and G. D. Lowry, with S. Nemazee, A Jeweler's Eye: Islamic Arts of the Book from the Vever Collection, Washington, D.C., 1988, p. 31. No information on the origin of the Istanbul fragments themselves is available (Déroche, personal communication). The folios in Washington were purchased from the New York dealer Hagop Kevorkian in 1957.


36. That is, one of thirty equal divisions of the Qur′ān. Al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, Umayyad governor of Iraq in 75–95/694–714, was apparently the first to order that the Qur′ān be divided into equal parts, called qiyāt (sing. juz′). The earliest source for this information appears to be Abū Bakr Abdallāh ibn Abī Dāwūd Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (250–316/844–929), Kūbā al-muṣaffah.
see Jeffery, ed., Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an: The Old Codices, Leiden, 1957, pp. 119–20. Thirtieths, however, are not among the fractional divisions mentioned by him. In the fifth/eleventh century al-Ghazālī, Ibhā' uṯūm al-dīn, v. 1, Cairo, n.d., p. 277, reported that al-Ḫajāj had brought together a group of Qur'ān reciters to count the words and letters of the Qur'ān in order to divide it into thirty āqād of equal size and to determine other fractional divisions. The author knows of no earlier version of this report. That division into thirtieths was already practiced in the second/third/eighth–ninth centuries is confirmed, however, by Ibn al-Nadrīn's mention of a work entitled Klāb āqād thalāthah by Abū Bakr Ibn ʿAyāsh (d. 192/808). Fihrist, ed. G. Flügel, v. 1, Leipzig, 1871, p. 36; Dodge, Fihrist, v. 1, p. 80; v. 2, p. 970.

37. In the Cairo edition the twenty-first juz' begins with Strah XXIX:46 and ends with XXXIII:30. The copyist of the manuscript followed a different division of āqād, however, in which juz' 21 begins with XXIX:44. Curiously, no early source seems to specify the divisions between thirtieths, but clearly, like the other divisions described by Ibn Abī Dāwūd's sources, they varied within a narrow range; Jeffery, Materials, pp. 121–22, 125–30. Both pages of illumination at the end of juz' 21 were published in Martin, The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey from the 9th to the 18th Century, v. 2, London, 1912, pl. 233, bottom left and right; one of the illuminated opening pages (CBL 1407, f. 1a) appeared in Martin, A History of Oriental Carpets before 1800, v. 1, Vienna, 1908, p. 10, fig. 11. In this article "a" refers to the side of the folio read first, that is, the verso, and "b" to the other side, the recto.

38. Four from CBL 1407, twenty-two from Berlin I.2211, and sixty-seven from Aya Sofya 23 in Istanbul.


40. The practice of measuring the distance between the bases of the first and last lines on each page, introduced by Deroche (Catalogue, pp. 16, 19), has been followed here. It should be emphasized, however, that the dimensions are not uniform either vertically or horizontally. Ranges of variation have therefore been given, though they may not encompass the possible extremes within each manuscript.

41. These dots have a bronze tone that may have resulted from mixing green with brown ink. Without technical analysis it is impossible to determine the cause of this variation, but it is not unique to this Qur'ān.

42. They are XVI (Paris), XXIV (Copenhagen XL [5]), XXX (Berlin), XXXI (Aya Sofya), XXXII (Dublin), XXXIII (Berlin), XXXIX (Oxford), LIV (Paris), XCIII (Paris).

43. The exceptions are Copenhagen XL (5), f. 18b (see Fig. 5), and Paris ff. 61a and 141a (see Deroche, Manuscrip), p. 88, where only marginal palmettes occur.

44. Visual examination suggests that the sepia color was obtained by diluting the dark brown ink used for the text, which was almost certainly made from gall nuts; without analysis, however, this impression cannot be confirmed. See M. Zerdou Bat-Yehouda, Les encre noires au Moyen Age (jusqu'à 1600), Paris, 1983, pp. 123–51, esp. p. 132; Grohmman, Arabische Paläographie, v. 1, pp. 128–29; Deroche, Catalogue, p. 20.


46. Jeffery, Materials, pp. 119–22, 127. The sevenths appear not to have been indicated in this manuscript, but very few of the possible alternative passages mentioned by Ibn Abī Dāwūd are preserved in the extant portions of the text.

47. Normally the heading and the panel of decoration framing it take the equivalent of two lines of text, which would have left room for only three lines on this page.

48. This fragment consists of three folios containing XXII:77–78, the end of juz' 17, with accompanying illuminations, which were published by Martin in Miniature Painting, v. 1, pl. 233a; see also Arberry, Koran, pl. 20. It was purchased from Martin sometime after 1912; cf. n. 34 above.

49. It consists of twenty-one folios containing the illumination at the beginning of juz' 20 and XXVII:57–85, XXVII:28–XXIX:11. In the Cairo edition juz' 20 begins with XXVII:58. This fragment came to the library from the collection of R. Meyer Riefstahl in 1926. Its connection with CBL 1421 was first noted by D. S. Rice, The Unique Ibn al-Bawwāb Manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, 1955, p. 2, n. 7, though he seems to have been aware of only one folio.


54. Deroche, "Collections," p. 146, comments that gatherings of
ten sheets are most common in the old Qur'ān manuscripts of the Topkapi Sarayi collection, without, however, giving specific information on EH 16; cf. Karabacek, "Zur orientalischen Altertumskunde, VI. Ein Koranfragment des IX. Jahrhunderts aus dem Besitze des Selischuckenultans Kaikubad," Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, v. 184, no. 3, 1917, p. 11, in which he remarks that, "wie üblich," the gatherings consist of ten sheets.

55. EH 16, f. 39b, unpublished; TIM 47, f. 1a, Déroche, "Collections," pl. 1b; CBL 1421, f. 3b, Déroche, "Collections," pl. Va; A.398, al-Ush et al., Catalogue, fig. 127.


57. "Collections," pp. 151–53, 164–65, pls. IIb–IIIb. On the fragment TIM 990, f. 2r (pl. IIb), and a page from the Dār al-Kutub, Cairo, illustrated by Moritz, "Arabia," EI², pl. IV bottom (cf. p. 398), the wag notes at the top show obvious attempts to emulate the style of the Qur'ān, with elongated connecting lines, alif turned to the right at the bottom, and the pinpoint opening in waw the scribe was betrayed, however, by such anomalies as the form of the ḥa’ and the tiny proportions of mim in relation to other looped letters.

58. Déroche, "Collections," pp. 154–55, pl. IVa. The letter forms generally imitate those of "Kufic," especially terminal qa‘ and dād and the raising of connected letters before jī m in najm and masjid, which has, however, been clumsily handled; on the other hand, both horizontal and vertical tails occur on terminal mim, the dāl/dhāl is very small, hā is hollow, and the proportions are generally inconsistent, an indication that the scribe was attempting an unfamiliar hand.

59. See, for example, a copy of Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām’s Ghartb al-ḥadīth dated 252/866, in the library of the University of Leiden, M. J. de Goeje, "Beschreibung einer alten Handschrift von Abū ‘Obaid’s Garib al-ḥadījī," Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, v. 18, 1864, p. 781 and pl. facing p. 788; and a copy of the Gospels dated A.D. 897 in the library of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, A. S. Aitay, The Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai, Baltimore, 1955, p. 4, no. 72, and pl. VI. A partial inventory of the distinguishing features of this script includes relatively little spacing between letter groups, considerable variation in the thickness of strokes, diagonal or curving ascenders on tall letters, terminal alif with a small vertical point at the bottom, small proportions of dāl/dhāl, angular ligatures, and preceding letters usually joined to the base-line stroke of jī m/hā/kāf. Some of these features can be said also to characterize the Qur’ānic script known as "broken Kufic" or "Persian Kufic"; cf. Déroche’s discussion of "Kufic/naskhī," which he prefers to call "broken cursive," "Collections," pp. 158–60. It is the author’s belief, based on principles of page layout, spacing, relations among letters, variation in strokes, and so on, that "broken cursive" is a stylization of the particular third-/ninth-century cursive script outlined here and cannot be viewed as a direct development from "Kufic." A separate study of the progressive course of this stylization is in preparation.

60. CBL 1406, a single folio with a rectangular illuminated panel on one side, is probably from the ornamental closing of a juz‘. On the reverse is a library stamp with the tughrā of the Ottoman Sultan Bayezit II. The folio was purchased from Martin, who published a photograph in 1912; Miniature Painting, pl. 254 (cf. Arberry, Koran, pl. 13). The illuminated panel measures 2.6 x 13 cm., too small for it to have been part of the type manuscript. Arberry, p. 8, reported that the five folios of CBL 1422 include fragments of two manuscripts, one with six lines to a page, the other with fifteen. In fact, three manuscripts are represented: folio 1 (1422A) with six lines of text on each side, and folios 4–5 (1422C) with fifteen; folios 2–3, however, contain seven lines on a text page and thus constitute 1422B. In this fragment there is an ornamental band framing the opening to Sūrah XVIII, and the ends of verses are marked with six-petaled rosettes in gold with red and green dots. The larger rosettes after ten verses (no five-verse divisions fall in this fragment) and marking the sajdah at XVII:109 are in gold and dark blue, a color not previously noted in group 1; cf. D. James, Qu'rans and Bindings from The Chester Beatty Library: A Facsimile Exhibition, London, 1980, p. 18, no. 5. The text page measures 11.8–11.9 x 19.6–20.2 cm. It contains a passage from XVII:107–XVIII:2. A note in the modern binding says "May 50, 1938, Cairo," but it may apply only to 1422C. James has identified fragments in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Mūsāh-yi Ṭrān-i Bāstān, Tehran, 4289; and the Pārs Museum, Shiraz, as parts of the same manuscript as CBL 1422. Only two pages of the Tehran fragment appear to have been published: one, containing the heading of Sūrah LXXV, in Bayānt, Fīrūst, pl. 2, the other, containing the end of Sūrah VII and the heading for Sūrah VIII, in The Arts of Islam, London, 1976, p. 316, no. 499, and M. Lings, The Quranic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination, London, 1976, p. 18 and pl. V. Close examination of the photographs suggests, however, that, though the Tehran pages contain the equivalent of seven lines, they are not part of the same manuscript as CBL 1422B. The ornamental heading for Sūrah VIII, which includes green but not blue, is rather crude, with simple sawtoothed and crook-shaped leaves in reserve on a dark-brown ground and gilding that has been rather haphazardly applied. Furthermore, the letters are surrounded by a white contour with a heavy gold outline, which at one point cuts across the contour between letters, a feature that appears unique. The title and verse count for Sūrah LXV are in reserve and outlined with gold against an equally coarse ground. The verse endings are marked by pyramids of six disks. In CBL 1422B, on the other hand, the ornamentation is rather fine. In the sūrah heading the precisely drawn foliage is in gold against a dark-brown ground, with continuous reserve contouring of the gold script, unbroken by the gold contour line. The verse endings are marked by gold rosettes. The letter forms in the texts of the two manuscripts also differ. In 1422B the alif is slenderer, without the extreme thickening of the stroke at the curve that characterizes the Tehran pages, where the same tendency to blur letter forms by means of thickened strokes is visible in the nūn. Furthermore, the downward-curving stroke of initial sām/gayn and jī m/hā/kāf is joined to the base line in a tapering point, rather than the sharply defined blunt end characteristic of CBL 1422B. The script in the latter manuscript also has a slight forward slant that is absent from the Tehran Qur'ān, which seems, however, to have been copied by more than one hand. The Shiraz fragment to which James refers has apparently not been
published; that in Boston, though much finer than the Tehran pages, also does not appear to be from the same manuscript as CBL 1422B.

61. Déroche classified the Paris portion of the type manuscript in his group D 1, which contains a total of fifty-three fragmentary Qur'āns; Catalogue, pp. 84–97. Some of them will surely turn out to belong to group 1.


63. Moritz, ed., Arabic Palaeography: A Collection of Arabic Texts from the First Century of the Hijra till the Year 1000, Cairo, 1905, pls. 19–30, identified the Qur'ān only as from Fūṭah. Grohmann was apparently leaping to conclusions when he referred to the Qur'ān as from the "mosque" at Fūṭah: "Problems of Dating," p. 215. Manuscript 1404 was formerly numbered K.3 in the Chester Beatty collection. Acquisition records of this collection do not appear to be extant, and it is thus often impossible to determine when and where a given manuscript was purchased. In this instance, however, correspondence files at the Library contain some clues. A typed list of manuscripts purchased from Dr. A. S. Yahuda includes the following entry under the date March 21, 1928: "large Qur'an, vellum, Cufic, 178–180 leaves. Circa early 2nd cent. 20–25 headings, (like Omar Qura, Cairo). 9 leaves sent on appro. to Venice. Transaction, April 6th circa." In a letter from Yahuda to Beatty, written (partly in code) from Cairo on March 21, 1928, the manuscript is more fully described: "Am offered Cufic house [Qur'ān] second century measuring nearly your Mameluk house. Shall send Venice details and leaves. . . . It was a very hard task to get this Coran, as the owners belong to a five centuries old noble family and are not in great need of money. Anyhow they eventually consented to sell it and I think that it is a very happy occasion, the more so as Cufic Corans in this size and in such good condition are extremely rare and known only in three or four copies altogether. It contains almost two thirds of the Coran and is without any shade of doubt from early in the second century A.H. If not of the first century A.H. as the script, the size and the designs and colours of the headings of the suras are very similar to those of the Coran in the Cairo Museum found in the old mosque of Omar the conqueror of Egypt [the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-As in al-Fustat], dating from the end of the first century (about 725 A.D.). It has about 178 or 180 leaves of vellum; 110 leaves are in perfect condition, the ink of only a few pages has faded; 50 leaves are more damaged or faded, and from 5 to 10 leaves are patched on one side with thick paper. There are from 20 to 25 headings of suras of different designs, 5 of which are slightly rubbed or damaged. At first I thought that in some of them the colours had been renewed, but comparing them with the sura headings of the above-mentioned Omar Coran I realised that it was not so but that the colours are preserved in their original state. It is very remarkable indeed that, whereas the ink has faded away on many pages, the colours of the headings have not lost their brilliance. I must add that these colours are specially characteristic of the first two centuries and that it was only from the beginning of the third century that gold was used in the decoration of Corans. I think this description will be sufficient to give you a good idea of the whole Coran. Among the nine leaves you will find two which belong to the damaged leaves. You will also observe that the vellum is not uniformly thick; as a matter of fact many pages are even thinner than those sent to you. As to the binding, it is a wonderful specimen of the Mameluk time, with a flap and in very good condition." Yahuda was clearly estimating the numbers of pages and decorated "sura headings," which closely approximate those in CBL 1404; furthermore, although the condition of the manuscript is very much overstated, the information on the binding (see n. 64 below) and paper patching is substantially correct. Nor does any other manuscript in The Chester Beatty Library approach this description in any particular. Following this letter Yahuda sent several pressing telegrams, concluding with one received in London on April 4, 1928: "Amount received house cleared." On April 6, 1928, he wrote to Beatty as follows: "I succeeded in securing the large Cufic Coran for you. . . . It was a very hard job indeed to discover that Coran and still more to persuade the owners to part with it. Even after I had concluded the purchase and paid the price for it, I had great difficulty in getting it out of their hands. . . . the more you look at it, the more you will like it and realise that it is a fine specimen of a Cufic Coran, especially because it contains such a large portion of the Coran. It happens that Professor Moritz, the former Director and Organiser of the Khaledvial (now Royal) Library is here, and I showed him a few leaves in order to hear his opinion on them. He was very excited when he saw them and agreed with me that the writing was undoubtedly of the first Mohammedan century and that also the decoration of the sura headings were [sic] original, although the colours might have been retouched in some places. As a matter of fact I found the pattern in the same colours on Coptic wood-pieces and cloth of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. and this confirms still further the date and genuineness of the decorations. I am sending you a copy of Professor Moritz's specimens of Arabic calligraphy [sic] in which you will find facsimiles of Cufic Corans of the first and second centuries A.H., which show the same type of writing as your Coran. Professor Moritz was very anxious to know how many leaves I had in my possession, because he wanted to persuade me to offer it to the Berlin Library. Of course I did not give him any further details and left him in the belief that I had only the leaves which I had shown him." Under these circumstances it is perhaps not strange that Moritz failed to recognize this manuscript as the same one he had seen in Fūṭah approximately twenty-five years earlier. Yahuda's somewhat hyperbolic account does tend to confirm that it was in private hands there, rather than in the mosque. There is no way notice on any of the folios.

64. Arberry, Koran, p. 4, reported that this Qur'ān had a Mameluk binding; see also n. 6 above. At present the manuscript is kept unbound in a wooden box. The author was informed in the winter of 1983–84 that the binding had long been missing and could no longer be identified. Subsequently, however, it was found on a storeroom shelf, still with the number 1404 pasted on it; in addition, measurements and a slight curvature along the bottom edges of both binding and folios.
confirm that they belong together. The restoration notice thus clearly refers to CBL 1404.

65. CBL 1404 should therefore be added to the short list of extant manuscripts for which the claim of "Uthmanic codex" has been made. See al-Munajjid, Dibrāṭ, pp. 50-55, where four such manuscripts are listed. Al-Munajjid has demonstrated that none of them can be in the hand of Uthman. Muhammad Jūrāfī might have been either Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Dādah (d. ca. 1148/1735) or his nephew Muhammad b. Qāsim, both members of the prominent Sharāfī family of Cairo merchants, originally from the Maghrib; both were members of the 'Azāb corps (ṣjā'ī); see A. Raymond, Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle, 2 v., Damascus, 1973-74, index, s.v. Sharāfī, esp. v. 2, pp. 668, 728. The title ghānim, literally "sharer in the booty," appears to have been uncommon in eleventh/eighteenth-century Egypt, and its import in this context is not clear. For a discussion of the extensive private library of the Sharāfīs and their generosity in granting access to it, see 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabarī, 'Aṣṣāfī al-ṭalāb fī-ṭarājima wa-ṭalābīr, v. 1, Budapest, 1297/1880, p. 204.

66. Frequently also small damaged strips of parchment have been pasted onto folios from quite different parts of the text, and at other points paper has been pasted over the text, so that it cannot be read.

67. H.-C. von Bothmer has argued, "Architekturbilder im Koran: Eine Prachthandschrift der Umayyadenzeit aus dem Jemen," Pantheon, v. 45, 1987, pp. 5, 15, that parchment leaves of the size of those in manuscript no. 20-33.1 from the Great Mosque of San'a do not occur in double-page spreads. The maximum preserved dimensions of that manuscript are 43.9 x 36.5 cm., though von Bothmer claims without explanation that originally they must have measured 51 x 47 cm. The preserved dimensions of the folios in CBL 1404 are 47 x 58 cm., according to Arberry, Koran, p. 4. As the preserved folios of the two manuscripts are of approximately the same width, however, the possibility that San'a 20-33.1 also consisted of double-page spreads cannot be ruled out.

68. This pattern seems to have been more common in Maghribī manuscripts, of smaller size and often of later date; see, for example, 1424 in The Chester Beatty Library, dated by Arberry, Koran, p. 36, no. 119, to the fifth/eleventh century. The alternative explanation, that six, eight, or ten sheets were laid so that flesh sides and hair sides faced each other and then folded in the middle, seems unlikely; the author has so far come across no example of a parchment Qurān in which gatherings were arranged in this way.

69. There are scaling bronze-colored additions of a later period that suggest an attempt at "gilding" of a sort.

70. Ḥīya 1, 3, 4, 6-11, 13, 16, 21, 22, 24, 28, 29. After this manuscript came into The Chester Beatty Library, its folios were divided into two groups, the smaller of which contained about seventy-eight folios considered to be more interesting from an artistic point of view or better preserved. Each group was numbered in pencil, starting with the numeral 1 but ignoring the correct sequence of the text. With the permission of the Librarian, the author rearranged all the folios in a single correct sequence, without, however, writing new numbers on them. The folio numbers presented below therefore seem somewhat scrambled. An asterisk indicates one of the "better" series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fisa'</th>
<th>Ends (Cairo ed.)</th>
<th>1404 f. number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>II:141</td>
<td>77a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>III:92</td>
<td>189b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IV:23</td>
<td>65b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>V:81</td>
<td>*14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>VI:110</td>
<td>*8a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>VII:87</td>
<td>12b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>VIII:41</td>
<td>*32a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>IX:92</td>
<td>55b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>XI:5</td>
<td>101a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>XIV:52</td>
<td>*36a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>XIX:135</td>
<td>*46b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>XXIII:30</td>
<td>*53b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>XXXVI:27</td>
<td>*61a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>XXL:46</td>
<td>182b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>LXV:12</td>
<td>191a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>LXXVII:50</td>
<td>*74b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


72. Fīḥrist akhūtub al-arabīyyah, pp. 2-3, no. 18953. For illustrations, see Moritz, Arabische Paläographie, pls. 1-12. The text contained on the illustrated pages is as follows:

- Plate 1, probably a full page, 12 lines, end of Surah XXXVIII
- Plate 2, detail of plate 1
- Plate 3, detail of end of Surah XXXI
- Plates 4-5, details of end of Surah XLVI
- Plate 6, full page, 11 lines, end of Surah XLVIII
- Plate 7, detail of end of Surah LVI
- Plate 8, detail of end of Surah LIX
- Plate 9, detail of end of Surah LXXXIII
- Plate 10, detail of end of Surah LXV
- Plate 11, detail of end of Surah LXVI
- Plate 12, detail of end of Surah LXXVII

Déroche, Catalogue, pp. 52, 75-77, noted that the thirty-eight folios of ms. 324c in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, with twelve lines to a text page measuring 47.48 x 55.5 cm., and the twelve folios of ms. 462 in the Gotha State Library are from the same Qurān, cf. Seetzen, Verschiednis, p. 26, no. 1449. For an illustration of folio 39 from B.N. 324c, see E. Tisserant, Specimen Codicum Orientalium, Bonn, 1914, pl. 42, and, for one from Goth, see Moeller, Paläographische Beiträge, pl. XIV.

73. That is, from Tanbūl in the Nile delta; see Official Standard Names Approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names, Gazetteer 45. Egypt and the Gaza Strip, Washington, D.C., 1959, p. 574, s.v. Tanbūl al-Kubūra.

74. Déroche does not seem to have recognized that these folios belong to the later portion of the manuscript and cited some of them as parallels for ornamented pages in B.N. 324c. Catalogue, pp. 75-77. It appears that acquisition of portions of this Qurān from the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ by Seetzen, Axellen de Cherville, and probably others as well in the first decades of the nineteenth century (cf. n. 34 above) is what necessitated the replacement of so many folios in 1246/1830. In this connection it is worth noting Seetzen's report, dated January 17, 1809, that he had seen in the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ a large "kofi" Qurān with wide bands of colored
ornament and a wasf notice in the name of Umar (‘Amr). He attempted to buy several leaves from the female attendant but found her too “bigoted” to sell; [C. F. H.] Kruse, ed., Ulrich Jasper Seetzen’s Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, Phönizien, die Transjordan-Länder, Arabia Petraea und Unter-Aegypten, v. 3, Berlin, 1855, p. 589. Obviously, he was eventually successful in obtaining some folios for the library in Gotha.

75. This difference was implicitly recognized by Moritz, who cited only plates 2–5, representing three pages, in connection with the supposed “Umayyad” ornamental bands in this Qurʾān; “Ausfänge in der Arabia Petraea,” Universität de Saint-Joseph, Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale, v. 5, 1908, p. 430 and n. 2.

76. For example, at the right of Moritz, Arabic Palaeography, pl. 1, contouring has been drawn around letters that intrude into the decorative band; a black line is also visible where earlier material was apparently erased and the interlace continued by a later hand.

77. This feature is generally supposed to be characteristic of “Hijāzī” script; see nn. 6–7 above.


80. Whereas almost all known surviving parchment Qurʾān fragments lack their original beginning and ending pages—those pages being the most subject to wear and thus the first to be discarded or replaced—this manuscript lacks its middle, which was very likely in better condition. In this connection it should be noted that at least one European collector, the Italian Giuseppe Caprotti, was active in Yemen at the beginning of this century. Although none of the Qurʾāns so far published as having belonged to him seems related to this one, it would not be surprising if other portions of the Ṣanṭa’ Qurʾāns were eventually to be identified in collections in Europe and elsewhere. See E. Griffini, “Die jüngste ambrosianische Sammlung arabischer Handschriften,” Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, v. 69, 1915, pp. 63–88. It should be noted, too, that E. D. Ross reported having seen the first and last folio of a small parchment Qurʾān in Tunis in the 1990s; “Some Rare Mas. Seen in Tunis,” Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, v. 3, 1925–25, pp. 610–15. One of them contained a wasf notice (see illustration facing p. 612) dated 275/889. These folios subsequently passed into the hands of Baron Rodolph d’Erlanger of Sidi Bou Said.


82. For the dating of the cache, see Costa, “Moschea,” p. 506, confirmed in personal communication.


85. A second Qurʾān from the mosque of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās, now in the Dār al-Kutub in Cairo, may have some bearing on the dating of group 2; Fihrist al-kutub, p. 2, no. 17852, with 332 folios, including “many” replacements on white paper. Unfortunately, it has not been published, though Moritz illustrated one page, containing the end of Sūrah XXIII, in his Arabic Palaeography, pl. 17. It is clear even from this limited sample that paleographically the manuscript resembles those of group 2, with eighteen lines to a vertical page and verse endings marked by three parallel strokes. There is no indication of fives or tens, though in line 1 additional space has been left after XXIII:109, presumably numbered 110 in this manuscript; a compass-drawn circle in that space may be a later addition. The most striking difference from group 2 manuscripts is that, instead of an ornamental band separating the two sūras, there is only a line space. Unfortunately, because this manuscript is so poorly published, it cannot be determined whether or not it was originally left unfinished. Its date has occasioned some controversy since Moritz first published the wasf notice contained in it; Arabic Palaeography, pl. 18. According to this notice, written in a hasty cursive hand, the Qurʾān was presented to the “old mosque” (atṭāmi al-ʾatṣiq) in Fustat, Mīr by Ahmad ibn al-Iskāf al-Waṭāq in Ramdān of the year 698. The designation of the hundreds is only partly preserved; it consists of a short, slightly curved initial stroke connected to a tall letter. In Moritz’s photograph the latter seems to have been connected to a following letter by a stroke that is broken off at the damaged edge of the parchment. Moritz read the initial stroke as mim and the second letter as abf and dated the Qurʾān to 168/784–85, without offering an explicit justification for his reading. Karabacek, “Arabic Palaeography,” pp. 153–36, insisted, again without explanation, that it should be 268/881–82; cf. Grohmann, “Problems of Dating,” p. 216, n.17. Rice established that the later date is more plausible in view of the reference to the “old mosque,” for probably this term came into use only after the construction of a new congregational mosque, that of Ibn Tullūn, completed in 263/876–79; Ibn al-Bawwāb, p. 2, n. 4. The nineteenth-century catalogue read the date 368/978–79, which, though ignored or dismissed by Moritz, Karabacek, Grohmann, and Rice, also seems plausible. The first stroke looks like a toothed letter; there is no sign of a loop to justify calling it a mim. Furthermore, the second letter seems to have been connected to a following one. Although there are instances in Arabic handwriting of mim drawn carelessly without loops and abf connected to succeeding letters, to assume that both peculiarities occurred in this instance, without supporting evidence, is to accept the less probable of two possible explanations, especially as in the rest of the rather long wasf notice the mim are looped and the abf usually not connected. It thus seems more reasonable provisionally to take the late fourth/fifth century as the terminus ante quem for this manuscript, though until the wasf notice has been carefully examined at first hand a third-/ninth-century date cannot be ruled out.

86. Abbott, Rise, p. 40. CBL 1434, a large fragment of the first surviving Qurʾān in “broken cursive” script (see n. 59 above),
is vocalized in red, green, yellow, and blue. An endpaper note in a much later hand indicates that the four colors distinguish the readings of Ibn Kathīr (d. ca. 1207/757) according to Ibn Abī Bazzah (sīd. d. ca. 240/854) and of Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alī (sīd. d. ca. 1547/770) according to al-Yazīdī (d. ca. 202/817): Red and green indicate what they agreed on, the latter reserved for the "additional" diacritics, like maddah, hamzah, tashdīd, and so on, whereas yellow indicates the variants of Ibn Kathīr and blue those of Abū 'Amr. Cf. Bergsträßer and Pretzl, Geschichte, pp. 261–73. For a brief discussion of the "canonical" readings, see W. M. Watt, ed., Bell's Introduction to the Qurʾān, Edinburgh, 1970, pp. 48–50.

87. There are many more instances of green dots and other additions throughout the manuscript than have been cited here. Some areambiguous, as when it is unclear whether a dot was meant to follow one letter (dammah) or stand above the next (fuṣūl). There are also instances in which the green dots are simply puzzling, for example, the insertion of an entirely superfluous lām after adīn wā-yāsāʾa, changing it to nonsensical wa- a-līl-yāsāʾa (Marsh 178, f. 20a, XXXVIII:40). Overall, however, the only consistent pattern that emerges is the one identified here, in which the placement of the green dots follows the same basic principles that guided placement of the red dots.

88. That the green dots and other corrections are later than the red ones is clear from the fact that they occasionally overlap or are displaced because of the latter.

89. See, for example, CBL 1409, 1412, 1422A.

90. A similar instance is cited in Bergsträßer and Pretzl, Geschichte, p. 263, n. 2. In some manuscripts a third party has added marks, sometimes simply "restoring" those of the "red" reader, particularly the kārah of the genitive ending when it has been altered to a dammah by the "green" reader. It is not possible to determine whether these oddities are related in any way to the use of the nominative in place of the genitive ending in the common speech of al-Baṣrah in the second/eighth century; see C. Pellat, Le milieu bāyān et la formation de Čaḡīz, Paris, 1953, p. 127, esp. n. 3.


92. See n. 86 above.

93. To attempt to define such related groups is premature, but it may be useful here to indicate the range of related manuscripts by citing, on one hand, CBL 1401/Freeer 29.72, 45.16, with mannered ribbon terminals and polychrome ornaments following every tenth verse (Fig. 14), and, on the other, the "Amr Qurʾān" already discussed.

94. There are two known fragments of this manuscript. The larger is Ar. 2047 in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, thirteen folios. De Slane, Catalogue, p. 365, suggested that it contains a portion of jamharat al-nasab by Hīshām ibn al-Kalībī (ca. 120/204 or 206/737–819 or 821) and that it was written during his lifetime, a suggestion that has been accepted by some scholars, for example, G. Vajda, Album de paléographie arabe, Paris, 1958, pl. 1; F. Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schriftums, v. 1, Leiden, 1967, p. 269. Brockelmann, EI1, s.v. al-Kalībī, was more doubtful; cf. G. Levi Della Vida, Review of N. A. Faris, The Antiquities of South Arabia, Orientalia, N.S. 9, 1940, p. 164, n. 2. J. "Afr, "Jamharat al-nasab li-ibn al-Kalībī," Majallat al-Majmaʿ al-'Ilmī al-'Irāqī, v. 1, 1950, pp. 337–39. The second fragment, two folios, is in the Staatbibliothek, Berlin; see J. Rödiger, "Über zwei Pergamentblätter mit arabischer Schrift," Philologische und historische Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 1876, pp. 155–43. These folios came to the library bound with a Qurʾān that had belonged to the eighteenth-century traveler Carsten Niebuhr. More recently, W. Caskel, "Jamharat an-nasab: Das genealogische Werk des Hīshām ibn Muhammad al-Kalībī," v. 1, Leiden, 1966, p. 110, noted without a reference that Levi Della Vida had "long ago" established that the text of the Paris fragment is not by Ibn al-Kalībī; it has not been possible to locate a published statement by Levi Della Vida to this effect. On the other hand, Abbott, "Arabic Paleography," p. 82, identified the author as Abū Abdallāh al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār (d. 256/870), also without a reference. Certain features of the script, for example, the connecting of medial ʿal and ʾālīt to the base line only by means of "stems," do suggest that the manuscript belongs to a rather late phase of development; Caskel, pp. 110–11, considered it typical of the third/ninth or fourth/tenth century. Al-Afdal also commented on the absence of any justification for an early third-/ninth-century date. A close paleographic parallel is a Qurʾān fragment, Ar. 334e, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, one folio, Déroche, Catalogue, pl. XIV.


96. Arberry, Koran, p. 10, included in the category "Persian Kufic" CBL 1417, four bound fragments of a parchment Qurʾān dated 292/905 (a total of 187 folios containing II:253–III:91, IV:44–148, VII:88–VIII:38, IX:80–87, 93, XI:27–29, 84–88, XXV:1–5, 22–XXVII:55, not in proper sequence), but, though the script includes a few characteristic features like the point at the base of the ʾāf, it is actually a rather unattractive cursive that differs from "broken Kufic" in significant ways. Other folios from this Qurʾān are in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (26.161.3, two folios, containing V:117–VI:3, the gift of the dealer Kirkor Minassian in 1926) and the Library of Congress (LCI-85.154.82a–aa, two folios containing LXXVI:25–LXXXVII:3 and LXXIX:46–LXXI:5 respectively, and AL 20, two folios containing VI:69–71 and 77–80, also from Minassian). In the latter collection there are also several folios from a parchment Qurʾān written by the same hand but in a horizontal format (GSM 85, fifty-six folios; from Minassian). These two manuscripts require special study, but they cannot be considered early examples of "broken Kufic." See n. 59 above.

97. There is a large fragment in The Chester Beatty Library, 1434 (170 folios, ten lines per page, containing I–VI:165). The colophon with the date is in another fragment in the library of Istanbul University, A6758 (sixteen folios containing XIX–XXXVII); F. E. Karatay, Istanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Arapça Yazmalet Katalogu, v. 1, no. 1, Istanbul, 1951, p. 3 and pl. V; cf. Rice, Ibn al-Bawwāb, p. 3 and n. 1. In his unpublished notes Rice also identified a fragment from the Ardabil shrine, which was exhibited in London in 1931, as part of this Qurʾān (see Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Persian Art . . . 7th January to 7th March 1931, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 3rd ed., London,
1931, p. 81, no. 126D); James, Qur'ans, p. 27, repeated the identification, but unfortunately no illustration of the exhibited work seems to have been published, and it is unclear how Rice arrived at his attribution. The signature on the Istanbul fragment, which is somewhat damaged, was read by Karatay as 'Ali ibn Shâdân al-Wâzî. In another manuscript by the same scribe the signature is quite clearly pointed, however. See F. Krenkow, *Biographies des grammairiens de l'école de Barra*, Paris and Beirut, 1936, unnumbered plate (ma. p. 191); cf. Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwâb*, p. 3, n. 1; F. Justi, *Iranišches Namenbuch*, Marburg, 1894, repr. Hildesheim, 1963, p. 270. The reading Sâdân published by James is therefore incorrect. Krenkow identified 'Ali b. Shâdân with a transmitter of 'âdâbîth by the same name about whom Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalânî, *Lisan al-miçuân*, v. 4, Hyderabad, 1350/1911, p. 234, no. 629, gave the following information: "[He reported] according to Abû Badr al-Sakhânî and his generation. Al-Dâraquînî considered him weak in relation to the truth. Abû Bakr al-Shâfîî did not mention him. Ibn Sâ'dîd and Ibn Makhladh also reported according to him. "Al-Dâraquînî died in 385/995 and Abû Bakr in 354/965, both in Baghdad (Sezgin, pp. 206, 191); they were thus approximately contemporary with the scribe 'Ali b. Shâdân. Abû Muhammad Yahyâ b. Sâ'dî, a teacher of al-Dâraquînî, was, however, born in Baghdad in 228/843 and died in the same city in 318/930 (Sezgin, p. 176); Ibn Makhladh is probably to be identified with the 'Abbâsid secretary and vizier, Abû al-Hasan b. Makhladh b. al-Jarrâh, who was also born in Baghdad, in 209/824, and died in Antioch in 296/882 (*EP*, s.v. Ibn Makhladh). Neither could therefore have had traditions from a man who was still active in 376/986. It has not been possible to identify Abû Badr al-Sakhânî.


99. CBL 4000. Cf. Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwâb*, p. 3, n. 4; Arberry, "More Niffârî," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, v. 15, 1953, pp. 30–42. In the Bibliothèque Nationale there is a copy of *Târikh mulîkh al-'arab* (Ar. 6726), attributed to Abû Sâ'dî al-Asmâ'î (d. 213/828; Vajda, *Album*, pl. 3); according to its colophon, it was copied by Abû Yusuf Ya'qûbîn ibn al-Sikkît on 10 Shawwâl 245/January 50, 858. The manuscript consists of twenty-seven folios on parchment and came to the library as part of the collection of the philologist Henri Pogon in 1922; see E. Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes des nouvelles acquisitions 1884–1924*, Paris, 1925, pp. iv, 547, where it is said to be written on "gazelle skin." Blochet expressed some discomfort about this manuscript, which was occasioned by the "astonishing" condition in which it was preserved, the absence of the customary readers' notes, the presence of identical verse extracts in another work from the same collection (Ar. 6738; 952/1545–46), and the apparently anachronistic use of the term "terres émiriennes" (the Arabic term is not given) in the colophon. Some years I—Franz Rosenthal, "From Arabic Books and Manuscripts I. Pseudo-Asmâ'î on the Pre-Islamic Arab Kings," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, v. 69, 1949, pp. 90–91, added several further items to this list; in particular, he noted that an edition of the first part of the text of Ar. 6738 had appeared in Baghdad in 1332/1915–14 with an attribution to Yahyâ ibn al-Washhâ. He also called attention to some additional anachronisms: the repeated introductory phrase "wa balaghânî yâ Amîr al-Mu'mînîn" and the flowing rhymed prose of the introductory sentences. He thus concluded that the work is not by al-Asmâ'î but is a compilation of an indeterminate later period, perhaps the fourth/tenth century. The manuscript certainly cannot then have been copied by Ibn al-Sikkît, and the script cannot be taken as an example of writing in the third/ninth century. Three years later 'Ali, "Mawârid ta'rikh al-Tabarî," *Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilimi al-'Irâqî*, v. 2, 1952, pp. 142–48, definitively demonstrated that another text supposedly by al-Asmâ'î is a later forgery.

100. See discussion and n. 59 above.

101. That he was born in 258/871 and died in Baghdad in 346/957 seems to be universally acknowledged; *EP*, s.v. Ibn Durustawây; Cheikho, ed., *Kitâb al-ma'tûd*, Beirut, 1921, p. 2; Kh. Zirikîî, *al-Kûm*, v. 4, Beirut, 1979, p. 76; Dodge, *Fihrist*, v. 2, p. 983. It is curious therefore that in the text itself the author has written, "I began this work in the caliphate of al-Mu'tasim billâh" (r. 218–27/835–42). Although Cheikho, p. 4, has supplied the correct dates for this caliph in an accompanying footnote, he has offered no comment on the apparent disparity.


103. One meaning of the verb 'arrâqa was "to draw the curved portion of a letter from right to left below the line"; R. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, 2nd ed., v. 2, Leiden and Paris, 1927, p. 121.


109. The fact that, in *Rise of the North Arabian Script*, Abbott did rely on the secretarial manuals for her identification of Qur'anic scripts may help to explain why it has been so difficult to make use of her conclusions in the study of extant manuscripts.


Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1958, p. 280. Abbott dismissed the earlier conclusion of A. Mingana, "Arabic Numerals," The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1937, pp. 315–16, that the inverted order of the numbers was the work of a Persian or Syrian copist who was not thoroughly familiar with Arabic. All the parchment Qur’ans with verse enumerations examined by the author are characterized by numbers written in inverted order, not only in the sūrah headings but also in the cumulative totals given in the rosettes marking the tens; it seems hardly likely that none of the earliest Qur’ans was copied by a native Arabic speaker.


114. Dates were written in the “new fashion” as early as 22/641 in papyrus documents (J. Karabacek et al., Papyrus Erkhersog Rainer: Führer durch die Ausstellung, Vienna, 1894, p. 139, no. 558; Grohmann, “Arabische Papyruskunde,” Handbuch der Orientalistik, Abt. 1, Ergänzungsband 2/1, Leiden, 1966, pl. II/2, Berol. 15002), 31/652 in inscriptions (H. M. El-Hawardy, The Most Ancient Islamic Monument Known, Dated A.H. 31 (A.D. 652), from the Time of the Third Caliph Uthman,” The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1930, pp. 321–33), and 72/691 on coins (M. L. Bates, "History, Geography and Numismatics in the First Century of Islamic Coinage," Revue Suisse de Numismatique, v. 65, 1986, pp. 283–94). That this way of writing numbers was not confined to dates is clear from the first cited papyrus, which refers to a quantity of sheep (khamsa ‘ashara). Even in the Qur’ān text itself numbers are expressed in this way; see XXXVIII:23 (tis’un wa-tis’ānā).

115. This conclusion receives some oblique confirmation from the early Islamic poet Abū Du‘ād al-Ru‘āsī al-Kilāfī, who lived in the Hijāz and who, in one of his couplets, referred to the “unwān (“title”) of a book in a context clearly implying decoration of some kind; although the Qur’ān is not in question, the reference is evidence that headings similar to those in the “Kūfic” mašāhīf were known already at the beginning of the Islamic period. See Krenkow, "The Use of Writing for the Preservation of Ancient Arabic Poetry,” A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to Edward G. Browne, ed. T. W. Arnold and R. A. Nicholson, Cambridge, Eng., 1922, p. 264.

116. Abū Bakr ḫn Ayyāsh, the author of the earliest known work on the “thirtieths,” was a Qur’ān “reader” at al-Kūfah; see n. 56 above. The introduction of vocalization marks was also credited in the early Arabic sources to a series of figures who were active in Iraq: Abbott, Risāl, p. 39, with references; cf. Bergstrasser and Pretzl, Geschichte, pp. 261–73. In contrast to the ajīb, however, vocalizations are found in a great variety of early Qur’ān manuscripts, including those of both groups 1 and 2.


118. Dodge, Fihrist, pp. 81, 86. Dodge’s identification of the “numbers” as those of the verses revealed to the Prophet in al-Madīnah (p. 81, n. 125) is surely incorrect. The number of verses was not the central issue in attributing passages to Mecca or al-Madīnah, nor is Mecca mentioned in this passage at all. That the numbers (‘adad) referred to are those of the verses in the sūrah is confirmed by the inclusion in the list of a book on the ‘ashara marks by Nāfī’, who resided at al-Madīnah and originated one of the seven “canonical” readings.

Fig. 1. Qur'an page, group 1 script, Freer 37.6, f. 4b; II:200-1.
Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Fig. 2. Qur'an page, group 1 script, Freer 37.6, f. 4a; II:211 preceded by ornament following II:210.
Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Fig. 3. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, XL (5), f. 13b, XXIII:99–100. Reproduced by permission.

Fig. 4. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, XL (5), f. 16a; XXIII:109–110. Reproduced by permission.
Fig. 5. Qur‘ān page, group 1 script, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, XL (5), f. 18b; XXIII:117–heading of XXIV. Reproduced by permission.

Fig. 6. Qur‘ān page, group 1 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1407, f. 1b; XXIX:44–45.
Fig. 7. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, Berlin I.2211, f. 14a; XXX.16–18. Reproduced with permission of Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

Fig. 8. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, Berlin I.2211, f. 14b; XXX.18–19. Reproduced with permission of Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.
Fig. 9. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1407, f. 2a; XXXI:34.

Fig. 10. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, Berlin I.2211, f. 18b; XXXIII:1–3. Reproduced with permission of Museum für Islamische Kunstd, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.
Fig. 11. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1407, f. 5a; XXXIII:30.

Fig. 12. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 12:11 Aug. 2°, f. 5a; XXXVII:168–70. Reproduced by permission.
Fig. 13. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 12.11 Aug. 2°, f. 6b; XXXVIII:17–18. Reproduced by permission.

Fig. 14. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1401, f. 1b; XIII:37–41.
FIG. 15. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M712, f. 5a, XXVII:76–81.

Fig. 17. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1422B, f. 2b; XVII:109–10.

Fig. 18. Qurʾān page, group 1 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1422B, f. 3a; XVII:110–11.

Fig. 21. Qur'an page, group 2 script,

Fig. 22. Qur'an page, group 2 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1404, f. *78a;
LXXXI:ornamental ending–LXXXII:19 (partly missing).