The fourteenth century saw a rise in the number of ornate Qur’ans exhibiting highly developed styles in calligraphy together with a growing confidence in illumination. It should be stressed that whichever aspect of Qur’an manuscripts is being considered—whether calligraphy, ornament or page layout—one cannot be divorced from the other. Page design is their unifying feature. The development of this artistic form of religious expression was encouraged and flourished under Mamluk and Il-Khanid rule. Between 1250 and 1317, Egypt and most of Syria were governed by the Mamluks, originally non-Muslim slaves in the service of Ayubid rulers, some of whom became converts to Islam and rose to positions of high office. In Iraq and Persia between 1258 and 1353, political control lay in the hands of the Il-Khanid Mongols who, like the Mamluks, became converts to Islam. Later dynasties between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries—in particular, the Timurid (1370–1506), Ottoman (1281–1922), Safavid (1501–1732) and Mughal (1526–1858)—saw further developments in the art of ornamentation. Hence over a period of some six hundred years Qur’an manuscript production passed through various stages of grandeur, refinement, and sophistication. These qualities are reflected in the ways in which the Qur’an text has been calligraphed and ornamented on the page.
Patronage and documentation

What is known of ornate Qur’ans from the Mamluk period and onwards is mainly gleaned through study of the documentation presented within the volumes themselves. The names of those involved in the manuscript’s production—the scribe and illuminator, who were sometimes the same person—are usually found on the colophon at the end of the Qur’an. Here, too, is often noted the date when the copying of the text was completed, together with the name of the city in which the work was carried out. Often, too, is included a page documenting the name of the person who commissioned the Qur’an. Because of its lavish and costly production, an ornate copy required the financial resources of a patron—usually a ruling sultan or an influential member of the court— who donated it as a gift to a mosque or other religious institution (fig. 19). The influence of a patron is immediately discernible in the splendour, grandeur, and magnificent of such opulent volumes, as exemplified by the extensive use of gold and other rich colours adorning the text and the design of the decorative pages. In these Qur’ans the architecture of the page layout is enhanced with a sense of space, achieved not necessarily by the physical size of the volume, but by generous margins and the choice of large calligraphic scripts, all of which provide freedom and movement between the lines of text.

The calligrapher and the illuminator

Our knowledge of the art of calligraphy, illumination, and the methods used to prepare inks and writing instruments comes mostly from medieval sources—from Arabic treatises on the subject, general handbooks and manuals for scribes who, in their capacity as court officials, were responsible for drawing up documents. The calligrapher would be responsible for planning the page for the text, organizing the space of the page and the use of the ruling frame (maqthy) which enabled him to write in straight lines. The calligrapher belonged to a professional class; in order to gain membership to this class, the scribe needed to obtain a diploma (ijaza), after several years of working under a master calligrapher. This apprenticeship, as might be expected, included training in trimming reeds for the pen (quills) were not used as in Western Europe) and in the preparation of inks including, among other ingredients, carbon, iron-gall and gum-arabic. In addition to gold, the palette for the illumination was made up mainly of yellow (orpiment, i.e. yellow arsenic sulphide), white (lead white), orange (red lead or a mixture of red lead and orpiment), blue (lapis lazuli or azurite), red (vernilion or red lead) and green (copper carbonate or a mixture of indigo blue and orpiment).

The task of embellishing the Qur’an would be undertaken by the illuminator on completion of the entire text or, as was often the case in multi-volume Qur’ans, after the completion of a section or a number of sections. It was not uncommon for the illuminator and the calligrapher to have been the same person. Where they were not, it can be assumed that they worked together as a team, collaborating in the planning of the page layout and the format of the volume. It was often the case that a number of illuminators worked together in the same workshop along with the master illuminator, where each artist had a delegated role or responsibility for a complete volume of a multi-volume set.

The patronship of master calligraphers and the artistry of some of the most talented illuminators combined to place these richly produced Qur’ans among the world’s most sublime expressions of religious art.

Sultan Baybars’ Qur’an

Illustrative of the combination of ornate art and religious feeling is the Raybars Qur’an, so named after its patron, Rukan al-Din Baybars al-Jushagri, who commissioned it. This Qur’an is the earliest dated Qur’an of the Mamluk period
and was produced in seven volumes in Cairo during the years 1304 and 1306. During this time Rukn al-Din Baybars was not yet a sultan but a high chamberlain in the court of al-Nasir Muhammad. Only later, between 1309 and 1310, did he acquire the title of al-Muazzafar Baybars, or Sultan Baybars II. Though Arabic historical sources make reference to this Qur’ān, the purpose of his patronage is unclear. It is not known whether the Qur’ān was intended as a pious gift to the mosque of al-Hakim in Cairo (built 996–1013), or whether it was intended to be a donation to the building of a religious foundation.

The Baybars Qur’ān presents the sacred text in seven volumes, each containing a seventh (ṣūb) of the Qur’ān text—a rare arrangement as noted above—and each with its own colophon page (fig. 20). With almost as much attention given to its document pages as to the text pages of the Qur’ān itself, the colophon is here presented within a cloud-like motif on a pink foliate ground, bordered on all four sides by gold filigree strapwork on a blue ground. We know much about the production of this Qur’ān since the attributions on the colophon pages are clear. Both the patron, Rukn al-Din Baybars, and the calligrapher, Muhammad ibn al-Wahid, are mentioned in all the colophons. Ibn al-Wahid was born in Damascus in the mid-thirteenth century though he lived most of his life in Cairo. This Qur’ān is the only surviving example of his work. The colophon of the seventh and final volume confirms the date, stating that this Qur’ān was completed in its entirety in the year 705 of the Muslim calendar, corresponding to the years 1305–06. We also learn that the master illuminator in charge of a small team was Abu Bakr Sandal, as his signature appears in the colophon page of the third volume within a marginal ornament (fig. 21). Although other examples of Sandal’s work are known, very little is known about him or his life. The two other members of his team, also documented in this Qur’ān, were Muhammad ibn Mubadir and Aydaydhi ibn ‘Abdallah al-Badri, about neither of whom is much known.

Each volume of the Baybars Qur’ān has a magnificent double frontispiece; these carpet pages are illuminated in the Mamluk style, characterized by the extensive use of geometric patterns and gold filigree work. However, where in earlier Qur’āns the design of these pages is mainly without text of any kind, the Baybars Qur’ān introduces into its carpet pages quotations from the Qur’ān and, because of its multi-volume presentation, the specific number of the particular volume. To a certain extent, the introduction of inscriptions dictated the
above and below the text are embellished with red and gold motifs on a blue ground, while the whole design is encased in gold with an ornamental clasp projecting into the outer margin of the page.

In contrast, many fourteenth-century Mamluk Qur’ans from Egypt have a more conventional presentation for the whole of chapter one, with the entire chapter set on the first page of the opening, and with the beginning of chapter two (Sunnat al-baqi’ah) on the second page (fig. 24). Another conventional feature of the opening text pages of Mamluk Qur’ans is the tripartite division of the page into a central text panel with upper and lower panels for chapter headings. Unlike the Baybars Qur’an, the upper panels often contain the chapter headings, while the lower panels state the number of verses in the chapter. The inscriptions often reverted to an archaic monumental script such as eastern kufi.

While the text of the opening pages in Mamluk Qur’ans was usually presented within a rectangular frame or border, this feature does not necessarily appear on all the other pages of the text. Instead, as seen in the Baybars Qur’an, the illusion of a border is created by wide margins and the alignment of the text (fig. 25). The physical size of the Baybars Qur’an enabled the calligrapher and illuminators to work not only with a large script and extensive decoration but also within a spacious page layout. Its 1.094 folios spread over seven volumes, each volume measuring 47.5 x 32 cm, give an indication of its monumental stature.

The splendour of the Baybars Qur’an is further enhanced by being written entirely in gold and in thuluth script. This cursive hand is here outlined in black ink, with vowels marked in red and other spelling signs in blue. The choice of thuluth as the script is also strange, for this script was generally considered ornamental, being used primarily for chapter headings and not for the body of the text. It would appear that thuluth had assumed to a great extent the same role as kufic and eastern kufic scripts during the Mamluk period, when they were mainly used for Qur’anic quotations in carpet pages or illuminated chapter headings. The layout of the calligraphy is also of special interest as each page of the Baybars Qur’an carries an even number of lines. This is virtually without precedent, for most Qur’ans with few exceptions have an odd number of lines per page. Of interest, too, is the fact that the text layout is continuous, without large illuminated rectangular panels to indicate the beginning of a chapter, as in many other Qur’ans of this period. In the Baybars Qur’an, chapter headings
The carpet pages designed by Abu Bakr Sardal, from volume three of Sultan Baybars' Qur'an, n. Add.23400, ff. iv-2.
13 The insipit pages of Sultan Baybars' Qur'an containing the whole of Chapter one, ii. qdd, 1359h, ff. 35-4

QUR'AN MANUSCRIPTS
By contrast with Sultan Baybars' Qur'an, compare this typical design for illuminated pages from a 14th-century Mamluk Qur'an, Cairo, with chapter headings and number of verses in the upper and lower panels. In: Cartwright, ff. 29v-3.
are merely indicated by a change of colour, with red ink overlaying the gold, but with no additional spacing between the lines. It would seem that the calligrapher viewed the text of the Qur’an as a complete entity and did not wish to interrupt the visual flow of the page (figs. 26, 27, 28).

A Royal Qur’an from Iraq

Individuality in the copying and illumination of Qur’ans is also found, not only in the Baybars Qur’an but in other ornate Qur’ans of this period, such as the one commissioned five years later in Mosul (Iraq) by the Il-Khanid ruler, Ujaytu (r. 1304–17). In many respects the differences between these two Qur’ans are striking, making it hard to appreciate that they belong to the same period, but perhaps this is due to the fact that they come from different regions. Variety and style of presentation can be seen in the range of motifs used in the design of the decorated pages of the multi-volume Ujaytu Qur’an. Many of these were inspired by the structure of the mosque. The influence of this architecture is particularly evident in the colophon page of volume twenty-five, where the rectangular frame, containing the text, is shaped in the form of a prayer-niche (mihrab) (fig. 29). This colophon states that the scribe of this volume, and of all preceding volumes, is ‘Ali ibn Muhammad al-Husayn, and that this Qur’an was compiled in Mosul in the year 710 of the Muslim calendar (corresponding to the year 1310).

The commissioning certificate of the same Qur’an also provides a more elaborate version of the prayer-niche motif within its rectangular framework (fig. 30). The text is written between ruled lines, giving the page the effect of a mihrab, which is the ruling frame that scribes used for writing on paper. The certificate identifies the patron as Sultan Ujaytu, and traces his ancestry back to Genghis Khan. The names of two of the Sultan’s viziers, Sa’d al-Din and Rashid al-Din, are also mentioned.

The carpet pages of this Qur’an of the Il-Khanid period show a completely different approach to design from that of the Baybars Qur’an and others normally associated with the Mamluk period (fig. 31). The carpet pages are not compartmentalized into sections, but constructed as a complete visual unit, with the main part of the illumination taken up by the whole rectangle; hence there is no room, nor could there be any intention, for the inclusion of Qur’anic inscriptions. This design, though remarkable for its execution of Mongol-style...

26 [Fig]: Detail of an illuminated oval marker from Sultan Baybars’ Qur’an. The marker contains the word ‘prostration’ (sukuk) to instruct the reader when to prostrate during the recitation of the Qur’an, su. 11:4:2, f. 156v (detail, enlarged).

27 [Fig]: Detail of an illuminated medallion from Sultan Baybars’ Qur’an. The Arabic for ‘takht’ (throne) in gold leaf script indicates the end of a month verse, su. 22:49, f. 41v (detail, enlarged).

28 [Fig]: Detail of an illuminated pear-shaped medallion from Sultan Baybars’ Qur’an. The Arabic for ‘bahr’ (sea) in gold leaf script indicates the end of a fifth verse, su. 24:29, f. 75v (detail, enlarged).
The colophon page of volume twenty-five of a Qur'an in thirty volumes, commissioned for the Il-Khanid ruler, Uljaytu, in Isfahan. The full name of the scribe, Na'īm al-Muhammad an-Nawartzī, is noted, and also in date of completion 719 (1319) and place of origin, in Ol. 4944, f. 11v.
The carpet pages from volume twenty-five of the Uṣūl al-Qur'ān, remarkable for their Mongol style of illumination and exquisite colouring. xii. On 4953, iii. 10-2.
The inscription page from volume twenty-five of the Umayr Qur'an, written in gold-Muqarnas script, with vowel signs in black. The lower panels contain part of the 'Throne Verse' (chapter 2, verse 255), at 1/4945, ff. 21r-3.
The continuing text pages from volume twenty-five of the Uljaytu Qur’an, with illuminated chapter heading. Note the two round illuminated verse markers (top left), with the Arabic word for ‘verse’ (946h) in gold naskhi script.

Illumination, is nevertheless conventional. This is exemplified by the extensive use of geometric patterns, the basic features of which are interlocking hexagons decorated with gold arabesques alternating on a red or blue ground. The hexagons are made even more complex by having at their centre a smaller hexagon, each with a gold floral design, also alternating on a red or blue ground.

Conventionally too, the whole interconnecting framework is highlighted in white, thus forming smaller hexagons at each intersection.

The opening pages of this Qur’an contain the text in a central panel within a rectangular frame, written in gold naskhi script with vowel signs in black ink (fig. 312). This was a popular script for larger Qur’ans of the Mamluk and Il-Khanid periods, its angular and cursive features – unlike the thuluth of the Baybars Qur’an – giving the calligrapher an opportunity to combine fluidity with rigidity. Again, the conventional use of paneling to carry inscriptions is integral to the rectangular frame surrounding the text, as is the decorative palmette extending from the upper and lower panels into the margin. The inscription records that this section is volume twenty-five of a thirty-volume Qur’an. It is one of the few complete parts of this multi-volume set to have survived intact.

Like the Baybars Qur’an, the text pages following the incipit opening are unframed but, unlike the Baybars Qur’an, the Uljaytu does not have an even number of lines; it follows the more usual practice of having an odd number per page (fig. 32). The ornamental chapter heading written within a rectangular panel also does not depart from conventional practice, nor does the use of naskhi script for the roundels which mark the end of each verse, each with the Arabic word for ‘verse’ (946h) inscribed at its centre.

The Mamluk Qur’an of Sultan Barquq

An outstanding example of a manuscript whose design illustrates the balance between function, ornament, script and layout, is the fourteenth-century Qur’an donated to a mosque in Cairo by the Mamluk Sultan, Faraj ibn Barquq, who reigned during the period 1309–1413 (fig. 34). The religious inspiration of a mosque is immediately evident from the gold architectural structure containing the word ‘prostration’ (sajdah) in blue naskhi. This feature is not only ornamental but has a liturgical purpose, instructing the believer when to prostrate during the recitation of the Qur’an. On the opposite page, balancing the mosque-inspired structure, is an almond-shaped ornament which, again,
The inscription (left) and carpet page (right) from part nine of Sulaiman Faraj ibn Harraj's thirty-volume Qur'an. 12. Gi. 312, ff. 1v-2v.
The incipit pages from an early Ottoman Qur'an of the 15th century, containing the text of the whole of chapter one and the first three verses of chapter two.

Although this Qur'an was designed in thirty parts, its carpet pages and incipit pages have only partially survived (fig. 35). The first opening of this manuscript contains only what remains of the double carpet pages and incipit pages, the leaf that originally lay between them having been lost. As in most Mamluk Qur'ans, the frame of the incipit page is divided into three sections, the middle section of which contains the text within a flowing cloud-like motif set against a background of scrolls. The fragments of inscription within the panels of the incipit page suggest that the complete version stated that this volume was part nine of a thirty-volume set, and that the inscription also carried a quotation from chapter 56, verses 77–8a. This quotation must have been inscribed on the incipit page, as it is clear that the carpet page was not designed to carry any inscription whatsoever. The general effect of the carpet page design is that of a rich tapestry, based on a ten-pointed star-shaped medallion with gold and white outlines extending to form a trellis of overlapping polygons which alternate in gold and blue.

Developments in style: shamsah medallion, carpet and prayer pages

Under Timurid patronage in the fifteenth century, a new delicacy and refinement began to replace the Il-Khanid style of illumination in Persia and Iraq. This development also spread to Turkey, where the Qur'ans produced under the early Ottomans, though often smaller in scale, were no less impressive than the large monumental Qur'ans of the Il-Khanid and Mamluk periods (fig. 58). The decorated incipit pages are typical of an exquisite and refined design, which nevertheless still retains many of the features associated with Qur'ans of the preceding century. The cloud-chain motif surrounding the text continues to dominate the central compartment of the frame. Equally conventional are the rectangular panels in gold strapwork, in which the upper panels contain the chapter headings, while the lower panels contain the number of verses in the chapters.
By the time the Safavid dynasty came to rule in Iran—between 1501 and 1732—the use of carpet pages as frontispieces was almost phased out. As seen in a sixteenth-century Qur’an from Afghanistan (or possibly India), these carpet pages were replaced by a large sunburst in the form of a medallion, often presented within a star-shaped design. The name of this medallion in Arabic is shamshat (“sun”), so-called because its shape and illumination resemble the sun and its brightness (fig. 37). The central position of the shamshat on the page no doubt contributes to the visual intensity of the illumination, its burst of light contrasting with the rest of the blank page. The medallions, although normally plain without any text, sometimes contained Qur’anic inscriptions. Just as some double carpet pages contain interrelated inscriptions, so pages with inscribed shamshat medallions depend on each other for their meaning, and can only be understood when seen as a whole.

Since the shamshat medallion replaced the carpet page as a frontispiece, it was only natural for the carpet page itself to develop a new role. Consequently, the carpet page is now incorporated in the same sixteenth-century Qur’an as part of the decorated incipit pages of text (figs. 2 and 38). In this new function, the carpet page contains within its design not merely Qur’anic inscriptions, but a whole body of text. In the case of this Qur’an, the two incipit pages carry the whole of chapter one (Sūrat al-fātiha), together with the chapter heading and a statement of the number of verses in the chapter. Where the carpet pages of other Qur’ans are compartmentalized, with the result that their inscriptions appear constrained, here, by contrast, the general effect is one of freedom, since the whole of the text, presented at the focal point of each page, merges naturally with its ultramarine background and the surrounding shapes. The symmetry of layout and design—gold palmettes and scrollwork around three sides of a rectangle with blue tassels protruding into the margin, and smaller palmettes alternating in blue and pink—all contribute to the visual unity of these incipit pages.

It is customary for Muslims to recite a special prayer on completing a reading of the whole Qur’an (fig. 39). These extra pages, which contain the concluding prayer at the end of the volume, are sometimes highly decorative. In the same sixteenth-century Qur’an, for example, the prayer pages have the same format as a carpet page, with each line of text on the right-hand page in gold set against an alternating background of blue, pink and yellow cartouches. For theological and doctrinal reasons—since only God is perfect—the symmetry of design in the decorative pages of Qur’ans is not exact. Usually the symmetry is
subtly broken; in this case, however, the asymmetry is obvious. For, though the cartouches on both pages are in the same colours, the left-hand page presents them in a different order.

New layouts for text

In the Qur'ans we have so far examined, the text pages— with the exception of decorated incipit pages— can be considered as a visual unit. However, this is not necessarily the case in the text pages of Qur'ans produced during the Safavid, Mughal and Ottoman periods. Typically, the area allotted for the text is partitioned within a rectangular framework, thus enabling a number of scripts to be used on the same page. There is no doubt that this format allowed the scribe to display his skills in a number of styles for the sake of variety and emphasis, as well as for making the page more decorative. An illustration of this is the design for a text page in a sixteenth-century Qur'an from Herat in Afghanistan, where the calligrapher has used four different styles of Arabic script (fig. 40). The first, middle and last lines within the overall framework are in gold thuluth script; the remaining lines in the two larger compartments are in black naskhi; while white rāğh script is employed for the chapter heading within the horizontal panel. Following convention, as we have already seen in previous Qur'ans, blue is the preferred script in the ornamental directions for reading the text. It should be noted that the positioning of the rectangular framework provides wide margins for these inscribed ornaments, which in the form of medallions join up to form a functional verse counter. The word ṣuḫāfah ('prostration') within the pear-shaped medallion is functionally placed close to the chapter heading to remind the worshipper that it is necessary to prostrate at this point in the reading, while the oval-shaped ornament containing the word ḥab in blue script indicates the beginning of a sixteenth section of the text.

In Qur'ans where the text is constrained within a rectangular framework, or in those Qur'ans where the framework encasing the text is divided into sections, the middle opening of the volume is often given a more elaborate treatment, much in the same way as that given to their decorated opening pages. Hence, the centre text pages of a sixteenth-century Qur'an from India have a carpet page design (fig. 41). The text here is split up, with alternating scripts in different coloured inks. The first, middle and last lines are written in an alternating gold and blue muhaqqaq script on a white ground, while the two main
The central text pages from a 16th-century Qur'an, India, with a carpet page design.

41 The early 16th-century Qur'an from India written in Qur'an script. Note the calligraphy, Persian translation penned in red nabati script.

42 The early 16th-century Qur'an from India written in Qur'an script. Note the calligraphy, Persian translation penned in red nabati script.

The central text pages are in black nabati on a gold ground with red and blue flowers. In this Qur'an, the use of different scripts penned in various colors is purely for decoration and variety. They do not draw attention to particular words or phrases since the text on the page reads as one continuous piece.

Scripts and their function

Scripts in various styles and colors, however, were employed not only for decorative purposes. They often had a more functional role, highlighting specific words or sentences. This was to help the reader to identify the hierarchy of texts where more than one text appeared on the page, and it was particularly important for those pages which carry not only the sacred text but also a translation of the original Arabic. An example of this is demonstrated in a Qur'an from India, copied around 1500 during the rule of the Delhi sultans (Fig. 42). The text, in black ink, is in a variety of nabati script known as bihari, so named after the province of Bihar in northern India with which this style of script became associated. The Persian translation is written between the lines and is penned in red nabati in a more restrained manner, so as not to diminish the status of the sacred text. Emphasis is given to the word Allah (God), the name being highlighted in blue throughout the text, and in gold where the name is mentioned in the pious invocation (basmalah) beneath the illuminated chapter heading. Deference to the divine name is given by penning the name of God in another colour; this appears to be a common feature of Qur'ans in Indian script. According to Islamic tradition the Qur'an is inimitable in any language, so the interlinear translations at their very best were no more than aids to comprehension.

A seventeenth-century Qur'an from Persia solved the same problem of accommodating the Qur'an text together with its translation on the same page by adopting a different approach to its presentation (Fig. 43). While using different scripts and coloured inks to differentiate between the original Arabic text and its translation, the two texts are here presented together within a rectangles structure which resembles the rulings frame (minbarah) used by scribes for ruling lines on paper. The Qur'an text in black nabati script alternates with its interlinear Persian translation written in a small red nabati/l Fitzgerald: - a Persian script developed in the late fifteenth century. Like the sixteenth-century Qur'an from Herat (Fig. 40), the individual marginal medallions in this Persian Qur'an join up to form a verse counter, the ornamental instructions here being in thuluth script rather than in archaic kufi. The alternating scripts find their counterpart
in the marginal ornaments, where the gold on blue of the fifth verse marker contrasts with the blue on gold of the tenth verse marker. The visual unity of the overall design is achieved through a subtle combination of scripts, coloured inks, and the positioning of the marginal ornaments.

The spatial dimension

The distribution of text on the page does not necessarily need to be generous for the layout to create a sense of space and grandeur. As already seen in those Qur'ans from the Islamic East which are written in early nastaliq script, the compactness of the text area is often a major feature of their page design. To some extent, this spatial effect was determined by the style of script. A high density of text is also characteristic of many Qur'ans produced in the Islamic West, written in maghribi script. This is particularly evident in a Qur'an from Morocco, copied in 473/1080 for the Sharif Sultan, 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad (fig. 43). Here the dynamics operating between the compact text and the illuminated marginal devices work well together due to their proximity, giving the impression of wide margins and spaciousness on the page: The pear-shaped medallions, their gold arabesque designs outlined in blue and picked out in red and green, contain the word for 'five' (thumā) in white kufic script, each positioned near the line of text which contains the end of a fifth verse. Likewise, the marginal large roundels containing the word for 'ten' (thulūt) in white kufic script are functionally placed to indicate the end of a tenth verse. An additional feature which adds to compactness is the reinforcement in the text of the fifth and tenth verse counts. The letter ha' in gold is inserted to mark the end of a fifth verse, ha' having the numerical value of five in the Arabic alphabetic system. A tenth verse is indicated by the insertion of a gold roundel, while gold knots indicate the end of the other verses. A contrasting use of the same script (maghribi) can be seen in an early eighteenth-century Moroccan Qur'an (fig. 45). Here, it gives an uncrowded, free-flowing grace to the text despite being encased within a fixed border. Admittedly, the script is elongated and has more space between the lines than in the maghribi Qur'an produced some two centuries earlier (fig. 44).