squabbles between princedoms, and the scope for destruction was enormous. In this context, multi-volume Qur’ans that were housed in institutions – mosques, madrasas etc. – would have been difficult to carry away and were more likely to have been left to the marauding forces to be looted and destroyed. Thus, today, we find numerous fragments, single sections (‘ ajam) and single folios surviving from multi-volume Qur’ans written in the large, looped ‘Maghribi’ script, but very few complete multi-volume sets. In contrast, the personal, portable manuscripts in small, ‘Andalusi’ script would have been easier to carry away and more likely to have been saved, and in the circumstances of warfare and looting it is more likely that someone would take their own possessions with them before thinking of the contents of the mosque library or madrasa. Thus, today, we find about twenty to thirty, if not more, surviving complete single volume Qur’ans in this small script.

The script on the present Qur’an lies somewhere between the two described above, but the size of the codex itself is larger than that of most other Qur’ans from this region. However, it is a single-volume codex. The commissioning inscription at the end indicates that its original function was for private use, but its size and bulk would probably preclude it from having been a travelling copy for portable use.

In many ways the most striking aspect of the present Qur’an is its illumination. It is remarkable for the quantity of illuminations, the size of the panels and devices, the intricacy of the detail and the variety of designs. The designs of the individual illuminated devices are typical of Western Islamic illumination in general, and comparable examples are found on manuscripts from the twelfth to the fourteenth century. This reflects the conservative nature of manuscript production in the Maghribi, especially of Qur’ans. The use of parchment as the main material for Qur’anic manuscripts in Morocco and Islamic Iberia as late as the fourteenth century is another indication of this phenomenon.

The marginal devices are predominantly roundels or foliate ‘winged’ roundels. These latter devices mark the text every five verses and echo the smaller ha-shaped devices used within the lines of text to indicate fifth verse divisions, which in turn represent the abjad value 5. The roundels mark the text every ten verses and echo the similar smaller devices used within the lines of text to mark the tenth verse divisions. These devices are typical of many Qur’an manuscripts from the Maghribi and Islamic Iberia. However, there are other more distinctive forms within the illumination that can be usefully compared with other manuscripts and also with works of art in other media.

The sura headings are written in ornamental Kufic script in gold, the letters edged in red. Each one has an illuminated medallion filled with gold foliate interface placed adjacent in the margin. At first glance the internal designs of these medallions appear the same, but a closer inspection reveals many subtle variations on the theme of foliate interface, with scarcely any single design repeated in exactly the same form (see Table 6).

There are several types of marginal device marking the sāida points (points for prostration). These are of a wide variety, but are principally of a triangular design augmented with circles and knots, or of a teardrop-shaped design with a roundel as a base and a cone-shaped upper part. In both cases they contain the word sāida in red or gold lettering. Occasionally a sāida point coincides with a hiṣb division or a tenth verse mark, in which case the device is generally more elaborate and contains all the relevant words in red or gold (see Table 7).

Further textual divisions are also marked in the margins: the hiṣb/ juz’ divisions are indicated with two types of medallion. One has a design based on three eccentric circles with a central gold roundel bearing the word (e.g.) hiṣb in red lettering. The outermost of the circles is filled with a radiating band of scalloped waves.

The second type consists of geometric roundels containing the word hiṣb or juz’ in gold ornamental Kufic script on a ground of blue and white interface. These devices are more distinctive and compare very closely with verse division medallions in a very large code of the Qur’an in ‘Maghribi’ script in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul. This manuscript has no colophon or documentary information, but has been attributed to both Nasrid Granada and Marinid Morocco. The internal geometric designs of both manuscripts are worth illustrating to show their similarity (see Table 8).

The opening double page of illumination in cat. 21 has large square panels with central lobed roundels containing geometric interface surrounded by gold inner border-bands and four spandrels of vegetal interface in gold. A palmette medallion of similar interface extends into the margin from each outer border. The popularity and longevity of this general design in the Muslim west can be seen by comparing the present example to an illuminated page in a Qur’an manuscript written at Valencia in 578 AH/1182 CE, and to a Spanish binding of the fifteenth century (see figs. 6 and 7).
The geometric design within the lobed circle contains an eight-pointed star. This form was quite common and appears in various media over several centuries, including the rib structure of two Marrakesh buildings, the Qubbat Barudiyyin of 1120 and the Kutubiyya Mosque of 1162, and the monumental Andalusian textile known as the Las Navas de Tolosa Banner, of the first half of the thirteenth century. The design of the banner is particularly close to that of the present illumination, since the eight-pointed star is contained within a circle, the circle within a square, and both have four corner spandrels (see detail and fig. 8).

The illumination of the final folios of cat. 21 compares quite closely to that of a Qur’an copied in 703 AH/1303 CE, which has been loosely attributed to Nasrid Andalasia, but on no firm grounds (see detail and fig. 9). In relation to more specific forms within the illumination, there are three royal Qur’ans copied in Fez in the first half of the fourteenth century which are stylistically comparable to the present work. One was copied in 1306, one in 1344, and one in 1348-58. All of them show stylistic similarities with cat. 21, but only the 1344 manuscript is published in any detail. It was apparently

**TABLE 6: Sura heading medallions in cat. 21**

**A.** A sura heading medallion coinciding with a **bâsh** division

**B.** A sura heading medallion coinciding with a **sâda** point
copied by the Marinid Sultan ‘Ali b. ‘Uthman II (r. 1331-48) himself, who sent it as a pious gift to the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem. At 21.5 x 19.5 cm it is somewhat smaller than the present codex (which is perhaps surprising, considering it was a royal production for a waqf of the highest importance), but it does contain several decorative elements that compare rather closely to the present examples (see Table 9).

There is a propensity to assign sophisticated western Islamic manuscripts of the later medieval period to Granada, because it is associated popularly with Moorish romance and the swansong of a glorious civilization. The survival of the great palace of the Alhambra and the Romantic place in more recent European literary and cultural history that it has assumed further enhances this mystique. However, Morocco, and especially Fez during the Marinid dynasty, was equally a place of great wealth and sophistication. The Marinid dynasty was extremely rich, thanks chiefly to the fine wool that it exported to Europe, but it also traded luxury African goods to Europe, including salt, ivory, ostrich feathers, incense and other perfumes, pepper, ambergris and, significantly, large amounts of gold in ingot and powder form. As well as a wealthy and cultured royal family, there was a large aristocracy of political, religious and military families, which was sophisticated and fond of luxury, but also devout and very keen on artistic and architectural patronage, especially in a religious context. During the early fourteenth century numerous mosques, madrasas and libraries were endowed in Fez, not just by the Sultan, but by wealthy aristocrats and merchants. The material prosperity of the Marinid state and the image that it adopted at this time, as champion of Maghribi Islam, explains the large number of pious donations (waqf) made by members of the dynasty to the benefit of public institutions in their own towns and in captured towns, as well as those of the holy cities of the East. Moreover, Fez itself was a “metropolis of humanities, sciences and arts”, and within this context scriptoria and libraries flourished, as did the crafts and tradesmen associated with such activity. Even in the eleventh century Fez had 104 paper factories. By the thirteenth century that figure had increased to over 400. The underestimated sophistication and artistic patronage of the Marinid rulers and aristocracy provides an appropriate context for the production of a luxury copy of the Qur’an like cat. 21. It may also lead us in time to attribute a larger number of late medieval luxury ‘Maghribi’ manuscripts to Marinid Morocco rather than to Nasrid Granada, which, despite the cultured milieu of Granada itself, was a kingdom in general decline, surrounded by hostile and aggressive Christian neighbours, and often at odds even with its Muslim brethren in Morocco.
**Far Left**
Fig. 6 Illuminated page from a Qur'an written at Valencia in 1182 CE (Istanbul University Library, Ms. A.5754)

**Left**
Fig. 7 Central panel of a leather bookbinding, Spain, 13th century (Museum of Art and Archaeology, Barcelona)

**Far Left**
Detail of opening illumination of cat. 21, with diagram of geometry

**Left**
Fig. 8 Central panel of the Las Navas de Tolosa Banner, c. 1200-50, with diagram of geometry

**Far Left**
Finispece of cat. 21

**Left**
Fig. 9 Finispece of manuscript dated 1303 (Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Ms. or. arabe 385)
Cat. 21 was certainly in Morocco in the post-mediaeval period, for several ownership inscriptions list births and deaths of members of the Sa'did and 'Alawi families. The earliest is dated 13 Rajab 1006 AH/23 March 1598 CE and records the birth of a certain 'Ubayd b.'Abd al-Salam in the palace of Rabat. At that time Rabat was under the control of the Sa'dids, although it was a time of great unrest, with three brothers, Zaydan, ' Abdallah and Muhammad, all vying for power. The next inscription is over a century later, dating to the early ' Alawi dynasty, and mentions the name 'Abd al-Wahid and the date 27 Muharram 1110 AH/7 August 1698 CE. The next mentions no names but the date 28 Rajab 1112 AH/10 January 1701 CE. The next mentions the names 'Abd al-Wahid ibn Muhammad and Sultan Ismail (r. 1682-1727) and the date 23 Rajab 1139 AH/18 March 1727 CE. This inscription no doubt refers either to the Sultan himself, who died in the year the inscription was written, or possibly to one of his sons (this part of the inscription is illegible). The final inscription mentions perhaps another son of Sultan Ismail, who, we are told, died in Rajab or Shawal 1141 AH/February-March 1739 CE.

3 Two manuscripts from Andalusia in the large looped script are a copy of the Shihab al-Abbar in the Royal Library, Rabat, Ms.1810, copied at Valencia in 568 AH/1172 CE, exactly the period when the group of small format Valencian Qur’ans was being produced (see New York 1992, no. 77, p. 307); and a single isn’ of the Qur’an copied at Valencia in 602-30 AH/1205-32 CE, see Sotheby's, London, 13 October 2004, lot 3. Three manuscripts from Morocco in the small ‘ Andalusí’ script are two Qur’ans copied at Marrakesh, one in 599 AH/1202 CE and one in 635 AH/1238 CE, and one copied in Consta in 587 AH/1191 CE; see Janet 1992a, p. 89.
4 The Moroccan and Berian examples are too numerous to list, but there are many of Berian provenance in the Bocot Library and many of Moroccan provenance in the Royal Library, Rabat. For the Bougie manuscript see Quartich 1990, pp. 36-37.
5 As was the case with the Almorahads and the Almohads.
6 Ms. T. 360. Single folios of this manuscript are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund 1942 (42.63), and the Cleveland Museum of Art. This is by far the largest and most grandiose Maghribi Qur’an to have survived. Its leaves measure 53 x 60 cm. For the Marinid attribution see New York 1987, no. 40, p. 57; for the Nasrid attribution see New York 1992, no. 83, p. 374.
7 Istanbul University Library, inv. no. A.8754.
8 Museo d’Arte i d’Arqueologia, Barcelona.
10 Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, or. arabe 385; see Paris 2001, no. 62, pp. 94-95; and Lings 1976, no. 105.
11 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Arab. 2.
12 Haram al-Sharif Islamic Museum, Jerusalem, inv. no. 3; see Khaled 2001, pp. 66-63.
14 The name ‘Marina’ wool comes from Marinid dynasty, whose farmers and wool merchants developed this type of fine wool from their sheep and introduced it to Italy and other European nations.
15 For instance, the ‘Attar Minadra, 1310-11, the Mashabiya Madrasa, 1346, and the Qarawiyin Library, 1350.
16 E.g., art. ‘Marina’.
18 Ibid., p. 108.
Large illuminated Qur'an in naskh script

Eastern Iran
About 1200

Arabic manuscript on buff paper, 337 folios. Eleven lines of black naskh per page, intermittent recitation marks in red, accompanied by a Persian interlinear translation in small black naskh. Individual verses marked by a gold rosette, pointed in red and green. Fifth verse divisions are marked within the text by a gold teardrop motif, pointed in red and green, and in the margin by a large upright 'palmette-tree', illuminated with gold and red, a green dot in the middle, and outlined in blue. Tenth verse divisions are marked in the margin by a large medallion, gold and polychrome, flecked and pointed around its circumference, and containing an inscription in gold Kufic relating to the number of verses passed. Fifth and tenth verses also marked in the margins with red letters, یا and یعنی respectively. Last and sub divisions are marked in large silver Kufic in the margins. There are other marginal annotations in red and silver throughout. The edges of some pages are neatly restored. Sura headings are in gold Kufic. Mid-point of the Qur'an is marked by unusual bifolium, illuminated predominantly in red and gold, with six lines of naskh within a knotted frame, with panels above and below containing the sura heading in white Eastern Kufic on a ground of red and blue, decorated with gold and white arabesques. These large medallions, gold and polychrome, protrude from the frame into the outer margin of each folio, the central one unattached. Incomplete at beginning and end, with traces of fire damage, in a modern green leather binding, filleted and with four gold corner motifs on the central field.

FOLIO 39.5 x 40 cm

This imposing Qur'an, remarkable for being almost complete and for the unusual style of its illuminated central bifolium, belongs to a small group of manuscripts copied in Eastern Iran in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Like the other manuscripts in this group, it marks a point of transition between the Qur'ans copied in Eastern Kufic in the eleventh and twelfth century and those in the khatt al-yabisah or 'dry' scripts, i.e. naskh, muhaqqaq and naskhi, which by the end of the thirteenth century dominated Qur'an production in the eastern Islamic lands. The angular naskh script, dark buff paper, marginal and intertextual devices and dimensions all bear close comparison to those of a Qur'an copied in 1270 CE and attributed by David James to Eastern Iran or North India. In this manuscript James notes the angular, archaic form of the letter kaf, which harks back to Eastern Kufic script. The same feature is found in the present manuscript, along with other features of Eastern Kufic Qur'ans, such as the sura headings, which consist only of the title in gold Eastern Kufic script, and are unmarked by any device in the margin. The distinctive 'palmette-trees' found both in this manuscript and the 1270 Qur'an, as well as the more usual medallions with projecting finials marking every tenth verse and the teardrop-shaped fifth verse markers, are also features found in Eastern Kufic Qur'ans from eastern Iran. The presence of these features in the present manuscript confirms David James's observation that the move from Eastern Kufic to naskh Qur'ans was a gradual transition.

The richly illuminated bifolium that marks the mid-point of the text, however, is strikingly different from contemporary surviving examples. Though the overall symmetrical design, consisting of illuminated panels above and below the framed text block, is not unusual in Qur'ans of this period, the loose knotwork forming geometric patterns that fills the text frame and the square corner pieces in the bottom panels is quite distinctive. Another feature that sets the illumination apart is the repetition of the word 'Allah' in small white Eastern Kufic to fill the borders of the cartouches of the upper panels as well as the inner rings of the medallions projecting into the margins.

The interlinear Persian translation, the imposing size, as well as the marginal commentary on Qur'anic recitation (qura'a), suggest that the Qur'an may have been for institutional rather than personal use.