CHAPTER SEVEN

Back to Baghdad

From Iraq and Iran during the second quarter of the fourteenth century we have a number of manuscripts that either form coherent groups, such as the Arghūn al-Kāmilī Qur’āns, or are important landmarks in the history of Qur’ānic calligraphy and illumination, such as the Yahyā al-Šīfī manuscript. These enable us to imagine what was going on in places such as Baghdad and Shirāz, and possibly Tabrīz. In this chapter we examine the most important manuscripts produced between the death of Īlāyī in 1316 and the 1344-46 Qur’ān of Tāshī-Khāṭūn. Politically this period is a confused one, with the fall of the Ṯālūnids and the rise of the Jalāyirids and Injūrīd dynasties. It is perhaps not surprising that in the entire period we have only one manuscript that can be associated unquestionably with an historical personality. However, we do know the names of two manuscript illuminators, and in this respect we are more fortunate than historians of manuscript illustration, who know from sources the names of several painters in this period, but have no pictures bearing their indubitable signatures.

Baghdad Qur’āns

We are fortunate in having a group of manuscripts from Baghdad, evidently produced by the same team over a ten-year period, which enables us to trace developments there in the third decade of the fourteenth century. This group, hitherto unknown, consists of five complete Qur’āns and one fragmentary manuscript (Cat.49, 52, 63, 65 & 66). All are in rayḥān, and all but one are signed by Arghūn al-Kāmilī, one of the sixīthāt. Cat.49, 52, 62 & 65 have complete colophons giving his name in various forms. Arghūn al-Kāmilī is described by some authors as Turkish, by others as Persian. He is said to have been born in Iraq ‘Ajami and brought up in Baghdad, turkī-l-ajīl ‘arabī-l-ādāb, where he became expert in all the classic hands, especially muḥāqqaq and rayḥān. According to Qudū Qāmil, Arghūn

Fig. 106 (Cat. 66). Text-page, folio 5v. Sūrah XXXI, Isra‘ (The Night Journey), verses 31-34; Sūrah XXXII, Sūrah (Adoration), ‘ayyākh 1-3.

The script is rayḥān, almost certainly the work of Arghūn al-Kāmilī, a master of that hand and one of the six famous pupils of Yaqūt.
wrote the inscriptions in two madrasahs in Baghdad, the Mirjâniyyah and the "one beside the bridge". This may not be true, as the first was not founded until 1356, eleven years after Arghûn is supposed to have died, but historians are not always accurate in these matters.3 Arghûn, who is believed to have died around 1344-45 is said to have copied the Qur'ân twenty-nine times. The five manuscripts belong to this period, and three are by the same illuminator, whose name is given in Cat. 62.

All five manuscripts are in rayhân, Arghûn's speciality, although he is said to have been the master of every hand. None of them name Baghdad, or any other city, but as he is reputed to have lived there we may assume that all the Qur'âns come from there. These, like other early fourteenth-century works by famous calligraphers, are signed by the illuminators, and this is one of our reasons for believing them genuine. The painters must have wanted to draw attention to their association with these famous calligraphers, and would thus have been unlikely to put their names to something they knew to be a forgery, particularly if the manuscript were being sold for a large sum. If a facsimile, or deliberate forgery, were produced, there was no need for the illuminator to sign the manuscript, which was the normal practice. Thus, in our opinion, the chances of at least four of the Arghûn manuscripts being genuine are quite high.

The script in the Chester Beatty pages (Cat. 66) is somewhat larger than that in the other copies, but they all follow the type of rayhân usually associated with Yâqût. All the copies except Cat. 49 have thirteen lines of script to the page. The manuscripts copied between 1329 and 1341 are all illuminated in the same style. In one of these (Cat. 62), the name of the painter is given in panels above and below the colophon as Muḥammad ibn

Sayf al-Dîn al-Naqqâsh. The same arrangement was used for Muhammad ibn Aybak's name in several parts of the Anonymous Baghdad Qur'ân (Cat. 39). Apart from these manuscripts we have no examples of Arghûn's work. Nevertheless, with the exception of Ibn Aybak, he is the only named painter whose activities we can trace in Iranian and Iraqi manuscripts at this time.

Muḥammad ibn Sayf al-Dîn was an excellent and inventive designer, as well as being a master of traditional compositions, the earliest of which occurs in Cat. 62, and consists of a star-polygon with projecting arms. It has palmette-and-blossom borders to the medallions, similar examples of which occur in Qur'âns made in Baghdad and Tabriz before 1316 (Cat. 39, 40 & 46), but are not found elsewhere before 1337.

The painter's undoubted pièce de résistance occurs in Cat. 53; it is a magnificent swastika composition. Although the swastika is relatively frequent in Islamic design, its appearance in Qur'ân illumination is rare. But it appears in the work of Ibn Muḥâdir and Muḥammad ibn Sayf al-Dîn. We can see it in the background to the colophon page of Part 2 of the Baybars Qur'ân (Cat. 1). In the same volume, corners are squared-off in a distinctive manner, just as we see in Cat. 53. The outermost border of Cat. 53 is composed of blank palmettes on an undecorated ground. Apparently the only other example of this type of border in fourteenth-century Qur'âns before 1330 occurs in the work of Ibn Muḥâdir, providing another link between him and Baghdad.

The other manuscripts illuminated by Muḥammad ibn Sayf al-Dîn show that he was fond of a variety of motifs. To contain inscriptions he often employs a motif ending in an

Fig. 107 (Cat. 49). Text-page, folio 269r, Baghdad 1320. Sūrat LXXI, Al-Irân (Friday Prayer), 49th-51st verses. The text is in rayhân, is signed by Arghûn al-Kâmilî, one of the finest exponents of that hand. At the bottom of the page appears the illuminated heading of the next surah. The illuminator is unknown but he was also responsible for the illumination of a Qur'ân dated 1326 copied by Almân ibn al-Suhrawardi, Fig. 48 (Cat. 48).

Fig. 108 (Cat. 53). Text-page, folio 237r. Sūrat II, Al-Baqara (The Cow), 48th-86th verses. Al-Irân (The Family of 'Îsâ), 6th-16th verses. Rayhân script by Arghûn al-Kâmilî, illumination by Muḥammad ibn Sayf al-Dîn al-Naqqâsh.

Fig. 109 (Cat. 49). Colophon, folio 287v. The manuscript was completed by Arghûn al-Kâmilî, almost certainly in Baghdad in Ramadân 720/October 1320.

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eight-pointed star-shape, and at the end of each panel the shape is repeated in the form of a half-star which is always filled with a rosett or blossom. Throughout the manuscripts sūrah headings are frequently written in cartouches of boldly irregular shapes and very often culminate in a particularly distinctive marginal palmette. These palmettes occur in three of his four Qur’āns (Cat. 53, 62 & 66), and consist of multi-petalled blossoms in dark and light blue, with some of the petals ending in curling points. It is always joined to the sūrah-panel by a single slender line.

Muhammad ibn Sayf al-Dīn and Arghūn al-Kāmil form one of three “teams” known to us in Iraq and Iran from the first half of the fourteenth century: the others are Ibn al-Suhrawardi and Muhammad ibn Aybak, and Yahiya al-Ṣūfī and Ḩamzah al-ʿAlawi, whose work is discussed below. They worked together over periods lasting from two to ten years, perhaps even longer. We cannot be certain that Muhammad ibn Sayf al-Dīn worked in Baghdad like Ibn Aybak, but the chances are that he did. His production resembles Baghdadi work from the early years of the century. Although familiar with traditional patterns, his work is more striking for its original features. Unfortunately, we have no idea for whom any of these manuscripts were made. It was just at this time that the Jallāyrid Sultan Ḥasan-i Buzurg was consolidating his hold on Baghdad, after the collapse of Ḥāmilid power on the death of Abū Saʿīd in 1335. At least one of the Qur’āns might have been made for the Jallāyrid monarch or some member of his retinue, but there is no documentary evidence for this.

Tabriz: the Taʿizz Qurʾān of the ‘Eunuchs’ Lady’

Among the Qurʾāns of the Chester Beatty Library are the remains of a once-magnificent manuscript copied in thirty parts (Cat. 55). The text is written five lines to a page in elegant thulūṭ-rayḥūn, in gold with blue voweRs, a typical Iranian colour combination. All of the parts must have borne the same date, for, although in several cases the final folios are missing, or badly damaged, both Jaz’ 8 and Jaz’ 26 state that they were written in the month of June 1334. All colophons are in a neat naskh hand and say: “Copied by the sinful slave Amir Hājī ibn Aḥmad al-Ṣayin…”. These colophons must have been inserted by the calligrapher at the same time, on completion of the manuscript. Otherwise it is difficult to see how he could have copied out the entire manuscript in one month in the complicated mustaʿṣar style. The manuscript is not Mamlūk, as some scholars appear to have thought, but Iranian. Rayḥūn Qurʾāns in gold with blue vocalization are not characteristically Mamlūk. Several Iranian manuscripts, though, are written in this way, including some of the most famous, the Qurʾān from Ḥamadān (Cat. 45) and the 1344–45 Qurʾān by Yahiya al-Ṣūfī (Cat. 66). The placing of a blue and gold border round each page is also an Iranian feature, though it does occur very occasionally in Mamlūk Qurʾāns at this time.

None of the ajzāʾ have opening pages of illumination. As in the Qurʾāns described at the end of the previous chapter, illumination is almost exclusively confined to the initial pages of text. The layout and illumination of these opening pages are virtually identical.
with those of several aja'az in the Qur'an of Şirgihmish (Cat.72 & 56). Two types of ground are used for the central panels of text: one is floral over red cross-hatchings with a treble dot motif, and the other consists of a wave-diaper pattern. Similar ones are used in the Şirgihmish manuscript (Cat.72). That manuscript rarely employs an outer border of palmettes; the Chester Beatty manuscript by al-Šaȳini does, but only of simple blue spikes. In its margin there is a single pear-shaped medallion with arabesque decoration, the same device appearing in the Cairo manuscript too. Some of the opening pages, those of Juz' 21 for example, have a chain-link border that does occur in much later Mamlûk manuscripts but which first appears in İli-Khâni work of the early fourteenth century, and virtually nowhere else. There is another fragmentary multi-part Qur'ân in the British Library which has many features in common with al-Šaȳini's (Cat.55) and was probably made about the same time.6

The most important clue to the origins of this Qur'ân is probably the name of the scribe. The name Amir ʿAbi Ḥajj does occur among the Mamlûks, but there is no reason why it could not be İli-Khâni. The niṣbah al-Šaȳini is unknown in Mamlûk society, or at least a detailed examination of the annals does not reveal anyone so called. Şaȳin is of Mongol origin; it was one of the names of Bâṭû Khan, grandson of Chingiz, who died about 1255-26.7 Near the Mongol capital of Sulțâniyyâh in Iran was a place called Qâlat Şaȳin or Şaȳin-Qalâh.8 It is possible that someone with the niṣbah al-Šaȳini could have come from that area, although a much more likely explanation is that the calligrapher was in some way associated with the İli-Khâni vizir Rukn al-Dîn Şaȳin, a protégé of the Amir Chiţîn Solţu, who was appointed vizir in 1324 but executed in 1327, in which case the origin of this Qur'ân may be Tabrîz.9

The manuscript was sent to Ta'izz in the Yemen at some stage in its history. Several aja'az have a barely-decipherable waqfīyyah which reads: "This Blessed Section was endowed in perpetuity by our mistress, the noble lady10 of the Eunuch Jamâl al-Dîn Farhân... for those who read the Noble Qur'ân in the Farhânsiyah Madrasâh established in Ta'izz the protected...")11 The exact date of this madrasâh is unknown, but it was built in the second half of the fourteenth century; so the Qur'ân must have been bequeathed to it between 1334 and 1400. It most probably reached Ta'izz by way of the Mamlûks, though it is difficult to discover how.

Shiraz: the Qur'ân of Tâshî-Khâtûn

The Qur'ân of Tâshî-Khâtûn is one of the few Qur'âns from the first half of the fourteenth century for which calligrapher, illuminator, patron, date and place of production are all established beyond doubt. According to Alâhî-i 'Ajam by Muḥammad Nâṣîr Shihrizî, published in Bombay in 1896, two parts of the Qur'ân were in the library of Ayatallâh Aqâ ʿAbî ʿUyûsîf Ḥâdâ'îq; two were in the National Library of Paris; and three were in the Pars Museum.12 Only four of these have been identified: Juz' 2, 3, 11 and 30.13 These parts, however, give us all the documentary information we need. The manuscript was written by the famous calligrapher Yaḥyâ al-Ṣâfî and illuminated by Hanzâh ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAlâwî and there are two colophons in the surviving portions.14 Juz' 11 reads: "It was written in the day of the Sultanate of the greatest Sultan, Possessor of the necks of the kings of the world,15 User of kings and sultans, the Alexander of his time, Quintessence of the elements, Jamâl al-Milâkah wa'l-Dunyâ wa'l-Dîn, Honour of Islam and the Muslims, Shahîk ʿAbî ʿIṣâq, may God make his rule eternal, by the slave Yaḥyâ al-Jâmâlî al-Ṣâfî in the year 745 [1344-45] at the royal abode Shiraz. " Shiraz at that time was under the control of the Injîlî monarch ʿAbî ʿIṣâq (1343-54). In Juz' 3 there is a similar colophon. Neither of these actually states that it was ʿAbî ʿIṣâq who commissioned the manuscript, only that it was written during his rule. It could be inferred from this that the Sultan was the commissioner, though it would be unusual for this to be mentioned by means of kunta bi-râsûr or bi-anûr. In fact, the commissioner is far more likely to have been ʿAbî ʿIṣâq's mother Tâshî-Khâtûn, who bequeathed the manuscript to the Shâh-i Chirâgh mosque in Shiraz, which she renovated between 1344 and 1349.16 A waqfīyyah in the manuscript tells us: "This juz', together with the remainder of the thirty aja'az of the Word of the Lord, was bequeathed to the exalted shrine of the greatest Imam and noble resting place of the delight of the eye of the Prophets, Aḥmad ibn Mūsâ al-Ridâ, the peace of God be upon him, by the exalted lady, Sultan of the ladies of her time, queen of the kingdom of Solomon, Tâshî-Khâtûn, may her greatness be prolonged, as an endowment in perpetuity. May God accept it from her."

Ibn Baṭṭûţa, who visited the shrine around 1347-48, remarks upon the devotion of the lady to the shrine of the Imam.17 "Tâshî-Khâtûn, mother of the Sultan ʿAbî ʿIṣâq, has built a large madrasah and zaqîyyah here in which there is always food for those coming to and those departing from Shiraz, and where Qur'ân readers continually read the Qur'ân at the tomb. The lady is accustomed to go to the shrine on Monday nights when the judges, faqîhs, and nobles of Shirzâ gather there. . . When people arrive the Qur'ân is recited in its entirety from copies (aja'âz)."18 The recitors read in the most melodious voices. Food is taken, the preacher then delivers his sermon. This occurs between the noon and evening prayers while the lady is in a room overlooking the mosque which has a window. Then drums and trumpets are sounded at the door of the tomb, as happens at the doors of kings."

The Calligrapher

The calligrapher, Yaḥyâ ibn Nâṣîr al-Jâmâlî al-Ṣâfî, was reputedly a pupil of Aḥmad Rûmî and of Mubârâk Shâh ibn Qâbû (and/or Mubârâk Shâh al-Suyûtî), who was a pupil of Yaḥyâ and, according to some authorities, one of the sitâh.19 He was a practising Sûfî, which explains his name. al-Jâmâlî presumably refers to the patronage of ʿAbî ʿIṣâq, whose throne-name was Jâmâl al-Dîn. Buildings in Shirzâ and Najaf bore inscriptions by him, and one of these still exists. He was in the service of the Amir Chiţîn Solţu, the famous İli-Khâni warlord who was executed in 1327 by ʿAbî ʿUdâ. After the fall of the İli-Khâni,
Yahya ibn Nasir entered the service of the Injuid, and after their collapse, that of the Muzaffarids. How this came about is not known, but Pir Husayn, grandson of Chiapin, occupied Shiraz for two years from 1339 before being driven out by his nephew Ashraf’s. It was only after Ashraf’s withdrawal, that Shaykh Abu Ishq took control. Perhaps Yahya was in the service of Pir Husayn and remained there after the time of Abu Ishq.

There are five lines of script on each page of the manuscript, which measures 50 x 36 cm. It is a fine muhaqqaq-rayhun, with many of the characteristics of a classic muhaqqaq, but with the fine vowels of rayhun. An odd feature of this manuscript is that jaz’ 11 is dated 1344-45, while jaz’ 3 bears the date 1345-46. Although this may simply be an error, it is not impossible that the calligrapher began with the shorter shirah, as is the custom when the text is being committed to memory. There is no reason why it should not have been done this way, although usually the calligrapher began with jaz’ 1.

Several other manuscripts and inscriptions bear the name of Yahya al-Sufi. The earliest is a Qur’an in the Türk ve Islam Eserleri Müzesi dated 1338-39 (Cat.61). Another manuscript, in an identical hand, is dated 1339-40 (Cat.64). All other items calligraphed by Yahya al-Sufi date from the time of Abu Ishq. At the ancient site of Persepolis there is an inscription by him which records the visit of Sultan Abu Ishq in August 1347. It consists of eleven lines of fine thuhib, but is now much damaged. A second inscription is found in the Masjid-i Atiq in Shiraz, where in 1351 it was inscribed around the upper part of the Khudai-Khana, or Bayt al-Maqabih, the Qur’an house built by the Injuid monarch. According to al-Shirazî’s Shadd al-Farîr, this building contained many Qur’ans written by famous men of the past. The Khudai-Khana was built as a repository for Qur’ans, but manuscripts were probably copied there too. Yahya al-Sufi’s inscription is reproduced in brick, and is unusual because the interstices of the letters are filled in with glazed tile.

Both these manuscripts predate the rule of Abu Ishq in Shiraz. We cannot tell where the calligrapher was between 1338 and 1340, but he must have been at Tabriz or Shiraz. While much of the decoration in the later manuscript (Cat.64) is Ottoman, the Türk ve Islam Eserleri Müzesi manuscript (Cat.65) has exceptionally fine illumination, and is greatly superior to that in the 1344-45 Shiraz Qur’an (Cat.69), or to the 1334 Qur’an already referred to (Cat.55). If the manuscripts are genuinely by Yahya al-Sufi, they must have been illuminated after this time.

The final jaz’ of the 1344-45 Tashi-Khatun Qur’an (Cat.69) bears the signature of the painter Hamzah ibn Muhammad al-Alawi, whose work is not known elsewhere. There are no illuminated frontispieces, and the manuscript begins directly with the illuminated text.

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Fig. 112 (Cat. 41). Right-hand frontispiece, folio iv, probably Baghdad 1339-40.

This most unusual composition is the work of Muhammad ibn Sayf al-Din al-Naqshab who illuminated several Qur’ans by Arghun al-Kanli, including this one. The double swastika design is found in Qur’an illumination, but rarely used so prominently.
Fig. 112 (Cat. 66). Text-page, folio 17, circa 1355. Safat LXVI, Nish (Nasbi), pages 1–10.
These pages bear no attribution but both script and illumination are identical to those found in several Qur’ans copied by Arghun al-Khamili and illuminated by Muhammad ibn Sayf al-Dhikla. The script is a classic naskh.
Fig. 115 (Cat. 60). Pars Museum, Shiraz 456, Jaz' 11, text page, Sura X, Yūnis (Jonah), ṣūrah 2.
Gold-muqarnas-rayšān script by Yahyā al-Janzūli al-Sīrāh, who produced this manuscript in Shiraz, almost certainly for Tāhir ibn Qāsim, son of the ʿImār al-ʿAdil Qāsim, in 1344-45. The illumination by Hamzah ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAlaʾfī is very mediocre. Most ʿImār al-ʿAdil manuscripts are poorly illuminated and illustrated.

Fig. 116 (Cat. 60). Pars Museum, Shiraz 456, Jaz' 11, text page, Sura X, Yūnis (Jonah), ṣūrah 3.

Fig. 117 (Cat. 45). Olayyati's Hamadan Qur'an, detail of opening page of text, folio 3r. Sura XVII, Bani Isra'il (The Children of Israel).

Right
Fig. 118 (Cat. 55). Jaz' 21, illuminated opening page of text, folio iv. Sura XXIX, al-ʾAnkabūt (The Spider), ṣūrah 46.
Multi-part Qur'ans in gold rayšān with blue vocalization, copied without an opening frontispiece, are undoubtedly of Iranian or Mamlūk origin. This manuscript was probably copied and illuminated in Tāhir but was transported to Tārir in the Yemen and endowed to the Karbāasıyঃ Maksūrā at the end of the fourteenth century.

Overleaf
Fig. 119 (Cat. 60). Text-page, Jaz' 6. Sura V, al-Mīrād (The Table), ṣūrah 41.
These pages have been ascribed to various locations, usually Sultanate India. In fact they are part of the same Qur'ān as Fig. 120, but at some stage in their history were given additional decoration, including these distinctive borders in red or white ḱufi over arabesque scrolls. The ḱufi is not a commentary but consists of pious sayings.

Fig. 120 (Cat. 60). Text-page, Jaz' 21, folio 121r, Anatolia or Central Asia, circa 1335. Sura XXX, Kāmil (The Roman Empire), ṣūrah 60.
Several odd volumes from this multi-part Qur'ān exist in collections around the world, though the best-known portions are various loose folios with ḱufi borders (Fig. 119). The script is a distinctive thulth-muḥaqqaq, three lines to the page, with a Persian interlinear translation. The ṣūrah heading of Sura XXXI, Laylān, is copied in a very idiosyncratic hand. The illumination is almost identical to that in Fig. 124.
The decoration of Hamzah al-‘Alawi is unexceptional, and in parts even mediocre. Indeed, Injū‘ī’s illustrated manuscripts produced in Shiráz at this time employ a crude, “folk”, style of painting, and the general level of workmanship does not seem to have been very high.

**A Turkish Group**

There is one final group of Qur’āns to examine before we return to look at developments in Egypt. Although documentary evidence to prove where these manuscripts were produced is lacking, they appear to form a coherent sub-group (Cat.58-60). Several museums and private collections possess pages of a Qur’ān (Cat.66) which once existed in thirty parts. On each page the text is copied in groups of three lines, which is very unusual.28 The script is a very large uthāth verging on mubāqaq, with rarely more than four words to the line. Verticals and the final letter mīm are long and spindly, while the letter kāf consists of a vertical stroke of the pen surmounted by a small kufic version of the character. Script and vocalization are in black. Between the lines is a Persian translation arranged in a zig-zag manner. All the leaves from the sixth juz’ have been given borders on their three outer sides, consisting of red or grey kufic inscriptions over fine foliate scrolls. The two corners are marked by interlocked geometric designs. These pages are often described as Indian, and there is certainly a resemblance between the Indian bihari script and the large uthāth in which the text of this Qur’ān is copied, and it is possible that the kufic inscriptions were added in India. However, when the surviving ajza’ which do not have the kufic additions are examined in their entirety, they are seen to be quite unlike any Indian Qur’āns we know from the Sultanate period.29

There is, on the other hand, quite a marked resemblance to a Qur’ān in the John Rylands Library (Cat.59). The layout of the two manuscripts is identical, with a three-line format of almost identical script, which is confined to one line on the opening folios of each juz’. In Cat.59 each juz’ begins with a petalled rosette bearing intersecting geometric compositions. This became popular in later Iranian Qur’āns, but at this time the only dated Iranian manuscript which uses opening rosettes is the Qur’ān produced in Marāqīh at around

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**Fig. 121** (Cat. 59). Juz’ 6, Anatolia or Central Asia, circa 1357. Sūrat IV, al-No‘ār (Women), āyah 176; Sūrat V, al-Mi‘ādah (The Table), nāsūhah. Like Cat. 60, this manuscript uses a curious mubāqaq- mubāqaq with the same three-line division of the page. The page in this case is of unusual horizontal format like the old kufic Qur’āns. The name Allāh is always written in gold taqqāq and the illumination is in vivid polychrome. Although the provenance is not certain, it was probably Anatolia. There is a Persian and Turkish interlinear translation, which also indicates a Turkish-speaking area.

**Fig. 122** (Cat. 59). Illuminated opening page, Juz’ 5, folio 2r. Sūrat IV, al-No‘ār (Women), āyah 28. The script, illumination and format are all most unusual. The single line of palmettes in the vertical border is virtually unique. The manuscript looks almost “custom-made” for the type of Anatolian Qur’ān reading-stand illustrated in Fig. 125.
1338 (Cat. 61). The most remarkable aspect of the decoration is the outer borders, which occur either on all three outer sides or on the vertical ones alone, and consist of a line of palmettes or of palmettes together with pear-shapes, which greatly exaggerates the manuscript’s horizontal axis. The only contemporary parallel with this is found in a magnificent copy of the Sahih of al-Bukhari dated 1294.29 In 1383 this was in the mosque of al-Raml in Palestine, but its place of origin is unknown.30 The other tripartite borders are often in the form of arabesque scrolls which culminate in palmettes, prolonging the corners into points and giving a “Baroque” effect.

The John Rylands manuscript has already been the subject of several studies by Turkologists, since it contains not only an early Persian translation of the Qur’anic text but an early Turkic one as well. According to these authorities, the Turkic translation is late twelfth/early thirteenth-century Qarakhânid, though the manuscript is later. Eckmann states: “The few innovations introduced by the copyst...make it plausible that the present manuscript was executed in the second half of the thirteenth century or in the first half of the fourteenth century. Paleographic peculiarities also corroborate this dating.”31

Because of the sumptuousness of the manuscript and the Turkic translation, this Qur’anz has been called Mamluk. However, few of its calligraphic and decorative features occur in Mamluk Qur’anz. Despite the use of Turkish in Cairo and Damascus, and the existence of large Persian-speaking communities in the Mamluk capital, there are no Qur’anz of undoubtedly fourteenth-century Mamluk provenance which contain interlinear translations in those languages.32 The Chester Beatty section of Cat. 60, jaz’ 21, opens with a petalled rosette identical to that at the beginning of jaz’ 22 of Cat. 59. The opening pages of text have a single line in a large thulth-muhaqqiq on a ground of scrolls over a red hatched field. Above and below are panels, the upper ones wider than the lower. The upper panel is divided into three parts, the two outer ones consisting of circles filled with strapwork. The text has three lines of script per page with a small interlinear Persian translation in nasikh. These are all similar to elements in the Cat. 59 manuscript, though the Chester Beatty jaz’ is much more restrained in style and overall appearance.

The manuscript which forms the third part of this group is in Mashhad (Cat. 58). It uses scripts similar to those in the two Qur’anz just examined, though somewhat smaller in scale, with a six rather than three-line division of the page. The Chagatay-Turkic interlinear translation is in a script very close to that used for the translations in Cat. 59, written at an angle with the same sort of ligatures and peculiarities. It is not the same hand, but clearly related. There are also close links between the layout and decoration of this manuscript and the Chester Beatty section of Cat. 60, where the sûrah headings in particular are almost identical in both colour-scheme — red-gold, brilliant green and dark blue — and design. This is the only manuscript to have a detailed colophon, telling us in both Arabic and Chagatay: “This Final, Clear Book, with translation and commentary, was completed by the slave in need of the mercy of God, Opulent, Omniscient, Muhammad ibn Shuykh al-`Abari33, known among his companions as Sayyid al-Khuftaj,34 after great effort and painful torment,
transcribing from a faulty copy and worthless tract, which has been corrected as far as possible, in various tongues, with aid of the Rewarding Monarch, 10 Ramaḍān 737 [14 April 1337].

The origin of these manuscripts almost certainly lies outside the areas which we have so far examined, those of the Mamlūk Sultate and ʿIl-Khānīd Iran and Iraq. One place where they could have been produced is the Qaramānid Sultate of Anatolia. Very similar decoration to that of all three manuscripts, and particularly to that of Cat. 59, occurs in a Qaramānid Qurʿan made in 1314-15 for Khūlī ibn Maḥmūd ibn Qaramān in Konya. The elaborate circular and lozenge-shaped medallions that we find at the beginning of the surviving ajiz of the group are usually devoid of inscriptions, and have a well-established existence in manuscripts from Konya from at least the second half of the thirteenth century.

Highly unusual is the square format of Cat. 59, which, with its lines of palmette edging on the outer borders of several opening pages of illumination matches both the shape and decoration of Qurʿan-stands from thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Anatolia. Indeed, Cat. 59 could almost have been made for one Qurʿan-stand in the Museum of Konya. We must not, however, disregard a possible Central Asian origin for these manuscripts. The Chagatay translation of the Masbāḥ manuscript indicates that it may have been made in the area to the north and east of modern Khurāṣān, where Chagatay was being increasingly spoken after the Mongol invasion of the area. But whatever the origin of these manuscripts

we can certainly discount a Mamlūk one. There is no evidence that copies of the Qurʿan with Turkish translations were ever produced in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria, nor in Iran during the fourteenth century; yet Cat. 59 may have been in Mamlūk hands at some stage, as it bears what looks like a waqfīyah notation in the name of a Mamlūk amir, unfortunately now almost illegible.

This in effect completes our survey of Qurʿan production in Iraq and Iran during the first half of the fourteenth century. As we have seen, with the fall of the ʿIl-Khānīd, and the rise of the Ḥāφūzīd and Ḥāʾīd dynasties, this was a time of some considerable confusion in Iraq and Iran. It is perhaps not surprising that we only have one manuscript that can be associated unquestionably with an historical personality during this period. We have seen how there was significant influence on Mamlūk Qurʿan illumination, though not in quite the way it was believed hitherto. We can now turn to Cairo during the reign of Sultan Shāhīd and see both the consolidation of earlier artistic links with Iraq and Iran, and the establishment of new ones.