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Codicology of the Zayyanid Manuscript: Contexts of Production and Mechanisms of Preservation in Historic Collections

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Abstract: This paper examines the manuscript collections produced in the Zayyanid city of Tlemcen, particularly copies of the Holy Qur'an, as a distinctive documentary and codicological corpus recording the history of book production in the Islamic West. It highlights the material and economic environment shaped by the booksellers' and copyists' market, which facilitated the reproduction of these works and provided the technical conditions necessary for their production. The study also traces the transmission of this manuscript heritage and the mechanisms through which it was preserved. Waqf inscriptions played a central role in safeguarding these manuscripts and ensuring their long-term preservation within the collections associated with the mosques of the Zayyanid capital.

Keywords: Tlemcen; Qur'an copying; book endowment; Zayyanids; manuscript.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The manuscript collections produced in the Zayyanid city of Tlemcen between the seventh and ninth centuries AH/thirteenth and fifteenth centuries CE constitute the principal point of departure for this study. They represent a distinctive documentary and codicological corpus within the material manuscript heritage of the Central Maghreb. These handwritten works, now dispersed among private collections and national and international libraries, are of considerable scholarly importance to historical and codicological research because of the antiquity of their material origins, which date to the late medieval and early modern periods. This is particularly evident in Qur'anic manuscripts, which preserve artistic and technical evidence documenting the development of book production, transcription, and preservation within an integrated material and economic structure centred on the booksellers' and copyists' market. This market functioned as a commercial space for supplying writing materials, while the circulation and preservation of manuscripts were regulated through waqf and endowment inscriptions, which transferred Tlemcen manuscripts from the sphere of commercial exchange to permanent preservation in the collections of historic schools and mosques, including the Great Mosque and the Tashfiniyya, Yaʿqubiyya, and al-ʿUbbad madrasas.

On the basis of these historical data, the central research problem concerns understanding and reconstructing the circulation trajectory of the Zayyanid manuscript in Tlemcen and identifying the structural transformation that affected its cultural and material identity as it moved from the

commercial-economic sphere into the cultural domain. How did the booksellers' and copyists' markets in Tlemcen contribute to stimulating manuscript copying and material production and to making manuscripts available as commodities in circulation? What status did the copying of the Holy Qur'an attain? What were the material and artistic characteristics of the royal Zayyanid Qur'anic manuscripts? How was courtly patronage expressed through the endowment of these manuscripts to the city's collections, and what were the political and religious implications of this practice? From another perspective, how did waqf inscriptions contribute to preserving Zayyanid manuscripts in the collections associated with mosques and madrasas?

2. Al-Qaysariyya Market: A Space for Manuscript Copying and the Commercial Circulation of the Zayyanid Manuscript:

Historically, the expansion of manuscript production in Zayyanid Tlemcen was closely associated with the emergence of booksellers' and copyists' shops. These establishments extended beyond a purely commercial role to perform a structural function in organizing the circulation and transmission of knowledge, benefiting from the vigorous commercial activity of the "al-Qaysariyya Market," which formed the economic centre of the city. The geographical location of these shops, in close proximity to major educational institutions such as the Tashfiniyya Madrasa and the Great Mosque, enabled them to fulfil an important scholarly and social function. The activities of booksellers and copyists were not limited to the technical aspects of

manuscript production, including copying, binding, decoration, and the provision of writing materials such as inks, pens, and paper. Their role also extended to organizing scholarly gatherings and discussions that brought teachers and students together. Consequently, these shops became a fundamental pillar in stimulating authorship and written production and in shaping the defining characteristics of the Zayyanid manuscript corpus.

This accumulation of knowledge further reinforces the historical conclusion that this specialized type of shop existed in the Zayyanid capital from the formative stages of the sultanate. The emergence of booksellers' and copyists' shops was not incidental; rather, it reflected the state's civilizational structure. This conclusion derives its legitimacy from explicit accounts preserved in later historiographical texts, foremost among them those of Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Marrakushi (d. 703 AH/1303 CE) [1], Ibn Marzuq (d. 781 AH/1379 CE)[2], and al-Tanasi (d. 899 AH/1494 CE)[3]. Although concise, these reports provide unequivocal documentary evidence of the firmly established presence of the book trade and manuscript-copying profession within the city's urban fabric from an early period.

In this context, the economic and logistical importance of al-Qaysariyya Market is further demonstrated by its role as the principal commercial space and primary repository supplying the various writing supports and types of paper circulating in Tlemcen. The materials used varied according to the nature of the work and its market value. While the use of parchment gradually declined and became largely restricted to the production of luxury Qur'anic manuscripts,

official correspondence, and certain major juridical compilations, Chinese paper, commonly known as "kāghid," became the principal support for manuscript copying. In Tlemcen and other Maghrebi cities, locally produced Maghrebi and Andalusi paper was widely used[4], before being gradually displaced by imported European paper, also known as Roman kāghid, which was distinguished by its watermarks[5]. This type of paper became firmly established in the market from the late seventh century AH/thirteenth century CE onward [6], owing to its abundant production and comparatively low cost.

By the end of the medieval period, during the ninth century AH/fifteenth century CE, however, imported paper appears to have become the dominant writing support in the booksellers' and copyists' market of Zayyanid Tlemcen. This is confirmed by a highly significant juridical document: the treatise of Ibn Marzuq al-Hafid (d. 842 AH/1438 CE), entitled *Taqrir al-Dalil al-Wadih al-Maʿlum ʿala Jawaz al-Naskh fi Kaghid al-Rum* [Establishing the Clear and Recognized Proof for the Permissibility of Copying on European Paper][7]. This juridical case clearly demonstrates the declining competitiveness of locally produced paper in the markets of Maghrebi cities compared with its European counterpart, which combined large-scale production, low cost, and high material quality. Consequently, the local product became unable to meet the growing demand generated by the vigorous expansion of authorship, copying, and written production in the Zayyanid capital.

2.1 Copying Qur'anic Manuscripts in al-Qaysariyya: The "Quartered Qur'an of the Maraziqa" and Early Imitation of the Ghattusi Style:

In the sixth century AH/twelfth century CE, al-Qaysariyya of Tlemcen was not merely a commercial space; it also constituted an organized artisanal environment governed by the regulations of the hisba. It supported the early development of Qur'anic manuscript production in accordance with well-established Andalusi traditions. This is evident in the professional biography of Abu ʿAbd Allah Muhammad al-Akbar, a descendant of the Maraziqa family (sixth century AH/twelfth century CE), whose scholarly interests focused primarily on the Qur'anic sciences. He was a professional Qur'an copyist who, at a young age, established a shop in al-Qaysariyya, where he combined Qur'an copying with the sale of merchandise to earn his livelihood. This practice reflects the close integration of commercial activity with the scholarly function of the manuscript trade. The quality of his copies reached such a level that people competed to acquire his Qur'anic manuscripts, which were produced in the Andalusi manner [8].

The division of his Qur'an into four separate quarters demonstrates an early awareness of the structural design and practical functionality of Qur'anic manuscripts. It also reflects the adoption by the copyists and booksellers of al-Qaysariyya of the "sectioned Qur'an" format, which was widespread in Andalusi and Maghrebi urban centres. This material division of the Qur'an was intended to facilitate its circulation and collective preservation in mosques and madrasas.

This noble quartered Qur'an derives its historical and documentary significance from the close chronological proximity between the period of its production and the flourishing of Andalusi artistic traditions represented by the predominance of the Ghattusi style[9] in calligraphic design. Ibn Marzuq's imitation of the Ghattusi script was therefore direct and contemporary, resulting in a copy that its later owner, Ibn Marzuq al-Khatib, described as "the utmost in beauty of script and vocalization, scarcely distinguishable from the handwriting of the Ghattusi manuscripts." He also records an exceptionally important codicological detail: the manuscript bore the copyist's signature. Its scribe was identified in early written records through the honorific signatures "the trustworthy jurist" and "the righteous trustee"[10]. This attribution adds an ethical dimension to the professional identity of Tlemcen's manuscript copyists as early as the sixth century AH/twelfth century CE.

However, the loss of this noble quartered Qur'an marked the definitive rupture in a process of material fragmentation that affected this manuscript heritage throughout successive historical periods. The limited surviving documentary evidence indicates that the copy that eventually came into the possession of the family's descendant, Ibn Marzuq al-Khatib, constituted only a surviving portion of a considerably larger original, which he described as "a quartered Qur'an comprising four quarters." Even this remaining fragment became entangled in the turbulent geopolitical circumstances that Tlemcen experienced during the Marinid siege of 737 AH/1337 CE. This critical period ultimately resulted in the

complete disappearance of this already fragmented treasure, which bore the signature of its copyist, Abu ʿAbd Allah al-Akbar. It consequently ceased to exist as a tangible material object and survived only through textual representations preserved in biographical and hagiographical works.[11]

2.2. Al-Qaysariyya of Tlemcen as a Repository of Royal Treasures:

The strategic and symbolic importance of al-Qaysariyya of Tlemcen, particularly the booksellers' and copyists' market within the walled city, is evident in the fact that it transcended its conventional function as a centre for copying and circulating commonly used texts and developed into a vital space housing some of the most precious manuscript treasures. The acquisition of the Qur'an attributed to ʿUthman [12], one of the treasures of the Umayyads of al-Andalus, on behalf of the founding Zayyanid ruler Yaghmurasan ibn Zayyan (633–681 AH/1235–1282 CE) in 646 AH/1248 CE provides compelling evidence of the firmly established status of this dynamic commercial space.

The Zayyanid ruler's immediate response to the manuscript's appearance on the market and his purchase of the Qur'an from the brokers, booksellers, and copyists [13] confirm that al-Qaysariyya was not merely a marketplace crowded with merchants. Rather, it functioned as an open repository possessing sufficient credibility and appeal to become a principal destination for the most valuable royal manuscript collections.

Irrespective of the continuing debate regarding the authenticity of this copy, tracing the trajectory of its

movement provides important insights into transformations of power and sovereignty in the medieval Islamic world. The manuscript travelled from the Islamic East to Córdoba and subsequently to Marrakesh before eventually reaching Tlemcen, where it acquired a distinguished and central position among the treasures of the al-Mashwar Palace. It also assumed an even more prominent role in the official ceremonies of the ruling Zayyanid dynasty until the Marinid siege of Tlemcen in 737 AH/1337 CE, when it was seized by the Marinid sultan Abu al-Hasan. According to the accounts of Ibn Marzuq al-Khatib[14] and Ibn Khaldun (d. 808 AH/1406 CE),[15] it ultimately came to rest in the library of al-Qarawiyyin in Fez. This development carries profound historical significance. It did not merely involve the physical transfer of a precious manuscript; rather, it represented the symbolic appropriation of spiritual centrality from the Zayyanid capital of Tlemcen in favour of the Marinid capital of Fez during this critical period.

2.3 Traditions of Qur'an Copying at the Zayyanid Court:

The presence of the ancient ʿUthmanic Qur'an mentioned above at the Zayyanid court for approximately ninety years undoubtedly established it as the principal historical and authoritative reference for Qur'an copying in Tlemcen until the end of the medieval period. This Qur'an was not merely a treasured object preserved in the royal library; rather, it became a normative exemplar from which the conventions governing the accurate reproduction of ʿUthmanic orthography and the standardization of calligraphic practices in Tlemcen Qur'anic manuscripts were derived[16]. It is

therefore plausible that one of the most significant surviving Zayyanid Qur'ans—namely, the Qur'an of the Zayyanid sultan Abu Zayyan Muhammad ibn Abi Hammu Musa II (796–801 AH/1393–1398 CE), copied in his own hand in Tlemcen in 801 AH/1399 CE—reflected the grandeur and prestige of the appropriated Cordoban exemplar.

This luxurious royal Zayyanid manuscript survives only in its first volume[17]. The Zayyanid sultan copied it in his own hand and endowed it to his library located in the front section of the Great Mosque [18]. The manuscript displays the splendour of the expansive Maghrebi script, with its distinctive Andalusi features, and was executed on gazelle parchment, one of the finest materials used for Qur'anic manuscripts in the Islamic West. Gold illumination appears at the beginning of every sura, at the head of each verse, and throughout the manuscript wherever the Most Beautiful Names of God occur, all of which were inscribed in gold. This "noble quartered Qur'an" therefore constitutes a tangible testimony to the Zayyanid sultans' profound association with the sanctity of the Qur'anic text and the venerable tradition of its transcription.

The precision and aesthetic refinement with which the Zayyanid sultan copied the Qur'an elevate the significance of this "noble quartered Qur'an" beyond that of a purely artistic undertaking, transforming it into a political and religious symbol that linked the Zayyanid throne to the sophisticated techniques of producing luxurious Andalusi Qur'anic manuscripts. The accompanying image illustrates the aesthetic qualities of this royal Qur'an:

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Surat al-Fatiha and the opening verses of Surat al-Baqara from the Qur'an of the Zayyanid Sultan Abu Zayyan, preserved in the National Library in Rabat under shelfmark D 1330.

The copying and circulation of Qur'anic manuscripts in Tlemcen extended beyond the devotional and refined aesthetic dimensions, several features of which have already been highlighted, to engage directly with rigorous scholarly efforts aimed at ensuring the accurate transcription of the Qur'anic text in accordance with the principles of ʿUthmanic orthography. This concern was clearly reflected in the development of Zayyanid Qur'an production, confirming the continuity of orthographic conventions within both professional circles, represented by copyists, and scholarly circles, represented by religious scholars. In this regard, particular importance attaches to the contribution of the renowned Tlemcen jurist al-Tanasi (d. 899 AH/1494 CE) to the field of Qur'anic notation. He devoted his work *al-Tiraz fi*

Sharh Dabt al-Kharraz to this subject [19]. This work was not merely a commentary on the didactic poem *Mawrid al-Zam'an* [20] by the Qur'an reciter al-Kharraz al-Sharishi (d. 718 AH/1318 CE), but a foundational treatise on the science of Qur'anic notation, formulated in accordance with the established practices of scholars in the Islamic Maghreb[21]. Al-Tanasi's work may therefore be regarded as a unified technical reference for regulating and standardizing the practical methods employed by Qur'an copyists in Tlemcen during the ninth century AH/fifteenth century CE.

More significantly, this concern with the notation, orthography, and chromatic differentiation of Qur'anic manuscripts was closely connected to broader legal-theoretical controversies and juristic debates concerning adherence to the ʿUthmanic orthographic tradition as a condition for the validity of devotional recitation during prayer. These discussions circulated widely within juristic circles across the Islamic West. Reference may be made in this regard to the legal debate between the Tunisian jurist Ibn ʿArafa (d. 803 AH/1401 CE) and his contemporary Ibn Lubb al-Gharnati (d. 782 AH/1381 CE), as documented by Imam al-Wansharisi (d. 914 AH/1508 CE) in his *Miʿyar* [22].

Within this juristic framework, the leading scholars of Tlemcen addressed the issue at a practical level, transforming the calligraphic and orthographic regulation of Qur'anic manuscripts into a means of resolving legal questions. This was manifested in the close relationship between the artisanal practices conducted in the shops of al-Qaysariyya and the endowed royal exemplars, fragments of which have survived to the present day, as well as in the Qur'anic manuscripts

preserved in the city's mosques and in the households of prominent scholars and religious authorities[23].

3. Book Collections Attached to the Mosques of Tlemcen as Repositories of the Zayyanid Manuscript Heritage:

The spaces through which manuscript copies circulated in the city of Tlemcen were diverse, ranging from economic settings represented by the booksellers' and copyists' market to scholarly settings represented by manuscript collections. These library repositories flourished through the endowment of books and manuscript works[24] to collections attached to mosques, madrasas, and zawiyas, including those of the Great Mosque and the Mosque of al-ʿUbbad. Through endowment inscriptions and the conditions stipulated by donors, manuscript works were transformed into inalienable waqf property that could not be traded. These collections consequently became the city's principal scholarly repositories and played a major role in stabilizing the Zayyanid manuscript heritage and protecting it from dispersal.

In the course of investigating and identifying the manuscript copies endowed in Zayyanid Tlemcen, whether by tracing the sparse and scattered references preserved in historical texts or by examining several endowment inscriptions recorded on the opening folios of surviving manuscripts, it became necessary to present a significant group of these copies and identify the principal elements of their endowment status. These include the identity of the

donor, the title of the endowed manuscript, the place of endowment, and, where possible, the wording of the endowment formula, as follows:

3.1 Endowments of the Great Mosque Library:

It is likely that the largest manuscript collections in Tlemcen were those endowed to the library of this mosque, owing to its central religious and civilizational importance. Al-Tanasi[25] explicitly referred to a group of books endowed by the Zayyanid sultan Abu Zayyan Muhammad, including several Qur'anic manuscripts, among them the copy written in the sultan's own hand, to which reference has already been made. The endowment also included a copy of *al-Shifa* by Qadi ʿIyad (d. 544 AH/1149 CE), likewise transcribed by the donor-sultan himself. This was a precious library manuscript whose present location remains unknown, together with a copy of *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

Among the valuable manuscripts endowed to this mosque that have survived to the present day is a copy of *al-Jamiʿ li-Ahkam al-Qur'an* by Abu ʿAbd Allah al-Qurtubi (d. 671 AH/1272 CE). The endowment inscription recorded on the verso of the first folio of volume thirteen—the final and only surviving volume of this early copy—indicates that it formed part of the endowments established by Ibn Marzuq al-Khatib. The endowment formula reads as follows: "Praise be to God. The shaykh, jurist, upright scholar, hadith expert, and hadith transmitter Abu ʿAbd Allah Muhammad, son of the shaykh, jurist, imam, learned, practicing, righteous, pious, ascetic, and sanctified Abu al-ʿAbbas Ahmad ibn Marzuq, has endowed the entirety of this exegesis entitled *Kitab al-Jamiʿ li-Ahkam al-Qur'an*, authored by Imam Abu ʿAbd Allah

Muhammad, to the Great Mosque in the city of Tlemcen... and sixty and seven hundred." This precious manuscript was endowed during the 760s AH. In the absence of codicological evidence or clear historical indications, it remains difficult to determine the circumstances under which it was transferred from the Great Mosque of Tlemcen, its original place of endowment, to the library of al-Qarawiyyin Mosque in Fez, where it is currently preserved.[26]

3.2 Endowments of the Mosque of Sidi Muhammad al-Sanusi (d. 895 AH/1490 CE):

Within the same context are the manuscript collections endowed to the library of this mosque and its madrasa, both as an act of seeking blessing through the status of Imam al-Sanusi and as a means of facilitating study for the students of the Sanusiyya Madrasa. His works on theology, logic, and hadith circulated there. Among the important endowments recorded in an inscription in its first chamber [27]are two complete copies of *Sahih al-Bukhari* and a work by Muhammad al-Mallali al-Tilimsani (d. 897 AH/1492 CE), the author of *al-Mawahib al-Qudsiyya fi al-Manaqib al-Sanusiyya* .[28]

3.3. Endowments of the Madrasa of the al-ʿUbbad Mosque:

The name of this madrasa was associated with the ribat of the saint Abu Madyan Shuʿayb, the celebrated Sufi pole and

one of the most prominent mystics of the Islamic West during the medieval period. It was among the foundations established by the Marinid sultan Abu al-Hasan al-Marini [29]. In an important testimony provided by Ibn Marzuq al-Khatib, he stated that this sultan endowed it with "precious book treasures and useful works," although he did not provide the titles of any of the endowed books. It is not unlikely that a substantial proportion of them belonged to the field of the religious sciences, including works of Maliki jurisprudence.

Although the available information concerning the identity of the manuscripts endowed to the al-ʿUbbad Mosque is admittedly limited, the value and richness of this collection attracted the attention of many prominent figures, foremost among them the city's jurists, religious scholars, and students. These included Ibn Marzuq al-Khatib, himself a native jurist of Tlemcen, who praised the library's valuable holdings. As for his contemporary Ibn Khaldun, author of *al-ʿIbar* [30], who visited the al-ʿUbbad district, it is highly plausible that he inspected the mosque library and examined its precious holdings.

At a later date, during the twelfth century AH/eighteenth century CE, the traveller Abu al-Qasim al-Zayyani (d. 1249 AH/1833 CE) visited Tlemcen, where he consulted the library of the al-ʿUbbad Mosque [31]and benefited from its collections[32]. He provided a detailed account of its holdings, listing seven manuscript titles preserved in the library at that time. These included a copy of al-Baladhuri's history in six volumes; a work by Sulayman ibn Ishaq al-Matmati; the history of Haniʾ ibn Yasdur al-Kumi; the history of Kahlan ibn Abi Luwa al-Awrabi; the history of al-ʿUqbani; the

Musnad of Ibn Marzuq al-Khatib; and a copy of *al-Wasita*. According to his important testimony, these manuscripts were entrusted to the mosque's imam-preacher and made accessible to the students of Tlemcen. Although copies of the histories of al-Baladhuri and Ibn Marzuq, together with *al-Wasita*, have survived to the present day, the remaining works by Berber genealogists form part of Tlemcen's lost intellectual heritage, and their current whereabouts remain unknown. This loss subsequently extended to a substantial portion of Algeria's manuscript heritage and was further aggravated by colonial intervention, which dispersed much of this invaluable legacy through policies of deliberate destruction and systematic burning, as well as the looting and forced removal of manuscripts from their original locations in private and public institutional libraries. Today, these manuscripts remain preserved in foreign archives and libraries as material evidence of this process of cultural alienation.

4. Conclusion:

During the Zayyanid period, the city of Tlemcen emerged as an integrated centre of intellectual and codicological production. The richness and diversity of its manuscript corpus—which encompassed works on the religious sciences, theological treatises, and juridical responsa addressing economic and political matters—were not an isolated phenomenon. Rather, they constituted the direct outcome of a scholarly environment and an integrated infrastructure structured around three central components:

- **The booksellers' and copyists' market:** This represented the economic and professional sector that stimulated authorship and manuscript reproduction and facilitated the rapid circulation of major works and manuscript copies among scholarly elites and students.
- **Traditions of copying the Holy Qur'an:** These traditions attained codicological and artistic maturity in the form of the "royal Qur'anic manuscripts" produced under the patronage of the Zayyanid chancery or through royal endowments. These manuscripts constitute material evidence documenting the development of the al-mujawhar Maghrebi script and the artistic conventions governing the notation and preparation of Qur'anic manuscripts in the Central Maghreb more broadly.
- **The libraries of mosques and madrasas:** Foremost among these were the library of the Great Mosque of Tlemcen and those of the Tashfiniyya, Yaʿqubiyya, and al-ʿUbbad madrasas. These institutions functioned as repositories for preserving original works and manuscript copies through the waqf and endowment system, thereby protecting them, to a certain extent, from the ravages of nature and time until their encounter with the colonial reality.
- **The looting and forced displacement of the manuscript heritage:** The dispersal suffered by the manuscript heritage of Tlemcen, and Algeria more generally, distributed this primary-source material among French manuscript repositories and libraries in Tunisia and Morocco. This situation requires contemporary historical research to move beyond descriptive readings and adopt a critical philological approach based on the direct examination of dispersed copies preserved in international collections or private

family holdings. Identifying, cataloguing, and digitizing these manuscripts, followed by subjecting their texts to critical editing and rigorous scholarly verification, extends beyond the mere recovery of accurate historical texts. It constitutes an indispensable codicological point of entry for reconstructing an understanding of the intellectual identity and the religious and social development of the Islamic West on the basis of its original sources.

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[2] Al-Musnad al-Sahih, edited by María Jesús Viguera, National Library for Publishing and Distribution, Algiers, 1981, p. 460.

[3] Al-Tanasi, History of the Banu Zayyan, Kings of Tlemcen (an excerpt from Nazm al-Durr wa-l-ʿIqyan fi Bayan Sharaf Bani Zayyan), edited by Mahmud Buʿayyad, National Book Institute, National Library of Algeria, Algiers, 1985, pp. 124–125.

[4] It is appropriate here to highlight one of the earliest and most important surviving descriptions of the production of local kāghid, dating to the mid-fifth century AH/eleventh century CE. It was transmitted by the anonymous author of ʿUmdat al-Kuttab, a work written for Prince Tamim ibn al-Muʿizz in Mahdia. The author devoted the eleventh chapter of the book to the manufacture and sizing of paper, under the title "On the Manufacture of Kāghid, the Decoration and Engraving of Pens, and the Sizing and Ageing of Kāghid." See: Anonymous author, ʿUmdat al-Kuttab wa-ʿUddat Dhawi al-Albab, edited by Najib Mayil al-Harawi and ʿIsam Makiyya, Islamic Research Academy, Iran, 1989, pp. 89–94.

[5] A watermark is “a distinctive emblem belonging to a papermaker that can be seen on any sheet of high-quality handmade paper when it is held up to the light.” See: Amir Muhammad Sadiq Ibrahim, Scripts and Watermarks in Arabic Manuscripts, King Abdulaziz Public Library, Riyadh, 2010, pp. 76–91.

[6] Papermaking spread to Italian cities, and significant improvements were introduced in Fabriano and Treviso, both in the preparation of the pulp and in the machinery used. These innovations included the use of hammer mills and the introduction of watermarks, which contributed to producing paper of superior quality. See: Helen Loveday, “Papermaking in the Islamic World,” translated by Murad Tadghut, published in The Study of the Arabic Manuscript: Research and Studies, supervised by Faysal Yusuf Ahmad al-ʿAli, al-Waʿy al-Islami, Kuwait, 2014, pp. 212–216; Geneviève Humbert, “The Arabic Manuscript and Its Paper,” translated by Muʾnis Miftah, Journal of Oriental Studies, no. 26 (2021), pp. 219–257; Amir Muhammad Sadiq Ibrahim, “Maghrebi Script: Characteristics and Types,” Al-Kuwait Magazine, no. 191, pp. 77–83.

[7] This treatise has survived as part of the juridical cases recorded by al-Wansharisi in Al-Miʿyar al-Muʿrib wa-l-Jamiʿ al-Mughrib, prepared by Muhammad Hajji et al., Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Rabat and Beirut, 1981, vol. 1, pp. 75–104.

[8] Ibn Marzuq, Al-Manaqib al-Marzuqiyya, edited by Salwa al-Zahi, al-Najah al-Jadida Press, Casablanca, 2008, p. 148.

[9] The Banu Ghattus family of eastern al-Andalus, led by Muhammad ibn Ghattus (d. 510 AH/1116 CE), dominated the calligraphy and copying of Qur’anic manuscripts in the Maghreb and al-Andalus during the sixth and seventh centuries AH. Their script was distinguished by “exceptional beauty and a splendour that captivates the mind.” Al-Maqqari, Nafh al-Tib, edited by Ihsan ʿAbbas, Dar Sadir, Beirut, 1968, vol. 3, p. 151.

[10] Ibn Marzuq, Al-Manaqib al-Marzuqiyya, p. 148.

[11] Ibid., p. 148.

[12] It was also known as “al-Imam.” Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Marrakushi provided extensive details about the ʿUthmanic Qur’an, the trajectory of its transmission, and the attention devoted by rulers to its ornamentation and embellishment. He also confirmed its presence in Tlemcen in 702 AH/1302 CE. See: Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Marrakushi, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 40–51.

[13] This account was transmitted by Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Marrakushi, Ibn Marzuq, and al-Tanasi, as previously indicated. By contrast, the two Ibn Khaldun brothers maintained that this Qur’an formed part of the spoils acquired by the Zayyanid ruler Yaghmurasan after his defeat of the army of the Almohad caliph al-Saʿid ibn al-Maʾmun. See: Yahya ibn Khaldun, Bughyat al-Ruwwad, edited by ʿAbd al-Hamid Hajiyat, National Library for Publishing and Distribution, Algiers, 1980, vol. 1, p.

206; Ibn Khaldun, Al-ʿIbar, vol. 13, edited by Ibrahim Shabbuh et al., Dar al-Qayrawan lil-Nashr, Tunis, 2012, p. 166.

[14] Ibn Marzuq al-Khatib's reports concerning the fate of the ʿUthmanic Qur'an after it was deposited in the al-Qarawiyyin Mosque in Fez are of considerable importance. Owing to his close relationship with the Marinid sultan Abu al-Hasan and his detailed knowledge of the internal affairs of the palace in Fez, Ibn Marzuq noted in his Musnad that the Qur'an was lost once again during the Battle of Tarifa in 741 AH/1340 CE and was subsequently taken to Portugal. Sultan Abu al-Hasan later succeeded in recovering it in 745 AH, with the assistance of a merchant from Azemmour, in exchange for thousands in gold. Ibn Marzuq, Al-Musnad al-Sahih, p. 461.

[15] Ibn Khaldun, op. cit., vol. 13, pp. 166–167.

[16] Important studies have examined the significance of the Umayyad Qur'an of Córdoba and its status as the normative exemplar against which the legitimacy of Qur'anic manuscripts in the Islamic West was assessed. Reference may be made to the following studies:

- Buresi, Pascal, "Une relique almohade : l'utilisation politique du coran de 'Uthman de Cordoue," in Lieux de cultes, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2008, pp. 274–280.
- Bongianino, Umberto, "Quelques remarques sur l'origine des écritures coraniques : Le cas d'al-Andalus (V[e]/XI[e]–VI[e]/XII[e] siècle)," Al-Qanṭara, vol. XXXVIII, no. 2, 2017, pp. 162–163.

[17] This manuscript is among the treasures of the Royal Library in Rabat and is preserved under shelfmark D 1330. The cataloguers of the Public Library in Rabat provided a description of the manuscript, stating that it constitutes the first volume of the Qur'an and extends to Surat al-Anʿam. It comprises 112 folios, with 13 lines per page, and measures 165 × 200 mm. The following statement appears at its conclusion: "The blessed first volume of the quartered Qur'an has been completed. It was copied by the hand of the Commander of the Muslims, Abu Zayyan Muhammad, in his presence, in the city of Tlemcen—may God preserve it—in the year 801." See: Y. S. ʿAllush and ʿAbd Allah al-Rajragi, Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts Preserved in the Public Library of Rabat, Part Two (1921–1953), 2nd ed., Publications of the Public Library, Rabat, 2001, vol. 1, p. 2.

[18] Based on the account of al-Tanasi, op. cit., p. 211.

[19] Edited by Ahmad ibn Ahmad Sharshal, King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an, Medina, 2000.

[20] It is known as Mawrid al-Zamʾan fi Rasm Ahruf al-Qurʾan and is among the most renowned didactic poems devoted to the orthography and notation of Qur'anic manuscripts. It circulated widely throughout the Islamic West and has been edited and

published several times, including the edition prepared by Ashraf Muhammad Fuʾad Talʿat, 2nd ed., Imam al-Bukhari Library, Egypt, 2006.

[21] Al-Tanasi's statements in Al-Tiraz, pp. 112, 113, 129, 136, and 183, indicate that he personally examined various copies of Qur'anic manuscripts in circulation. This is apparent in expressions such as "it occurs in some copies," "the Qur'anic manuscripts are unanimous," "the well-known practice," and "the ancient Qur'anic manuscripts."

[22] Al-Wansharisi provided a detailed account of this debate in connection with a juridical question sent from Granada to the jurist Ibn ʿArafa concerning "the recitation by the leader of the Tarawih prayer in Granada according to an anomalous reading inside the mosque, whereupon the congregation protested loudly and Ibn Lubb intervened." See: al-Wansharisi, op. cit., vol. 12, pp. 68–147.

[23] Reference may be made here to a shaykh of Tlemcen known as Ibn Hasni, who copied a Qur'an while serving a prison sentence in Tlemcen during the Marinid siege of 698–706 AH/1298–1306 CE. Ibn Maryam al-Maliti, Al-Bustan, edited by ʿAbd al-Qadir Bubaya, Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, Beirut, 2014, p. 96.

[24] On the phenomenon of book endowment, see: Benbin Ahmad Shawqi, Studies in Manuscript Science and Bibliographical Research, 2nd ed., National Printing and Stationery Press, Hay Mohammadi, Marrakesh, 2004, pp. 110–133.

[25] Op. cit., p. 211.

[26] The manuscript is preserved under shelfmark 13. See: Muhammad al-ʿAbid al-Fasi, Catalogue of the Manuscripts of the al-Qarawiyyin Library, Dar al-Kitab, Casablanca, 1979, vol. 1, p. 59.

[27] See: Hammu ibn Rustan and Charles Brosselard, Tuhfat al-Iʿtibar fi-ma Wujida min al-Athar bi-Madinat al-Jidar, edited by ʿAlawa ʿAmara and Faris Kaʿwan, Dar al-Huda, Algeria, 2021, p. 78.

[28] The inscription mentions other works endowed to this mosque and attributed to prominent Sufi figures, including a work by Sidi Ibrahim al-Shabarkhiti in four volumes, as well as works by al-Kharashi and Sidi al-ʿArusi. See: Ibid., p. 79.

[29] Ibn Marzuq, Al-Musnad al-Sahih, p. 407.

[30] It appears that Ibn Khaldun preferred to reside in al-ʿUbbad during the years 772 AH/1370 CE and 776 AH/1374 CE, distancing himself from political affairs and devoting his time to scholarship. He also began teaching during this period. See: Ibn Khaldun, Al-Taʿrif bi-Ibn Khaldun wa-Rihlatuhu Gharban wa-Sharqan, edited by Muhammad ibn Tawit al-Tanji, Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, Beirut, 2004, p. 187.

[31] Abu al-Qasim al-Zayyani, Al-Turjumana al-Kubra fi Akhbar al-Maʿmur Barran wa-Bahran, edited by ʿAbd al-Karim al-Filali, Dar al-Nashr lil-Maʿrifa, Rabat, 1991, p. 144.

[32] Among the lost works consulted by Abu al-Qasim al-Zayyani was the historical work of Salim ibn Salim al-Matmati. See: Ibid., p. 58.