

## CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

# THE WRITTEN TRANSMISSION OF THE QUR'AN DURING UMAYYAD TIMES

Contextualising the Codex Amrensis I<sup>1</sup>

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*Éléonore Cellard*

## INTRODUCTION

Recent studies of the oldest Qur'anic manuscripts have highlighted the prominent role of the written book within the early Muslim community. Thousands of Qur'anic fragments, initially neglected, genizah-like, in mosques are being rediscovered in library collections around the world. However, none of these early fragments preserve chronological or geographical details about their copying; these are found only in texts from the ninth century and later. This chapter proposes some new insights to the history of the written Qur'an during Umayyad times, based on analysis of the Codex Amrensis I (referred to subsequently as Codex A.I). It focuses on the context of the copying of this manuscript and establishes its place within the written transmission of the Qur'an.

Studying Qur'anic manuscripts requires the exploration of different sources of chronological and geographical information. Palaeography – the study of the script – aims to distinguish the successive steps in the elaboration of a specific Qur'anic script and its evolution over the centuries. It should also serve to identify regional styles and locate them. Codicology – the study of the material construction of the book itself – completes the description by the deep analysis of the Codex's structure, which also shows variation according to the different traditions and the different periods in which codices were produced.

On the textual level, the study of Qur'an manuscripts still relies heavily on the traditional Qur'anic sciences. It compares the manuscript in question to the 1924 Cairo edition and the huge number of traditional Islamic treatises about Qur'anic orthography, variant readings and variant division into verses. From these latter emerges the idea of an unchanging text, affected merely by regional variations, according to the several accepted schools. However, the chronological gap between the early Qur'anic manuscript fragments, from the second half of the seventh century, and the first works of Qur'anic science by Muslim scholars, from the ninth century, poses a major challenge. When early manuscripts are analysed, the later tradition does not seem to

reflect the whole textual transmission of the Qur'an over time, but rather to convey a somewhat idealised, retrospective vision of the Qur'an's history.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, this chapter is not directly concerned with the Islamic tradition's later accounts of the written transmission of the Qur'an, but those accounts are an important part of the context for thinking about the Codex in question. The Islamic tradition offers several retrospective narratives that identify significant milestones within the course of the written transmission of the Qur'an. According to these narratives, the Umayyads, and especially the Marwanid dynasty (684–750), were directly involved in the production of the written Qur'an. The great expense they devote to ensuring the book's magnificence shows a growing interest in the physical presentation of the Qur'an;<sup>3</sup> while their role in the introduction of textual reforms – orthography, reading and textual division – proves their deeply felt need to control the text. At the same time – and importantly for our purposes here – the traditional Islamic accounts attest to the production of Qur'an manuscripts outside the court-sponsored framework. They indicate that early Muslim scholars were also engaged in the written production of Qur'ans. Several Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, such as Ibn Mas'ud and Ubayy ibn Ka'b, are said to have owned Qur'anic books, which continued to circulate for a long time in some dissident circles.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, these authorities and others were also involved in serious disputes about the formal presentation of the Qur'an, both as to its physical appearance and its text.<sup>5</sup> In other words, a competition between the official scriptoria and the more modest environments stimulated the production of Qur'anic manuscripts during the Umayyad period.

When it comes to studies of actual Qur'anic manuscripts, most recent studies have assumed some homogeneity in the written transmission of the early Qur'an, both on physical and textual level.<sup>6</sup> All have focused on liturgical manuscripts or lectionaries, characterised by their large dimensions.<sup>7</sup> The specificities of their orthography (that is, the conventions used in writing them), switching between pre- and post-reformed styles, are a criterion of dating related to the Umayyad reform, with the chronology being calibrated according to their degree of orthographic modernisation. Thus, our understanding of Qur'an production is actually based mainly on Umayyad official copies, produced under the patronage of members of the ruling Umayyad elite. However, very little is known about the low-cost production of Qur'ans, which could reflect either a private or an unofficial milieu. Codex A.1 provides some insights into such texts, and the evidence presented here may indicate that Codex A.1 could be a regional manuscript, written by a copyist familiar with scripts used in official Umayyad contexts. Certainly, it provides further evidence that parameters of the transmission were not yet fixed in the Umayyad period, and retained the possibility of individual expression by those who were responsible for copying it. Hence, Qur'anic orthography could be linked to political claims, and, could be used as a way of showing allegiance to particular factions.

In what follows, key features of Codex A.1 are described in material, formal and textual terms.<sup>8</sup> Then, these features are compared to other manuscripts and to literary and historical data, in order to contextualise the writing of the Codex A.1. It is this analysis that leads to the hypothesis that Codex A.1 is likely a regional copy made by someone familiar with Umayyad official Qur'ans, in a context of political competition and contestation over the Qur'anic text.

## PART ONE: THE DESCRIPTION OF THE CODEX A.1

### The Codex A.1 and the project Coranica

The recent edition of the Codex A.1 according the rules of diplomatic editing, and combined with a facsimile,<sup>9</sup> was part of the French-German project Coranica (2011–15). One of the main objectives of this project was to focus on the chronology of the Qur'an, trying to collect and study all the written evidence, especially manuscript fragments, datable to the seventh century. Selecting suitable manuscripts was an early challenge, carried out by the use of a palaeographical criterion: all the fragments should be classified as Hijazi style. That is, written in an archaic script in which vertical strokes are inclined to the right.<sup>10</sup>

Among the collected fragments, one in particular captured my attention, because of its horizontal orientation, contrasting with the vertical orientation of the rest of the collection. Some parts of this manuscript were already known by the specialists and two hypotheses concerning its date have been proposed by François Déroche and Alain George, based on paleographic criteria. According to them, the use of the archaic Hijaz script, adapted to a horizontal format, reflects a later practice, probably during the eighth century. Concerning the social circle in which this manuscript could have been produced, Déroche and George consider this copy as 'a conscious reference to the Hijazi past and the oldest written form of the Qur'an',<sup>11</sup> assuming probably that it was produced in a conservative context.

However, no deep study had been conducted on it before the project Coranica. Two new parameters allowed us embark on the study of the Codex A.1. First, the project gathered a number of other folios belonging to the same codicological unit, dispersed in many library collections and auctions catalogues. Second, other fragments with the same features have been collected since, offering the possibility of evaluating the significance of the peculiarities of the Codex A.1.

### History of the Codex A.1

There is much evidence that the manuscript was originally kept in the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'As in Fustat, now situated in the Old Cairo. This is why we decided to call it Codex Amrensis 1 (Codex A.1). It consists of 75 folios on parchment, dispersed in four different collections.

The history of two sequences of its folios is well known.<sup>12</sup> A first sequence of 32 folios is now preserved at the National Library of Russia in Saint Petersburg (Marcel 9, fos.1–32). During Napoleon's Egyptian campaign of 1798–1801, the orientalist Jean-Joseph Marcel visited a room of the 'Amr mosque and acquired several Qur'anic fragments including these 32 folios. When he died, his collection was bought by the Imperial Library of Saint Petersburg (now National Library of Russia). Since then, it has remained unchanged as J.-J. Marcel classified it. Six other folios are in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BnF Arabe 326, fos.1–6), and these derive from the collection of Asselin de Cherville (1772–1822), former French consul in Cairo. A few years after Jean-Joseph Marcel had visited the mosque, Asselin de Cherville visited it. De Cherville was a student of Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838), from whom he received his knowledge of early Qur'anic scripts. Asselin de Cherville built up an important

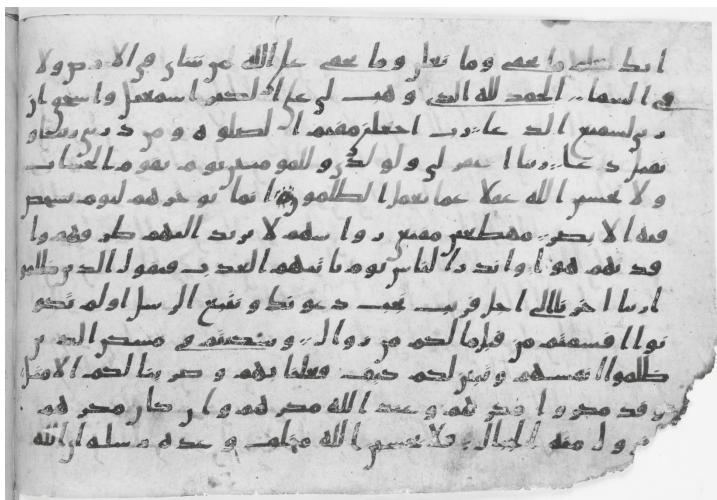


Figure 21.1 The Codex Amrensis 1, Paris, BnF Arabe 326a, fo.3a.  
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collection of Qur'anic manuscripts, carefully selected for their paleographic criteria. After De Cherville's death, the Bibliothèque Impériale (today Bibliothèque Nationale de France) acquired his collection. At the Library, the fragments were regrouped in accordance with their formats and scripts and then bound in several florilegia.

Two other sequences from the Codex A.1 found their way on to the antiques market. Like the first two sequences, the fragments are unequally dispersed. A first collection of 36 folios was bought in Rennes, in September 2011, and is now in the Museum of Islamic Art at Doha (MIA.2013.29.1 and MIA.2013.29.2). These folios were preserved by an antiquities dealer in Paris, who probably acquired them in Cairo in the 1920s.<sup>13</sup> Two sequences constitute this set: a first sequence of 29 folios (Rennes I/ Doha, MIA.2013.29.1) and a second of seven folios (Rennes II/ Doha, MIA.2013.29.2). Finally, a last folio is kept in the Nasser D. Khallili Collection of Islamic Art (KFQ34).

### Palaearcography of Codex A.1

In general, the text of Codex A.1 is copied respecting the rule of the oldest *scriptio continua* – that is, the same regular space is inserted between words and between the nonjoined letters within words alike. There are 12 lines per page, except in three folios which have 11 or 13 lines. In this early tradition, a word can be cut at the end of the line, but only if there is a nonjoined letter. However, this rule cannot be applied at the end of the page where the complete word must be written. In many cases, when confronted with a long word at the end of the page, the copyist ignores the justification of the rest of the text on the page and completes the word on the same line. More rarely, if it overtakes the justification, it can be written under the text-box, as in Saint Petersburg, NLR, M9, fo.16b, where we observe the word *kānū* with *-nū* written under the text and then erased.

Table 21.1 Letters without variation.

<i>Letter</i>	<i>Image</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Alif</i>		The letter has a slanting stroke to the right and a short return.
Initial <i>jīm</i>		The letter is short and curved.
Medial <i>jīm</i>		The letter crosses the baseline.
Initial ‘ayn		The letter has a short, straight hook.
Medial ‘ayn		The right arm of the letter is right and thinner.
Isolated <i>lām</i>		It has a short return which does not reach below the baseline.
Final <i>mīm</i>		The letter has a circular body which reaches slightly the baseline.
Medial <i>hā’</i>		The letter has a long bar which slopes to the left.

The script of the Codex A.1 presents slanting strokes to the right, and thus is classified in the *Higāzī I* of Dérache's palaeography. The script's appearance is thin and proportioned, with a tendency for lengthening oblique endings (especially the endings of the letters *alif* *maqsura* and *qaf*) and for amplifying the curves of letters in final or isolated positions (such as *jīm/hā/kha’* and ‘ayn). The drawing of the letters is relatively homogeneous in the whole manuscript, although there are some variations in the proportions of letters, inclination and thickness of the script: for example, the inclination is more pronounced on the Saint Petersburg, NLR, M9, fo.5b. However, study of the palaeographical shapes indicates that the manuscript is not the result of collective work.

Eight letters present a single fixed form (see Table 21.1).

Eight other letters know three variant shapes – two shapes are distinct and the third is a hybrid of the other two (see Table 21.2). These variations sometimes appear on the same page, and so should be attributed to the same copyist. Consequently, the copyist could choose between several patterns for a single letter. Among these variations, six are particularly recurrent:

### Codicology of the Codex A.1

We can distinguish four main textual sequences in the present fragments, which correspond respectively to the second and fourth quarters of the Qur'an and cover about 17 per cent of the Qur'anic text. Occasionally, these sequences are interrupted by the lack of one or more leaves.

Table 21.2 Letters with variant shapes.

Letter	Image	Description
Final or isolated <i>jīm</i> /ħā'/ <i>khā'</i> (idem for isolated 'ayn)		The tail has generally a curved shape. This shape is the most recurrent. The tail of <i>jīm</i> has a horizontal shape. Hybrid shape of the two formers (half-curved shape).
Final and isolated <i>qāf</i> (idem for final <i>alif</i> <i>maqsūra</i> )		The tail is oblique and straight, overly elongated. It ends with a short hook. The tail is short and continues with an open curve.
		Hybrid shape of the two formers: the tail is shortened, and the end in U-shaped is enlarged with its branches parallel to the baseline.
Final or isolated <i>kāf</i>		The base of the letter is longer than its upper horizontal stroke. The elongation is frequently short, except some examples in S. Petersburg, M.9. The base of the letter is shorter than its upper horizontal stroke.
Final or isolated <i>tā'</i>		The horizontal baseline of the letter stops at the beginning of the vertical shaft, which slants to the right. The horizontal baseline of the letter is elongated by a long downward appendage. This variation has been observed seven times in Saint Petersburg, Marcel 9. In all of them, except one (f°27a), the tail has been erased.

The manuscript had probably already lost its binding in the mosque of 'Amr, but the continuity of many textual sequences (see Table 21.3) suggests that several quires (four sheets of parchment folded to form eight folios), and probably groups of quires, still survived. Twelve quires are extant, partially mutilated (see Table 21.4). The entire manuscript would have contained approximately 320 folios – that is to say 40 quires. The quires are systematically *quaternions* (made of four bifolios, or 16 pages). As with all such early manuscripts, the folios are parchment made from sheep or goat skin. The arrangement of the parchment's bifolios respects 'Gregory's rule': as

Table 21.3 Sequences of the Codex A.1.

<i>Sequence</i>	<i>Qur’anic text</i>	<i>Source</i>
I.	8: 1–11:79	S. Petersburg, NLR Marcel 9
	12 :96–12:111	Paris, BNF, Arabe 326, f.1
	14 :16–15:99	Paris, BNF, Arabe 326, ff.2–6
II.	40 :66–43:31	Rennes I (ff.1–10)
	43 :73–52:38	Rennes I (ff.11–29)
	57 :13–57:23	Khalili Collection, KFQ 34
	58 :3–62:3	Rennes II

Table 21.4 Reconstitution of the quires.

<i>Number and type of quire (number of folios)</i>	<i>Fragment</i>
[11 IV]	Missing
4 IV (32)	M.9
IV -7 (1)/ [IV → missing]/ IV -3 (6)	Arabe 326 a
[12 IV]	Missing
IV -1 (7), IV -2 (13), 2 IV (29)	Rennes I
IV -7 (1)	KFQ 34
IV -1 (7)	Rennes II
[4 IV]	Missing

in most of the Greek or Coptic manuscripts, flesh faces flesh, and hair faces hair. Each quire opens with a flesh side.<sup>14</sup>

The maximum dimensions of the folios are 178 millimetres high by 288 millimetres wide (this is the measure of the S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9 fo.20). These correspond to a fair size *in-octavo* (in book format). The parchment is thick, without holes, with a small contrast between the flesh side and the hair side. On each open bifolio, we find a marked justification and line-by-line ruling, incised with a dry point. In the external margins, we can observe traces of pricking, used for tracing horizontal lines.

### Textual analysis: orthography

Comparison between the text of the Codex A.1 and the 1924 Cairo edition reveals numbers of deviations, involving mostly the notation of the *matres lectionis*, or the ‘mothers of reading’ – that is, the three consonants, *alif*, *waw* and *ya'*, used to mark vowels. Such deviations are especially common with *alif*. That said, excluding these, there are still another 85 variants of the consonantal skeleton, or *rasm*: suppressions, additions or changes of consonants. In each of these, the copyist’s mistakes have to be distinguished from traditional variants. When the same variant appears several times, it could be the copyist’s practice.

### **Omission of letters**

The most frequent orthographic variation is omission of letters. It represents 34.5 per cent of all variants, excluding those concerning the *alif*. More than half of these omissions are probably due to a copyist's mistake. The other omissions certainly stem from copyists' traditions and concerns:

- The *alif* with the value of long vowel /ā/ is often omitted (*scriptio defectiva*). However, the copyist's orthographical rules are ambiguous and heterogeneous. The *alif* never appears in the verb *qāla*. The plural form of the same verb, *qālū*, keeps the *alif* in 45.5 per cent of the cases. Sometimes, the *scriptio defectiva* appears along with the plural spelling in the same folio, one on the recto and the other on the verso (as on the S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9, fo.32), but there is no occurrence of the two orthographies on the same page. Similar variations occur for other words. In rare cases with these other words, the two orthographies appear on the same page (*adhāb*: S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9 fo.29a; *jannāt*: S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9 fo.12b).
- The *alif al-wiqaya* ('*alif* of protection', placed after a final *waw* in third person plural verbs) is omitted in the plural verb *rā'ū* (example: 10:54, S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9, fo.22a).
- The long vowel /ū/ does not appear in the word *'ulū* (8:75; 9:86; 14:52; 46:35).
- The glottal stop (*hamza*) is also affected by this orthographical fluctuation. For example, the verb *sa'altukum* (10:72) is written without *alif*, while *sa'altumūh* (14:34) keeps the *alif*. The word *qur'ān* is written without *alif* (9:111; 10:37; 15:81 and 87), except in 15:1 where it has the *alif*. The same is true for words where the *hamza* follows the long vowel /ā/. For example, in 10:28 (S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9 fo.20b), the first occurrence *shurakā'ukum* is written without *waw*, while the second one is written with it.
- The long vowel /ī/ is generally written in the name *ibrāhīm* with four exceptions: two at 9:114, and one at 14:35 and 42:13, respectively.
- Another orthographic feature concerns the notation of the article *al-*, when it is associated with the particle *bi-*. In 17 per cent of the occurrences, the initial *alif* disappears. This phenomenon is particularly frequent in the word *bi-l-haqq*, written *ba' - lam - ha' - qaf* in half of the occurrences (S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9, fos.4a, 12b; Paris, BnF, Ar.326 fo.2a; RI fos.12b, 13b, 14a and 14b). It occurs also in other formulae, as *bi-l-ma'rūf* (without *alif* in 9:71; with *alif* in 9:112) and *bi-l-qisṭ* (without *alif* in 10:47 and 10:54; with *alif* in 10:4 and 11:85).
- The particle *fā'* is omitted before *bi-mā* at 42:30 (R.I, fo.7b). This variant without *fa-* is attributed by the traditional accounts to the codices of Medina and Damascus.<sup>15</sup>

### **Additional letters**

In some rare cases, the manuscript includes additional letters. Where these occur systematically, they are *matres lectionis*, *alif*, *waw*, and *ya'*. These additional letters

make up 27 per cent of all the variants. In the absence of such evidence in other documents, we should consider that 75 per cent of the additional letters are copyist's mistakes. Some other variants appear frequently and thus could be attributed to a written tradition:

- Thus, the term *'ilāh*, written without medial *alif*, is sometimes noted with a *ya'* (one example at 9:128, S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9, fo.17b). The same goes for the orthography of *'āya/'āyāt*, including an additional *ya'* when the word is preceded by the particle *bi-*.
- The orthography of the word *shay'* is subject to variations between the correct Arabic form, without *alif*, and another form with *alif*. This later form appears in 70 per cent of the occurrences.
- The pronoun *dhū* includes also a final *alif*, after *waw* (10:60, S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9, fo.22b. And 41:35, Rennes I, fo.4r). The same orthography applies to the word *al-sū'* (60:2, R.II, fo.5a).

### Different letters

The last category variants of the consonantal skeleton, or *rasm*, concerns the substitution of a different letter (which represents 21.1 per cent of the *rasm* variants). As with the preceding orthographical variations, such changes concern principally the *matres lectionis*, and more rarely the consonants:

- The word *zakāt* written with *alif* (9:5 and 11, S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9, fos.6b and 7a.) instead of *waw* (9:18 and 71, S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9, fos.7b and 12b; 58:13, Rennes I, fo.2a).
- In the words *'āya/'āyāt* and *'ilāh*, the *alif* can be substituted by *ya'*. Other words are also concerned (*'alhyāhā*, 41:39; *sayyi'a*, 42:48). We include also here the inverse rule for the final *alif* *maqsūra*, written as *alif mamdūda* (*madā*, 43:8; *'ilā*, 46:5).
- The *waw* carrying the glottal stop in the word *lu'lu'* (52:24, R.I, fo.29b) is substituted by an *alif*.
- The word *rijza* is written *rijsa* with *sin* instead of *zay* (8:11, S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9, fo.1b). This variant is attributed to the Reader and Companion Abu-l-'Aliya.

### Probable copyists' errors or traditional practice

Finally, there are some textual variants which could be due to a copyist's mistake (the copyist often corrects himself) or traditional practices: change of case ending: *al-mu'minūna* instead of *al-mu'minīna* (8:17, S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9, fo.2a); change of term and then self-correction: *al-mushrikūna* instead of *al-shākirīna* (10:22, S. Petersburg, NLR, M.9, fo.19b); change of preposition: *fā'* instead of *wāw* (43:87, R.I, fo.11b); and change of conjugation, then correction: *kharajūna* instead of *kharajū* (47:16, R.I, fo.19) and *yafsidūna* instead of *yafsidū* (47:22, R.I, fo.19).

## Textual analysis: diacritical signs

### *Consonants*

The diacritical marks are represented by oblique dashes. That they are written with the same ink as the letter forms themselves shows that they are contemporary with them. On many occasions, their position – or their number – does not correspond to the established system of diacritics. Except for *qaf* and *fa'*, which are systematically noted with a dash above (for *qaf*) and a dash below (for *fa'*), most of the letters associated with diacritical signs show fluctuations. Some variations are probably due to transpositions (the dash is placed on the preceding or next letter) or inversions (for instance, *bi-ruknihi*, R.II fo.28a, has a dash above initial *ba'* and another below medial *nun*). Other variations remain obscure: some are referring to a different letter's reading (the expected *ta'* is dotted like *tha'*, with three dots above, on at least ten occasions); others are using an unknown system (for example, the use of dashes placed both above and below the letter).

### *Lam-alif*

Another great peculiarity of this manuscript is the addition of one or two dashes next to isolated *lam-alif* (see Figure 21.2). We observed this phenomenon in 20 per cent of occurrences.

These dashes appear regardless of the linguistic purpose of *lam-alif*: negation (*lā*), article *al-* and initial *alif* (for example: *al-ard*), exception (*illā*), *lam* of word's radical and *alif* of case ending (*rasūlan*). A satisfactory explanation remains to be found.

### *Diacritical marks and variant readings*

In the manuscript, imperfect verbs are usually punctuated by the copyist. The dotting reveals a great number of variants involving a change of person. Some of them are . Permission of Bibliothèque nationale de France. well attested by the tradition, and

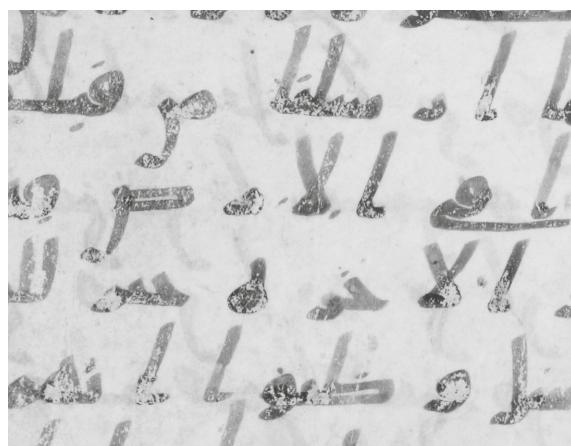


Figure 21.2 Diacritical marks on *lām-alif*, Paris, BnF Arabe 326, fo.1b, l.7.  
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Table 21.5 Reading variants.

<i>Variant's type</i>	<i>Traditional reading's variants</i>	<i>Unknown variants</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Yā'</i> becomes <i>tā'</i>	11	20	31
<i>Yā'</i> becomes <i>nūn</i>	4	13	17

Table 21.6 Reading attributions.

<i>Reader</i>	<i>Died in</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Variants' percentage</i>
al-A‘raj	AD 117 AH./735.	Medina	53%
Ibn ‘Āmir	AD 118 AH./736.	Damascus	
Hasan al-Baṣrī	AD 110 AH./728.	Basra	47%
Abū Ja‘far	AD 130 AH./747.	Medina	41%
Nāfi‘	AD 169 AH./785.	Medina	

thus, are authentic grammatical variants, rather than simply errors. Among the 61 variants we have noticed, there are two recurrent types involving the prefix of the third person *yā-* (see Table 21.5).

Only 28 per cent of these variants are known by the Tradition and are principally attributed to Syrian or Medinan Readers of the end of the seventh century and beginning of the eighth century (see Table 21.6).

### Textual analysis: division into verses

The text reveals two successive steps of division: a first division into verses by the copyist himself is indicated by groups of strokes without a systematic pattern. In a second stage, another hand added an oval symbol, sometimes looking like a tree leaf for separating groups of verses. The number of verse markers between two ‘tree leaf’ symbols is usually seven or eight, or, more rarely, ten.

There are two tendencies in the frequency of verse divisions. In the first part of the manuscript, that is in M.9 and Ar.326, the copyist seems to be more meticulous in the notation of verse divisions (5 per cent of the verse divisions are missing). He regularly adds more divisions than those contained in the 1924 Cairo edition. In contrast, in the second part of the manuscript – that is in R.I, II and KFQ34 – 33 per cent of the verse divisions are missing.

A comparison between the manuscript’s system of verse division and the reports in Islamic traditional sources<sup>16</sup> does not permit a strict attribution to any well-known traditional system. It appears that only 4 per cent of the manuscript’s variant divisions are known to the tradition. They are mostly in accord with the system of Medina (82.3 per cent) and Syria (79.4 per cent), but only occasionally with the Kufan system (44 per cent). However, a great number of verses are not indicated on our manuscript: in total, 16.3 per cent of the verse divisions found in the Cairo

edition are not represented. Once again, these missing divisions are known only partially (15 per cent) by the tradition. Six per cent of the additional divisions, including the separation of the *basmala*,<sup>17</sup> do not correspond to any regional system. A survey of the 61 additional divisions reveals that almost 30 per cent of them correspond to the exact location of a *waqf* (pause), ten per cent are near a *waqf*, but cut the sentence on an internal rhyme, 15 per cent fit with a rhyme or a frequent ending word, another ten per cent isolate a type-formula,<sup>18</sup> and only 15 per cent could serve as a semantic separation.

## PART TWO: CONTEXTUALISING CODEX A.1

The evidence suggests that Codex A.1 is not an isolated case in the long history of the written transmission of the Qur'an, but rather belongs to a family of manuscripts. Several of its characteristics are already found in other fragments. The most obvious ones are these two fragments kept in the Musée des Arts Islamiques, Kairouan (R119 and P511), which adopt exactly the same formal characteristics. A third fragment, from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France's collection (Paris, BnF Arabe 326b), also shows an identical presentation. In this section, Codex A.1 is compared in more detail with other manuscripts in order to evaluate its characteristics and situate it in the history of the written transmission of the Qur'an. The evidence tends to suggest that it belongs in the Umayyad era, and that the copyist was aware of official Umayyad-era Qur'ans.

Two specific sets of manuscripts (see Table 21.7) can contribute to identifying this context for the production of Codex A.1 and its family. The first group is classified as the A group by Deroche.<sup>19</sup> This group, featuring a very homogeneous script (see Figure 21.3), has been identified on approximately 64 folios, belonging to three different fragmentary vertical *in-quarto* manuscripts<sup>20</sup> and two oblong *in-octavo*<sup>21</sup> manuscripts originating from Fustat, in Egypt. The second set of manuscripts are more problematic because of their stylistic heterogeneity.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, some common features regarding both material and text lead us to form a provisional group from them. This group comprises more than 140 folios, corresponding to three *in-quarto* manuscripts, and several smaller damaged fragments. Their scripts (see Figure 21.4) have features derived from Hijazi A script and, to a lesser extent, B.I.;<sup>23</sup> thus, we will refer to this second provisional group as Late Hijazi/A (LH/A). Furthermore, a Carbon-14 analysis has recently proposed an Umayyad date for Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Ms.or.fol.4313,<sup>24</sup> which confirms the palaeographical evidence (see Figure 21.7 – folios belonging to the same manuscript in the Egyptian National Library).

A comparison between these *in-quarto* fragments and Codex A suggest a potential Umayyad attribution for the latter.

### Palaeography: Codex A.1 and the LH/A and A families

In general appearance, the copyists of the LH/A and A groups respect the same traditions concerning the disposition of the text-box. Like Codex A.1, the LH/A manuscripts sometimes follow the curious habit of writing the final words on a page under the text-box (Paris, BnF Arabe 330g, fo.60a; Qāf 47,<sup>25</sup> fo.10a). This peculiarity does not appear in the A and LH/A-A manuscripts (see Figure 21.5).

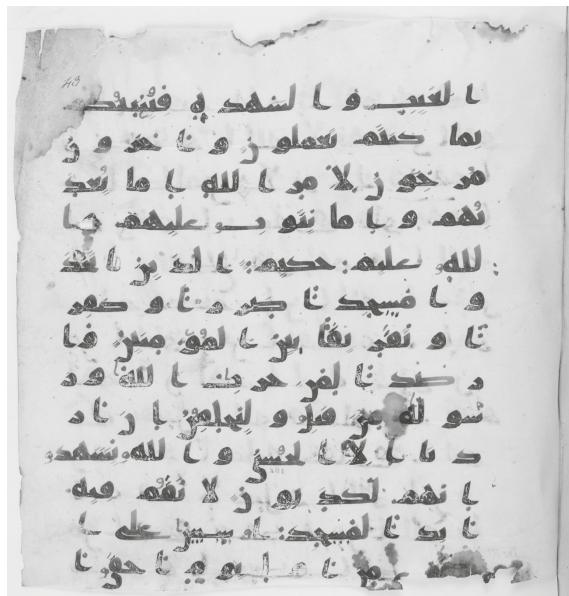


Figure 21.3 The A script. Paris BnF Arabe 330f, fo.43a.  
Permission of Bibliothèque nationale de France.

A comparison of the detailed palaeography of the two groups reveals distinctive scripts (see Table 21.8). Nevertheless, all the scripts share significant elements with the script of Codex A.1:

- Frequency of large, open curves for final *qaf* and *alif maqsura*.
- Three optional shapes for the final or isolated *ha'*/*kha'*/*jim* or isolated *'ayn* (horizontal, half-curved, curved).
- Prominent and oblique bar of the letter *ha'*.
- Appendage – more or less accentuated – at the baseline of the letter *ta'* in final position.

The regular and well-proportioned script of Codex A.1 undeniably corresponds to the A script, as it is found in the two Parisian fragments: Paris, BnF Arabe 326b and 330f. However, a detailed analysis of the script of the latter reveals that the A group contains fewer variations in letter shapes than Codex A.1. The ratio of variations in letter shapes could be related to the manuscript's dimensions.<sup>26</sup> During the eighth century, the larger-size manuscripts may have used a homogeneous script and then served as models for the smaller ones. This could be the case for Codex A.1, which mixes variant shapes from both the LH/A and A groups. Moreover, two of its variant shapes, derived from LH/A (final *'ayn* and final *qaf*), are known in the other *in-octavo* fragment, BnF Arabe 326b (see Figure 21.6). Unfortunately, at the moment we do not have enough material for the *in-octavo* manuscripts in A script to establish an exhaustive palaeography.<sup>27</sup>

The links between the LH/A series, the A group and the Codex A.1 are most likely to be explained by their being contemporary styles, which interacted with each other

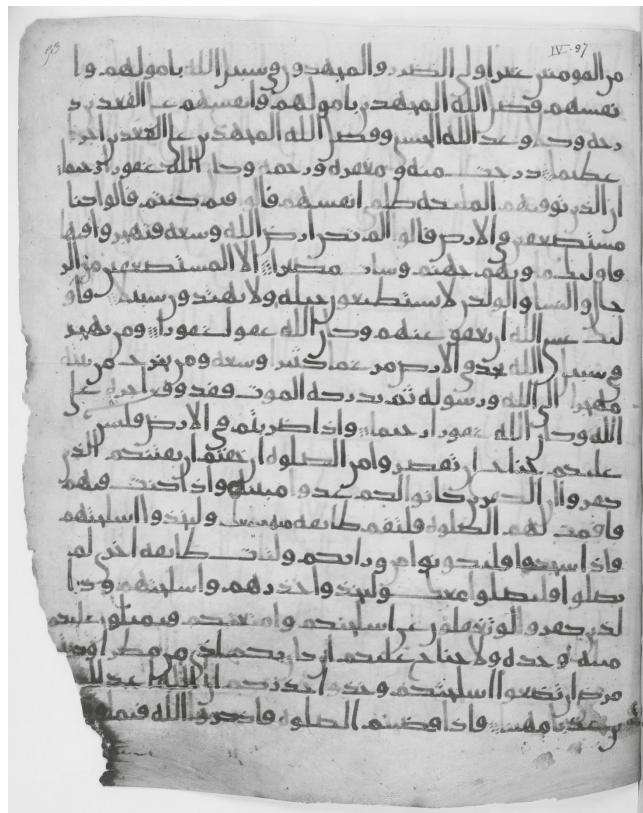


Figure 21.4 The LH/A script. Paris, BnF Arabe 330g, fo.53a.  
Permission of Bibliothèque nationale de France.

during the Umayyad period. Indeed, al-Nadim mentions in his *Fihrist* the creation of several styles by the calligrapher Qutba al-Muharrir (d. in AH 152/770 CE): ‘Qutba was the first transcriber during the period of the Banu Umayya. He developed the four forms of writing, deriving one from the other.’<sup>28</sup>

### Codicology

A recent study has shown that geography was probably one of the most significant criteria in the way of constituting the Codex.<sup>29</sup> In other words, regional traditions override sectarian affiliation in the material production and assembly of early Qur'an manuscripts. Following this line of reasoning, Codex A.1 appears to belong to a corpus of manuscripts from the same geographical area, perhaps in Palestine or Egypt.

The most significant codicological convergence between the LH/A and A manuscripts and Codex A.1 is undoubtedly their specific way of constituting the quires. Our observations of the whole corpus highlight a clear preference for the *quaternion*, and respect for Gregory's rule. These parameters are already known from the earliest Qur'ans: the Codex Parisino-petropolitanus is indeed composed

Table 21.7 List of the studied manuscripts LH/A and A scripts.

<i>Script</i>	<i>Codicological unit<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Fragments</i>	<i>Folios</i>
A script	1	Paris, BNF Arabe 330d	2
		San-Petersburg, Marcel 20 (fos.1-4)	4
	2	Paris, BNF Arabe 330e	9
		San-Petersburg, Marcel 20 (fos.5-16)	11
		Rome, Bibliotheca Vaticana, Ms Arab.1605 (ff° 21-25)	5
		Paris, BNF Arabe 330f (fos.31-49)	19
		Chicago, Oriental Institute, A6963 et A6992	2
	4	Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Is.1615 I	47
		Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, Ms. 68, 69, 70, 699	14
		Houston, TR: 490-2007	1
		Paris, BNF, Arabe 330g	19
		San-Petersburg, Marcel 16	12
LH/A script	5	Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, MIA.2013.23	6
		Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Is.1615II	4
		Bergsträsser's Archives, Qāf 47 (see Figure 21.7)	31
		Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Ms. or fol. 4313	7
		Kairouan, MIA, R119	86
	6	Paris, BNF Arabe 326b (fos.7-9)	2
Hybrid style (LH/ A-A)	7		
	8		

<sup>1</sup> The assigned number is provisory.

of *quaternions*, respecting Gregory's rule. This technique is generally linked to the Greek, Palestinian Christian and Coptic manuscript traditions. In contrast, most of the later manuscripts, in Late Hijazi and other styles seem to prefer another tradition, similar to the Syriac one,<sup>30</sup> employing *quinions* (five bifolios folded to form ten folio quires), with folios arranged flesh sides facing to hair sides. The latter becomes the standard procedure, despite some hesitation during the first half of the eighth century, specifically in the *in-folio* manuscripts written in the C style.

In the material of the parchment itself, the two groups LH/A and A use two distinct types of parchment. The first one is specific to the three *in-quarto* manuscripts from the LH/A group. The skin contains a number of defects probably due to the proximity of the skin's edges and its clumsy treatment to make it into parchment (example on San-Petersburg, NLR, Marcel 16, fo. 6). Excessive stretching caused several holes (examples on Paris, BnF Arabe 330g, fos. 57 and 58). Moreover, the great variability of thickness from one folio to another, combined with the excessive stretching, produced a strong effect of transparency (examples on Dublin, CBL Is 1615I, fos.10 and 14). In contrast, the A group and Codex A.1 have better quality parchment, without the aforementioned defects. However, they show the same variability of thickness between the folios.<sup>31</sup>

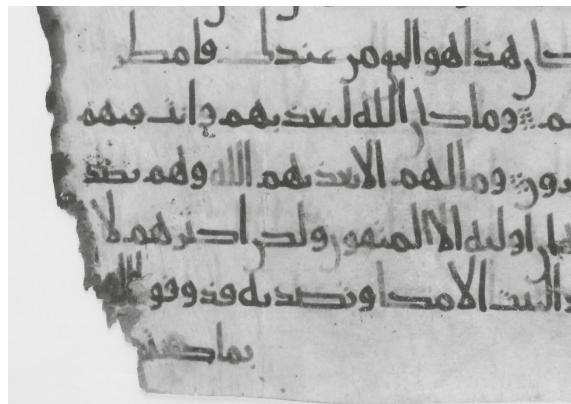


Figure 21.5 Writing under the text-box, Paris, BnF Arabe 330g, fo.60a.  
Permission of Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Table 21.8 Comparison of individual letters' shapes.

Qāf 47	Paris BnF Ar. 330g	Codex A.1	Paris BnF Arabe 326b	Paris BnF Ar. 330f
Final qaf				
jim/ ha'/kha'				
ha'				
Final ta'				

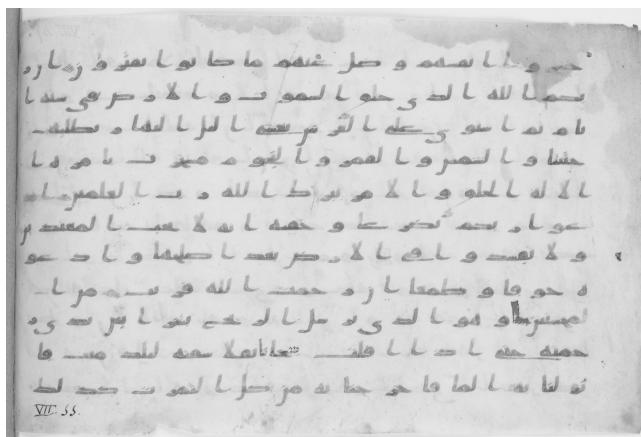


Figure 21.6 Paris, BnF Arabe 326b, fo.8b.  
Permission of Bibliothèque nationale de France.

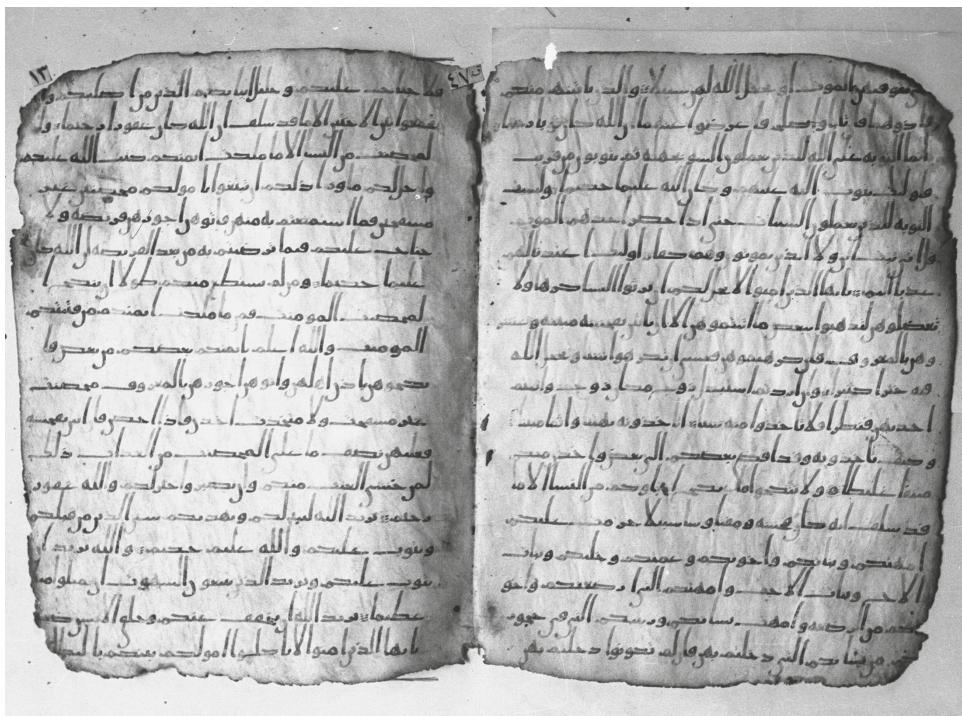


Figure 21.7 Gotthelf Bergsträsser photoarchive, Qāf 47, fos. 13b–14a.  
Permission of Corpus Coranicum BBAW.

Parchment quality could give some information about the chronology and the environment in which the manuscripts were produced. The great Umayyad manuscripts often used thin and flexible parchment (Paris BnF Arabe 330c), while the Codex Parisino-petropolitanus and the later manuscripts – such as the C manuscripts, from the eighth century<sup>32</sup> – use a thicker, rigid, one. The quality of the skin could reflect a local tradition of producing parchment, but we should isolate the LH/A group from the A group and Codex A.1. That all the manuscripts in question respect Gregory's rule might indicate a Palestinian or Egyptian provenance, since the Greek, Aramean Christian Palestinian and Coptic tradition of Gregory's rule was well established in these regions.

### Textual comparison: a tradition against others

The Islamic narratives suggest that there was competition between the official Qur'an scriptoria and more modest loci of production, and that this may have stimulated the production of manuscripts during the Umayyad period.<sup>33</sup> The evidence from Codex A.1 appears to match this context of multiple centres of production, and competition between them. Because of the fragmentary character of our documents, comparison between Codex A.1 and other manuscripts is confined in most cases below to short textual sequences.

## Orthography

One of the main conclusions already drawn above from the orthographic analysis of Codex A.1 is the confusing and irregular way copyists followed various rules, especially for the notation of the *alif* as *mater lectionis* (a vowel marker). The notation of *alif* with the value of long vowel /ā/ represents the most frequent orthographical variation within the Qur'anic manuscripts of the first three centuries.<sup>34</sup> If we compare two manuscripts, the Codex Parisino-petropolitanus, from the second half of the seventh century, and the Meknes manuscript,<sup>35</sup> datable to the ninth century, we could observe that in all the instances, the first one writes the words *qālū* and *'adhāb* systematically without the long /ā/ vowel marked by *alif* (*scriptio defective*); while the second one consistently marks the long /ā/ vowel in these words (*scriptio plena*). Thus, the Codex Parisino-petropolitanus and the Meknes manuscript could represent two milestones attesting the introduction of the *alif* as *mater lectionis* (vowel marker). Codex A.1 might be situated between these milestones. Indeed, the manuscript preserves in many cases idiosyncratic spellings and alternative orthography to such an extent that one wonders if the copyist was really following any rule at all.

When the *alif* as *mater lectionis* in Codex A.1 and the other manuscripts are compared it can be seen that orthographical modernisation does not follow a clear linear progression. Indeed, the text maintains the old orthography in some instances, but uses the new one in others. We shall limit ourselves here to the example of *'adhāb*. Table 21.9 illustrates the orthographic options for this word in several manuscripts.<sup>36</sup> All of them reflect the hesitation between the two orthographic possibilities. The Codex A.1 and its correlative manuscripts are written in red.

These examples highlight two further noteworthy facts. First, the orthography chosen does not depend on any grammatical context (the verses 34/52 and 61/68 of the ninth *sura* show a similar construction but adopt a different orthography). Second, the complete body of evidence reveals both connections and contrasts between the manuscripts. Indeed, the Codex A.1 and the LH/A group share the same orthographic orientations for all the 19 compared instances, except for 10:15.<sup>37</sup> If we compare these instances to other manuscripts, such as the London, BL Or.2165, more than half of these adopt the opposite orthography from those in the Codex A.1.

A more wide-ranging textual comparison of Codex A.1 with other manuscripts highlights the frequency of the same particular spellings and permits us to place our fragment within a wider set of manuscripts written in several scripts, all datable to the end of the seventh century or beginning of the eighth century (LH, B.I, A and hybrid styles from these scripts). These specific spellings already exist in the Codex Parisino-petropolitanus, but have almost entirely disappeared in the Meknes Codex:

- The long vowel /ū/ doesn't appear in the word *'ulū*.
- The *alif al-wiqaya* in the plural verb *rā'ū* is omitted.
- The long vowel /i/ is sometimes missing in the name *ibrāhīm*.
- The glottal stop (*hamzah*) is not directly represented by a specific sign, but is implied by the use of *alif*, *waw* or *ya'*, as carrier of the *hamzah*. The usage of these letters varies: in some instances, the carrier of the *hamzah* completely disappears; in others, it appears whereas it is not represented in the *rasm* of the Cairo Edition; the choice of carrier also varies (*alif* instead of *ya'* or *waw*).

Table 21.9 Orthographical options for *'adhāb*.

	<i>'adāb (scriptio defectiva)</i>	<i>'adab (scriptio plena)</i>
9:34	Codex A.1 Paris, BNF Arabe 330g Codex Parisino-petropolitanus	London, British Library, Or.2165 Paris, BNF, Arabe 6140a Berlin, SBB, We.1913 Paris, BNF, Arabe 331 G.-B.-Archiv, Meknes
9:39	Codex A.1 Paris, BNF Arabe 330g Codex Parisino-petropolitanus Paris, BNF, Arabe 6140a	London, BL, Or.2165 G.-B.-Archiv, Meknes
9:52	London, BL, Or.2165 G.-B.-Archiv, Saray Medina 1a Berlin, SBB, We.1913	Codex A.1 Paris, BNF Arabe 330g
9:61	London, BL, Or.2165 Berlin, SBB, We.1913	Codex A.1 Paris, BNF Arabe 330g Parsis, BNF Arabe 330f G.-B.-Archiv, Saray Medina 1a G.-B.-Archiv, Meknes
9:68	Codex A.1 Paris, BNF Arabe 330g London, BL, Or.2165 Paris, BNF, Arabe 6140a	Berlin, SBB, We.1913

- The orthography of the word *shay'* is subject to variations between the more usual Arabic form, without *alif*, and another form with *alif*.
- The spelling of *'āya/'āyāt*, including an additional *ya'* when the word is preceded by the particle *bi-*.

Hence, these manuscripts suggest the existence of an intermediate phase – probably at the beginning of the eighth century – where the ancient orthography was still in use. Moreover, rarer spellings found in Codex A.1 are also existent in the LH/A and A fragments:

- The notation of the article *al-* without initial *alif* when it is associated with the particle *bi-*. This spelling is quite irregular, although the manuscripts agree on the places where they have to use it. For example, the Paris, BnF Arabe 330g uses the defective spelling in the formula *bi-l-ma'rūf* at 9:71; while the more usual form with *alif* is employed for the same formula at 9:112. An identical observation could be made regarding Kairouan R119 for *bi-l-qist*, written without *alif* in 10:47 and 10:54, but with *alif* in 11:85.
- The term *'ilāh* includes sometimes a *ya'* in place of the medial *alif* (one example in 9:129 found in Paris, BnF Arabe 330g and Qāf 47).

- The word *zakāt* is written with *alif* at 9:5 and 9:11 in Paris, BnF Arabe 330g; while it is correctly written with *waw* in 9:18 and 9:71.
- The change of consonants mentioned for the word *rijza*, written *rijsa* with *sin* instead of *zay* in the Codex A.1 (8:11) appears in three other manuscripts related to the LH/A-A groups (Paris, BnF Arabe 330g; Qāf 47 and Kairouan R119) but also in a B.I manuscript (Paris, BnF Arabe 331).

The flexibility and freedom often alleged in studies of the earliest Qur'anic manuscripts may be only apparent.<sup>38</sup> Some rules hide behind the orthographical variations and show that the Qur'anic transmission was already controlled during the first half of the eighth century. It is possible that the Islamic narratives about the Umayyad reform by the governor of Basra, Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad (d. AH 67/686 CE),<sup>39</sup> may have played a role. However, we know nothing further about the exact instructions of that reform. As Régis Blachère noted, it is strange that this reform did not reach the whole text.<sup>40</sup> Thus, we could envision the orthographic duality in the manuscripts as a disagreement on the words which slipped through the reform, as well as a disagreement precisely on the reformed words. In such cases, the manuscripts could reflect both a pro-Umayyad and anti-Umayyad trends.

In other words, at the beginning of the eighth century, the manuscripts do not display any common orientation towards a unique Qur'anic archetype. Due to opposition to the Umayyad reform, the archaisms could have been maintained in some local circles as a response to the introduction of the modern orthographies.

### *Diacritical signs and variant readings*

The majority of the different readings of letters observed in the Codex A.1, such as *tha* instead of *ta*, are not attested in other manuscripts and, thus, should be envisaged as unintentional transpositions or improper use of the diacritical system assigned to the copyist. This kind of mistake appears here and there in the Qur'anic manuscripts of the first two Islamic centuries, without reference to a particular reading's tradition. However, the numerous changes in dotting the verbal prefixes noticed in the Codex A.1 could well characterise the tradition of a specific reading.

Unfortunately, the comparison of this kind of variation is very restricted: only eight occurrences using dots in a different way from that of the Uthmanic Vulgate are shared by our manuscripts and the LH/A group. Half of them agree on the way of dotting the prefix: always *ta* instead of *ya* (see Table 21.10). None of them are known as a traditional Qur'anic Reading.

These correspondences reflect a general tendency already observed in other manuscripts, datable from the eighth century.<sup>41</sup> During this time, the undotted verbal prefixes could be problematic for some copyists and, presumably, for some readers. Then, many of them received diacritical dots, mainly referring to the letter *ta*, whatever the grammatical context.

A second category of variation in diacritics involves the established diacritical system itself. The comparison reveals that most of the unique ways of dotting observed in the Codex A.1 are due to improper uses that can be assigned to the copyist himself.<sup>42</sup> There are a few correspondences both in the LH/A-A groups and in other manuscripts from the eighth century.

Table 21.10 Variant readings involving diacritics.

<i>Sura, verse</i>	<i>Term</i>	<i>Manuscript's variant</i>	<i>Manuscript</i>
8:47	<i>ya'malūna</i>	<i>ta'malūna</i>	Codex A.1 Paris, BNF Arabe 330g Qāf 47, before correction
9:35	<i>yuhmā</i>	<i>tuhmā</i>	Codex A.1 Paris, BNF Arabe 330g
10:26	<i>yarhaqu</i>	<i>tarhaqu</i>	Codex A.1 Paris, BNF Arabe 330g Paris, BNF Arabe 330e (A script) Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art, n.24145 (A/C.I script) Berlin, SBB, We.1913 (B.I script)
11:87	<i>nasha'u</i>	<i>tasha'u</i>	Codex A.1 Kairouan R119 Paris, BNF Arabe 328c (LH)

### *Lam-alif*

This specific use of dots in association with the *lam-alif* appears in one A manuscript (Paris, BnF Arabe 330f, see Figure 21.8).<sup>43</sup> We identified it in this manuscript almost 11 times for similar words (negation *la*, article *al-* combined with initial *alif*, exception *illā*). Further investigations are still necessary concerning the dotted *lam-alif* and the function of its dots.

### *Fa and qaf*

The specific dotting of *qaf* (with a dot above) and *fa* (with a dot below) could reflect a regional and temporary tradition, mostly related to the LH/A and A groups. Enlarging the scope of our investigations to papyri and inscriptions, this specific way of dotting these letters was apparently employed simultaneously with a second one, which reverses the rules, during the first half of the eighth century in both religious and administrative milieux. This latter way ultimately prevailed in the mainstream written tradition. However, it failed to displace the first one completely, which is still the recognised system today in the Maghrib region.<sup>44</sup>

### *Textual division*

The verse marker constitutes an essential tool within written transmission. Indeed, it is already visible in the most ancient Qur'anic manuscripts. It is always written in the same black ink as the consonants; thus, it may have had the same sacred quality, and differ in this respect from the other additions, such as vocalisation or titles, usually added in red ink. However, it shows much greater variation than the consonantal



Figure 21.8 Dotted lam-alif. Paris, BnF Arabe 330f, fo.43a.  
Permission of Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Table 21.11 Common variations of the verse markers with their potential function.

<i>Sura, verse</i>	<i>Separation after:</i>	<i>Manuscript</i>	<i>Hypothetical function</i>
8:34	<i>Al-muttaqūna</i>	Codex A.1 Qāf 47 Kairouan R119	<i>Isolation of a type-formula</i>
8:42	<i>Mafūlan</i>	Codex A.1 Qāf 47 Paris, BNF Arabe 330g Kairouan R119 London, BL, Or.2165 Cambridge, Add. 1125	<i>Semantic stop in the speech (also known by the Tradition, as Basran, Syrian and Hijazi separation)</i>
8:44	<i>Mafūlan</i>	Codex A.1	<i>Semantic stop in the speech, copy of the 8:42</i>
9:61	<i>li-l-mu'minīna</i>	Qāf 47 Codex A.1 Paris, BNF Arabe 330g Paris, BNF Arabe 330f (A)	<i>Semantic stop in the speech</i>
9:115	<i>Yattaqūna</i>	Codex A.1 Paris, BNF Arabe 330f (A)	<i>Isolation of a type-formula; Recitation tool (waqf location)</i>
10:5	<i>Hisāb</i>	Codex A.1 Qāf 47 Paris, BNF Arabe 330g	<i>Recitation tool (waqf location and key word, usually used in ending verse)</i>

skeleton. This variation indicates flexibility in the textual units and their delimitation at least until the end of the eighth century and so should be considered as substantial information about Qur'anic transmission.

In Codex A.1 there are additional verse divisions, most of which are apparently peculiar to the copyist of the Codex A.1. Other manuscripts of the LH/A group also

have their own verse divisions. A few separations found in the Codex A.1 are also found in the LH/A and A manuscripts, and sometimes in other manuscripts. Qāf 47 introduces several separations, often placed in the location of the *waqf*, as in the Codex A.1 (see Table 21.11).

Despite the distinct traditions in their placement, the positioning of these verse markers may have satisfied similar needs. Flexibility in their use appears to have been confined by some specific criteria. These appear to have had to do mainly with orality and recitation, placing the verses markers in line with internal rhymes and optional pauses. Most of these separations were added freely by the copyists; but some others were circulating as part of the Qur'an's transmission. Among these separations, very few have survived in the later tradition. Many issues are still waiting investigation regarding the concept of verse during the first stages of the Qur'anic transmission. In particular, further investigation could clarify the relationships between the oral and written in the late antique Arabic world.

## CONCLUSIONS

Codex A.1 should be considered an Umayyad-era production. Like the LH/A family, it reflects transitional features reminding us of both the earliest manuscripts in Hijazi script and those in A script. A more precise identification remains hypothetical: Codex A.1 could be a regional manuscript, most likely from Palestine or Egypt, written by a copyist familiar with the LH/A script, who based his copy on a model written in the type A script. It is perhaps no coincidence that many of these manuscripts have been discovered in Egypt. A local tradition of copying the Qur'an might have emerged there in very early times.

The present study emphasises the existence of multiple trends in the transmission of the Qur'an during Umayyad times. In particular, it provides further evidence against the concept of a unique transmission from a Qur'anic archetype. During the first decades of the eighth century, the parameters of the transmission were not yet fixed, and retained the possibility of individual expression by those who were responsible for copying it. Hence, Qur'anic orthography could be linked to political claims, and, thus, was used as a way of showing allegiance to particular factions. In the same way, the extensive use of *matres lectionis*, diacritical signs and markers of verses clearly reflects a sudden interest in the verbal recitation of the Qur'an, and the incursion of the *qurra'* (or 'Readers') into the written transmission. (The *qurra'* are the authoritative figures who played a major role in the Qur'an transmission according to the Islamic tradition.) Unlike the earliest manuscripts, in which the Qur'anic text is confined to a very ambiguous consonantal skeleton, Codex A.1 and its related manuscripts introduce new textual elements for a concrete performance of the Qur'anic reading. The Qur'an, then, is not an immutable text; it rather provides a space wherein several trends in its arrangement are in constant confrontation. Identifying these trends is a very complex task and requires us to consider both political and social claims.

The foregoing analysis raises many further substantial issues related to the identification of these trends. Do some trends reflect efforts to preserve the archaic heritage, while others are responses to the new expectations of the Muslim community? Do the different copyists' initiatives conceal a cleavage between pro- and anti-Umayyad

tendencies? Does the complex relationship between orality and writing have an impact on the writing of the Qur'an? These substantial issues still remain to be further explored in future studies of the Qur'anic manuscripts.

## NOTES

- 1 I would like to express my warmest thanks to Fred Donner for his corrections, suggestions and comments. I am however responsible for any mistakes which have remained in the text.
- 2 See, for example Deroche 2009, Dutton 2017. Studying the variants readings of the Birmingham MS Mingana Arab. (Isl) 1572, Yasin Dutton rightly assigns the fluidity found in the early manuscripts to a 'so-called period of ikhtiyar which seems to have preceded the final standardization of the Seven, Eight, Ten Readings, etc.' p. 27.
- 3 According to al-Nadim (d. 995 or 998), the caliph Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz (r. 717–20) would have ordered a manuscript to a mosaic's craftsman but refused to pay the outrageous price requested by the copyist (al-Nadim 1872: 6). Elsewhere, the caliph's brother, Abu Bakr, would have purchased his father's manuscript for thousand dinars (Ibn Duqmaq 1310/1893: 73).
- 4 See Jeffery 1937.
- 5 See al-Sijistani 2004.
- 6 Excluding the Ṣan'a' palimpsest (Ṣan'a' DAM 01-27.1) which is very similar to the other manuscripts on the formal level, but distinct on the textual one.
- 7 The earliest ones, in Hijazi script, as the Codex Parisino-petropolitanus or the British Library Or. 2165 are equivalent to in-quarto. Later examples, written in elaborate styles, show a progressive growth in the size of the Qur'anic manuscripts: the Ṣan'a' codex attributed to the reign of al-Walid I (Ṣan'a' DAM 20-33.1) corresponds to an in-folio, and the 'Umayyad fragment', studied by Y. Dutton, reaches the dimensions of in-plano (Dutton 2007).
- 8 A complete study of this manuscript will be envisaged within the project Coranica.
- 9 Cellard 2018.
- 10 For a description of the Hijazi style, see Deroche 2014.
- 11 George 2010: 92.
- 12 See Deroche 2009 and George 2010.
- 13 David 2011, lot no. 152.
- 14 The rule is so named after Caspar René Gregory (1846–1917), who is credited to be the first to notice the consistent practice of collating parchment leaves in medieval codices (Avrin 2010).
- 15 al-Sijistani 2004: 40.
- 16 Spitaler 1935.
- 17 Except in R.I between the *suras* 43 and 46, where there is no separation. This may reflect the work of another copyist.
- 18 This type-formula could be defined as a 'short textual unit which in all cases ... can be defined as a very general enunciation ending with a word rhyming with the neighbouring verses' (Deroche 2014: 28).
- 19 Deroche 1983.
- 20 Paris, BnF Arabe 330d, 330e, 330f.
- 21 Paris, BnF Arabe 326b, San-Petersburg, NLR, Marcel 10.
- 22 One of the fragments belonging to this group is classified as Hijazi type II – as the BL, Or.2165 on the Corpus Coranicum website.
- 23 Deroche 1983: 145.
- 24 This analysis has been undertaken by the project Coranica, see Corpus Coranicum 2016.

- 25 This fragment is today kept in Cairo, Dar al-kutub (masahif 247). The present study of this manuscript is based on the images from the Bergsträsser-Archiv, in which the manuscript is called Qaf 47 (available on [www.corpuscoranicum.de](http://www.corpuscoranicum.de)).
- 26 Cellard 2015.
- 27 Many similar fragments from the Damascus deposit have been identified in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul.
- 28 Dodge 1970: 12.
- 29 Debié 2010.
- 30 George 2010.
- 31 Paris, BnF Arabe 330f combines bifolios sometimes thick and sometimes thin.
- 32 See for example Paris, BnF Arabe 334a, 334b and 334c, 337a.
- 33 Controversies about the physical presentation of the codex (use of ornaments or size of the codices) and its orthography could reflect these different trends of producing manuscripts, see Sijistani 2004.
- 34 According to C. Robin, the letter *alif* wasn't employed for the long /a/ in pre-islamic Arabic spelling. The system of the *matres lectionis* was probably reformed in Medina, during the first decades after the Muhammad's death (Robin 2006).
- 35 Photographed by Gotthelf-Bergsträsser from the private Library of the Sherif 'Abdarrahman ibn Zidan.
- 36 This table has been elaborated in part with the data of the Corpus Coranicum website ([www.corpuscoranicum.de](http://www.corpuscoranicum.de)).
- 37 Here, the Codex A.1 includes the *alif* while the Paris BnF Arabe 330g does not.
- 38 Deroche 2009; Small 2011.
- 39 Al-Sijistani 2004: 117.
- 40 Blachère 2002: 94.
- 41 About the C.I manuscripts, see Cellard 2015. A same conclusion has been proposed in Fedeli 2012.
- 42 However, this kind of deviation appears also in the LH/A group. In many instances, two manuscripts (Paris, BnF Arabe 330 g and Qāf 47) use four dashes for dotting the *shin*.
- 43 The dotted *lam-alif* appears in sura 9, verses: 74, 99, 106, 107, 110, 114, 118. Another dotted *lam-alif* is on the folio 1b, sold in Rennes (number 153), belonging also to the Paris, BnF Arabe 330f.
- 44 Kaplony 2008; Leemhuis 2006; Small 2013.

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