‘An Arabic Qurʾān, That You Might Understand’

Qurʾān Fragments in the T-S Arabic Cairo Genizah Collection

Magdalen M. Connolly
University of Cambridge, Cambridge, U.K.
mmc53@cam.ac.uk

Nick Posegay
University of Cambridge, Cambridge, U.K.
nrp40@cam.ac.uk

Abstract

The Arabic-script Qurʾān fragments of the Cairo genizah collections have not yet drawn much interest among Arabic and genizah scholars. This paper aims to bring them to the attention of a broader audience by presenting the palaeographic features (§3) and vocalisation systems (§4) of eleven Arabic-script Qurʾān fragments from the Cambridge University Library’s Taylor-Schechter Arabic collection. While the focus of this paper is the physical appearance of these Qurʾān leaves, their presence in the Cairo genizah (§1.1)—a Jewish ‘storeroom’ for retired sacred texts—is also tentatively explored (§1.2, §5).

Keywords

Qurʾān fragments – Cairo genizah – Arabic – Arabic palaeography – vocalisation signs
1 Introduction

1.1 The Cairo Genizah

The Hebrew word *genizah* (pl. *genizōt*) is often translated as 'storeroom,' though it more literally means 'hiding away.' It is common practice among Jewish communities to place texts which are no longer in use, but which are considered sacred (typically due to the inclusion of the name of God or the Hebrew script) in a synagogue's genizah. Once full, the contents of the storerooms are usually buried to protect them from desecration.

In the early medieval period, al-Fustāṭ's Palestinian synagogue (known as the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue) was a vibrant focal point of the Jewish community, and possessed a genizah. Due to plague, famine, intermittent persecution (Courbage and Fargues [1997] 2018:19), and the emigration of wealthier Jews to the burgeoning Cairo (Rustow 2008), the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue had fallen into relative disuse by the turn of the fourteenth century (Jefferson 2018:426). This decline continued, and by the seventeenth century, the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue saw only sporadic services and the occasional pilgrim (Reif 2000:14; Jefferson 2018:428).

Scholars and travellers who visited al-Fustāṭ make few allusion to the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue's genizah between the fifteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries (Jefferson 2018:429), and there is scant record of admittance for a foreigner before Jacob Sapir in 1864 (Jefferson 2018:433). Thereafter, rumours...

---

1 Submitted on June 19, 2019. Accepted for publication September 15, 2019.
2 For introductions to the Cairo genizah collections, see Reif (2000); and Hoffman and Cole (2011).
3 From the root *gnz*, ‘storing up, reserving’ (Jastrow 1926:258).
5 It is not yet known whether the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue's genizah was periodically cleared and re-filled. The discovery of late ninth-century papyri documents indicates that it was not emptied. However, Jefferson’s suggestion that additional material from other local *genizōt* may have been added to the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue’s genizah between 1889 and 1892 throws this evidence into doubt (2018:426–427, 433–434, 444).
6 The Jewish community in ninth- and tenth-century Egypt accounted for approximately one per cent of the total population (Courbage and Fargues [1997] 2018:16).
7 The majority of texts found in the Cairo genizah collections date between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries; the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue's ‘heyday’ (Loveday 2001:25; Jefferson 2018:426).
8 When the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue’s genizah was sealed off in the fifteenth century, its officials made a rooftop opening to allow for further deposits of texts (Jefferson 2018:427), suggesting that they expected further submissions.
about the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue’s genizah gradually gained traction, and when the storeroom was emptied for the synagogue’s reconstruction in 1889, westerners’ interest in the genizah had been piqued.

In 1896, while travelling in Egypt, twin-sisters Margaret D. Gibson (1843–1920) and Agnes S. Lewis (1843–1926) acquired a Hebrew manuscript, reportedly from the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue’s genizah. On their return to England, Gibson and Lewis brought this manuscript to their friend, Solomon Schechter (1847–1915), then Reader in Rabbinics at the University of Cambridge. Schechter identified it as the Hebrew edition of Ben Sira,10 a text previously only found in Syriac and Greek renditions11 (Hoffman and Cole 2011: 11).

Schechter rapidly arranged a trip to Egypt, arriving in Cairo by December 1896, and with the permission of Cairo’s Chief Rabbi, Aaron b. Simon (Hoffman and Cole 2011:73), he sifted through the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue’s genizah. In 1897, he returned to Cambridge with eight wooden tea crates, all stuffed with fragments (ibid.: 78).

The manuscripts and fragments attributed to the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue’s genizah number approximately 300,000, of which roughly 190,000 now reside in the Cambridge University Library. The remaining fragments are scattered among various institutions, including the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the national libraries of France and Israel; the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York; the British Library, London; the University of Manchester’s John Rylands collection; and a number of small, private collections (Reif 2000:17–18).

The Cairo genizah collections remain an invaluable—and in some areas under-utilised—resource for scholars interested in biblical studies, economic and social history, medieval medicine, Semitic philology, and many areas besides. The collections contain Hebrew, Judaeo-Arabic, Arabic, Aramaic, Syriac, Coptic and Judaeo-Spanish texts, and comprise more genres than can be listed here. Among these texts are a small number of Arabic-script Qurʾān fragments.

1.2 Arabic-Script Fragments in the Cambridge Cairo Genizah Collections

The Arabic-script component of the Cambridge genizah collections is relatively slight in comparison to their Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic contents. It is estimated that the collections contain roughly 7,000 Arabic-script fragments,
approximately four per cent of the total 190,000 (Khan 1986:54). As Geoffrey Khan remarks (1986:54), the presence of Arabic-script fragments in the Cairo Genizah is somewhat puzzling. Following Shelomo D. Goitein’s suggestion (1967:14), he proposes that the Arabic-script texts may have once formed parts of personal collections, which predominantly comprised Hebrew texts. When their owners moved or died, the collections were disposed of in the synagogue’s genizah, irrespective of their contents (Khan 1986:54). However, many (if not all) of the Arabic-script fragments—legal documents, letters and literary texts alike—contain the *basmala* or similar reference to God, which may have warranted their storage in the genizah.

With regard to the Arabic-script Qurʾān fragments, we are confronted not only with the question of why they are found in the genizah, but also whether they were indeed owned by Jews, and if so, for what purpose? As none of the fragments under consideration contain a colophon or any other indication of ownership, attempts to address the former question may appear speculative. However, the presence of Judaeo-Arabic Qurʾān fragments in the synagogue’s genizah indicates that at least some of the Jewish community did engage with the Qurʾān’s teachings directly, either in Judaeo-Arabic transcription or in Arabic script.

The size and style of the T-S Ar. fragments indicate that they were probably used for private study. While none of the them could be described as ‘model’ Qurʾāns, neither are they obviously or intentionally damaged. With the exception of a few marginal jottings in the form of the *basmala* and *ḥamdala* and the occasional correction, the fragments are largely unmarked.

The ensuing sections will introduce each fragment with a brief codicological summary (§ 2), followed by more detailed descriptions of their palaeography (§ 3) and vocalisation systems (§ 4).

---

12 Khan cites a different figure of 7,000 out of 140,000 (approximately five per cent) (1986:54), but after three more decades of Genizah research, we now have a better idea of the total number of fragments in the Cambridge collections (see Friedberg Genizah Project https://fjms.genizah.org/?lang=eng for details).

13 Additional Qurʾān fragments are found in the Taylor-Schechter New Series, as well as other collections (see, e.g., T-S NS 183.79; T-S NS 192.11a, T-S NS 192.11b and T-S NS 19211c; and T-S NS 306.145).

14 See Paudice (2009).
2 Eleven Arabic-Script Qurʾān Fragments

The fragments are ordered here according to their classmarks in ascending order:

(i) T-S Ar.19.7  
(ii) T-S Ar.38.8  
(iii) T-S Ar.38.39  
(iv) T-S Ar.38.64  
(v) T-S Ar.40.97  
(vi) T-S Ar.40.177  
(vii) T-S Ar.41.84  
(viii) T-S Ar.41.93  
(ix) T-S Ar.41.119  
(x) T-S Ar.42.145  
(xi) T-S Ar.42.193

2.1 Preliminary Physical Descriptions

(1) T-S Ar.19.7

Content Qurʾān 2:255
Material; condition Paper; one leaf; badly torn, holes, slightly rubbed, slightly stained, horizontal laid lines, vertical chain lines
Dimensions Page 13.7 × 22.7 cm
Written area 13.7 × 20.2 cm; two lines + marginalia (recto; verso is blank)
Script Script Ṯuluṯ
Hands Two hands (second hand rubricated)
Letter-pointing Graphemes are partially pointed with diacritical dots
Vocalisation Partial modern vocalisation
Inks Polychrome; black ink  
Some words in red (second hand); some spaces between letters filled with red ink, almost haphazardly
Format Unknown

15 For explanations of the vocalisation systems, see § 4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(ii)</th>
<th>T-S Ar.38.8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Qurʾān 11:43–50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material</strong></td>
<td>Parchment; one leaf; holes, slightly rubbed, slightly stained, recto is hair side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimensions</strong></td>
<td>10.2 × 15.2 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page</strong></td>
<td>5.4 × 9.7 cm; eight lines (recto); eight lines (verso)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Script</strong></td>
<td>Abbasid bookhand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hands</strong></td>
<td>One hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter-pointing</strong></td>
<td>Graphemes are only sporadically pointed with diacritical dots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocalisation</strong></td>
<td>Partial red-dot vocalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inks</strong></td>
<td>Polychrome; brown ink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red vocalisation dots</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
<td>Horizontal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(iii)</th>
<th>T-S Ar.38.39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Qurʾān 17:31–50; 18:10–27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material; condition</strong></td>
<td>Parchment; one leaf, with stub attached; torn, holes, rubbed, stained, water-damage, verso is hair side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimensions</strong></td>
<td>10.7 × 19.7 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page</strong></td>
<td>9.3 × 13.1 cm; 11 lines (recto); 13 lines (verso)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Script</strong></td>
<td>Mixed style; possibly nashī, with elements of mağribī script</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hands</strong></td>
<td>One hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter-pointing</strong></td>
<td>Unpointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocalisation</strong></td>
<td>Unvocalised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inks</strong></td>
<td>Monochrome; black ink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
<td>Horizontal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Content
- **Qurʾān** 77:27–50; 78:1–12; 79:40–46; 80:1–37

### Material
- Parchment; two leaves (bifolium); torn, holes, rubbed, stained, F1 recto and F2 verso are hair side; evidence of binding

### Dimensions
- **Page** 12.8 × 29.9 cm
- **Written area** 9.3 × 14.6 cm/15.3 cm; seven lines per leaf

### Script
- **Maġribī** (mabsūṭ); Early Abbasid script (subheadings)

### Hands
- One hand

### Letter-pointing
- Graphemes are frequently pointed with diacritical dots; āʾ is pointed with a sublinear dot, qāf with a single suprilinear dot

### Vocalisation
- Partial maţribī vocalisation

### Inks
- Polychrome; brown ink; gold sub-headings, with outline
  - Red vocalisation signs

### Format
- Horizontal

### Decoration
- End of an āya (‘verse’) is marked with three small dots in a triangular formation

---

### Content
- **Qurʾān** 96:10–19; 97; 98:1–6a

### Material
- Paper; one leaf, with stub attached; torn, holes, slightly rubbed, slightly faded, stained, vertical laid lines; evidence of binding

### Dimensions
- **Page** 13.7 × 10.5 cm
- **Written area** 10 × 6.5 cm; nine lines (recto); 11 lines (verso)

### Script
- **Nasḫī** (main text); **tawqīʿ** (second hand)

### Hands
- Two hands; one for recto and verso verses; and one for recto optative formulas

### Letter-pointing
- Graphemes are frequently (but inconsistently) pointed with diacritical dots

### Vocalisation
- Partial modern vocalisation

### Inks
- Monochrome; black ink

### Format
- Vertical
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>(vi)</strong> T-S Ar.40.177</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimensions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Script</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hands</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter-pointing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocalisation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decoration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Floral/circular filled in verse markers</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>(vii)</strong> T-S Ar.41.84</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimensions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Script</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hands</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 This fragment is mentioned in Khan 1986:60, n. 35.
(cont.)

**Letter-pointing**
Graphemes are frequently pointed with diacritical dots

**Vocalisation**
Isolated modern vocalisation

**Inks**
Monochrome; black ink

**Format**
Vertical

**Decoration**
Two or three consecutive ḥā’s mark the end of an āya

(iii) T-S Ar.41.93

**Content**
Qur’ān 2:29–34

**Material**
Paper; one leaf; torn, slightly stained, patternless

**Dimensions**
Page 20.8 × 16.8 cm

**Written area** 14.2 × 9.3 cm; nine lines + marginalia (recto); seven lines + catchword (verso)

**Script**
Nashī

**Hands**
Two hands (second hand in red)

**Letter-pointing**
Graphemes are consistently pointed with diacritical dots

**Vocalisation**
Isolated, modern vocalisation in red ink

**Inks**
Polychrome; black ink

Some red text in recto margin; isolated use of red vocalisation signs (recto)

**Format**
Vertical

(ix) T-S Ar.41.119

**Content**
Qur’ān 17:47–57

**Material**
Paper; one leaf; slightly torn, holes, slightly rubbed, slightly stained, folded once horizontally in the centre, horizontal laid lines

---

17 This fragment belongs with T-S NS 192.11a, T-S NS 192.11b and T-S NS 192.11c (Our thanks to Estara Arrant for pointing this out). It also physically joins to T-S NS 306.145.
### Qurʾān Fragments in the Arabic Cairo Genizah Collection

| Dimensions | Page | 24.7 × 17.7 cm; 18.6 × 12.2 cm; nine lines + marginalia (recto); nine lines (verso) |
| Written area | 16.8 × 11.3 cm/page; 10–11 lines; 14.1 × 9.4 cm (F1, recto and F4 verso) |

| Script | Script Muḥaqqaq (maṣāḥif) |
| Hands | One hand |
| Letter-pointing | Graphemes are consistently pointed with dia-critical dots |
| Vocalisation | Full modern vocalisation |

| Inks | Monochrome; brown ink |
| Format | Vertical |
| Decoration | One floral/circular design (recto) |

(x) **T-S Ar.42.145**

| Content | Qurʾān 36:1–26; 37:12–64; 37:121–138 |
| Material | Paper; four leaves (two bifolia); torn, holes, rubbed, stained, vertical laid lines horizontal chain lines |

| Dimensions | Page | 21.5 × 31.6 cm |
| Written area | 16.8 × 11.3 cm/page; 10–11 lines; 14.1 × 9.4 cm (F1, recto and F4 verso) |

| Script | Script Nashī |
| Hands | Two different hands |
| Letter-pointing | Graphemes are consistently pointed with dia-critical dots |
| Vocalisation | Full modern Arabic vocalisation |

| Inks | Monochrome: black/brown ink |
| Format | Vertical |

(xi) **T-S Ar.42.193**

| Content | Qurʾān 20:109–21:35 |
| Material | Paper; two leaves (bifolium); torn, holes, badly rubbed, badly stained, vertical laid lines |

| Dimensions | Page | 24.9 × 34.1 cm |
| Written area | 20.7 × 12.4 cm; 19–20 lines |
Script: Nashī
Hands: Two hands; one for the main text, one for additional vocalisation signs
Letter-pointing: Graphemes are frequently (but not consistently) pointed with diacritical dots; āʾ and ġīm often unmarked in all positions
Vocalisation: Partial to full vocalisation, some vocalisation signs in black ink, some in brown ink
Inks: Polychrome; black ink (main text, vocalisation signs); brown ink (vocalisation signs)
Red dots separate verses
Format: Vertical
Decoration: Large red dots separate verses

2.2 Codicology
Scribes throughout the early Islamicate world composed Qurʾāns on vertical-format parchment (Loveday 2001:9, 15) and papyrus,18 but during the tenth century, a horizontal format displaced the vertical (Déroche 1992:17; Gruendler 2001:142).19 Horizontal-shaped parchment then dominated Qurʾān production until the early eleventh century, when scribes in Iran and Iraq began copying the Qurʾān on paper20 (James 1992:14; Sijpesteijn 2008:519). Until then, paper had been the preserve of documents, but its relatively low production cost (ibid.: 519; Gacek 2012:186), comparative ease of preparation (Loveday 2001:23), and the indelibility of ink on paper as compared to parchment (Blair 2006:45) all contributed to its growing popularity. This development spread westward, reaching Egypt by the mid-eleventh century, but while Egyptian scribes were

---

18 Papyrus continued to be used in Egypt for administrative matters until the mid-tenth century (Khan 1992:23; 2007:33; Blair 2006:41; Gacek 2012:93), with parchment being reserved, on the whole, for Qurʾāns and literary texts. Meanwhile, in the eastern Abbasid provinces, paper had already supplanted papyrus in administrative circles by the mid-ninth century. It is therefore unsurprising that paper was more readily adopted in the eastern provinces than in the more westerly regions for Qurʾān composition.

19 See e.g., the Palermo Qurʾān (QUR26, QUR368) and Istanbul’s Nuruosmaniye Library MS23, dated 982–983.

20 Déroche states that the oldest paper Qurʾān dates to the early tenth century (1992:17), but he gives no classmark. He is perhaps referring to al-Rāzī’s transcription, dated 971–972 (Blair 2006:46; 2007:601).
quick to adopt the new medium, parchment remained the preferred Qurʾān material in the Maġrib for several centuries (Déroche 1992:17; Blair 2006:46). This eleventh-century shift in medium was accompanied by a reversion to vertical formats (Déroche 1992:18; James 1992:14), but the Maġrib again resisted the eastern trend, and from the eleventh century onwards maġribī Qurʾāns were generally cut in square format (James 1992:14, 89).

Eight of the eleven fragments examined here are written on paper in a vertical format (T-S Ar.19.7; T-S Ar.40.97; T-S Ar.40.177; T-S Ar.41.84; T-S Ar.41.93; T-S Ar.41.119; T-S Ar.42.145; and T-S Ar.42.193).21 Conversely, the three Qurʾān fragments composed on parchment are all cut in a horizontal format (T-S Ar.38.8, T-S Ar.38.39 and T-S Ar.38.64).

Three of the paper fragments exhibit vertical laid lines (T-S Ar.40.97, T-S Ar.41.84 and T-S Ar.42.193), one horizontal laid lines (T-S Ar.41.119), one vertical laid lines with horizontal chain lines (T-S Ar.42.145), and one horizontal laid lines with vertical chain lines (T-S Ar.19.7). These lines suggest that they were all produced using laid moulds (Loveday 2001:34–35; Gacek 2012:139, 187). Neither of the two remaining paper fragments (T-S Ar.40.177 and T-S Ar.41.193) have discernible lines, but they do have perceptible fibres. The former was prepared using the more rudimentary wove mould (Loveday 2001:34; Gacek 2012:187), while the latter—which can be confidently dated to the late nineteenth century (Posegay, 2020)—is industrially-produced paper.

3 Palaeography22

This small selection of Qurʾān fragments contains a wide array of script-styles,23 including Abbasid bookhand, ‘New Style’ scripts, and maġribī, nashī, muhaqqaq and ṯulūṭ scripts. Our descriptions follow the loose chronological development of script-types presented by Déroche (1992), Gruendler (2001), Blair (2006) and Sijpesteijn (2008), but this order is not a comment on the fragments’ temporal origins.
**Ḥiǧāzī** script and the ‘Early Abbasid scripts’ used for Qurʾān transcriptions from the seventh and eighth centuries onwards, do not appear in T-S Ar. However, two fragments contain script-styles that resemble Abbasid bookhand (T-S Ar.38.8) and New Style (T-S Ar.40.177) scripts (see Déroche 1992:134–183). Abbasid bookhand refers to script-styles used for administrative purposes during the ninth and tenth centuries (Blair 2006:146, 150; Gacek 2008a:110; 2012:1, fig. 1). Gacek calls New Style I (henceforth NS.1) and New Style III (henceforth NS.111) ‘dressed-up ... version[s] of the Abbasid bookhand’ (2008a:110; 2012:1–2), and they are attested in Qurʾān production between the tenth and thirteenth centuries (Déroche 1992:134; Blair 2006:151).

Abbasid bookhand, NS.1 and NS.111 are precursors of **maġribī** script-styles (Gacek 2008a:110; 2012:1–2). The term **maġribī** is currently applied to script-styles used in southern Spain, the Maġrib, and sub-Saharan Africa from approximately the tenth century onwards (Abbott 1939:41; Blair 2006:223; Gacek 2008a:110–111). Two distinct types of classification are currently in use; one is geographically determined, while the other differentiates based on stylistic disparities (Gacek 2008a:112; 2012:149). T-S Ar.38.64 is written in **maġribī** script.

Of the eleven T-S Ar. Qurʾān fragments, five exhibit **nasḫī** script-styles (T-S Ar.40.97, T-S Ar.41.84, T-S Ar.41.93, T-S Ar.42.145 and T-S Ar.42.193). The term **nasḫī** (‘related to copying; transcription’) is commonly employed in western scholarship to refer to smaller, cursive scripts (Sijpesteijn 2008:518–519) first deployed during the ‘earlier Muslim centuries’ (Gacek 2008c:339). However, the classification is plagued by ambiguity, and it has been variously designated both a rectilinear (Blair 2006:226) and curvilinear script (Gacek 2008c:340; 2012:162–163). **Nasḫī** styles appear in Qurʾān production from the early eleventh century (see e.g., James 1992:22; Sijpesteijn 2008:519), and were some of the most common script-styles for copying Qurʾāns under the Mamluks (Blair 2006:336) and Ottomans (Mansour 2011:31).

---

24 Déroche introduced this term to replace ‘kufic’, which he considers outdated and too geographically limited to be useful (1992:11).

25 With the exception of T-S Ar.38.64, in which sūra headings are in an Early Abbasid script style (akin to Deroche’s C.l.a and D.IV).

26 Blair rejects the terms NS.1 and NS.111 in favour of ‘broken cursive’ (Blair 2006:444; 2007:601).

27 Khan (2014) demonstrates that these curvilinear script-styles originated in the eastern provinces, and were probably the result of Pahlavi-influenced cursive script-styles. They are attested in eighth-century documents from Khurasan, gradually spread from east to west during the ninth century, and became dominant thereafter (2014:283, 290–291).

28 Both Houdas (1886) and Abbott (1939) differentiate between script-styles on the basis of geographical location (Gacek 2008a:112), which Blair objects to (see 2006:221–222).
Scribes used *muḥaqqaq* (‘accurate; indubitable’) to transcribe large and medium-sized Qur’āns from approximately the eleventh century (Blair 2006: 171; Gacek 2008b:307; Mansour 2011:32). It is renowned for its tall, rectilinear ascenders and diagonal, tapered descenders. The terms ǧalīl (‘broad’) and ḥafīf (‘light’) refer to larger or smaller varieties, respectively. T-S Ar.41.119 resembles one of these ‘light’ styles, known as *maṣāḥif* (lit. ‘codices,’ i.e. Qur’āns).

T-S Ar. 19.7 has a *tulūt* (lit. ‘a third’) script-style, a type notable for its large size, hairlines, and deep curves (Gacek 2009:560). It was often favoured in headings, colophons and inscriptions (Blair 2006:336; Mansour 2011:30).

### 3.1 Abbasid Bookhand and ‘New Style’ Scripts

#### 3.1.1 T-S Ar.38.8

The text is written in a small hand, along a straight, un-scored textline, with curved descenders and a mixture of curved and straight ascenders that slant slightly leftwards. The ascenders sometimes sport left-side head-serifs. There is little differentiation between thick and thin lines, indicating that the scribe wrote with a round-cut calamus, a soft reed commonly used in the Maġrib (Abbott 1939:42; Gacek 2008a:111; 2012:40–41). There is a mix of open and closed counters.

The script closely resembles that found in *Kitāb Ġarībal-Ḥadīth*, of which folio 241 is dated to 252/866 (Witkam 2015:383–385; see also Blair 2006:146, 150; Gacek 2012:1). The two texts resemble each other in their ‘s’-shaped alifs; initial, medial and final kāf; lām-alif warrāqiyya; word-spacing; the breaking-up of words at the end of a line; and the relative absence of shading. These elements, combined with the fragment’s horizontal format, may indicate a late ninth/early tenth-century date.

#### 3.1.1.1 Alif

Individual *alif* (fig. 1) ranges from a vertical shaft, which sometimes has a left-leaning head and tapers towards the bottom (red), to a shaft with a hint of a central curve and a small left-turned foot (green), a curvaceous line with a bend in the middle (black), or an inverted ‘s’-shape with a left-side head-serif (white). The medial form sometimes protrudes below the textline (blue), and its head occasionally leans left. *Alif*’s height varies throughout.

---

29 Our initial survey of each fragment comprised a description of every grapheme. This, however, resulted in a text that more closely resembled a monograph than a journal article. As such, we have included descriptions of a selection of graphemes that encapsulate the most distinctive features of each style.

30 Leiden University library (MS Or. 298). Only ff. 241a–b of the manuscript are dated with certainty.
3.1.1.2 ʿAyn/Ḡayn
Initial ʿayn/ḡayn has a horizontal baseline and a large curved arm which points downwards (red). It differs from Ṽa.i in its shorter baseline and more rounded arm. Medial form is a triangular shape, ‘resting on its tip’ (Déroche 1992:136). No feature distinguishes medial ʿayn/ḡayn from medial Ṽa/qāf.

3.1.1.3 Kāf
Kāf’s width appears to be determined by the availability of space, elongating where possible. In initial position, an angular ‘s'-shaped kāf (green) (i.e. kāf mabsūṭa, Gacek 2012:243, 275) occurs. The ‘s'-shape is retained in final form (red), but it is more curvilinear and compressed than in initial-word position.

3.1.1.4 Mīm
In initial (red) and medial (blue) forms, mīm is rounded, resembling the Early Abbasid Script D.1. However, unlike D.1, final-form mīm (green) has a vertical tail. Here, the rounded head rests on a horizontal baseline, which extends leftwards, before descending in a short, oblique curve.
Initial ُهَاء (red) varies; sometimes it is a closed, cursive (approximate) circle, with a line that cuts though its centre. This form is known as ُواَقَحُ الْخْيِرَةَ (‘the cat’s face’). In other places, the circle is broken, and the outer arm forms a 45-degree angle around an inner circle. A closed-counter ُهَاء ُمَرْدُعَة is used in final form (green), and an upturned teardrop appears in isolation (blue).

Final ُيَاءْ، ُمَعْقَدَة (fig. 6) and ُيَاءْ ُمَرْدُعا (fig. 7) are used interchangeably.

The two arms of the angular ُلَّامَ-اَلْيَفَ لَمْرُقُيَة curve slightly to the left, with the right arm curving downwards at the top.
3.1.2 T-S Ar.40.17731

The fragment’s small, angular hand adheres to NS.1 principles, but there are hints of the more curvilinear NS.11. A straight (un-ruled) writing-line is maintained throughout, with all letters sitting on the textline. Descenders tend towards the curvilinear, while ascenders sometimes curve rightwards. The rectilinear aspect is most apparent in the heads of wāw, initial qāf and fāʾ and final hāʾ. There is little evidence of shading, and head-serifs occur only occasionally (red, fig. 9). Counters are usually open.

3.1.2.1 Alif

Isolated alif alternates between three main forms: an infrequent, curved shaft (red), with left-side head-serif and right-hooked foot, reminiscent of the Early Abbasid style B.11 (see Déroche 1992:136); the same curved shaft, with a right-turned foot but no head-serif (white); and a straight shaft (black), sometimes with a left-side head-serif and a tapered bottom. Medial alif’s shaft (green) consistently protrudes below the textline. The shaft’s height fluctuates.

![Figure 9](T-S Ar.40.177,F2,v.1-5)

3.1.2.2 ‘Ayn/Ǧayn

Initial āyn has an extended, horizontal baseline with a curved vertical arm (red). Its medial form constitutes a closed, triangular shape, with a flat horizontal top.32 Two similarly sized semi-circular shapes comprise isolated āyn/ġayn (green).

---
31 Khan proposes a possible tenth-century date for this fragment (1986:60, n. 34). However, it is worth noting its similarities to the twelfth-century text KFQ88.3 (see Deroche 1992:134, 181, 183).
32 The homographs medial āyn/ġayn and medial qāf/fāʾ are differentiated from one another consistently in this text. The former has a triangular form, while the latter is diamond-shaped.
3.1.2.3 Kāf
An angular, ‘s’-shaped kāf mabsūta occurs in initial, medial (blue) and final (green) forms.

3.1.2.4 Mīm
In initial, medial and final forms, mīm’s head is angular, with a pointed top. The final form’s tail extends from underneath the head, curving right, then left. The angular form and curved tail resemble NS.I and N.S.III, although the tail is situated more to the head’s left than its centre. The softening of the angular shape in medial form resembles NS.III (Déroche 1992: 137).

3.1.2.5 Haʾ
Akin to NS.III (Déroche 1992:136–137), an angular waḏḥ al-hirr represents hāʾ in initial (red) and medial (blue) forms.
3.1.2.6 Yā’
Yā’ mardūda is more frequent than yā’ muḥaqqaqa in final position. When space allows, yā’ mardūda’s horizontal stroke is extended.

3.1.2.7 Lām-Alif Ligature
The triangular base and gentle leftward curve of lām-alif warrāqiya are consistently used.

3.2 Mağribi Scripts
3.2.1 T-S Ar.38.64
The main body of text is in mağribi (mabsūṭ) script, but gold sūra headings are in Early Abbasid script-style, thinly outlined with brown ink. The text follows a straight writing-line, with ascenders that lean leftwards, and descenders with deep, broad bowls. The lack of shading suggests that the scribe used a calamus with a rounded nib. Left-side head-serifs are not uncommon, and counters are generally closed.33

3.2.1.1 Alif
Isolated alif has a long shaft and leans leftwards a little (red), sometimes with a slight left-turned foot. Final alif has a left-turned top hook, and the shaft occasionally juts below the textline (green). These two features typify NS.IIII’s final alif.

---

33 The stylistic lengthening of the basmala occurs between the hā’ and mīm of al-raḥmān, rather than between the sīn and mīm of bism. This stylistic feature was favoured by mağribī scribes (Blair 2006:226).
3.2.1.2 ‘Ayn/Ḡayn
Initial ‘ayn/ḡayn has a large, curved head and horizontal baseline. Following the mabsūṭ style, the baseline does not extend far beyond the arm. The medial form is ‘a [small] closed triangle resting on its tip.’ (Déroche 1992:136).

3.2.1.3 Kāf
Kāf mabsūṭa occurs in initial (red) and medial position. Final-form kāf (green) comprises a vertical stroke that is perpendicular to a shorter horizontal base stroke. The vertical stroke sometimes bends leftward. This style is known as kāf muʿarrā (Gacek 2012:319).
3.2.1.4 Mīm
Initial mīm resembles a triangle with softened edges (red). Its horizontal base rests on the textline, connecting to the following letter from the bottom left-side. Final mīm is small with a closed counter, and sits below the textline. Its tail begins as a vertical stroke, before sweeping left in a large arc.

3.2.1.5 Hāʾ
Initial hāʾ (red) constitutes two small, oval-shaped loops, above and below the textline, with closed counters. This form is known as ʿuḏn al-faras (‘the horse’s ear’). In medial form (green), a single stroke connects the loops, which do not meet in the middle.

3.2.1.6 Yāʾ
Isolated yāʾ extends in a sweeping curve below the following letters (fig. 21). In final form, yāʾ mardūda (fig. 22) is more common than yāʾ muḥaqqaqa.
3.2.1.7 **Lām-Alif Ligature**
Two styles alternate. First, the two vertical strokes of *lām-alif warrāqīya* (fig. 23) form an elongated cross, with no baseline stroke. *Lām-alif muḥaqqaqa*, a more curvilinear form with a looped bottom, also occurs (fig. 24).

3.3 **Nasḥī Scripts**
3.3.1 **T-S Ar.38.39**
While the style is predominantly curvilinear, rectilinear influence is also evident (e.g., *ṭāʾ*). The pen strokes’ widths are uniform, suggesting a round-cut calamus was used. All the words rest on the straight, un-ruled writing-line. Ascenders only sometimes curve, while descenders are short and curve towards the left. Nearly all counters are open.
3.3.1.1 Alif
Isolated *alif* (red) alternates between a straight stroke with no adornment to a vertical stroke with a left-turned foot. Final *alif* is sometimes a straight stroke that leans rightwards (blue), but sometimes has a distinct curve, and left-turned head (green), akin to Abbasid bookhand (see fig. 1) and *mağribî* script (see fig. 9).

**Figure 25** T-S Ar.38.39,F1,v.1–2

3.3.1.2 ‘Ayn/Ġayn
Initial ‘*ayn*/*ġayn* varies somewhat in the point at which the base meets the arm, and in the inclination of the base relative to the textline (red), but these variations may be attributed to the inconsistencies of an untrained hand. Medial ‘*ayn* (blue) is triangular and rests on its apex. It differs from medial *qāf* (green), where no central counter is visible, but this difference may be unintentional.

**Figure 26** T-S Ar.38.39,F1,v.4–5

3.3.1.3 Kāf
Resembling NS.III, *kāf mabsūṭa* occurs in all positions.

**Figure 27** T-S Ar.38.39,F1,v.4
3.3.1.4 Mīm

The rounded stroke of initial mīm (red) extends at an approximate 45-degree angle before curving back to meet the baseline stroke. Initial mīm joins the following letter from the baseline, but medial mīm’s connecting stroke extends from its head (blue). In isolated (black) and final forms (green), mīm’s tail extends from the head, down and to the left (i.e. mīm maqбуla maḥṭūfa), possibly influenced by muḥaqqaq script. The tail varies in length, sometimes terminating in an upturned flick.

3.3.1.5 Hāʾ

As in T-S Ar.38.8, initial hāʾ occurs both as waḡh al-hirr (fig. 30); and as an initial stroke that remains open, with an internal loop that joins to the following grapheme (fig. 31). In medial form (blue, fig. 32), ʿudn al-faras is favoured. In word-final position, hāʾ mardūfa occurs (green, fig. 32).
3.3.1.6 Yā’
Yā’ *muḥaqqaqa* (red) and *yā’ mardūda* (blue) appear interchangeably in word-final position, here.

3.3.1.7 Lām-Alif Ligature
Three *lām-alif* ligatures appear: (i) *lām-alif warrāqiya* (blue); (ii) *lām-alif muḥaqqaqa* (red); and (iii) *alif muḥaffafa* (green). In the latter, the short, curved stroke of *alif* does not meet *lām*’s foot.
3.3.2 T-S Ar.40.97

Elements of *nasḥī* and *muḥaqqaq* scripts intermingle here, and the main hand is a little inconsistent. The words sink onto the textline at a diagonal slant. Often, the final word of a line is superscript, resembling the Persian *nastaʿlīq* (‘hanging’) script, which may have its origins in *nasḥī* (Gacek 2008c:341; 2012: 165). Shading occurs consistently, most notably in the curves of descenders, such as *nūn*. Some thinned-out angles suggest that the nib used was cut at an angle (Gacek 2012:41). Right-side head-serifs occur frequently. Counters are open.

3.3.2.1 Alif

Initial *alif* (red) sports a left-turned foot. The shaft often has a right-side head-serif. Isolated final *alif* (blue) constitutes a long stroke, leaning leftward at the top. Final *alif* (green) hooks left at the top, akin to T-S Ar.38.64 (see fig. 16).

![Figure 35 T-S Ar.40.97, v.3](image)

3.3.2.2 Kāf

Initial *kāf* alternates between *kāf-mabsūṭa* (blue, fig. 36) and *kāf maškūla* (red, fig. 36). *Kāf maškūla* does not always have a top arm. When it does, it floats above the grapheme’s body. The two styles also alternate in medial form (fig. 37). An unmarked *kāf muʿarrā* occurs in both final (fig. 38) and isolated (fig. 39) positions.

34 The margin of this text contains a second hand, which is not discussed here.
Figure 36  T-S Ar.40.97,r.2–6

Figure 37  T-S Ar.40.97,v.3

Figure 38  T-S Ar.40.97,v.8

Figure 39  T-S Ar.40.97,r.9
3.3.2.3 Mīm
Initial mīm (green) is a misshapen circle, connected to the following letter from the top left-side. Medial mīm (blue) sits below the adjacent graphemes. Final mīm has two forms: mīm maqālub mushala, with its long, vertical tail; and mīm maqālub maḥṭūfa, which has a left-sloping, diagonal, tapered tail. It is not unusual for these two varieties to occur interchangeably (see James 1992:40–44).

![Figure 40 T-S Ar.40.97, f.8–9](image)

3.3.2.4 Hāʾ
Initial hāʾ (red) constitutes a closed circle (wağh al-hírr), sliced diagonally by the connecting stroke. Wağh al-hírr (blue) and ʿuḏn al-faras (green) occur interchangeably in medial position. In final form, hāʾ mardīfa appears (black). Isolated hāʾ resembles a tear-drop (purple).

![Figure 41 T-S Ar.40.97, v.3–4](image)
3.3.2.5 Yā’  
Final yā’ is written as both yā’ mardūda (fig. 42) and yā’ muḥaqqaqa.

3.3.2.6 Lām-Alif Ligature  
In initial form, lām-alif muḥaqqaqa (red, fig. 43) and a rounded iteration of lām-alif warrāqīya (fig. 44) are favoured, while lām-alif muḥaffafa (blue, fig. 43) appears in word-final position.

3.3.3 T-S Ar.41.84  
The hand here begins neatly at the top of both recto and verso, but grows increasingly untidy as it progresses. The words rest on a flat textline, but the space varies between the lines, which are not always straight. Ascenders tilt slightly to the left, while descenders are short and oblique (except final nūn). Aside from initial alif, there is little evidence of shading. The writing looks as if it might have been executed with a round-nib. Serifs are rare, and open counters are favoured.
3.3.3.1 Alif
Individual *alif* often has a left-turned, hooked foot, which varies in length (red), but it also appears as a hook-less stroke, which tapers towards the bottom (green). Final *alif* leans leftwards, and occasionally sports a head-serif. *Alif*’s height varies.

![Figure 45 T-S Ar.41.84,v.2–4](image)

3.3.3.2 Kāf
*Kāf mabsūṭa* appears in initial (red), medial (blue), final and isolated (green) forms. Its size varies, possibly dictated by the availability of space.

![Figure 46 T-S Ar.41.84,r.8–9](image)

3.3.3.3 Mīm
Initial *mīm* (green) has an almond-shaped head, sometimes with an open counter. Medial *mīm* (blue) is no more than a dot in some instances. In others, it resembles the initial form, with an open counter. Connecting ligatures extend from the top of the letter’s head. In some cases, final *mīm* has a long, vertical tail, (red) (i.e. *maqlūba musbala*), but in others, the tail is shortened (white). Occasionally, the tail projects diagonally down from the head and curves upwards, ending in a flick (black, i.e. *maqlūba mušaʿara*).
3.3.3.4 Hāʾ

Waḥḥ al-ḥirr appears exclusively in initial position (fig. 49), while ‘uḍn al-faras occurs in both initial (red, fig. 48) and medial positions (blue, fig. 48 and fig. 49).

3.3.3.5 Yāʾ

Final yāʾ only appears as yāʾ muḥaqqaqa.
3.3.3.6 Lām-Alif Ligature
Only lām-alif muḥaqqaqa occurs.

3.3.4 T-S Ar.41.93
Written in a well-formed nashī script, the letters generally sit on a straight writing-line. Ascenders tilt to the left, sometimes with serifs, while most descendents (except final mīm) trail close to the textline in oblique curves. There is some shading, but the edges are fairly rounded. Both open and closed counters are found.

3.3.4.1 Alif
Initial alif (red) has a hint of a left-turned foot (i.e. muḥarrafa), although in some instances it may be more aptly described as a ‘tapered terminal’ (i.e. mut-laqā) (Gacek 2012:8). Final alif (blue) extends from the preceding letter in a smooth, upwards curve. Its shaft and tip bend slightly to the right. However, when topped with hamza (white), final alif is straight and leans a little leftwards.
3.3.4.2 Kāf

*Kāf mabsūṭa* (red, fig. 52) and *kāf maškūla* (white, fig. 52) interchange in initial and medial positions. The elongated ‘s’-shaped *kāf* sports a serif in initial and medial forms (red, fig. 52; blue, fig. 53). Final *kāf mu‘arrā* (green, fig. 53) occurs consistently; a small *hamza* floating above its horizontal, curved foot.35

![Figure 52](TS Ar.41.93.v7-8)

![Figure 53](TS Ar.41.93.v3)

3.3.4.3 Mīm

Medial *mīm*’s form depends on the preceding letter. When following a vertical letter (e.g. *lām*), *mīm* has an almond-shaped head, with an open counter; after a horizontal grapheme (e.g. *sīn*), it becomes a short, rectangular stroke, projecting below the textline. In final form, *mīm maqlūba musbala* (green, fig. 54) appears, with a rounded head and a straight, vertical tail, protruding from the head’s left-side. Final *mīm maqlūba maḥṭūfa* (red, fig. 54) also occurs, its short, horizontal tail projecting from an open-counter head, flicking upwards at the end. This form appears on verso (fig. 55), but in the margin the word has been re-written (in the same hand) with *mīm maqluba musbala*. This may suggest that the latter form was deemed preferable, at least in this context.

---

35 During the ninth century, a miniature s-shaped *kāf* was inserted above word-final *kāf* in order to differentiate it from final-form *lām* (Gruendler 2001:140), while the latter often received a supralinear ‘v’-shape. These symbols were devised through the analogical extension of *ihmāl* signs, used to ensure correct reading of unpointed letters, to these two final-form graphemes (Witkam 2015:403–404).
3.3.4.4 Ha’

In initial position (red, fig. 56), the preferred form is a raised waǧh al-hirr, with its central stroke extending down towards the textline. Medial form occurs as ’udn al-faras (white, fig. 57) and as a simple ‘v’-shape, which sits below the textline (blue, fig. 56).
3.3.4.5 Yāʾ
Both yāʾ muḥaqqaqa (red) and yāʾ mardūda (green) appear.

![Figure 58: T-S Ar.41.93.r.4–5](image)

3.3.4.6 Lām-Alif Ligature
Only Lām-alif ṣawrāqi occurs. Its base rests on the textline at a slight angle. Both arms sport a head-serif.

![Figure 59: T-S Ar.41.93.r.5](image)

3.3.5 T-S Ar.42.145
These bifolia appear to contain two different hands. The scribe began with Qurʾān 36:1–11 (F1 recto) and moved on to verse 36:11–18 (F1 verso) (hand one). These two sections are written in a neat, precise hand. The following verses 36:18–27 (F2 recto) and 37:12–26 (F2 verso) become progressively larger and untidier. The remaining verses (Qurʾān 37:27–65 and 37:120–137) continue in this style (hand two), perhaps written in haste, as a draft or writing practice.

The words rest on a straight writing-line, leaning slightly leftwards. Although not as accentuated as nastāʾīq script, there is a tendency for initial letters to be superscripted, with the remaining letters falling onto the textline. Ascenders vary in height, as do the curved descenders. Head-serifs appear rarely. Shading is apparent in the writing on F1 recto, F1 verso and the beginning of F2 recto, but thereafter it ceases. The lack of shading in some folios may be due in part to a change from an obliquely cut reed to a rounded nib.

3.3.5.1 Alif
Isolated alif has four variations (fig. 60). First (red), the vertical stroke leans slightly rightward, tapers at the top, and has a slight left-turned foot. Second (white), the vertical stroke has a right-turned curve in the middle, and its thickness decreases from top to bottom. The third manifestation (yellow) is also hinted at in F4 verso, but the shading apparent in this example is not found
there. Fourth (black), the shaft curves leftwards in the middle, and has a right-side head-serif. Final alif has two forms. The first (blue) has a minor rightward bend, and the top tends slightly leftwards. The shaft’s head is sometimes tapered or diamond-shaped. Second (green), the curvilinear alif bends towards the right at the top, which sometimes tapers or sports a left-side head-serif.

3.3.5.2 ʿAyn/Ḡayn
Medial ʿayn (blue, fig. 62) sports closed counters (hand one), but ḡayn (blue, fig. 61) has an open counter (hand two). This difference between the first (F1 recto and F4 verso) and second (all other folios) hands is maintained throughout the text.

3.3.5.3 Kāf
Kāf mabsūṭa and kāf maškūla alternate throughout. Initial kāf maškūla (black, fig. 63) is found alongside initial kāf mabsūṭa (red, fig. 63). Both styles occur in medial form (fig. 64). In hand one, kāf muʿarrā appears in word-final position, with a miniature ‘s’-shaped kāf floating above its baseline (fig. 65).
3.3.5.4 Ṣīm
On F1 recto, final ʿmīm with a long, vertical tail (i.e. *maqlūba musbala*) is favoured (green, fig. 66). In the remaining folios (ff. 2–4), ʿmīm *maqlūba maḥṭūfa* occurs more frequently (white, fig. 67; fig. 68). The former has closed counters throughout, while the latter has open counters. Initial (red) and medial (blue) forms have closed counters in the neater hand (fig. 66; fig. 67), but open counters in the second hand (fig. 68).
3.3.5.5 Hāʾ
Both hands generally\textsuperscript{36} use \textit{waḡh al-hirr} (red, fig. 69; fig. 70). Medial \textit{ʿudn al-faras} with open counters occurs in both hands, but the first hand often favours \textit{hāʾ muʿallaqa} (white, fig. 69), while the second uses \textit{ʿudn al-faras} without exception (fig. 70).

\textsuperscript{36} F1r.5 (red): alternative initial position \textit{hāʾ}. 
3.3.5.6 Yā’
Yā’ mandūda only occurs in the first hand. Otherwise, yā’ muḥaqqaqa dominates.

3.3.5.7 Lām-Alif Ligature
All three lām-alif ligature varieties are used by both hands. In isolation, lām-alif muḥaqqaqa (red, fig. 71) and lām-alif warrāqīya occur (blue, fig. 72; fig. 73), but in final position, lām-alif muḥaffafa is preferred (green, fig. 71; fig. 72; fig. 74).

**Figure 71**
T-S Ar.42.145,F4,v.11

**Figure 72**
T-S Ar.42.145,F1,r.5–6

**Figure 73**
T-S Ar.42.145,F2,r.5

**Figure 74**
T-S Ar.42.145,F2,r.9
3.3.6 T-S Ar.42.193
This script-style is more rectilinear than other fragments in this category. The hand is reasonably neat, with tall, upright ascenders and a straight writing-line. The textlines are so close together that ascenders and descenders often contact words in adjacent lines. The script is serif-less. Shading does occur, but is not systematic, and seems to result from varying quantities of ink on the pen-nib. The heads of fāʾ, qāf, mīm and wāw rarely have open counters.

3.3.6.1 Alif
Isolated alif is a straight shaft (white, fig. 75), but sometimes has a left-turned foot (red, fig. 75). In some instances, the foot is more pronounced (fig. 76), and the tip of the shaft bends rightward. Final alif (blue, fig. 75) occasionally projects below the textline (green, fig. 75). Alif’s width and height vary due to the amount of ink on the pen-nib.

3.3.6.2 Kāf
Only kāf maškūla occurs in medial position (blue, fig. 77), but in initial position (white, fig. 77) it interchanges with kāf mabsūṭa (red, fig. 77). With one exception (fig. 79), final form is kāf muʿarrā with a thin vertical stroke and
thicker curved base (fig. 78). A miniature kāf floats above the baseline. Sometimes (fig. 79), another stroke stretches from the top of the grapheme back over the preceding letters.

3.3.6.3 Mīm

Initial mīm (red, fig. 80) constitutes a short stroke, resting on the textline. Sometimes, the head floats above the textline and the connecting stroke slants downward. Medial mīm sits below the textline, sometimes resembling a ‘v’ (blue, fig. 80). The most common final form is maqlūba musbala (green, fig. 80). Occasionally, the tail extends towards the left, as in maqlūba maḥtūfā, with an open counter (fig. 81). Isolated mīm (white, fig. 80) has a more curved tail, which extends downwards from the right-side of the grapheme’s head.
3.3.6.4 Ḥāʾ
Initial ḥāʾ takes the waḡḥ al-hirr form (red, fig. 82). Medial ḥāʾ (blue, fig. 82) is either a ‘v’ below the baseline (i.e. ḥāʾ muʿallaqa) or ‘udn al-faras with closed counters (fig. 83). In the former case, the preceding grapheme is horizontal, while in the latter, it is vertical. Final ḥāʾ (green) may have an open counter and a short, vertical shaft that projects up from the grapheme’s head (fig. 82), or a vertical stroke that projects diagonally towards the baseline (fig. 84).
3.3.6.5 Yā’
Only  yā’ muḥaqqaqa appears for final-form yā’.

3.3.6.6 Lām-Alif Ligature
Lām-alif warrāqīya (red, fig. 85) and lām-alif muḥaqqaqa (blue, fig. 85) both occur. Lām-alif muḥaffafa (green, fig. 86) appears in word-final position.

3.4 Muḥaqqaq and Tulūt Scripts

3.4.1 T-S Ar.41.119
This hand is elegant and regular. The letters sit on a straight writing-line, though those with tails tend to sit a little higher, and descenders hang at an approximate 135-degree (anti-clockwise). The length of ascenders and descenders is notably uniform, and the writing tilts slightly to the left. Letters consistently taper at angles and at the end of vertical and oblique strokes. Tear-drop headserifs adorn the top right-side of many vertical shafts (see Atanasiu 2003: fig. 8–3 in Gacek 2012:123). Counters are open throughout.

3.4.1.1 Alif
Isolated alif (red) has a long, left-slanting shaft. Its width decreases from top to bottom, resulting in a fine tip (i.e. alif muṭlaqa). A tear-drop headserif caps the right side. In two instances (green), isolated alif has a left-curved downward foot (i.e. alif muḥarrafa). Final alif curves slightly rightward in the centre and leftward at the top, though the depth of these curves varies.
3.4.1.2 Kāf
A uniform kāf mabsūṭa (red, fig. 88) occurs in every initial position. Medial-form kāf (blue, fig. 89) alternates between kāf mabsūṭa and kāf maškūla. Isolated and final kāf (green, fig. 88) resemble kāf muʿarrā in their straight, vertical shaft and long, curved foot, but they also have a detached diagonal stroke above the shaft (as seen in T-S Ar.42.193, fig. 78). A miniature ‘s’-shaped kāf floats above final kāf (fig. 88) and occasionally above medial kāf (fig. 89).

3.4.1.3 Mīm
Initial mīm has an almond-shaped, open-counter head, and floats above the textline (red). The connecting ligature descends diagonally from the pointed
apex. Medial form (blue) has a closed counter and juts below adjacent graphemes. Final mīm’s head (green) hangs under the textline, below the preceding ligature. Its tail descends at an approximate 135-degree angle, bending slightly before terminating in a thin wedge. This mīm is characteristic of muḥaqqaq scripts.

Figure 90  T-S Ar.41.l19.r.5–6

3.4.1.4 Ḥā’
Initial ḥā’ (fig. 91) resembles ṭaḡḥ al-hirr, but its outer stroke is separate and towers over the inner loop. Ṭaḡḥ al-hirr (fig. 92) and ṭūḏn al-faras (fig. 93) occur for medial form. The final form (fig. 94) is ḥā’ mardīfa/marbūṭa, with a vertical ear and a downward-pointing looped head.

Figure 91  T-S Ar.41.l19.r.7
Figure 92  T-S Ar.41.l19.v.1
Figure 93  T-S Ar.41.l19.v.9
Figure 94  T-S Ar.41.l19.v.6
3.4.1.5 Yāʾ
Both yāʾ muḥaqqaqa (fig. 95) and yāʾ mardūda (fig. 96) occur.

3.4.1.6 Lām-Alif Ligature
Lām-alif muḥaqqaqa (red) occurs in isolation, and the right shaft has a head-serif. Lām-alif muḥaffafa appears in word-final position, varying slightly depending on its function. When the final letter is tanwīn alif, the serif-less shaft curves as it descends towards the lām (green). By contrast, regular final alif is straight, with a right head-serif (blue).

3.4.2 T-S Ar.19.7
This small fragment contains all the hallmarks of a large, stylised tulut script: curved descenders with hairlines which reach up towards the following letter; long vertical ascenders, leaning slightly to the left; and large open counters.

3.4.2.1 Alif
Two instances of isolated alif (red, fig. 98) have a long, left-leaning shaft, measuring 6.7 cm. The shaft of the first alif tapers towards the bottom, ending in a hairline foot that curves below the following lām. A horizontal bar joins the isolated alif to a preceding final alif (fig. 99). Another isolated alif (fig. 98) sports a beak-like, right-side head-serif.
3.4.2.2 Mīm

Initial (red) mīm is circular with an open counter, and joins the following grapheme with a stroke from beneath its head. The medial form (blue) also has an open counter, but hangs below the textline, underneath the adjacent ligatures. Final mīm may be a closed-counter head below the ligature of the preceding grapheme (green), its tail descending diagonally, before curving up in a hairline flick (i.e. maqlūba muša“ara); or a closed-counter head with a curved, vertical tail (white) (i.e. maqlūba musbala).
3.4.2.3  Hāʾ  
Final hāʾ follows the hāʾ muḥdawdība style (green). The looped body and short angled arms of hāʾ muḥrabbaʿa (red) occur in isolation. Its right arm is considerably broader than the left.

3.4.2.4  Yāʾ  
Yāʾ mardūda appears twice. Its tail terminates in a hairline.

3.4.2.5  Lām-Alif Ligature  
Lām-alif muḥaqqaqa (red) and lām-alif muḥaffafa (blue) both occur. In the former, the left arm is longer and wider and has a left-side head-serif, while the right arm ends in a hairline. In the latter, the lām and alif each have a head-serif, on their right and left sides, respectively.
4 Vocalisation

Ten of the T-S Ar. Qurʾān fragments have some form of vocalisation marking. They show few variations from typical Qurʾānic vocalisation systems, and fit broadly into four types. First, the single unvocalised fragment (T-S Ar.38.39). Second, two fragments use the red ‘rubricated’ dot system (T-S Ar.38.8, T-S Ar.40.177). Third, seven manuscripts all contain forms of the ‘modern’ Arabic vocalisation signs (T-S Ar.19.7, T-S Ar.40.97, T-S Ar.41.84, T-S Ar.41.93, T-S Ar.41.119, T-S Ar.42.145, T-S Ar.42.193), although there is substantial variation within this group. Finally, T-S Ar.36.64 has a distinct ‘mağribī’ type of vowel pointing.

Besides the vocalisation signs, there is a tendency among all eleven fragments37 to indicate long medial /ā/ with plene alif, although with varying degrees of frequency. This feature distinguishes them from ‘model’ Qurʾāns, where medial /ā/ was more often written defectively (see Khan 1990–1991:57–58). Moreover, most of the fragments consistently lack alif ḥanjariyya (‘dagger alif’), even in places where it appears in the standard Qurʾānic text. Some—most notably T-S Ar.38.64—also substitute alif ṭawīla in place of alif maqsūra, possibly to ensure correct pronunciation during private study.

37 With the possible exception of T-S Ar.19.7.
4.1 Unvocalised

4.1.1 T-S Ar.38.39

This fragment lacks vocalisation signs of any kind, although the absence of vocalisation and diacritical dots does not necessarily indicate that it is especially old.

4.2 Red Dots

The red-dot system was the first vocalisation system developed to record Arabic vowels, most likely in Iraq or Syria around 700 (Abbott 1939:39; George 2015a:4–7). Simply put, a red dot above a consonant indicates the vowel /a/, a dot below indicates /i/, and a dot to the left indicates /u/. Two dots mark tanwīn (nunciation). This basic system saw widespread use in Qurāns across the Middle East and North Africa, and remained common even after the invention of other vowel-pointing techniques in the eighth and ninth centuries (Abbott 1972:3, 9). Substantial modifications to the red-dot system also occurred during this period, including the introduction of additional coloured dots for diacritical features like hamza (glottal stop), sukūn (silence), and tašdīd (gemination).

Yasin Dutton has explored this evolution in depth, showing that despite the growing complexity of the system, individual Qurān manuscripts are internally consistent, and some even use multiple colours of dots to record variant readings (1999, 2000). Building on Dutton’s work, Alain George argues that it is possible to use the work of the Andalusian traditionist Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī (d. 1053), specifically his al-Muḥkam fi naqṭ al-maṣāḥif (Rules for Pointing the Codices) (al-Dānī 1960), to determine the provenance of manuscripts with different variations of the red-dot system (George 2015a, 2015b). The analyses of the manuscripts in this group are based on George’s compilation of the calligraphic rules in al-Dānī’s text (George 2015a:15).

4.2.1 T-S Ar.38.8

This fragment is partially vocalised, following the standard red-dot arrangement for marking /a/ (supralinear), /i/ (sublinear), and /u/ (intraplinear), as well as tanwīn. In addition to red vowel dots, the manuscript originally had darker dots of a second colour, probably green, for marking other diacritical phenomena. However, the leaf has significant water damage, which has caused some red dots to turn black, and many other dots to fade or blur. It is often difficult to determine their original colours, but some conclusions are possible. A single red or dark-coloured dot can represent madd (lengthening) (r.1, r.3; v.2, v.5) or the sukūn on a mater lectionis of a long vowel (r.1, r.3, r.4, r.7; v.2, v.6, v.8). These dots can be above (r.1; v.8), below (r.1, r.4), or to the left (v.5,
v.6) of a letter, seemingly interchangeably. A single red dot can also represent *sukūn* on other consonants (r.1, r.7), and a red dot or a dark dot can mark *šadda* (r.7; v.2, v.3). These inconsistencies suggest that the manuscript was pointed twice.

In r.2, the red dot below *allāh* in *min ʾamri l lizard* (Qurʾān 11:43) is relatively far to the right, between the *hāʾ* and *lām*, and an additional red dot sits above the *hāʾ*. This placement may indicate a blending of the /ā/ and /i/ vowels (*min ʾamri l lizard*) as an instance of *ʾimāla*, conditioned by the preceding I-vowel in *ʾamri*.

The use of red dots for *sukūn* suggests that the red layer of the vocalisation follows a Medinan or early *mağribi* style. That said, the original colours are unclear, and the text lacks other distinctive Medinan or *mağribi* features (George 2015a:15).

4.2.2 T-S Ar.40.177

This manuscript follows the basic red-dot system, with some slight variations. *Tanwīn fath* and *kasr* appear as horizontal pairs of dots, while vertical dots mark *tanwīn ḍāmm*. *Alif* with a red dot represents a vocalised *hamza*, and a red dagger *alif* appears once on *allāh* (F2 v.5). A horizontal black (F1 v.14) or yellow (F2 r.6) stroke above a letter indicates *sukūn*. This yellow stroke accompanies a large dark dot, which also indicates *sukūn* once elsewhere (F2 v.6). A relatively small red dot appears below the *ḍād* in *faḍlim* (Qurʾān 2:243, F2 v.3), which may represent *sukūn* or a variant reading with *faḍlim*.

The large *hāʾ* in the margin of F2 r.17 overlaps the *tanwīn ḍāmm* at the end of verse 2:240, suggesting that the vowel dots were added to the manuscript before the fifth-verse marker, likely only a short time after the consonantal text was produced.

4.3 ‘Modern’ Vocalisation

The standard ‘modern’ Arabic vocalisation signs developed by the mid-ninth century (Abbott 1972:9–11; Déroche 2003; George 2015a:13–14), and saw use in Qur’ānic texts by the eleventh century at the latest (Déroche 2003). Al-Dānī refers to these signs as *šakl al-šīr* (‘the marking of poetry’) (al-Dānī 1960:4a, 11a), which he says consisted of miniature forms of alif (/a/), yāʾ (/i/), and wāw (/u/) in the same positions as the older red dots. The general consensus in both the Arabic tradition and secondary scholarship is that the grammarian al-Ḫalīl b. Aḥmad (d. 786/791) invented this system for his work on prosody, and it quickly spread to other non-Qur’ānic texts (al-Dānī 1960:11a; Abbott 1972:3, 7–9; Revell 1975:180–181; Talmon 1997:41–42; Versteegh 2014:64), although George notes that they ‘are solely attested in secular documents for the third/ninth century.
onwards’ (George 2015a:13–14). All of the following fragments have an identifiable version of the modern system, although they show variation in the degrees of completeness in their vocalisation. They also vary in their use of letter-form diacritic signs to mark phonetic phenomena like taṣdīd, taḫfīf, madd, and wasl.

4.3.1 T-S Ar.19.7
Though only one line of text remains, it includes modern fatḥa, kasra, and ẓan′a signs. There is also a black stroke to indicate lengthening in fī and a šadda on al-samāwāt (Qurʾān 2:255).

4.3.2 T-S Ar.40.97
Partially, but consistently, vocalised, this manuscript has modern black signs for fatḥa, kasra, ẓan′a, sukūn, and šadda, as well as a vertical length marker on fī (v.9). A short horizontal stroke above alif may indicate madd (v.9). In at least three instances (r.4, r.5 twice), the sign for tanwīn ẓan′a is comprised of a fatḥa and a ẓan′a.

A modified kasra represents ʾimāla in several contexts. In the basmala at the beginning of sūras 97 (v.8) and 98 (r.2), a thick stroke, angled downward and slightly to the right, sits below the mim in bism and below the space between the hāʾ and lām in allah. This right-angled sign replaces a normally left-angled kasra, and reminds the reader to pronounce the neighbouring A-vowel with ʾimāla: bismillāh ir-rahmān, rather than bismillāhi. This ‘reversed kasra’ appears throughout the fragment, usually in the sublinear space between two letters, each time in a place where a fatḥa undergoes some ʾimāla by preceding (r.1, r.6 twice, r.9; v.4, v.5, v.1138) or following (r.639) a kasra. Additionally, the kasra in nādiyahu (Qurʾān 96:17, v.5) is below the alif, rather than the dāl, possibly indicating ʾimāla.

A miniature unpointed ḥāʾ indicates ḥaṭīf (non-gemination) for either the ʿayn in v.4 or the lām in v.5. A miniature ʿayn below tuṭiʿhu (Qurʾān 96:19, v.6) is an ihmāl sign, preventing the reader from mistaking the sukūn for an ʾiʿjām dot and reading ḡayn (see Witkam 2015).

4.3.3 T-S Ar.41.84
The only vowel signs in this fragment are a few fatḥas (v.4, v.10, v.11), although there may at one time have been several red dots (e.g. v.12). A vertical red stroke

---

38 This marking suggests a vocalic reading of the typical sukūn in bi-iḏni (Qurʾān 97:4), bi-iḏni.
39 After baʿdi (Qurʾān 98:4), This one could instead indicate ʾimāla of a preceding fatḥa if baʿdi is read without sukūn (i.e. baʾsdi).
once indicates sūkūn (v.1), while a horizontal red stroke is šadda (r.5). The alif at the end of tawāṣaw (Qurʾān 103:3, v.12) is shorter and superscripted, likely because it has no phonetic value.

4.3.4 T-S Ar.41.93
This fragment is almost completely unvocalised, but it does use a vertical stroke as a length marker for fī (r.7) and ʾinnī (r.9). Final kāf is marked by hamza (r.7–8, r.9; r.2 margin; v.3). A horizontal black stroke may indicate gemination (r.6). The words lil-malāʾika (Qurʾān 2:30, r.6) are fully vocalised with modern fatha, kasra, and sūkūn in red ink.

4.3.5 T-S Ar.41.119
This fragment is fully vocalised with modern vowel signs in brown ink, including sūkūn, šadda, madda, wasla, and a length marker for fī (v.4). A few words have a second layer of signs in grey ink, including fatha, kasra, ḍamma, and šadda, (r.5, r.6), and a larger miniaturised wāw for the long vowel in ʿarabū (Qurʾān 17:48, r.1). This last sign supersedes the first layer, which (mistakenly?) marked the same word as either ʿarabawā or ʿarabuwā.

Several ihmāl signs appear. A miniature kāf above the letter consistently marks final kāf, as well as some internal kāfs (v.3, v.7). A sublinear miniature ʿayn clarifies that an ʿayn with sūkūn is not ġayn (v.5), and a supralinear miniature hāʾ shows that a hāʾ is not tāʾ marbūta (v.6). This last sign is known especially from Qurʾān manuscripts in muḥaqqaq script (like T-S Ar.41.119) from the Mamluk period onwards (Witkam 2015:404, n. 51). A small alif sits above the final wāw in yaqūlū (Qurʾān 17:53, r.9), but this addition probably corrects an unintentional omission, as no other alif appears in this way.

A curved stroke below the tāʾ marbūta in wasīla (Qurʾān 17:57, verso 8) resembles a yāʾ mardūda, and may indicate ʾimāla. Additionally, there is a reversed kasra between the lām and tāʾ of allatī (Qurʾān 17:53, r.9), most likely indicating ʾimāla (i.e. allatī).

4.3.6 T-S Ar. 42.145
The vocalisation is idiosyncratic to each hand, which suggests that the scribes wrote consonants and vowels simultaneously. Both hands fully vocalise the text with modern fatha, kasra, ḍamma, sukūn, and šadda. Both also use wasla, but the smaller hand does so more consistently. The smaller hand also makes frequent use of vertical strokes as length markers (F1 r.2, r.3, r.6, r.7), and indicates ʾimāla with modified vertical kasra signs (F1 r.1, r.4 twice, r.10).
There is one layer of partial vocalisation in brown ink (F1 v.3–9; F2 r.4, r.9), using modern vowels and sukūn. A second layer contains nearly full vocalisation in black ink, including sukūn, madda, and wasla (F1 v.2, v.13), sometimes overlapping the earlier layer (F1 v.5, v.7).

Sukūn usually looks like an unpointed nūn. Ḍamma varies between a small wāw and a curved stroke, and often appears similar to sukūn. Neither vocaliser has a grapheme for šadda. The text retains the older diacritical practice of marking final kāf with a miniature kāf; but the evolution of this sign into the now-standard hamza shape has clearly begun. The larger hand represents wasla with a miniature wāw, as opposed to the more common abbreviated sād.

The third masculine plural pronominal suffix -hum is often extended to -humu/humū with a damma (F2 v.2; F2 r.6, r.9) or wāw (F2 v.9). Al-Dānī attributes this practice to the people of Medina and the Maġrib (al-Dānī 1960:4b; George 2015a:11).

Red dots mark verse divisions. A yellow dot above and a green dot below (F2 v.7) may offer variant readings of nūḥī (Qurʾān 21:25): either nūḥā or nūḥī. The later vocaliser placed a fatha in accordance with the former reading. It is also possible that some combination of these dots indicated an ultra-long vowel. There is a blue dot (F1 r.5) below the nūn in Qurʾān (Qurʾān 20:113), which may be a reminder of tanwin (-an) after -ān.

### 4.4 The Maġribī System

The ‘maġribī’ vocalisation system is not ‘modern,’ at least not in the sense that it sees common use today. However, it is also not a red-dot system. It may be a parallel development to the modern system or a maġribī modification of the more ‘standard’ signs (Déroche 2003). In this system, a horizontal supralinear red stroke represents /a/, a horizontal sublinear red stroke represents /i/, and a small supralinear red wāw represents /u/. A supralinear red circle indicates sukūn, and a miniature dāl indicates gemination. According to al-Dānī, this dāl sign is from the final letter of tašdīd (gemination), [footnote disappears?] and its use in the Maġrib follows the practice of Medinan vocalisers (George 2015a:8; al-Dānī 1960:24a).

---

40 This derivation would contrast most of the other diacritical letters, which were typically the first letter in a phonological phenomenon (šadda → sin/šīn; sila/wasla → ṣād or wāw; ḥāff → ḥāʾ). A miniature sin/šīn sign was probably already in use to distinguish sin from šīn (Revell 1975:180–181). See also, Witkam 2015.
This fragment is fully vocalised with the mağribī system, using horizontal red strokes for /a/ and /i/ and a small supralinear wāw for /u/. This last sign often appears as just a curved stroke. Two strokes or two wāws indicate tanwīn. Sukūn is a red circle, but some have blurred and look like solid dots.

A supralinear upward-facing red dāl marks tašdīd with /a/, and a sublinear downward-facing dāl marks tašdīd with /i/. Tašdīd with /u/ is never marked. A longer horizontal red stroke denotes madda on alif (F2 v.1, v.4). Hamza is written in the same ink as the vocalisation, and alif’s that are normally omitted have been inserted as full letters in red ink (F1 v.1; F2 v.4, v.5). A horizontal red stroke through the lower third of an alif indicates wasl when the preceding vowel is /i/ (F1 v.1, v.4 twice; F2 r.6 twice).

In several instances, the two strokes of tanwīn fath are black instead of red (F1 v.6, v.7; F2 v.5, v.6). It seems that the scribe who wrote the consonantal text reflexively added tanwīn strokes to some alifs, rather than waiting for a second pass with red ink.

5 Conclusion

No aspect of the palaeography, orthography, or vocalisation of these eleven fragments distinguishes them from other ‘personal-use’ Qur’āns of the medieval Islamicate world, and no single physical feature connects them to each other. In fact, despite all being stored in the same synagogue, these manuscripts show a wide range of Arabic styles from different time periods (c. tenth—nineteenth century), including Abbasid, mağribī, nāšī, muḥaqqaq, and tūlūt scripts with a mix of vocalisation systems. The only detail that unites the fragments is their content: they all mention biblical figures or non-Muslims.

Seven of the eleven fragments refer to one or more biblical figures, including T-S Ar.38.8 (Noah; Qur’ān 11:43–50), T-S Ar.38.64 (Moses and Pharaoh; 79:15–26), T-S Ar.40.177 (Saul; 2:246–247), T-S Ar.41.93 (Adam; 2:29–34), T-S Ar.41.119 (David; 17:55), T-S Ar.42.145 (Elijah and Lot; 37:121–137), and T-S Ar.42.193 (Adam; 20:115–123).

41 Although not in the fragment, the rest of this sūra refers to Moses, Jerusalem, the children of Israel (vv. 2–5); Noah (v. 17); and Adam (v. 61).
42 Given that verses 12–64 and 121–138 of sūra 37 are extant, this manuscript must have contained verses 75–120, which mention Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Moses, and Aaron. The next section after the extant text tells the story of Jonah (vv. 139–147).
Two fragments contain parts of chapters that would refer to multiple biblical prophets if the manuscripts were intact. T-S Ar.19.7 is a badly torn fragment of Āyat al-Kursī (Qurʾān 2:255), but part of verse 254 is also visible, and presumably it once contained more verses. Surrounding Āyat al-Kursī, verse 254 is about the kāfirūn, verses 246–251 tell the story of Saul, David, and Goliath, and verse 258 references Abraham. Meanwhile, T-S Ar.38.39 only contains Qurʾān 18:10–27, but the rest of the sūra is tales of prophets, including Adam (v. 50), Moses (vv. 60–78), and the story of Gog and Magog (vv. 83–101).

The two remaining fragments do not mention any biblical figures. However, T-S Ar.40.97 has two references to ahl al-kitāb (Qurʾān 98:1 and 6), ‘the people of the book,’ discussing their scripture (i.e. the Bible). Finally, T-S Ar.41.84 includes all of sūra 109, al-Kāfirūn. It explains what believers should say to nonbelievers, and the final verse reads: ‘For you is your religion, and for me is my religion’ (lakum dinukum wa-liyadīnī, Qurʾān 109:6).

We can thus draw two conclusions from the presence of these fragments in the Ben ‘Ezra Synagogue genizah. First, while it was already known that some medieval Jews engaged with the Qurʾānic text through Judaeo-Arabic, it is now clear that some also owned and read parts of the Qurʾān in Arabic script. Second, it seems highly likely that they owned certain Qurʾān manuscripts and stored them in the Genizah specifically because they contained passages about non-Muslims and biblical figures.

However, it remains uncertain whether those same Jews owned or stored parts of the Qurʾān that were not related to these topics. If they did, those manuscripts are not represented in the T-S Ar. collection.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the syndics of Cambridge University Library for permitting us to write about these fragments, and for allowing us to reproduce their images here. This work was supported by a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship (Connolly) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation [OPP1144] (Posegay).

We are indebted to Prof. Geoffrey Khan and Dr. Ben Outhwaite for reading an earlier draft of this paper, and for their invaluable input. That being said, any errors herein are ours alone.

43 See Genesis 10 and Ezekiel 38.
44 E.g., T-S Ar.51.62.
Bibliography


Witkam, Jan Just. ‘The Neglect Neglected. To Point or Not to Point, That is the Question,’ *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 6 (2015): 376–408.