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Sicut Euangelia sunt quatuor, distribuerunt continentiam eius in quatuor libros: **On the Division of Iberian Qur’ans and Their Translations into Four Parts**

Abstract: In the prologue to his trilingual Qur’an (Arabic-Castilian-Latin), Juan de Segovia pointed out that among the defects of Robert of Ketton’s Latin translation was the fact that it did not adopt the division of the text into four books that, in his words, the Muslims used in their holy book “in imitation of the Gospels.” Thereafter, despite the weakness of his reasoning, this four-part structure for the Qur’an was widely accepted in European Christian intellectual circles, and it would be reflected in the writings they produced, whether translations or anti-Islamic polemics. That said, this division that we observe in Quranic manuscripts from the Iberian Peninsula, including the complete translation of the Qur’an in the famous T 235 manuscript, derives exclusively from the Islamic tradition and the Quranic sciences. This tradition of dividing the Qur’an into four parts also presents some distinctive features that have not yet been sufficiently explained. The goal of this chapter is to show that this particular way of organizing the Qur’an can be explained by looking at the work of Andalusī scholars such as al-Dānī (fifth/eleventh century), as well as to show how it spread and was faithfully transmitted by the different Islamic communities in Spain, from one generation to the next, up to the end of the seventeenth century.

1. The school of Quranic recitation that was typical of the Qur’an in the Islamic West was unquestionably the *varia lectio* (*qirā’a*) that the Egyptian Warsh transmitted (*riwāya*) from his teacher, Nāfi‘ of Medina. The Islamic West includes not only the area of North African known as the Maghreb but also, importantly, the Iberian Peninsula. It is well known that this choice affected not only the variants used for the interpretation of certain passages but also how the work was divided and how the number of ayas was counted and thus the distribution of the basic unit of division of the Quranic text in versions of the Qur’an produced in this region: the *ḥizb* (pl. *aḥzāb*) or sixtieth (1/60), which was in turn subdivided into eighths (1/480).

2. As some scholars have rightfully pointed out,¹ this *varia lectio* has become an essential benchmark for describing Iberian versions of the Qur'an and the works derived from them. The latter include, on the one hand, the translations of Islam's holy book produced by different Spanish Muslim communities in the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries, known as Aljamiado versions, most prominently MS T 235 (1606);² and on the other, the Latin translations produced by Robert of Ketton (1143), Mark of Toledo (1210), Juan de Segovia (1456), and Egidio da Viterbo (ca. 1520), the vernacular versions by Juan Andrés and Juan Gabriel, and apologetic treatises with Quranic quotations such as Juan Andrés's *Confutación de la secta mahomética y del Alcorán* (1515), Martín García's *Sermones* (1517), Martín Figuerola's *Lumbre de fe contra el Alcorán* (1521), and Lópe de Obregón's *Confutación del alcorán y secta mahometana* (1555). To approach these derived works from a different recitational tradition leaves the impression that they are full of errors, when in actuality they are interpretations according to the Warsh recitation. An example would be a divergence in the aya count in a given sura.³

2.1. However, it should be noted that Warsh's was not the only *riwāya* based on Nāfi's reading method that was known in the Iberian Peninsula. We have documentation that the other *riwāya* based on the same recitation circulated in Iberia early on: the *riwāya* of Qālūn, who was also from Medina. Thus, we know, for example, that Abū al-Qāsim Ibn al-Ḥajjāj (or al-Ḥajjām, d. 1006),

1 Juan Vernet, Introduction to *Alcorán. Traducción castellana de un morisco del año 1606* (Barcelona: UNED-Real Acadèmia de Bones Lletres, 2001), XII; Margarida Castells, "Alguns aspectes formals de la traducció llatina de l'Alcorà de Robert de Ketton (ca. 1141–1143) i la seva relació amb el text original àrab", *Faventia* 29.2 (2007): 95; Teresa Espejo Arias and Juan Pablo Arias Torres, "El Corán de Cútar. Una joya del patrimonio escrito andalusí", in *El Corán de Cútar, Málaga. Estudio introductorio* (Seville: Consejería de Obras Públicas, Consejería de Cultura y Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo, 2009), 88; Juan Pablo Arias Torres and François Déroche, "Reflexiones sobre la catalogación de ejemplares alcoránicos (a propósito del MS 1397 de El Escorial)", *Al-Qanṭara* 32.1 (2011): 252; Dăniela C. Chiru, "Traducerile coranice aljamiado-morisce și problematica identificării originalului arab", in *Studies on Literature, Discourse and Multicultural Dialogue. Section: Language and Discourse* (Târgu-Mureș: Arhipieleag XXI); Dăniela C. Chiru, "Influencias lingüísticas del árabe en las traducciones coránicas aljamiado-moriscas" (PhD diss., University of Bucharest, 2015), 29; Juan Pablo Arias Torres, review of López-Morillas, Consuelo, *El Corán de Toledo. Edición y estudio del manuscrito 235 de la Biblioteca de Castilla La Mancha, Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos* 65, (2016): 293.

2 Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha (Toledo), accessible online at <https://bvpb.mcu.es/es/consulta/registro.do?id=397610>. Accessed Mars 3, 2021.

3 Chiru, "Traducerile coranice", and Chiru, "Influencias lingüísticas", 29–30; Arias Torres, *El Corán de Toledo*, 293.

learnt the Qur'an from Abū al-Ḥasan al-Anṭakī al-Muqri' according to the reading of Nāfi' and the *riwāya* of Warsh and Qālūn. He was expert in both variants, taught them to other people, and copied and vocalised Quranic manuscripts as he had learnt from al-Anṭakī.⁴

There is evidence that this second *riwāya* was known among Spanish Islamic communities in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in at least two manuscripts held at the Biblioteca Tomás Navarro Tomás in Madrid: MS RESC. 13, which contains the opuscle *La kontradición y deferencia ke ay entre Wars y Qalun* (fols. 148–157), and MS RESC. 60, whose “regla de la lienda del Alcorán” (fols. 120–122) mentions “Qalu y Warxi” explicitly. Although Chiru, having compared an extensive sample of 150 fragments, asserts that, without exception, all the Aljamiado versions of the Qur'an follow the Warsh recitation,⁵ it remains to be seen what influence the Qālūn recitation may have had on the copying of other Iberian Quranic manuscripts preserved from earlier periods.

2.2. Likewise, the Nāfi' method of Qur'an recitation, though dominant, was not the only one that was known or practiced in this corner of the Islamic world. Andalusī scholars excelled in the science of *variae lectiones* (*qirā'āt*) in general, and the reading method of the Iraqī Ḥamza b. Ḥabīb, the first to be introduced in al-Andalus, during the Emirate period, still had followers in the mosques of Nasrid Granada during the final years of the kingdom.⁶

3. A typical feature of current Maghrebi editions based on Warsh that does not usually appear in editions based on the other, more-prevalent reading method – the “Eastern” method of the sage from Kufa 'Āṣim, transmitted in the *riwāya* of Ḥafṣ – is the division of the text into four parts. This division seems to be more closely connected to the organization of the text and its written transmission than with its recitation or liturgical use,⁷ which relies on other divisions, such as the *juz*⁸ (1/30), for reading the whole of the Qur'an in a month, or the *māthānī* (1/7),

4 Umberto Bongianino, “The Origin and Development of Maghribī Round Scripts. Arabic Paleography in the Islamic West (4th/10th-6th/12th century)” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2017), 98.

5 Chiru, “Influencias lingüísticas”, 39.

6 Abdullah H.A. Uwisheq, “A Critical Edition and a Study of the Commentary on the Qur'anic Reading of Nafi' Sharh al-Durar al-Lawami' by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Malik al-Minturi” (PhD diss., SOAS University of London, 1988), 77.

7 However, there are references to al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, governor of Iraq (2nd/8th century) reading a fourth of the Qur'an every night (al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'an*, Ed. Abdallah al-Turki, 104).

8 Although we currently use the term *ḥuz'* in a specialized sense to indicate 1/30 of the Qur'an, which consists of two *aḥzāb*, and it appears in this way in typical printed editions, it is also used more generally to mean a “fraction of the text of the Qur'an” or “volume.” In the manu-

for reading it in a week. Currently, the standard Moroccan edition of the *riwāya* of Warsh divides the text of the Qur'an in the following way⁹:

- *al-rub' al-awwal* or first fourth: suras 1–6 (*aḥzāb* 1–15).
- *al-rub' al-thānī* or second fourth: suras 7–18 (*aḥzāb* 16–31).
- *al-rub' al-thālīth* or third fourth: suras 19–35 (*aḥzāb* 31–44).
- *al-rub' al-rābi'* or last fourth: suras 36–114 (*aḥzāb* 44–60).

4. The division of the Qur'an into four parts has deep roots in Islamic tradition. However, again, there is no consensus among Muslim scholars regarding the exact contents of each part. Ibn Abī Dāwud, in his *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*,¹⁰ follows a different distribution that is also recognized by Andalusī authors, such as the expert in Islamic exegesis al-Qurṭubī: first book (suras 1–6), second book (suras 7–18), third book (suras 19–39), fourth book (suras 40–114). And he even accepts other content ranges for the third book: suras 19–36 or 19–40. Castells¹¹ reminds us that another traditional and very popular system for dividing the text into four parts – leaving out sura 1 – is based on the lengths of the suras: *al-ṭiwāl*, the section with the longest suras (2–9); *al-mi'ūn*, the section with suras longer than one hundred ayas (10–35); *al-māthānī*, with suras that have fewer than one hundred ayas (36–49); and *al-mufaṣṣal*, with the shortest suras (50–114). However, there is again no consensus, in this method of division, regarding which make up each group.¹²

5. Nevertheless, copies of the Qur'an from the Iberian Peninsula that reflect in some way this division of the text into four parts, as well as the above-mentioned works derived from them, display a slight variation in the third and fourth parts: these comprise suras 19–37 and 38–114, respectively. As far as I know, none of the specialists who have noted this fact has provided a satisfactory explanation for this distribution. In her edition of the Qur'an "in Christian letters" contained in

scripts that I have worked with, it is used with this sense of 1/30 in MS T 504 at the Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha but also, for example, with the sense of 1/60 (equivalent to a *ḥizb*) in MS 26.IV.9 at the Instituto Valencia de Don Juan (Madrid), 1/4 (equivalent to *rub'*) in BNF ar. 395, 1/27 (equivalent to *tajziyat ramaḍān*) in RAH LXXXIII, and 1/8 (equivalent to *thumn*) in BNF ar. 423 and Uppsala University Library, O.Bj. 48.

⁹ This division is seen both in the edition described by Castells, "Alguns aspectes formals", 81–82, published in Tétouan (1975) and in the edition *sine data, sine loco* that is commonly found today in Moroccan bookstores, which I have used for reference in this article.

¹⁰ *Apud* Hartmut Bozbin, "Bemerkungen zu Juan Andres und zu seinem Buch *Confusion de la secta mahometica (Valencia 1515)*", *Festgabe für Hans-Rudolf Singer*, ed. Martin Forstner (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991), 249.

¹¹ Castells, "Alguns aspectes formals", 82.

¹² Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'an*, ed. Muṣṭafā Dīb al-Bu'ā (Beirut-Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2006), 199–203.

MS T 235, López-Morillas tenuously linked this division to the possible collaboration of ʿIsā Ibn Jabīr, who would have necessarily worked with Juan de Segovia on his famous lost trilingual Qurʾan.¹³ Although Casassas recognizes that the four-part division of the text is linked to Islamic tradition, in his description of the Bellús Qurʾan he focuses on the adoption of this division in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Spain, and later in Europe, among Christian intellectual circles, and on the way they used it in their distribution and numbering of the chapters of Islam's sacred text.¹⁴ Other authors merely point out that this division "obviously had a Maghrebian origin,"¹⁵ "resemble[s] the division of Qurʾans in North Africa into four parts,"¹⁶ "almost exactly follow[s] the Maghrebi division,"¹⁷ "correspond[s] to a widespread Western Islamic tradition."¹⁸

6. In her excellent work on how the textual tradition of the original is reflected in Ketton's Latin version, Castells intuited where to look for the reason for this structural variation, though, perhaps because it was not the main objective of her study, she did not pursue the matter:

En tractar de qüestions formals, els experts en ciències alcoràniques ens informen de la pràctica – l'origen de la qual sembla que es remunta a finals del primer segle de l'Hègira – de comptar les lletres, les paraules i les aleies del text de la Revelació.¹⁹

13 Consuelo López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo. Edición y estudio del manuscrito 235 de la Biblioteca de Castilla La Mancha* (Gijón: Ediciones Trea, 2011), 39–40.

14 Xavier Casassas, "El Alcorán de Bellús: un Alcorán mudéjar de principios del XVI con traducciones y comentarios en catalán, castellano y latín", *Alhadra* 1 (2015), 160–162. Since Juan de Segovia's Latin translation, the system is well known that was adopted by Christian authors using the four-part division of Islam's sacred text and enumerating the chapters contained within each part. Thus, part I, leaving aside sura 1, contains 5 chapters (suras 2 to 6); part II contains 12 chapters (suras 7 to 18); part III, 19 chapters (suras 19 to 37); and part IV, 77 chapters (suras 38 to 114). To locate a sura, the book or part is given, followed by the chapter number. For example, sura 2 will be cited as book I, chapter I, or sura 9, as book II, chapter III.

15 Ulli Roth, "Juan of Segovia's Translation of the Qurʾan", *Al-Qantara* 35.2 (2014): 567.

16 Ryan Szpiech, Katarzyna K. Starczewska and Mercedes García-Arenal, "Deleytaste del dulce sono y no pensaste en las palabras: Rendering Arabic in the Antialcoranes". *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 5.1 (2018): 109.

17 Mercedes García-Arenal and Katarzyna K. Starczewska. "The Law of Abraham the Catholic: Juan Gabriel as Qurʾan Translator for Martín de Figuerola and Egidio de Viterbo", *Al-Qantara* 35.2 (2014): 422.

18 Nuria Martínez de Castilla, "The Copyists and their Texts. The Morisco Translations of the Qurʾan in the Tomás Navaro Tomás Library (CSIC, Madrid)", *Al-Qantara* 35.2 (2014): 504.

19 Castells, "Alguns aspectes formals", 81.

(In order to address matters of form, experts in Quranic sciences tell of the practice – whose origin seems to go back to the end of the first century of the Hegira – of counting the letters, the words, and the *ayas* of the text of the Revelation.)

What underlies this distribution is a common trope in Arab-Islamic civilization: a mathematical principle. In this specific case, the sacred text is divided into fragments of the same length, with the same number of letters.²⁰ The reason for the division, then, is not to be sought in treatises on Islamic exegesis but rather in the works of experts in other auxiliary Quranic sciences, such as treatises on recitations or on the reckoning of *ayas*.

7. It seems to me that the work of Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān al-Dānī (d. 444/1053), which is foundational to Quranic studies in al-Andalus,²¹ is key to explaining this and other ways of dividing Islam’s sacred text. In his *al-Bayān fī ‘Add Āy al-Qur’an*,²² al-Dānī accepts the above-mentioned way of distributing the text into four parts based on Ibn Abī Dāwud (1–6; 7–18; 19–39; 40–114), but he proposes an exact division based on the *ḥizb*, the basic structural unit of the Quranic text, with part one going through 7:3 (*aḥzāb* 1–15); part two, through 18:73 (*aḥzāb* 16–30); part three, through 37:144 (*aḥzāb* 31–45); and part four, through the end (*aḥzāb* 46–60). As was noted above, the modern-day Maghrebi edition does not divide the four parts into exactly 15 *aḥzāb* each, but rather thus: 1–15 (suras 1–6), 16–31 (suras 7–18), 31–44 (suras 19–35), and 44–60 (suras 36–114). This is the difference.

7.1. Al-Dānī applies the same mathematical principle of dividing the text into fragments of the same length to highlight other possible divisions, such as the 27 *tajziyat ramaḍān* which allow for the recitation of the Qur’an to end with the *Laylat al-Qadr*: “at 2:157 is where the first *juz’* or first of the 27 nights of Ramadan ends, each of which contain 12755 letters (except the last one, which has two

20 In the Arab-Islamic world, mathematics are present not only in obvious fields common to other civilizations such as architecture or decoration but also in other less-obvious, unexpected fields such as lexicography. Thus, for example, in the prologue to his *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*, Khalīl bn Aḥmad (d. 175/791), the father of Arabic lexicography, says that the 28 letters of the alphabet, in two-, three-, four-, or five-lettered combinations, should allow for the formation of millions of words that man could have at his disposal for expressing his thoughts. Consequently, he organized his famous dictionary by grouping into chapters all roots with a given letter in any position, eliminating ones with phonetic incompatibilities (*muhmal*) and keeping and commenting on only those that actually exist in the language (*musta‘mal*). See Juan Pablo Arias, *Un poco de lexicografía árabe* (Universidad de Málaga, 1996), 52 – 55.

21 On this author, see “al-Dānī, Abū ‘Amr”, *Biblioteca de al-Andalus* 1, 308–22.

22 al-Dānī, *Al-Bayān fī ‘Add Āy al-Qur’an*, ed. Ghanem Qadduri al-Hamad (Kuwait: The Heritage, Manuscripts and Documents Center, 1994), 301–302.

more).”²³ Al-Dānī adopts this tradition from the Iraqi Muḥammad bn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Iṣbahānī (fourth/tenth century), whom he considers the greatest expert of his day in the Nāfi‘ recitation according to the *riwāya* of Warsh.

8. In practice, however, this mathematical approach is not very appropriate for dividing the text into fourths, especially in copies of the Qur’an that will become independent codicological units, because it would mean interrupting the text of a sura. Thus, as al-Dānī’s disciple Abū Dāwud Sulaymān Ibn Najjāḥ (d. 496/1103) remarks in his *Mujtaṣar al-Tabyīn*,²⁴ some slight changes are allowed and preferred. First of all, the end of *ḥizb* 15 should coincide with the end of sura 6,²⁵ and, therefore, the *ḥizb* mark and the sign for the beginning of the second of the four parts – if there is one – should appear at this precise place or next to the title of sura 7. I will illustrate this division and the following ones with images from MS T 235, in order to emphasize the idea that Qur’an translations reflect the textual tradition of their originals, and from MS 5212, at the Biblioteca Nacional de España, a manuscript from the Iberian Peninsula dated 1507 that contains an Arabic original of the complete text. In MS T 235 the colophon for the first of the four parts is located at the end of sura 6, and the end of *ḥizb* 15 is marked by making it coincide with the title of sura 7. In the BNE manuscript, there are no colophons between parts, only at the end, and so decoration is used²⁶ to mark the beginning of each new fourth, and a decorative cartouche (*‘unwān*) frames the title of sura 7 (*al-A‘rāf*).

23 al-Dānī, *Al-Bayān*, 311–2.

24 Abū Dāwud Sulaymān Ibn Najjāḥ, *Mujtaṣar al-Tabyīn li-Hijā’ al-Tanzīl*, ed. Aḥmad M. Sharshal (Majma‘ al-malik Fahd li-ṭibā‘a al-muṣṣhaf ash-sharīf, 2002), 527.

25 al-Dānī likewise admits the end of sura 6 in *ḥizb* 15, as well as variants for *aḥzāb* 21, 22, 23, 31, 37, 41, 43, and 49 (*Al-Bayān*, 317–319).

26 Although there are excellent descriptive studies of these decorations, the clear connection between the decorations and the division of the text into four parts has not previously been remarked. Thus, in her description of the decorations in Almohad Qur’ans, Marianne Barrucand simply states: “Souvent, seuls les titres considérés comme dignes d’une mise en valeur particulière (notamment ceux de deux premières sourates) donnent lieu à un *‘unwān*”. See Barrucand, “Les enluminures de l’époque almohade: frontispices et *‘unwān-s*”, in *Los Almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, ed. P. Cressier, M. Fierro, L. Molina (Madrid: CSIC, 2005), vol. II, 87.

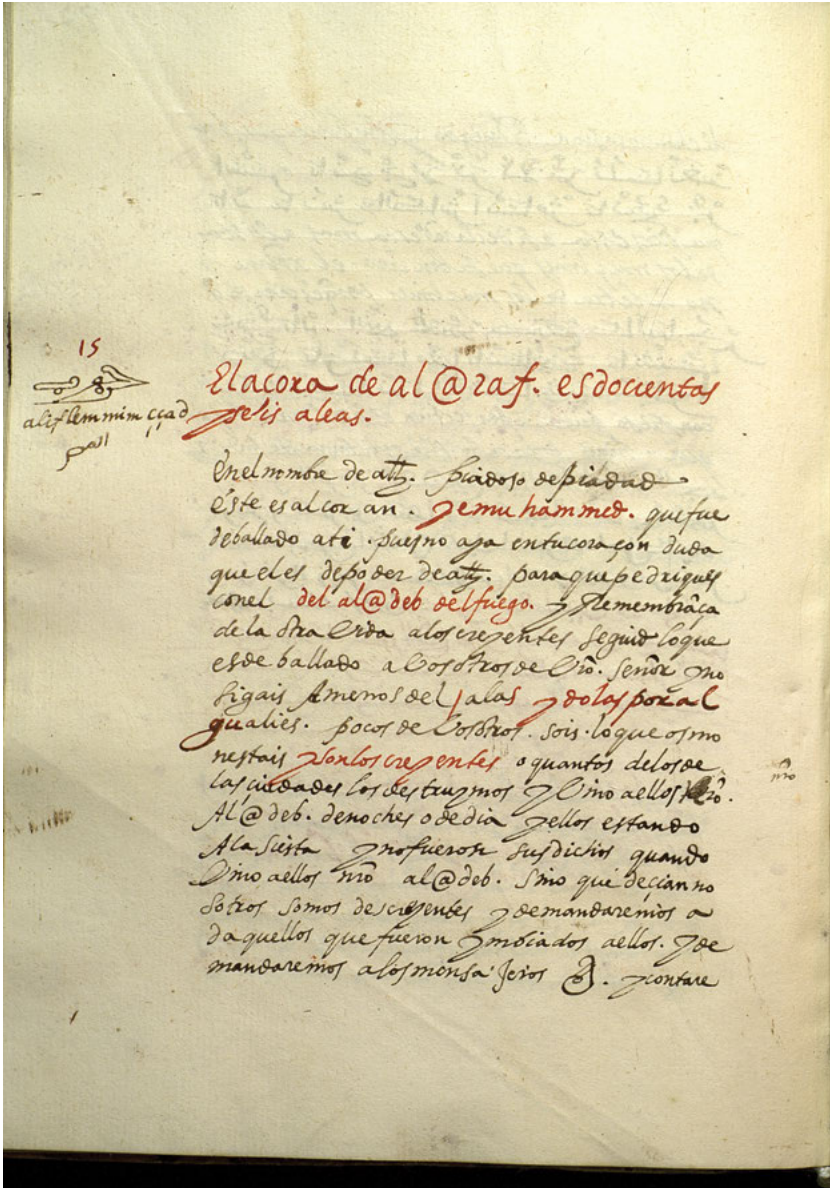


Figure 2: T 235 82v (sura 7).



Figure 3: BNE 5212 p. 55 (sura 7).

Secondly, in manuscript copies (whether in one or several volumes), even when *ḥizb* 30 and *ḥizb* 45 are indicated in their respective places (18:73 and 37:144), the beginning of the third fourth or the middle of the Qur'an will be marked at the end of sura 18 or the beginning of sura 19²⁷ and the last of the four parts will begin at sura 38.²⁸ In other words, the second fourth includes part of *ḥizb* 31 and the third fourth includes part of *ḥizb* 46, which interferes with the strict mathematical division. This is reflected in our two manuscripts. In MS T 235, there is a colophon at the end of suras 18 and 37, a blank page preceding sura 19 and a decorative cartouche for its title (*Maryam*), and a blank line before the unfinished decoration at the beginning of sura 38 (*Dāwud*). In BNE 5212, there are decorative cartouches for the titles of these same suras, with a brief colophon, a blank space and a blank page preceding sura 19 to clearly indicate the end of sura 18 and, therefore, the middle of the Qur'an.

27 Ibn Najjāh, *Muḥtaṣar al-Tabayin*, 814.

28 Ibn Najjāh, *Muḥtaṣar al-Tabayin*, 1044.

Uno pues quieret que Amiedo ha eno ntrado
 de sus señas puer sobre obras buenas y no me to
 Apaxero con la seruidad de sus señas ninguno.
 D. La Ofana y la grandia son aax arceros
 de la obra que haze el sicco Asubeno puer
 quien obra con Ofano y of con grandia puer
 pone a parceros en su obra para con sus señas y
 puer dia que la Ofano es la desore genicio
 chica ۞ ۞ ۞ ۞ ۞ ۞

تمت الربيع اشهر من الفزان العظيم . يوم الابع ۞
 حساب النضر واحد و ثلثين من شهر ربيع عام هـ
 هـ ۞
 ثلث عشر من . اغفر الله لمن كتبه و لمن قرأه و لمن
 استعمله لمن اختاره . خير من بين يارب العالمين .

aca bode el segundo quarto de l'alcazar grande
 dia de miercoles por el viento de los Xaria nos. a
 henta y l'India del mes de mayo año de mil
 seyt cientos e seyt. poro ne atty a quien lo es
 cubo y a quien lo leera ya quien lo es a chara
 ya quien lo comprendera para bien. za todos
 los de la luma de lan xabi muhammed / Qm.
 ۞
 fue sacado con toda s'lectitud y l'indad.

Figure 4: T 235 fol. 167r (end sura 18).

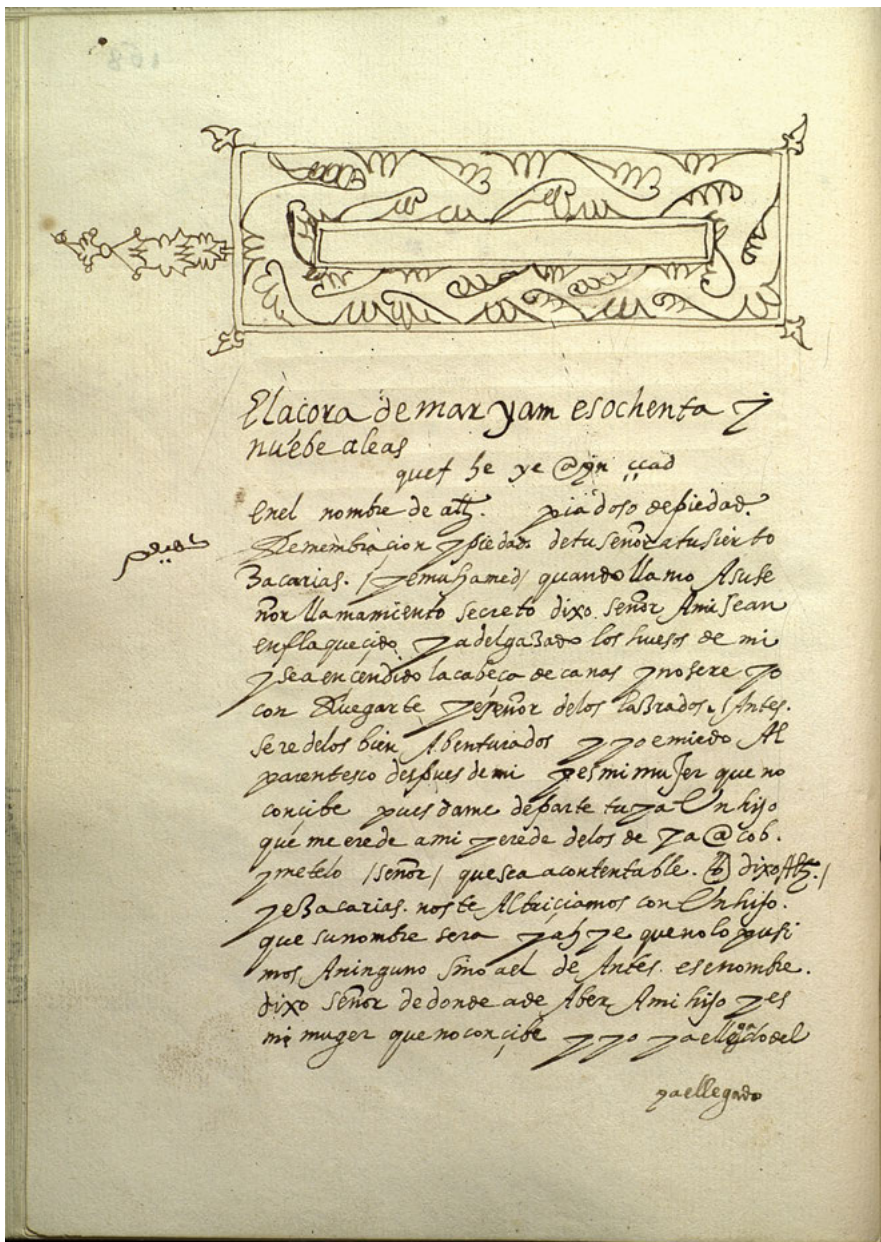


Figure 5: T 235 fol. 168v (sura 19).

298

/o decian los de coray xi / fueron que decian
 si hubiese en nro poder Alquitab como a los
 primeros. / como el alquitab. domuce / seria
 mos de atq. / Azurados. / y descreperon con el.
 / alcoran / pues al nro sabran / quando lo eran
 el al@deb. / 170 B que pase abancaron mas
 palabras. / Anos diez los mensageros. / ellos
 fueron / Concedores / y mas huesdes / son las / Conce
 doras. / a parte de ellos hasta sus placos. / Pe
 muhamed. / y es de boiada esta alca con el alca
 del matarlos / y espera los que al nro veran el
 al@deb. / y con nro al@deb. / se acujtan. / pues
 quando se ballara su des trujion. / quando se co
 to cado en la l@bina la primera l@b. / y estan
 maldia que el nro a los que no creyeron. / a
 parte de ellos / Pe muhamed. / hasta sus placos
 / a guardalos que al nro veran el al@deb.
 / En l'impio estu señor el señor de la founra.
 de los. / ponen a parato / con ellos descre y nro / 180 B
 y el alcalem es sobre los mensageros. / y los lores
 son a datq. / señor de todas las cosas.

نعمت الثالث الرابع من الفان بعون الله تعالى لست عشر من
 الملاصق. و. حسار النصر اثنان عشر بين
 من شهر حبيب. يوم الخميس كأم ست وست
 ميلة. بعد الع. نفع الله لمن طيبته وكل طيبة
 المسلمين اجمعين. بيا شنت شكك ويا الله اننا لله
 بيا

Figure 6: T 235 fol. 258r (end sura 37).

El alcor de degud es setenta y seis
aleas.

En el nombre de ^{caad} atf. piadoso de Piedad
Juro atf. por el alcor an. el delo claredad que a
quellos que descrejeron son en qui bicia. y ondis
crepacion. los quantos destruyamos onles dellas
eladas y quitaron nos a gora tiempo de huir.
y maravillaronse que l' mo aellos monestador.
de ellos mismos y dixeran los descrejentes eskes
auijero mehitroso que a puesto a los Señores Uno
soto. y esta es cosa maravillosa y fueron los ma
yores dellas y dixeran y os sufris con l' a se
ñores que esta es cosa fea y no oyamos con a
quisto en que habia de ser en la degla por fiero
nos este sino y proponed y dicens a mahamed
c. @. m. que porquino abia de ser de ballado s' b' el
el alcor an. delante de nos. Antes son en duda
del alcor an. mas ello es que quitaran el al @ deb.
esta por l' entura. empoder dellas. los espores de la

Figure 7: T 235 fol. 258v (sura 38).

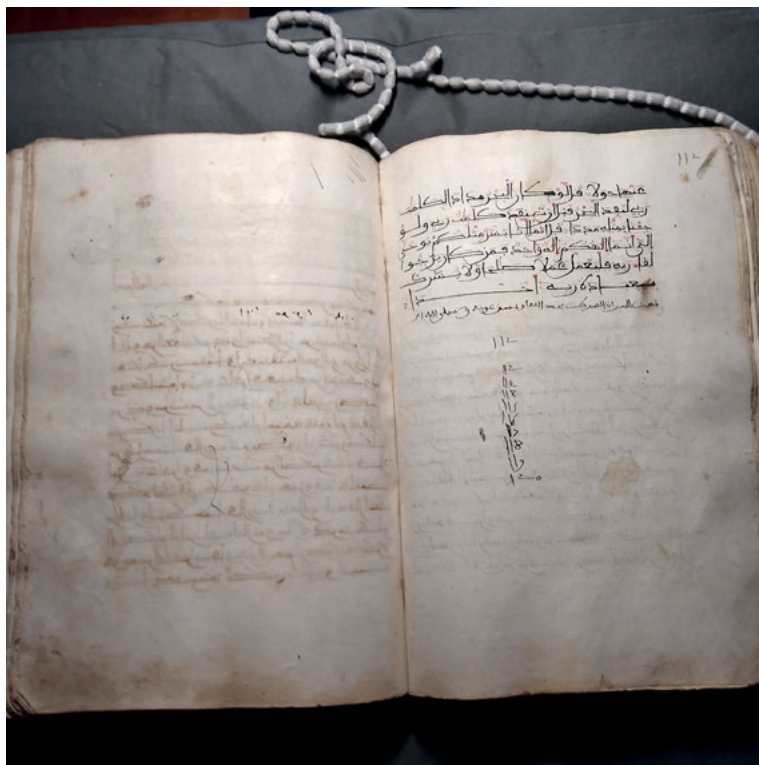


Figure 8: BNE 5212 p. 112 (end sura 18).



Figure 9: BNE 5212 p. 114 (sura 19).



Figure 10: BNE 5212 p. 176 (sura 38).

9. Now that we have identified an authoritative source to explain this division of the text, al-Dānī and his followers, and shown how it was put into practice through the examples provided by these two late manuscripts of the Qurʾān (from the early sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), we still need to address the question as to when this arrangement began to be applied to other copies of the Qurʾān and whether the tradition was typical of and exclusive to the Iberian Peninsula, in both the Andalusī and the Mudéjar-Morisco periods. In order to provide a satisfactory answer to the question of how this tradition made the leap from theoretical treatises to the *scriptoria* of the copyists, we are confronted with the perennial difficulty of finding Qurʾāns with explicit topical and chronological information in the form of a colophon or other evidence that would enable us to identify their Iberian provenance beyond a shadow of a doubt. Despite this constraint, it is possible to say that a good number of the extant manuscripts that I consulted from the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries – that is, those closest to the time when the al-Dānī school was producing its work – do not show signs of the division of the text into four parts.²⁹ This may be due to the fact that these

²⁹ BNE res/272, Almería, 539/1134; Dār al-Kutub 196, Valencia, 557/1161; Bibliothèque Nationale de Tunis 18791, 558/1163, and 13727, Valencia 564/1168; Colección Marqués de Bute, 565/1169–70;

are generally single-volume copies of the complete sacred text in quarto size (or close to it), with small script and twenty or so lines per page, where the clearest unit of macrotextual division is the *ḥizb* and its subdivisions and, in several cases, the division into twenty-seven nights (*tajziyat ramaḍān*), all of which are indicated with careful decorative motifs in the margins. Although the titles of the suras are written in calligraphy and in different colors and are sometimes accompanied by decorative motifs, they may be run-in with the rest of the text, which visually diminishes the sura as a unit of division in the perception of the reader.

10. But there are always exceptions to the rule, such as MS Cod. Arab. 4, at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, which was recently rediscovered by Umberto Bongianino (2020).³⁰ In this early copy (533/1138–39), we find numerous careful annotations in the margins to indicate the various options for dividing the text of the Qur’an (into halves, thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, sevenths, eighths, ninths, tenths, or twenty-sevenths), closely following, though without mentioning the source, the directions provided by al-Dānī in his *Bayān*. However, the manuscript does cite, in the long note in chrysography with which it begins, a different work by al-Dānī, the famous *Kitāb al-Muktafā fi l-Waqf wa-l-Ibtidā*.³¹ As for the divisions between the four parts, the copyist of this manuscript records them in the mathematical positions corresponding to *aḥzāb* 15 (7:3, fol. 29v), 30 (18:73, fol. 61v), and 45 (37:144, fol. 92v), but this division is not reflected in the decoration of the manuscript beyond the fact that the note in the margin is also in Kufic chrysography. However, in accordance with the allowed changes mentioned by Ibn Najjāh, he does make *ḥizb* 15 coincide with the title of sura 7.

10.1. There are other manuscripts that seem to suggest the existence of transitional models. Thus, for example, Sura *Maryam* in MS R. 33, held at the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi in Istanbul, has a decorative cartouche. This Qur’an was copied and decorated by Andalusī artists for the Almohad prince Abū Ya‘qūb in Marrakesh in jumādā II 599 (February/March 1203). Likewise, MS 214 at the

University of Dresden MS Ea. 293, 580/1184; University of Uppsala MS O. Vet. 77, 591/1195; Fondo Kati, Ceuta, 595/1198. There is likewise no division into four parts in other copies with similar features but from a later date, such as Escorial 1397, Málaga, 701/1302, or Archivo Histórico Provincial de Málaga L-14028, s.d.

30 Accessible at <https://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0011/bsb00117587/images/>. Accessed Mars 3, 2021. I am grateful to Umberto Bongianino for making me aware of this and for kindly allowing me to read his work (2020) prior to its publication.

31 On this work about the rules for pausing in the recitation of the Qur’an and their preservation in a late manuscript from al-Andalus, see Juan Pablo Arias Torres, “Un fragmento del *Kitāb al-Muktafā* de al-Dānī entre los libros árabes de Cútar (Málaga)”, *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 26 (2015): 19–28.



Figure 12: BNE 4989 sura 19.

10.3. For the period 1225–1250 we have evidence for the division into four parts being marked by cartouche decoration of the titles of suras 7, 19, and 38 in Cod. Arab. 1 at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, which was copied in Seville in 624/1227.³⁴ There is also a four-volume manuscript held at the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi (MSS R. 21–24) that follows the four-part division of the text and that was produced at around the same time.³⁵ It does not have an explicit date, but it was deposited in a mosque in Marrakesh by the Almohad prince Ibrāhīm b. Abi Ibrāhīm b. Abi Ya‘qūb in 635/1238. Lastly, another multivolume manuscript, BNF arabe 395,³⁶ has the second fourth culminating with a brief colophon in Kufic script at the end of sura 18: *kamula al-juz’ al-thānī bi-ḥamdi llāh wa-‘awni-hi*. The text once again starts

³⁴ On parchment, small-size script and 25 lines. Accessible at <https://app.digitale-sammlungen.de/bookshelf/bsb00040328>. Accessed Mars 3, 2021.

³⁵ On paper, large format (48 x 59). See Bongianino, “The origin and development of Maghribi Round Scripts”, 129. Again, I am grateful to Professor Bongianino for sharing several images of this manuscript with me, among which were those showing the title *al-A‘rāf* decorated with a cartouche and a side vignette where the term *ḥizb* has been inserted (R. 22, fol. 1v) and the colophon of the third part at the end of sura 37 (*kamala al-rub’ al-thālith*, R. 23, fol. 231v).

³⁶ On parchment, small-size script and 16 lines. Accessible at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8490173s.r=arabe%20395%20coran?rk=85837;2>. Accessed Mars 3, 2021.

with the title of sura 7 framed in a decorative cartouche and a side vignette indicating the end of *ḥizb* 15 and the beginning of 16. Although this manuscript is dated by its having been deposited as *waqf* in Malaga in 1440–41, in the opinion of its cataloguer, it was produced earlier than that, which would suggest that the division of the text into four parts had been instituted by the thirteenth–fourteenth century.³⁷

11. This system of dividing the text into four parts was in full swing in the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century, according to Juan de Segovia’s well-known statement in the Latin prologue to his trilingual Arabic-Castilian-Latin Qur’an (1456). After this date, there are frequent extant, generally multivolume manuscripts in Arabic that reflect this structure. Among dated manuscripts we have BNE 5314, from 895/1490,³⁸ which concludes, “*najaza al-rub‘ al-thālith min al-Qur’an...*”; BNE 4948, copied only one year later, in 896/1491 (*tamma al-rub‘ al-rābi‘ min kitāb Allāh*), with a decorative cartouche at sura 38 (*Dāwud*); and BNE 5350, a first half of the Qur’an (*kamula al-nisf al-awwal*), dated in 911/1505, with the corresponding decorative cartouche and *ḥizb* mark to indicate the beginning of the second part at sura 7.

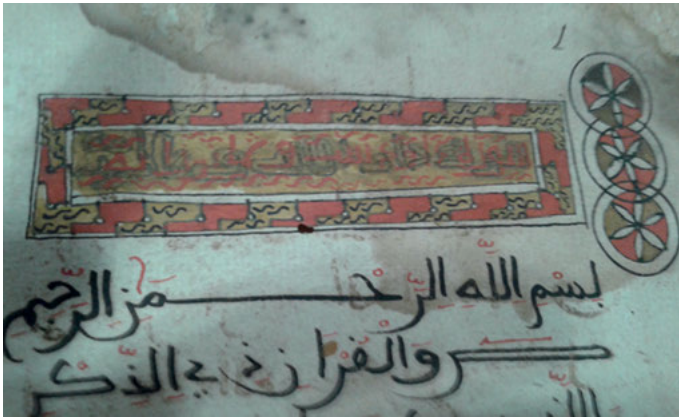


Figure 13: BNE 4948 sura 38.

³⁷ In the opinion of Salvador Peña Martín (communicated to me in private correspondence), the fact that this practice of dividing the text into four equal parts clearly begins in the Almohad period is connected to the fact that the square was the quintessential symbol for this dynasty (see Miguel Vega, Salvador Peña and Manuel Fera, *El mensaje de las monedas almohades. Numismática, traducción y pensamiento islámico* (Cuenca: Universidad Castilla La Mancha-Escuela de Traductores de Toledo, 2002), 251–259. I am grateful to Professor Peña for this information and for his generosity in agreeing to read and revise this paper before its publication.

³⁸ The date 1540 that appears in Guillén Robles’s *Catálogo* and is reproduced in the current online catalogue needs to be revised.



Figure 14: BNE 5350 sura 7.

The most highly developed embodiment of this four-part structure can be found in the fantastic large-format manuscript in the Gayangos Collection of Spain's Real Academia de la Historia (RAH), copied in Aranda de Moncayo in 1597,³⁹ in which the four parts are even given numbers in the decorative cartouches for suras 2, 7, 19, and 38.



Figure 15: RAH Codera 288 11/10619 sura 2.

³⁹ See Cristina Álvarez Millán, “Un Corán desconocido de D. Pascual de Gayangos en la Real Academia de la Historia”. In *La memoria de los libros. Estudios sobre la historia de lo escrito y de la lectura en Europa y América*, vol. II, 367–383 (Salamanca: Instituto de Historia del Libro y de la Lectura, Fundación Duques de Soria, 2004); Cristina Álvarez Millán, *Censo del Fondo Oriental de la Real Academia de la Historia, Manuscritos y documentos* (Madrid: Dykinson, 2016).



Figure 16: RAH Codera 288 11/10619 sura 7.



Figure 17: RAH Codera 288 11/10619 sura 19.



Figure 18: RAH Codera 288 11/10619 sura 38.

Lastly, this tradition, which we have traced back to the eleventh century, goes all the way up to the seventeenth. Thus, it is seen in the above-mentioned *Alcorán en letra de cristianos* contained in MS T 235, and it is maintained in what is, as far as we know, the last Qur'an produced in the Iberian Peninsula: MS 2 *olim* A-5-2 at the School of Arabic Studies in Granada, a manuscript containing suras 1 through 19 that was copied in Cordoba well into the seventeenth century⁴⁰ and whose later use in Christian academic circles is attested by the annotations in Latin for translating the titles and the numbering of the suras according to the four-part division of the text that is of interest to us here.

⁴⁰ Accessible at <http://simurg.bibliotecas.csic.es/viewer/image/CSIC000924100/1/> . Accessed Mars 3, 2021. This manuscript was initially dated to 1007/1598 in the catalogue of the School of Arabic Studies, but in Arias and Déroche, “Reflexiones”, we proposed, with some reservations, the date 1067/1657, which we hope shortly to revise again in an upcoming study in the light of new research.



Figure 19: EEA-GR MS 2 suras 1–2.



Figure 20: EEA-GR MS 2 sura 7.

12. At this point all that remains is to consider one final question: Can we continue to speak of a “Maghrebi tradition” when referring to this textual tradition, which is observable in manuscripts with copies of the Qur’an from the Iberian Peninsula or in works derived from them? If we understand the term in its widest sense of “pertaining to the Islamic west,” then, yes. It is equally true that, as Bongianino concludes in his thesis on the origin and development of Maghrebi calligraphy,⁴¹ the notion of a distinction between al-Andalus and the Maghreb – which for centuries and particularly during the Almohad period were a cultural and aesthetic unit where there was constant interaction and relative homogeneity – is an illusion. As is attested in the manuscripts examined in this study, copies of the Qur’an were produced on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar following the same textual tradition and in the same “Mediterranean international style.”⁴² The origin of this tradition, according to the extant material evidence and in keeping with Bongianino’s thesis, can be plausibly ascribed to al-Andalus, where it was

41 Bongianino, “The Origin and Development of Maghribi Round Scripts”.

42 I adopt the expression from the work of Barrucand, “Les enluminures”, 72.

based on the theoretical framework developed by al-Dānī, among others. Hence, it is possible to speak of a textual tradition that originated in the Iberian Peninsula and that later, through the work of Andalusī or Maghrebi scribes, spread through North Africa. It hardly seems coincidental that the first Qur'an in Maghrebi script, copied in 706/1306 in Tunis,⁴³ where there was a long tradition of making *maṣāḥif*, starts the last of the four parts, the only extant one, with sura 38, or that this sura also bears the title *Dāwud* (frequently used in copies from the Iberian Peninsula), framed within its corresponding *'unwān*.⁴⁴ Other extant manuscripts suggest that this division with the last part containing suras 38–114 spread to regions as far-flung as Malta⁴⁵ and sub-Saharan Africa well into the seventeenth century.⁴⁶

13. That said, the fact is that this textual tradition, as we have seen, does not correspond to the prevailing practice in the Maghreb today. This is not the place to go into the question of when, where, and why one tradition was abandoned in favor of the other.⁴⁷ However, I would like to point out that the famous and opulent *muṣḥaf* from the library of the Moroccan sultan Muley Zaydān (1599)⁴⁸ has some features that differentiate it from Iberian Qur'ans from the same period. Among these features, which are present in today's standard Maghrebi edition,⁴⁹ are a different mark for the end of some *aḥzāb*⁵⁰ and a tendency toward selecting certain titles for the suras,⁵¹ although the latter is not a defining feature. These

43 British Library, MS Add. 11638.

44 Arias and Déroche, "Reflexiones".

45 MS Codex 1904, University of Pennsylvania (Malta), copied by a prisoner from Morocco in 1065/1654, accessible at <http://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/html/mscodex1904.html>. Accessed Mars 3, 2021.

46 Lewis O 02, Free Library of Philadelphia, sura 38 again bears the title *Dāwud*, accessible at http://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0023/html/lewis_o_002.html#a291r. Accessed Mars 3, 2021.

47 It is hoped that the large store of information about these copies that will be made available through the database built by the The European Qur'an (EuQu) project will allow these kinds of conclusions to be drawn in the near future.

48 Biblioteca de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Madrid (D. 1340).

49 Although it is not the edition that I am working with, a modern edition of the Qur'an was published in Tétouan in 1391/1971–72 that follows the text of this famous manuscript, which explains this similarity.

50 Thus, for example, the end of *ḥizb* 15 is marked at 7:3, and the end of *ḥizb* 22 is marked at 11:5. The fact that, in the manuscripts from the Iberian Peninsula that I have consulted, both *aḥzāb* coincide with the end of sura 6–beginning of 7 and end of sura 10–beginning of 11, respectively, seems to constitute another distinctive feature of this Iberian textual tradition, with clear consequences for the decorations in these two copies.

51 E.g., *Ṣād* vs *Dāwud* for sura 38.

same features are present in BNE 5347, a manuscript acquired in Tétouan, with a copying date of 1692 according to the colophon. As for the division of the text into four parts, BNF arabe 4528, a manuscript of Maghrebi origin dated 1681–82, has the last fourth beginning at sura 36.

14. In conclusion, going back to the title of this paper, it is clear that the division of the text into four equal parts that is common in Iberian Qurʾans has nothing to do with the claim “sicut Euangelia sunt quatuor”⁵² in the biased explanation given by Juan de Segovia, which Darío Cabanelas long ago called into question.⁵³ It is perhaps appropriate to give credit to Segovia for calling attention to this canonical four-part division in the Arabic originals of his day, which would be so widely adopted by later Christian scholars for ordering the suras.⁵⁴ The four-part organization that we find in these Quranic manuscripts, whose slight variations also affect the decoration in these manuscripts, is part of a thoroughly Islamic tradition originating in the Quranic sciences that had been cultivated in al-Andalus since the eleventh century.

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⁵² Juan de Segovia, Latin prologue to the trilingual Qurʾan accessible at <http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/islamolatina/content/prologus-iohannis-de-segovia-alcorano>. Accessed Mars 3, 2021.

⁵³ Darío Cabanelas, *Juan de Segovia y el problema islámico* (Madrid, 1952), 133.

⁵⁴ However, since Juan de Segovia included sura 1 in the first book, we cannot be sure that he was the original source of the most-common distribution of the text into books and chapters in later Christian versions, because in this tradition sura 1 is usually considered an introduction and the first book has five chapters (see note 13). This is reflected, for example, in the Latin annotations to MS 2 (*Liber Ius Alkorani continet Azoaras V*, see image 22) or the above-mentioned Bellús Qurʾan, as well the *Confutación* by Juan Andrés or the Latin translations by Egidio da Viterbo and Germán de Silesia. On the other hand, the Islamic tradition also considers the *fātiḥa* as *apertio libri*, which is reflected in the decoration of Arabic Qurʾans from the Iberian Peninsula in which the titles of suras 1 and 2 usually both have decorative cartouches, which can be interpreted in this way (i.e., sura 1 = introduction, sura 2 = beginning of part).

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