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# The Qur'an of Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada: The Arabic Versions of Suras 21 and 22 in BAV MS Urb. Lat. 1384

## 1 Introduction

Roman and Vatican libraries include a large collection of manuscripts of the Qur'an, mostly coming from Islamic countries. These manuscripts sometimes bear notes hidden between the sheets at the beginning or in colophons with few words or lines indicating where and when they were acquired and finally found their way to Rome. The main chapters in this history of contacts, acquisition, preservation and use of this material are related to the activity of figures connected to missions and religious orders, or to cultural interests beginning in Renaissance and prompting interest in the Qur'an.<sup>1</sup> Further, and mainly in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the interest in the knowledge of Islam and Arabic created the conditions for a growing acquisition of Islamic and Qur'an manuscripts connected to the foundation of Propaganda Fide and the activity of scholars among whom Ludovico Marracci (d. 1700) was the main and most influential one.

Amongst the Qur'anic materials that are preserved in the Vatican Library, three manuscripts, at different levels, connect the text of the Qur'an to the figure of Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada, a.k.a. Flavius Mithridates a.k.a. Shemu'el ben Nissim Abū al-Faraj, a fascinating figure of a Jewish convert to Christianity. He was born in Sicily and made use of his knowledge of Hebrew, Arabic and languages in general in ten years of frenetic activity at the end of the 15th century between the papal court at Rome, a short period in Germany, at the court of the Duke of Urbino and as teacher of Pico della Mirandola before disappearing, most probably in Viterbo jails, in 1489. His outstanding linguistic expertise and contribution to knowledge ranging from Kabbalah to the Qur'an have inspired a growing amount of studies in various directions and mostly in relation to his translations from the

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<sup>1</sup> See Carlo Alberto Anzuini, *I manoscritti coranici della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana e delle biblioteche romane* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2001); and, as regards the interest in the Qur'an in Renaissance Italy, see Angelo Michele Piemontese, "Il Corano in Italia umanistica," in *Bibbia e Corano. Edizioni e ricezioni*, eds. Carmela Baffioni, Anna Passoni Dell'Acqua, Rosa Bianca Finazzi and Emidio Vergani (Milano/Roma: Biblioteca Ambrosiana – Bulzoni Editore, 2016), 31–66.

Hebrew.<sup>2</sup> His complex and mysterious personality has even inspired biographical novels by contemporary authors fascinated by his multiple personalities, as attested by his various names.<sup>3</sup>

The name of Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada/Flavius Mithridates is related to the Qur'an in connection with three different manuscripts, which include the Islamic holy text. Though one or maybe two of them were produced elsewhere, they are now in Rome, in the collection of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, and constitute beyond doubt some of the most significant items preserved in such a unique collection in relation to qur'anic manuscripts. The first one is the BAV MS Barb. Lat. 1775, including a sermon in five languages pronounced in presence of the Pope Sixtus IV in the Easter of 1481. This sermon includes two Arabic quotations closely inspired by qur'anic passages.<sup>4</sup> The second is the magnificent and illuminated BAV MS Urb. Lat. 1384, including three different texts, two of which have the parallel Arabic version along with the Latin translation; one of these units is constituted by the texts of the sura 21 and 22 of the Qur'an. This manuscript was realized for Federico of Montefeltro and was possibly also produced, all or in part, in Rome in 1480–82. The third and last is an enigmatic Qur'an, missing a small part at the beginning but originally complete, written in Hebrew characters (BAV MS Vat. Ebr. 357), datable from the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Moncada left his name in different parts of this manuscript and inserted interlinear translations in Latin and comments.

In this paper I am going to focus on and discuss the Arabic text of the second work, also touching on the short qur'anic quotations in the first manuscript in relation to the form of the text that was probably used as a model and source. As regards the third manuscript, a few studies by other scholars, and mainly Benoît Grévin, have recently contributed to explaining many enigmatic details. Benoît Grévin is currently working on an edition of the manuscript which will contribute to highlight the significance of this manuscript in the history of Renaissance approaches to the Qur'an.<sup>5</sup>

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2 See the bibliography in Michela Andreatta and Saverio Campanini, “Bibliographia mithridatica,” in *Flavio Mitridate mediatore fra culture nel contesto dell'ebraismo siciliano del XV secolo*, eds. Mauro Perani and Giacomo Corazzol (Palermo: Officina di studi medievali, 2012), 289–317; see also Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 18–19.

3 Andrea Camilleri, *Inseguendo un'ombra* (Palermo: Sellerio editore, 2014).

4 Benoît Grévin, “De Damas à Urbino. Les savoir linguistiques arabes dans l'Italie renaissante (1370–1529),” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 70, no. 3 (2015): 626.

5 On this manuscript, see most of the works by Benoît Grévin quoted in the Bibliography; see also Aleida Paudice, “On three extant sources of the Qur'an transcribed in Hebrew,” *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 2 (2009): 214–257 with further references.

## 2 The Qur'anic Quotations in BAV MS Barb. Lat. 1755

Before coming to the discussion of the Qur'anic text preserved in BAV MS Urb. Lat. 1384, which is the focus of this paper, it is necessary to look at the quotations in another manuscript. This is also an important point in relation to our topic since this manuscript, BAV MS Barb. Lat. 1755, includes two brief and problematic quotations from the Qur'an, inserted in the already mentioned sermon of Easter 1481, that were produced by Moncada's hand (Fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> As such it constitutes not only a significant testimony, notwithstanding their shortness, in relation to the confidence of Moncada with the writing of Arabic but also a direct attestation to his knowledge of the Qur'an, known or evoked by heart or copied from another source.

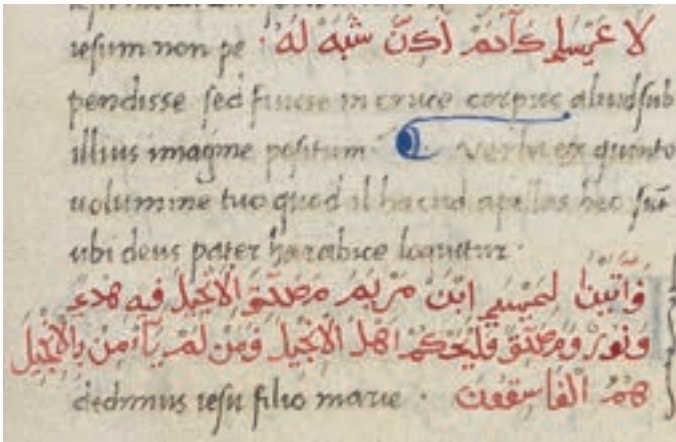


Fig. 1: BAV MS Barb. Lat. 1755, 100r.

<sup>6</sup> In BAV MS Vat. Ebr. 357 a few words written in Arabic in this Qur'an in Hebrew character are considered by Grévin to have been produced by Moncada himself and as such constitute other quotations of the Qur'an. See most of the works by Benoit Grévin quoted in the Bibliography; see also Paudice, "On three extant sources of the Qur'an transcribed in Hebrew," with further references in Arabic by Moncada though in a different context and above all in relation to the Judeo-Arabic text that probably influenced it; see on this Grévin, "Flavius Mithridates au travail sur le Coran," in *Flavio Mitridate mediatore fra culture nel contesto dell'ebraismo siciliano del XV secolo*, eds. Mauro Perani and Giacomo Corazzol (Palermo: Officina di studi medievali, 2012), 37 n. 32; see also on these quotations Angelo Michele Piemontese, "Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada alla corte di Urbino," in *Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada alias Flavio Mitridate. Un ebreo converso siciliano*, ed. Mauro Perani (Palermo: Officina di studi medievali, 2008), 154–55.

The problematic character of these quotations is given by the fact that they do not faithfully correspond to the qur'anic verses that Moncada wanted to quote. However, the inaccuracies in the quotations seem to combine the two possibilities that they were simply recalled by heart though, at the same time, some formal details in the writing appear to point to a contact with a written source and version of the text. The only way to combine these two aspects is to suggest that reliance on written sources was given by previous knowledge, since it is difficult to maintain that he copied in such an inaccurate way directly from a qur'anic manuscript even if Moncada's personality could suggest a certain superficiality in displaying his knowledge of Islamic and Arabic sources.

The quotations occur in the same page (BAV MS Barb. Lat. 1755, fol. 100r). The first one refers – rather than being – to Qur. 4:157 and it is a reference to where the Qur'an states that Jesus was not killed on the cross and that this was made apparent to his followers.<sup>7</sup> The quotation starts with *lā 'Īsā ka-ānam*, where 'Īsā is actually vocalized 'Aysā, and what is more significant is that the name has both a small *alif maqṣūra* and an *alif ṭawīla* reflecting the habit, though not faithfully reproduced, in the qur'anic script of writing an *alif maqṣūra* with the small dagger *alif* above it. In this case, the dagger *alif* is too big, though a written source is the most probable origin of this choice. The name of Jesus appears actually in Qur. 4:157, but the preceding *lā* and what follows (*kānam?*) are not clear. The last part of the quotation, *lakinna* (or *akinna*) *shabah lahu* apparently stands for *lākin shubbiha la-hum* (Qur. 4:157). There are two points to note. The quotation attests to some knowledge and reference to a specific qur'anic passage but this is wrongly quoted and not clear. Further, the script attests to knowledge of some formal devices such as the *alif maqṣūra* with dagger *alif* and the *alif madda* in *kānam*. The *tashdīd* in *lakinna* is a further element attesting the knowledge of vocalization by the writer and a possible reference to a written source.

The second and longer quotation confirms these elements though the calligraphy, by the same hand, clearly not belonging to a mother tongue but to someone not as well versed in Arabic writing, is more problematic. In this case, a more complex

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7 As noted by Chaim Wirszubski, *Flavius Mithridates. Sermo de passione Domini* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities/Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1963), 35, the quotations do not confirm the mystery of Christ's passion but deny it altogether. A transliteration and discussion of these quotations were given in Piemontese, "Il Corano latino di Ficino e i Corani arabi di Pico e Monchates," *Rinascimento* 36 (1996), 227–73: 256–257. Here and in "Il Corano in Italia umanistica," 35 the significant detail is added in the text where Moncada states that these quotations were taken by the fourth and fifth volumes (*uolumine*) of the Qur'an, i.e., the fourth and fifth suras, and giving as title of the fifth, the alternative *al hacud* (ar. *al-'Uqūd*) which is an attested variant title instead of the most common *al-Mā'ida* (The Table).

sequence of words brings to the surface some other faulty solutions. The quotation is a collection with insertions from Qur. 5:46–47, which is also a qur'anic passage related to Jesus. A few words are inserted that are not in the verses: *ātaynā* at the beginning, and the *man lam ya'minu* (sic) *bi-l-injīl*. This second insertion is significant since it simplifies and makes stronger the qur'anic passage. The use of *ya'min* instead of *yu'min* is an indication of some problems while showing a vocalization to attest knowledge of the Arabic script and of the Qur'an. The rest is comprised of words and expressions collected from the qur'anic passage, displaying omissions and peculiarities in the script: the *ātaynā* at the beginning has a dagger *alif* above the *nun*, *li-'aysā* is a wrong version for *bi-'īsā* in Qur. 5:46.

Apart from the wrong vocalization, it is significant that the *alif maqṣūra* is dotted similarly to *hudan*; this is a formal device that reflects some regional uses (for instance, from Egypt, Yemen) to which some copies of Qur'an attest. Further, the two occurrences of *muṣaddiqan* (here vocalized *maṣaddiqa* and *maṣaddiqan*) have a *madda* instead of the *tashdīd* and no final *alif*. Another significant detail is the final *al-fāsiqūn* with *waw* and *nūn* connected. The text is vocalized and in many cases in a correct form. The writer displays awareness of the formal devices with some faulty solutions that in any case refer to a written culture, though not served by a proficient hand in writing down and in rendering the correct qur'anic script, with an approximation that combines with the approximation of the Qur'an references.

There are few doubts around the fact that the text was written by Moncada himself.<sup>8</sup> As such, it reflects his capability in writing Arabic and his knowledge of the Arabic Qur'an. The calligraphy is indication of the fact that he knew how to write Arabic but was not so good and had some problems in connecting or not some letters. It is not easy to say if this was given by the uncertain hand, by interference from spoken language, by fault of knowledge or by superficiality given by the fact that supposedly almost nobody was able to check it. Vocalization and some formal device, at the same time, highlight awareness of a written source and of a written qur'anic source in particular, though some inconsistencies also attest that there was no direct and faithful copying activity.

### 3 The BAV MS Urb. Lat. 1384 and the Qur'an

The manuscript BAV MS Urb. Lat. 1384 is a different kind of work. It is a luxury project offered to the Duke of Urbino including three parts and, as such, it was really the result of an impressive cultural operation. Along with the third part including

<sup>8</sup> See Wirszubski, *Flavius Mithridates*, in part. 44.

the text of the Qur'an and its translation that will be dealt with here, the two other units, along with pages including respective introductions and glossaries, are: 1) *De imaginibus caelestibus* by one 'Alī b. al-Ḥātim (fols. 1-19, 21-28, numbered 1-27), in Latin and Arabic; nothing is known about this author, named Abū 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥātim, only that he was testimony to an eclipse in Ramadan 327/July 939; 2) *Defectus Solis et Lune*, in Latin only, and being a treatise on the astronomic tables and eclipses (fols. 31-62b) apparently attributed to the same author; 3) and the edition and Latin translation of the suras 21 and 22 of the Qur'an.<sup>9</sup>

The significance and the quality of the manuscript have been discussed and underlined in a number of previous studies. The aim of the work as a whole was to present such a luxury product to Federico of Montefeltro, who was spending a lot of money on the acquisition of texts and manuscripts and whose interest also in Arabic and Oriental items was not different from that of other figures in the Italian Renaissance, including the Pope. Moncada was a protagonist in all this operation between Rome and Urbino, since he himself was the translator and the general editor of the work as a whole. However, he wrote neither the Latin versions nor the Arabic parts. There can be few doubts about this. The Latin text of the first treatise, the *De imaginibus caelestibus*, of all the Latin parts was most probably written by Pietro Ursuleo of Capua, who was active in Rome in 1475 as a calligrapher in the circle of Pope Sixtus IV. Apparently more problematic is the question of who wrote the Arabic parts in the first and in the third parts. The hand reproducing the texts in the columns of the two treatises is by a native speaker and writer and the calligraphy is Eastern. Rubrications and Arabic words in margins, as for instance the indication of divisions of the text in the qur'anic portion, are by another hand. Whatever was Moncada's involvement in the copying of the manuscript he was most probably the editor of all of it, the one most probably writing the rubrications and in the margins, and the translator into Latin.

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<sup>9</sup> See on this manuscript Benoît Grévin, "Editing an illuminated Arabic-Latin masterwork of the Fifteenth century. Manuscript Vat. Urb. Lat. 1384 as a philological challenge," in *Multilingual and Multigraphic documents and manuscripts of East and West*, eds. Giuseppe Mandalà and Immaculada Pérez Martín (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2018), 359–81; Benoît Grévin, "Between Arabic and Latin in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy," in *Latin and Arabic: Entangled Histories*, ed. Daniel G. König (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2019), 161; Piemontese, "Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada alla corte di Urbino," 160–161. On the *De imaginibus caelestibus* see the edition of the Latin, with English translation, in Kristen Lippicott and David Pingree, "Ibn al-Ḥātim on the talismans of the Lunar mansions," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987): 57–81; and of the Arabic in Marc Oliveras, "El *De imaginibus caelestibus* de Ibn al-Ḥātim," *Al-Qanṭara* 30/1 (2009), 171–220. As regards instead the *Defectus Solis et Lune*, in Latin only, it is a treatise on the astronomic tables and eclipses (fols. 31-62b) apparently attributed to the same author.

Coming more directly to the third part with the Qur'an, the manuscript includes some significant information in its introductory part about the presumed cultural aim behind it. Moncada mentions a more comprehensive project of which the two translated suras are a mere sample: to translate, according to the request of Federico of Montefeltro (*reg.* 1474–1482), the whole Qur'an into Latin and then into Hebrew, Caldaic (Aramaic) and Syriac. The concept was that of a polyglot Qur'an consisting of the original Arabic with the four translations, a work that Moncada himself at the end of the introduction defines as hard and difficult. No other indication in any source substantiates further steps in this project and these two edited and translated suras are the only evidence of it. Such a project reflects on one hand a renowned interest, at least in the realm of simple proposals, in a direct approach to the Arabic Qur'an and the need for further translations, with a humanistic interest in polyglot productions that recall the similar visions of Juan of Segovia and Egidio da Viterbo. On the other hand, it highlights the unsubstantiated pretention of Moncada that apparently mentions this to impress the client and the readers to enhance his work but that was never followed by further work, apart from his notes and transcriptions in manuscript BAV MS Vat. Ebr. 357.

One major question in relation to this work is Moncada's knowledge of Arabic and of the Qur'an as it is reflected in the edited text, the translation and the other texts such as the included indexes. As evidenced by Grévin, the indexes here included in any case highlights that, at the beginning of 1480s, Moncada was acquainted with the necessity of using Islamic commentary traditions to work on the Qur'an and thus had knowledge of what was necessary in this regard.<sup>10</sup> Such an acquaintance, notwithstanding faults in knowledge, was served by an attitude in which the polemics, if compared to other works on the Qur'an, were reduced. Both the introduction and the notes of comment, not to say the translation, attest a generic neutral attitude and are not marked by a polemical attitude as are many products of the time.<sup>11</sup>

Most questions have been raised in connection to the translation and its errors, which have been underlined as a sign of Moncada's reduced proficiency and to enhance the rhetoric of his project, which was not based on a solid knowledge of Arabic and of the Qur'an. As regards the question of the knowledge of the Qur'an, this had to be significant to a certain extent given the indication given in the introduction to the number of the suras and of its liturgical divisions. In fact, this introduction displays a specific reference to the knowledge of the qur'anic divisions, with a particular emphasis on the liturgical, usually marginal, indication of the thirty *juz's* further divided into sixty *hizbs* along with the exact indication of the

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<sup>10</sup> Grévin, "Flavius Mithridates au travail sur le Coran," 30.

<sup>11</sup> Burman, *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom*, 138.

114 suras, which should not be underestimated in times when there were different numbers and the Opening sura was sometimes not considered in the total number.<sup>12</sup>

Apart from this detail, other researchers have evidenced the errors and problems attested in the Latin translation of the two suras and, consequently, advanced many doubts on Moncada's knowledge of Arabic. These short Latin translations include mistakes and display a problematic knowledge of the Arabic text, while the comments on the Hebrew manuscript (BAV MS Vat. Ebr. 357) reflect a different and higher learning. This situation has puzzled scholars and suggested various explanations against the old considerations that dismissed the Latin translations as the product of ignorance.<sup>13</sup> Grévin has suggested reconsidering faults and imprecision in the translation, by also taking into consideration contingencies and the need to re-evaluate the matter by combining what emerges from this manuscript and from the Hebrew copy of the Qur'an on which he commented and where different translations are added by his hand.<sup>14</sup> Though the quality of the translation is not of fundamental significance for our inquiry into the Arabic text of the Qur'an

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12 "In triginta gez, idest partes et in sexaginta hisbi, idest distinctiones, nec non in centum quatuordecim surath": Raffaele Starrabba, "Ricerche storiche su Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada ebreo convertito siciliano del secolo XV," *Archivio Storico Siciliano* 3 (1878): 90 (or. text), 43; Hartmut Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Arabistik und Islamkunde in Europa* (Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), 81–82; Grévin, "Flavius Mithridates au travail sur le Coran," 29–30 e n. 8, where the Latin text is given; see also in Piemontese, "Il Corano latino di Ficino e i Corani arabi di Pico e Monchates," 260. There is some confusion on the addition to these languages of Turkish, related to the mention of it in the text, see for ex. Piemontese, "Il Corano latino di Ficino," 259. On the confusion in the indication of the *hizbi*, see below.

13 See Levi Della Vida, *Ricerche sulla formazione del più antico fondo dei manoscritti orientali della Biblioteca Vaticana* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1939), 92–97; Hartmut Bobzin, "Latin Translations of the Koran. A short overview," *Der Islam*, 70/2 (1993): 193–206: 201; Burman, *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom*, 18f., 24–26, 48–49, 133–148. Piemontese, "Il Corano latino di Ficino," 254–273; Piemontese, "Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada alla corte di Urbino," 35–38.

14 See Grévin, "Between Arabic and Latin," 173–74; Benoît Grévin, "Le 'Coran' de Mithridate" (Ms. Vat. Ebr. 357) à la croisée des savoirs arabes dans l'Italie du XVe siècle," *Al-Qanṭara*, 31 (2010), 513–48: in part. 530–32, see also 522 n. 35 on the request by Federico of Montefeltro to translate into Latin the Qur'an, and 538: he had a good knowledge of Arabic but conditioned by his dialectal practice; see also Benoît Grévin, "Connaissance et enseignement de l'arabe dans l'Italie du XVe siècle: quelques jalons," in *Maghreb-Italie. Des Passeurs médiévaux à l'Orientalisme moderne (XIIIe-milieu XXe siècle)*, ed. Benoît Grévin (Roma: École française de Rome, 2010), 103–138: 133: Moncada used another copy of the Qur'an which was vocalized, for his notes. Benoît Grévin, "Un témoin majeur du rôle des communautés juives de Sicile dans la préservation et la diffusion en Italie d'un savoir sur l'arabe et l'Islam au XVe siècle: les notes interlinéaires et marginales du 'Coran de Mithridate' (Ms. Vat. Ebr. 357)," in *Chrétiens, juifs et musulmans dans le Méditerranée médiévale. Etudes en hommage à Henri Bresc*, ed. Benoît Grévin et al. (Paris: De Boccard, 2008), 45–56. He was in Rome between 1477 and 1483, and consulted BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4071 with a Latin translation of the Qur'an.

reproduced, the errors and inaccuracies indicate that Moncada's knowledge was consistent but not enough to fully understand such a complex text.

Finally, as regards the Arabic texts reproduced in the manuscript, it must be said that they can hardly be considered as attestations of Moncada's knowledge since they were not produced by his hand. Though this possibility was suggested by some scholars who had worked on the *De imaginibus* and by Giorgio Levi Della Vida when dealing with the qur'anic part, this has been definitely dismissed by more recent studies.<sup>15</sup> No specific statement is given in the manuscript itself and such a hypothesis and other interpretations are conjectural since the name of the copyist of the Arabic is not given and no other indication in this regard is given in any source. However, a simple comparison of the quality of the Arabic of BAV MS Barb. Lat. 1775 discussed above and the text preserved in BAV MS Urb. Lat. 1384 immediately attests that where the hand in the first item was by an amateur, the Arabic text in the second one (Fig. 2) was by a first-language speaker well-versed in Arabic calligraphy. There can be few doubts on this, notwithstanding other opinions. Further, the calligraphy of the two Arabic parts is Eastern, thus pointing to a copyist not connected to Moncada's family relationship to Iberian Jewish communities, which indicates a consequent knowledge of Arabic coming from Islamic Western regions using a different calligraphy.<sup>16</sup> A reference to the Arabic text in the other treatise included in the manuscript is of some help in this regard, since it was realized or at least revised by the editor, most probably by Moncada himself, and it includes mistakes and the exchange of letters, though it must be said that these are not so evident in the two suras of the Qur'an.<sup>17</sup>

Angelo Michele Piemontese has been the main scholar to discuss briefly and deal with the Arabic text in this manuscript and suggested some possible hypotheses in relation to its calligraphy and some choices in at least some of its formal features. The calligraphy of the text in Arabic given in the manuscript and in the qur'anic excerpts has already been correctly defined as a *naskhī* (*naskh*) and the text given in *scriptio plena*.<sup>18</sup> The Arabic text was not by Moncada's hand but,

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15 Levi Della Vida, *Ricerche sulla formazione del più antico fondo*, 93–94 n. 2 where he also states that the hand is the same of BAV MS Barb. Lat. 1775; Oliveras, “El *De imaginibus*,” 177, quoting Lippincott and Pingree's studies.

16 See for ex. Grévin, “Between Arabic and Latin,” 154–55: on the Arabic in Sicily and on “literati with a Spanish Judaeo-Arabic background” (155) who settled in Sicily.

17 Levi Della Vida, *Ricerche sulla formazione del più antico fondo*, 94. Bobzin confirms the opinion of Levi Della Vida, see Harmut Bobzin, “Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada e la sua traduzione della sura 21 (‘dei profeti’),” in *Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada alias Flavio Mitridate*, 174.

18 On a tendency to recur to *scriptio plena*, see Bobzin, “Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada e la sua traduzione della sura 21 (‘dei profeti’),” 174.



Fig. 2: BAV MS Urb. Lat. 1384, fol. 75v, beginning of sura 22.

according to Piemontese, by a Near-Eastern Christian hand. Piemontese also provided evidence that different hands should be recognized in the manuscripts, one of the calligrapher writing the text and another one of a copyist adding the

rubrications.<sup>19</sup> In this Piemontese was following what Lippincott and Pingree had maintained in relation to their study of the treatise by Ibn al-Ḥātim. In particular in their second and brief article, reproducing Paul Kunitzsch's suggestion, it is stated that the Arabic calligraphy of this work was made by an Oriental hand, and a probable solution would point to a Near-Eastern Christian connected to the Papal court; this combines with the presence in this treatise of idiosyncrasies of the text that indicate a substrate of Spanish Arabic dialect or colloquialisms, given by the source or by someone reading to the scribe and introducing these features. Needless to say, this last detail would better imply a Maghrebi handwriting and not an Eastern *naskhī* calligraphic style.<sup>20</sup>

As regards the question of the source used as a model to copy the text, it has been suggested that a Maghrebine manuscript of the Qur'an owned by Montefeltro and now in the Vatican Library (BAV MS Vat. Ar. 212) could have acted as a model for Moncada in his partial translation, but a simple look at this manuscript highlights that this is not the case. The few errors in BAV MS Urb. Lat. 1384 are not present in it and there is no correspondence in the verse divisions, in the use of the *madda* and in the alternations of *scriptio plena* and *scriptio defectiva*.<sup>21</sup> No other information can suggest another possible source and, in such a situation, there is no doubt that the debate on the calligraphy in this manuscript is one of the points that has received reduced attention notwithstanding its significance in relation to the manuscript.<sup>22</sup>

Harmut Bobzin and Thomas Burman have also underlined some faults or problems in the definition of the liturgical divisions, which are indicated in the Latin translation. Instead of the proper *ḥizb* it is the half of the *ḥizb* to be singled out and the beginnings of the *ḥizbs* are not indicated and missing; further, the different writing indicated in two passages (fols. 70r; 81v) has further attracted attention and has been signaled (see on this below, pp. 74–76). The Arabic text also displays some

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19 Michele Angelo Piemontese, "Pico, Moncada e Abdala Sarracenus nella 'Oratio de hominis dignitate'," in *Flavio Mitridate mediatore fra culture nel contesto dell'ebraismo siciliano del XV secolo*, eds. Mauro Perani and Giacomo Corazzol, 121; Piemontese, "Il Corano latino di Ficino," 259–61; see also in Piemontese, "Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada alla corte di Urbino," 160, where he states again that the Arabic text was written by a Near-Eastern Christian hand.

20 Kristen Lippincott and David Pingree, "More on Ibn al-Ḥātim," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 51 (1988): 188 n. 2.

21 See BAV MS Vat Ar. 212 fols. 3v-6r (sura 21) and fols. 6r-8v (sura 22). There is only a similarity in the use of the *madda* with the quotations in BAV MS Barb. Lat. 1775, see above (p. 59) the two occurrences of *muṣaddiqan* which have a *madda* instead of the *tashdīd*. On this manuscript see Anzuini, *I manoscritti coranici della Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana*, 55–57.

22 Grévin, "Editing an illuminated Arabic-Latin masterwork," 375.

other specific features of interest according to previous studies, such as the versification, which does not always follow canonical division.<sup>23</sup>

All these questions will be discussed in the next chapter and though the main features have been mentioned or hinted at in these previous studies, a comprehensive discussion of this attestation of a partial copy of the Arabic Qur'an produced in Western Europe has never been carried out.

## 4 The Formal Features of the Arabic Qur'an in BAV MS Urb. Lat. 1384

The Arabic text of the Qur'an quoted in the manuscript is in general a faithful reproduction of the text. The few errors and the formal features in the script and in the vocalization and the use of other signs attest beyond any doubt that this was copied in the presence of a direct source to which the copyist or calligrapher could constantly refer. There is nothing comparable to the inaccuracies of BAV MS Vat. Lat. 1775 and in general there are not the idiosyncrasies signaled in the first part of the manuscript in the Arabic of the text of Ibn al-Ḥātim mentioned above. Given this, in any case, the script and text of the two suras as presented in this manuscript, running by the side of the Latin translation, display some significant features that are an important and early testimony of an Arabic Qur'an, even if partial, produced in Western Europe for a Western readership. The fact that the copyist was probably Arab does not diminish this significance and is in any case a testimony to the source or model that was used for this work.

The formal features that can be significant in the evaluation of the peculiarities of the script and a possible identification of sources are numerous: the use of *scriptio plena* or *defectiva*; the peculiarities of the consonantal ductus; the presence of errors and lapses; the division in verses and other indications of different kind on the division of text; and vocalization; and other signs. All these elements are pertinent to the understanding of the quality of the script, its relation to possible sources and the consequent significance of all this for an identification of all the actors in this operation: the source(s), the copyist and the final text produced for Federico of Montefeltro, all this mediated by Moncada and his knowledge.

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<sup>23</sup> Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 82–83; Bobzin, “Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada e la sua traduzione della sura 21 (‘dei profeti’),” 173–176 on all these peculiarities only from sura 21; Burman, *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom*, 137. Grévin has rightly defined these as “minor inaccuracies”, see Grévin, “Editing an illuminated Arabic-Latin masterwork,” 369.

*Scriptio plena* is the most common choice and the one that takes place for all the occurrences in relation to *alifs* connected to plurals and other cases. To list all the occurrences in relation to the defective 'Uthmānic script would produce a long list; it can however be stated that apart from some exceptions also connected to specific cases, *scriptio plena* is the choice that can be considered strictly related to the source. The manuscript in these cases favours a spelling adherent to the rules of Arabic writing instead of the peculiarities of the defective 'Uthmānic script.<sup>24</sup> This does not mean that the text does not include attestations of *scriptio defectiva* in a number of cases even if a rule in the choice between the two *scriptios* is apparently not clear.

The most significant examples of *scriptio defectiva* that display specific features are the names of the prophets, which are almost always written in *scriptio defectiva*, though the various occurrences of Sulaymān are given in *scriptio plena*.<sup>25</sup> It is also significant to emphasize that some words in common use or related to major religious tenets, such as *al-rahmān* and *al-ṣalāt*, are quoted in a defective way, following common use in written Arabic.<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to think that such different choices were given by one manuscript model, and this is further underlined by some eclectic choices, with alternation, for instance, of the two scripts in the same line or verse.<sup>27</sup>

24 See for ex. fol. 65v (Qur. 21:3–8): *aḍ'āf*, *aḥlām*; *ahlaknāhā*; fol. 66r (Qur. 21:8–14): *ja'alnāhum*, *ṣadaqnāhum*, *kitāban*, *masākinikum*; fol. 66v (Qur. 21:14–20): *zālimin*, *da'wāhum*, *ja'alnāhum*; fol. 70r (Qur. 21:49–56): *'ālimin*, *'akifin*, *'ābidin*, *ḍalāl*; fol. 72v (Qur. 21:81–86): *bāraknā*, *'ālimin*, *al-shayāṭin*; fol. 75v (Qur. 22:1–4): *sukārā* (2 occurrences); fol. 75v (Qur. 22:1–4): *yujādilu*; *shaytān*; fol. 77r (Qur. 22:10–14): *bi-zallām*, *al-ḍalāl*, *al-ṣāliḥāt*; fol. 77v (Qur. 22:14–17): *jannāt*; fol. 77v (Qur. 22:14–17): *bayyināt*; fol. 79v (Qur. 22:29–32): *hurumāt*, *al-an'ām*, *al-awthān*; fol. 80r (Qur. 22:32–36): *manāfi'*, *al-an'ām*, *al-ṣābirin*, *razaqnāhum*, *ja'alnāhā*, *sha'ā'ir*; fol. 81r (Qur. 22:38–41): *yuqātilūna*, *diyārihim*, *ṣalawāt*, *masājid*, *makkannāhum*; fol. 82v (Qur. 22:50–54): *al-shayṭān*; fol. 84v (Qur. 22:67–71): *kitāb*, *sulṭānan*, *lil-l-zālimin*; *passim*.

25 See Ibrāhīm in defective writing without *alif*: fol. 70r (Qur. 21:49–56); fol. 70v (Qur. 21:57–65); fol. 71r (Qur. 21:65–72); fol. 79r (Qur. 22:25–28); fol. 81v (Qur. 22:41–46); fol. 84v (Qur. 22:78); Ishāq: fol. 71r (Qur. 21:65–72). But cf. Sulaymān written in *scriptio plena*; fol. 72r (Qur. 21:77–81).

26 See *al-rahmān*: fol. 68v (Qur. 21:35–40); fol. 69r (Qur. 21:40–44); fol. 75r (Qur. 21:110–112); *al-qiyāma*: fol. 76v (Qur. 22:5–10); fol. 77v (Qur. 22:14–17); fol. 84v (Qur. 22:67–71); *al-ṣalāt*: fol. 80r (Qur. 22:32–36); fol. 71v (Qur. 21:72–77); fol. 81r (Qur. 22:38–41); fol. 84v (Qur. 22:78); *al-zakāt*: fol. 84v (Qur. 22:78). But *subḥān* is always *plena*: cf. fol. 67v (Qur. 21:25–30).

27 See for instance the most significant alternation of solutions in fol. 71v (Qur. 21:72–77): *ṣāliḥin plena*, *ja'alnāhum defectiva*, *al-khayrāt plena*. See also the cases of the defective fol. 69v (Qur. 44–49): *al-qiyām*; fol. 75v (Qur. 22:1–4): *lākin*; fol. 80v (Qur. 22:36–38): *lākin*. See also the word *al-samawāt* where only the final *alif* is given in the ductus, see fol. 66v (Qur. 21:14–20); fol. 67v (Qur. 21:25–30); fol. 70r (Qur. 21:49–56); fol. 78r (Qur. 22:17–21); fol. 84r (Qur. 22:63–67).

There are many other significant features of the script of the manuscript in relation to the consonantal ductus. This can also be related to the dynamic relation in the production of manuscript copies of the Qur'an between the 'Uthmānic defective script, the *scriptio plena* in various degrees and, in some cases, to specific or personal choices by a copyist, as attested in many qur'anic manuscripts of all ages, or, as a third conditioning factor, to common ways to write Arabic in other contexts. It is not easy to detect the impact of each factor in the relation between a specific source, the copyist and the final product and to distinguish between them. This is most evident when touching on some letters that have often been proved problematic in scribal activities.

One of these letters is the *yā'* for those cases in which it is normally written with the two dots but that in the 'Uthmānic ductus is often without, not to say the variety of solution in relation to the same sign as support of the *hamza*, which will be discussed later on. Connected or not to the source used in copying, this attitude follows the scribal practice in the production of Arabic manuscripts of adding the dots, as requested by script, of the *yā's*.<sup>28</sup> Eclectic and different choice are also attested for the same words that also appear without dots.<sup>29</sup> The condition of the Arabic text in BAV MS Urb. Latin 1384 is also in this case complicated by those cases where the sign of the *yā'* is dotted, where the qur'anic script and also the rules prescribe no dots. The most typical case is the dots added to the *alif maqṣūra*.<sup>30</sup> Further, one other significant case is also related, the rendering as a simple dotted *yā'* that in 'Uthmānic script, when preceding a pronoun, is given with the support of an undotted sign of the *yā'* plus a dagger *alif* since it is grammatically a proper

<sup>28</sup> See for instance *fī* with dots while in the 'Uthmānic script there are no dots: fol. 76v (Qur. 22: 5–10); fol. 78r (Qur. 22:17–21); fol. 79r (Qur. 22:25–28); see also fol. 65v (Qur. 21:3–8); *nūhī*: fol. 68r (Qur. 21:30–35); *rawāsī*; fol. 68v (Qur. 21:35–40); *alladhī*; fol. 72v (Qur. 21:81–86); *dhikrā*; fol. 73r (Qur. 21:86–91); *fa-nādā* (two occurrences); fol. 75r (Qur. 21:110–112); *ilā* (v. 111); fol. 76v (Qur. 22:5–10); *thāniya*; fol. 77v (Qur. 22:14–17); *tajrī*; fol. 84r (Qur. 22:63–67); *tajrī*; fol. 69v (Qur. 21:44–49); *wahy*; fol. 73v (Qur. 21:91–97); *hiya*; fol. 74r (Qur. 21:97–104); v. 104 *naṭwī*; fol. 74v (Qur. 21:104–109); *ṭayy*; fol. 74v (Qur. 21:104–109); *adrī*; fol. 75r (Qur. 21:110–112); *adrī*; fol. 77v (Qur. 22:14–17); *yahdī*; fol. 79r (Qur. 22:25–28); *baytī*; fol. 79v (Qur. 22:29–32); *tahwī*; fol. 80r (Qur. 22:32–36); *al-muqīmī*.

<sup>29</sup> See also fol. 76r (Qur. 22:4–5): v. 5 both *fī* and *ilā* without dots; fol. 78v (Qur. 22:22–25): *tajrī* with no dots; see also for ex. fol. 73r (Qur. 21:86–91): *nujī*; fol. 84v (Qur. 22:73–78): *la-qawwī*; fol. 82r (Qur. 22:46–50): the first occurrence of *ta 'mā* has no dots and the second one has dots.

<sup>30</sup> Fol. 65r: *al-najwā*; fol. 69v (Qur. 44–49): *kafā*; fol. 72r (Qur. 21:77–81): v. 81 dots under *ilā*; fol. 75v (Qur. 22:1–4): *sukārā* (two occurrences); fol. 76v (Qur. 22:5–10): *al-mawtā*; fol. 77r (Qur. 22:10–14): *al-mawlā*; fol. 76r (Qur. 22:4–5): *ilā*, *yutaqaffā*; fol. 77v (Qur. 22:14–17): *al-naṣārā*; fol. 78v (Qur. 22:22–25): *ilā*; fol. 80v (Qur. 22:36–38): *al-taqwā*; fol. 81v (Qur. 22:41–46): *Mūsā*; fol. 82r (Qur. 22:46–50): v. 48 *ilā*; fol. 82v (Qur. 22:50–54): *alqā*; fol. 84v (Qur. 22:67–71): *hudan* (sic); fol. 84v (Qur. 22:78): *al-mawlā*; fol. 71v (Qur. 21:72–77): *nādā*; fol. 72v (Qur. 21:81–86): *nādā*.

*alif*.<sup>31</sup> This could be related to some practices mainly from Maghrebi manuscripts and reflect adherence to the sources notwithstanding the attestation of this in other manuscripts.

The complicated affair of the dots in the ductus of the *yā'* is also present in the written life of another consonant that is the nightmare not only of the students of Arabic but also of the copyists of Arabic literature who have always battled with rules that were apparently not easy or not consistent with speaking attitudes and habits. We are alluding to the fate of the *hamza*. The dots are recalled in the script of *hamza* with the support of the undotted *yā'* which is, needless to say, usually dotted in this manuscript.<sup>32</sup> Apart from this specific case, the indication of the *hamza* follows some general rules that reflect, also in this case, a close relation to common use in the copying of Arabic manuscripts and reflect the closeness to full script in line with grammatical and calligraphic common rules. For instance, the *hamza* that should be indicated at the beginning of words and put above the *alif* is usually never given in the text.<sup>33</sup>

Adherence to common writing devices of Arabic appears in the occurrences of the *hamza* in the various forms of a common verb such as *sa'ala*. And the *hamza* appears as regularly written also in the case of another verb such as *amana*.<sup>34</sup> Other specific features recall habits also attested in writing practices of other literature.<sup>35</sup> Further, in other cases, some specific writing features are attested, for instance where the rules and the qur'anic calligraphy would prefer *alif hamza* followed by

31 Fol. 65v (Qur. 21:3–8): *iftarāhu*; fol. 74r (Qur. 21:97–104): *tatalaqqāhum*; fol. 75v (Qur. 22:1–4): *tawallāhu*; fol. 80v (Qur. 22:36–38): *hadākum*; fol. 84v (Qur. 22:78): *ajtabākum, sammākum*.

32 Fol. 71v (Qur. 21:72–77): v. 73: *a'immā*; fol. 69v (Qur. 44–49): *la'in*; fol. 71v (Qur. 21:72–77): *al-khabā'ith*; fol. 68r (Qur. 21:30–35): *dhā'iqā*; fol. 83r (Qur. 22:54–58): *yawma'idhin*; fol. 81v (Qur. 22:41–46): *b'ir*; fol. 77r (Qur. 22:10–14): *la-bi'sa*; fol. 77v (Qur. 22:14–17): *al-šābi'in*; fol. 84v (Qur. 22:72–73): *a-fa-unabbi'ukum*; fol. 79r (Qur. 22:25–28): *al-bā'is*; fol. 82v (Qur. 22:50–54): *ūlā'ika*; fol. 83r (Qur. 22:54–58): *fa-ūlā'ika*.

33 See for ex. fol. 65r (Qur. 21:1–3): *illā*; fol. 66r (Qur. 21:8–14): *a-fa-lā*; fol. 66v (Qur. 21:14–20): *arad-nā, fa-idhā*; fol. 67r (Qur. 21:20–25) *aktharuhum*; fol. 70r (Qur. 21:49–56): *a-fa, ataynā, idh, li-abīhi*; fol. 71r (Qur. 21:65–72): *al-arq*; fol. 71v (Qur. 21:72–77): *awḥaynā, iqāma*; fol. 77r (Qur. 22:10–14): *aṭma'anna; passim*. But *hamza* is also omitted in fol. 65r (Qur. 21:1–3): *ya'tithim*.

34 In the various forms of the verb *sa'ala*: fol. 65v (Qur. 21:3–8); fol. 66r (Qur. 21:8–14); fol. 67r (Qur. 21:20–25); fol. 70v (Qur. 21:57–65). In the various forms of *amana*, such as *yu'minūna*: fol. 68r (Qur. 21:30–35): *yu'minūna*; fol. 83r (Qur. 22:54–58): *yu'minu*; fol. 73v (Qur. 21:91–97): *mu'min*.

35 See for ex. *ru'ūsihim* with the *hamza* above the only *waw*: fol. 71r (Qur. 21:65–72); fol. 78r (Qur. 22:17–21). See also in relation to *shay'* with the *hamza* above the dotted *yā'*: fol. 71r (Qur. 21:65–72); fol. 75v (Qur. 22:1–4); fol. 76r (Qur. 22:4–5); fol. 69v (Qur. 44–49); fol. 77v (Qur. 22:14–17); fol. 79r (Qur. 22:25–28); in the middle on *alif hamza*: fol. 74v (Qur. 21:104–109): *bada'nā*; or cf. fol. 73v (Qur. 21:91–97): *Ya'jūj* and *Ma'jūj* with *hamza* between *alif* and the following letter.

other letters, and the *hamza* is given between the *alif* and the following letter.<sup>36</sup> Eclecticism is also attested along with some specific original solutions, which are in any case a minority and rare.<sup>37</sup> Finally, the expertise of the copyist is attested in the many occurrences where complicated words with *hamza* are written in a correct form, or where, even if not given according to the defective ‘Uthmānic script, are reproduced correctly with a clear acquaintance of what has been copied.<sup>38</sup>

It is not easy to draw some lines from this review and to give reasons for all these peculiarities in the absence of the source or model used. The impression is that most of the features must have come from a manuscript source in *scriptio plena* and that some simplifying attitudes such as not inserting the *hamza* with less problems for the meaning – for instance, in the case of *alif hamza* – could be derived from the writing practice and knowledge of the copyist, who could have selectively decided not to follow all the details of the source. If so, such an attitude further attests to the proficiency of the copyist who had the expertise to select and even, maybe, to write in alternative ways following common practices in the writing of Arabic manuscripts.

One other main element in this direction, and attesting the way the copyist dealt with the Arabic source and his production of a copy, is given by one of the elements of this manuscript, i.e. the use of the sign of the *madda* or a *madda*-like sign on many occasions. This occurs in many cases in the way attested in the manuscript tradition of the Qur’an and in the writing. It is first of all significant that the sign appears where qur’anic script includes it, attesting a perfect awareness of the meaning of the sign by the copyist.<sup>39</sup> This is evident in, for instance, the case of *al-samā’*, which is correctly given with *alif madda* plus *hamza*.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> See for ex. fol. 65v (Qur. 21:3–8): *fa-ta’tūna*; fol. 68v (Qur. 21:35–40): *ta’tihim*; fol. 69r (Qur. 21:40–44): *na’ti*. See also fol. 83r (Qur. 22:54–58): *ta’tihim*; and cf. fol. 68r (Qur. 21:30–35): *a-fa’ayna* with *hamza* above the *yā’*. But cf. where it is written correctly: fol. 79r (Qur. 22:25–28): *ya’tūka, ya’tina*.

<sup>37</sup> Fol. 79r (Qur. 22:25–28): *li-l-ṭā’ifin* with dotted *hamza*, and undotted *hamza* in *qā’imīn*. See for ex. fol. 68v (Qur. 21:35–40): *ra’āka* is written *rā’*, *alif* and *kāf*; fol. 68v (Qur. 21:35–40): *sa-urikum* with *hamza* after *alif* but no *waw*.

<sup>38</sup> See for ex., in relation to the writing of the *hamza*, fol. 69r (Qur. 21:40–44): *ustuhzi’a*; fol. 72r (Qur. 21:77–81): *ba’sikum*; fol. 71r (Qur. 21:65–72): v. 69: *hā’ulā’*; fol. 74r (Qur. 21:97–104): *hā’ulā’*; fol. 80v (Qur. 22:36–38): *dimā’uhā*; fol. 84v (Qur. 22:78): *shuhadā’*; fol. 71v (Qur. 21:72–77): *saw’*; fol. 78v (Qur. 22:22–25): *sawā’an*; fol. 79v (Qur. 22:29–32): *sha’ā’ir*.

<sup>39</sup> Fol. 69v (Qur. 44–49): *al-du’ā’*; fol. 69v (Qur. 44–49): *ḍiyā’*; fol. 76r (Qur. 22:4–5): *nashā’u*; fol. 76v (Qur. 22:5–10): *al-mā’a*; fol. 78r (Qur. 22:17–21): *yashā’u*; fol. 79v (Qur. 22:29–32): *ḥunafā’*.

<sup>40</sup> Fol. 66v (Qur. 21:14–20); fol. 68r (Qur. 21:30–35); fol. 77v (Qur. 22:14–17); fol. 79v (Qur. 22:29–32); fol. 84v (Qur. 22:67–71). See also *al-malā’ika*, with *alif madda* and dotted support of the *hamza*: fol. 74r (Qur. 21:97–104); fol. 84v (Qur. 22:73–78).

Along with this, the use of the *madda* also appears in some occurrences of terms that in ʿUthmānic script are usually given with a *hamza* plus *alif* but where grammatical rules would prescribe a correct use of *alifmadda* as a way to represent both, as in the case of the term *āya/āyāt* (verse/verses) or of other words.<sup>41</sup> This means that, notwithstanding the possible source, the use of the *madda* is grammatically correct and if this was introduced by copyist, it was made with awareness of the rules, notwithstanding those cases where the solutions are alternated and the *madda* may or may not be inserted.<sup>42</sup>

Along with these occurrences, however, there are significant and noteworthy occurrences of the sign of the *madda* in those passages where the writer inserts it instead of a dagger *alif* for common defective writings and instead inserts an *ā*. The manuscript is consistent with this use, which reflects the writing attitude in later manuscripts to add signs on the consonantal ductus according to various styles.<sup>43</sup> What is significant is that in the first treatise of the manuscript, written by the same hand, the *madda* is also used to indicate the dagger *alif*, for instance for *ilāh*, thus qualifying this as a specific formal use whose source or origin is to be ascertained. The function of this *madda* as a substitute of the *alif* of a defective script is evident in many cases; for instance, in one quotation of such a significant term as *al-rahmān* or in some of the more numerous occurrences of *hādihā/hādihī*, where a *madda* is given instead of the dagger *alif*. It also even appears in one case above an

41 Fol. 65v (Qur. 21:3–8): *bi-āya* (and *āmanat*); fol. 68v (Qur. 21:35–40); fol. 72r (Qur. 21:77–81); fol. 73v (Qur. 21:91–97); fol. 77v (Qur. 22:14–17); fol. 82v (Qur. 22:50–54); fol. 83r (Qur. 22:54–58); fol. 84v (Qur. 22:72–73). Another most common attestation is the case of *āmana* and derivatives, see *āmanū* in fol. 77r (Qur. 22:10–14); fol. 77v (Qur. 22:14–17); fol. 78v (Qur. 22:22–25); fol. 80v (Qur. 22:36–38); fol. 82r (Qur. 22:46–50); fol. 83r (Qur. 22:54–58); fol. 84v (Qur. 22:73–78). Cf. also fol. 66r (Qur. 21:8–14): *ākharīn*; fol. 74v (Qur. 21:104–109): *ādiantukum*; fol. 82r (Qur. 22:46–50): *ādhana*; See *atā* and derivatives such as *ataynā*, in fol. 71v (Qur. 21:72–77); fol. 72r (Qur. 21:77–81); fol. 76v (Qur. 22:5–10); fol. 84v (Qur. 22:78). See also the many occurrences of the plural *āliha*: fol. 68v (Qur. 21:35–40): *ālihatatum*; fol. 69r (Qur. 21:40–44): v. 43 *āliha*; fol. 70v (Qur. 21:57–65): *bi-ālihatihi*; fol. 71r (Qur. 21:65–72): *ālihatihim*; fol. 74r (Qur. 21:97–104): *ālihatan*. See also fol. 69r (Qur. 21:40–44): *ābā'ahum*; fol. 70r (Qur. 21:49–56): *ābā'anā*; fol. 77r (Qur. 22:10–14): *al-ākhirā*; fol. 77v (Qur. 22:14–17): *al-ākhirā*.

42 See for ex. the case of the expression *yā ayyuhā*, widely attested in the Qur'an: fol. 84v (Qur. 22:72–73): *yā ayyuhā* with *alifmadda* followed by *hamza*; see also fol. 84v (Qur. 22:73–78); without use of the *alifmadda*: fol. 75v (Qur. 22:1–4); fol. 76r (Qur. 22:4–5) fol. 82r (Qur. 22:46–50). See also the other occurrences of the vocative *yā*: fol. 71r (Qur. 21:65–72): *yā nār kūnī*; see also in the occurrences of *yā waylanā*: fol. 73v (Qur. 21:91–97); fol. 66r (Qur. 21:8–14); fol. 69v (Qur. 44–49);

43 See for ex. the case of *ilāh* which is usually defective in Qur'anic manuscripts and with the dagger *alif* over the corresponding letter, fol. 67r (Qur. 21:20–25): v. 25 *ilāh*; fol. 67v (Qur. 21:25–30): *ilāh*; fol. 73r (Qur. 21:86–91): *ilāh*; fol. 74v (Qur. 21:104–109): *ilāhukum*, *ilāh* (v. 108); fol. 80r (Qur. 22:32–36): *fa-ilāhukum*. The case of the plural *āliha* (see above, n. 41) is different since *alifmadda* at the beginning is an *alif* plus *hamza*.

*alif maqṣūra*.<sup>44</sup> Further, other words include the *madda* in unusual positions, thus attesting to some specific habit by the copyist himself or by the manuscript used as a model.<sup>45</sup> Such use of the *madda* needs further inquiry into manuscript traditions.

Other formal features of the copied manuscript relate to the presence of errors and lapses as a way to check the accuracy of the copyist and the data coming from the formal divisions included in the manuscript.

The number of errors is not too consistent though that would in any case be unusual for a Qur'an copied in a Muslim country. It is not possible to consider these errors as the result of a fault of knowledge, but they are most probably to be ascribed to distraction or less care than one would expect for a production of a written copy of the Qur'an. The errors are connected to substitution of letters,<sup>46</sup> deletion or addition of letters,<sup>47</sup> or other kinds of mistake.<sup>48</sup> Though these are few and in general questions of detail, this is in any case, being a sacred text, significant. One major detail in this regard is that the *basmala* is omitted at the beginning of sura 21 in Arabic while it is given in the translation (fol. 65r). Further, the most significant error appears in fol. 83v, where *min dūna Allāh* is written instead of *min dūnihi*; in this regard, notwithstanding possible derivation from the source, it is clearly a change prompted by the copyist according to sense and connected to his personal knowledge of Arabic.<sup>49</sup>

The errors in the vocalization, which can be easily considered as faults by the copyist but that, at the same time, can constitute alternative readings or specific fea-

44 *Al-rahmān*: fol. 67v (Qur. 21:25–30) v. 26; cf. also fol. 69v (Qur. 44–49): Hārūn. As regards *hādhā/hādhihi*, the *madda* is above the *hā'*, see fol. 65v (Qur. 21:3–8); fol. 67r (Qur. 21:20–25); fol. 68v (Qur. 21:35–40); fol. 70r (Qur. 21:49–56); fol. 73v (Qur. 21:91–97); fol. 78r (Qur. 22:17–21): *hādhāni*. See also the significant case of *al-ṣalāt* written *ṣ.l.w.t.* with *madda* above the *waw*: fol. 81r (Qur. 22:38–41). fol. 74r (Qur. 21:97–104): *ūlā'ika*; fol. 69r (Qur. 21:40–44): *hā'ulā'*; instead of a dagger *alif* even above an *alif maqṣūra*: fol. 74v (Qur. 21:104–109): *yūhā*.

45 See fol. 67r (Qur. 21:20–25): *dūnihi* with *madda* above the *nūn*; fol. 77r (Qur. 22:10–14): v. 11: *al-khusrān*; cf. also fol. 84r (Qur. 22:63–67): *bi-idhnihi* with *madda* above the *nūn*.

46 See fol. 66r (Qur. 21:8–14): *al-mushrifīn* instead of *al-musrifīn*; fol. 67r (Qur. 21:20–25): *yaqtarūna* instead of *yaftarūna*; fol. 70v (Qur. 21:57–65): *al-zālimīn* instead of *al-zālimūn*; fol. 71r (Qur. 21:65–72): v. 69: *kūnū* instead of *kūnī*; fol. 82r (Qur. 22:46–50): v. 48 *akhadhñāhā* instead of *akhadhtuhā*.

47 Fol. 72r (Qur. 21:77–81): *'allamnāhu* missing the *-hu*; fol. 73v (Qur. 21:91–97): v. 94 *al-ṣāliḥīn* instead of *al-ṣāliḥāt*; fol. 75v (Qur. 22:1–4): *wa-tarā al-nās* without an *alif*; fol. 83r (Qur. 22:54–58): *la-hādī* instead of *la-hādi*.

48 See for ex. in fol. 70v (Qur. 21:57–65): *tāllāh* with one more *alif*; fol. 73r (Qur. 21:86–91): last line, the word *Maryam* is inserted above the ductus of the last line (see Bobzin, “Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada e la sua traduzione della sura 21 (“dei profeti”),” 174); fol. 76r (Qur. 22:4–5): *mūnkum* is written detached: *min + kum*; fol. 79r (Qur. 22:25–28): *bawwa'nā* has an *alif* attached to *-nā* as a *lām*, *al-rāki'* (though with a *ḍamma* above the *rā'*) instead of *al-rukka'*.

49 Fol. 83v (Qur. 22:58–63): *min dūna Allāh* instead of *min dūnihi*.

tures of the source used as reference deserve specific attention; they are quite a few, though insisting on small details that confirm the general accuracy of the copying of text but, at the same time, are eccentric in relation to the Muslim production of copies of the Qur'an which are in general more accurate.<sup>50</sup> In terms of accuracy, other signs around the ductus attest to detailed attention to what in the source reflects the peculiarities of the Arabic Qur'an. Such an attitude highlights how this was received in the production of this manuscript by the copyist, who was evidently aware of all formal devices but could probably permit himself less attention and revision since the text was produced for a non-Muslim public rather than for "proper" readers.<sup>51</sup>

The last point to be dealt with and that defines the features of a Qur'anic text arises from the divisions in verses inserted in the text or those liturgical divisions also added in the text or in margins. The division of the verses marking their beginning and end is given, adding to the consonantal text something like a large dot written in read with a small tail similar to a thick comma added to the text. There is no specific space for this, which is usually added above the line as it is also common in some Qur'anic manuscripts, thus marking the fact that the divisions do not belong to the core of the sacred text and evidencing that they may have been added later on. Only in rare cases are other signs inserted: three small red dots inserted in the ductus.<sup>52</sup>

Such versification includes some specific and unusual divisions. Further, the divisions indicated are further complicated by the fact that the sign of the tens of verses added to the margin of the text does not always come after ten verses as indicated in the text itself. This could show that such a division, taken from the original, was not fully followed and checked with the added division of the single verses.

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50 Fol. 66r (Qur. 21:8–14): *masākinikum* instead of *-kum*; fol. 67v (Qur. 21:25–30): *jahannama* instead of *jahannamu*; fol. 69r (Qur. 21:40–44): *al-'umr* instead of *al-'umur*; fol. 69v (Qur. 44–49): *al-qīsti* instead of *al-qīsta*; fol. 71v (Qur. 21:72–77): v. 76 *min qabli* instead of *min qablu*; fol. 75v (Qur. 22:1–4): v. 2: *murđi'atun* instead of *murđi'atin*; fol. 78v (Qur. 22:22–25): *lu'lu'an* without final *alif* but with a *tanwīn*; fol. 79r (Qur. 22:25–28): *tushrik* with one more *sukūn*, a *sukūn* on the *alif* of *ism*; fol. 84v (Qur. 22:73–78): *da'fa* instead of *da'ufa*; fol. 77r (Qur. 22:10–14): v. 11: *khasira* vocalized *khasr*; fol. 79v (Qur. 22:29–32): *ajtanab* with a *fatha* above the *alif*. Some mistakes in vocalization and other ones had already been brought to attention by Bobzin, who confirms the severe judgment by Levi Della Vida as regards the translation and indicating the problem in some misunderstanding of letters, see Bobzin, "Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada e la sua traduzione della sura 21 ("dei profeti")," 174.

51 See for ex. fol. 65r (Qur. 21:1–3): *al-najwā* with *tashdīd* above the *nūn*; fol. 69v (Qur. 21:44–49): *al-ṣummu* with the two *tashdīds*; fol. 75r (Qur. 21:110–112): v. 112: *ḍamma* under the *alif* di *uḥkum* since it is connected to the preceding *rabbī* (does it come from recitation?); fol. 82r (Qur. 22:46–50): *maghfira* with a *tashdīd* on the *mīm*: cf. also fol. 79v (Qur. 22:29–32): *wa-l-yattawwafū* is perfectly vocalized.

52 Fol. 66r (Qur. 21:8–14): after *al-wa'd*; fol. 84v (Qur. 22:67–71): v. 67. And cf. fol. 69r (Qur. 21:40–44): v. 41 *mā kānū bi-hi*, with a circle above *bihi*.

If related to the division according to the 1924 Cairo edition, which, as we know, does not reflect any particular standard, some different attestations are included, while some divisions are missing, reflecting that complex condition that appears in many manuscripts of every age and for which the 1924 Cairo edition is simply used for sake of comparison.<sup>53</sup> The factors of this situation are well known and related to the inference of the traditionally identified differing schools, specific different traditions not attested in exegetical literature and in some cases specific choices by the single manuscript also connected to lapses or other reasons. The extent of this variability and the exact reflection in late Medieval and modern manuscripts is still to be analysed.<sup>54</sup>

Along with the signs marking the division in verses, the manuscript also includes two other kinds of division. One is the indication of the sequence of every ten verses (given as HAXRA in the Latin text), given in margin of the Arabic in red and in larger script (*‘ashar*) and, further, the other is the indication in the Latin text as HISBI, and in red in the margin of the Arabic text, being the indication of the liturgical division in parts (sing. *ḥizb*, pl. *aḥzāb*), as was already indicated in the introduction, where Moncada mentioned such divisions.<sup>55</sup>

However, such divisions evidence some inconsistencies. First of all, the indication of tens is not always consistent and appears after a sequence of a different number of verses according to the division given in this manuscript and also differently from the reference division in the 1924 Cairo division.<sup>56</sup> Further, as regards the liturgical division, the manuscript indicates as HIZBI what is not a proper indication of the end/beginning of the *ḥizb* but of half a *ḥizb*, which is also indicated in some manuscripts. According to the most common divisions, the two suras 21 and

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53 Missing divisions: fol. 66r (Qur. 21:8–14): v. 13; fol. 70v (Qur. 21:57–65): v. 60 after Ibrāhīm, v. 62 after Ibrāhīm; fol. 71r (Qur. 21:65–72): v. 66 after *yaḍurrukum*, v. 69 after Ibrāhīm; fol. 76v (Qur. 22:5–10): v. 9 after *al-ḥariq*; fol. 78r (Qur. 22:17–21): v. 20 after *al-julūd*. Added divisions: fol. 66v (Qur. 21:14–20): v. 18 after *zāhiq*; fol. 78v (Qur. 22:22–25): v. 25 after *al-bād*; fol. 69v (Qur. 44–49): after *shay’an*, after *ataynā bi-hā*; fol. 84v (Qur. 22:78): adding divisions after *min qablu*, after *al-nās*, and after *al-zakwa*.

54 The identification by Bobzin, “Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada e la sua traduzione della sura 21 (“dei profeti”),” 173–174 of the division given as “kufic” with some variants reflect some of the features of such division but is a mere classification according to exegetical tradition and which does not consider such a common variability in this regard attested in the manuscript tradition. According to this, it is not possible to define in terms of more or less closeness to a model to judge the accuracy by the copyist.

55 See above, n. 12.

56 See fol. 69v (Qur. 44–49): *‘ashara* at v. 47, 9 verses after the preceding indication of ten verses; fol. 70v (Qur. 21:57–65): at v. 58, after 11 verses; fol. 71r (Qur. 21:65–72): at v. 71, after *li-l-‘ālamīn* after 8 verses only; fol. 73v (Qur. 21:91–97): v. 91 after 11 verses; fol. 78v (Qur. 22:22–25): at v. 22; fol. 84v (Qur. 22:73–78): at v. 73, after 11 verses.

22 constitute the thirty-third and thirty-fourth *hizbs* and the middle of each *hizb* is in the middle of the sura. As we might expect from a transcription of this kind, the *hizbs* at the beginning and at the end of the suras are not given but only the reference to the half of *hizb* is given in the middle of the two suras. In this case, the mention of the HISBI (Fig. 3, fol. 81v) in the Latin text is accompanied by an Arabic



Fig. 3: BAV MS Urb. Lat. 1384, fol. 81v.

word in the margin which is difficult to detect. It looks like *khapb/khabs*, which should correspond to an indication of half of the *hizb*.

Apart from some unclear details, the manuscript as such is not different from other late Medieval productions. The impression is that, along with a significant reference to the source model and consequent reception of verse and liturgical divisions, attention to the consistence of the divisions along with the corresponding liturgical divisions was not significant. It looks as if the reproduction of a copy, probably including some lapses, was accompanied by indications in the margins whose exact reference to the versification was not cross-checked. It appears that to reproduce the signs rather than making them useful and corresponding was the main aim in this.

## 5 Conclusion

Errors, inaccuracies and the reduced number of the suras copied in the sample offered cannot diminish the significance of such an operation. At the end of the 15th century, Federico of Montefeltro commissioned Raimondo Moncada, a Jewish convert, to produce an edition and translation, even if partial, of the Qur'an with a display of resources and the involvement of more than one person. The illuminated and precious manuscript implied the work by at least a general editor such as Moncada also acting as translator, an artist producing the illuminations and decorations, a copyist of the Latin and copyist of the Arabic. The text of the Arabic produced by this copyist involved a relation with the editor and with a source as model. If the text as such cannot be considered as fully a product of the Western activity of copying and editing the Arabic Qur'an it falls short of it. It attests that for such a luxury product in Europe it was necessary to recruit a first-language speaker who produced an Arabic excerpt of the Qur'an of high quality.

In any case, whatever was its quality in relation to previous and later works of this type made by Europeans, what is significant for us about all this work is that the two suras translated appear in the manuscript, preserving them with the Arabic text on their side, thus producing the first known example of edition of the Arabic Qur'an given with its translation that is extant. We know from historical sources that Moncada also projected or at least announced the project of a polyglot Qur'an including the Arabic along with its translation into various languages, but this never happened. What is attested, i.e., this manuscript, is in any case relevant and a unique example of an interest in producing the Arabic Qur'an in Europe through the joint contributions of supposed experts in translating, editing and the contribution of an unknown Arab or Muslim copyist.

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