

ABSTRACT

The Atlantic slave trade lasted from the early 16th century to the middle of the 19th century, when more than 12.5 million Africans were shipped across the Atlantic, with 45 percent taken to Brazil. This project aims to shed light on the collective and spiritual resistance of some of the enslaved in the Americas through the study and analysis of recently discovered manuscripts.

METHODOLOGY

The manuscripts were written in Maghrebi script, which was common in North and West Africa. In the analysis of the manuscripts, a Qur'an written in the Maghrebi script was consulted to determine misspellings and grammatical errors. Other errors were noted as well, such as the determination of whether the chapter is Meccan or Medinan. The analysis, therefore, includes the transcription of the verses, notes on the script, misspelling and English translation of the verses using The Study Qur'an (Seyyed Hossein Nasr et al., 2015) [Figure 4].

BACKGROUND

On 25th January 1835, African Muslim slaves and freedmen organized the important slave uprising in the port town of Salvador, Bahia in Brazil. Unlike other towns in Brazil, many of the enslaved population in Bahia came from the Bight of Benin.

The manuscripts examined here were taken off the bodies of three martyrs and were subsequently deposited in the Instituto Histórico Geográfico Brasileiro in Brazil, Biblioteca Pública Municipal do Porto in Portugal, and the Bibliothèque Municipale Armand Salacrou - Le Havre in France.

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PAGES OF RESISTANCE:
ANALYZING MUSLIM AFRICAN MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE AFTERMATH OF THE MALÊ SLAVE UPRISING 1835

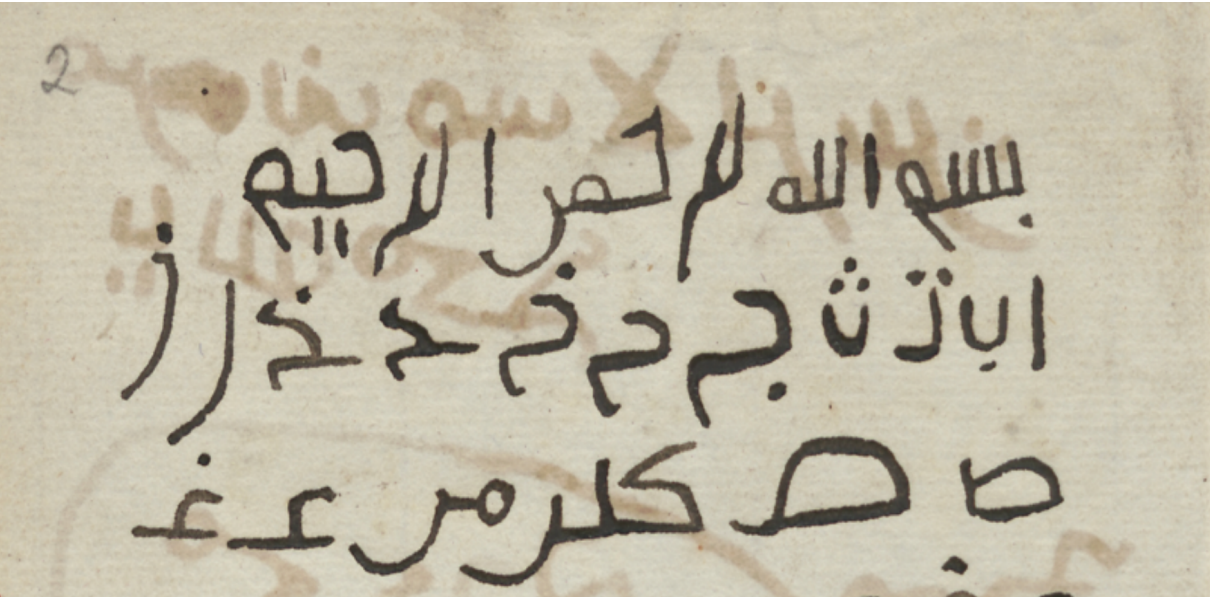


FIG. 1 DEPICTING LEARNING THE ARABIC ALPHABET.: [MS 1223 04]

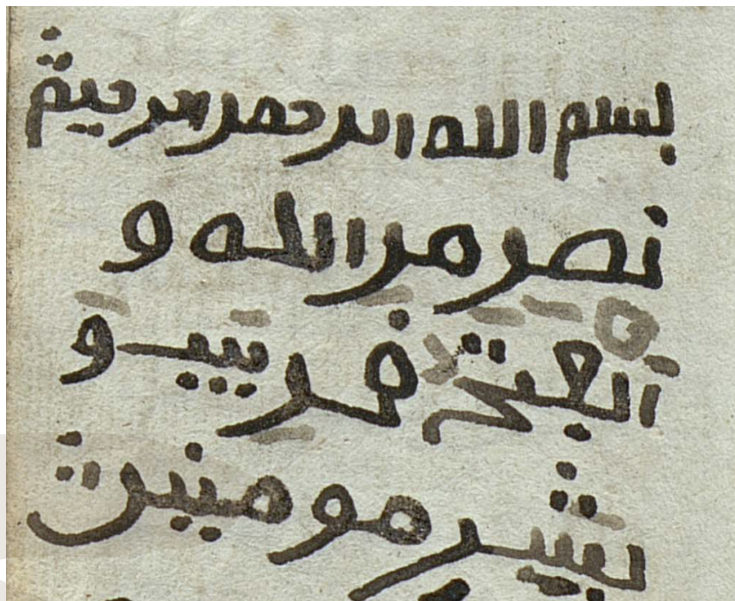


FIG. 2 MS 556 95

“In the Name of God, The Compassionate, The Merciful Help from God and a victory nigh. So give glad tidings to the believers.” [61:13]

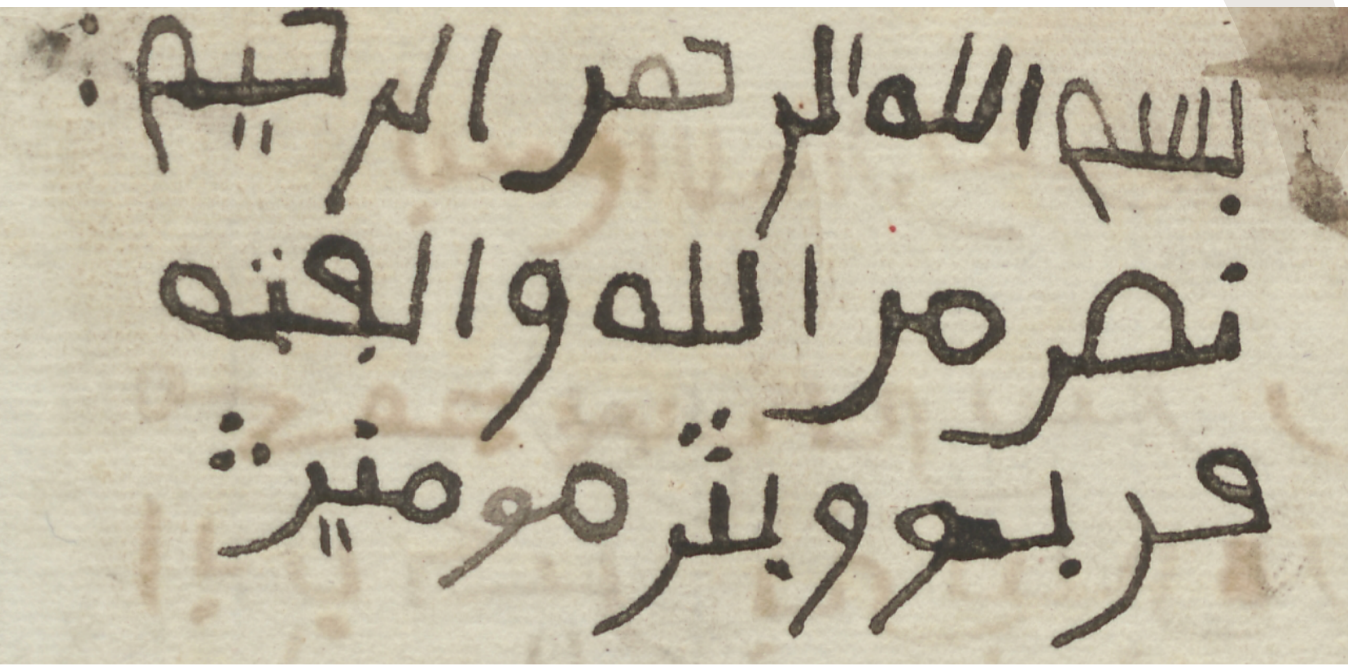


FIG 3. MS 1223 05



MS 1223 12

الناس مدنية (مكية) وهي ست آية
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ملك الذي، الله (الله) الذي، من ثم الوسواس الخناس (الذي يؤسوس في صدور الناس) من الجنة والناس. سورة العصر (الفتحة) مكية وهي سبع آية بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، الحمد لله رب العالمين (المؤمن)، الرحمن الرحيم، ملك يوم الدين (أيك تعبد

Notes:
The author mistakenly wrote the Al-Nās chapter is a Medinan chapter; it is a Meccan Chapter.
The name of the Opening chapter, *al-Fātiḥah*, is illegible but does not seem to resemble the name at all. The closest reading would be *Al-Nās*, which is the 110th chapter of the Qur'an.
There are missing end of verse markers (pointed at in with an empty closed brackets) at three positions on this page: end of verses 114-4, 114-5, and 1-4.

Notes on script:
There is a correction being made in the second-last word of the last sentence, a *gh* that was previously forgotten was added underneath the word *ghak*.

Notes on Writing:
Misspelling of the word *slale* missing the *hameza*.
Misspelling of the word *al-alamim*: missing an *alif*.
“*Al-Nās* [Mankind] Medinan and it is six verses.
In the Name of God, The Compassionate, The Merciful Say, “I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the God of mankind, from the evil of the stealthy whisperer () who whispers into the breasts of mankind () from jinn and mankind. [End of *Surah*]. *Surah Al-Nās* (illegible) [The Opening] Meccan and it is seven verses In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Praise be to God lord of the worlds, the Compassionate the Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment () thee we worship

MS 1223 | MS 556

MS 1223 Porto was selected for this research project. The manuscript consists of 53 pages, with 5 pages written in ajami (African languages written in the Arabic script) and the rest in Arabic. The manuscript consists of the 30th juz' (parts) of the Qur'an, spanning from the 87th to the 114th chapter.

FINDINGS

Through an analysis of the writing style, grammar, punctuation and spelling of the text, it is possible to deduct biographical information about the author. It is likely that the author was a student, learning Arabic and the Qur'an under the supervision of a teacher. This was deduced from the fact that the author wrote the Arabic alphabet at the end of the book [Figure 1]. There are also signs of corrections that were made, either by the student or by the teacher [Figure 4].

One interesting finding of the research is the author's choice of verse 61:31 to begin the book. The choice of this specific verse had to have been intentional. It is from the 28th section of the Qur'an, 61st chapter, 13th verse which promises Believers a victory from God and a near opening. While the manuscript covers the 30th section of the Qur'an in order, yet the author choose to include this verse. Interestingly, this verse was also found in MS 556 from Le Havre [Figures 2 and 3].