binding phase; exterior covering of red leather (goat) over strawboard; blind tooling with yellow and black overprinting.

140mm × 102mm
Oriental Institute A18770
Palestine, late 19th century A.D.

Upper and Lower Covers: All tooling is in blind with the major elements of the design being overprinted in alternating black and yellow paint. A frame of reverse S-shaped stamps is defined by double fillets. At the center of the inner panel is a heavily-pressed panel stamp of scalloped mandorla shape. Its outline is emphasized by a single fillet from which radiates a semicircular shape in six-petalled rosette groups. Groups of three spires with longer stems are formed at the extensions of the mandorla outline. Beyond the middle element of these finials, against the bordering fillets at head and tail, are tooling pairs of the floral or twelve-petalled rosette stamps. Single stamps are likewise tooling at the corresponding points on the horizontal axis.

The central panel stamp has a well-organised bismirical pattern of interweaving petal forms growing from a central lozenge. The compartments formed within the design are marked by dots.

The triangular corners of the inner panel are demarcated by double fillets and contain a central impression of a square format stamp forming a cross-shaped motif, on either side of which is a round stamp containing a triangle centred by a dot. Projecting into the field of the inner panel from the fillets defining the corners are triangular configurations of the twelve-petalled rosette stamps in diminishing rows. On either side of the mandorla against the frame on the fore-edge and spine sides are placed two impressions of a round stamp containing a six-pointed star centred by a dot.

Spine: The spine is untooled.

Fore-edge Flap: Along the length of the fore-edge flap is tooled a row of smaller versions of the cross-shaped stamp found centring the corners of the upper and lower covers. The row is defined by double fillets and the stamps are painted alternating black and yellow.

Envelope Flap: The borders of the envelope flap and the corners of its inner panel are tooled similarly to the corresponding areas of the upper and lower covers, though the triangular groups of twelve-petalled rosettes are smaller and the corners contain the smaller version of the cross-shaped stamp flanked by two of the rosette stamps.

At the point of the flap is a small plant-shaped panel stamp, placed to align with the horizontal axis with a mandorla-shaped outlining fillet from which radiate floral sprigs as in the central motifs of the upper and lower covers. Against the bordering fillet on the fore-edge side of the inner panel are tooling single impressions of the round stamp containing the six-pointed star. The panel stamp depicts a small plant with sharply elongated leaves growing from a central stem. At the top of the stem is a closed calyx. Dots flank the plant.

M. Khek. [1984], p. 13.

92 A round manuscript: "'Ajlūn, Pardīnīmeh, ca. 1000 H./1600 A.D., textblock paper burnished European hand-made laid (double-headed eagle watermark); endsheets paper burnished European hand-made laid (watermark, maker's initials NTM); link stitch sewn at two sewing stations with fine rose-coloured cotton thread; endband stations also may have been used as part of the main sewing as they reveal the same thread as well as the silk endband anchorage thread; Islamic endbands of fine yellow silk (both decorative and anchorage threads); doublure of yellow/orange-dyed European hand-made laid over paper hinges; green silk tabby fore-edge hinge; earlier sewing end anchoring holes indicate that this is a second, and possibly third, binding phase; spine and fore-edge exterior covering of red/brown leather (goat); upper and lower boards and envelope flap exterior covering of Turkish mottled paper (over pasteboards) with a pattern of green leafy stalks with three- and four-petalled flowers alternating indigo and rosecoloured in orange on a light yellow background.

100mm × 100mm
Oriental Institute A12075
Turkey, 19th century A.D.

93 A round manuscript: "Majmū'a and Lyf'ya from the Khamsah of Nizami; copied 1271 A.H./1854 A.D.; exterior covers painted leather; paper over paper pastesheets.

187mm × 119mm
Oriental Institute A12075
Persia, second half of 19th century A.D.

Upper and Lower Covers: Upper and lower covers are similarly decorated. Each has a black painted background. Gold-painted fillets define an outer border and an inner frame containing double rows of diamond-shaped dashes painted in gold. The inner defining fillets in each corner form small square cover compartments. The wider main frame has a succession of five-petalled rosettes painted in pink and red against a bed of scattered green brush dashes. Between the rosettes are painted double bud-like dashes in pink and red.

The inner panel has a central cluster of two large peony-like flowers, one seen from the front with pink petals with red tips, the other viewed from its base with white petals becoming tan at their tips. Close to these is a cluster of floral elements in orange pink and red with interior peach- or pomegranate-like forms. Across the remainder of the panel, in association with a variety of leaves in sprays and clumps, are scattered loosely roses, cartouches and tulips. Smaller groups of fruit or bud forms are concentrated towards the corners of the panel. The panel shows a pleasing variation from ivory to deep pink colouration and from pale yellow through olive to dark green.

94 A round manuscript: Persian: an album of concertina paper leaves joined in a structure with textile hinges; leaves framed by painted margins (contemporary with the decorated covers); with specimens of the calligraphy of two scribes, of whom one can be identified as Dervish 'Abd-al-Majid 'Abd-al-Majid (surname, Khani) (d. 1185 A.H./1774 A.D.), 16 pages of his work are dated ranging from 1171 A.H./1757 A.D. to 1185 A.H./1771 A.D.; following every two pages of the Shi-'ita style from the pen of Dervish 'Abd-al-Majid there are two other pages in an unexpectedly excellent style of calligraphy, two of these are dated 1160 A.H./1551 A.D. but the name of the scribe needs to be identified; exterior and interior covers of painted leather work over paper pastesheets.

240mm × 137mm
Oriental Institute A12100
Persia, late 18th century A.D.
COLOUR PLATES N, O.
Upper and Lower Covers (Exterior) On the paper pasteboards a red lacquer ground has been laid which includes metallic particles of tin or silver, or possibly gold, to give a scintillating effect. Over this are painted the basic forms of birds and flora of the inner panel and floral frame. The flowers of the main panel have their petals dimensionally expressed by exploiting the puckering of the paint layer at the edges as it dries. Over these basic shapes are painted the details of the forms. The black background of the outer border and inner frame are then painted with their decorative details and defining lines added in gold paint. The whole cover is then painted with a clear lacquer.

The upper and lower covers are similarly decorated but the lower is reversed in composition, with the bird on the left hand side. A floral frame is bordered on both sides by a row, defined by gold lines, of gold floral motifs in staggered compartments painted on black. The frame is painted with white full-petalled roses and associated leaves which alternate with full olive/green and blue flowers also with associated leaves. The background is marked by tiny gold tendrils.

The inner panel shows a bird perched on a leafy rose bush. Its painting has delicate tonal transitions moulding its form from light to dark along its head, neck, wings and tail. The rose bush bears two large multi-petalled flowers, one drawing a core of golden stamens and the other is in profile. There are also three buds in varying stages of development. On one of the leaves a delicate butterfly alights. A white carnation and its buds balance the bird.

Upper and Lower Covers (Interior) The interior of the covers have thin, white gesso-like ground overpainted in vermilion. A fine design of small decorative elements in contrast to the bound-ness of the exterior, is painted in gold. The borders are painted in similar technique to those of the exterior covers and the whole is varnished with clear lacquer.

We are indebted to Professor Rehmat Mousavi of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago, for inspecting the manuscript and determining the dates of the calligraphers.

At the point of the envelope flap is scribed a round medallion demarcated, as are its adjacent panels, by tripartite fillets which leave a perimeter band of untooled leather. The roundel is occupied by a geometric interlace, formed by double fillets, whose outer form is a Solomon's seal developing from an octagram centred on a six-point star. The centre star and the outer compartments of the Solomon’s seal are tooled with dots and hatched arcs. The flanking panels are filled with a repeat pattern of the hatched X-shaped stamps with interstitial dots. These dots are gold tooled in the central areas of the panels to form diamond configurations.

Pasteboards The paste holding together the manuscript fragments, of which the pasteboard of this flap were made, has decayed so that they no longer adhere together. This has permitted examination of their text.

Dr. Elton Daniel has kindly made the following observations:

The text of the fragments, ignoring those which are not legible or too brief for analysis, has to do with the subject of the prayer ritual in Islam. Some fragments deal with fixing the times for the required prayers; others with the manner of praying; still others with the tone of voice to be used, the content of the prayer, etc. One fragment also deals with the formula for the call to prayer, the manner of its delivery, and the variations permitted in it.

The text is thus clearly a work on fiqh (jurisprudence/religious instruction). The fragments are either part of a chapter on prayer (ahi al-salat) or, perhaps, an independent treatise on the subject of prayer (risala fi-l-salat). There are frequent references to the opinions on this subject of Abu Hanifa, al-Shafi’i and Malik b. Anas, among others. Other indications make it clear that this particular example of fiqh comes from the Maliki school. The great Malik b. Anas, is mentioned in a marginal note on one of the fragments.

Since it has not been possible to make extensive collations of the text with
published (and still less unpublished) works of Mālikī fiqh, it is impossible to assign a definite title or author to this work. The author makes frequent reference to information provided by his colleagues (aḥbab). One fragment contains the phrase "the Qāḍī Abī 'Abd Allah al-Ḥabīb told this to me." The city of Qaryawān (Kairouan) is mentioned and one may suppose that the author lived or worked in that center of Maliki learning.

Finally, one may note that the handwriting of the copyist appears to be consistent with that of someone from North Africa and could perhaps be dated 9th century A.H./16th century A.D., although admittedly such palaeographic evidence is not always certain or conclusive.

95 A MANUSCRIPT by Al-Qāsim ibn al-Mā'īn

The copy was completed on 23 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1008 (A.D. 1603). The ms. was either among the possessions of, or was copied from a ms. at the time in the possession of, Shams ibn Ṣālihi.

The work seems to come to an end, fol. 49, with chapter XII (Ṣawā'id al-bīr). There is, however, an appendix of more chapters concluding with the ms.'s own addition on what to eat and drink in each month of the year so as to be in good health (fol. 52) and other practical notations. From fol. 49 to end, poetry is interspersed.

56 fols. 142 mm × 95 mm; 17 lines to page. Small, Buyid or Buyid script. Paper probably made in Egypt. New owners and considerable damage. A stone-built building without a stone-built building.

96 A MANUSCRIPT by Al-Qāsim ibn al-Mā'īn

The work is a fragmentary record of a pilgrimage to Mecca, written in Arabic and consisting of a few pages of manuscript.

97 A MANUSCRIPT by Al-Qāsim ibn al-Mā'īn

The work is a fragmentary record of a pilgrimage to Mecca, written in Arabic and consisting of a few pages of manuscript.

98 A FRAGMENT of the 1000 Nights: the first two folios of the earliest-known ms. of the Alf Lailah, or Arabic Nights stories. Written on paper is Kufic-naskhi script, it consists of the title-page and first page of text, preceded by a blank flyleaf. The title-page reads:

99 A BOOK OF TALES FROM A Thousand Nights. There is neither strength nor power in God the Highest, the Mightiest
On the next page is the beginning of the first story.

This much-tattered fragment was used as scrap paper in the 9th century A.D., with numerous scribblings and drawings on the flyleaf and margins. These include pious phrases, the draft of a letter, and five drafts of a legal formula written by one Ahmad ibn Malaffa, and dated by him the last of Safar of the year six and sixty and two (hundred), corresponding to 20th October, 879 A.D.

Apart from being the earliest-known copy of the Arabian Nights, the fragment is also the earliest dated example of a paper book outside the Far East.

N. Abbott, (1938); pp. 129-164.

99 A quattuor; three hundred and twenty-five folios, the text written on paper in zilijah khufi, with title-pages in ornamental Kufic script. The title-page, two following pages and two pages at the end are elaborately decorated in gold, red, blue, green, black and white. The original upper and lower covers and flap of the binding, covered with blind tooled and gilded painted leather, have survived, but the whole volume bears later repairs in light brown leather. Marzit used the design on the covers for the covers of his own work, Arabic Palaeography, published in Cairo in 1905.

420mm × 310mm
Oriental Institute A12068
Dr. R. Marzit
Egypt, 15th century A.D.

N. Abbatt, (1938); pp. 86-87; Pl. XXX-XXX1.
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