ITEM 7

**Bifolium in 'New Style' Kufic**

**NEAR EAST, 10TH CENTURY AD**

7.5 x 11 cm

A bifolium bearing verses 17–20 and 64–68 of the surah Hud (xx). The text was written on vellum, with six lines of script to the page. The script is a 'New Style' Kufic hand of the type categorized by Déroche as no.iii. Verses are unmarked. Diacritics are in the form of short strokes, written at an angle, and vowels are indicated by a system of red dots. Ruled lines used as a guide by the calligrapher are still visible on either side of the text.

ITEM 8

**Bifolium in 'New Style' Kufic**

**PERHAPS IRAN, 11TH OR 12TH CENTURY AD**

16.2 x 11 cm

On this bifolium verses 130–133 and 147–149 of the surah al-An'am (v) were written in a 'New Style' Kufic script of the type categorized by Déroche as no.i. There are six lines to the page, and the distance between the lines is 1.7 cm, and the height of the alif is 1.5 cm. Diacritics are in the form of dots, while vowels are marked using the archaic system of red dots. The verse marker on folio 1a has an outline in the form of a double circle, while the centre is occupied by a large gold dot surrounded by two red and two green dots. The manuscript was copied on a deep-brown laid paper.
A page bearing part of verse 82 from the surah al-Mā' idah (v.), written in one of the varieties of the script called the "New Style" by Déroche (1992, pp.132–137) but previously known as Eastern Kufic and, with even less justification, as Qarnatian Kufic. The page comes from one of the best-known copies of the Qur’an in "New Style" Kufic, parts of which are found dispersed in many collections. The largest portion, which contains most of Part 16, is in the Topkapi Palace Library, Istanbul (see Saint Laurent 1989). The manuscript was originally produced in thirty parts, and this page seems to be the penultimate folio of Part 6. The last two lines of verse 82 would have been found on the page opposite, and they will have concluded with an illuminated verse marker, an offset from which can be seen in the bottom right corner of the text panel on this page.

The script is part of the group classified by Déroche as NS.1, a monumental script employed from the 10th to 13th centuries. It is distinguished by the use of exceptionally tall vertical strokes (alif and lām measure 4 cm), which are positioned in close proximity, and by some letter forms, such as the letter kāf in the word as-sūrā in the first line on this page. In this example the text, which in the main body of the manuscript was written in four lines to the page, has been reduced to two lines. Vowel signs were marked in red, the sign for sukun in blue, and the signs for tashkil and alif maddah in silver, which has now oxidised. A sepiu line follows the outline of both the groups of letters and of these orthoptic signs, and the areas outside these lines are filled with magnificent palmette scrolls, reserved in a field worked in sepiu with tiny spirals. The combination of text and palmette scrolls fills an area measuring 11.5 x 14.5 cm, which is defined by bands containing two types of gold scrollwork on a sepiu ground. These bands also enclose horizontal panels above and below the text, which are filled with palmette scrolls reserved in a field of sepiu spirals. The upper panel is slightly narrower than the lower panel, and the filler patterns therefore differ.

Due to their position on the outside of the manuscript, the leaves containing the end of the text were vulnerable to damage, which may explain why this page was separated from the recto of the leaf by splitting, and restored. In the process two half-medallions originally located in the outer, left-hand margin, attached to the top and bottom of the text frame (compare Atil 1990, p.113), were inserted in the top left corner of the page.
ITEM 10

Tāj al-Tarājim fi Taṣfīr al-Qur‘ān li’l-A‘jīm
IRAN, 12TH OR 13TH CENTURY AD
128 FOLIOS, 38 X 30.5 CM

A rare and important manuscript containing one section of the Persian translation and commentary on the Qur’anic text by ʿImād al-Dīn Abūʾl-Muzaffar Tahir ibn Muhammad al-Ṭabari, called Shāfiʿir (d.A.D. 1078). The author was a protégé of the Seljuq vizier Nizam al-Mulk and the author of a work in Arabic on the sects of Islam. His translation is one of the earliest of the Qur’anic text into Persian, having been preceded by that of al-Ṭabari (d.A.D. 923), prepared for the Samanid ruler Mansur ibn Nuh (a.n. 961–976); another by an anonymous contemporary of al-Ṭabari; and a third version by al-Surabadi, who lived during the time of the Seljuk ruler Alp Arslan (A.D. 1063–1072). The only other early fragment of al-Ṭabari’s work so far discovered is in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Richard 1989, i, pp. 39–40).

The manuscript was written on a thick, cream laid paper, and it originally began with a magnificent double-page illumination inscribed with a title in ‘New Style’ Kufic, the left-hand half of which survives (folio 1a). The words in the centre are al-thālīth, written horizontally, and ʾiṣṣa wa-dallā, written vertically. The first may indicate that Part Two of al-Ṭabari’s work began with this volume, while the second shows that there was a reference to God on the page opposite. The surrounding illumination is in the style current in the Iranian world before the Mongol invasions. It consists of a panel measuring 24.5 x 18.5 cm accompanied by a peaked disc 5 cm in diameter, which protrudes into the margin in the centre of the left-hand side. The panel has an inner border of gold interface over blue, 1.5 cm wide, and a narrower outer border composed of a repeating petal motif. The main field is divided into compartments by curvilinear strapwork based around two almost complete circles. The compartments are filled with palmette scrolls with large leaves and blossoms, in gold on blue, gold and red grounds. The design derives ultimately from the frontispieces of earlier Kufic Qur’ān manuscripts. The marginal disc has the same borders, while the palmette scrollwork that fills the centre is in gold on a red ground.

The headings throughout the manuscript were written in a script with features of thulūḥ and kufi in horizontal bands illuminated in the same style as the frontispiece accompanied by a palmette disc in the margin. At the top of folio 1b there is a heading, al-sahi / min taṣfīr / Tāj al-Tarājim / mans’ Kalam Allāh Ta’ālā indicating that the manuscript is volume 7 of al-Ṭabari’s work. It is followed by an introduction to
the surah Maryam (xxi), in Persian, which in turn is followed by the heading and bismallah of the surah itself. The introduction gives the place of revelation, the verse count according to various traditions, the numbers of words and letters in the surah, and Hadith relating to it, relayed on the authority of Ibn Abu Ka’b. This and the similar introductions that precede each surah, form part of the commentary, which was written throughout in a fine, fluid nashīh hand. The bismallah, on the other hand, was written in the imposing muhaqqaq hand used for the Qur’ānic text and is punctuated by a disc containing a leaf form in gold and the word āyāh written in gold ‘New Style’ Kufic, all on a red ground. Discs of this type mark the end of each Qur’ānic verse, while each tenth verse is indicated in the margin by an illuminated device inscribed ‘asr, and each fifteenth by a smaller device inscribed khamshah. The beginning of juz’ 17 (folio 31b, at the beginning of surah xxi), and of juz’ 18 (folio 118b, at the beginning of surah xxiii), and a prostration point within the text (folio 117a) are indicated by inscriptions in the margins in gold ‘New Style’ Kufic.

The mixture of calligraphic styles on folio 1b prefigures the complex layout seen in the rest of the manuscript, created to accommodate three different texts. The Qur’ānic text itself runs from the surah Maryam to the surah al-Ma’ārim (xxiii) and was copied in muhaqqaq in a maximum of five lines to the page. Each letter alif measures more than 3 cm in height, and the distance between the lines is 5 cm. The letter kaf is notably archaic in form. Sets of four impressed lines were used to guide the scribe: one for the maximum height of the tallest letters (alif, lam and kaf), one for the maximum height of other letters, one for the base line, and one for the maximum depth of the letters. In the space underneath each line of Qur’ānic text are the Persian glosses, written at an angle of 45 degrees to the main text, in a nashīh hand. This pattern of ten lines to the page is frequently interrupted by sections of the Persian commentary, written in horizontal lines of nashīh; at one point (folios 66b–70b) the commentary fills a full nine pages.

The binding is of great age and is probably contemporary with the manuscript. The outer covers and flap are of brown leather. The main feature of the tooled decoration is the circular centre-pieces defined by triple borders and filled with knotwork, which was once gilded. Those on the outer covers have extensions above and below that culminate in palmettes. Other features include corner-pieces in the form of quarter-rosettes, and the whole composition is framed by multiple borders that are filled with two different repeat patterns. The doublures are of light-brown leather and have tooled centre-pieces filled with arabesque patterns.

Storey, 3, Part 1, pp. 74.
ITEM 11

Leaves from a Qur’an Juz’

PROBABLY CENTRAL ASIA, 14TH CENTURY AD

5 LEAVES, 28 × 19 CM

These leaves, a bifolium and three separate folios, come from a dispersed copy of the Qur’an bound in thirty parts, or juz’ (see James 1988, cat. 60). One juz’, the sixth, was in Iran in the 13th century, when inscriptions in neo-Kufic and archaising ornament were added in the margins. These have been misidentiﬁed as Indian work, and the whole manuscript attributed to India, while David James suggested an Anatolian provenance. It now seems certain that these juz’ were produced in the 14th century, somewhere in Central Asia, where the pre-Mongol Iranian traditions of Qur’an production were continued long after the Ilkhanid style had triumphed in Iran proper (compare the account of Chinese Qur’an production in Stanley 1999).

This material consists of a leaf with verses 29–34 of the surah al-Naba’ (l.xxxviii), a leaf with verses 5–9 of the surah al-Naze’ir (l.xxxix), a bifolium with verses 27–35 of the same surah, and a leaf with verses 4–6 of the surah al-Hujjat (l.xxxiii). The text was written on thick, buff-coloured laid paper, in a large mufahqas-like script, three lines to the page. There are interlinear glosses in Persian, copied in a ﬁne nasta’liq hand, with alternate glosses at angles of 45 and 135 degrees to the main text. Verses are marked by gold rosettes with the centre outlined in green and the edge set off with red dots, and in two places the end of a group of ten verses is marked in the margin by a gold roundel.

The script of the main text is of an unusual type, which clearly originated in the large mufahqas hands of pre-Mongol Iran, as illustrated by the copy of the Taj al-Tawilim in this catalogue (item 10 above). However, this has been oddly transformed by the use of a pen which has been trimmed to a very narrow point – too narrow for the size of the script.

ITEM 12

Prayers for the Seven Days of the Week

IRAN, 15TH CENTURY AD

9 FOLIOS, 23.5 × 17.5 CM

This prayer-book is notable for the high quality of its script and illumination, the complexity of its layout and the thick, card-like paper on which it was written. The card, which is deep-buff in colour, is so thick that any details of its construction are difﬁcult to discern, but it is clear that it was not made by pasting several layers of paper together: it was manufactured as a single thickness. Papers of such unusual quality would have had to be specially ordered from a manufacturer, which suggests that this manuscript was made for a patron of some substance (compare James 1992a, pp. 19–20). Taken together with the high artistic quality of the manuscript, this suggests that it may have been written for a person of considerable means, probably a member of a royal court, and perhaps even a member of one of Iran’s ruling dynasties of this period, the Qaraqoyunlu, Aqquyunlu and Timurids, all of which numbered great patrons of the arts of the book amongst their members.

The main text was written in four lines of gold muhaqqaq to the page, within an area measuring 13.2 × 10 cm. The outlines of the letters and the vocalization were executed in black, with ﬁner pens. The loops in some letters are ﬁlled with black, and some of these black areas are decorated with fragments of foliage in reserve. Most lines of muhaqqa are set in ‘cloud’ reserved in a ﬁeld ﬁlled with ﬂoral scroll-work executed in gold, without an outline but with highlights in blue. Where the background decoration was omitted (folio 1b, part of folio 4a, 5a), similar ornament has been supplied by a later hand or hands.

The muhaqqa text is framed by a pair of gold rules set 0.5 cm apart to form a blank band. This is itself enclosed by a ruled margin 2.5 cm wide, which contains the Shi’i Twelve Blessed Apostolic Prayers. The prayers in the margin were written in short lines of naskh set at an oblique angle, and the triangular areas left over by this layout have been ruled in gold and ﬁlled with ﬂoral sprays in gold and colours on a plain ground (compare Los Angeles 1989, pp. 116, 119).

The titles of all but one of the 12 prayers in naskh are written in gold ta’alq, outlined in black and with some loops ﬁlled with blue. All but one are set on gold scrollwork of different types within parallelograms framed by gold or blue rules. The titles of all but one of the seven daily prayers are written in a similar manner, but in gold shufsh. The exceptions are the ﬁrst titles in each sequence, on folio 1b, which are set in panels exquisitely illuminated in a style of the mid-15th century AD. The title in the margin is written in white over turquoise palmette scrolls on a gold ground stippled with groups of three tiny dots. The title of the main text is presented in a more sophisticated manner. It is written in gold, also over turquoise palmette scrolls, but on an ultramarine ground textured with groups of three tiny white dots, and within a central cartouche with rounded ends. The areas on either side are black and are decorated with sprays of flowers in gold and colours. The palmette scrolls retain the quality of the best 14th-century work, and the use of colour gives the design great vibrancy.

The main title on folio 1b is that of the prayer for Friday. The prayer for Saturday begins on folio 2b, that for Sunday on folio 4a, and that for Monday on folio 5a, but the following title, on folio 6b, is that of the prayer for Wednesday, while the prayer for Thursday begins on folio 8a. It appears from this that one leaf, containing the