234 Qur'an fragment in kufic, Arabic manuscript on vellum, Abbasid, tenth century
approximately 68 leaves, 8 lines to the page written in dispersed kufic script with diacritics
in red, illuminated markers between verses, some defects, 85 by 131mm.
£3,000-5,000

235 Three Qur'an sections (XX, XXIV and XXVI), Arabic manuscripts on paper, Timurid, early fourteenth century
27, 27 and 26 folios respectively, 7 lines to the page written in elegant naskhi script with
diacritics in black, gold discs decorated with red and blue dots between verses, margins ruled
in red, blue and gold, sura headings in thuluth in gold, within a cloud-band contained in
a panel with pink hatched decoration, remarqued throughout, inscriptions in naskhi script
in margins and flyleaves, corners rather thumbed, creased, two volumes with contemporary
upper covers of brown morocco tooled in blind, skilfully repaired, volumes XXVI bound in
modern brown morocco, 260 by 165mm.
£1,500-2,000

236 Small Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper, Anatolia, thirteenth century
299 leaves, folios 107-109, 130-132, 224-226, and 282-299 later replacements, 15 lines
to the page written in minute naskhi script with diacritics in black, text interspersed with
gold discs, margins ruled in blue, illuminated devices in wide margins, sura headings in
white on gold panels, two double pages of illumination at beginning, large area of illumination
damaged and crudely repaired, waterstained, discoloured, red morocco with stamped central
medallions and cornerpieces of gilt leather overlay, borders tooled in gold, doublures of brown
morocco gilt, spine defective, 87 by 65mm.
£5,000-6,000

237 Large Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper with thirty-three double pages of
illumination, Sultanate India, fifteenth century
634 leaves, 11 lines to the page written in large bihari script, first, sixth and eleventh line
of each page written in red, other lines written in black, the word Allah picked out in gold
throughout, gold discs decorated with blue and red dots between verses, margins ruled in
colours and gold, approximately forty-nine lines of commentary in Persian written diagonally
in borders of each page, significant words picked out in red throughout, illuminated circular
devices in margins, sura headings in gold on illuminated panels, thirty-three double pages of
illuminations in colours and gold, some defects, modern brown morocco with central medallions
and borders tooled in blind and some gold, with flap, 360 by 224mm.
£5,000-6,000
AN IMPORTANT MAMLUK QUR’AN DATED 1427

238 Large Qur’an, Arabic manuscript on paper copied by the scribe Ahmad bin Yusuf al-Jushj, Mamluk, written at Cairo, dated A.H.831/A.D.1427

229 leaves including 1 blank, 13 lines to the page written in elegant and neat naskhi script with vowel points and diacritics in red, blue and black, text interspersed with gold muqarnas decorated with alternating red and blue dots, elegant glasses written diagonally in two shades of red in wide margins, some headings in thuluth in gold, one double page of illumination in colours and gold, three small holes with loss of small areas of illumination, creased, folio 1 crudely repaired otherwise in good condition, circular endorsement seal impressions on several folios, nineteenth-century brown morocco with painted central medallions and borders in gold, worn, with flap, 425 by 270mm.

Provenance:
1. The colophon states that this Qur’an was copied by Ahmad bin Yusuf al-Jushj in Cairo in 1427. This calligrapher appears not to be recorded elsewhere.
2. Circular seal impressions in several places in the manuscript are dated A.H.1257/A.D.1841 and indicate that the manuscript was taken to Rhodes by the nineteenth century. The seals bear the Turkish legend “[This is] a song-book of the library that Hafiz Ahmed Agha of Rhodes, the former stirrup-holder of the imperial presence, built in the aforesaid island.”

This finely-illuminated Qur’an retains many of the features of Mamluk Qur’ an illumination of the previous century, see D. James, Qur’ an of the Mamluks, London, 1988. Like many scholars, James considers that century to be the zenith of manuscript production in the Mamluk Empire.

£50,000-80,000
239 Qur’an, Arabic manuscript on paper with a fine double-page frontispiece, Persia, late fifteenth century

572 leaves, 9 lines to the page written in clear naskhi script with diacritics in black, interlinear Persian translation in red throughout, gold discs decorated with red and blue dots between verses, margins ruled in blue and gold, illuminated circular devices in wide margins, glosses in margins, sura headings in thuluth in gold, one double page of illumination in colours and gold, waterstaining, discoloration, brown calf gilt, sides ruled with eighteenth-century Indian floral lacquer covers, spine laid on with late eighteenth-century English calf to a new classical design gilt, slightly worn, 285 by 180mm.

Provenance:
Inscription in pencil on flyleaf reads: Wilfrid Blunt, Baldwin’s Shore, Eton College, Windsor, Jan. 1946
Inscription in lower border of folio 564R attributes the calligraphy to Abdullah al-Tabbakh who studied in Herat, travelled to India and returned to Herat where he died in A.H.885/A.D.1480.

£3,000-5,000

240 Qur’an, Arabic manuscript on paper copied by Mahmud bin Suleyman, Ottoman, dated A.H.899/A.D.1493

389 leaves, 13 lines to the page written in elegant naskhi script with diacritics in black, gold florets decorated with orange dots between verses, margins ruled in gold or blue and gold, sura headings in elegant thuluth in gold, one double page of illumination in colours and gold, repaired and rebacked, folios 380th and 389th with fine illuminated panels containing floral and arabesque motifs in colours and gold, slight discoloration, waterstained, some crude repairs, browned, red morocco with stamped central medallions of gilt leather onlay, outer borders tooled in gold, worn, repaired, rebacked, with flap, 260 by 137mm.

£3,000-4,000

241 Qur’an section (Jus XIV), Arabic manuscript on paper copied by Juwan Marad bin Muhammad bin Bayazid as-Saravi, Persia, dated A.H.906/A.D.1500

44 leaves, 5 lines to the page written in clear naskhi script with diacritics in black, gold rosettes decorated with red and blue dots between verses, margins ruled in gold, one double page of illumination in colours and gold, trimmed, edges frayed, some repairs, corners rather thumbed, waterstaining, brown morocco with borders tooled in blind, worn, 200 by 140mm.

£3,000-4,000
242 Qur'an section, Arabic manuscript on paper, attributed to Hamdullah ibn al-Shaykh, Ottoman, c.1510-20

20 leaves, 11 lines to the page written in elegant naskhi script with diacritics in black, gold discs decorated with alternating red and blue dots, margins ruled in gold, catchwords in wide margins, one double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, discoloration, edges slightly frayed, corners rather thumbed, red morocco with stamped central medallions of gilt leather onlay decorated interwoven floral motifs and serrated leaves in deep red, water borders tooled in gold, double pages of marbled paper, slightly worn, some staining, spine crudely repaired with adhesive tape, lacking flap, 240 by 160mm.

An inscription in Ottoman Turkish dated A.H.1328/A.D.1910 at the end of the manuscript states that the late Shaykh al-Islam Musa Kazem Effendi attributed the writing of this Qur'an section to Hamdullah ibn al-Shaykh. Hamdullah (died 1520) is considered the most famous of the Ottoman calligraphers for his contribution to the improvement and perfection of the various Arabic scripts especially the riq'a script. His most famous pupil was Sultan Bayazid II.

£2,500-3,000

243 Qur'an section (Juz X), Arabic manuscript on paper, Levant, early seventeenth century

27 leaves, 7 lines to the page written in naskhi script with diacritics in black, gold discs decorated with alternating red and blue dots between verses, margins ruled in red and blue, catchwords in wide margins, two illuminated headpieces in colours and gold preceded by one illuminated page containing a waqf inscription dated A.H.1084/A.D.1673, some defects, modern leather gilt, worn, 204 by 143mm.

£800-1,000

244 Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper, Persia, seventeenth century

312 leaves, 15 lines to the page written in elegant naskhi script with diacritics in black, interlinear rules in gold throughout, illuminated devices between verses, catchwords in wide margins, occasional illuminated devices in margins, sura headings in thuluth in gold, one double page of illumination in colours and gold, folios 2 and 3 detached, discoloration, corners rather thumbed, black shagreen with stamped central medallions and corners of gilt leather onlay decorated with flowers, fields and borders with floral motifs in gold, slightly worn, 180 by 102mm.

£1,000-1,500

245 Qur'an section (Juz XI), Arabic manuscript on paper, Levant, early seventeenth century

20 leaves, 7 lines to the page written in naskhi script with diacritics in black, text interspersed with gold discs decorated with alternating red and blue dots, margins ruled in blue and red, catchwords added at a later date, two illuminated headpieces, one page of illumination in colours and gold containing waqf inscription, some defects, modern leather gilt, slightly worn, 240 by 145mm.

£800-1,000
A QUR'AN COPIED DURING THE REIGN OF
MEHMET THE CONQUEROR

246 Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper commissioned by Muhammad Chelebi Ibn Sinan Beg, a scribe at the treasury of Sultan Mehmed II Fatih (reigned 1444-46 and 1451-81), copied and illuminated by Ahmad Ibn Abdullah, Ottoman, dated A.H.859/A.D.1454

246 leaves, folio 1 later replacement, 15 lines to the page, first and last lines on each page written in large naskhi script in black with diacritics in black, central line on each page written in elegant thuluth in gold with diacritics in black, contained within a panel hatched with large lines and occasionally decorated with floral sprays in black ink or the three ball motif in blue, remainder of text written in clear naskhi script with diacritics in black, gold rosettes decorated with blue dots between verses, interlinear and intercolumnar rules in gold throughout, illuminated panels on each page decorated with floral motifs, cypress trees, cases of flowers and illuminated circular devices in blue and gold, the bismillah for each sura elegantly written in black or gold, tears throughout crudely repaired with loss of areas of text and illumination including frontispiece, edges frayed, nineteenth-century brown morocco tooled in blind, stained, crudely rebound, with flap, 305 by 233mm.

Apart from those in Istanbul libraries, manuscripts from the treasury of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror are very rare. The colophon mentions Sinan Beg as the father of Muhammad Chelebi. This must be the painter Sinan Beg described by Karimzadeh as a contemporary of Sultan Muhammad Khan Fatih who had studied in Europe where he was a pupil of Mastui Pavelli (Master Pavlo?). See M.A. Karimzadeh Tabrizi, The Lives of Old Painters of Iran, and Selection of Masters from the Ottoman and Indian regions, London, Vol.1, pp.227-8 £20,000-30,000
247 Qur’an, Arabic manuscript on gold-sprinkled paper copied by Muhammad Muhsin al-Yazdi, Persia, dated A.H.1095/A.D.1683

299 leaves, 14 lines to the page written in elegant naskhi script with diacritics in black, gold discs decorated with red and blue dots between verses, margins ruled in blue and gold, catchwords in wide margins, sura headings in thuluth in gold, one double page of illumination in colours and gold, some crude repairs mostly restricted to outer margins, waterstaining affecting text, crazed, black shagreen gilt, worn, repaired, rebached, 273 by 175mm. £500-800

248 Qur’an, Arabic manuscript on paper, probably India, eighteenth century

414 leaves, lacking first folio, last four folios later replacements, 15 lines to the page written in naskhi script, first section of manuscript without diacritics and vowel points, margins ruled in gold, blank panels between chapters intended for sura headings, two illuminated headlines in gold, one page of illumination at beginning, some defects, brown morocco gilt, damaged, 117 by 70mm.; and three other Qur’ans £500-800

249 Small Qur’an, Arabic manuscript on gold-sprinkled thin paper copied by Muhammad Muhsin, Persia, dated A.H.1130/A.D.1717

249 leaves, 17 lines to the page written in elegant naskhi script with diacritics in black, gold dots between verses, margins ruled in blue and gold, catchwords, glosses in Persian chikashin in wide margins, sura headings in red or white on illuminated panels, one double page of illumination preceding by two illuminated shamas in colours and gold, crazed, discoloration, floral lacquer binding, doublures decorated with intertwining grape-cane motif in green and gold on yellow ground, cracked and chipped, rebached, 76 by 46mm. £2,000-3,000

250 Small Qur’an, Arabic manuscript on paper copied by Muhammad Reza Adbullah, Qajar, dated A.H.1209/A.D.1794

201 leaves, 19 lines to the page written in minute naskhi script with diacritics in black, interlinear gilt decoration throughout, gold discs between verses, margins ruled in gold, glosses in shlash in margins, catchwords, sura headings in thuluth in red on gold panels, one double page of illumination in colours and gold, slight discoloration, floral lacquer binding, rebached, lower cover detached, 96 by 56mm. £500-800
A LARGE ILLUMINATED QUR'AN DATED 1555

251 Large Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper copied by the scribe Maqqud al-Tabrizi, Persia and Turkey, dated A.H.963/A.D.1555

263 leaves, 15 lines to the page, first, middle and last lines on each page written in large muhaqqaq script in gold, other lines written in smaller naskhi script in black, diacritics in black, gold discs decorated with blue and red dots between verses, interlinear and intercolumnar rules in gold throughout, margins ruled in colours and gold, illuminated circular devices in wide margins, some headings in thuluth gold contained within cloud-bands drawn in ink on illuminated panels, one double page of fine illumination in colours and gold at beginning with central panels incorporating the opening verses of the Qur'an in muhaqqaq in gold, folio 260b with final prayer written in large muhaqqaq in alternating blue and gold, commentary on folios 261a-262a written in elegant nasta'liq script in alternating blue, red and gold, folios 262b-263a with two illuminated circular medallions incorporating a verse from the Qur'an in white, ground richly decorated with intertwining floral motifs in gold, slightly creased, some worming otherwise in good condition, circular endowment seal impressions on several folios, nineteenth-century red morocco with stamped central medallions, corners, and border panels of gilt leather onlay decorated with intertwining floral motifs, borders tooled in blind, doubloons of brown morocco gilt, slight worming, lower cover rather worn, spine repaired, with flap, 492 by 349mm.

Provenance:
1. The colophon states that this Qur'an was copied by Maqqud al-Tabrizi in 1555.
2. Folio 263a carries a very faded inscription, probably sixteenth century, which mentions Constantiopolis as the place of endowment.
3. Folio 263b also bears an inscription in Ottoman Turkish which reads "It is requested that, when this [Qur'an] is read, the merit for it shall be offered up for the soul of Bakhtiyar Khatun".
4. Circular seal impressions on several pages in the manuscript are dated A.H.1257/A.D.1841, and bear the Turkish legend "[This is a waqf book of the library that Hafiz Ahmed Agha of Rhodes, the former stirrup-holder of the imperial presence, built in the aforesaid island]".
While the layout of the text of this unusually large copy of the Qur’an is very like manuscripts produced in Persia from the mid-sixteenth century, the illumination is distinctly Ottoman, notably the opening double carpet pages and the two illuminated blac roundels at the end. It is known that a number of artists, calligraphers and illuminators went to the Ottoman court from Tabriz during the time when Shah Tahmasp’s enthusiasm for fine manuscript production was on the wane. It therefore seems that this volume was taken to Turkey as a text and subsequently illuminated there in Ottoman style. The characteristically Persian Shi’ite prayers written on folios 261a-262a and the faded inscription on folio 263b mentioning Constantinople, both support this thesis.

£30,000-120,000
252 Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper copied by Isma'il Najib, a pupil of Ahmed al-Zarifi, Ottoman, written at Shumri, dated A.H.1264/A.D.1847

308 leaves, 15 lines to the page written in naskhi script with diacritics in black, discs decorated with alternating red and blue dots between verses, margins ruled in red and gold, catchwords, illuminated devices mostly in the shape of floral sprays in colours and gold, sura headings in white on illuminated panels, one double-page of fine illumination in colours and gold, slightly creased otherwise in good condition, contemporary brown morocco, covers richly tooled with a diaper pattern in gold, slightly worn, with flap, 188 by 120mm.

£3,000-4,000

253 Small Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper copied by Muhammad bin Zayn-al-'Abidin al-Khavansari, Qajar, dated A.H.1255/A.D.1839

212 leaves, 20 lines to the page written in small naskhi script with diacritics in black, illuminated markers between verses, interlinear gilt decoration throughout, margins ruled in gold, catchwords in wide margins, occasional illuminated devices, sura headings in red on illuminated panels, one double-page of illumination in colours and gold, waterstaining affecting text, one folio torn and crudely repaired, last line of text on one page rubbed, contemporary floral lacquer binding, rebacked, 105 by 66mm.

£1,000-1,500

254 Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper commissioned by Haji Mirza Isma'il Bazar Qaswini, copied by Valad Farahallah Faisabadi, written at Qazwin, dated A.H.1257/A.D.1841

250 leaves, some folios later replacements, 15 lines to the page written in naskhi script with diacritics in black, double interlinear rules in gold throughout, illuminated markers between verses, catchwords, illuminated devices in margins, sura headings in red on illuminated panels, one double-page of illumination in colours and gold, folio 1 later replacement, corners rather thumbed, 310 by 202mm.

£400-500

255 Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper copied by Ibn Ali Aghar Muhammad Qasim al-Kiliyikani, Qajar, dated A.H.1259/A.D.1843

227 leaves, 21 lines to the page written in neat naskhi script with diacritics in black, illuminated markers between verses, margins ruled in gold, catchwords, illuminated devices in margins, occasional glass in Persian in nasta'liq in margins, sura headings in red on illuminated panels, one double-page of illumination in colours and gold preceded by two illuminated stylized trees containing the opening prayers, slight soiling, corners rather thumbed, floral lacquer binding, corners and spine crudely repaired, 140 by 80mm.

£700-900