Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper copied by Ahmad bin Abd al-Nabi known as Ibn Qadi al-Haram al-Shafi'i. Damah, Egypt or Syria, dated 1243/AD 1827-8
328 leaves, 3 lines to the page written in neat naskhi script in black, diacritics in black, gold rosettes decorated with red and blue dots between verses, margins ruled in blue and gold, numerous illuminated decorative elements outlined in blue and gold margins, gilded written in colophon ink and hid and juz markers in gold in margins, gilded headings in large gold settings in compartments ruled in gold with circular devices infilling with foliate motifs extending into margins, one double page of illumination in colours and gold containing opening verses of Qur'an, opening double page with large headings in white ornamental kufic, final page with invocation and colophon written in naskhi in gold, corners rather thumbed with some repairs, some slight smudging, modern leather binding with stamped and filigree decoration over green ground, with flap. 310 by 210mm.
£6,000-8,000

£1,200-1,800
A FINELY ILLUMINATED SAFAVID QUR’AN

91 Qur’an, finely illuminated Arabic manuscript on gold-speckled paper with text written in blue, gold and black, Persia, probably Herat, mid-sixteenth century

445 leaves, 11 lines to the page, first, middle and last lines written in elegant muhaqqaq script in alternating blue and gold, other lines written in smaller naskhi script in black, dividers in blue and black, gold dots or rosettes decorated with blue dots between verses, intercolumnar and intercalary rules in gold throughout, sura headings in gold or white thuluth on illuminated panels, margins ruled in colours and gold, illuminated circular devices containing floral motifs in wide margins, catchwords, outer margins ruled in gold, juz and hadith divisions noted in margins in blue or gold, two double pages of fine illumination in colours and gold, six further double pages with fine illumination, three illuminated headpieces, some slight rubbing at beginning and end, few pages rather thumbed with crude repairs, some leaves with splits repaired, some marginal devices repaired, few pages with understanding restricted to margins, later brown morocco binding with gilt-stamped central medallions and cornerpieces, doublures of red morocco with gilt floral decoration, 254 by 155mm.

This Qur’an is distinguished by several attractive features: the elegance of the blue and gold muhaqqaq script and the black naskhi script, the variety of unusual colours in the illuminated sura headings, and the profusion of fine illumination of text and borders at the beginning and end.

The fully illuminated pages are as follows:

ff.1b-2a Two rectangular panels of coloured decoration enclosing two illuminated shamsas containing opening prayers.

ff.2b-3a Surat al-Fatiha written in gold in two cartouches surrounded by fine illumination in colours and gold.

ff.440b-44a Suras CX-CXL written black, white and gold with floral interlinear illumination and lateral cartouches of floral illumination on blue.

ff.449b-45a Suras CXI-CXII written black, blue and gold with interlinear floral decoration and lateral cartouches of floral illumination on blue.

ff.444b-45a Suras CXIII and CXIV written in gold on an orange ground, with lateral panels of floral decoration on pale blue, sura headings in white on gold, fine border illumination in colours and gold.

ff.453b-46a Illuminated headpiece and two pages of prayers written in white muhaqqaq on a gold ground with floral decoration in colours.

ff.460b-47a Illuminated headpiece and two pages of prayers written in white on two columns of nastaliq in gold on a blue ground with floral decoration, intercolumnar decoration in orange.

ff.474b-47a Prayers written in two columns of nastaliq in gold and white on alternating backgrounds of blue and gold with floral decoration, intercolumnar floral decoration in red on blue.

This Qur’an is closely in style and format to a Qur’an in the Khalili Collection copied at Herat or Maragha circa 1560-70 by the scribe Habsiah al-Kitab al-Maraghi (J. Raby, ed., After Times, The Nasir al-Din Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, III, Oxford, 1992, no.36, pp.156-81). Another Qur’an very close in style and execution, copied by Muhammad al-Kitab al-Shirazi and dated A.H.933/A.D.1526, was sold at Christie’s, 24th April 1996, lot 167, £20,000-25,000
92. Qur'an in thirty sections, Arabic manuscript on paper copied by Dervish Muhammad, Ottoman, dated A.H.1004/A.D.1595

20-26 leaves in each volume, 9 lines to the page written in naskhi script in black, dissection in black, gold discs decorated with red and blue dots between verses, margins ruled in black and gold, sura headings in red or white on gold panels, each volume with opening page of later illumination in Mamluk style, fza 1 with one double page of later illumination in Mamluk style, rather thumbed with repairs to corners, tears, some smudging, contemporary red morocco matching bindings with gilt-stamped central medallions of scrolling floral motifs, some worn and rebacked, doublures of marbled paper, all with flaps, 290 by 190mm.

(50) £4,000-6,000

See illustration opposite.

94. Qur'an, Arabic and Persian manuscript on paper, North India, eighteenth century

509 leaves, 11 lines of Arabic to the page written in clear naskhi script in black ink on gold throughout, 11 lines of interlinear Persian translation in red, black circles between verses, margins ruled in black and gold, catchwords, numerous illuminated floral devices in margins, outer margins ruled in gold with band of floral decoration in gold, marginal commentary in black, sura headings in white, seven double pages of illumination in colours and gold, two double pages with illuminated shamsas and corners pieces within rectangular panels ruled in gold, text illumination on folio 5a giving a date of A.H.1241/A.D.1825, olive morocco binding with rectangular panels of red velvet and borders of gilt-stamped motifs, 140 by 92mm.

£1,500-2,000

93. Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper, probably Mughal, India, late sixteenth century

444 leaves, 13 lines to the page written in clear naskhi script, dissection in black, gold discs decorated with blue dots between verses, margins ruled in colours and gold, borders decorated with floral designs and scrolling cloud-bands in gold throughout, numerous illuminated floral and circular devices in wide margins, sura headings in large gold naskhi in panels of cross-hatched decoration, three double pages of illumination in colours and gold, opening page with large illuminated shamsa, slightly restored, worn tears to margins, many repaired, some folios with decorated borders replaced, discoloured, brown morocco binding with central medallion of gilt-stamped scrolling foliate motifs, 287 by 202mm.

£4,000-6,000
A FINE SAFAVID QUR'AN

Qur'an, finely illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper in a contemporary binding. Persia, probably Shiraz, mid-sixteenth century

407 leaves, 10 lines to the page written in neat naskhi script, disaccords in black, gold dots decorated with blue dots between verses, margins ruled in colours and gold, catchwords, juz, baih and fifth and tenth suras marked in gold in wide margins, sura headings in blue, white or gold thuluth on illuminated panels, illuminated circular devices in margins, two double pages of fine illumination in colours and gold, two illuminated headpieces, the four pages of prayers at end are probably a subsequent though early addition, opening folio with corner slightly cut, some slight wear to margins of illuminated pages, fine contemporary brown morocco binding with large rectangular gilt-stamped panels of scrolling arabesques and cloud-bands, borders with small panels of similar decoration, edges worn, rebanked, doublons with central medallion, cornerspieces and outer border of fine paper filigree over blue ground, inner field of gilt-stamped scrolling cloud-bands and floral motifs, the petals picked out in blue and red, slightly worn, modern box, 297 by 190mm.

The two double pages of illumination incorporate the surat al-Fatiha and prayers at the end. The two illuminated headpieces are for the beginning of the surat al-Baqara, with interlinear decoration of floral motifs on gold, and for invocations at the end.

In addition to the fine quality of illumination on its opening pages, this Qur'an is remarkable for the variety of colours used for the backgrounds of the illuminated sura headings. Striking shades of pale blue, mauve, red and pink appear alongside the more traditional blues and gold. It can be compared with two Qur'ans in the Khalili Collection, both copied by Ruzbihan Muhammed al-Tahi al-Shirazi, one dated 1545, the other undated (Rahn, J. (ed.), After Timur, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, III, Oxford 1992, nos.39-40, pp.150-163).

£15,000-20,000
96 Qur'an section (sura XLVI), Arabic manuscript on paper copied by Imad Nur Kamal, Ottoman, dated A.H.871/A.D.1466

15 leaves. 9 lines to the page, first, middle and last lines written in large thuluth in black, other lines written in smaller rayhans script in black, distancers and vocal points in black, gold margins decorated with blue dots between verses, illuminated devices with floral decoration in blue and gold in margins, interlinear rules in gold throughout, one finely illuminated headpiece with sura heading in elegant gold thuluth on a scrolling ground, lower and inner margins repaired throughout not affecting text, opening page with seal impression in margin, contemporary brown morocco binding with central medallions and cornerpieces of blind-tooled floral motifs, skillfully restored, doublures of brown morocco with gilt-stamped central motif, with flap, 329 by 233mm.

The calligrapher Imad Nur Kamal was from Transoxiana. He was trained in thuluth and naskhi and was said to excel in these forms of script. He is known to have copied a Qur'an in 1466 and the present manuscript is probably a section from it.

£3,000-4,000

97 Qur'an section (sura LXXXIX to sura CXIV), Arabic manuscript on paper copied by Omar al-Wasafi, Ottoman, dated A.H.1231/A.D.1776

30 leaves including one blank and two folios of colophon. 8 lines to the page written in naskhi script, gold florins or rounds between verses, margins ruled in colours and gold, catchwords, occasional illuminated devices in margins, sura headings in red on illuminated panels, the kusmakat adorned with floral decoration in colours and gold, one illuminated headpiece in colours and gold, opening double page with interlinear gold and marginal decoration of floral motifs in gold, red morocco with central medallions of leather overlay with decorative motifs in gold, border of gold repoussé, lacking flap, 197 by 131mm.

The colophon states that Omar al-Wasafi was the scribe of the Galata Saray.

£700-900

98 Qur'an section (sura XIX to CXIV), Arabic manuscript on paper, in scroll form, Persia, nineteenth century

Text written in ghubari script in black forming geometric and floral cartouches in central panel, selected verses in reserve at intervals, text written diagonally in outer borders, margins ruled in colours and gold, one illuminated headpiece in colours and gold, length 31.3cm., width 7cm.

£1,000-1,500
A FINE SAFAVID QUR'AN

Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper with three double pages of fine illumination, the text written in gold and black, Persia, second half of the 16th century.

341 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 dots between verses, interlinear and intersyllabic rules in gold throughout, lateral panels on each page with floral motifs in gold, margins ruled in colours and gold, catchwords, illuminated circular devices in wide margins, sura headings in gold thuluth contained within illuminated panels in colours and gold, three double pages of fine illumination in colours and gold, a few leaves misbound, some tears along margins, occasional repairs, edges slightly mottled towards end, trimmed, three flyleaves at end with prayers and inscriptions in black naskhi, brown Morocco, damaged and rebound, 335 by 230mm.

This richly decorated Qur'an features three double pages of fine illumination:

f.1b-2a Surat al-Fatiha and the opening verses of surat al-Baqara written in elegant muhaqqaq script in white on a gold ground, enclosed by panels and a radiating border of illumination in colours and gold.

f.158b-159a Final verses of sura XVII (Bani Israel) and the heading and opening verses of sura XVIII (al-Kahf), written in gold muhaqqaq and black naskhi with lateral panels of floral decoration in gold, margins ruled in orange and blue with a band of ropework design, radiating border of illumination in colours and gold.

f. 340b-341a Suras CIV-CXIV (surat al-Kafirun to surat an-Nasi), including six sura headings, written in gold muhaqqaq, gold thuluth and black naskhi with lateral panels of floral decoration in gold, margins in orange and blue with a band of ropework design, border of illumination in colours and gold.

$18,000-22,000

£2,000-3,000

This rare Qur'an section was made by Chinese Muslims, and the calligraphic and decorative qualities clearly show this Far Eastern influence. Interestingly the script has very thick extended horizontals, slightly reminiscent of Tibhari script. The opening folio has a crude repair to the top margin and the paper which has been used to repair it has two Chinese characters written on it. They are not and do not have the general meaning of 'sackcloth' and 'practice' respectively. The small cornerpieces on the binding may be stylized versions of the Chinese character shun, which means 'good health'.

£2,000-3,000

A.H.1128/A.D.1715

25 leaves, 9 lines to the page written in gold naskhi script in gold outlined in black throughout, gold roundels with red and blue dots between verses, sura headings in gold outlined in gold, margins ruled in gold, p.5 ruled in red outlined in gold, sura headings and inscriptions in gold on opening folio within an illuminated panel, leaves detached, four holes on opening folio slightly affecting text, edges slightly frayed on certain folios, some discolouration restricted to edges, slightly thumbed, red marocco with stumped central medallion of floral motives, worn, with flap, 300 by 204mm. An inscription on the opening folio states that this section was copied as a result of the generosity of the Amir Muhammad Madani Ibo Qadi Muhammad Musahib.

£2,000-3,000