Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures

Qur’an leaves including three earlyvellum leaves in hijazi script and a vellum leaf from the ‘Blue Qur’an’.

Qur’ans including an important early vellum section in hijazi script, a rare signed and dated Chinese Qur’an section, an important early Timurid Qur’an dated 1484 copied by Jair Tahira and a four 15th century Persian Qur’an written in gold.

Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Indian manuscripts including a finely illuminated Andusian manuscript dated 1596, a prayer book copied by Ahmad al-Najafi and a fine selection of illustrated poetical manuscripts.

Qajar oil paintings.

Persian miniatures including a fine mid-16th century Safavid drawing.

Indian miniatures and Company School paintings including a natural history illustration painted by Zayn al-Din for Lady Impey, a portrait of Dara Shikoh by Gower/Rahman, an 18th century album including a fine 18th century Bijapur portrait, and an illustration from the ‘Lambaghnam’ Gisr Gernsela.

Persian lacquer including a fine Safavid mirror-case signed Ta Shab al-Zamani and dated 1695.

Day of Sale
Friday 22nd October 1993 at 10:30 am and 2:30 pm
In the Main Galleries
34-35 New Bond Street, London, W1

On View
Sunday 17th October 1993, 12 noon to 4:00 pm
Monday 18th October 1993, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm
Tuesday 19th October 1993, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm
Wednesday 20th October 1993, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm
Thursday 21st October 1993, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm

Absentee Bids
Please use sale code: “DARA”
Fax (for bids only): (071) 408 8255
Catalogue £15.00 at the gallery,
£18.00 by mail UK, £21.00 overseas

The Front Cover Illustration shows lot 241
The Back Cover illustration shows a detail of lot 64

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Advice to Bidders
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7. QU’RAN LEAVES

1. Vellum Qur’an leaf in kufic, North Africa, ninth/tenth century
15 lines to the page written in elegant kufic script, diacritics in red and green, illuminated rondels or gold marks between verses, sura heading in gold, slight dulling restricted to margins, 187 by 255mm.
£800-1000

2. Vellum Qur’an leaf in kufic, North Africa or Near East, ninth/tenth century
16 lines to the page written in neat kufic script in brown ink, diacritics in red, edges frayed, 144 by 250mm; and another vellum Qur’an leaf in kufic, laid down on a seventeenth-century album page, the border decorated with flowers, animals and birds in gold.
£400-600

3. Vellum Qur’an leaf in kufic, North Africa or Near East, ninth century
17 lines to the page written in brown ink, vowel points in red and green, red circles every ten verses, some staining, edges frayed, reverse rubbed affecting text, 154 by 213mm.
£500-700

4. Vellum Qur’an leaf in kufic, Near East, ninth century
15 lines to the page written in elegant kufic script with diacritics in red and green, clusters of gold dots between verses, gold marker in margin, slight discoloration, reverse rubbed with slight loss of text, 157 by 233mm.
£1,500-2,000

5. Vellum Qur’an leaf in maghribi, probably Andalusia, thirteenth century
13 lines to the page written in maghribi script with diacritics and vowel points in red, green and blue, roundels and markers between verses, a few erased, discoloration, framed, 178 by 164mm.
£300-500

11 lines to the page written in elegant kufic script with diacritics in red and green, clusters of gold dots between verses, gold marker in margin, slight discoloration, reverse rubbed with slight loss of text, 157 by 233mm.
£1,500-2,000

Oriental Manuscripts
and Miniatures

FRIDAY 22ND OCTOBER 1993 AT 10.30 AM

Morning Session: lots 1-183

All lots are offered subject to the Conditions of Business printed in the back of this catalogue and to reserves.
Two vellum Qur’an leaves in kufic, Near East, ninth century

16 lines to the page written in brown ink, diacritical marks added later in black ink, double circles in red every ten verses, crooked, edges frayed, some patches of staining, few small holes, 170 by 210mm.

£1,200-1,800

Two vellum Qur’an leaves in kufic, Near East, ninth century

22-23 lines to the page written in brown ink, red or dotted circles every ten verses, some later re-inking, crooked, one hole affecting text, edges frayed, verso worn, 158 by 210mm, and smaller

£1,200-1,800

Vellum Qur’an leaf in kufic, North Africa, nineteenth/twentieth century

5 lines to the page written in elegant extended kufic script, diacriticals in red and green, recent border of buff paper with margins ruled in colours and gold, some discolouration, slightly crooked, vellum 102 by 166mm, and another vellum Qur’an leaf in kufic.

£500-700

Three vellum Qur’an leaves in maghribi, North Africa or Andalusia, thirteenth century

9 lines to the page written in neat maghribi in brown with diacriticals and vowel points in yellow, green, red and blue, gold vegetal decorated with coloured dots or scallop-shaped devices between verses, illuminated circular devices in margins, discoloured, framed, 157 by 170mm.

£400-600

Vellum Qur’an leaf (Sura XXV, verses 31-60) in hijazi script, Mecca or Medina, late seventh century

15 lines to the page written in hijazi script, diacritical marks, (where present) consist of brown ink dots, no vowel points, clusters of three dots between verses, some water damage at edges affecting text, 98 by 189mm.

This is a rare example of a Qur’an leaf written in the earliest Arabic script. It is interesting not only for its antiquity and the fact that very few examples of Qur’anic manuscript production survive from this period, but also because it is in a horizontal rather than vertical format, which was highly unusual for that date. Another leaf from the same Qur’an is lot 15 in this sale. Other examples of hijazi leaves in horizontal format are in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris (Ms. arab.329a, see F. Déroche, Les Mssans du Coran. Aux origines de la caligraphie coranique, Paris 1983, no.1), the Khalil Collection, (see F. Déroche, The Abbasid Tradition, London 1992, no.1, p.31), and the Sana’a Museum (see Maadjel San’a, Dar Al-Ahbar AL-Islamiyyah, 1985, no.25, p.54). However, the closest comparison to the script of the present Qur’an leaf are found on two leaves in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul (nos.87 and 90) which are of vertical format to the script of the present Qur’an leaf.

£6,000-8,000

Vellum Qur’an leaf in kufic, North Africa or Near East, ninth century

15 lines to the page written in an early kufic script in brown ink, no later painting, vowel points in red, red circle outlined in brown between verses, discoloured, few holes affecting some words, framed, 152 by 222mm.

£3,000-4,000

Qur’an bifolium in eastern kufic on brown paper, Persia, twelfth century

7 lines to the page written in eastern kufic script, diacritics and vowel points in red, blue and green, one illuminated floral device in margin, stained, some small holes slightly affecting text, slightly crooked, 152 by 110mm, and three other Qur’an leaves

£500-700
15 Vellum Qur’an leaf (Sura XXVII, verse 88 to Sura XXVIII, verse 16) in hijazi script, Mecca or Medina, late seventh century

15 lines to the page written in hijazi script, diacritical marks (where present) consist of brown ink dots, no visual points, clusters of three dots between verses, gap left to indicate start of Sura XXVIII, some water-damage at edges affecting text, 88 by 189mm.

From the same Qur’an as lot 11. A particular feature of this leaf is the blank space left for the sura division. Other Qur’an leaves of this date with sura divisions normally have some form of rudimentary decoration in the form of geometric panels decorated with coloured dots. The fact that on this leaf a gap has been left where one sura ends and the other begins implies either that a special feature was to be placed there after the completion of the writing of the text and that this was never completed, or that the blank space itself was the indication of the sura division. For a further discussion and comparative material see footnote to lot 11.

£5,000-8,000

16 Two vellum Qur’an leaves in kufic, North Africa or Near East, ninth century

11 lines to the page written in elegant kufic script, diacritics in red, gold circular devices with floral surround between verses, damage and discoloration with loss of text, skillfully restored with new vellum, 163 by 226mm. (2)

£1,500-2,000

17 Nine Qur’an leaves in muhaqqaq script on brown paper, Il-Khanid Persia, thirteenth/fourteenth century

9 lines to the page written in large muhaqqaq script, the word aya written in gold within illuminated discs to mark verses, glories in margins written in blue, green and red, large circular and drop-shaped marginal devices in colours and gold, two sura headings (Sura al-Hujurat and Sura al-Fatiha) in white or brown on panels with scrolling floral illumination and palmettes extending into margins, soiled, edges frayed, 344 by 290mm. (9)

£1,000-1,500

18 Three large Qur’an leaves in bihari script on paper, India, fifteenth century

13 lines to the page written in large bihari script on buff paper, first, seventh and thirteenth lines in bolder script, the word Allah picked out in gold, gold florets decorated with blue dots between verses, margins ruled in red, glories in margins, one sura heading in white on a gold panel with adjacent panels of floral decoration in orange and a palmette extending into margin, 560 by 330mm. (3)

£500-700

19 Vellum Qur’an leaf in kufic, North Africa, tenth century

3 lines to the page written in large bold kufic script with diacritics in red and green, one illuminated circular device in blue, red and gold in margins, some discoloration, reverse rubbed with fine skilful repairs, 194 by 273mm.

A leaf from this Qur’an is in the Al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Akhbar al-Islamiyya, Kuwait National Museum (see Al-Andalus, The Art of Islamic Spain, New York, 1992, fig.1, p.117). Other leaves from the same Qur’an were sold in these rooms on 25th June 1985, lot 6; 21st/22nd November 1985, lot 292, 22nd/23rd May 1986, lots 246 and 247; 20th November 1986, lots 275 and 276, 11th October 1991, lot 887 and 23rd October 1992, lot 557.

£1,800-2,000

20 Vellum Qur’an leaf in kufic, North Africa, ninth/tenth century

3 lines to the page written in large bold kufic script with diacritics in red and green, gold florets between verses, one edged frayed with slight loss of text, some discoloration, slightly crossed, reverse rubbed with some loss of ink, 196 by 260mm.

See footnote to previous lot.

£1,500-2,000

21 Vellum Qur’an leaf in kufic, North Africa, ninth/tenth century

13 lines to the page written in elegant kufic script with diacritics in red and green, gold florets between verses, illuminated device in margin, some holes, slight discoloration, slightly crossed, reverse rubbed with loss of text, 230 by 330mm.

£1,500-2,000
22 Five vellum Qur'ān leaves in mashq script, Near East or Arabia, eighth century.

15 lines to the page written in small mashq script, no letter pointing, few vowel points in red or green, some heading in red, patches of discolouration, surface worn, edges frayed, 130 by 200mm., and smaller.

This script is interesting in that, although the form of the individual letters has not yet attained the elegance and consistency normally associated with mashq script, the dispersal of the text on the page is already very balanced. Another leaf from the same manuscript is lot 23 in this sale. Another section from the same Qur'ān was sold at Christie’s 27th April 1993, lot 21.

£3,000-5,000

23 Vellum Qur'ān leaf in mashq, Near East or Arabia, probably eighth century.

15 lines to the page written in small mashq script, no letter pointing, few vowel points in red or green, patches of discolouration, surface slightly worn, edges frayed, reverse worn, framed, 130 by 194mm.

This script is interesting in that, although the form of the individual letters has not yet attained the elegance and consistency normally associated with mashq script, the dispersal of the text on the page is already very balanced. This Qur'ān leaf is from the same manuscript as lot 22 in this sale. Another section from the same Qur'ān was sold at Christie’s 27th April 1993, lot 21.

£800-1,200

24 Vellum Qur'ān leaf in kufic, North Africa or Near East, late ninth/early tenth century

15 lines to the page written in fine kufic script in brown ink on vellum, vowel points in red and green, two or three diagonal dashes between verses, one quadrifol floral device in red and green to mark ten verses, few patches of staining slightly affecting text, 218 by 294mm.

From the same Qur'ān as lot 27. Another leaf from the same Qur'ān is in the Khalili Collection (see P. Déroche, The Abbasid Tradition, London 1992, p.65).

£1,000-1,500

25 Selected verses from the Qur'ān, xylograph printing on paper, possibly Fatimid Egypt, eleventh/twelfth century

69 lines to the page printed in minute kufic characters in four paragraphs, on thin paper, top line reading ‘La ilaha illa Allah’ in larger ornamental kufic, circles to mark division of verses, extensive repairs barely affecting text, bunched, 271 by 65mm.

This rare early example of printing is almost certainly an amulet, to be rolled and kept in a cylindrical container. This would account not only for its unusual long, narrow shape, but also for the fact that the excerpts from the Qur'ān are not sequential. For instance, verse 4 of Sura LXVII occurs in the third paragraph, but is not in sequence with the verses before or after. Very little is known about printing at this period in the Middle East, but a valuable discussion of similar printed amulets in American collections in an article by R.W. Bulliet entitled ‘Medieval Arabic Tarabs: a forgotten chapter in the history of printing’ (Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol.107, 1987) sheds great light on the present piece. In addition, the article on Muslim’s in the Encyclopedia of Islam gives the following useful information:

‘Xylography, or printing by means of plates or characters engraved on wood, was used by the Arabs, judging by the specimens which have been noted in the collections of manuscripts and papryi possessed by certain libraries in Europe (Vienna, Heidelberg, Berlin and the British Library), America (Museum of the University of Pennsylvania), or the Arab countries (National Library of Cairo and the ‘Abd al-Wahhab Collection, Tunisia). There is no precise indication of the dates of these specimens, of which the majority are amulets. According to Moritz, six printing-plates in the collection of the ancient Khaled Library of Cairo date from the Fatimid period’. It is thus difficult to date the present amulet precisely, but a Fatimid origin would fit with the style of script and with the evidence put forward by Bulliet. The difficulty of cutting cursive Arabic characters onto a wood-block may have lead to a preference for the use of kufic, with its angular letters. However, since the use of kufic for manuscript production declined rapidly after the tenth century it would be unlikely that the present piece dates from much after the Fatimid period.

The script is very difficult to read due to the fact that the kufic characters (difficult to read at the best of times) have been slightly distorted by being cut onto a block. Some letters which are normally joined are separate, and vice-versa, and no letter drops below the line of the script, so that, for instance, the tail of a terminal د sits on the line and the rest of the word has to sit above the tail.

£1,800-2,000
Illuminated Qur'an leaf (Sura 1, verse 64) in muhaqaq script on paper, Anatolia or Sultanate India, c.1350-60

26

3 lines to the page written in elegant muhaqaq script on buff paper, interleaved Persian translation written diagonally in smaller script in black, illuminated mina with blue and gold, 288 by 184mm.

Leaves from this Qur'an are well-known, but the origin of the Qur'an itself is still debated by scholars. It has most often been ascribed to Sultanate India, but there is also a strong case for an Anatolian origin, and it has even been described as Mamluk on occasions. The kufic script and decorative schemes around the edge are not contemporary with the muhaqaq script of the Qur'anic text, and this causes some difficulty. David James has convincingly linked these leaves with an Anatolian or Central Asian Qur'an of circa 1555, which, although devoid of the decorative border and surrounding kufic script, has an interleaved Persian translation arranged in the same manner and in the same hand (see D. James, *Qur'ans of the Mamluks*, cat. no.66, pp.170-1 and 245). However, the manuscript originated: the interesting thing about the leaves, apart from the fine script and aesthetic appeal, is that the use of the kufic script around the border was not only geographically unusual, being a western kufic style, but was also a style of script which had more or less gone out of fashion some two hundred years earlier, except as a decorative script for headings. Other leaves from the same Qur'an are now in Museums and private collections around the world, including the British Library, the Chester Beatty Library, the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass., the Rietberg Museum, Zurich, and the Los Angeles County Museum. For further discussion see J. Arberry, *The Koran Illuminated*, Dublin 1967, pl. 48, J. F. Losky, *Indian Book Painting*, London 1986, no. 5.

£2,000-2,500

Vellum Qur'an leaf in Kufic, North Africa or Near East, late ninth/early tenth century

27

15 lines to the page written in fine kufic script in brown ink on vellum, vowel points in red and green, two or three diagonal dashes between verses, one quadruple floral device in red and green, 274 by 200mm.

The script of this Qur'an has some characteristics of the late hijazi style, but is more regular and consistent than the early hijazi examples. It is comparable with three other leaves, one in the Khalili Collection (see François Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, Oxford 1992, p.310), one sold in these rooms, 15th October 1982, lot 288 and one sold at Christie’s, 17th June 1986, lot 54. They are all of a slightly later date than the present leaf, and although the letter forms are essentially the same, the script on the three later leaves has developed into a more regular style and certain letters, such as the terminal he have distinct differences. In the present leaf the terminal he hangs below the line in a rounded hook shape, whereas in the other three leaves, it folds back emphatically under the line, a trait carried in later styles of kufic.

From the same Qur'an as lot 24.

£1,000-1,500

£2,000-3,000

28

Vellum Qur'an leaf (Sura 15, verse 38), in early kufic script, Arabia, eighth century

17 lines to the page written in neat consistent hijazi script in brown ink, some vowel points in brown, two clusters of three brown ink dots between verses, brown circles surrounded by clusters of brown dots every ten verses, some heading in red, some areas of discolouration, two small holes barely affecting text, reverse worn, framed, 203 by 290mm.

£2,000-2,500

The script of this Qur'an has some characteristics of the late hijazi style, but is more regular and consistent than the early hijazi examples. It is comparable with three other leaves, one in the Khalili Collection (see François Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, Oxford 1992, no.6, p.350), one sold in these rooms, 15th October 1982, lot 288 and one sold at Christie’s, 17th June 1986, lot 54. They are all of a slightly later date than the present leaf, and although the letter forms are essentially the same, the script on the three later leaves has developed into a more regular style and certain letters, such as the terminal he have distinct differences. In the present leaf the terminal he hangs below the line in a rounded hook shape, whereas in the other three leaves, it folds back emphatically under the line, a trait carried in later styles of kufic.

£2,000-3,000
Vellum Qur’an bifolium in kufic, Near East, late eighth/early ninth century

17 lines to the page written in kufic script, diacritics in red, clusters of three brown dots between verses, brown and red circular device with dots every ten verses, slight discolouration and smudging in places, edges fresh not affecting text, 172 by 246mm.

The script on these Qur’an leaves is in an interesting transitional style. Although its characteristics are close to fully developed kufic, it has some letter forms which are more reminiscent of earlier styles, the alif, the terminal yad and the terminal sin in particular. It can be related to two Qur’an leaves in the Khalili Collection (see F. Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, nos 6 and 40, pp. 52 and 89).

£2,500-3,500

Large vellum Qur’an leaf in mashq script, Near East, late eighth century

16 lines to the page written in elegant mashq script in brown ink, letter painting in red and green, verse divisions marked with rows of three or four short diagonal dashes, one roundel decorated in brown, green and white to mark ten verses, top edge fresh, lower edges defective with some loss of text, one split, few holes due to oxidation, 290 by 345mm.

Other leaves from the same Qur’an are in the Khalili Collection (see F. Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, London 1992, pp. 120-122), and several have been sold in these rooms, the most recent on 30th April 1992, lot 317; see footnote to that lot for further references.

£3,000-4,000