AN IMPORTANT EARLY QUR’AN LEAF IN HIJAZI SCRIPT

By the time the Prophet died in A.D. 632, although the majority of the Qur’an was held in ‘the hearts of men’, the memories of the Companions of the Prophet, it is likely that some parts of the Qur’an had been written down. Whether any of the Qur’an had been written down during the Meccan period is not known, but after the Prophet’s arrival in Medina, when the revelations were taking on a more legislative content, the employment of scribes was well attested. Among those who at that stage wrote down parts of the Qur’an were ‘Uthman, Ma’wa, Ubayy Ibn Ka’b, Zayd Ibn Thabit and Abdullah Ibn Abi Sarh. However, it is probable that before the death of the Prophet no complete written copy of the Qur’an existed.

The first reported impetus for the collection of the Qur’an after the Prophet’s death came during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr (632-4), following immediately the death of the Prophet. ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab (who succeeded as Caliph in 634) had become worried that many of the Moslems who knew parts of the Qur’an by heart were being killed in the ‘Wars of Apostasy’ (Ridda). At this stage the oral tradition was still the predominant method of promulgation of the Revelation and of traditional poetry. ‘Umar feared that parts of the Qur’an might be lost altogether and urged Abu Bakr to ‘collect’ every part of the Qur’an. Abu Bakr gave his cautious agreement and commissioned Zayd Ibn Thabit, one of Muhammad’s former secretaries, to ‘collect’ the Qur’an from pieces of papyrus, flat stones, palm-leaves, shoulder-blades and ribs of animals, pieces of leather and wooden boards, as well as from the hearts of men’. Zayd Ibn Thabit copied what he had gathered on to sheets (nushu) and presented them to Abu Bakr. They then passed to ‘Umar when he succeeded to the Caliphate, and thence to Hafsah, ‘Umar’s daughter, and one of the Prophet’s widows. These accounts have been analysed extensively by European scholars during the last century. For a full discussion see Bell and Watt, *Introduction to the Qur’an*, Edinburgh, 1970, chapters II and III and E.L. Korari.

The second reported impetus for a fixed, written version of the Qur’an came in the Caliphate of ‘Uthman (644-56). During expeditions against Armenia and Azerbaijan there were disputes among the troops as to the exact reading of the Qur’an. This eventually led to ‘Uthman’s decision to produce a definitive version of the Qur’an to prevent any further disputes among the believers. Again Zayd Ibn Thabit was chosen to supervise the writing of the Qur’an. When this task was completed the revised version was compared with
the 'sheets' (sahif) in Hafsa's possession and these were where the comparative Islamic manuscripts had finished. Several copies were made and sent in codex form to the main centres of Islam, and it is possible that the present leaf might actually be from one of these copies. It is reported that at this point all previously existing copies of the Qur'an were destroyed on any possible disagreement over the exact text. However, another tradition relates that Marwan, when governor of Medina, acquired one of the 'sheets' in Hafsa's possession to destroy them, but only managed to do so with the help of a certain Shu'th bin Abi Dawud (d.592) who witnessed to this discussion in its various non-canonical readings of the Qur'an (for a discussion see Arthur Jeffreys, Materials for the Study of the Text of the Qur'an, London, 1937).

One important observation that cannot be made as a result of the rediscovery of the present leaf and its pendant leaf sold last October is that not only does the dark brown script run absolutely consecutively from one to the next, but so did the pale brown script underneath, except that the top and bottom line of the pale script has been trimmed, presumably when the parchment was cleaned and prepared for re-use. There are only ten words of the second line of the last line of this leaf and the first of the next. This suggests that the later scribe was taking apart and re-writing the page, one word at a time, page by page, and re-assembling it in the same order. But what is noticeable is that the dark script is further advanced than the rest of the leaf, as indicated by the pale under-scrift, and so the later scribes were getting more words to the page. This may have been a result of their slightly different style of script, or possibly it was an intentional way of saving vellum. At the time of the writing of the Uthmanic codices, parchment was the only material considered worthy and durable enough to be used for the official record of God's word. It was a fairly rare commodity at this time in the Arabian peninsula and when one considers that the present leaf contains thirteen verses of the Qur'an, it may be estimated that a complete copy of the Qur'an would have needed something like three hundred leaves. The height of the 'ghaf' is only about enough vellum to complete the four or five codices which are said to have been produced at the time it would have been necessary to re-use earlier parchment which parts of the Qur'an had already been written. An interesting account regarding the size of the script is given by Uthman bin Abdar Rida (d.1451) in his Ta'rikh (The Maghribi journey) he tells of his experiences at Qarawah, where he examined several leaves from the Uthmanic codices which had found their way to the library of the Abbasid caliph Yazid I and from which two half-spans high by one and a half wide (see S. Munajjed, Etudes sur la Calligraphie et la Scriptura du Pré-Islamique, Paris, 1973). These accord with the written text of the present leaf corresponds to this approximation.

Note too that another palimpsest leaf similar to the present one was discovered in the roof of the Great Mosque in Saru'a during renovation in 1972 (see Masjidi's 1/4, Dar Al-Athr Al-Islamiyya, Kuwait National Museum, exhibition catalogue, 1985, no.4, p.59). The present leaf shows this. In present one in both the earlier script and the darker script on top, but the darker script on the Sana'a leaf has characteristics slightly older or the same as the earlier script writing under it and has a stronger sense of linear discipline. The Sana'a leaf, like the present one, also has several diacritical marks and no vowel markings, and carries the similar use of clusers of dots to indicate verse divisions. The Sana'a leaf is cautiously attributed to the first half of the first century A.H. and interestingly the script underneath is also Qur'anic. Furthermore, the size of the Sana'a leaf is very close to that of present leaf (371 by 280mm. and 365 by 281mm. respectively). Although the present leaf and its pendant leaf are undoubtedly written by the same scribe, the slightly different style of the darker script on the Sana'a leaf suggests that it may have been written by a separate scribe. The simple explanation of these is that this stage has been referred to as scripto defensione as opposed to the scriptio plena of modern Arabic. This is due to the fact that the scriptio plena of the Qur'an used a comprehensive system of diacritical and orthographic markings leave room for variations in the reading of the script. According to traditional accounts the use of a comprehensive system of diacritical marks on consonants in the form of dots or vertical strokes (also called letter-pointing or 'qam') was devised by Al-Hajjaj bin Yusauf, who died in 714. This was an important development as it meant that consonants of identical form could be distinguished from one another. The other great aid to the development of the easily readable script was the invention of coloured inks. This invention has been attributed to Abu'l-Awas al-Du'ali, who died in 688. However, it has been argued that the development of scriptio defensione into the scriptio plena could not have happened at all as is implied by the accepted account for the inceptions of Al-Hajjaj and Abu'l-Awas. It is virtually certain that the scriptio plena did not come into existence all at once as is implied by the accepted account. New eras of experimental 'changes' (See Bell and Watt, op.cit., pp.47-48). At the stage of the writing of the Uthmanic codices of the Qur'an the system of orthographic aids had almost certainly not yet come into being. It is known that the use of markigns to differentiate between different kinds of early Arabic script was in use in the late early Arabic scripts, but only often in essential cases where there was a real possibility of consonantal confusion, and not in a regular application (see Y. Safadi, op.cit., p.15).

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF ARABIC SCRIPT
Little evidence remains of pre-Islamic Arabic script. Inscriptions on tombstones in late Nabataean and early Islamic period are rare. Most of the extant pieces from the 2nd to 5th century CE which is the early period of the Qur'an give us the first clues to the development of Arab scripts and certain letters are recognisable (see Y.H.Usher). The Arabic script at this point, approximately two years before the birth of the Prophet, had not formed into a homogenous style. It is certain that the practice of writing was well known among the merchants of Mecca and Medina at the time of the Prophet, for there are several references in the Qur'an to the use of written records both in a religious context and in daily life. At this stage the scripts were known by their locality (e.g Makki script from Mecca or Madini script from Medina), but they did not necessarily vary according to their locality, script from different localities shared similar characteristics. The three main stylistic characteristics were known as Maghriban wa- Mudawwana (rounded and curved), Mathallath (triangular) and fi'in (both triangular and rounded) (see Y. Safadi, op.cit., p.8, and a kufic section in A.C. Hobscher Beauty Library, D. James, Qur'ans and Bindings from the Chester Beatty Library, London, 1980, no.2, p.15). The alif at the beginning of a word (as in Allah) carried a horizontal tail at the base. This is another characteristic picked up in later scripts, but it has been pointed out that this was a distinguishing characteristic of early Meccan and Medinan scripts (see S. Munajjed, op.cit., p.24) and can be seen on a letter from the Sassanians. The role of the alif throughout the period of the early Islamic century and at an inscription dedicating a dam built by the Caliph Mu'awiyah and dated 677 AD (see Y. Safadi, op.cit., p.15). Three other features of the script are that in the fi'in (as in the negative la) has a shape in which there are two verticals inwards and the base forms a small triangle. The characteristics of the light brown earlier script are generally more cursory, but a thinner nib has been used giving narrower vertical strokes. The light brown script can also be compared with some of the graffiti on the walls of the Ummayyad city of Madina and in an inscription dedicating a dam built by the Caliph Mu'awiyah dated 677 AD (see Y.Safadi, op.cit., p.15).
DIACRITICAL AND ORTHOGRAPHIC MARKS

On the dark brown script there are no marks to indicate short vowels, so it is a purely consonantal script. There are some diacritical markings to differentiate between consonants of the same shape, but they are not used on all the letters that require them in modern Arabic. For instance; the letter ḥa, the medial waw, the ta, and the medial ya have the correct consonantal marks (i.e. one and two marks respectively), but there are no marks to distinguish between the sin and the shin, nor between the jam, ha, and kha, nor between the za and the ta, or the daal and the sad. It is probable that these marks are contemporary with the rest of the dark brown script as the width of the dashes matches the width of the vertical strokes of the script (i.e. a nib of the same width has been used). The marks take the form of angled dashes formed by placing the nib down once on the page. So the shape of the dashes indicates the shape of the nib used.

On the pale brown earlier script again there are no marks to indicate short vowels and the only consonant which has diacritical marks to distinguish it from others of the same shape is the ta. Otherwise there is only a consonantal skeleton.

It is noticeable that both scripts lack a linear discipline (i.e the lines of the scripts wobble and there is no strict line base for letters in a word or words in a line). All the above characteristics correspond with the styles of Arabic script known to have been in use in the Hijaz area of western Arabia in the mid seventh century. £50,000-70,000
A LEAF FROM THE ‘BLUE QUR’AN’

Blue vellum Qur’an leaf written in gold kufic, The Great Mosque, Qairawan, early tenth century

15 lines to the page written in elegant elongated kufic script in gold, unruled, silver rules between verses, circular silver device in margin, corners very slightly creased, some oxidation, 283 by 382mm.

This leaf is from a manuscript commonly known as the Blue Qur’an. When complete it was one of the most luxurious manuscripts ever produced in the medieval Islamic world. Other examples of dyed vellum are known, but yellow was the more usual choice of colour. Blue was unusual and it is possible that in the choice of blue vellum and gold script there was a hidden political agenda. The most luxurious manuscripts being produced in the Byzantine empire at that period were religious codices on blue-dyed vellum. The present leaf and its six other leaves would have rivals and surpassed the luxury of the Byzantine codices. F. R. Martin suggested that the manuscript was commissioned by the Caliph al-Ma’mun for the tomb of his father Harun al-Rashid, but J. M. Bloom has argued that it had been part of the library of the Great Mosque at Qairawan, for an inventory in 1293 lists a Qur’an written in gold on blue parchment, with, however, only five lines to the page not fifteen (see J.M. Bloom, ‘Al-Ma’mun’s Blue Koran’). These folios illustrate the Koran, an Early Fatimid Kufic Manuscript from the Maghrib. Les manuscrits du Moyen-Orient, Varia Turcica, VIII, Istanbul and Paris 1989, pp.95-9):

Whichever commissioned the manuscript and for what particular reasons, a North African provenance is now the most widely accepted.

The majority of the manuscript is in the National Library, Tunis, and other detached leaves are now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, and private collections. Several other leaves from the same Qur’an have been sold in these rooms. For further references see footnote to lot 279, 28th November 1986. £25,000-35,000

QUR’ANS

54 leaves, 5 lines to the page in bold brown maghribi script with vowel points and diacritics in green, orange, yellow, red and blue, large illuminated discs in red, green and gold outlined in black between verses, large scallop-shaped devices in red and gold every ten verses, smaller gold rosettes with red and green dots every five verses, illuminated circular devices in margins, one upper heading in gold ornamental kufic with an illuminated palmette in red, blue and gold extending into margins, commentary at lower heading in gold kufic with red shading within a mihrab-shaped panel outlined in blue, worn, worn holes, discolouration mostly confined to margins, some slight smudging of black outlines of illuminated devices, some crossing, torn, whole and leaves loose and detached, 183 by 176mm.

These fifty-four vellum leaves are not fully contiguous, but contain the majority of sura XXVI and the beginning of sura XXVII. The fragments are as follows: folios 1-12, surat al-Shu’ara (the Poets) verses 10-49; folios 13-29, surat al-Shu’ara verses 88-135; folios 30-54, surat al-Shu’ara verses 138-165 and 181-227 and to verse 11 of surat al-Naml.

The bold maghribi script of this Qur’an section relates closely to a twenty-volume Qur’an in the Bibliothèque Ben Youssouf in Marrakesh (no.431), which was probably written at Granada in the thirteenth century. One section was exhibited at the Al-Andalus Exhibition at the Alhambra in Granada earlier this year (Al-Andalus, The Art of Islamic Spain, New York, 1992, no.81). Another closely comparable calligraphic style can be seen in a Qur’an section sold in these rooms, 11th April 1976, lot 247, probably from the same manuscript, a leaf of which was exhibited at the Treasures of Islam Exhibition in Geneva in 1985 (no.7 in that catalogue).

The shape and colour-scheme of the rosettes on the present manuscript are very close to those of a sixty-volume Qur’an copied at Granada in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. The thirty-ninth volume is now in a private collection in Toulouse (Al-Andalus, The Art of Islamic Spain, New York, 1992, figs. 2 and 3, p. 118). Another similar feature is the use of a mihrab-shaped architectural device to frame text. A Qur’an manuscript in the British Library (Or.12924D), illustrated in Al-Andalus, The Art of Islamic Spain, New York, 1992, fig.4, p.119), also written at Granada in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century shows further stylistic similarities. £10,000-12,000
AN IMPORTANT EARLY QUR’AN SECTION IN HIJAZI SCRIPT

Qur’an section (Surat al-Amran, verses 34-104), Arabic manuscript on vellum written in late Hijazi script, Mecca or Medina, c.700 A.D.

8 leaves (one fragmentary), 19-27 lines to the page written in brown Hijazi script, diacritical marks, where present, consist of oval dots or angled dashes, no vowel points, clusters of brown ink dots to indicate verse divisions, circular devices consisting of green and red dots every ten verses, one long, narrow rectangular penul of green and red dots, and a circular marginal device consisting of colored dots on final folio, probably to indicate the sura heading of Surah IV (al-Nisa’), leaves seem to be a part of a single codex, 3 leaves torn with some loss of text, final two folios with hole and slight loss of text, cutout, stained, watermarked, some later reinking, 210 by 260mm.

This fragment of eight leaves forms one of the most important pieces of early Qur’anic material. It almost certainly dates from the first century Hijri, and examples of the Qur’an from this period are extremely rare. It is highly important for the study of the early history of Qur’ans and for the development of Arabic script. It sheds light on the development of the textual divisions and how they were indicated. And particularly rare is the fact that the leaves are still bound with the original stitching.

COMPARATIVE MATERIAL

There are several leaves or fragments dating from the early eighth century which are comparable to the present fragment. A Qur’an in the British Library (Or.2166) (see Martin Lings and Yasin Safadi, The Qur’an, catalogue of an exhibition at the British Library, 1976, no.11a, p.20). A Qur’an fragment in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Ms.1615) (see D. James, Qur’ans and bindings from the Chester Beatty Library, catalogue of an exhibition, 1991, p.14). Three Qur’an leaves in the Museum of Islamic Art, Istanbul (nos. 85, 87 and 89) (see S. Mumajid, Etudes de Paléographie Arabe, Beirut 1977, pp.94, 95). A leaf and a bifolium in the Sana’a Museum (nos.00-283 and 00-25.1) (see Massih, Sen’a, Dar Al-Adia Al-Islamiya, Kuwait National Museum, exhibition catalogue 1989, nos.5 and 17, pp.56 and 60-61). A fragmentary leaf in the Vatican Library (Ms. Ar. 1005) (see S. Mumajid, op. cit., p.25). A leaf in the Khalili Collection (see François Déroche, The Abbasid Tradition, London 1992, no.1, p.90) and a leaf formerly in the property of the Hagop Kevorkian Fund, sold in these rooms 23rd April 1979, lot 13.

It is likely that the present fragment forms a complete physical section of an early Qur’an manuscript. The scribes must have copied the Qur’an on to single leaves which were then stitched together using stitching probably made from animal gut. If all the physical sections of the Qur’an were made up of eight leaves and contained more or less the same number of verses, they would have needed approximately thirty gatherings of eight single leaves. This physical division is close to modern divisions of Qur’ans (madh) and although the latter are certainly based on a division of the text for purposes of recitation (one per day for each day of the holy month of Ramadan) the need for physical divisions of groups of leaves in early Qur’ans may well have had an influence on this.

The leaves are of vertical format, which accords with other known early leaves and fragments, rather than the horizontal format which became the preferred format for the kufic scripts. It is likely that the format changed from vertical to horizontal as the style of Arabic script progressed more towards the decorative muhaqqaq category, in which the letter forms are extended horizontally.

THE SCRIPT

Generally speaking the script on this section is fairly upright in character and does not slant emphatically like ruq’a script. It seems to be a combination of the matn and什么叫 scripts of the later Meccan and Madinan phase (for a discussion of these scripts see Y.H. Safadi, Islamic Calligraphy, London 1976, p.89). There is a strong sense of linear discipline and the overall appearance of the script is very neat. The general characteristics of the script vary from page to page and the width of the nib also tends to vary, that of folio 4b being very wide, whereas that of folio 2b is much narrower.

There are several individual letter forms which are worth discussing. The terminal ya, so often a distinctive feature in early Arabic scripts, shows two variations in the present fragment. On occasions it hangs very extensively below the line, sometimes trailing as much as two lines below, whereas on other occasions it curls back under the line and extends horizontally. Whether this was an intentional variation or indicative of the fact that the letter forms had not yet been strictly fixed, we cannot tell for sure, but it is probable that both forms of terminal ya had some decorative element as there are too exaggerated to be merely functional. This is borne out by the fact that on other occasions in the present fragment the terminal ya is much shorter. It is interesting to note that the horizontally emphasised terminal ya that was preferred as Arabic script developed towards ruq’a, and with muhaqqaq and kufic, the horizontal emphasis achieved its apotheosis, while the more vertical emphasis of the hanging ya was relegated. Other letters show distinct variations. The initial alif, the terminal wa, the medial ta, and the terminal ghayn. The strongest variations tend to be from page to page rather than from line to line or even word to word. All these variations indicate that this section is probably the work of more than one scribe. For an account of the development of early Arabic script and early Qur’ans, see footnote to lot 31 in this sale.
DIALECTIC AND ORTHOGRAPHIC MARKS

Some, but by no means all, letters are marked to differentiate between consonants of the same form. The ح and the خ are marked, as are the ر and the س. The خ is marked and the خ is sometimes marked. But there are no marks to differentiate between the آد and the د، or the ذ and the ذ. The marks themselves consist of angled dashes.

VERSE DIVISIONS AND DECORATION

The verses are marked by clusters of brown ink dots, similar to the dashes used for diacritical marking. But the clusters are not all the same. The verses divisions are not visible on folio 1, but from folio 2a onwards they are as follows:

f.2a A vertical row of three dots.
f.2b A cluster of four dots in a square.
f.3a Four dots either in a horizontal row or a cluster.
f.3b A cluster of four dots in a square.
f.4a Three or four dots in a small cluster.
f.4b A horizontal row of four dots.
f.5a A horizontal row of four dots.
f.5b A horizontal row of four dots.
f.6a A horizontal row of three dots.
f.6b A horizontal row of three dots.
f.7a A horizontal row of three dots.
f.7b A horizontal row of three dots.
f.8a A horizontal row of four dots.
f.8b A horizontal row of four dots.

The circular devices of coloured dots indicating divisions of ten verses are applied either to avoid the letters which they overlap, or sometimes on top of the brown ink. There were no larger gaps left to accommodate these devices, which may indicate that they were added slightly later. But the counter argument to this is that, although their were no larger gaps, neither were there any normal clusters of brown ink dots. If the original scribe was not expecting special devices to be added for every ten verses at the original production stage then he would have used his normal system of ink dots to indicate these verse divisions. Since he left them blank, it implies that some special device was to be used. The coloured devices closely resemble the devices on the British Library Qur'an, and Vatican leaf (see refs. above). The decorative band for the sura heading on folio 8b is made up of a series of rhomboids in a horizontal line filled with dots and circles in red and green, the spandrels of the rhomboids being filled with red shading and green dots and all surrounded by a green outline. There is a definite extra line space given to this decorative band. It has not had to be squeezed in between to previously existing lines of text. This again implies that it was intended as an original part of the production of this Qur'an section.

£100,000-150,000
A CHINESE QUR'AN SECTION

36

Qur'an section (Juz XVIII), Arabic manuscript on thick paper, copied by Shams al-Din Ibn Taj al-Din, Yunnan, China, dated A.H.875/A.D.1470

52 leaves including three blanks, 5 lines to the page written in large, clear naskhi script in black, diacritics in black, gold margins between verses, margins ruled in red, occasional illuminated marginal devices, sura headings in red in ruled compartment, one double page of illumination with floral, cloud-band and wave designs in colours and gold, one illuminated naskhi with an invocation to God, slightly trimmed, some slight discolouration, late seventeenth century leather binding with central panel in the basmalah in ornamental naskhi script and borders of scrolling motifs, with flap, 251 by 174mm.

This is a rare example of Chinese Qur'an production. Another Chinese Qur'an section, dating from circa 1700 was sold in these rooms 28th April 1993. The present section, however, dates from several centuries earlier and is highly important both in its decorative scheme and in the fact that it is signed and dated and gives the location of its production. Its appearance sheds important new light on a part of Qur'anic history about which very little is known.

The colophon translates as follows:
Shams al-Dīn Ibn Taj al-Dīn wrote this at Dar al-Hadīth Madrasah in the great Chinese city of Yunnan on the first of Ramadan in the year eight hundred and seventy-five, praise be to God and Blessings on the Prophet.

Yunnan is the south-western province of China, a seemingly unlikely area for Qur'anic production in the fifteenth century, but, due to the lasting effects of Mongol trade routes, Yunnan had a strong Muslim population during the Ming dynasty (see The Cultural Atlas of China, Oxford 1983, pp.150-151).

The Paper
The text is written on a very thick buff-coloured paper, which seems to be made up of three layers. It is similar to 'Khanbaligh' paper, a fine Chinese paper used for many centuries and exported to the Middle East as a luxury paper. In the past, a beautiful writing paper called Khanbaligh was used. It was a type of card on which were copied books of extreme luxury and official documents which were needed to last a long time. Archaeologists think that this sumptuous product came from China because 'Khanbaligh' was, in the 14th century, the Mongol name for Peking....Khanbaligh paper was a true triplex paper.....the pulp, and here is its character, has been worked very hardly and must have been boiled and pounded for a long time' (L. Vidal and R. Bouvier, 'Papier Khanbaligh et des autres papiers antiques asiatique' Journal Asiatique, January-March 1925).

The Illumination
The illumination on the opening double page dates from two periods. The inner rectangular area of illumination is contemporary with the production of the manuscript (i.e.1470). It consists of bold floral motifs in red, green and gold, and small stylised wave designs. It is in keeping with the general decorative vocabulary of earlier Central Asian manuscript production. The illumination outside this rectangle, consisting of hemispherical bands of floral motifs, cloud-bands and stylised wave designs, dates from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century and can be closely compared in style and colour-scheme to designs on Kang-Xi pottery of the same period (see R. Krahl, Chinese Ceramics in the Victoria and Albert Museum, Vol III, London, 1986, pp.170-74). The illuminated roundel on the preceding page also dates from the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century and the specific design of the roundel and the inscription inside it can be compared with similar roundels on 'blanc de Chine' and brass censers of the same period (see P.J. Donnelly, Blanc de Chine, London 1969, p.19).

The Binding
The binding also dates from the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century and is very close to the binding of another Chinese Qur'an section sold in these rooms (see above). The roundels with the basmalah in ornamental naskhi script and the flap have a background consisting of a small diaper design. This particular pattern can also be seen on Kang-Xi pottery of the period (see R. Krahl, ibid.).

£6,000-8,000

Another section from the same Qur'an was sold in these rooms 28th April 1993, lot 80. £10,000-12,000
37

Qur'an section (Juz XII), Arabic manuscript on vellum, Andalusia or North Africa, early thirteenth century

107 leaves, 1 line to the page written in neat brown naskhi script on vellum, vowel points and diacritics in orange, red and blue, gold discs or gold trefoil devices decorated with red and blue dots between verses, circular, triangular or deep-shaded illuminated devices outlined in blue in margins, sura headings in gold with illuminated palmettes extending into margins, one opening double page of illumination consisting of square panels of floral devices in gold on red ground within a geometric frame, borders of gold knotted rope-work motifs and palmettes extending into margins, inscriptions at end stating completion of this section within a panel of knotted rope-work design with illuminated palmette extending into margin, trimmed, opening double page worn and defective, some holes and fraying on inner margin at beginning and end, gatherings and leaves loose and detached, 152 by 131mm.

A Qur'an section very close in style of script and illumination, and probably another section from the same thirty-volume Qur'an, was sold at Christie's 28th April 1992, lot 37. Another similar section was sold at Christie's 11th April 1989, lot 53.

£12,000-18,000

38

Qur'an Jama, Arabic manuscript on cotton, North India, seventeenth century

Cotton under-slip inscribed front and back, the Qur'an written in black naskhi in 135 compartments ruled in black and gold, sura headings in red, each compartment with a circular device in colours at each corner, compartments surrounded by a band of crosshatching with orange and blue speckled decoration containing the 99 names of God, large rounds in blue and orange over each breast containing the shahada in gold, epaulette cartouches decorated with blue, orange and black rounds containing inscriptions to God, lower border with 15 further compartments containing text of the Qur'an, discoloured, fragile, 650 by 955mm.

Three other Indian Qur'an jama's have appeared on the market in the last 15 years, the first (Spinks 1980, no.78) was catalogued as Sultanate, the second, (Christie's 21st November 1986, lot 84) was dated 1176 (seventeenth century), the third (Christie's 28th April 1992, lot 78), also seventeenth century, bears a very close resemblance to the present jama.

£3,000-5,000

39

Qur'an section (Juz IV), Arabic manuscript on paper, Timurid Persia, mid-fifteenth century

25 leaves, 7 lines to the page written in elegant naskhi script, text interspersed with gold discs decorated with red and blue dots, margins ruled in colours and gold, one finely illuminated headpiece in colours and gold, final folio with further verses of the Qur'an in a different hand, trimmed, remargined throughout, some smudging and discoloration, red morocco binding, upper cover with central medallion of gilt-stamped floral motif, slightly worn, lower cover of modern red morocco, 236 by 149mm.

£1,200-1,500

40

Miniature Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper in octagonal form, Persia, circa late sixteenth century

Approximately 216 leaves, 25 lines to the page written in minute naskhi script within a roundel ruled in brown or gold, sura headings in red, leaves and gatherings lose within binding, black morocco with gilt-stamped star-shaped motifs, slightly worn, rebound, in an octagonal silver case inscribed with the ayat al-Kursi (Throne verse), 42 by 43mm.

£1,000-1,500
Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper, Timurid Persia, first half of fifteenth century

354 leaves, 11 lines to the page written in neat naskhi script, dividers in black and red, gold discs decorated with blue and red dots between verses, margins ruled in colours and gold, sura headings written in gold thuluth over red on panels decorated with red cross-hatching and blue floral motifs, one double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, opening double page with interlinear decoration of red cross-hatching and floral motifs in blue, red and yellow, vermilion throughout, some spots of staining, few tears crudely repaired, opening double page creased and slightly rubbed, early sixteenth century brown morocco binding with central rectangular panel of gilt-stamped geometric and foliate motifs with cloud-scrolls, borders with gilt-stamped calligraphic cartouches, rebacked, doublures of later brown morocco with gilt-stamped decoration, 300 by 211mm.

£6,000-8,000

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Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper, Persia, sixteenth century

384 leaves, 12 lines to the page written in neat muhaqqaq script, dividers in black, gold discs decorated with blue dots between verses, margins ruled in colours and gold, catchwords in a different hand, illuminated devices in margins throughout, several pages towards the end with additional marginal decoration of graceful broken curvilinear leaves in green, red and gold, sura headings in white on illuminated panels of colours and gold, four double pages of illumination in colours and gold including opening verses of the Qur'an and proverbs at end in muhaqqaq and nastaliq, folio 1, later replacement, text of folio 78a added over original text, several leaves with crude repairs to margins, some slight stains at edges, black morocco binding with gilt-stamped floral decoration, spine slightly worn, 263 by 167mm.

£3,000-4,000
Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper, copied by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wali al-Daftari, Ottoman, dated A.H.1090/A.D.1682

485 leaves, 11 lines to the page written in neat naskhi script, decorative borders between lines, ruled in gold, margins filled with gold, collected and preserved at the end, three leaves detached, 2 leaves detached, 152 x 229mm.

Cur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper, copied by Muhammad Ibn Ramdas al-Maghluwi, Ottoman, dated A.H.973/A.D.1566