QUR'ANS

20

A FINE MAMLUK QUR'AN, c.1320

20 Qur'an, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, Egypt, Mamluk, c.1320

273 leaves, 15 lines to the page written in fine naskhi script on cream-coloured paper, Allah picked out in gold throughout. Basmallah written in gold throughout, gold rosettes decorated with orange and blue dots between verses, illuminated circular and oval devices in margins indicating half-juz and birth divisions, further textual divisions written in margins in gold, sura headings written in white thuluth on illuminated panels with illuminated circular devices extending into margins, two double pages and one single page of fine illumination in colours and gold, some leaves with repairs in edges, one leaf with bottom half replaced, later red morocco binding with gilt-stamped central medallion and cornerpieces, edges and spine repaired, with flap, 321 by 229mm.

The illuminated pages in this Qur'an are as follows: ff.1b-2a. Opening double page frontispiece with large fully illuminated rectangular panels of geometric and foliate motifs in blue and gold, semi-circular illuminated devices extending into margins, four lines of pious invocation in white thuluth.

ff.2b-3a. Surat al-fatiha and beginning of Surat al-Baqara with interlinear foliate decoration in red and blue within rectangular panels of illumination in blue and gold, sura headings in white thuluth outlined in red, circular and semi-circular illuminated devices extending into margins.

£20,000-25,000

This fine Mamluk Qur'an is typical of manuscripts produced in Cairo in the early part of the fourteenth century. It can be compared with several Mamluk Qur'ans of this period illustrated in D. James, Qur'ans of the Mamluks, London 1988, nos.5-9, pp.62,74, 222-3, and with a Qur'an dated 1321 sold in these rooms 27th April 1994, lot 15. The script can also be compared with two large Mamluk Qur'an leaves in this sale, lots 8 and 18.
21
Qur'an, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, Timurid Persia, first half of fifteenth century

354 leaves, 11 lines to the page written in neat naskhi script, discrepancies 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 full illumination in colours and gold, opening double page with interlinear decoration of red cross-hatching and floral motifs in blue, red and yellow, reneging throughout, some spots of staining, few leaves 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. £2,500-3,500

22
Qur'an fragment (Sura IX v.92.Sura XII v.60), illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, Persia, late sixteenth century

26 leaves, 13 lines to the page, first, seventh and thirteenth lines written in large naskhi script in blue and gold, interspacing lines written in small naskhi script in black, decorated gold discs between verses, margins ruled in colours and gold, illuminated circular devices with floral decoration in margins, sura headings in white thuluth on illuminated panels, some dampstaining, few leaves with repairs to margins, brown morocco binding, with flap, 237 by 165mm. £600-800

23
Qur'an fragment (parts of Suras II, III, XVIII), illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, Egypt, Mamluk c.1400

57 leaves, 5 lines to the page written in neat naskhi script in black on cream-coloured paper, text interspersed with gold rosettes decorated with coloured dots, illuminated circular devices in margins, sura heading (Sura al-Imran) written in neat thuluth script in gold, slightly thumbed, most leaves with repairs to margins, some dampstaining, modern brown leather binding, with flap, 265 by 171mm. £2,500-3,500
Large Qur'an, finely illuminated Arabic manuscript on gold-sprinkled paper with a fine contemporary gilt-stamped and filigree binding, Mughal, late 16th century.

376 leaves, 13 lines to the page, first and last lines written in large blue muhaqqiq script, middle line in large gold muhaqqiq, intervening lines in fine naskhi script in black, gold-sprinkled paper throughout, gold text decorated with coloured dots between verses, text area bordered with four rectangular panels of floral illumination in colours and gold throughout, margins ruled in colours and gold, text divisions marked in margins in red, blue and gold, wide margins decorated throughout with finely illuminated devices, seven finely illuminated double pages, some worming at beginning and end skillfully repaired, fine contemporary binding, the covers with large rectangular panels of gilt-stamped arabesques and cloud-scrolls, the flower-heads picked out with lapis-blue, dull brass with central medallion, corners and border decorated with fine borders and gold filigree over blue and green grounds, the intervening field of gilt-stamped scrolling motifs, a band of gilt-stamped rectangular panels containing fine incised repetitions of fine muhaqqiq script, original covers laid on new boards, fore-edge flap of similar design, 400 by 272mm.

The illuminated double pages are as follows:

f.1r-2a: Two large illuminated shamsas.
f.25v-3a: Fully illuminated double page with Surat al-Fatiha written in white on a gold ground in a central oval cartouche.
f.30r-4a: Illuminated headpiece marking the beginning of Surat al-Baqara, interlinear gold decoration with lateral panels of floral illumination on blue grounds.
f.179r-180a: Fully illuminated double page with interlinear gold decoration and lateral panels of gold flower heads on blue grounds.
f.378v-379a: Fully illuminated double page with prayers written in large muhaqqiq script in white and gold on panels of colours and gold.
f.378v-379a: Prayers written in large muhaqqiq script and smaller nasta'liq script in white and gold on blue and gold grounds with intercolumnar decoration of blue flower heads.

The illumination fits with what is known of the Mughal style of the late sixteenth century, with its great debt to Safavid Persian illumination of the middle of the century. Particular traits which indicate Mughal rather than Persian illumination are the use of unusual shades of green, blue and
purple and the stronger use of orange. The degree of detail afforded to the larger flower heads is also more typical of Indian work. Two comparative Indian Qur’ans have been sold in these rooms: a large Deccani Qur’an of the late sixteenth century copied by the scribe Mîr Abd al-Qadir al-Husaini (27th April 1994, lot 17), and a large Mughal Qur’an of the same period (23rd October 1995, lot 581).

The style of the binding also owes an enormous amount to Persian work of the mid-sixteenth century. What is unusual about the present binding, other than the fine quality of workmanship, is its good condition. The surfaces have survived extremely well, to the extent that the laps-kazali used to pick out the flower heads on the outer covers is still intact and the filigree doublures are in an excellent state of preservation.

The particularly fine calligraphy, along with the sumptuous illumination, the superb contemporary binding and the general quality of the manuscript as a whole would point to a possible royal provenance.

£60,000-80,000

(See also colour illustration of binding on page 28)

25 Qur’an section (Sura XV v.15 - Sura XVI v.128), illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, copied by Fatima bint Hassan, in a fine contemporary stamped and tooled brown morocco binding, Syria, Mamluk, second half of fourteenth century

21 leaves including flyleaf, 9 lines to the page written in neat naskhi script on paper, gold molettes decorated with coloured dots between verses, one verse heading (Suraat al-Nahl) in gold thuluth, illuminated circular and swirl devices in margins, single page of illumination in colours and gold (later addition), some slight staining, fine contemporary brown morocco binding tooled and stamped in gold and blind with central rectangular panel of interlocking geometric motifs, blind-stamped borders of crosses and reeded foliate motifs, worn at edges and hinge of spine, contemporary stabiliated leather doublures, with slip, 220 by 163mm.

£4,000-6,000

26 Large Qur’an, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, India, Mughal, dated A.H.1055/A.D.1645

505 leaves, 9 lines to the page written in mughqiq script, significant phrases picked out in gold, gold discs decorated with blue dots between verses, first 69 leaves with interlinear and marginal commentary written in red nasta’liq, margins ruled in blue and gold, catchwords in black, verso headings in gold thuluth or mughqiq on ruled panels, opening double page of fine floral illumination in colours and gold, trimmed, later cloth covers, 373 by 247mm.

£2,000-4,000

27 Qur’an section (Izîl XX), illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, Timurid Persia or Sultanate India, fifteenth century

18 leaves, 9 lines to the page written in neat naskhi script on paper, gold discs decorated with coloured dots between verses, margins ruled in blue and gold, illuminated circular devices in margins, one finely illuminated header, some spots of discolouration, trimmed, later marbled boards, 333 by 223mm.

£1,500-2,000
28 Small Qur'an, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, Persia, dated A.H.1201/A.D.1786

207 leaves, 21 lines to the page written in minute naskhi script, interlinear gold decoration throughout, decorated gold florals between verses, margins ruled in gold, catchwords in black, illuminated floral devices in margins, sura headings in red in illuminated panels, opening double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, final page with small miniature painting of a man, possibly depicting a saint, floral lacquer binding, slightly cracked and chipped in places, 92 by 54mm.

£1,200-1,800

29 Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper in scroll form, North India, eighteenth century

Text written horizontally in naskh script, small gold dots between verses, margins ruled in colours and gold, illuminated headings in colours and gold, with leather endpiece detached, length approximately 10 metres, width 9.5cm.

£600-800

30 Miniature octagonal Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper, Persia or Turkey, circa seventeenth century

Approximately 220 leaves, 18 lines to the page written in neat, minute naskhi script on paper, gold dots between verses, margins ruled in red and gold, sura divisions marked with thin gold panels, opening double page with narrow band of illumination in blue and gold, folios 1 and 2 later replacements, later brown morocco binding with central medallions of gold-stamped leather onlays, covers detached, 45 by 40mm.

£600-800

31 Qur'an, Arabic manuscript on paper, Sub-Saharan Africa, eighteenth/nineteenth century

Approximately 568 leaves, 14 lines to the page written in cursive script, details in brown, yellow and red, clusters of three yellow dots between verses, coloured devices in margins, sura headings in red, two pages with rectangular panels of lattice decoration in brown and yellow, opening page of text with similar rectangular panel, leaves loose in brown leather binding with stamped and tooled decoration, slightly worn, with flap, in brown leather vellum, 230 by 175mm.

£800-1,200

32 Qur'an, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper with a fine contemporary lacquer binding, commissioned by the Amir Muhammad Husain Khan al-Sariri, copied by Muhammad Ali al-Khurasani and Muhammad Husain al-Yazdi, Qajar, dated A.H.1292/95/A.D.1875-78

332 leaves, 15 lines to the page written in neat naskh script, details in black, interlinear gold decoration throughout, gold bosses decorated with coloured dots between verses, margins ruled in colours and gold, catchwords, marginal commentary in fine black ink, within gold panels decorated with blue flowers, finely illuminated floral devices in margins throughout, sura headings in red on panels of fine illumination in colours and gold, one double page of fine intricate illumination in colours and gold, fine contemporary floral lacquer binding and doublures, 222 by 170mm.

It is an interesting coincidence that this Qur'an is copied by the same scribe as lot 35 in this sale.

Unfortunately it is not possible to identify exactly who Amir Muhammad Husain Sariri (who commissioned the manuscript) was, since there are several officials of this name listed during the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar.

£6,000-8,000
Qur’an section (Sura XXXVI v.21-Sura XXXIX v.37), illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, India, Sultanate, fifteenth century

24 leaves, 9 lines to the page, first, fifth and ninth lines written in elegant thuluth script in blue on a ground of red cross-hatching, interspersing lines of thuluth script in gold (gold added later over brown ink), gold discs decorated with colored dots between verses, text bordered by lateral panels of red cross-hatching, margins ruled in blue and gold, finely illustrated pear-shaped devices in margins, sura headings in fine gold rayhani script on cross-hatched and illuminated panels, two double pages of fine illumination in colors and gold, wrapping mostly restricted to margins, margins repaired throughout, some text areas repaired, later red morocco binding with stamped decorations, 278 by 208mm.

Other sections from this Qur’an have been sold at Christie’s 26th April 1992, lot 41, and 9th October 1999, lot 49. £4,900-6,000

Qur’an section (Juz III), illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper in a fine contemporary gilt-stamped binding, Ottoman, sixteenth century

28 leaves, 7 lines to the page written in elegant muhaqqaq script with diacritics and vowel points in black, the word Allah and the Basmallah picked out in gold throughout, text interspersed with gold discs outlined in blue and decorated with orange dots, margins ruled in colours and gold, illuminated circular devices in wide margins, sura headings in thuluth in gold on illuminated panels, one double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, opening double page with alternating lines of black and gold muhaqqaq, corners slightly discolored, some pages rubbed, some slight smudging, few repairs to edges not affecting text, contemporary brown morocco binding with central gilt-stamped rectangular panels containing oval medallions and extending flourishes, the fields filled with arabesques and cloud bands, borders consisting of a band of gold-stamped oval medallions with floral motifs, inner borders delineated by a ring of gold-stamped cablework, double lines of brown morocco with central medallions and cornerpieces of gilt filigree over colored grounds, edges and corners worn, with flap, 350 by 230mm.

Other sections from this thirty-volume Qur’an have been sold in these rooms, 14th October 1982, lot 182; 16th April 1984, lot 193; 15th October 1984, lot 253 and 13th October 1989, lot 92. £5,000-8,000