Nuzhat al-Alhab (commentary on the opening chapter of the Qur’an) Arabic manuscript on paper, dedicated to Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, copied by Abd al-Wahhab ibn Abdallah, Ottoman, dated A.H. 854/A.D. 1450

83 leaves, 9 lines to the page, first, middle and last lines written in fine large naskhi script, interspersed lines in smaller naskhi script on thick cream and brown paper, significant words picked out in gold, green and red, dedication on f.4a to ‘Mehmed Khurram ibn Uthman’, f.1a with further dedication and ownership inscriptions, dimpled, opening few folios with slight repairs to margins, modern brown morocco, with flog., 270 by 180 mm.

This is a very interesting manuscript written for Mehmed the Conqueror and dating from an important period in the history of the Ottoman empire - three years before the conquest of Constantinople. In the text of folio 4a is the dedication to Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror. Adjacent are two notes. One gives the lineage of Mehmed back to Uthman, the founder of the dynasty. The other note explains the brief dedication in the text saying 'And he is Sultan Mehmed ibn Sultan Murad, called Abu’l-Fath (Father of Victory), who conquered Constantinople in the year 857...'. There is a further note on folio 1a under the title (now partly obscured) stating 'In the name of al-Sultan Mehmed(?) Khan Abu’l-Fath who conquered Constantinople in the year 857

£2,000-4,000

For further discussion see:


C. E. Bosworth, The Islamic Dynasties, Edinburgh, 1987, p.147. £3,000-4,000


251 leaves, 13 lines to the page written in a neat cursive hand in black ink on thick buff paper, chapter headings (fadl) written in larger script occasionally edged in red, numerous marginal glosses, slight dampstaining around edges, brown paper boards with brown morocco edges, worn, rebacked, 175 by 14 mm.

Al-Zamakhshari (1075-1144) was one of the great scholars of the twelfth century. He is best known today for his work on Arabic grammar, but was equally famous in his own time for his theological writings. He also wrote poetry and produced a volume of literary sayings which enjoyed great popularity during his lifetime. His genius lay in philology and he was the first of the four great masters of Arabic grammar who, during the tenth century, amalgamated and refined the debates of previous centuries and produced the most influential grammars. Al-Zamakhshari is particularly popular among Eastern and Western scholars for his very orderly arrangement of ideas. He was born and died in Khwarazm, but spent many years in the Arab lands. The great fourteenth-century traveller Ibn Battuta records that he visited Al-Zamakhshari's tomb during a sojourn in Khwarazm.

The present text, his Kitab al-Mufasaal, written in 1119, is probably his most famous and respected work on Arabic grammar. The four sections of the work - nouns, verbs, particles and phonology - and the numerous subdivisions (fusul) are so skilfully linked that the text as a whole has received almost universal praise in the eight and a half centuries since it was written. The Kitab al-Mufasaal also forms the basis for M.S. Howell's Grammar of the Classical Arabic Language.

It is worth noting that this manuscript, with its distinctly Arab interest, was produced in Samarkand during a period of Chaghatay dominance in that area. In most cases the Chaghatayids were strongly anti-Islamic, but there was a brief period of Islamisation during the reign of Tarmashin (1529-34). It was in the middle of his reign that the present manuscript was produced. Tarmashin was killed by the anti-Islamic eastern faction of the Chaghatayids in 1334.
Jamal al-Din Husain al-Kashifi. Tafsir al-Qur'an, large illuminated Arabic and Persian manuscript on paper, Persia, Safavid, mid-sixteenth century

572 leaves, 27 lines to the page written in neat naskhi script in black and red, margins ruled in colours and gold, catchwords, ruled headings in white on illuminated panels, one finely illuminated headpiece in colours and gold, opening double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, slight dampstaining in upper and lower margins, later black morocco with gilt-stamped central medallions and cornerpieces, 370 by 244mm.

Al-Kashifi was a Timurid scholar who completed his Tafsir al-Qur'an in 897/1491.

£2,000-4,000

Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Ashara', Sharh Mujaz Ibn an-Nafs (commentary on the Mujaz al-Qarn of Ibn an-Nafs - a medical treatise), Arabic manuscript on paper, Levant, dated A.H.566/A.D.1170

196 leaves, 27 lines to the page written in a neat cursive hand varying on naskhi, headings and significant words picked out in red, marginal glosses throughout, some dampstaining in margins, modern red morocco, rebacked, 227 by 126mm.

£1,200-1,800

Two scrolls with pious verses in Arabic, China or Central Asia, perhaps eighteenth/nineteenth century

the scrolls of Chinese design with paper laid down on green silk, pious phrases in Arabic in a bold, free hand applied with a brush, paper and silk now stained, torn and fragile, text area 136 by 34cm, scroll 164 by 60cm.

£1,300-2,900

Prayers and pious phrases, Arabic manuscript in scroll form on paper, North India, dated A.H.1285/A.D.1868

the phrases written in fine script in the form of birds, animals, flowers and other designs, the interior of the forms decorated with floral sprays in gold on gold-sprinkled paper, all on a ground of scrolling floral bands, gold, later rules in gold, in a cloth envelope, length 180cm, width 6.1cm.

£2,000-3,000
Ibn Haukal, *Kitab Mukhtasar al-Maghrib fi wasfi buldan al-Maghrib* (a brief description of North Africa), Arabic manuscript on paper with one map, European or North Africa, early nineteenth century

17 leaves, 23 lines to the page written in neat cursive script on blue paper, names of cities and other significant words picked out in red, one coloured map showing North-West Africa, the Berber peninsula, Italy and the Mediterranean islands from Malta north, glossed in Arabic and English in pencil, marbled paper boards, 228 by 135mm.

This is an interesting manuscript. It describes various cities along the North African coast including Tangier, Tunis, Tripoli and Algiers, and on the opening page is a note in a nineteenth century French hand as follows: *'V'Afrique d'Ibn Haukal cotept (? sur le no. de la Bkh. Bodl. à Oxford, no. 963'. A similar hand has written 'Ibn Haukal, Oxford' on the flyleaves at the beginning and end.

£1,000-1,500


71 leaves, 15 lines to the page written in two columns of fine neat handwriting script on paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold, headings in red in ruled panels, margins ruled in colons and gold, opening double page with finely illuminated headpieces and intercolumnar decoration of coloured flower heads on gold ground, few minor stains, adherent in good condition, later brown morocco binding with gilt-stamped central medallions and cornerpieces with foliate motifs in brown, with flap, 228 by 135mm.

£1,600-2,500

Mansur Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Kashmiri al-Balkhi, *Tashrib Mansuri* (a treatise on the anatomy of the human body), Persian manuscript on paper with five coloured diagrams, copied by the author himself, dated A.H.815/A.D.1411

30 leaves, 20 lines to the page written in a clear cursive hand, significant words picked out in red, five full-page anatomical diagrams, rather stained, few holes, some mould remaining, edges frayed and repaired, later red morocco binding, 245 by 174mm.

An autograph copy of the author’s most famous medical treatise.

The *Tashrib Mansuri* (Anatomy of Mansur) is one of the most famous treatises on the human body. Written around 1400 and dedicated to Pir Muhammad Bahadur Khan, Mansur’s work quickly became very popular and influential. The five chapters are: bones, nerves, veins, arteries and complex organs. The colophon on the penultimate folio of the present copy states that it was completed by the author himself in the month of Dhu l-Hijja in the year 815 (1411), making it an extraordinary survival and one of the earliest copies of this seminal medical work.

£5,000-8,000
Jami, Nafahat al-Uns, illuminated Persian manuscript on paper, with a lengthy contemporary inscription in the author's hand, Persia, probably Herat, dated A.H. 885 / A.D. 1479

265 leaves, 21 lines to the page written in neat nasta’iliq script in black ink on cream paper, names of saints and other titles and significant words picked out in red, margins ruled in blue and gold, calligraphic margins, occasional marginal glosses, one illuminated headpiece in colours and gold, first eight leaves containing fikris, folio 1a with lengthy note in the author's hand and signed by his 'bastabba hukayr Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad Jami' with the date 885/1478, further notes on flyleaves including ownership inscriptions and odd impressions, rebound, dampstained mostly restricted to margins, some leaves with repairs to margins, later brown morocco with central medallions and cornerpieces of gilt leather clasps, rebuckled, 242 by 181mm.

This is one of the three earliest known copies of Jami's Nafahat al-Uns, with a note signed and dated by the author himself in the year that he composed the original text, and it may be an autograph copy.

According to C.A. Storcy (Persian Literature, London 1972, vol.1, part 2, p.954) and Brockelmann (GDMAL SII, p.286) there are only two known manuscripts of Jami's Nafahat al-Uns which date from the year of its composition. An autograph manuscript and a copy transcribed from an autograph, both dated 885/1478. The present manuscript, dated 883 at the end and in the author's note on folio 1a, constitutes a third. The author's note, which praises his work in florid language and expresses the hope that it will be beneficial, implies that the whole of the manuscript was copied in his own hand, although he has not signed himself in the colophon. A further note on folio 1a indicates that the manuscript was made waaf at Tashkent in 973/1565.

Jami was one of the great scholars of the Timurid period and the Nafahat al-Uns, or 'Breath of Fellowship', was his biographical account of six hundred and eleven Sufi Saints. He is described eloquently by E.G. Browne in his Literary History of Persia 1263-1502 (CUP 1941, pp.507-48) and it is worth quoting some passages in full: 'Mulla Nur-ud-Din Abdur-Rahman Jami, who was born on Sha'ban 25, 817 (November 7, 1414), and died at Herat on Muharram 18, 898 (November 9, 1492), was one of the most remarkable geniuses whom Persia ever produced, for he was at once a great poet, a great scholar, and a great mystic. Besides his poetry...he wrote on the exegesis of the Qur'an, the evidence of the Divine Mission of the Prophet Muhammad, traditions, lives of Sufis, Mysticism, Arabic grammar, Rhythm, Prosody, Music, anecdotes and other matters. He was held in the highest honour by his contemporaries, not only by his fellow-countrymen, but even by the Ottoman Sultan, who vainly endeavoured to induce him to visit his court. By his most illustrious contemporaries he was regarded as so eminent as to be beyond praise and so well known as to need no detailed biography. Thus Babur...says that he is too exalted for there to be any need for praising him...San Mirza, the son of Shah Ismail the Safavi, says by reason of the extreme elevation of his genius...there is no need to describe his condition or set forth any account of him, since the rays of his virtues have reached from the East to the uttermost parts of the West.' £15,000-20,000
Mubarak to create an updated version of the Kalila wa Dimna and the result was the Ayari-Danish, which he completed in 996/1587-8.

The present copy has thirty two miniatures in a provincial Deccani style, but there are stylistic influences from other schools of Indian painting, and two miniatures in particular (114b and 148b) are in an earlier Mughal style. This is a natural result of the repeated copying of texts, where the artist or artists occasionally copy a miniature rather than compose one of their own.

The notes on the upper doublehale and flyleaf indicate that the manuscript has been in European ownership for some time. Two notes adhered to the paper and one written directly onto the flyleaf in old English hands give (correct) information about the text and copyist and fourth inscription reads simply ‘Magnus Lundquist 1943’.

£1,000-1,500

Nizamuddin al-Hassan bin Muhammad al-Nishapuri. Sharh Tadhkirat al-Nasiriya (also called Tundith al-Tadhkir), a commentary on the Tadhkira of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. Mr Syed Sharif. Sharh Tadhkira, two works in one volume, Arabic manuscript on paper, copied by Amir Muhammad bin Amir Muhammad al-Qarni, Persia, dated A.H.844 and 845/A.D.1441 and 1442.

314 leaves, 25 lines to the page written in neat nasta‘ili script in black, significant words picked out or underlined in red, catchwords in side margins, numerous diagrams in red and black ink throughout, red impressions and ownership inscriptions on first and last folds, slight dampstaining restricted to outer margins, edges slightly frayed by wear, contemporary brown morocco with stamped central medallions of foliate motifs, slightly worn, lacking flap, 247 by 151mm.

This is an important manuscript containing two astronomical works based on Nasir al-Din al-Tusi’s Tadhkira. The first part, Hasan bin Muhammad al-Nishapuri’s commentary, has a colophon by the scribe Amir Muhammad al-Qarni, dated 29th Dhu ‘Hijja A.H.844 (23rd May 1441). The colophon at the end of the second part states that it was originally written in A.H.811 and was copied into this volume in Dhu ‘Hijja A.H.845 (April/May 1442). Given the subject of the treatises and the dates of their copying, it is possible that they were produced under the patronage of the great Timurid patron Uthman Beg ibn Shah Rukh, who was governor of Samarkand until 1449 and whose interest in astronomy particularly is well-known. His observatory at Samarkand was considered one of the wonders of the world at that time. An interesting compendium of scientific works written for Uthman Beg in 1420-3 and including a different treatise of Hasan bin Muhammad al-Nishapuri, was sold in these rooms, 19th October 1985, lot 87.

Of the several seal impressions on the opening page, two are of a design associated with Ottoman royal seals of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Both are now illegible.

For further references see: Brockett, GMAJ, S1, p.951, S2, p.273. £6,000-8,000
55

Vahshi. Diwan, illustrated and illuminated Persian manuscript on paper with ten miniatures, Persia, late sixteenth century

232 leaves, 12 lines to the page written in two columns, nasta‘i‘q script on pink paper, interleaved with foliate motifs on a gold ground, margins ruled in gold, headings in white on illuminated panels, further panels of illumination interspersed amongst the text, borders of coloured and sprinkled paper, five finely illuminated headpieces in colours and gold, ten miniatures, opening folio worn and split, most miniatures with some rubbing, Qajar floral lacquer binding, upper cover and first few folios detached, 288 by 125mm. £1,000-1,200

56

Haqani. Diwan, illuminated Persian manuscript on paper, copied by Muhammad Shafi, Persia, dated A.H.1039/A.D.1629

225 leaves, 17 lines or less to the page written in one or two columns of fine nasta‘i‘q script on fine cream paper, interleaved and double interleaved in gold, margins ruled in gold, headings in red in ruled panels, three finely illuminated headpieces in colours and gold, later red morocco gilt, 281 by 160mm. £1,000-1,200

57

Jami. Tuhfat al-Ahrar, illustrated and illuminated Persian manuscript on fine coloured and stencilled paper with six miniatures, Buhara, c.1570-80

81 leaves, 11 lines to the page written in two columns of nasta‘i‘q script on thick cream paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold, occasional significant words and phrases picked out in red, headings in white on illuminated panels, folio dimensions dated 941/1535, margins ruled in colours and gold, borders of coloured paper finely stencilled with swirling floral motifs and scenes of animals among trees, one illuminated headpiece in colours and gold, opening page of text with interlinear gold, six miniatures, contemporary painted lacquer covers showing scenes of a prince enthroned in a landscape and musicians and dancers by a stream, surrounded by scenes in nasta‘i‘q, heavily retouched, some flaking, one corner of upper cover cracked, red morocco doulihieh with central medallion and converses of fine filigree over laps, blue grounds, 231 by 162mm. £4,000-6,000

Formerly in the collection of Hagop Kevorkian. Sold in these rooms, 21st April 1980, lot 198.

The miniatures are as follows:
1. A youth picking blossom from a tree (frontispiece).
2. The Prophet Muhammad ascends on Buraq.
3. A greybeard seated on a carpet in a landscape listening to an attendant reading from a book.
4. Yusuf with the mirror brought to him by a Canaanite traveller.
5. A youth in a landscape speaking to a man in a pit.
6. A maiden takes fruit from a bowl offered by a youth (finisepiece).

£4,000-6,000
Jami, Yusuf va Zuleyka, illustrated and illuminated Persian manuscript on paper with coloured and stencilled borders and eight miniatures, copied by Abd al-Rahman al-Bukhari, Bukhara, dated A.H.972/A.D.1564

138 leaves, 14 lines to the page written in two columns of fine nasta’liq script in gold, headings in gold nasta’liq in ruled panels, margins ruled in colours and gold, borders of coloured and marbled paper with fine stencilled decoration of gold scrolling leaves and flowers, catchwords in black, one finely illuminated headpiece in colours and gold, eight miniatures, two with inscriptions dedicated to Ahmad Ghazi Abdallah Bahador Khan, one with inscription dated 971/1563, few leaves with staining at edges, some leaves loose or detached, red morocco binding painted with floral designs in colours and with central medallions and cornerpieces of gilt-stamped floral motifs, red morocco doublures with central medallions and extending florons of black filigree over green grounds, now somewhat worn, rebacked, 248 by 176 mm.

Formerly in the collection of Hagop Kevoorian. Sold in these rooms 21st April 1980, lot 194.

The miniatures are as follows:
1. Yusuf lifted from the well by his brothers.
2. Yusuf being dressed by merchants after bathing in the Nile.
3. The old woman bidding for Yusuf in the market.
4. Yusuf as a shepherd.
5. Yusuf in a garden with Zuleyka’s handmaidens.
6. The women of Egypt, overcome by the beauty of Yusuf, cut their hands as they peel oranges.
7. Yusuf sitting with the Pharaoh after being released from prison.
8. Zuleyka, grown old with grief, sitting outside her harem but while Yusuf passes without recognising her.

£8,000-10,000

Hafiz, Diwan, illustrated and illuminated Persian manuscript on paper with five miniatures, Persia, Shiraz, dated A.H.938/A.D.1532

194 leaves, 14 lines to the page written horizontally and diagonally in one and two columns of neat nasta’liq script on paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold, margins ruled in gold, catchwords, headings in blue thuluth in panels of scrolling floral motifs in colours and gold, five miniatures, opening double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, brown morocco with red velvet panels, 196 by 11 mm.

Formerly in the collection of Hagop Kevoorian. Sold in these rooms, 7th December 1970, lot 193.

The miniatures are as follows:
1. A ruler out riding meets an old woman (probably Sultan Sangar and the old woman).
2. Two men dancing to tambourines.
4. Poets drinking in a landscape (with inscription on scroll of figure at middle right: Sassan - mood and soul went in sorrow of you).
5. A wedding scene.

£8,000-10,000

Sa’di, Gulistan, illustrated and illuminated Persian manuscript on paper with two miniatures, Tabris, dated A.H.952/A.D.1546

128 leaves, 12 lines to the page written horizontally and diagonally in one and two columns of fine nasta’liq script on thick cream paper, headings and significant words and phrases picked out in red, blue, orange or gold, double intercolumnar rules in gold, margins ruled in colours and gold, opening double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, two miniatures, one with architectural inscription dated 954/1547, some leaves with slight staining, brown morocco with gilt-stamped central medallion and extending florons of scrolling motifs picked out in red, brown morocco doublures, 235 by 146 mm.

The miniatures are:
1. A prince and a sheikh in a palace apartment.
2. The farrier’s daughter watches the Kadi of Hamadan as he sleeps.

£4,000-6,000
A FINE PERSIAN MANUSCRIPT COPIED BY
SULTAN ALI AL-MASHHADI AT HERAT, DATED
1495

61

Jami, Diwan, finely illuminated Persian manuscript on thick paper, copied by the calligrapher Sultan Ali al-Mashhadi at the Dar al-Sultana at Herat, dated A.H.901/A.D.1495

313 leaves, lacking approximately 10 leaves, 15 lines to the page written in one or two columns of superb nastaliq script in black on thick burnished paper, significant words and phrases on opening four folios written in blue, green and gold, double intercolumnar rules in gold, margins ruled in blue and gold, catchwords in wide margins, few pages with further columns of text written diagonally in margin, headings written in fine nastaliq and thuluth scripts in gold, blue, red, maroon and green on panels of fine illumination in colours and gold, opening double page of superb intricate illumination in colours and gold, very slight dampstaining restricted to outer margins, otherwise in good condition throughout, later Indian lacquer binding painted with floral tendrils and borders of scrolling floral motifs, some leaves loose, text area 176 by 111mm., leaves 289 by 196mm.

This is one of the most exquisite Persian manuscripts to come to auction for many years. Everything about it is of the highest quality. The paper is thick and finely burnished, the nastaliq script is superb and by one of the greatest of all Persian calligraphers - Sultan Ali al-Mashhadi - and the illumination is extremely fine and attributable to Yari. It was copied only three years after the death of the author (see footnote to lot 52 in this sale for further biographical information on Jami).

The calligrapher Sultan Ali al-Mashhadi was the greatest calligrapher of the late Timurid and early Safavid periods and was particularly famed for his nastaliq. He spent the majority of his working life at the court of Sultan Husain Baigara at Herat, but moved to Mashhad after the death of his patron, where he stayed until his death. He may also have spent some time at the court of Shaybani Khan Uzbek in Bukhara after the death of Sultan Husain Baigara and before his return to Mashhad. He is discussed at length by Qazi Ahmud in his treatise Calligraphers and Painters (transl. Minorsky, Washington 1959) and the following extract shows the regard in which he was held: