Prayers, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper in gold script, copied by Hamid bin Mubarakshah al-Khatmi, Egypt or Syria, Mashriq, dated A.H.779/A.D.1377

18 leaves, 5 lines to the page written in gold rehauzi script in gold on cream paper, orthographic marks in blue, margins ruled in blue and gold, colophon written in white thuluth on a finely illuminated panel, opening; folio modern replacement, burn marks at top, some dampstaining, five leaves resewn with gold, edges slightly frayed, spine worn, 245 by 159mm.

£6,000-8,000
Treatise on musical modes (naghm) associated with the Prophet Muhammad, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, China, seventeenth/eighteenth century

59 leaves, 6 lines to the page written in flowing naskhi script on cream paper, significant words and phrases picked out in red, colophons mentioning date on final page probably added later, five leaves detached, contemporary brown morocco with blind-stamped and stamped central medallion, worn, split, rebound, dovetailed brown morocco, 188 by 137mm.

This is an unusual text which discusses various musical modes (naghm) and associated poetry (e.g. ghazal) with reference to the life of the Prophet Muhammad. The most popular mode is the Nigoh Zamzam (from the well of Zamzam near Mecca). While several Chinese Qur'an sections have appeared on the market in recent years, non-Qur'anic manuscripts from the Far East are still very rare.

£1,000-1,500

The Fenarizade Family:
Shems Bey belonged to the prominent Ottoman family of Fenarizade, the descendents of the celebrated jurist Molla Shemsiuddin Muhammad el-Fenari, who lived between about 1359 and 1451 and was traditionally regarded as the first chief mufti of the Ottoman empire, a post later known as the Seyhulislam. The descendents of Molla Fenar was the young son, Yusuf Bâli, also held high judicial office. The latter's son, Ali ibn Yusuf Bâli, held the post of Kaa mar, one of the three, both called Muhammad, became qâdi of Istanbul. The eldest brother, usually known as Muhammadshah Celebi, is thought to have held the post between 1515 and 1517, and the younger

brother, known as Muhyiddin Celebi, is thought to have held it between 1520 and 1522, they both went on to higher office, and Muhuyiddin was Seyhulislam between 1543 and 1545. It is a curious fact that both brothers signed themselves "Muhammad ibn Ali al-Fenari".

The descendents of Molla Fenar's elder son, Muhammadshah, also distinguished themselves in the service of the Ottoman state. One of his grandsons, Fenarizade Zeyneddin Celebi, became qâdi of Damascus in 1516 and died as qâdi of Aleppo in 1526. Another was Shems Bey himself, who became Chief Registrer of the Imperial Treasury. A Shems Bey or Shemsiuddin Passa is listed in the standard sources as serving in this post between 1514 and 1516; this waqfâyeh shows him to have been Fenarizade Shems Bey, and also demonstrates that he was still in the post in 1517. By 1522, when a supplementary waqfâyeh was drawn up, Shems Bey was acting as governor of the sanjak of Tekirda in southern Anatolia.

The manuscript:
The manuscript contains two separate documents, the main waqfâyeh dated 1517 (pages 26-124) being preceded by the supplementary deed dated 1522 (pages 1-18); page 19 is blank. When the manuscript was re-assembled one of the leaves was misplaced, so that pages 15 and 16 should read immediately after page 2.
The main deed begins with a certification of its conformity with the Shari’ah signed by “Muhammad ibn Ali al-Fanari”, who describes himself as “wazir at Constantinople” (page 25). The supplementary endowment deed begins with a similar certificate by “Muhammad ibn Ali al-Fanari”, who describes himself as “pasha at the Abode of the Sultanate, the city of Constantinople” (page 1). As the dates of the two documents (1517 and 1522) make it clear that the signatures of the certificate on the main deed is Muhammadshah Chelebi, the signatory of that on the supplementary deed is Muhaylidin Chelebi, this manuscript offers us an excellent means of distinguishing between the signatures of the two brothers.

Both deeds begin with a preface written in praise of God, His Prophet Muhammad and the Prophet’s family (pages 20-23 and 2 and 15). In the main sufiyyah this is followed by the negus of Sultan Selim I, which reads “Selim Shah, son of Bayazid Khan, the ever victorious” (page 24), and then the certificate of Muhammadshah Chelebi (page 25). The main text begins with an introduction setting out the reasons for a good Muslim to devote his worldly goods to charitable causes (pages 26-29). The fact that the act of endowment enscribed in the sufiyyah took place in the reign of “Sultan Selimshah Bey” is introduced; his encomium occupies three pages (29-31). Then Shems Bey is introduced; his encomium occupies another three pages (32-33).

The act of endowment is then recorded and the property endowed is listed (pages 35-36). The latter included nine watermills containing twenty grindstones, all in the city of Bursa or nearby districts (pages 38-43); four sahihs in the village of Trubasar (pages 44-46); twelve plots of agricultural land in the district of Yenisehir (pages 46-50); and a great deal of urban property in Bursa that had either been bought or developed by Shems Bey himself (pages 50-72). Most of pages 72 and 73 have been left blank, presumably to allow for additions.

The revenue from these properties were to be used in a number of ways. The first, and most touching, was that ten Qur’an reciters were to be paid one akçe per day to recite one thirty-sixth of the Qur’an at the grave of the founder’s wife, Aishe Hafiz, daughter of Muhammad Bey, which lay near the mausoleum of Molla Shemseddin Muhammad Efendi in Bursa (pages 76-84). The second pious purpose on which the endowments’ revenues were to be spent was the school he had erected at the village of Aksu in the mountains between Inegol and Bursa (pages 84-86). The third purpose was the maintenance of the endowed buildings and the payment of ground rents (pages 86-94).

The next section (pages 95-100) deals with a number of practical matters, such as the collection of rents, the maintenance of buildings and the appointment of an attendant for the latrines. Shems Bey had built near the tomb of Emir Sultan in Bursa. The founder also set aside a large daily payment for the viziering of his great-grandfather, Molla Fenari, in Bursa (pages 105-111) and another for the support of his family (pages 111-114). The exact size of the latter sum is difficult to judge, since wording of the deed has been tampered with on all four occasions that the sum is mentioned. The appointment of the officials who were to administer the endowments is regulated (pages 114-117), and the document concludes with a description of the actual establishment of the sufiyyah (pages 117-124). This took place in the last days of Ramadan A.H.923/7-16th October A.D.1517 in the presence of the Grand Vizier, Pir Muhammad Pascha, of Kurnal Bey, the commander of the Istanbul garrison, of Abdussalam Bey, the Sultan’s commissioner for the capital, who was also the first administrator of the endowments, and of a number of treasury clerks and other dignitaries. On page 124 there is also a list of witnesses, who include Molla Shereif ibn Izav, the qadi of Galata.

The drawing of the supplementary deed on pages 1-18 seems to have been occasioned by the death of Aaf Chelebi, a son of Shems Bey, it is concerned with the addition of one mill with three grindstones on the sea shore in the district of Yalova, two mills with four grindstones in the district of Miltah and 39 shops in Bursa to the endowments of Shems Bey, but its main purpose is to direct that three Qur’an reciters were to be paid one thirty-sixth of the Qur’an per day for the souls of his son Aaf Chelebi and his wife Aishe Hafiz.

£2,000-3,000

Illuminated album of calligraphy by Sayyid Abdullah, including extracts from the Hadith, Ottoman, probably eighteenth century

6 leaves, one line of large thuluth and 5 lines of fine naskh calligraphy per page, each page with two lateral panels of floral illumination, opening ‘Ruznama’ with floral illumination above, margins ruled in colours and gold, borders of marbled paper, later brown morocco with gilt border rules, doublures of gold-flecked brown paper, 190 by 270mm.

£1,000-1,500

Ruznama (calendaric table), illuminated Turkish manuscript on vellum in scroll form, copied by Muhammad Amin Hilmi at Ararat (?), Ottoman, nineteenth century

Numerous tables in red, blue and black with intervening text in gold on blue ground, tables ruled in gold, illuminated headpiece in colours and gold at beginning, leather endpapers, length 95cm, width 8.3cm; and another Ruznama on paper

£1,000-1,500
Al-Biruni, Abu'l-Rayhan Muhammad Ibn Ahmad. Kitab al-Tafhim li-wa'il sinsan al-tanjin (Instruction in the Elements of the Art of Astrology), Arabic manuscript on paper with numerous coloured diagrams and tables, copied by Muhammad bin al-Hasan bin Naar bin Hassun (?) bin Muhammad bin al-Munajjim, Near East, dated A.H.593/A.D.1197

136 leaves, 17 lines to the page written in a neat cursive hand in brown ink on cream paper, significant words and phrases picked out in red, diagrams and tables in red, black, brown and blue ink, one diagram fully coloured in blue/green and black, final folio defective, but mostly legible, some slight staining throughout, trimmed, in a fourteenth century brown morocco binding with blind tooled and stamped central wood medallion, cornerpieces and border band, plate brown morocco doublures, with flap, 244 by 168mm.

Al-Biruni (A.D.973-1048) was 'the most distinguished encyclopaedist of the Muslim scientists' (G. Saliba in Young, Latham and Serjeant, Religion, Science and Learning in the 'Abbasid Period, CUP, 1990, p.405) and his Kitab al-Tafhim li-wa'il sinsan al-tanjin is the most comprehensive encyclopaedia on astrology that has survived from medieval times' (ibid., p.413). He was a native of Khwarazm and began his career at that court, but later worked for the rulers of Jurfan and for Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, whom he accompanied on his campaigns to India. He may also have worked for the Samanid ruler Mansur II.

The Kitab al-Tafhim, written at Ghazna in A.D.1029 is in the form of answers to questions posed by a woman by the name of Rayhana bint al-Hassan and contains sections on geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and the astrolabe as well as astrology itself. The present manuscript is dated Monday 17th Shawwal A.H.593 (4th September A.D.1197), only one hundred and fifty years after the death of the author himself.

For discussion and further references see: Young, Latham and Serjeant, Religion, Science and Learning in the 'Abbasid Period, CUP, 1990, chapter 24.


£6,000-8,000
Illustrated album page of fine nastaliq calligraphy by Mir Ali, Persia, Herat or Bukhara, early sixteenth century

four lines of fine nastaliq calligraphy written diagonally on marbled paper, text surrounded by gold scrolling decoration, two triangular panels of foliate illumination in colours and gold, one containing signature of calligrapher, marginal bands of colours and gold, borders of gold-sprinkled silver cream paper, framed, text area 163 by 81mm.

Sold in these rooms, 15th October 1981, lot 154.

Maqalat Mir Ali was one of the master calligraphers of the first half of the sixteenth century. He studied under Zain al-Din Mahmud and Sultan Ali al-Mashhadi. He was employed at Herat until 1528 when he was taken by the conquering Uzbek Uhad Khan to Bukhara, where he stayed until his death. The year of his death has not been established, but different sources mention 1538, 1544 and 1558. He was highly esteemed in his own day and Qadi Ahmad (Calligraphers and Painters, A Fonsive by Ghazi Ahmad, son of Mir Mansur, Washington D.C., 1909, p.120) tells us that he ‘carried off...the hall of pre-eminence and superiority, for in laying down the foundations of nastaliq he was the initiator of new rules and of a praiseworthy canon’. For further information see ibid., pp.120-31. 

£2,000-3,000

Illustrated album page of fine nastaliq calligraphy by Ahmad al-Husaini, Persia, late sixteenth century

4 lines of fine nastaliq calligraphy in black ink on blue paper, with interlinear decoration of scrollng flowers on gold ground, two triangular cornerspieces of fine illumination in colours and gold, the lower containing the signature of the calligrapher, inner borders of cream and brown paper with gilt decoration and cartouches containing further verses in black nastaliq, outer border of pink paper with repeating gold floral motifs, framed, text area 197 by 91mm., page 396 by 246mm.

Ahmad al-Husaini al-Mashhadi was a well-known calligrapher of the late sixteenth century, examples of whose work are in several public collections including the India Office Library, London, the Austrian National Library, Vienna, and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington D.C.

£1,000-1,500

Illustrated album leaf of calligraphy by Muhammad Husain al-Kashmuri, Mughal, c.1600

4 lines of fine nastaliq calligraphy written diagonally on brown paper surrounded by later floral and foliate decoration in colours with occasional use of gold, border heads of blue and cream paper, outer border of silver-sprinkled orange paper, reverse with an eighteenth-century portrait of Bahadur Shah standing holding a sword, similar borders, text area and miniature 182 by 95mm., page 389 by 246mm.

Muhammad Husain al-Kashmuri was the greatest calligrapher of the Mughal court atelier in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and was given the honorific title Zarin Qalam (Golden-pen) by the emperor Akbar. This page of his calligraphy has been mounted on an album page and decorated towards the end of the eighteenth century. Other examples of his work have been sold in these rooms 18th October 1995, lots 68 and 71, where further details of his life and work can be found.

£1,000-1,500
Illuminated album page with a letter from the scribe Abd al-Rashid to the Emperor Shah Jahan, Mughal, dated A.H.1050/A.D.1640

9 lines of fine nasta’liq script on a gold ground surrounded by floral and foliate illumination in colours and gold, reverse with description in ink in English, some patches of staining at right, text area 153 by 97mm., page 275 by 181mm.

The letter is a request by Abd al-Rashid, the court calligrapher and librarian, for Shah Jahan to pay his salary. An album of calligraphy by Abd al-Rashid is lot 48 in this sale. £1,000-1,500

Illuminated album page with fine coloured nasta’liq calligraphy, India, seventeenth /eighteenth century

8 lines of fine nasta’liq script written diagonally in yellow, red, white and green, on a green ground decorated with blooming flowers and leaves, cornerpieces of blue and yellow flowers and tendrils on orange grounds, border bands of cream and marbled paper, outer border of silver-sprinkled orange paper, text area 223 by 130mm., page 378 by 246mm.

This is a remarkable page of nasta’liq calligraphy. The script itself is very fine and has the unusual aspect of being written in different colours. The background is no less remarkable and has been applied after the script with such skill around the letters that it appears that the script has been written on top of the floral ground. The style of the floral decoration is also unusual. £2,000-4,000


176 leaves, 12 lines or less to the page written horizontally and occasionally diagonally in two columns of fine black nasta’liq script on gold-sprinkled paper, band of scrolling foliate tendrils between double ruled columns ruled in gold, headings written in white nasta’liq on finely illuminated panels, margins ruled in colours and gold, border decoration of scrolling flowers and leaves in gold throughout, opening double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, trimmed, some splits along margins, later ornate folio with gold-stamped and pasted bands of floral decoration, doublures of red morocco with central medallions, extruding flowers, cornerpieces and borders enameled of gilt filigree over coloured grounds, slightly worn, 229 by 175mm.

The scribe Sultan Husain al-Haravi is known to have worked at Bukhara during the 960's (1550's), but little is known of him before that time. The present manuscript, dated 1541, therefore sheds further light on his career. The style of the illumination, both within the text area and in the margins, is closer to Indian work of the period, perhaps of the Deccani school. It is possible that Sultan Husain al-Haravi moved to one of the Muslim Indian courts from Herat early in his career and later moved back to Bukhara. £5,000-5,000
illuminated album with ten miniatures and a page of calligraphy by Mir Imad al-Husaini, Persia, late sixteenth century

12 illuminated pages, the miniatures in the Shiraz style of c.1569, with illuminated panels above and below containing headings in white thumb from manuscripts of poetry, one page of 11 lines of fine nasta'liq script written horizontally and diagonally with wavylinear rules in gold and signed 'khatibahu al-abl al-mustashib Imad al-Husaini', inner margins ruled in colour and gold, borders of floral, leaves, green and blue paper decorated in gold with finely drawn animals, birds, mythical beasts, trees, flowers and scrolling foliage motifs. Ottoman eighteenth-century brown morocco with central medallion and extending floral of gilt-stamped floral motifs, gilt-stamped border hand of rope motif, divisions of silver-sprinkled buff paper, miniatures 110 by 57mm. and smaller, pages 230 by 122mm.

This is an attractive small album with miniatures, illumination and calligraphy from various manuscripts of Persian poetry. The miniatures all come from a manuscript of Qarshin’s ‘Apīd al-Makhdūqi and are painted in the Shiraz style of c.1569. The illumination and the page of nasta’liq calligraphy by ‘Imad al-Husaini date from the same period.

Mir ‘Imad al-Husaini was one of the greatest Persian calligraphers. He studied under various masters including Malik al-Dallami and Muhammad Husain. He worked in Qazvin, Tabriz, Herat and Turkey and was considered an equal in skill to Mir ‘Ali.

The miniatures are:

1. The dog-headed monster of the island of al-Kasr.
2. The fish which goes on land and eats meat.
3. The human-headed fish, the wolf-headed fish which lays eggs and suckles its young and the flying fish.
4. The sea-horse.
5. Solomon with two jinn and an angel.
6. The sea monster with a single horn.
7. Birds flying upwards (possibly the parakeets of Java).
8. The fish with the body of five snakes and the head of a hare.
9. The miraculous rescue of the stranded voyager.
10. The tree-people of Java with a winged raven cat.

£3,000-4,000