الذكرى الأعظم لأبي في هذه الدنيا للأنبياء الذي
تمت به المدينة وهم الصادقون رضاؤه
والمؤمنون الذين أرسله الله وملائمه من
والأخوة وصوفي وعليهم من الفضل

THE ILLUMINATION

The illumination is notable both for its profusion - six fully illuminated double pages and a huge number of marginal devices - and also for the enormous variety of forms, shapes and patterns within the marginal devices and palmettes. The six double pages are as follows:

F.1b-2a Opening double title page with headings written in eastern kufic script in white on silver (now oxidised) and blue-fritted grounds, central circular panels containing reticulated geometric forms and further headings, border bands of knotted motifs. Originally there were single palmettes extending into the margins from the mid-point of the border bands. These are now obscured under paper repairs, but may still be revealed after conservation.

F.3b-4a Large rectangular panels containing numerous six lobed medallions (containing the word Allah in white kufic) interlocking with hexagons, inner border bands of knotted motifs, outer border bands of radiating arabesques. The geometric forms of the main area of illumination are almost exactly the opposite (i.e. using the same motifs but in reverse) of those of one of the sections of Ulfaytay Khan’s Mosul Qur’an (written 1306-11, James, 1988, fig.67)- here the main feature is a repeating, convex six lobed medallion interlocking with hexagons and concave six-sided forms; the main feature of Ulfaytay’s sections is a repeating six-sided star interlocking with concave-sixed hexagons. The outer border bands are very similar to those on a manuscript of the Majmu’ al-Baharifiyya made for the vizier Rashid al-Din at Tabriz in 1310 (Bibliothèque National, Paris, Ms. Arabe2324; see Martin, 1912, pl.238; Pope, Survey, pl.95b); London, 1976, no.229); and, to a lesser extent, those on a Qur’an section made for Rashid al-Din in 1315 (Topkapı, E1246; James, op.cit. cat.46) and an anonymous Baghdad Qur’an of 1302-3 in thirty sections (James, op.cit. cat.39). Further comparison can be made with the illuminated title frames of the great Jami’ al-Zawarik manuscript prepared for Rashid al-Din at Tabriz in 1314 (Nasseer D. Khalil Collection, London, formerly Royal Asiatic Society, see Gray, 1978, pl.56-7; Blunt, 1945, fig.250a,252a). Like folios 1b-2a, from the mid-point of the outer bands would have sprung palmettes which are now obscured.

F.3b-4a Opening text (Surar al-Fatihah and beginning of al-Baqara): headings in white thuluth on illuminated foliate grounds, rayhans and nashtih text written within cloudbands reserved on a ground of tightly scrolling wheels and blue cinamomi dots.

Thereafter the illumination consists of palmettes for the sura headings and illuminated marginal devices for the fifth and tenth verses, for the sajda instructions and for the jaw’ and rub’i (seventh) markers. These are all finely drawn and consist of a remarkable variety of external shapes and internal forms, all based on intertwining foliate motifs with geometric frames (for illustrations of some of these see accompanying illustrations).

The marginal illuminations are similar to those of several extant Il-Khanid Qur’ans and illuminated manuscripts, perhaps most notably a Qur’an written by Yaqut al-Musta’imini in Baghdad in 1265 (Iran Bastan Museum, see Safadi, 1974, no.67), a Qur’an written at Maragha in 1338 (Chester Beatty Library, Dublin Ms.1478; Pope, Survey, pl.946b; James, 1980, no.67) and to an illuminated shamsa in the Morgan Manuscript of 1296-1300 (Pope, Survey, pl.946a).

POSSIBLE ORIGINS

Sadly the colophon does not record where the manuscript was made, only when (August 1303). Based on stylistic evidence and comparisons with other manuscripts, Tabriz or Maragha is likely, while Baghdad is possible. All had important scriptoria and were producing Qur’ans of the highest quality for the Il-Khanid court. This manuscript was probably made for a high ranking official of the Il-Khanid ruler Majdahud Ghiyath (1295-1304). It is just possible that the patron may have been the great vizier and historian Rashid al-Din, who, by 1303 was already in a powerful position in the empire, and was a keen Muslim convert. In order to emphasise the strength of his Islamic belief, he was in the habit of writing treatises on Islamic theology (apparently slightly derivative, see El.2, ‘Rashid al-Din al-Tabbî’). In the same vein, he is also known to have owned or commissioned at least a thousand Qur’an manuscripts (James, 1988, p.128). In his will he listed the Qur’ans in his book-store near his tomb in Tabriz as containing four hundred written in gold, ten by Yaqut, two by Ibn Muqallid, twenty by Ahmad Ibn al-Suhrawardi, a further twenty by ‘well-known’ calligraphers and five hundred and forty-eight beautifully-written. Of these, the first four categories can be discounted for the sake of the present manuscript (since it is not in gold, nor is it by any of those scribes), leaving the tantalising possibility that it is one of the other five hundred and sixty-eight once in Rashid al-Din’s library.

The manuscript is sold with a typed note dated January 18th, 1950, from A.S. Felton (then Keeper of Oriental Books and Manuscripts at the British Museum) describing the Qur’an.

For further discussion and references to manuscripts of this period see: James, 1988, chs.4,5,7, Srinitz, 1997, no.1, El.2, ‘Rashid al-Din al-Tabbî’ and ‘Ghazan’ Gray, 1978 Talbot Rice, 1976 Blunt, 1995
The Property of a Lady

21 Large Qur'an leaf in mughqash script on paper, probably Damascus, manuscript, 13th century.
Text: Suras 30:1-9; 13 lines per page written in fine mughqash script on cream-coloured paper, illuminated in black, gold and blue, with geometric borders, leaves and branches with gold and red, blue and black in margins, framed 455 x 300mm.

This leaf comes from a grand, two-volume Qur'an, probably produced at Damascus in the second quarter of the 14th century. The first volume is in the National Museum in Damascus (no.13615) and the second is dispersed. For many years it was considered to have been written for the Mamluk Amir Ibrahim Ibn Mahmud al-Sayf Manjik (also called Sayf al-Din Manjik) based on the reading of an inscription in the first volume which recorded that the manuscript had been donated to a religious institution. However, recent research by Stanley Quarich (1213, no.22, pp.117-9) has shown that the donor to be Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim Ibn al-Sayf Manjik, the great-grandson of Amir al-Sayf Manjik. This would place the waqf donation in the 15th century, too late to correspond with the original production of the manuscript. This does not, however, preclude the possibility that the Qur'an was made for the great-grandfather, but donated to the waqf by the great-grandson.

Other leaves from this Qur'an have been sold in these rooms, 26th April 1995, lot 3; 19th October 1994, 45; 23rd May 1996, lot 260; 22nd April 1980, lot 155; and 7th December 1971, lots 262-266. For a fuller discussion of this and related manuscripts see Quarich, c.p.c.l.t. Geneva, 1988, no.10 and London, 1976, no.539.

£2,000-3,000

The Property of a Private Collector

22 Six sections from a thirty-volume Qur'an, illuminated Arabic manuscripts on paper, with waqf inscriptions of the Mamluk Sultan Qansu'hi Ghawri, Egypt, Mamluk, late 13th century.
Text: Sections 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; 7 lines per page written in black ink script on cream paper, gold rosaces decorated with red and blue dots between verses, sura headings written in gold thuluth script within ruled panels, margins ruled in red, bi-divisional written in gold thuluth in margins with interstices infilled in red, each volume with an opening page illuminated with rectangular and circular panels with titles in white thuluth on illuminated grounds, illuminated rounds in margins, lengthy waqf inscription mentioning the name of Qansu'hi-Ghawri.

These sections are interesting examples of manuscript production at the very end of the Mamluk empire just before the Ottoman conquest of Egypt. From the style of the illuminated openings, the manuscripts would appear to have been made towards the end of the 13th century, but during the reign of the penultimate Mamluk Sultan, al-Malik al-Ashraf Qansu'hi Ghawri (r.1291-1301) the thirty volume Qur'an was dedicated to his madrasa in Cairo. The text of the main waqf inscription reads:

"I attest to the fact that our lord Abu al-Nasr Qansu'hi Ghawri...." 

Other Property

23 Large Qur'an leaf in mughqash script on paper, Egypt, Mamluk, early 14th century.
Text: Suras 30:1-9; 13 lines per page written in fine, strong mughqash script on cream paper, gold rosaces decorated with blue dots between verses, fifth and tenth verses marked in margins with large illuminated devices, sura heading (Surat al-Sa'id) written in fine, large thuluth script in gold with some interstices infilled with black, catchword in black in lower margin, framed 450 x 325mm.

This Qur'an leaf is typical of the large, grand Qur'ans made under the patronage of the Mamluk court in Egypt in the early 14th century. Related examples are illustrated and discussed in James, 1988, 86, 87-8, 89, 90, 91-92, 93, 94, 95-97, 98-99, 100-101, 102, 103; and 1988, 86, 87-8, 89, 90, 91-92, 93, 94, 95-97, 98-99, 100-101, 102, 103.

£1,200-1,800

24 Large Qur'an leaf in mughqash script on paper, Iran, Timurid, early 15th century.
Text: Suras 30:1-9; 13 lines per page written in fine, bold mughqash script in black ink on cream paper, illuminated in black, gold rosaces decorated with red and blue dots between verses, fifth verse marked in margins with an illuminated device, tenth verse marked in margins with an illuminated roundel outlined in gold, sura heading (Surat al-Rahm) written in fine gold thuluth script with interstices infilled with black, on an illuminated panel with scrolling foliate tendrils and corners of blue and gold floral motifs, wide margins 475 x 325mm.

This and the following leaf come from an important single-volume Qur'an manuscript now in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, London (Qur'4, James, 1993, no.98, pp.42-53). The style of the script and illumination in general relate to early 15th century Timurid work, but, as James points out (ibid, p.42) it also bears a strong resemblance to a multi-volume Qur'an written for the Aqquyunlu ruler Yoqub Beg in 1483 by the scribe Zayn al-Abidin bin Muhammad al-Shirazi (the majority now in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ms.1501-2 (Arberry, 1967, nos.147-8, James, 1980, no.55), fragments in the Mashhad Shrine Library). A single leaf from the manuscript was sold in these rooms, 8th July 1980, lot 161.

£1,000-1,500

25 Large Qur'an leaf in mughqash script on paper, Iran, Timurid, early 15th century, or Aqquyunlu, late 15th century.
Text: Suras 30:1-9; 13 lines per page written in fine, bold mughqash script in black ink on cream paper, illuminated in black, gold rosaces decorated with red and blue dots between verses, fifth verse marked in margins with an illuminated device, tenth verse marked in margins with an illuminated roundel outlined in gold, sura heading (Surat al-Rahm) written in fine gold thuluth script with interstices infilled with black, on an illuminated panel with scrolling foliate tendrils and corners of blue and gold floral motifs, wide margins 475 x 325mm.

This Qur'an leaf is typical of the large, grand Qur'ans made under the patronage of the Aqquyunlu rulers Yoqub Beg in 1483 by the scribe Zayn al-Abidin bin Muhammad al-Shirazi (the majority now in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ms.1501-2 (Arberry, 1967, nos.147-8, James, 1980, no.55), fragments in the Mashhad Shrine Library). A single leaf from the manuscript was sold in these rooms, 8th July 1980, lot 161.

£1,000-1,500

26 Qur'an, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, Persia, Timurid or Aqquyunlu, late 15th century.
217 leaves, 13 lines per page written in neat naskh script in black ink on buff paper within crimson bands reserved on gold ground, small gold roundels between verses, sura headings in thuluth in gold on panels of red cross-hatching or in blue on panels of gold scrolling arabesques, remarqued throughout with occasional re-insertion of original marginal roundels, opening double page of fine illumination, later black morocco binding with gilt-stamped central medallions, corners and border cartouches with floral motifs picked out in colours 285 x 200mm.

£2,000-4,000

From the same Qur'an as the previous leaf, see footnote to that lot.
£1,000-1,500

27 Qur'an, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, Persia, Timurid or Aqquyunlu, early 16th century.
217 leaves, 13 lines per page written in neat naskh script in black ink on buff paper within crimson bands reserved on gold ground, small gold roundels between verses, sura headings in thuluth in gold on panels of red cross-hatching or in blue on panels of gold scrolling arabesques, remarqued throughout with occasional re-insertion of original marginal roundels, opening double page of fine illumination, later black morocco binding with gilt-stamped central medallions, corners and border cartouches with floral motifs picked out in colours 285 x 200mm.

£2,000-4,000
27 Miniature Qur’an, Illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, probably Western Persia or Anatolia, dated A.H.728/A.D.1320
300 leaves, 17 lines per page written in fine, minute naskhi script on cream paper, gold dots between verses, some headings written in gold thuluth script in gold with the interstices of some letters filled in black, two opening double pages of illumination in colours and gold, predominantly blue, green and gold, dated ‘same 728’, later Ottoman brown marocco binding with gold-painted trellis pattern, with flap, in a fitted cloth box 70 by 95mm.

Provenance:
Edward E. Ayer.

This manuscript is probably the earliest dated miniature Qur’an to appear at public auction. Two miniatures Qur’ans, both dated 1412, have been sold, one in these rooms, 5th July 1982, lot 103 and one at Christie’s, 21st November 1986, lot 99, while the earliest Qur’an in Arthur A. Houghton’s collection of miniature books, sold at Christie’s, 30th December 1979, was dated 1560. Miniature Qur’ans of the fourteenth century are extremely rare and this manuscript is also notable for the high quality of script and illumination.

Edward E. Ayer was a Chicago industrialist who made his fortune in railroad engineering. In 1911 he donated part of his collection (which was predominately of western medieval manuscripts) to the Newberry Library, along with an endowment. In 1920 the Library purchased the remainder from him.

£6,000-6,000

28 Qur’an section, Illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper in blue and gold ink, Ottoman, early 15th century
44 leaves, 5 lines per page written in fine muhaqqaq script in alternating lines of blue and gold ink, dark blue and gold, gold dots between verses, fifths versus marked with gold roundels with extending flowers in the margin, tenth versus marked with gold roundels in margins, opening double page with text area surrounded by gold ruled panels and marginal palmettes of gold arabesques, the jaz’i’ titles written fairly in white ornamental kufic above and below the text area, slightly worn at corners, later red marocco with gilt stamped central medallion.

This manuscript comes from a grand thirtieth-section Qur’an almost certainly written in the first half of the 15th century and is an important example of early Ottoman manuscript production. Syntactically it relates to late Mamluk Qur’ans, especially in the basic layout and the fine muhaqqaq script, which has a strong, flowing rhythm, enhanced by the use of alternate lines of blue and gold ink.

The particular section is interesting since some aspects remain unfinished and give us a rare insight into the production process. Most interesting are the opening pages where the text is surrounded by gold illumination. The panels above and below the text are filled with scrolling gold arabesques. The outline of the white ornamental kufic titles has been added over the top of the gold, but is faint and would surely have been given a second coat of white pigment. We know from other sections of this Qur’an that these panels, when complete, were filled with colours, predominantly blue and red, so we are able to deduce the order in which the illumination was prepared. These titles, the gold arabesques, forming the outline of the pattern, the first layer of white of the ornamental script, the infilling of the other colours, 4. Perhaps the final coat of white pigment of the ornamental kufic.

Other sections from this Qur’an have been sold in these rooms, 30th April 1991, lot 230. This leaf comes from a dispersed manuscript of the Qur’an which was typical of the high quality production at Persian cities such as Shiraz in the second half of the sixteenth century. Muhaqqaq was a favoured script for the writing of the Qur’an at this stage, due to its powerful flowing form and rhythm, but writing in it alternating lines of blue and gold was more unusual, indicating a more expensive and high quality production, and the use of green and brown shading, to give the paper variegated colour, was an extremely rare feature. As a complete Qur’an it must have been a very impressive manuscript.

£1,200-1,800

29 Other Property
30 Qur’an fragment, Illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, Persia or Turkey, 16th century
Text: Qur’an 95, v.v.99-112
12 lines per page written in alternating lines of fine black and gold muhaqqaq script, the paper sprinkled green or brown, interlinear rules in blue, gold florals decorated with coloured dots between verses, margins ruled in colours and gold, large illuminated medallions in margins marking fifths and tenth verses, jaz’i’ division written in gold thuluth in margin, text area 252 by 157mm, leaf 400 by 290mm.

Provenance:
Sold in these rooms, 26th April 1991, lot 230.

This leaf comes from a dispersed manuscript of the Qur’an which was
31 Qur’an, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, copied by Hafiz Uthman, Ottoman, dated A.H.1095/A.D.1683
318 leaves including 2 flyleaves, 15 lines per page written in fine naskhi script in black inks on buff paper, gold roundels decorated with coloured dots between verses, naskhi headings in gold thuluth script in ruled panels, margins ruled in blue and gold, catchwords in black, textual divisions marked in margins in gold, finely illuminated marginal devices of foliate motifs in colours and gold, opening double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, gilt edges, good condition, nineteenth-century brown morocco binding with central medallion of gilt-stamped floral motifs, with flap, 192 by 119mm.

Provenance:
Sold in these rooms, 20th April 1989, lot 24.
After Sheikh Hamdullah and Ahmad Qorshabi, Hafiz Uthman is considered the greatest Ottoman calligrapher. He was born in Istanbul in 1642 and died in 1698. He perfected his own particular style of naskhi script, which was to influence future generations of Ottoman calligraphers. He was also a great teacher and numbered the Sultans Mustafa II (reigned 1695-1703) and Ahmad III (reigned 1703-30) among his pupils.

Another Qur’an by Hafiz Uthman, of similar style and dimensions, was sold in these rooms 29th November 1986, lot 326.

The present Qur’an is notable not only for its fine quality, but also for its generally good condition. An interesting aspect of the functional side of fine Qur’ans is demonstrated by the present manuscript. On the whole there is very little thumbing of the corners of the pages, with hardly any staining. But the six pages which constitute Surah Sisir are noticeably more thumbed, giving physical evidence of the popularity of this particular chapter.

£18,000-22,000

32 Qur’an, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, copied by the scribe Muhammad Hadi al-Imadani, illuminated by Mehdi al-Husaini, Persia, Safavid, dated A.H.1120/A.D.1708
286 leaves, 15 lines per page written in neat naskhi script on cream paper, gold flowers between verses, fifth and tenth verses marked in margins with illuminated floral devices, further textual divisions (fza); high ex.) marked in margins within illuminated devices, naskhi headings written in fine thuluth in gold within illuminated panels, margins ruled in colours and gold, marginal commentary in black naskhi within gold rules, catchwords in black, six double pages of fine illumination in colours and gold, one with the signature of the illuminator Mehdi al-Imadani, final double page with text area surrounded by gold scrolling foliate motifs, fine commentary leaves interleaved with main text and decorated with gold scrolls around naskhi text, numerous ownership inscriptions at beginning and end, two leaves loose, later floral morocco binding with dubious signature of the Muhammad Tahir Muhammad Yusuf and dated 1133 (1720), relaquetoned, in a cloth cover 217 by 165mm.

Provenance:
Sold in these rooms, 10th April 1989, lot 198.

This fine late Safavid Qur’an manuscript is notable for recording not only the name of the scribe, Muhammad Hadi al-Imadani, but also the name of the illuminator, Mehdi al-Husaini. His signature appears below the text of the opening of Surah al-Baqara on flio 3a. Amongst the names of owners and birth-records appears the name of the Qajar prince Firuz Mirza. The scribe is known to have copied two other Qur’ans, one dated 1128/1715 in the Gulistan Library and another dated 1130/1718 whose whereabouts is unknown (Iranzini, vol.1, p.192). Related Qur’ans have been sold at Christie’s, London, 27th April 1993, lot 39 and 19th October 1993, lot 47.

£52,000-70,000

33 Qur’an, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, commissioned by Haji Mirza Abdullah Khan Al-Mulk, copied by the scribe Ali Askar al-Arsteni, Persia, Qajar, dated A.H.1285/A.D.1866-7, in a fine contemporary lacquer binding signed by the artist Lutf Ali al-Shirazi and dated A.H.1285/A.D.1865
316 leaves, 14 lines per page written in fine naskhi script in black with interlinear Persian translation in red, the text area of each page decorated with fine scrolling foliate motifs in gold, double interlinear rules in gold, verse divisions marked with illuminated florets, naskhi headings written in fine thuluth script in gold on illuminated panels, margins ruled in blue and gold, marginal commentary written in fine black naskhi script on claud-bands reserved against a gold ground, caughtwords in black, juz’ and hizb divisions marked in margins within illuminated devices, three very finely illuminated opening double pages, finely painted contemporary lacquer binding with central oval containing gold bulls-eyes surrounded by trees, branches with townscapes, border cartouches of floral decoration, signed and dated twice by Lutf Ali al-Shirazi, lacquer doublures painted with irises and poppies on a gold ground, in a green cloth cover 286 by 190mm.

£30,000-40,000
This is a superb example of Qajar manuscript production with strong calligraphy, exquisite, intricate illumination and a very fine lacquer binding.

The patron of the Qur’an, Haji Mirza Abulali Khan, was a grandson of Fath Ali Shah Qajar through his thirty-sixth daughter Mahinush Jab Khanaun. He began his political career in the government finance department and was later appointed deputy governor of Qazvin and governor of Hamadan, Shahrud and Bastam. He was given the title Ali al-Mulk in 1862-3 and died in 1891 (see Bandad, vol.2, pp.284-6).

The scribe, Ali’Askar al-Arsanjani, was a mystic and one of the leading scribes of the mid-19th century, based in Shiraz. Qur’ans copied by Ali’Askar al-Arsanjani have been sold in these rooms 11th October 1991, lot 930 (dated 1825), 23rd May 1986, lot 419 (dated 1834) and 1st June 1987, lot 123 (dated 1864). (His son Muhammad Shah’al-Arsanjani was also a prominent calligrapher - a Qur’an copied by him was sold in these rooms, 15th October 1997, lot 18).

The binding is a splendid example of Qajar lacquer-work by the prominent artist Lutfali Ali of Shiraz. He painted in watercolour and illustrated manuscripts as well as painting lacquer-ware, and was particularly famed for his skill in painting flowers and birds. Interestingly, the binding of the present manuscript was completed two years before the text, and, as is mentioned with Lutfali’s signature, was completed on Naserii in the year 1281 (21st March 1865). A binding signed by Lutfali of similar design and quality to the present piece is in the Nasir al-Din Khali Collection, London (Khalili et al., 1986a, no.156. For a wider discussion of the artist see ibid, p.206).

£20,000-30,000

34 Prayers, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, copied by the scribe Du’vish Muhammad ibn Asi, a pupil of Abdullah, Turkey, Ottoman, sixteenth century

10 leaves, 5 lines to the page written in fine nashki script on cream paper, gold florids decorated with coloured dots between verses, headings in white thuluth on finely illuminated panels, margins ruled in blue and gold, one illuminated headpiece in colours and gold, colophon on final page written in white thuluth on gold ground within an illuminated roundel, similar illuminated roundel on f.3a with dedicatory inscription, gold ring of Sultan Murad III on f.1b possibly added later, brown morocco with panels of fine silver brocade bearing inscription ‘malab al-‘asfou’, doublures of red morocco 169 x 110mm.

£3,000-5,000

35 Jami. Diwan, illuminated Persian manuscript on paper, copied by the scribe Muhammad al-Qawam al-Shiraz, Persia, probably Shiraz, dated A.H.960/A.D.1552

205 leaves, 12 lines per page written in one or two columns of fine nasta’liq script, double intercolumnar rules in gold, headings in blue nasta’liq script on illuminated panels, margins ruled in colours and gold, single columns of text bordered by small panels of foliate decoration in colours and gold throughout, further triangular panels of floral decoration intermixed with text throughout, opening double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, opening page with ownership inscriptions and a seal impression, contemporary brown morocco binding gilt-stamped with arabesques and floral motifs, the flower head picked out in blue, doublures of brown morocco with central medallion and cornerpieces of gilt and black filigree over blue grounds, filigree worn, with flap 253 by 199mm.

This is a fine manuscript of the poetry of Jami, copied by one of the leading scribes of the mid-16th century. Muhammad al-Qawam, also known as Imanbazi, was a native of Shiraz and spent much of his career in that city. which, during the middle part of the 16th century, was the leading centre for illuminated manuscript production in Iran. He was a prolific scribe and at least seventeen of his manuscripts are extant in collections including the British Library. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Cambridge University Library, The Institute of Oriental Languages, St. Petersburg, the Topkapi Saray Library, the Tewke i Munesi, Istanbul, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Sackler Gallery, Washington and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. For further references see Geist, 1949, pp.59-63, Lowery and Beach, nos.138,166.

£10,000-15,000

36 Illuminated opening double page from a manuscript of Nizami’s Haft Paykar, Iran, Herat, late 15th century

Text written in two columns of nasta’liq script with 8 lines per page, double intercolumnar rules in gold, text area surrounded by panels and bands of fine illumination in colours and gold, framed 262 by 155mm.

£15,000-7,000
38 Hafiz, Divan, Illuminated Persian manuscript on paper with coloured and decorated borders, copied by Muhammad Qasim b. Mir Ali, Persia, probably Khurasan, dated A.H.989/D.A.D.1581 116 leaves, 14 lines per page written in fine nasta‘liq script in black on cream paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold, text interspersed with numerous panels decorated with gold cartouches, margins ruled in colours and gold, wide borders of cream, yellow, blue, green and pink paper with stylised designs of vegetation, animals, birds and geometric patterns in various colours, opening double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, illuminated headpiece at beginning of poetry, later lacquer binding with central cartouches and cornerpieces of gilt floral designs on black grounds, the main field with birds amongst scrolling foliage in black and gold on amber grounds, brown morocco doublures, 308 by 181mm.

This is an interesting example of the work of the great scribe-illuminator Ruzbihan Muhammad al-Shirazi. He has been described as “one of the most famous scribes-illuminators of Shiraz during the first half of the 16th century and may well have been the leading master of the city” (James, 1920b, p.144). His signed works date between 1514-17 and he is known to have copied and illuminated both Qur’ans, in which the classical scripts of naskhi, thuluth and muhaqqiq were used, and poetry, in which nasta‘liq was the chosen script - as in this case. Based on the use of the term meashahib by artists in the 17th century, Robinson has suggested that Ruzbihan might also have been a figure painter (Robinson, 1979a), and although there is no hard evidence for this, it is a tantalising possibility that the present manuscript may have been written, illuminated and illustrated by the same man.

The illumination of the opening headpiece in the present manuscript is typical of his style, and similar work can be seen in a Qur’an in the Nasir D. Khalili Collection, London (James, op.cit., no.39, for a full discussion of the scribe see ibid., pp.144-49). The miniatures are as follows:

1. A prince visits a hermit in his mountain cave.
2. A group of learned men in discussion with a stranger at a mountain pavilion.
3. A man bound in chains under a canopy with two others nearby (the pious and the wicked).
4. Sā‘id in the idul-temple at Sumnath.

£3,000-5,000

Other Property

39 Sā‘id, Bustan, illustrated and illuminated Persian manuscript on gold-sprinkled paper, copied and probably illuminated by Ruzbihan al-Shirazi, Persia, probably Shiraz, c.1538-40 text incomplete, 103 leaves, 12 lines per page written in two columns of fine nasta‘liq script on gold-sprinkled paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold, headings in orange, blue or gold, margins ruled in colours and gold, opening double page with finely illuminated headpiece and interlinear floral illumination, four contemporary miniatures, remarqued, later gilt-stamped binding with foliate motifs picked out in red, green and blue, red morocco doublures with central panels of gilt paper onlay 251 by 161mm.

This is an interesting example of the work of the great scribe-illuminator Ruzbihan Muhammad al-Shirazi. He has been described as “one of the most famous scribes-illuminators of Shiraz during the first half of the 16th century and may well have been the leading master of the city” (James, 1920b, p.144). His signed works date between 1514-17 and he is known to have copied and illuminated both Qur’ans, in which the classical scripts of naskhi, thuluth and muhaqqiq were used, and poetry, in which nasta‘liq was the chosen script - as in this case. Based on the use of the term meashahib by artists in the 17th century, Robinson has suggested that Ruzbihan might also have been a figure painter (Robinson, 1979a), and although there is no hard evidence for this, it is a tantalising possibility that the present manuscript may have been written, illuminated and illustrated by the same man.

The illumination of the opening headpiece in the present manuscript is typical of his style, and similar work can be seen in a Qur’an in the Nasir D. Khalili Collection, London (James, op.cit., no.39, for a full discussion of the scribe see ibid., pp.144-49). The miniatures are as follows:

1. A prince visits a hermit in his mountain cave.
2. A group of learned men in discussion with a stranger at a mountain pavilion.
3. A man bound in chains under a canopy with two others nearby (the pious and the wicked).
4. Sā‘id in the idul-temple at Sumnath.

£3,000-5,000

Other Property

40 Sā‘id, Gulistan, illustrated and illuminated Persian manuscript on gold-sprinkled paper, Persia, probably Bukhara, late 16th century 130 leaves, text incomplete, 12 lines per page written in one or two columns of fine nasta‘liq script on black ink on gold-sprinkled paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold, significant words picked out in blue, orange or gold, inner margins of coloured paper decorated with gold foliate motifs, outer margins of thin cream paper inset with cartouches of coloured paper decorated with gold foliate motifs, catchwords in black, opening illuminated headpiece, four miniatures (some retouching), later-brown morocco with central gilt-stamped medallion of foliate motifs, slightly worn.

271 by 170mm.

The miniatures are as follows:

1. A sheikh with attendants on a garden terrace outside a palace.
2. A group of men sailing across the sea in a ship.
3. A prince with his teachers in a palace chamber.
4. A schoolmaster with his rowdy pupils in a courtyard.

£2,000-3,000

41 Khwandsamir, Ghiyath al-Din, Habib al-Siyar, Persian manuscript on paper, probably 17th century approximately 480 leaves, 29 lines per page written in nasta‘liq script on cream paper, significant words and phrases written in red nasta‘liq or naskhi, catchwords in black, black chograph; and a copy of the Tarikh ‘Alam ‘Azami Abadi, dated A.H.1001/D.1609 (2) each ms. 365 by 280mm.

£2,000-3,000