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Front Cover Illustration
Lot 22, An important manuscript of Avicenna dated A.D. 1052

Back Cover Illustration
Lot 128, A rare Mughal early 17th century gold box

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Clearance of Lots for this Particular Sale
At 11 am the morning after the Sale large works of art and all carpets will be transferred to our warehouse and will be subject to our usual charges and available for collection the following day.
1 A flat stone inscribed with pious phrases, Arabian desert, perhaps 7th century or later
the stone of vaguely oval form, the naturally flat upper surface inscribed with pious phrases, in early kufic script, some areas abraded and scratched, naturally flat lower face with fewer, larger inscriptions of more cursive style upper face 283 by 186mm.
Provenance
Acquired by a Scottish gentleman in the Arabian peninsula, c.1950. By direct descent to the present owner.

This is a remarkable curiosity which relates to early rock-cut inscriptions in certain parts of the Hijaz and to inscriptions on dedications of dams and monuments during the Umayyad period. It is very early calligraphically to a rock-cut inscription at Mount Saba near Medinah of circa A.D.625, to early script found on a letter from the Prophet Muhammad to the ruler of al-Hasa in the Gulf in the early 7th century, and to a dedicatory inscription on a dam dated A.D.677 built by the Caliph Mu’awiyah (see Suladli 1978, p.15). The script on this stone is essentially early kufic in style, with some notably primitive letter-forms, such as the dāl, the ba, the ta, the lateral ma and a triangular form which seems to represent a medial sa and a medial mim. The latter form, which appears on the penultimate line of script on the stone, can clearly be seen on another ‘Umayyad inscription dedicating a pool built by the Caliph Hisham in A.D.724-43 (Suladli 1978, p.16).

Interestingly, the inscriptions on the stone are mostly religious, and may well be excerpts from the Quran. Although much of it is hard to decipher, certain words which occur frequently in the Quran also appear here. For example, the upper line seems to start with ‘Basmallah’, the second line contains the words ‘al-‘alamin’ and thereafter the following recognisable words are present: ‘abd-ha-bul-ha-‘alam... allah-... sambahallah...’ ‘allahu-... anna-... rab-... al-‘alamin... allah-... wa-dha... allah-... ‘alamin-... yaa-... allah-... yaa-... addan-... ‘alam-... yaa-... ‘alam-...’.

Although the stone was probably simply a ‘milestone’ type, perhaps lying on a pilgrimage route across the desert, and therefore presenting a convenient surface for religious inscriptions, it is also worth remembering that (according to the sources) before the first Orthodox Caliph Abu Bakr, ordered the original ‘collection’ of the Quranic text in A.D.632-4, it had been written down on ‘pieces of papyrus, palm-leaves, shoulder-blades and ribs of animals, pieces of leather, wooden boards, and flat stones’. While it is impossible to be sure of when the inscriptions were cut on to the present stone (the use of an angular script such as the this may well have continued far beyond the kufic era when used on such hard surfaces as stone) it is a tantalising possibility that this piece somehow relates to that early canonical phenomenon.

£2,000-3,000

2 Qur’ān leaves in kufic script on vellum, North Africa or Near East, 10th century
11 lines per page written in kufic script in brown ink on vellum, letter pointing (‘f’yun) in brown ink, roundels marked with red and green dots, fifth verses marked with stylised kufic letter ‘la’ in gold, tenth verses marked with roundels decorated with coloured dots, ink on verso slightly oxidised and worn, in one frame, each leaf 145 by 206mm.
The script of these Qur’ān leaves is interesting, featuring unusual forms of the terminal mim, the terminal mim, and the alif lam combination. These features are shared with only two or three other Qur’ān leaves, which are a leaf of which was sold in these rooms, 29th April 1998, lot 10 (see footnote to that lot for further discussion).

£2,000-3,000

3 Qur’ān leaves in kufic script on vellum, North Africa or Near East, 10th century
11 lines per page written in kufic script in brown ink on vellum, letter pointing (‘f’yun) in brown ink, roundels marked with red and green dots, fifth verses marked with stylised kufic letter ‘la’ in gold, tenth verses marked with roundels decorated with coloured dots, ink on verso slightly oxidised and worn, in one frame, each leaf 145 by 206mm.

See footnote to previous lot.

£2,000-3,000

4 Qur’ān leaf in kufic script on vellum, North Africa or Near East, 10th century
11 lines per page written in kufic script in brown ink on vellum, letter pointing (‘f’yun) in brown ink, roundels marked with red and green dots, fifth verses marked with stylised kufic letter ‘la’ in gold, tenth verse marked with roundels decorated with coloured dots, ink on one side slightly embossed and worn, framed 145 by 211mm.

£1,000-1,500

5 Qur’ān fragment in kufic script on vellum, with two illuminated leaves, Near East or North Africa, late 9th-early 10th century
Text: Sura VI, vv.75-80
four leaves, two text leaves with five lines per page written in fine kufic script in brown ink on vellum, gold florals between verses, fifth verses marked with an illuminated roundel containing the word ‘almaw’ in gold kufic, text on verso of both leaves worn: illuminated leaves with gold rectangular panels of recticulated and foliate motifs set around a geometric frame based on squares and rectangles, circles and semi-circles, stylised palmettes in gold, blue and red extending into the margin; the verso of one leaf with a rectilinear panel and marginal palmettes of flower heads within tightly scrolling tendrils in brown ink; the other verso with an inscription in naskh dated 6/133/701 or 133/717, one leaf defective and repaired along inner edge, in a fitted blue cloth case 95 by 163mm.
The two finely detailed folios in this fragment would have formed the opening and closing leaves of one fasc of a thirty-volume Qur’ān. It is interesting that while one leaf is decorated with only a gold panel, the other leaf has the gold panel and another of very finely drawn motifs in brown ink. The combination of simple geometric forms and foliate motifs is typical of the illumination of the period and these examples are notable for the fine quality and minute intricacy of the work. Other illuminated leaves from this Qur’ān have been sold in these rooms, 16th October 1996, lot 6. For related examples in Tunisian public collections and the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin see: Carthage, nos 345, 347, 355. Arberry 1967, nos 5, 10, 16, pls 13, 14, 16, 18, 20.

£2,000-3,000
6 Qur'an leaf in bold maghribi script on pink paper, Southern Spain, 13th century
TEXT: SURA LXXXV, vv.29-38
five lines per page written in five large maghribi script in brown ink on pink paper, letter-pointing and vocalisation in gold, tashkil and sukun in blue, hamzat al-walid marked with brown dots, hamzat al-qaf marked with yellow dots, single verse divisions marked with gold trefoil devices and large illuminated roundels containing alif letters in blue, white and red, tenth verse marked within the text by an illuminated roundel containing the word 'al-kufi' in gold kufic on a red ground, worn heading written in gold kufic script on a finely illuminated panel with a roundel extending into the margin 330 x 261mm.

This is a fine example of Islamic manuscript production from the Muslim west, and the twenty-volume Qur'an from which this leaf originates is remarkable in many ways. It was written on paper, which in medieval Islamic Spain was unusual, vellum still being the preferred material for the writing of the Qur'an: the paper was dyed pink, a rare luxury aspect; the script is a fine example of large scale maghribi (the marking of the hamzah indicating an Andalusian origin) and the spacious arrangement of the script on the page allowed for the clear marking of the diacritics and vocalisation in colours and gold and the elaborate illuminated devices between verses. A particularly unusual aspect of the verse divisions is the use of alif letters to mark the exact verse count of every verse. The illumination of the devices marking the verse divisions is of very high quality and the size of the devices allows the use of a relatively complex design. Due to the fine quality of the manuscript it can be assumed that it was made for a high ranking official or member of a princely family from one of the major cities of Southern Spain. It has generally been attributed to thirteenth century Granada, although the script and illumination bear a close resemblance to a manuscript of the Shihab al-Abhar, dated 566/1172-3, written at Valencia (Al-Andalus, no.77, p.307). The large, rounded script was in general use from the second half of the 12th century onwards. The pink paper may have come from the town of Jativa (Arabic Shabba), 35 miles south-west of Valencia, which was famed throughout Europe and the Near East for its paper-making. Jativa shared the political and military history of its near neighbour Valencia, falling to the Christians in 1229-40.

A section from the same Qur'an, formerly in the collection of Marthe Lyster, was sold at the Hotel Georges V, Paris, 30th October 1975, lot 488, and subsequently in those rooms, 14th April 1976, lot 247. Two leaves from that section were sold in those rooms, 23rd April 1997, lots 42 and 43, while a biroliam and a single leaf were sold 15th October 1988.

7 Qur'an leaf in bold maghribi script on pink paper, Southern Spain, 13th century
TEXT: SURA LXXXV, vv.29-38
five lines per page written in five large maghribi script in brown ink on pink paper, letter-pointing and vocalisation in gold, tashkil and sukun in blue, hamzat al-walid marked with brown dots, hamzat al-qaf marked with yellow dots, single verse divisions marked with gold trefoil devices and large illuminated roundels containing alif letters in blue, white and red, tenth verse marked within the text by an illuminated roundel containing the word 'al-kufi' in gold kufic on a red ground 330 x 261mm.

From the same manuscript, see footnote on previous lot. The text of this leaf and the previous lot is contiguous.
G4,000-6,000

8 Qur'an leaf in blue and gold script on blue paper, probably Mamluk, Cairo or Damascus, c.1315-40
TEXT: SURA LXXII.*vv.38-41
five lines per page written in blue paper in fine naskhi script in alternate lines of gold outlined in black, and blue outlined in gold, diacritics and letter pointing in gold or blue, gold follets decorated with coloured dots between verses, frayed at edges 251 x 178mm.

This is a very rare Qur'an leaf, whose use of alternate lines of blue and gold script on blue-dyed paper sets it apart from all other published Qur'ans. The vast majority of Qur'an manuscripts employed black or brown ink for the main text. Occasionally, on the finest Qur'ans made for monarchs or high-ranking courtiers, gold was used for the Qur'anic text, and even fewer manuscripts, mostly in late 15th and 16th century Iran and Turkey, alternate lines of blue and gold or blue and gold and gold were used (see, for example, sale in these rooms, 15th October 1998, lots 28-29). However, the paper in these cases was always a natural buff or cream colour, whereas the paper of the present leaf is dyed a greenish blue. The use of dyed paper in Islamic manuscripts is not unknown, especially during the Mamluk period, but pink was the far the most popular colour.

The script of the present leaf is an elegant naskhi, which closely resembles that of two Mamluk Qur'an manuscripts written in gold in the early 14th century. The first was copied at Cairo by Shadih ibn Muhammad ibn Shadhbi ibn Ayyub in A.H.1333, the second was copied by Ahmad ibn Abi Ibrahim al-Qausabi al-Dinshahi in 1341, probably at Damascus (see Jumes 1998, cats.6 and 21, pp.59-63, 143-4). £12,000-18,000
Four large Qur’an leaves in tμmar script on paper, Egypt, Mamlik, early 14th century.

Text: SURA 25:30

This is a good example of the occasional Mamlik tendency to copy Qur’ans in scripts which were not normally used in the Qur’anic context. The most common cursive scripts for the Mamlik Qur’an, muhaqqaq, rayhani and nasahi, with thuluth used for sura headings and other incipitals (as, in this case, in the tenth verse markers). The present script was essentially a script of the chancellery, and can be seen on Mamlik documents such as lot 23 in this sale. However, occasionally, a scribe would employ such a script for the Qur’an itself, but remarkably few examples are extant.

Mamlik Qur’an in tμmar script is divided between the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Ms.1876:140), the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (Ms. 73:171), and the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (Ms. KB 31:59) and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Ms. 26:11). (See James 1988: cat. 2). A, 1980, no. 24, and Arberry 1967: no. 51).

£1,500-2,000

10 Qur’an section in muhaqqaq script on paper, Egypt, Mamlik, 14th century.

Text: SURA 14:48

This is an interesting fragment of an important thirty-volume Qur’an. The best known leaves from this manuscript have distinctive border decoration of coloured kufic script and floral scrolls, and the arguments over the exact origins of the manuscript have focused on Mamlik Egypt, Sudan, and India and Central Asia. However, David James has argued convincingly for an origin in Anatolia or what is now Turkmenistan, north east of Khurasan. His argument was based on the presence of the Persian interlinear translation in the present Qur’an, and on two other manuscripts with either Persian or Chagatai Turkish translations. For a full discussion of these see James 1988, pp. 176-177. The current fragment is of exactly the same format as the better-known leaves, but lacks the border decoration, which, in any case, may have been added later and is therefore not necessarily significant in determining the origins of the manuscript. Thus the present fragment provides a purer example of the original manuscript. There are several unusual features. The main script is a very bold form of muhaqqaq with certain letter forms reminiscent of thuluth. The interlinear Persian is written in an extremely neat naskhi hand, one which is close in style to several Il-Khanid manuscripts, including a Qur’an written at Baghdad by Ahmad ibn al-Suhrawardi in A.D. 1318 (TIB, James 1988: cat. 48), a Qur’an completed in A.D. 1350 by al-Husain bin Muhammad al-Hasani (sale in these rooms, 15th October 1998, lot 20), and the main text of the Pierpont Morgan Library’s copy of the Manqii’i Hayyani, written at Maragha in 1266-1300 (Schmitt 1997: pl. 1, figs 7, 13, 19).

£5,000-7,000
A HIGHLY IMPORTANT
QUR'AN WRITTEN AT
VALENCIA IN AD1160
The Property of a Private Collector

12 Qur'an, Arabic manuscript in
Andalusi script on vellum,
copied by the scribe Abdullah
bin Muhammad bin Ali, known
as Ibn Ghattach, at Valencia,
Southern Spain, dated
A.H.596/A.D.1160

134 leaves, 22 lines per page written in
fine, small Andalusi script in reddish-
brown and dark brown ink on vellum,
twenty points in the same ink, isha'ild
and sukan marked in blue, 'humza'
marked with blue and yellow dots, fifteenth
verses marked with gold scallop-shaped
motifs representing the kufic letter 'la'
(numeral value 5 in the abjad system), tenth verses marked with
small gold rounds, 'nadh' divisions and
'sadqa' instructions marked in
margins with illuminated roundels
containing the relevant word in gold or
white kufic, sana' headings written in
gold kufic with illuminated palmettes
or roundels extending into margins,
headings of opening two verses
surrounded by illuminated rectangular
panels, folio 1a with full-page square
illuminated panel infilled with
gemetric, bird and foliate motifs in
red, silver, gold, green and blue, final
page with colophon written in neat
gold thuluth script between two small
square illuminated foliate panels,
binding of 13th/14th century brown
morocco with central radiating round
decorated with blind-tooled and
stamped geometric motifs, doubleh of
brown morocco stencilled with
Mamluk-type foliate designs
70 by 115mm.

Provenance:
Sold in these rooms, 30th April
1992, lot 336.

This is a highly important
manuscript of the Qur'an, one of
only seven published manuscripts
definitely known to have been
produced in Islamic Spain. Of
these seven, five are in the
permanent collections of national
or university libraries. The sixth is
in a firmly established private
collection, while the seventh is the
present manuscript.

The published Qur'an manuscripts
which have colophons specifically
naming a Spanish, rather than
Moroccan, city are as follows:
(mention should here be made of
two highly informative essays on
this subject by David James (1992a,
pp.86-96) and Tim Stanley
(Quarritch, 1213, pp.39-52), from
the which the majority of relevant
points below have been extracted,
and to which we would refer all
readers). (In chronological order)
1. Written at Cordoba, dated
A.H.348/A.D.1154, now Ms.A6755,
Istanbul University Library.
2. Written at Valencia, dated
A.H.556/A.D.1160, the present
manuscript.
3. Written at Valencia, dated
A.H.557/A.D.1161, now Ms.196,
Cairo National Library.
4. Written at Valencia, dated
A.H.564/A.D.1168, now Ms.
Ahmadliyeh 13727, Tunis National
Library.
5. Written at Valencia, dated
A.H.578/A.D.1182, now Ms.A6754,
Istanbul University Library.
6. Written at Valencia, dated
A.H.596/A.D.1199, now QUR318,
Nasser D Khalili Collection,
London.
7. Written at Seville, dated
A.H.624/A.D.1226, now Cod.Ori62,
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek,
Munich.

Several remarkable points present
themselves in this list. All these
Qur'ans were written within the
space of eighty-three years. The
decade between 1160-70 produced
three of the seven, all at Valencia.
Of the seven, all but two were
written at Valencia, with one at
Cordoba and one at Seville. The present manuscript is the earliest, by one year, of all known Valencian Qur'ans, and the second earliest from Islamic Spain.

It is worth noting that dated Qur’ans from the Islamic west are, in general, very rare, even without the mention of a city in the colophon. James (op. cit., p. 99) mentions only seventeen dated manuscripts, from 1080 to 1238. To this list can be added four others, the latest being dated 1303 (Lings 1976, no. 104) which were omitted from that list or which have come to light since, the present manuscript being one of those five.

Thus, a total of only twenty-one dated medieval Qur’ans from anywhere in the Islamic west survive to the present day. Of these twenty-one, sixteen are in permanent institutional or national libraries.

The present manuscript contains a colophon which not only mentions Valencia (numidat Balansiya) as the place of production, but also that the scribe was Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Musti’ib ibn Sa’id al-Andalusi, who was known as Ibn Ghurta. He was also the scribe of the 1161 Valencian Qur’an in the Cairo National Library (number 3 above). He is mentioned by the author Ibn al-Abbar in his Zaymir, and he was the father of two other scribes, one of whom, Muhammad ibn Ghurta, was the scribe of the 1168 and 1182 Valencian Qur’ans (numbers 4 and 5 above). The family received much contemporary praise for their calligraphic skills, and Muhammad ibn Ghurta, who was personally known to Ibn al-Abbar, was considered the ‘expert’ of the west. This important information sheds light on the makeup and function of a medieval scriptorium.

It is likely that the scribe of the present manuscript was the head of the Valencian workshop, since he is known to have had other pupils, the Imam of the mosque, Abu Hamid ibn Abi Zahir, and probably Yusuf ibn Abdullah ibn Abd al-Mahdi ibn Yusuf ibn Khaaldun, the scribe of the 1199 Valencian manuscript (number 6 above).

The small, neat script of this group of Qur’ans has become known as Valencian script, for obvious reasons. The group of seven, and particularly the Valencian five, share a very similar size and shape, design of illumination and layout of text, sura headings and incidentals. Typically they are of a relatively small, square format, averaging around 180 by 175mm, with an opening page of recticulated and geometric illumination. The opening two suras, al-Fatiha and al-Baqara, are presented on the same, right-hand opening page, with the sura headings surrounded by rectangular illuminated panels. Thereafter, the sura headings are written in gold kufic with adjacent illuminated palmettes, but without any surrounding panels. The text is written on vellum and tightly spaced with approximately 25-28 lines per page. This was the format for the majority of all Qur’ans from the Islamic west, although it is generally considered to be the Liberian format, which was exported to North Africa with the movement of scribes as a result of successive periods of political instability from the 12th-14th century.

In the period in which this manuscript was produced the city and kingdom of Valencia had recently found stability under the new Almohad rulers after a troubled period which had lasted since the end of the 11th century. In the early 1060s the Christian king Ferdinand I of Castile had inflicted a severe defeat on the Valencians. The kingdom came under successive Muslim and Christian rulers until the end of the century, when it was in the hands of Alfonso IV of Castile. At this point a major part was played by the legendary El Cid, and the city was not regained by the Muslims until 1102, when the Almoravids finally defeated El Cid’s wife Ximena, who set fire to the city before retreating. There then ensued a period of relative calm while successive Almoravid governors controlled the province, until the advent of the Almohads saw a return to troubled times. By the middle of the 12th century, however, Valencia had found stability under a series of local princes under the nominal suzerainty of the Almohad rulers.


For Ibn al-Abbar’s Zaymir see Ribera y Tarragó 1928.

For further information on the subject, the region and the period, see: Al-Andalus, pp.304-17 E.L.Z. Balfour, ‘al-Muwalidun’ Lings 1976, nos.95-104 259,000-350,000

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13 Three large Qur’an leaves in bold muhaqqaq script on paper, Iran, c.1250 SURA XV, V, 28-37, 93-105, 118-129; SURA X, V, 1 12 lines per page written in bold muhaqqaq script in brown ink on buff paper, single verse divisions marked with gold florins within text, fifth verses marked in the text with small drop-shaped gold devices representing the letter ‘wa’ (numerical value 6 in the ‘abjad’ system) and in the margins with large illuminated gilt palmettes containing the word ‘khamsa’ in gold kufic, sixth verses marked in the text with gold roundels containing the exact verse count surrounded by radiating decoration in blue and red, sura headings (Sura Yunus) written in brown kufic script in white on a boldly illuminated panel with a palmeta extending into the margin 420 by 300mm.

These three Qur’an leaves exhibit the bold style of calligraphy and illumination prevalent at the beginning of the 13th century in Iran and Mesopotamia. The radiating decoration surrounding the tenth verse markers is a notable feature which was still in use in the first decades of the Kharid rule in Iran and Mesopotamia.

£1,200,000-1,800,000
Two line fragment from a very large Qur'an leaf, probably made for the Emperor Timur (Tamerlane), Central Asia, probably Samarkand, c.1400, with 19th century Qajar illumination.

Text: Sura 9, vv.50-63
2 lines of superb muhaqqaq script in dark brown ink on cream paper, large gold and blue rounds between verses, text surrounded by exuberant illumination of coloured flowers on a gold ground, interlinear band in blue, reverse strengthened in 19th century or later with silk paper onlays, framed each line 23.8 by 98cm.

This two line fragment comes from a magnificent Qur'an of extraordinary dimensions which had long been attributed to Prince Bayazungur ibn Shah Rukh, c.1420-30, on account of his particular interest in calligraphy, especially the grand forms of muhaqqaq script. However, in the catalogue of the exhibition 'Timur and the Princely Vision' in 1989, it was suggested that the manuscript fitted more naturally under patronage of Timur himself, and that the great marble Qur'an stand commissioned by Ulugh Beg after Timur's death, and originally located in the main chamber of the Friday mosque at Samarkand, was probably made specifically for this Qur'an. This attribution was expanded considerably by Soudavar (1992, cat.20a-b, pp.59-62). A very pertinent part of this attribution concerns the passage in Qadi Ahmad's 16th century treatise on calligraphers, in which he describes how the calligrapher 'Omar-e Aqa', copied a Qur'an in minute ghubar script for the emperor Timur. So small was the volume that it could fit under the socket of a signet ring. However, Timur was not pleased with it, so 'Omar-e Aqa wrote another copy extremely large, each of its lines being a cubit in length, and even longer...' (Milner, 1959, p.64).

Soudavar continues the argument with convincing technical details of the surface area of paper needed for such a manuscript, its weight, the estimated thickness of its spine and so on, all of which support the theory of Timur's, not Bayazungur's, patronage.

The manuscript was dispersed as early as the 16th century, for Qadi Ahmad mentions that the calligrapher Malik al-Dhaliyan owned one folio (folios), and it seems probable that several leaves were replaced in the 16th or 19th centuries. There has been some debate over which of the surviving folios are medieval and which more recent. The present leaf presents convincing evidence of its antiquity in several ways. Firstly, the fact that it is a fragment is all in itself significant. Secondly, the original dark brown ink of the script and decorites has oxidized heavily and been re-inked with a later, blacker ink. Thirdly, the illuminated rounds marking the verse divisions accord with those of other leaves established to be original to the manuscript (e.g., those illustrated in Lente and Lowery, cat.6a-c). Fourthly, the presence of very obviously 19th century illumination surrounding the text of the present fragment would imply that it had undergone a restorative process in the Qajar period, rather than being written then, especially as the gold used for the surrounding illumination differs markedly from that of the gold rounds marking the verse divisions. Finally, an unpublished four line fragment from the same page as the present piece is in the Reza-i Abbas Museum in Tehran, with text exactly contiguous with the present piece, beginning with the word 'nakhshahin' in verse 63 of Sura LV. The Tehran fragment is also illuminated in the same style.

Qur'an, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, commissioned by Mirza Abd al-Karim, copied by Nosratallah ibn Muhammad Sharif al-Husaini, illuminated by Muhammad Javald, Persia, Qajar, dated A.H.1260/A.D.1844.

320 leaves, 14 lines per page written in fine muhaqqaq script on cream paper, interlinear gold illumination throughout, illuminated versals between verses, margins ruled in red, blue, green and gold, some headings written in fine red thuluth on illuminated panels, further text divisions marked in margins with illuminated floral devices, marginal commentary in fine black nasta'a on gold ground within floral compartments, each page with small floral devices at top corners containing the title of the sura, five double pages of fine illumination in colours and gold (three frontispieces, one half-page and one finispiece), contemporary floral lacquer binding dated A.H.1261/A.D.1845.

Provenance: On the final flyleaf is a note by Hanza Mirza Hushmat al-Dwalkh, who records presenting the Qur'an to a certain Sayyid Ali Takqani in the year 1826. His name was the 21st son of Abbas Mirza, the son of Fath Ali Shah Qajar. At the time he wrote the note he was governor of Khuzistan and Luristan.

Qur'an, illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, commissioned by Amir Kunah Khan Qajar, completed for his son Nosratallah Qajar, copied by ibn Muhammad Ali Muhammad Shafi al-Tabrizi, Persia, Qajar, dated A.H.1239/A.D.1824.

385 leaves, 12 lines per page written in fine naskhi script on cream paper, interlinear Persian translation in red nasta'a, double interlinear rules in gold, gold clouds between lines, illuminated gold portraits between verses, sura headings written in gold thuluth on illuminated panels, margins ruled in blue and gold, five and six divisions and waqf instructions marked in margins in gold thuluth within illuminated devices, marginal commentary in ahkash script signed and dated A.H.1252/A.D.1836, opening double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, further double page with illuminated shimmers in similar style set within boxes with illuminated border bands, neat impressions and ownership inscription dated 1358/1890, 1382/1905 and 1327/1905, contemporary floral lacquer binding, some surface defects, rebacked in plastic, floral lacquer devices with central calligraphic cartouches 255 by 161mm.

Provenance: The Qur'an was commissioned by Amir Khan Qajar, chief of the Special Guards at Isfahan, who was later appointed governor of Fars by Muhammad Shah Qajar. He died in 1840-41. The marginal commentaries and interlinear translation were completed by the order of Nosratallah Qajar, Amir Khan’s son, by ‘Aynullah Jawani Tabrizi in A.H.1252/A.D.1837.

£15,000-25,000