A LARGE QUR’AN LEAF IN KUFIC SCRIPT ON VELLUM, NORTH AFRICA OR NEAR EAST, 10TH CENTURY

TEXT: SURAT AL-IMRA’AH (LV), V.4-21
Arabic manuscript leaf on vellum, 5 lines per page written in fine, stretched Kufic script in brown ink, occasional letter pointing of brown diagonal dashes, vocalisation in red, green and blue dots, single verses marked with gold roundels surrounded by petals in brown ink and containing the exact verse number (fathan, rashida, 'asha, etc.) in small gold Kufic; tenth verse marked in margin with large illuminated roundels containing the word 'asha. Ink on vellum warm 25.7 by 38.9cm.

For a discussion see footnote to previous lot.

£ 20,000-30,000  € 24,400-36,500
A QUR’AN LEAF IN KUFIC SCRIPT ON VELLUM, NORTH AFRICA OR LEVANT, 10TH CENTURY

TEXT: SURAT AL-MUMINUN (XXXI), vv.74-76
11 lines per page written in dark brown ink on vellum; vocalisation of red and green dots, letter pointing of deep red brown dots, single verses marked by a pyramidal arrangement of six gold dots, tenth verse division marked a large gold rosette bearing the word khamsa in Kufic script in reverse.

197 by 50.5cm.

LITERATURE
Published in 1400 Years of Islamic Art 1991, nos.8.

This leaf comes from an important Qur’an notable for its unusually attenuated and elegant script. The persistent features which set it apart from normal Kufic are the very tall verticals, the wide, curving terminal run and the thin, trailing tail of the terminal mim. This particular form of the Kufic script is only found in two other known Qur’ans. Examples of these can be found in the one, loc. 11 and 12, in the National Library, Tunis (Rahm 52; Lingis and Safadi 1976, no.24), the Musée des arts islamiques, Carthage (no.9), the Staatliche Museen, Berlin (Mosch 1991, see Berlin 1989, nos.85) and Sotheby’s London, 12th October 2000, lots 10-31 (where further references are given).

Other leaves from this Qur’an are in the Al Sabah Collection, Kuwait (al-Andalus, fig. 117), and the Tareq Al Sallam Museum, Kuwait, and the Nasser D’ Khall Collection, London (Dietrich 1992, no.58). Further leaves have been sold in these rooms, most recently: 12th October 2005, lots 7 and 2.

For a full discussion of the script of this Qur’an and other related examples see Fraser and Kozlowski 2006, nos.31 and 14.

2 £ 12,000-18,000 £ 14,400-21,600
A FRAGMENT FROM SAHNUN’S AND UTCAI’S COMMENTARY ON AL-MUDAWANNAH FI PURU’ AL-MALIKIYYAH (AL-MUDAWANNAH AL-KUBRA) OF MALIK IBN ANAS.

NORTH AFRICA, PROBABLY GAIRAWAN, DATED 429 AH/1039 AD

Arabic manuscript on vellum, 2 leaves, 2 lines per page written in Eastern Kufic script verging on Maghribi in brown ink, headings written in a larger hand 29 by 18.6cm.

LITERATURE

Published in: 1400 Years of Islamic Art, 1999, no.10.

This fragment, which constitutes a quire or gathering from a larger manuscript, is part of Malik Ibn Anas’s Al-Mudawannah Al-Kubra, one of the most important texts on Islamic law. This particular version comprises a series of opinions and explanations given by al-Uqai, the pupil of Malik Ibn Anas, in response to questions posed by another well-known early Malikite scholar, Al-Sahnun.

The Malikite school was particularly popular in the Maghrib, and this and other closely related fragments are most likely to have originated in Gairawan and the Maghrib. The script is essentially a form of Eastern Kufic, a script that was known to have been used in North Africa by the end of the 10th century (witness the Palermo Qur’an of 982-3). Other fragments of Malikite texts in very similar hands are extant from the late 10th, 11th and early 12th centuries. The earliest so far published was dated 393/994, while an example with a slightly more rounded hand is dated 527/1132 (see Christie’s, London, 10 October 2000, lot 40, 25 April 1997, lot 49). Neither of these manuscripts mentioned the place of origin in their colophons, however, two further fragments from this group have colophons that mentioned the place of origin as Gairawan, one dated 408/1018, is lot 17 in this sale, and another undated fragment was sold at Bonhams, London, 10 April 2000, lot 15.

£8,000-10,000 - €9,800-12,000

A SECTION OF AN IMPORTANT COMMENTARY ON THE KITAB AL-MUDAWANNAH OF MALIK IBN ANAS, NORTH AFRICA, PROBABLY GAIRAWAN, DATED 408 AH/1018 AD

Arabic manuscript on vellum, 19 leaves, 27 lines per page written in Eastern Kufic script verging on Maghribi in brown ink, headings written in a larger hand, modern binding 24.3 by 17.5cm.

This is the second part (al-furat al-sharif) of a commentary on the famous and important early work on Fiqh of Malik Ibn Anas, the Kitab al-Mudawannah al-Kubra. This title page of the present section tells us that it is the second section, dealing with injuries and responses, and that this text is the abridgment of a scholar called Abu Muhammad Abdullah Ibn Abu Zayd al-Faqihi Ibn Haroon Ibn Mawan. It also tells us that it was completed in Ramadan AH 408 (January/February 1018) in the hand of Haroon Ibn Mawan familiy.

The script and early date are also noteworthy, and a discussion of these aspects can be found in the footnote to the previous lot.

£8,000-12,000 - €9,800-14,000

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND CONDITION REPORTS AT SOTHEBYS.COM
A QUR'AN MANUSCRIPT, COPIED BY 'ABD AL-KABIR BIN AL-
SHARIF BIN AL-HUSAIN BU HAMID AL-ISHA 'ALI, NORTH WEST
AFRICA. DATED 1325 AH/1905 AD

Arabic manuscript on paper, 235 folios, one repairment. 12 lines per
page written in neat, small Maghrib script in black ink, vocalization in
yellow, green, red and blue. Allah written in gold throughout. Text
divisions marked within the text area with small halo devices in gold and
in the margins with gold script or illuminated devices. Sura headings
written in gold Maghrib script, opening double page with border
illumination. Illuminated panel at end, contemporary gilt-stamped red
morocco binding, with flap
18.4 by 11cm.

For manuscripts in related style see Späthmesi 1987

£5,000-8,000 €6,300-9,600

AN AFRICAN QUR'AN MANUSCRIPT, SAHARAG REGION, 19TH
CENTURY

Arabic manuscript on paper, 248 leaves, 10 to 22 lines per page written in
a loose Maghrib hand in brown ink, diagnostics and orthography in red,
yellow and brown, small yellow trefoil devices between verses; sura
headings written in red, further text divisions marked in margins with
decorated devices, opening frontispiece with a full page panel of lattice-
pattern decoration in yellow and rust-red with a floral and geometric
panel opposite, central double page with two large panels of geometric
and floral decoration in black, yellow, red and brown, original stamped
and scored brown leather covers with flap and leather thong, now bound
into a modern spine.

£4,000-6,000 €4,900-7,300

Qur'an manuscripts from Sub-Saharan Africa are relatively rare and are
almost always produced in this distinctive style, written in a loose Arabic
hand evolved from the Maghrib script, with decoration of a distinctly
African character rendered in palettes of ochres, yellow and reds, and
loosely held within a wrap-around leather cover with a long leather thong
to secure it. In this case the manuscript has been bound using a modern
leather spine, perhaps because the original spine had deteriorated.

Although rarely displaying the cosmopolitan refinement of Qur'ans
produced in metropolitan centres of North Africa, the present type are of
great interest in showing the evolution of manuscript production in this
region and the distinctive local decorative manner.

£4,000-6,000 €4,900-7,300
A BIFOLIUM FROM A QUR'AN IN MUHAQQAQ SCRIPT ON PAPER, EGYPT OR SYRIA, MAHALK, 14TH CENTURY

Arabic manuscript leaves on paper, two folios, two and five lines per page written in bold muhaqqaq script on paper, gold ornaments between verses, two pages with central text panels illuminated with interlaced scrolling foliate motifs and gold border bands with illuminated roundels extending into the margins; one page blank, mounted 22.5 by 15.7cm.

This bifolium contains the last verses of Sura 54 (Al-Qamar). The fact that the final two pages contain a prayer spread across two illuminated panels indicates that this was also the end of a physical volume. Since this text falls at a kahf division, it indicates that the manuscript was originally produced in 60 volumes.

£ 4,000-6,000

19

TWO FOLIOS IN MUHAQQAQ SCRIPT ON PAPER, ANATOLIA OR CENTRAL ASIA, CIRCA 1300-1350

Arabic manuscript leaves on paper, 5 lines per page written in muhaqqaq script in black ink, interlinear Persian translation written diagonally in small black naskh script, gold fillets between verses, margins with extracts from the Hadith in red and blue Kufic decorated with scrolling foliate and geometric conventions 59 by 18.6cm.

Leaves from this well-known Qur'an section have been convincingly linked to a thirty-volume manuscript of circa 1335 A.D. of Anatolian or Central Asian origin (James, 1986, pp.73-7, 1992, n.53) which, although mostly devoid of the decorative border and surrounding kufic script, has an interlinear Persian translation arranged in the same manner and in the same hand. Previous to that attribution these leaves had often been attributed to Suburban India. The Kufic script and decorative schemes around the edge are not contemporary with the muhaqqaq script of the Qur'anic text.

Other leaves have been sold in these rooms 15th October 1993, lot 14, and 12th October 2000, lot 14, while a twelve-leaf section without the marginal decoration was sold in these rooms 22nd April 1996, lot 11. Other leaves from the same Qur'an are now in museums and private collections including the British Library, the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, the British Museum, London, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art: the Taxic Raja Museum, Kuwait and the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, London. For further discussion see Arbbery 1967, pp.68-69, Loutfy 1986, n.63, James 1986, pp.73-7, 1992, n.53.

£ 8,000-10,000
A RARE ILLUMINATED QUR'ANIC PRAYER SCROLL
TURKEY, OTTOMAN, EARLY 16TH CENTURY

Arabic manuscript on paper, extracts from the Qur'an, prayers and praise phrases written in gold, black and coloured inks in a variety of scripts including muhaqqiq, rafiqueh, thuluth, nasta'liq and square Kufic, some in micrography of ghubar scripts, further micrography forming floral scrolls and cloud bands, the illuminated ground with polychrome floral designs, geometric panels, small coloured squares and plain coloured grounds.

Length 310cm, width 9cm.

This is a rare and very finely executed scroll of prayers and Qur'anic extracts, whose quality, variety of scripts, illuminations, and decorative inventiveness is striking. Illuminated scrolls from the early Ottoman period are very rare. A related example was sold in these rooms 26 April 1996, lot 22.

£ 20,000-30,000 // $ 24,400-36,600
22 AN ILLUMINATED QUR’AN, COPIED BY SULEIMAN IBN ZAIN AL-ABIDIN KNOWN AS TAWFIGI, TURKEY, OTTOMAN, DATED 1217 AH/1802-03 AD

Illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, 540 leaves, 15 lines per page written in neat naskhi script in black ink, gold dots between verses, margins ruled in gold and colours, some headings written in white churuks script on illuminated panels, further text divisions marked in margins, opening double-page frontispiece with floral illumination in colours, gold and silver, colophon surrounded by polychrome floral illumination, 19th century gilt-stamped green morocco binding, with flap 18.7 by 11.5cm.

The colophon informs us that the scribe Suleiman ibn Zain al-Abidin was a pupil of the scribe Mu‘tasim known as Kutub (from Kutubah).

The use of silver in the outer areas of the illumination on the frontispiece is highly unusual.

£ 8,000-10,000 € 9,300-12,200

25 A LARGE QUR’AN MANUSCRIPT, COPIED BY ABD AL-KARIM AL-NAQSHABANDI, TURKEY, DATED 1266 AH/1849 AD

Illuminated Arabic manuscript on paper, 44 leaves, 40 or 41 lines per page written in small naskhi script in black ink, gold dots between verses, some headings written in red within gold ruled panels, margins ruled in red, blue and gold, further text divisions marked in margins in red ink, the juz’ divisions decorated with gold foliate frame, opening single page fully illuminated with polychrome floral motifs and a central cartouche containing Surat al-
Fatihah and the opening verses of Surat al-
Baqara, modern red velvet cover 46.1 by 28.1cm.

The colophon on the final page records the full name of the scribe as al-Haj Abd al-Karim bin al-Haj Muhammad Khalil al-Khalil al-
Naqshabandi, and the date of completion as 1266 (1849). Neither the scribe nor his father have been identified.

£ 6,000-8,000 € 7,300-9,800