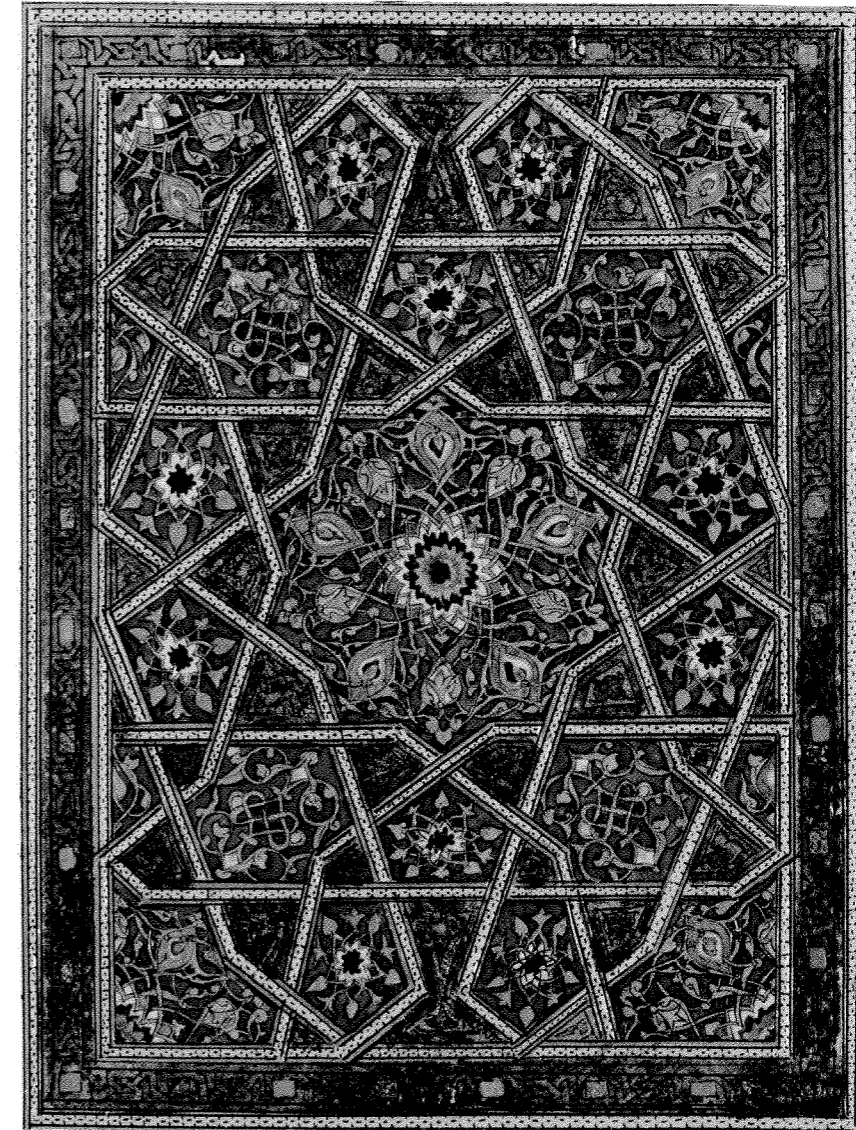


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THE QUR'ĀN

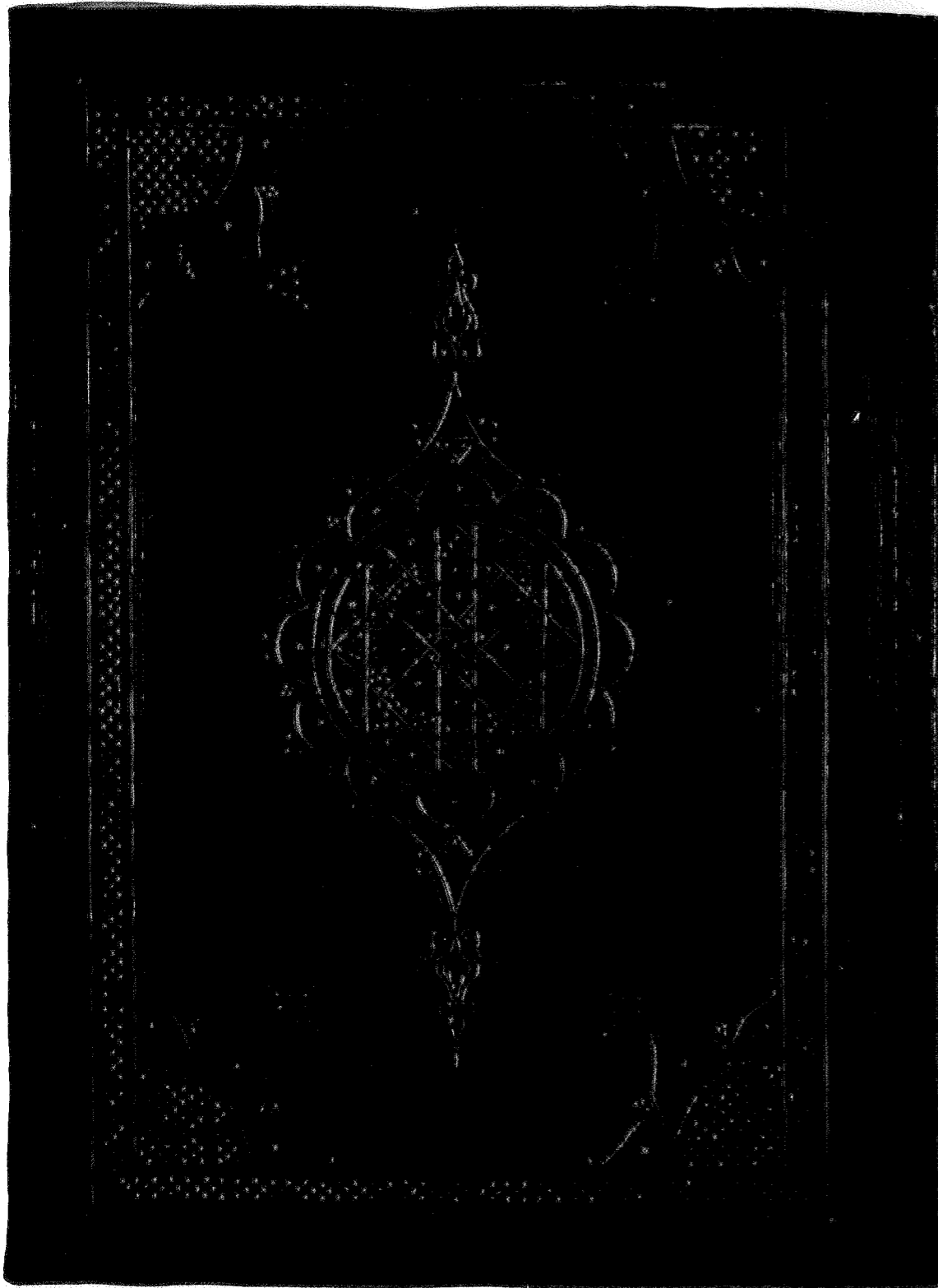
القرآن الكريم

Martin Lings and Yasin Hamid Safadi



1302

A British Library Exhibition
World of Islam Festival 1976



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The Qur'ān

Catalogue of an exhibition of Qur'ān manuscripts
at the British Library 3 April–15 August 1976

Martin Lings PhD


*formerly Keeper of Oriental Manuscripts
and Printed Books*

Yasin Hamid Safadi BA

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Preface

The exhibition of the Qur'ān has been arranged by the British Library in co-operation with the World of Islam Festival Trust, and features a splendid display of calligraphic and illuminated manuscripts from many countries. These have been assembled from the British Library's own collection, generously augmented by some of the best examples from public and private collections in the lands of origin and in Europe.

The organization has entailed willing help from many people, both corporately and individually and our grateful thanks go to them. In particular I must signal our appreciation to Dr Martin Lings, former Keeper of this Department, and Mr Yasin Safadi, Assistant Keeper in charge of the Arabic Collections, for their travels and constant labours in selecting and preparing the materials for exhibition, and in compiling the catalogue; and Mr J. Losty, the Exhibition Officer of this Department, for his unsparing efforts on the organizational side.

Geoffrey Marrison
Director and Keeper
Department of Oriental
Manuscripts and Printed Books

Foreword

The present exhibition has been organized by the British Library, in co-operation with the World of Islam Festival Trust, with significant contributions from many national and private collections in Europe and the Middle East. It has been made possible to present the most splendid Qur'ān manuscripts available today by complementing the famous British Library collection with these contributions and to represent all the important developments of the art of Qur'ān illumination and calligraphy throughout the period from the 2nd/8th to the 13th/19th century.

It is difficult for anyone who has never been directly involved with an international exhibition of this kind to realize the obstacles and dilemmas which are liable to confront those who are responsible for its organization. The many months of planning, travelling and maximum effort have proved insufficient to solve all the problems that have confronted us. It is therefore hoped that the readers of this catalogue will be ready to excuse certain inevitable shortcomings. It is never easy to catalogue items which are not to hand, nor was adequate working access always provided. These difficulties together with numerous others resulted in a few entries being disproportionately shorter than the rest, and in certain deficiencies in the specifications which are normally given. Also, since at the time of submitting this catalogue to the press some loan arrangements had not been completely finalized, it is possible that some exhibits now in the catalogue may be withdrawn or that others may be added. The reader may be assured, however, that these very few and minor alterations will detract little from the certain splendour of the exhibition as a whole, and whatever information becomes available before the opening of the exhibition will be supplied in the caption which will be provided for each exhibit.

We wish to thank all our colleagues who have generously assisted us in our difficult task, and in particular the directors and the relevant staff of all the contributing institutions (listed below) and also the owners of private collections, who have generously loaned their treasures to the exhibition. We are particularly grateful for the much needed and generous help given to us by Dr N. Daniel, CBE, and Mr J. Lankester, the British Council representatives in Cairo and Tunis respectively.

Acknowledgement is also due to Dr J. M. Rogers, of the American University in Cairo, for his generous help and constant encouragement and for the many useful discussions which have been exchanged.

We also wish to thank all our colleagues in the British Library who helped us in various ways, and in particular Mr K. B. Gardner and Mrs M. Foot for their help in cataloguing the Qur'ān bindings in this exhibition. We take this opportunity also of expressing our grateful appreciation to our colleague Mr J. Losty and must acknowledge the credit which is due to him for his generous and sustaining help throughout the onerous task of preparing this exhibition. Our thanks are also due to our colleague Mr Rex Smith.

Martin Lings
Yasin Hamid Safadi
February 1976

Contributors

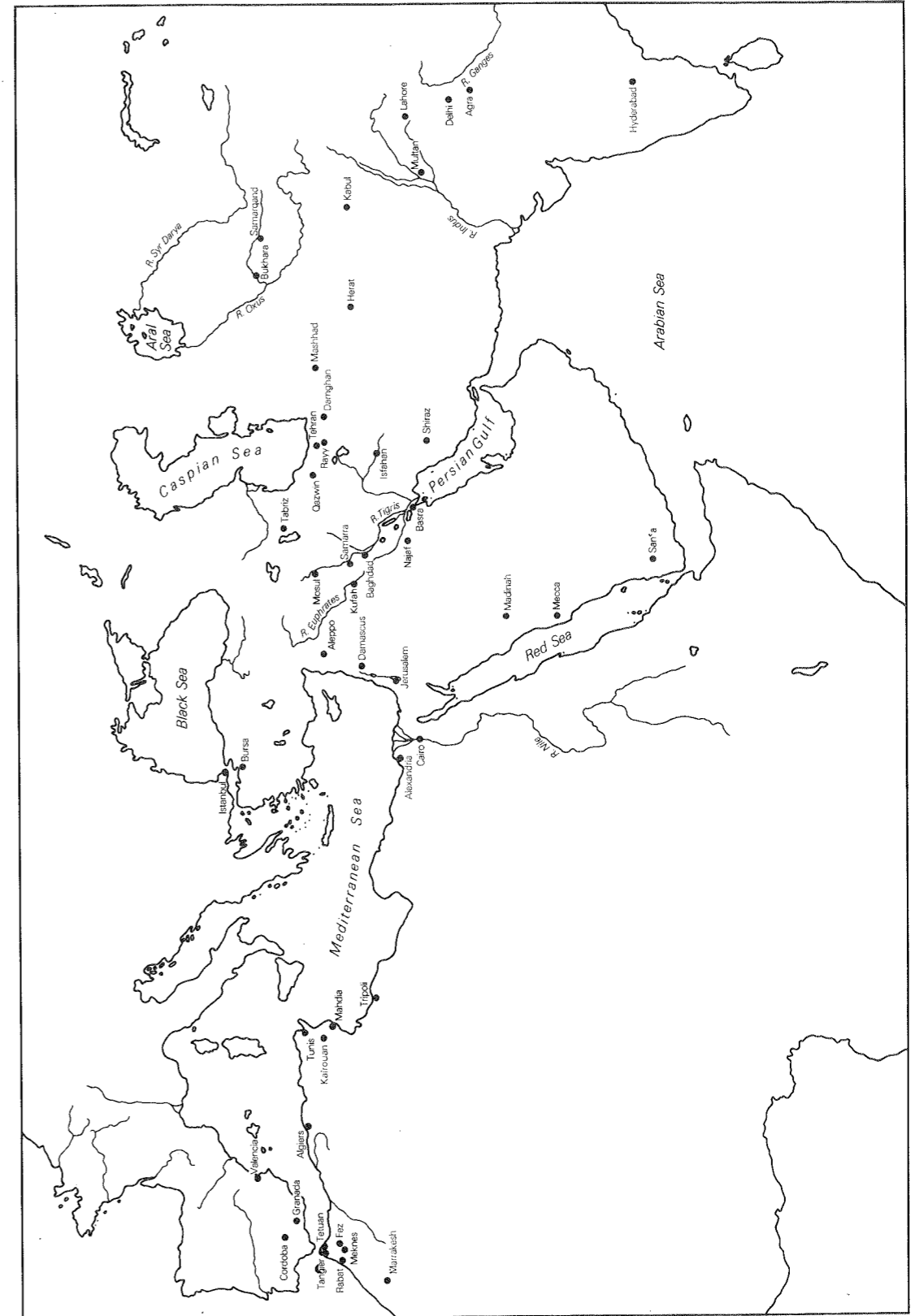
Cairo, National Library: 53, 60, 61, 62, 63, 71, 73, 74, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 86, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105
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National Institute of Archaeology and Art: 2, 4, 10, 11, 15, 18, 19, 20, 25, 153, 154, 155, 156 (all these items are located in the Great Mosque Museum in Kairouan)

Transliteration

’	ء	z	ز	f	ف
b	ب	s	س	q	ق
t	ت	sh	ش	k	ك
th	ث	ṣ	ص	l	ل
j	ج	ḍ	ض	m	م
ḥ	ح	ṭ	ط	n	ن
kh	خ	ẓ	ظ	h	ه
d	د	‘	ع	w(u)	و
<u>d</u>	ذ	gh	غ	y(i)	ي
r	ر				

As to the vowels, *fathah* is transcribed with *a*, *kasrah* with *i* and *ḍammah* with *u*.

The combination *ḍammah* + single *wāw* and *kasrah* + single *yā’* are transcribed respectively *ū* and *ī* in closed syllables, and *uw* and *iy* in open syllables. So-called ‘sun letters’ are transcribed phonetically. Final short vowels are not transcribed: *ū* and *ī* at the end of a transcription indicate respectively, in the penultimate of the original Arabic, *ḍammah* + double *wāw* and *kasrah* + double *yā’*. Elsewhere these combinations are transcribed *uwuw* and *iiyy*. Thus, for example, *as-sāmi* (fem. *as-sāmiyah*) means ‘the lofty one’, whereas *as-sāmi* (fem. *as-sāmiyyah*) means ‘the Semite’. *Alif* is transcribed *ā*; *alif maqṣūrah* is transcribed *à*. The diphthongs *fathah* + *waw* and *fathah* + *yā’* are transcribed respectively *aw* and *ay*.



اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ

'Recite in the name of thy Lord'

Introduction

The Qur'ān

¹Qur'ān is the transliterated form of the Arabic word which is derived from the verb *qara'a* 'to read', but perhaps a more commonly used word in the West for the Muslims' sacred book is the 'Koran'.

Like many other religions, in particular Judaism and Hinduism, Islam lays great emphasis on the distinction between revelation and inspiration. Islam teaches that the Qur'ān¹ was transmitted to the Prophet Muḥammad through the intermediary of the Archangel Gabriel and that it is, therefore, at the level of pure revelation, having the sacramental status of divine speech. The Prophet received the revelation throughout his twenty-three years of prophethood. According to Muslim tradition, Muḥammad heard the first of these revelations in the cave of Ḥirā' near Makkah (Mecca) with a voice commanding him: 'Recite in the name of thy Lord'. He continued to deliver the divine revelation till his death in A.D. 632, after which the revelation stopped and was mainly transmitted from believer to believer orally by the *ḥuffāz* (those who memorized the Quranic verses and can repeat them by heart). In 633, however, a number of these *ḥuffāz* were killed in the battles that followed on the Prophet's death, which greatly alarmed the Muslim community. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who was a close companion of Muḥammad and destined to be his second successor, urged the first Orthodox Caliph Abū Bakr to commit the Qur'ān to writing. The Prophet's secretary Zayd ibn Thābit was ordered to compile the revelation into a book which was later collated and codified by the third Orthodox Caliph 'Uthmān in 651. This canonized redaction was later copied into four identical editions and sent to the four main Muslim regions to be used as standard codices from which all Qur'ān copies were to be produced, first in the script of Madinah and Mecca, then Kufah, and later in most of the various styles of Arabic scripts that were developed in the Muslim world. Adherence to the canonized codex of the Qur'ān has been so complete that no textual variants have been introduced, nor can a single copy be produced in the Muslim world today with any variant readings other than those minor ones admitted by the learned Ibn Mujāhid in the 'seven recognized readings' which were finally fixed and canonized in 321/933.

The Qur'ān does not appear, however, to have been arranged according to any criterion other than that of placing the longest sūrah (chapter) first, preceded by the Fātiḥah (the Opening Chapter) and followed by the other sūrahs arranged in sequence, with certain exceptions, according to their length and their number of verses. Since Muḥammad had to emigrate, in the course of his prophetic

mission, from Mecca to Madinah, the Qur'ān was revealed to him at these two towns; hence the place of revelation has been associated with each sūrah in the form of the word *makkiyyah* or *madaniyyah* being stated in the sūrah heading which also includes the title and the number of verses of the ensuing sūrah.

Calligraphy and Illumination

It would perhaps be true to say not only that as calligraphers the Arabs have never been surpassed, but also that they have been equalled by only one other people, namely the Chinese, who developed their art along altogether different lines. With the Arabs must be included, needless to say, the Persians and the Turks and certain other Islamic peoples for whom Arabic is the liturgical language, in particular those of the Indian subcontinent; and with calligraphy must be included illumination. Nor could there be any better way of giving the Western world a glimpse of this twofold art than by an exhibition of Qur'ān manuscripts, since Islamic calligraphy and illumination are centred upon the Qur'ān, for the sake of which they came into existence. Many gifted Muslim calligraphers would grudge devoting the full amount of their talent – and their patience – to anything else, so great is the merit of copying the revealed text, a merit which is extended also to the patron who commissions the manuscript.

It was the revelation of the Qur'ān, and the need to record precisely every syllable of it, which imposed writing on the Arabs as an accomplishment. Until then, like other nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples, they had been somewhat disdainful and even distrustful of the written word. This was not for any lack of linguistic prowess but, on the contrary, because they were in love with the spoken word. Their poets – and the ancient Arabs have been described as a nation of poets – never thought of perpetuating their lines by writing them down, despite their keen desire to be remembered by posterity. To this end each poet would transmit his verses to two men of a younger generation who could be relied upon to transmit them in their turn to others.

The somewhat crude and ungainly script was kept well in the background. But once the Arabs were compelled to focus their attention upon it, attempts were soon made to devise a script more worthy of the revelation. The style which finally prevailed, superseding the results of all the other early attempts, takes its name from the Iraqi town of Kufah which was one of the great early centres of Islamic culture. Kufic may be said to have reached its perfection, for Qur'ān manuscripts, in the second half of the second Islamic century which ended in A.D. 814.² The establishment of this liturgical script was an achievement which was to determine, as we shall see, the whole future of Arabic calligraphy; for though subsequent developments were all in the direction of cursive forms and of easy legibility, Kufic remained as a criterion of conformity to spiritual values, a sort of guarantee that, however easy the script might become, the hieratic level would be maintained.

In the 3rd/9th century, there were two derivations from Kufic which for clarity's sake will be termed here Eastern Kufic and Western Kufic, though in the East they are usually referred to by the same name as the parent script. From each of the derivatives a highly ornamental style of lettering was developed for purposes of illumination only. There were no further developments from Eastern Kufic, but in Persia Qur'āns continued to be written in this remarkable script until as late as the 7th/13th century, and there, as elsewhere in the East, calligraphers clung to its ornamental varieties as a means of enhancing their illuminated headings and frontispieces until the beginning of the 10th/16th century. From Western Kufic, on the other hand, all the scripts of North-west Africa and Andalusia are descended.

The Eastern cursive scripts were not derived from Kufic, but it is to Kufic that they appear to owe their calligraphic perfection. Partly under its influence at the beginning of the 4th/10th century, a master named Ibn Muqlah devised a cursive script that was mathematically 'proportioned', and it was on this meticulously calculated basis that the next generations of calligraphers, amongst whom Ibn al-Bawwāb was the pioneer, were able to write freely and yet hieratically.

Illumination had been slower to develop than calligraphy, partly because there was a less imperative need for it, but also because it was no doubt held in check by the fear of allowing anything to intrude upon the text itself. Nor is it likely that these scruples would have been overcome except on the understanding that ornaments could be a very positive means of heightening the transcendent effects which the calligraphers aimed at producing by the script. As regards the details, it is in the nature of things that each civilization, for its arts, should draw largely on the treasury of relics left by its predecessors. What counts, however, is the choice it deliberately makes of certain possibilities rather than others; and in the particular case we are considering, that choice, far from being arbitrary, was clearly determined by the Qur'ān itself. We have a right to assume this because the Qur'ān likens the *good word* (being itself the best of good words) to a *good tree with root firm and branches in heaven* (XIV, 24) and it also continually speaks of itself as a *light* or as *radiant with light*. It cannot therefore be by chance that the two chief elements of Qur'ān illumination are arboreal and solar. Moreover as regards the first of these (the second needs no explanation), the Quranic text abounds in references to trees, apart from the already quoted simile. Particularly relevant, since it combines both elements, is the tree that is mentioned in the Verse of Light (XXIV, 35), *a sacred olive tree that is neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil well nigh blazeth with splendour though the fire have not touched it*.

The most obvious opportunities for illumination are in the sūrah headings and the divisions between the verses. These divisions, usually in the form of rosettes, are made luminous with gold, if gold is available, but they are sometimes solar in form as well as in colour – roundels surrounded by finials which have the effect of rays. The Arabic term *shamsah* (little sun) includes also stellar medallions. The heading, nearly always written in a script different from that of the text itself, consists of the title of the sūrah, the word *makkiyyah* (Meccan) or *madaniyyah* (Medinese), and the number of verses

²In what follows, dates will be given twofold, with the Islamic year or century preceding the Christian one, the first year of the Hijrah corresponding to A.D. 622.

contained in the sūrah. This lettering, often highly ornamental, is placed in a rectangular frame which stretches across the page from margin to margin, taking up the space, in depth, of two or three lines of text; and the frame is prolonged into the outer margin by a palmette which may be said to stand for the whole tree of which it is a fragment. This symbolism is reinforced sometimes by an upright marginal palmette and, in the Islamic West, by the 'tree of life' which is one of the most strikingly beautiful features of Andalusian and North-west African Qur'āns. These and other marginal ornaments – solar roundels, for example – often serve to indicate, by means of the number five or ten inscribed within them, that five or ten verses have passed. Such inscriptions, like the sūrah heading itself, are nearly always upon a ground of arabesque.

As regards colour, gold was initially the most important element, as can be seen from the Kufic Qur'āns; but after a period of fluctuation, blue gained precedence over green and red and in the East was eventually raised to the level of parity with gold, while in the West, where gold retained its supremacy, blue was second. The use of other pigments seems to be based less on the particular significance of each than on their collective value for achieving a harmony of total effect in conjunction with the two framework colours. As to these, we need only remember that the whole purpose of the art we are considering is to affirm the transcendence of the Qur'ān inasmuch as, like the *good tree, its branches are in heaven*; and blue and gold are, precisely, the colours of the heavenly vault and its luminaries.

All these aspects of illumination had been fully developed before the end of the 7th/13th century, and all the important cursive hands had been perfected, except for Nasta'liq which in any case was seldom to be used for Qur'ān calligraphy.³ Most people would probably agree, however, that the best examples of the larger cursive scripts and of illumination are to be found, at any rate in the Islamic East, in Qur'ān manuscripts of the 8th-9th/14th-15th centuries. The rise almost simultaneously of two new dynasties, the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria and Īl-Khānid Mongols in Persia and Iraq, seems to have had an invigorating effect upon art, and to have acted as an incentive in the direction of grandeur and strength. Whatever the faults of the new rulers, no one could accuse them of not being lavish patrons of the arts. Most of the splendid Egyptian Qur'āns in this exhibition were commissioned by one or other of the Mamluk sultans; and as regards the Īl-Khānids, who were pagan, Islam was quickly able to absorb them and thus to conquer its conquerors. Seven of the finest exhibits are parts of two famous Qur'āns which were commissioned by a grandson of Hulāgu who had sacked Baghdad some fifty years previously in 656/1258; another particularly fine example is by the hand of Ibrāhīm Sulṭān, the grandson of another pagan destroyer, Timūr, better known in English as Tamburlane.

But there was almost certainly a more profound factor of invigoration at work, quite unconnected with the new patrons. Sacred art is by its very nature dependent upon mysticism, and in the case of calligraphy, the dependence is particularly direct. In mediaeval and later Islam the generally accepted idea that handwriting is an indication of character was transposed to a higher plane in the sense that

perfect calligraphy was held to be a manifestation of spirituality, that is, of inward perfection; and this perfection is, precisely, the essential concern of mysticism. Thus in speaking of the sacred artist's inward orientation as a necessary basis for producing his art, B. B. Zakhoder writes, with special reference to Islam: 'The religious consecration of a process of production, which, generally speaking, is typical for the whole of the Middle Ages, achieves its supreme expression in calligraphy. By maintaining that "purity of writing is purity of soul", the mediaeval outlook made on the master calligrapher the same stern demands of asceticism as it did on the members of the religious class.'⁴ The ideal in question no doubt remained more or less theoretic in many if not most cases. But the connection in Islam between mysticism and calligraphy was made closer by the fact that both the Sufis and the calligraphers trace back their spiritual lineage to one and the same individual, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. Throughout the Middle Ages, and afterwards, the two vocations were like inseparably close lines, forever overlapping in the persons of eminent calligraphers who were Sufis, not to mention the authors of more than one treatise on calligraphy. It would therefore be surprising if the remarkable spread of the hitherto relatively secret and reserved Sufi orders, which took place throughout the whole of Eastern Islam and also in the West during the 7th/13th century, should have been without its effect upon the sacred arts and in particular upon calligraphy. However this may be, and whatever outward and inward causes may have been preparing the way, no one can deny that there took place in the Islamic East, from the outset of the 8th/14th century, one of the most remarkable flowerings of calligraphy and illumination that the world has ever seen.

A great contribution of the Mamluk and Mongol periods lies in the Qur'ān frontispieces and other full-page illuminations, and this exhibition may claim to have brought together some of the finest examples. Not that the frontispiece was an innovation, for it had been a feature of Qur'ān manuscripts since the 3rd/9th century. Nor were any new basic elements introduced; it was rather a question of consummation. The effect, which was produced by means of geometrical forms combined with the arabesque, might be described as a simultaneous expression of profound repose and intense life, a static perfection of plenitude and a dynamic radiance of infinite vibrations.

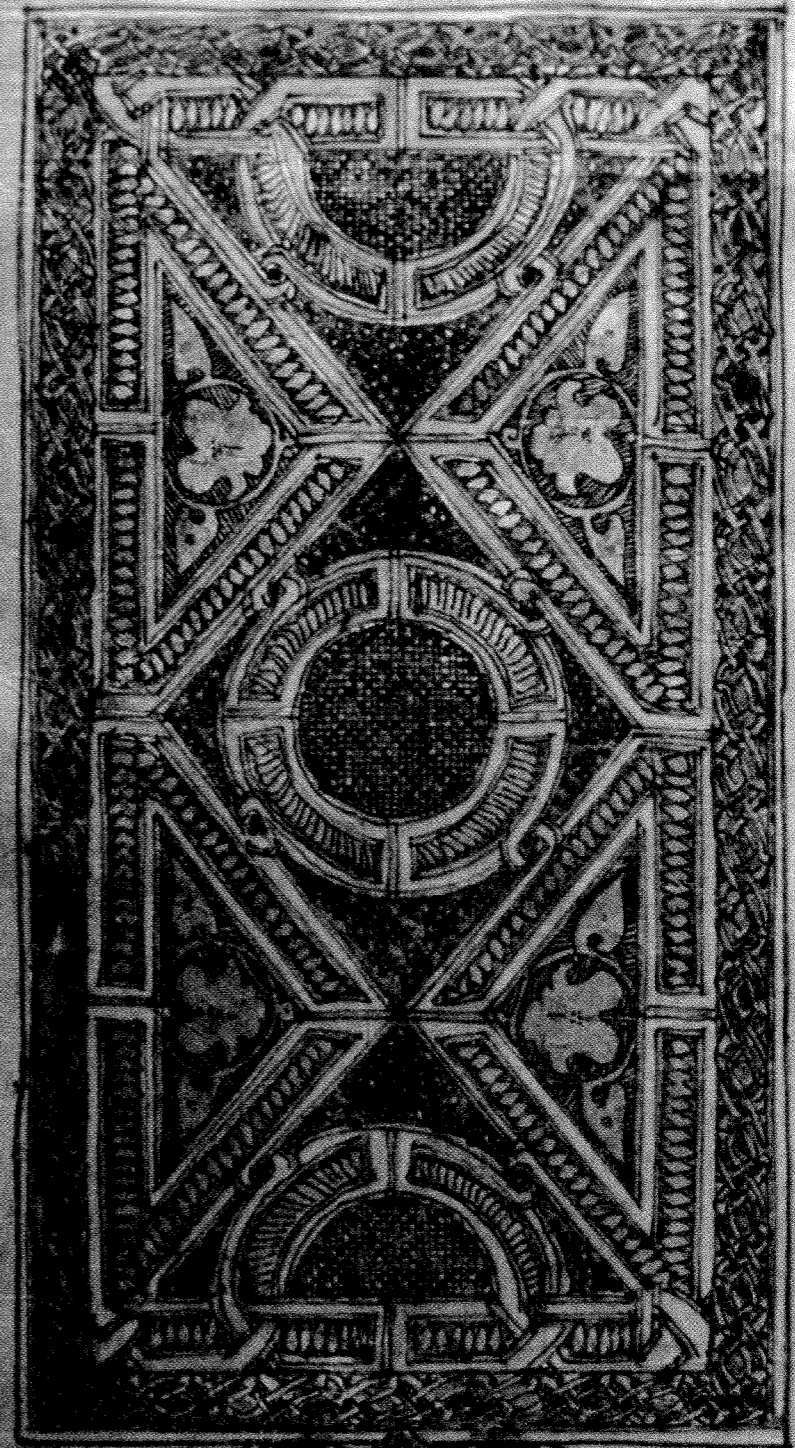
Qur'ān illumination was undoubtedly the source of the illuminative art of the Persian miniaturists. But once it had been adapted to their requirements, it flowed back, as it were, to have an influence in its turn on the Quranic art; and in the 9th/15th century, under Timurid patronage, this delicate style began to replace the Īl-Khānid style of Qur'ān illumination in Iraq and Persia, making itself felt also in Turkey, while that of the Mamluks continued in Egypt and Syria until the Ottoman conquest of those parts in 922-3/1516-7. Timurid illumination belongs none the less in spirit far more to the art which preceded it than to that which followed it, as can be seen from the examples displayed.

In the first decades of the 10th/16th century Eastern Qur'ān illumination crystallized into a form which, until the present day, has undergone no significant basic changes. This final style quickly became inter-regional, not without subdivisions, needless to say,

⁴Qāḍī Aḥmad, *Calligraphers and Painters*, p. 22.

³A superb exception however is to be found in Istanbul in the Topkapi Saray Library (HS 25) copied in 945/1538 by Shāh Maḥmūd an-Nisābūrī.

though it can sometimes be difficult to tell, without an explicit colophon, whether a Qur'ān of the 10th-11th/16th-17th centuries was written in Persia – Iraq, in India, or in the Ottoman Empire. Especially powerful was the Safavid influence on either side, in both an easterly and a westerly direction, as will be seen from the arrangements of the manuscripts which belong to this latest period. For the last three centuries in the Islamic East, and for a somewhat shorter time in the Islamic West, there has been a widening gap of disparity between calligraphy and illumination, with isolated exceptions. But to this day, there are still schools of calligraphy in both East and West. Qur'ān manuscripts are still written despite the printing press, and a remarkably high general standard of script has been maintained.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَأَمَّا بَعْدُ فَاذْكُرُوا
الْيَوْمَ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُخَالِفُونَ
أَمْرًا فِيهِ كُنْتُمْ كَارِهِينَ
وَأَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا
كُنْتُمْ تَفْعَلُونَ

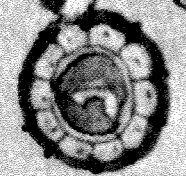
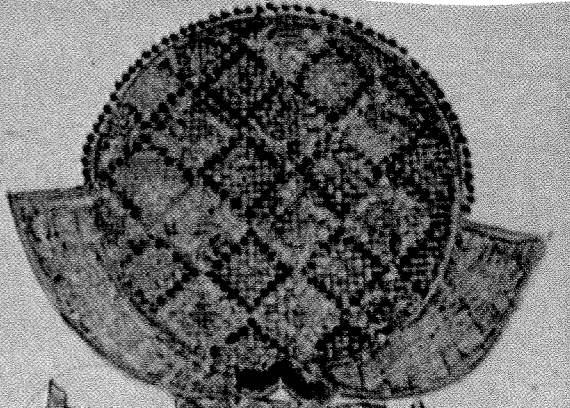


Plate II. See no. 17.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَأَمَّا بَعْدُ فَاذْكُرُوا
الْيَوْمَ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُخَالِفُونَ
أَمْرًا فِيهِ كُنْتُمْ كَارِهِينَ
وَأَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا
كُنْتُمْ تَفْعَلُونَ



09 60

Plate III. See no. 19.

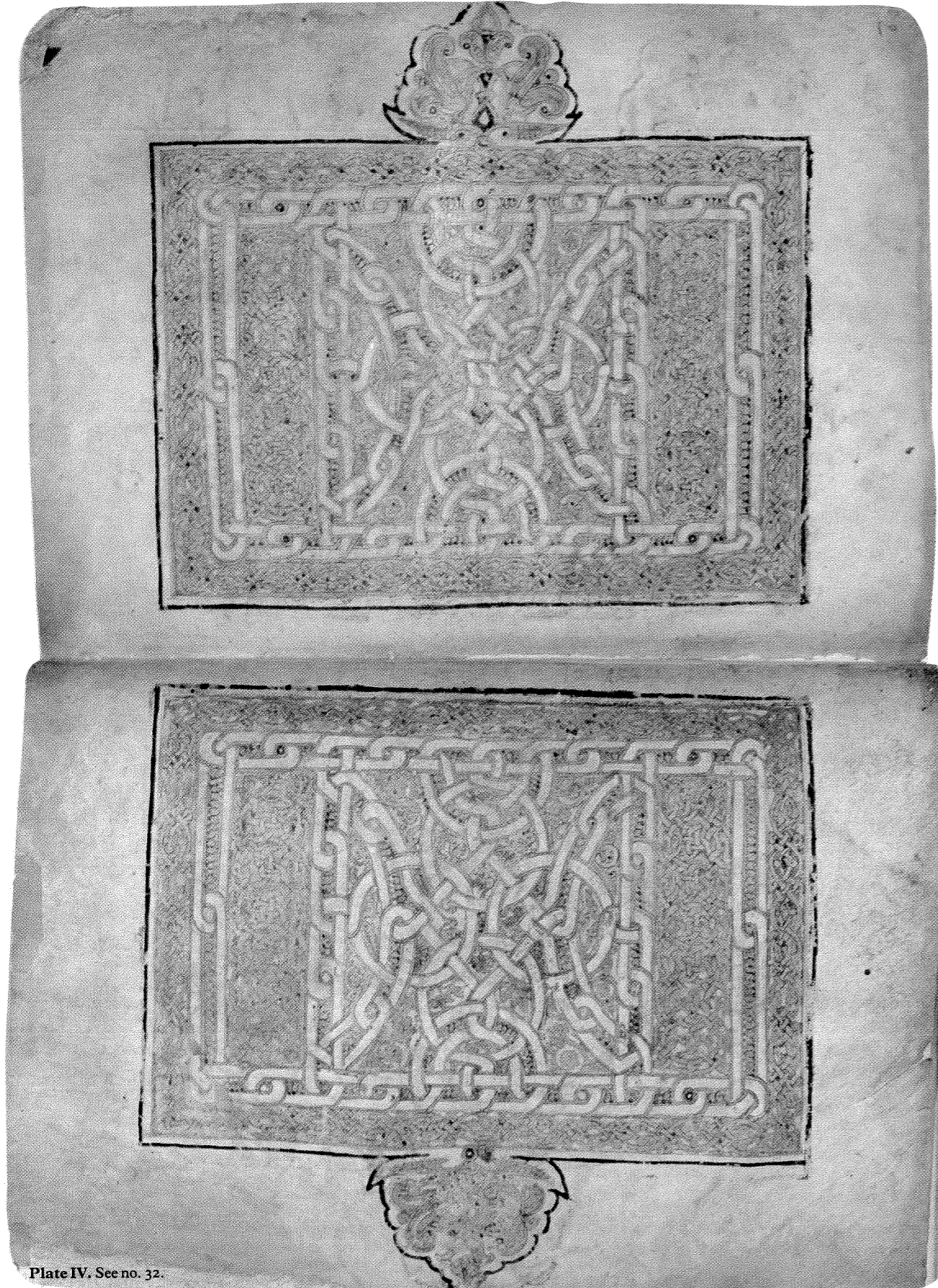


Plate IV. See no. 32.



Plate V. See no. 37.

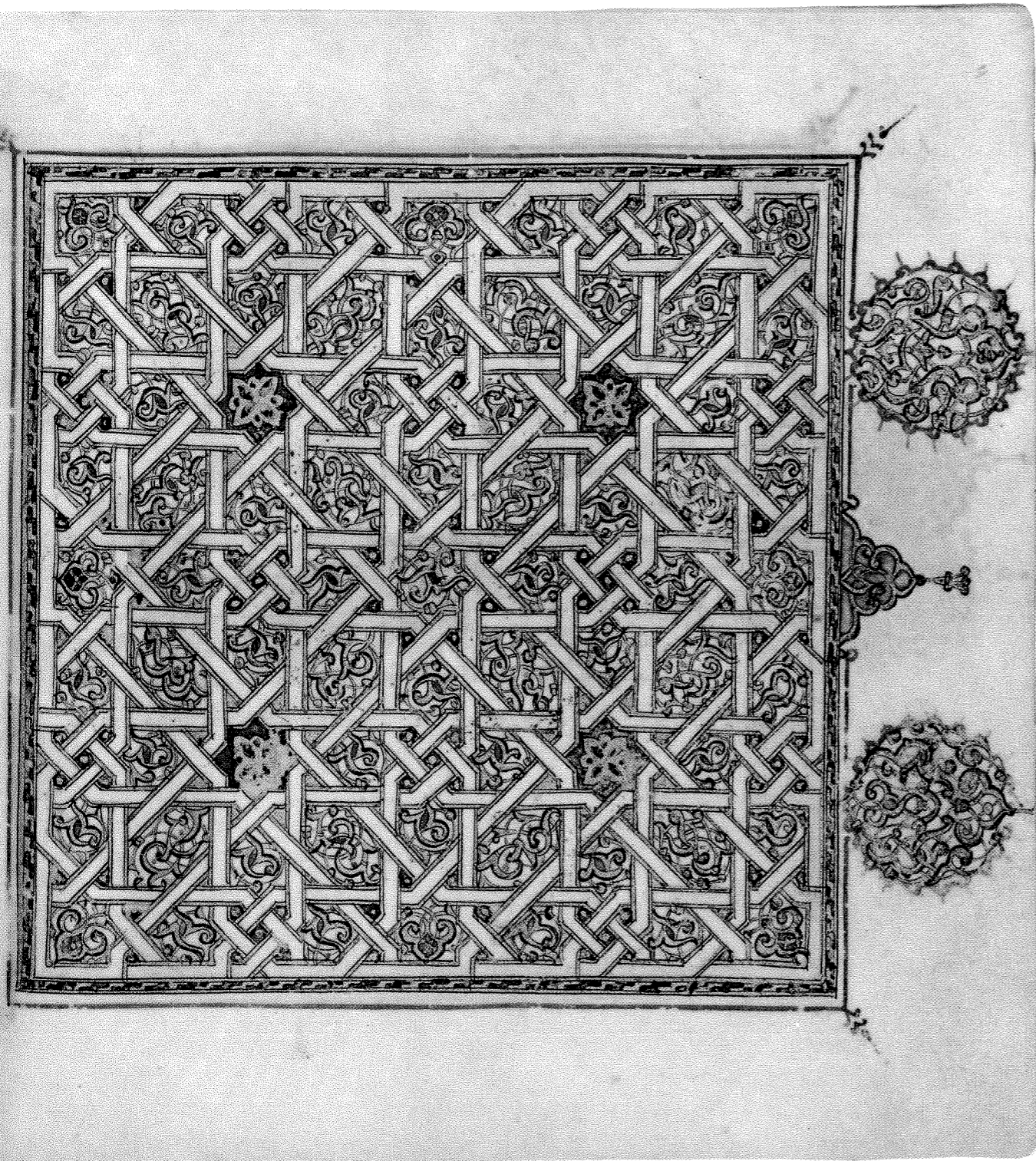


Plate VI. See no. 48.

٧٤١
بِالتَّكْوِينِ ﴿١٠٠﴾ فَبَعَثْنَا رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ قَا
حَتَّ مَعَهُمْ أَخِيذَةً رَابِيَةً ﴿١٠١﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَّا خَلَقَ
الْمَاءَ حَمَلَكُمْ فِي الْجَارِيَةِ ﴿١٠٢﴾ لِنَجْعَلَنَّ
لَكُمْ تَذَكُّرًا وَتَعْيِيمًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَوَعَدْنَا
بَاءَ الْفَيْحِ فِي الصُّورِ نَفْخَةً وَحِجَّةً ﴿١٠٤﴾
وَحَمَلْنَا الْأَرْضَ وَالْجِبَالَ بِدِكْتَاءِكُمْ
وَاحِدَةً ﴿١٠٥﴾ فَيَوْمَ سَدَّ وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةَ
وَأَنْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَسُيُودًا وَاهِيَةً ﴿١٠٦﴾
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَا أَزْجَارَهَا وَيَجْمَلُ عُرْسُوكُمْ
فَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ مَلَائِكَةُ ﴿١٠٧﴾ يَوْمَ سَدَّ
تَعْرِضُورٍ لَا تَخْبِرُ مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةً ﴿١٠٨﴾
فَأَقَامُوا وَتَرَى كَتَبَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ يَقُولُ ﴿١٠٩﴾
أَفْرَأَى كَتَبْتُمْ أَنَّى مَلَأُوا
حَسْرَاتِهِ ﴿١١٠﴾ فَمَنْ فِي عَيْشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٌ ﴿١١١﴾
فِي حَيَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ﴿١١٢﴾ فَكُونُوا هَادِيَةً ﴿١١٣﴾
كُلُوا وَأَشْرَبُوا وَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ فِي
الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَأَقَامُوا وَتَرَى كَتَبَهُ



Plate VII. See no. 50.

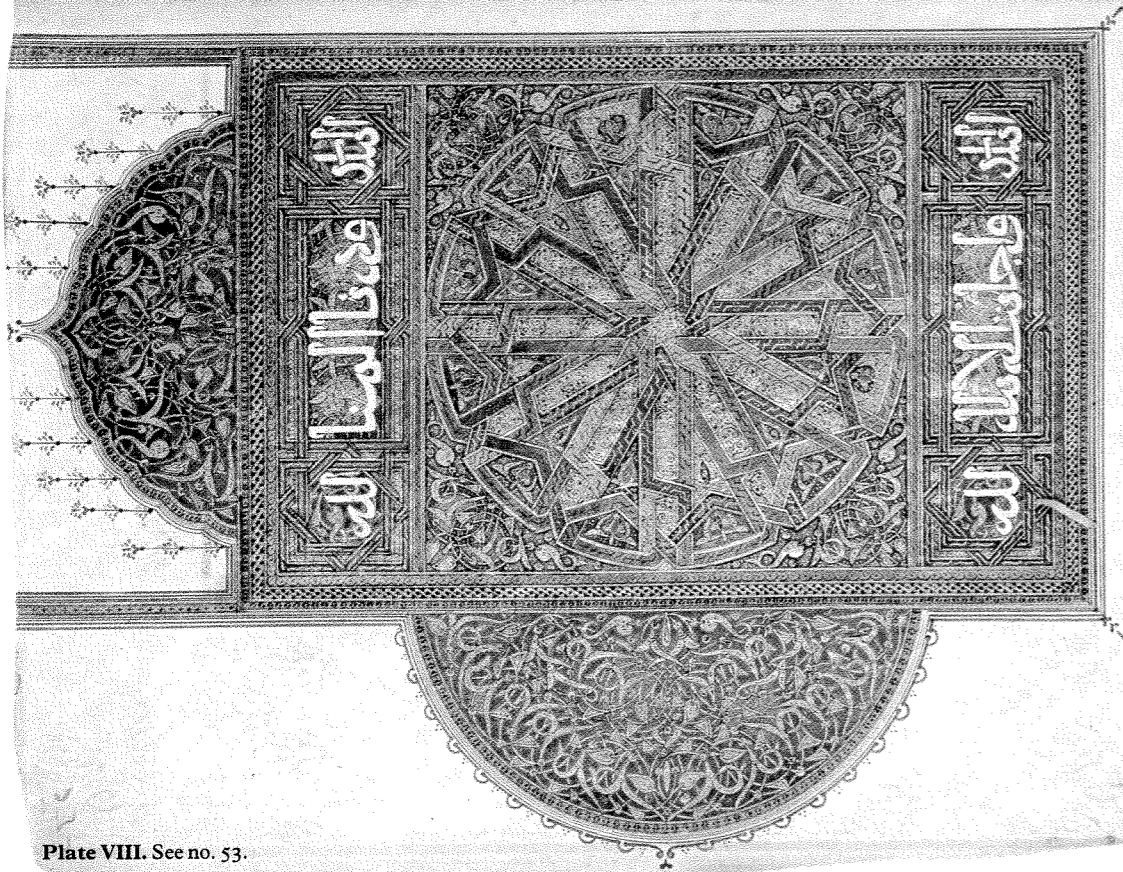
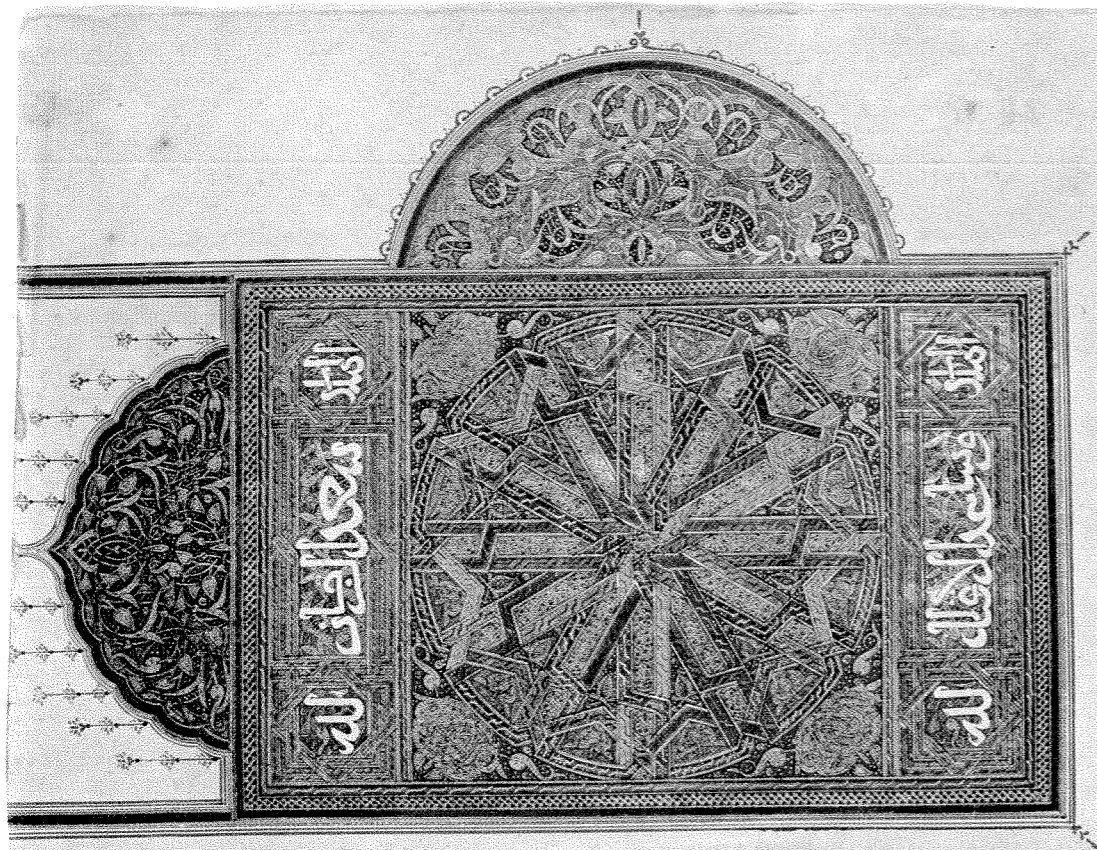


Plate VIII. See no. 53.

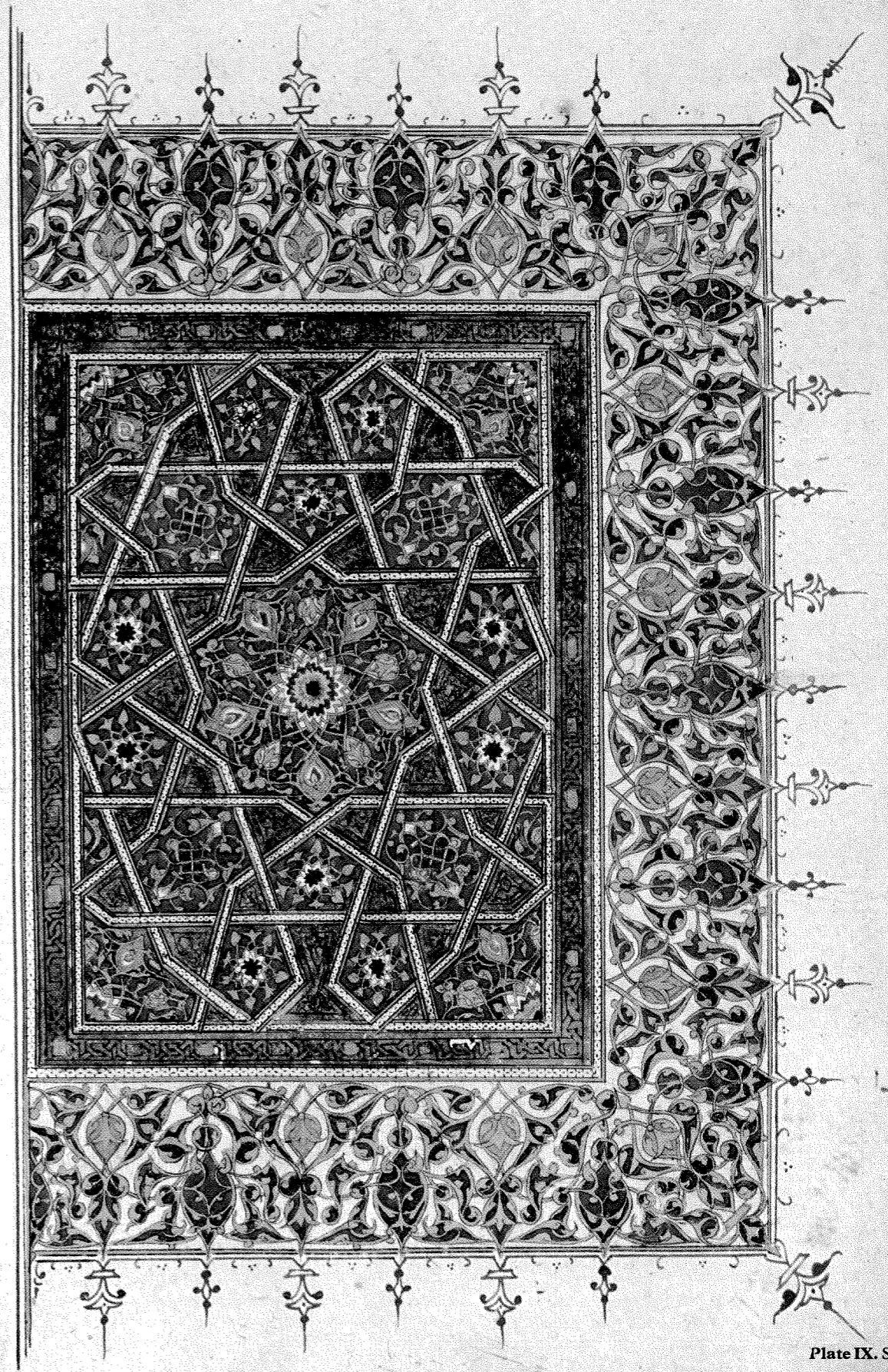
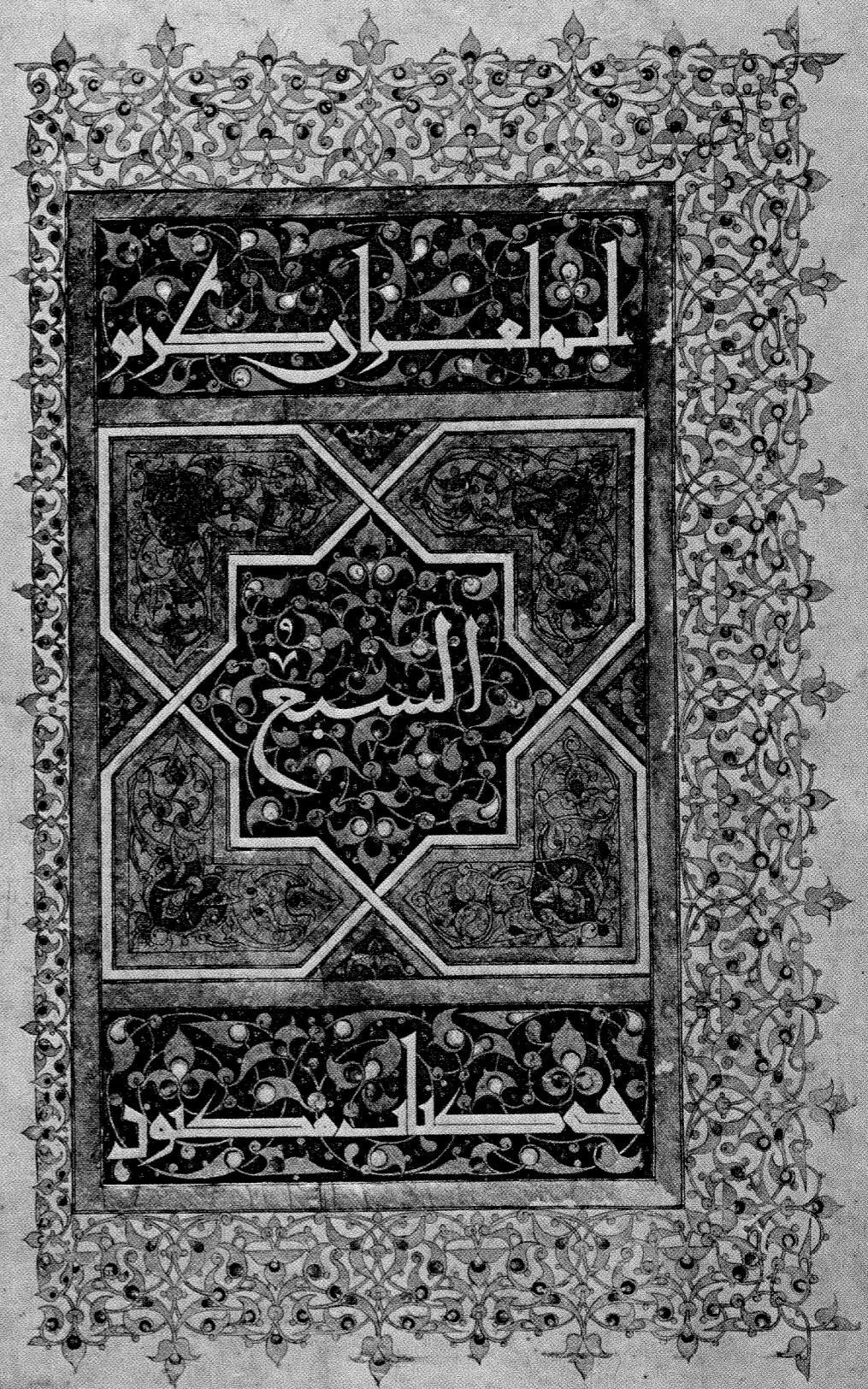
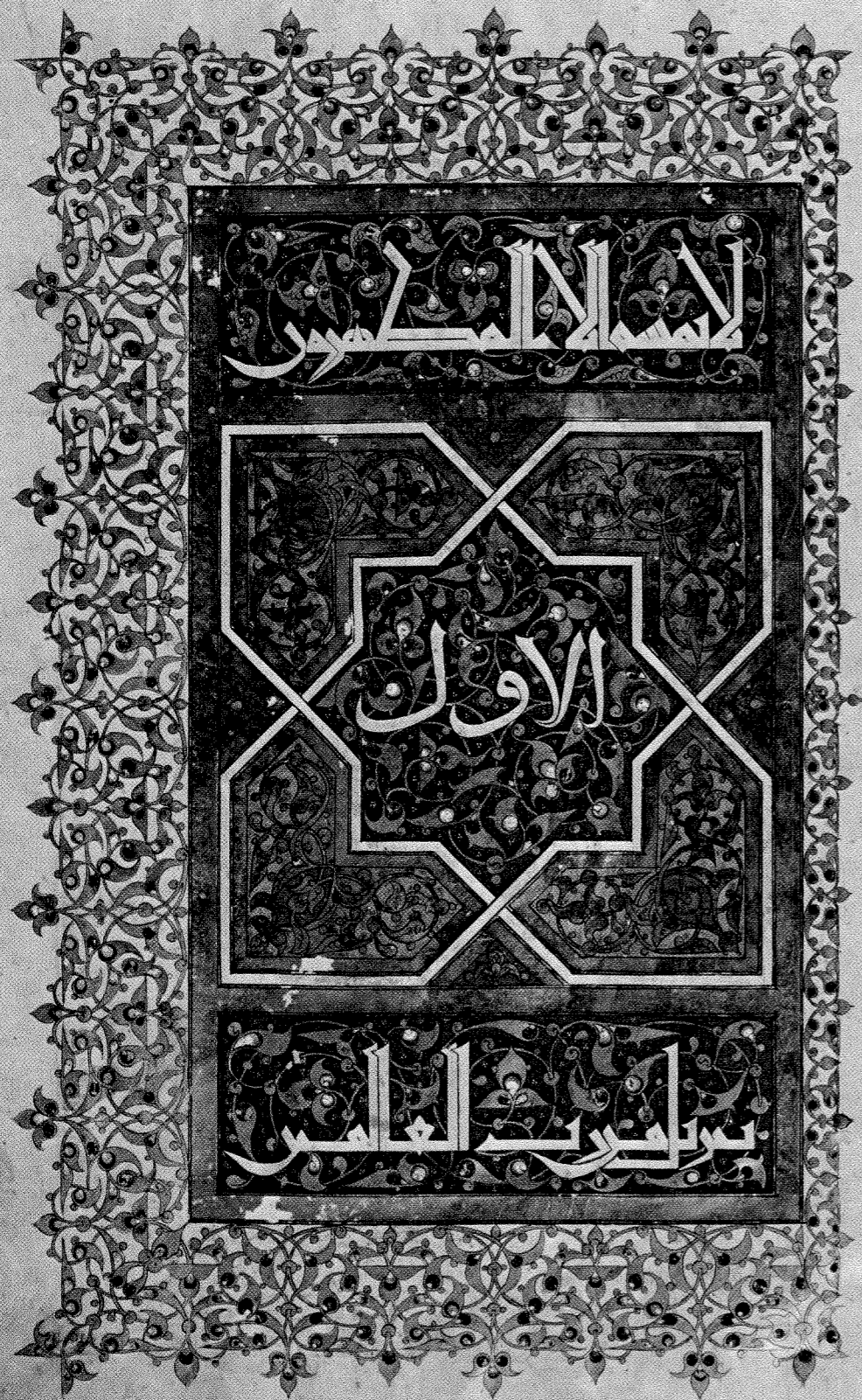


Plate IX. See no. 75.



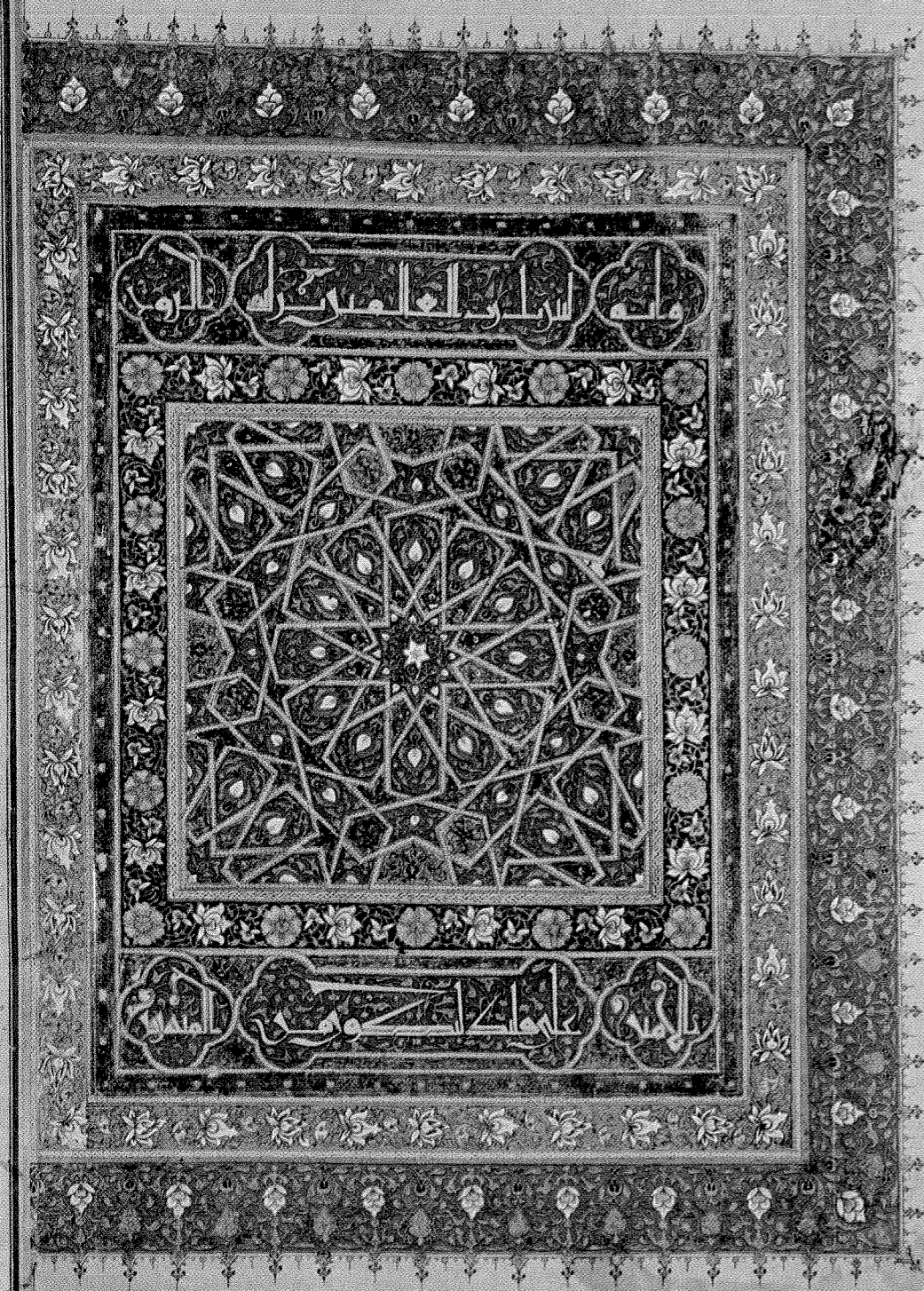


Plate XII. See no. 79.

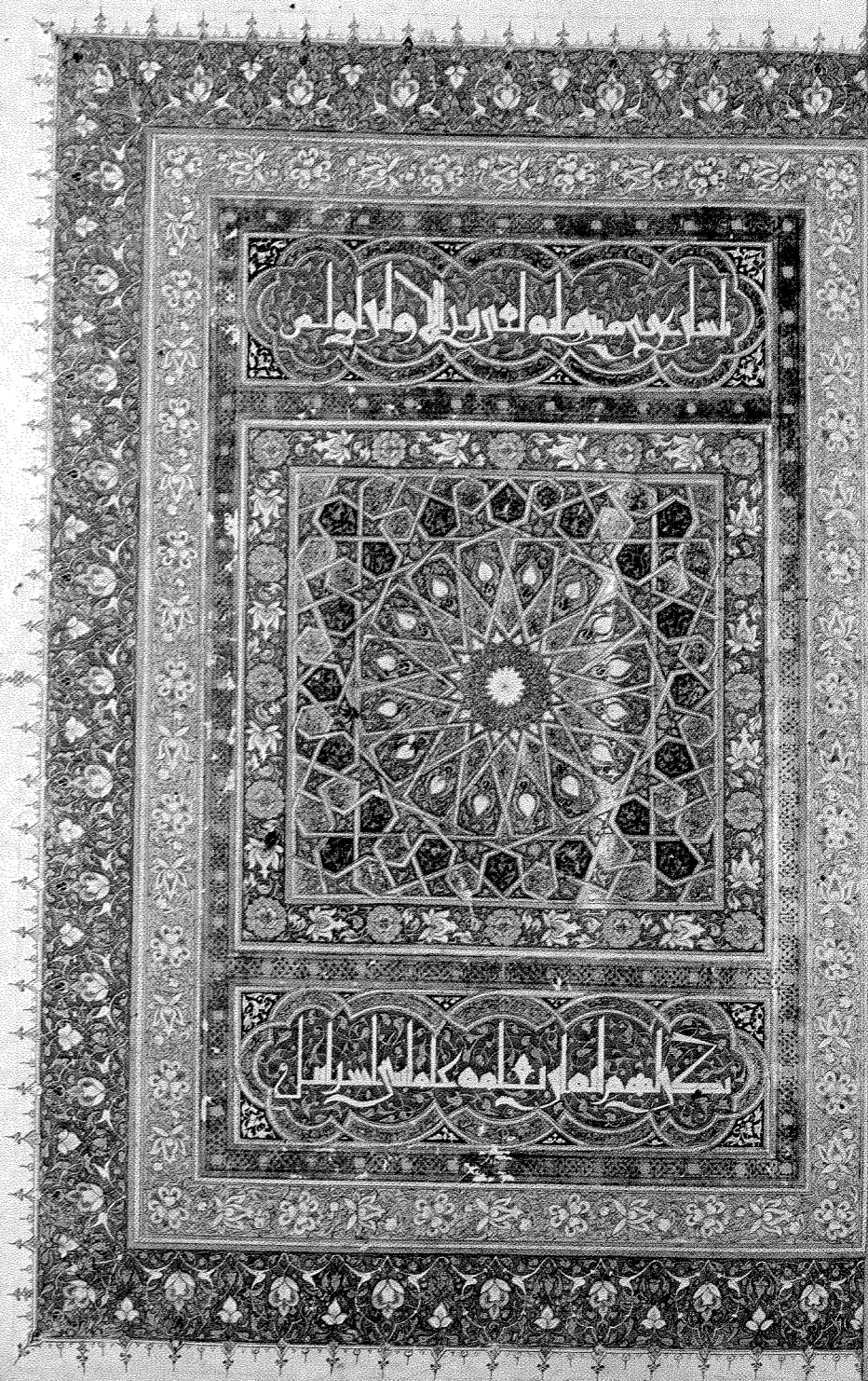
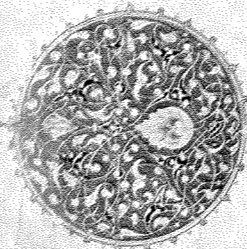


Plate XIII. See no. 80.

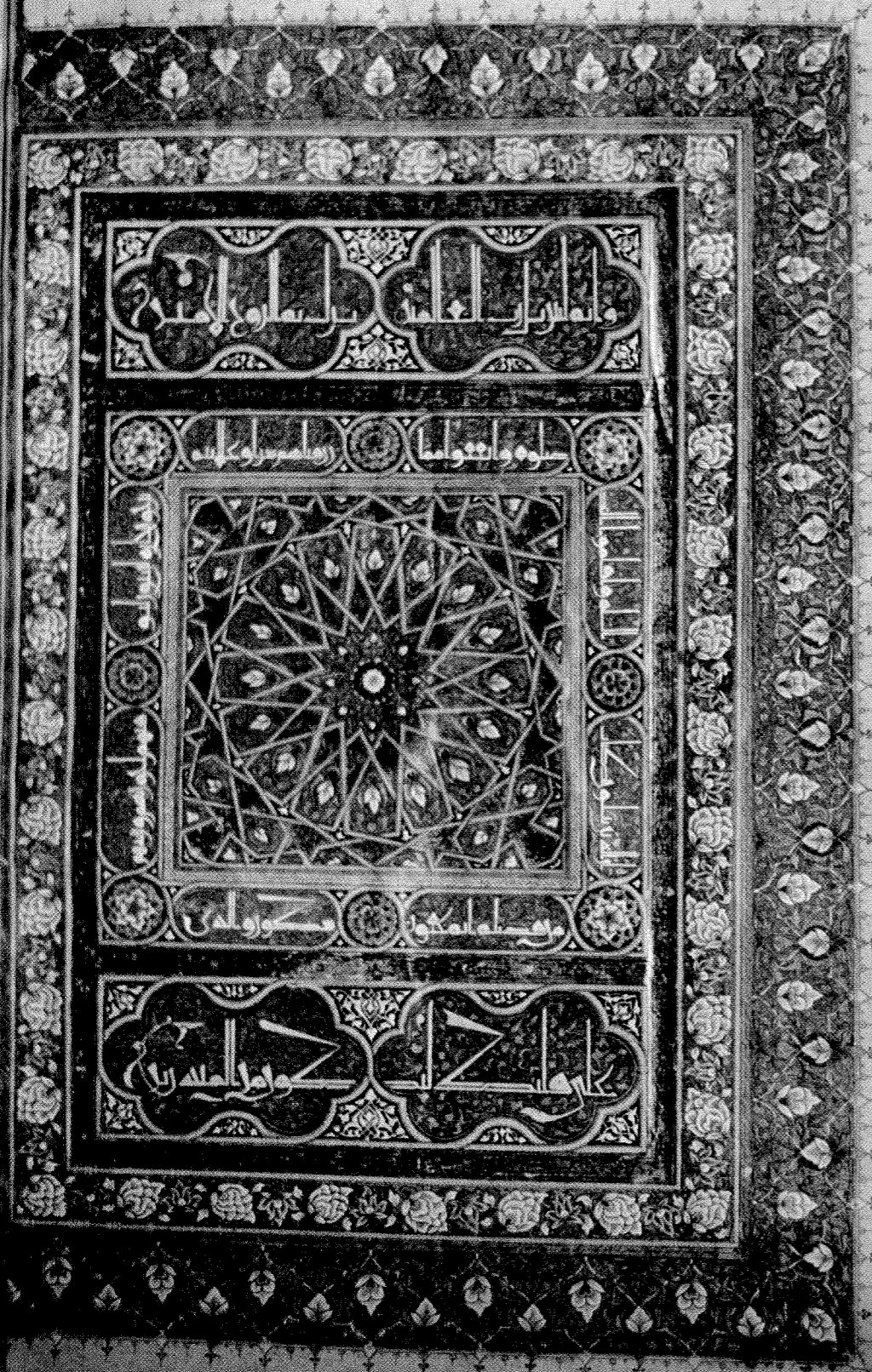


Plate XIV.
See no. 81.

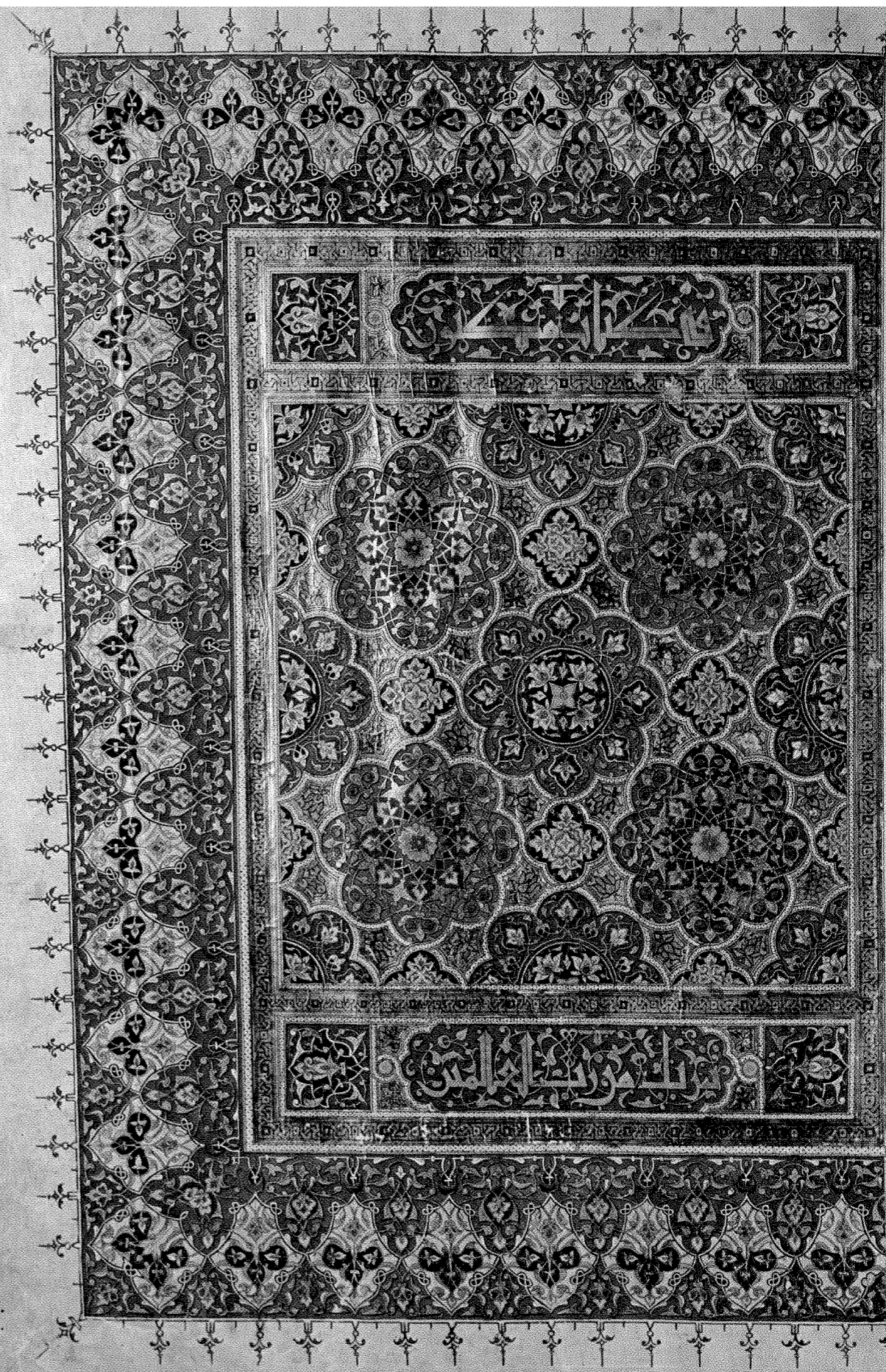
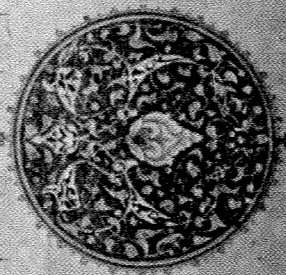
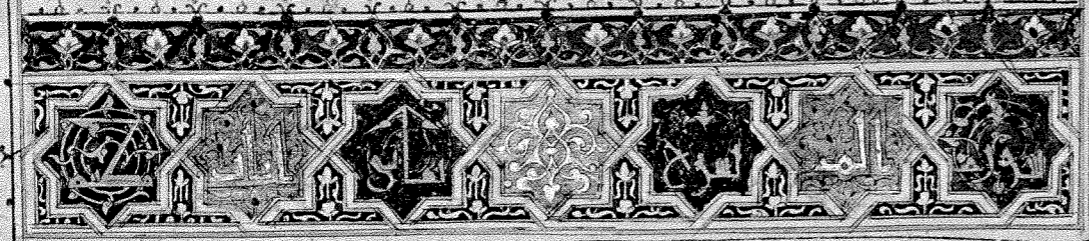


Plate XV.
See no. 82.



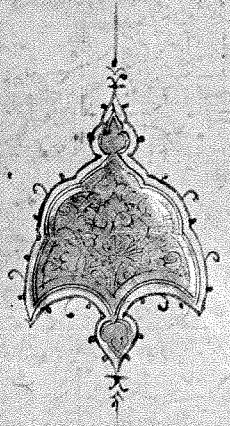
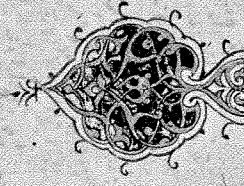
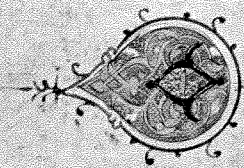
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْمُنْشَرِحَ لَلصَّدْرِكَ وَوَضَعَا عَنكَ وَزَرَ الَّذِي أَنْفَضَ ظَهْرَكَ وَرَفَعَا لَكَ
ذِكْرًا فَاذْمَعِ الْعُسْرَ بِسِرِّ الرَّحْمَنِ إِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ عِزٌّ

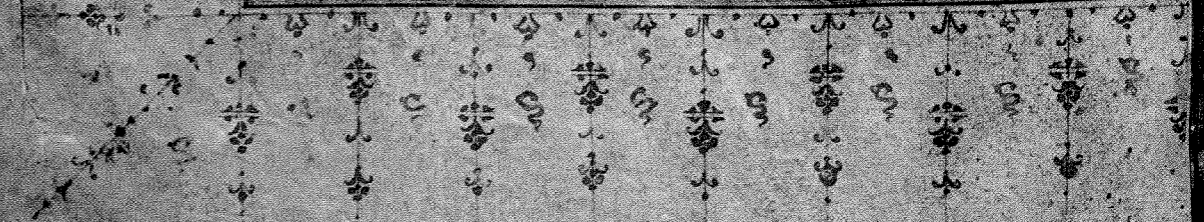


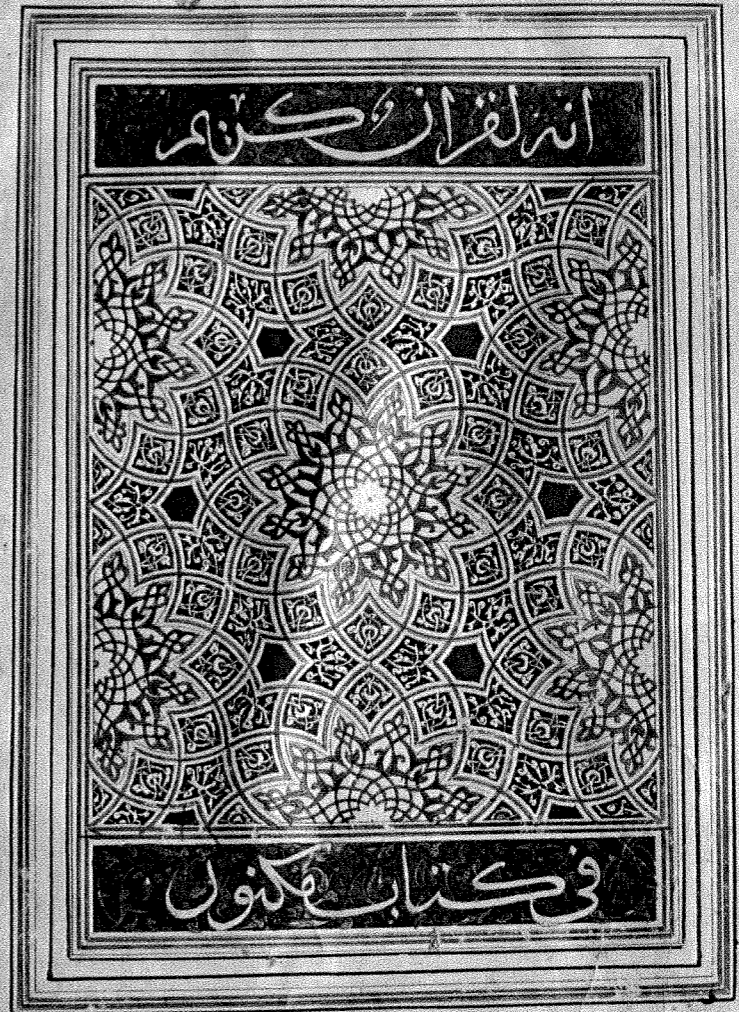
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالْتَبَرُوا الزُّبُرَ وَطُورِ سِينِينَ وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي
أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ فَمَا يَكْفُرُكَ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ يَا حَكِيمُ الْحَكِيمِينَ

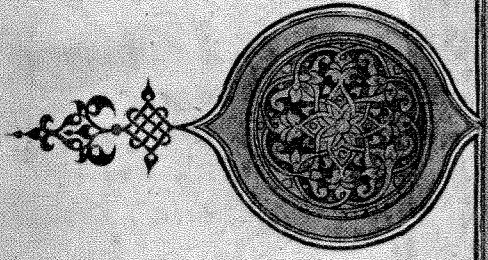
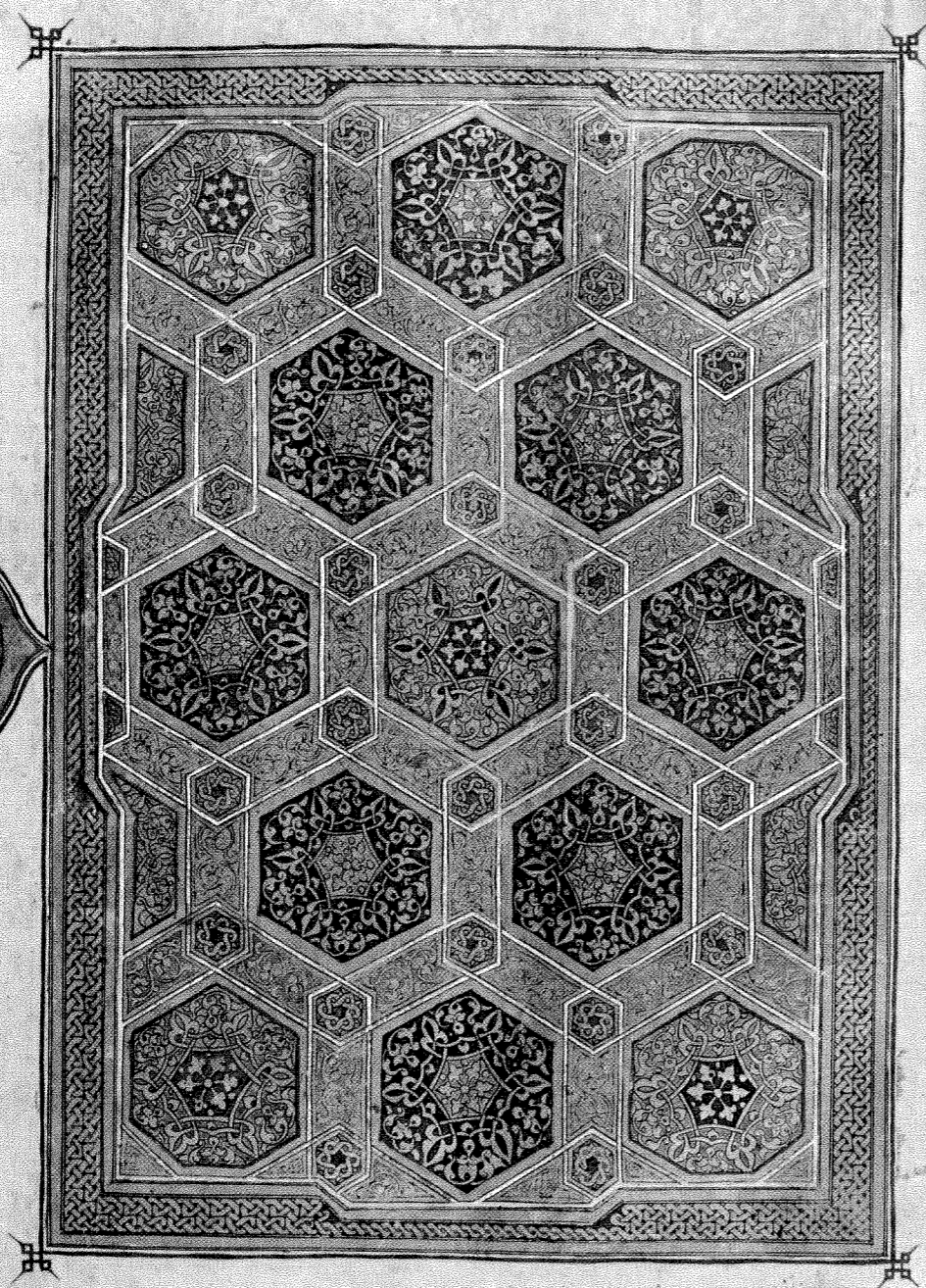


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ لِرَبِّهِ الْعَالَمِينَ الْقُرْآنَ الْعَرَبِيَّ الْقُرْآنَ الْمَدِينِيَّ
الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ





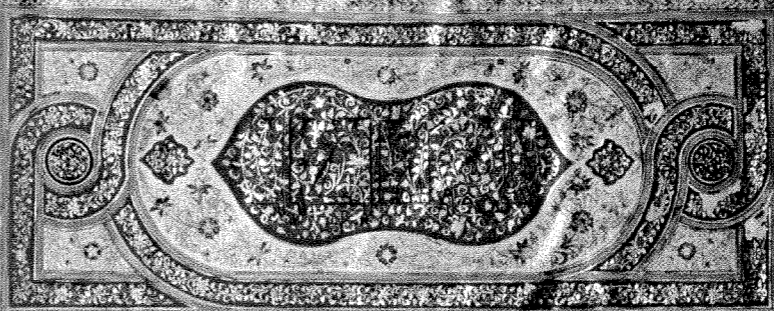
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وقف وحسن وسئل وأبد العبد الفقير إلى الله تعالى
 أبو سعيد محمد بن بكر الدين في الملك الناصر إعاد الله عليه من ركعات القرآن العظيم
 جميع هذه الزيادة وعقدتها لتكون جزءاً على المسلمين كافة ينفعون بها في الغزاة
 والنقل والمطالعة وجعل مستقرها بالشريعة التي تعرف بانسابها بالقرافة الضمري الحجازية
 لحوش الملك الظاهر بحري الحلال في ذلك كتابك لأن برث الله الأرض ومن عليها وهو خير الوارثين
 وجعل الواقف المذكوراً عالماً بالنظر في ذلك لنفسه طول حياته ثم من بعده لأولاده الأرشاد
 فالأرشاد فإذا انقضت الذرية ولم يبق منه أحدًا يكون النظر لمن يكون شيئاً بالترتيب المذكور
 بحري الحلال في ذلك كتابك فخرهم على من غيره أو بدل له من يد له بعد ما سجد فأما عند علي
 الدين بعد ولده إن الله سبحانه وتعالى وسرط الواقف المذكور عالماً إن هذه الزيادة كما لها يكون مستقرها
 بالقبلة المذكورة وأما لا يخرج من الترتيب المذكور ولا تغادر ولا يخرج إلا إصلاح ووقع الأشهاد بذلك
 في السابع والعشرون من شهر جمادى الآخرة سنة ست وخمسين





 الحمد لله رب العالمين
 الحمد لله رب العالمين
 الحمد لله رب العالمين
 الحمد لله رب العالمين


Plate XX. See no. 112.



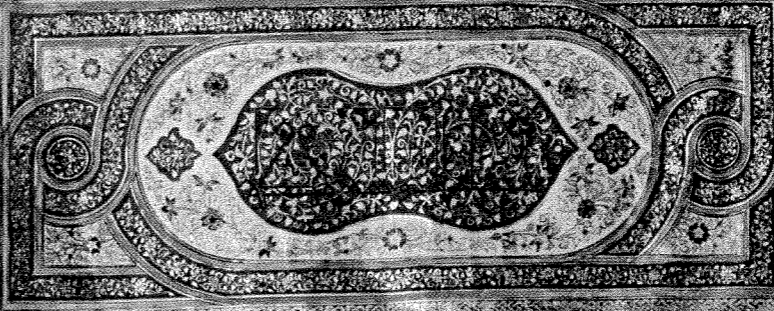
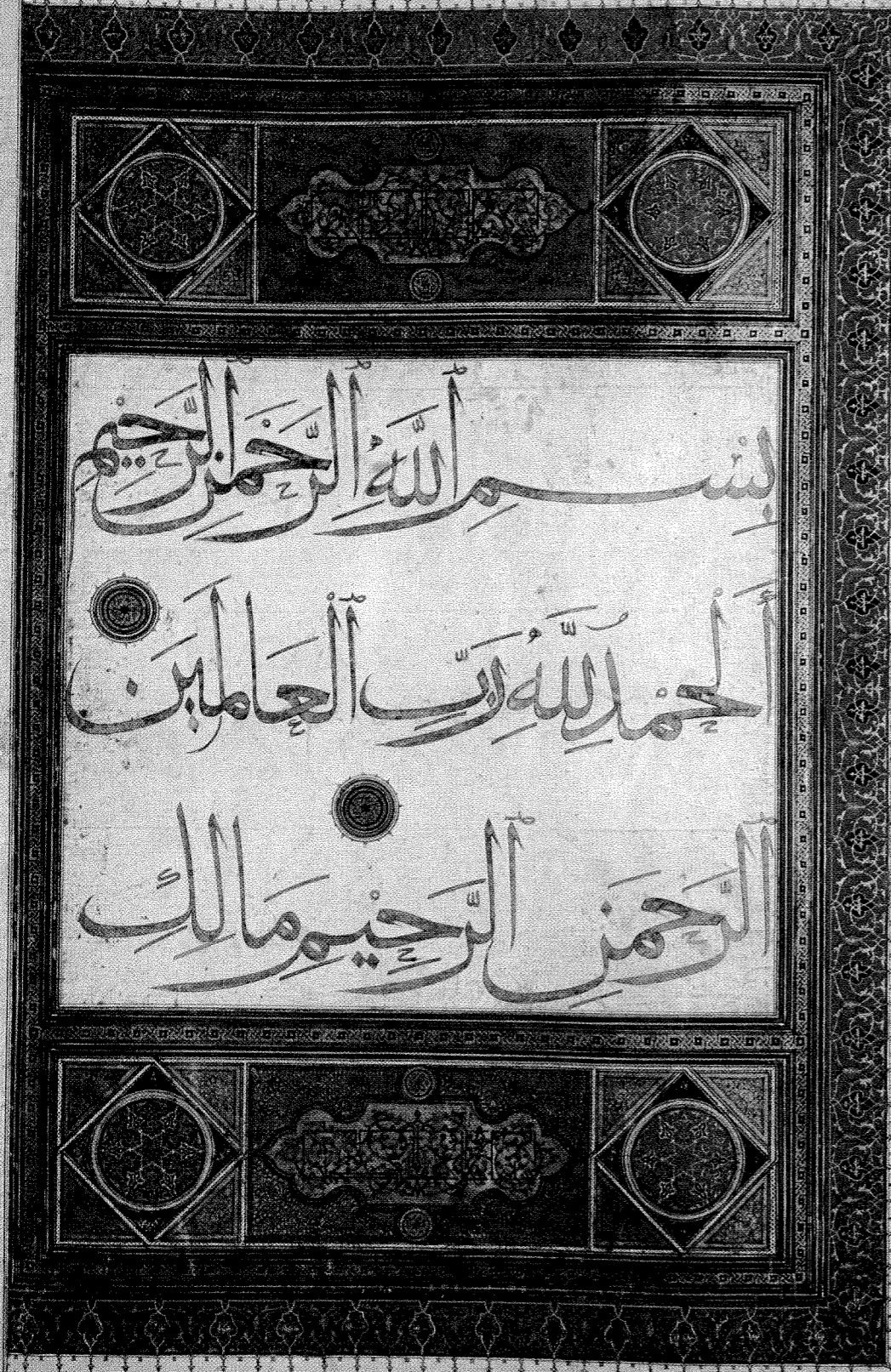
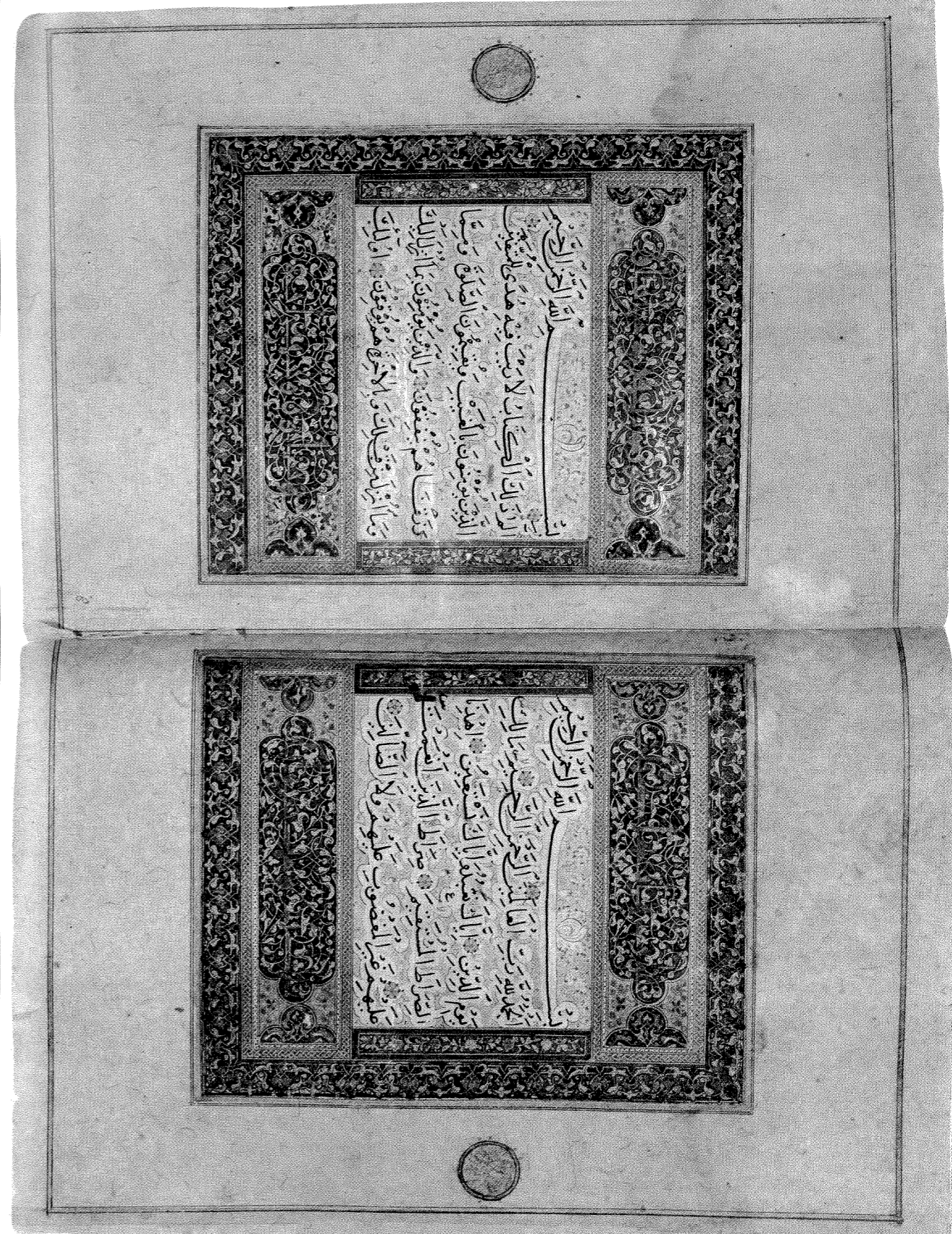
 الحمد لله رب العالمين
 الحمد لله رب العالمين
 الحمد لله رب العالمين
 الحمد لله رب العالمين


Plate XXI. See no. 115.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
 الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مَالِكِ

Plate XXII. See no. 119.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَى لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
 الْبُرُوقَ بِرَبِّهِ وَاللَّيْلَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا
 وَالنَّجْمَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا وَاللَّيْلَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا
 وَالنَّجْمَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا وَاللَّيْلَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا
 وَالنَّجْمَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا وَاللَّيْلَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَى لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
 الْبُرُوقَ بِرَبِّهِ وَاللَّيْلَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا
 وَالنَّجْمَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا وَاللَّيْلَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا
 وَالنَّجْمَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا وَاللَّيْلَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا
 وَالنَّجْمَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا وَاللَّيْلَ بِمُجِزَاتِهَا

Plate XXIII. See no. 126.

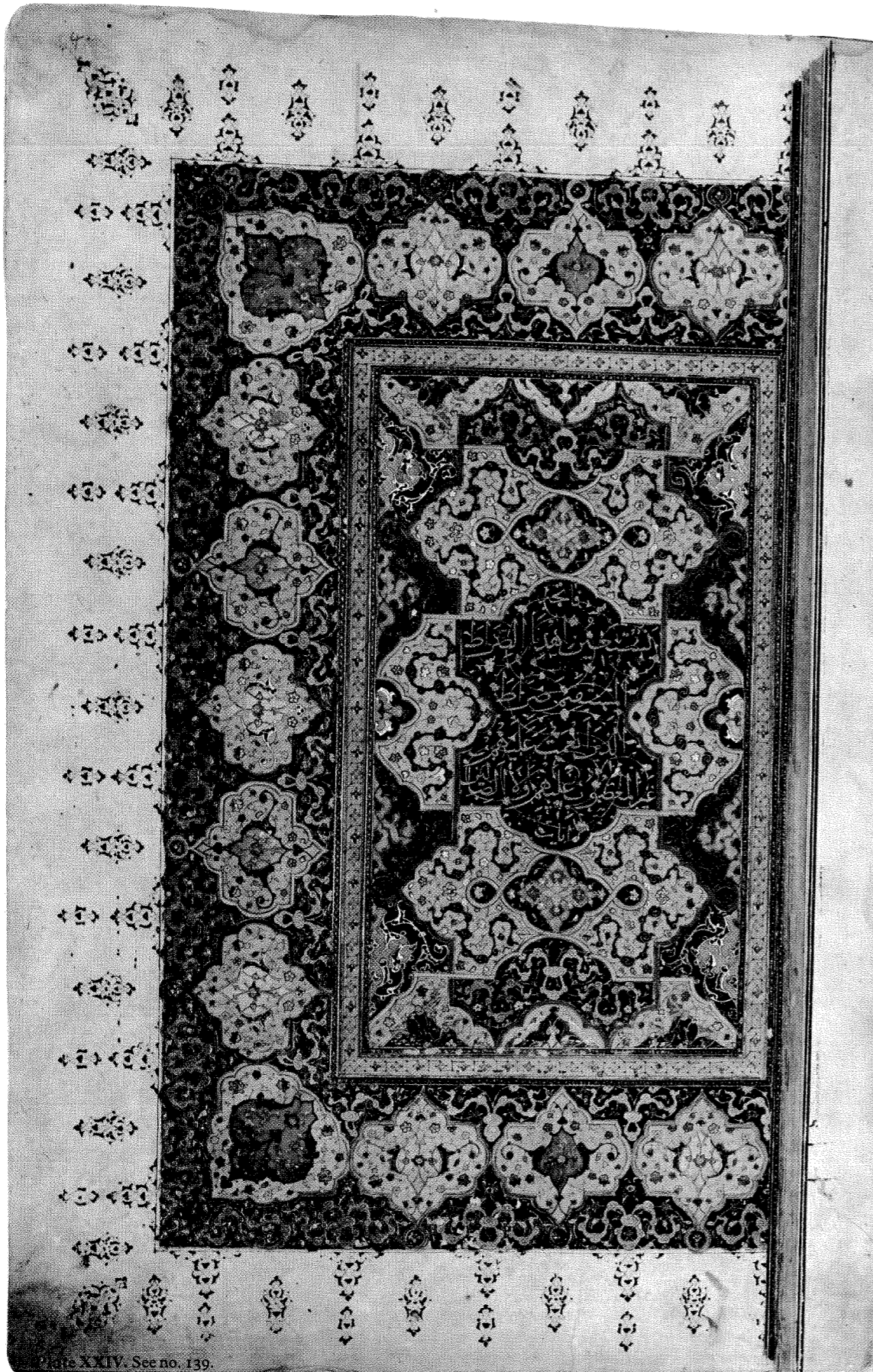
Early Kufic

2nd-4th/8th-10th century

All the masters of later Arabic calligraphy acknowledge the Prophet's cousin 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib as the first master of Arabic calligraphy, although there is some doubt as to whether he actually wrote a Qur'ān copy in his own hand. The first serious attempts to write Arabic in a hieratic style, however, are associated with the towns of Mecca, Madinah, Basrah and Kufah, each of which gave its name to an early calligraphic style. But there seems to have been a general opinion that Kufic excelled the others, and by the end of the 2nd/8th century it was in use all over the Islamic world as the sole calligraphic script for Qur'āns. The earliest extant copy of the Qur'ān included in this exhibition comes from the British Library collections (*see no. 1a*), which is believed to have been copied at Mecca or Madinah in the script called *al-mā'il* in the late 2nd/8th century and it is, exceptionally, in vertical format; the other early copies of the Qur'ān which have come down to us are written in Kufic script in black or dark brown ink, and later occasionally in gold, on white vellum, often only a few monumental lines on each page; early Qur'āns on coloured vellum are extremely rare (probably no more than three or four specimens are extant) and we are fortunate to be able to include in this exhibition, from Tunis, two folios from an almost complete Qur'ān on blue vellum which is indeed a superb example of its type (*see no. 11*). The Qur'āns which have come down to us in Kufic script are all oblong in format, probably owing to the influence of the horizontal Quranic inscripational panels in mosques (*see* Richard Ettinghausen, in *A Survey of Persian Art*, vol. III, p. 1942), but even apart from such considerations, this script has a marked characteristic which in a sense calls for the format in question, and that is the long, thick horizontal strokes – sometimes very long – which serve to give it a certain momentum despite its overall static quality. Without the oblong format these strokes would have been disproportionate; and the format was maintained only as long as they continued to be a feature of this script.

Until the beginning of the 3rd/9th century, Kufic Qur'āns received little illumination, but once the initial reluctance of allowing ornamentation to intrude upon the text was overcome, the evolving art of illumination soon provided various ornamental devices which also served certain necessary functions in the arrangement of the Quranic text.

Although in some early Qur'āns verse divisions were not indicated,



in most Kufic and later Qur'āns certain devices which may be called 'verse counts' were provided, and in illuminated Qur'āns these verse counts were used to provide additional ornamentation indicating the end of single verses and separating groups of five and ten verses, and occasionally groups of four verses.

Single verse division markings varied from a simple device such as a thick short stroke, usually in gold and colours (*see no. 12*), to a very stylized and elaborately designed rosette in gold and colours (*see no. 1b*); in most cases, however, the division was indicated by a multi-petalled gold rosette with touches of colour. Another device, and one of the earliest marks used to indicate a verse division, is the stylized trefoil made up of small contiguous gold circles, usually only three but sometimes as many as six, resting on each other to form a pyramid (*see nos. 3 and 24*). The fifth verse divisions were indicated by the final form of an ornamental gold *hā'*¹ stylized to resemble a small palmette (*see nos. 3, 6, 9 and 28*); alternatively a gold rosette is used, only slightly different in design or colour from other rosettes used for the ordinary verse division (*see no. 17*). A gold roundel is used to indicate the tenth verse division, and it is usually positioned either in the text or in the margin (*see nos. 3, 7 and 17*). A few Kufic Qur'āns feature a special rosette marking the last verse of the *sūrah*; an example of this type of ornament, which can be seen in one of the exhibits, is a gold horizontal stem with stylized leaves (*see no. 19*). It is interesting to note that many of these same verse division ornaments of the 3rd/9th century were also used in Eastern Kufic Qur'āns of the same period; furthermore in the Islamic West, in particular, their use was continued at least till the 10th/16th century. In the Islamic East, however, both their design and illuminative form began to be modified after the 4th/10th century. If the beginning of a new section of a Kufic Qur'ān was indicated, it was usually done by a relatively more substantial ornament, or even a full-page illumination not unlike those used as frontispieces (*see nos. 16 and 18*).

The division between *sūrahs* was indicated by a 'sūrah heading' which became the most basic element of Qur'ān illumination. In Kufic Qur'āns, these consisted mainly of decorative rectangular panels with a *shujayrah* – a palmette projecting horizontally into the margin, and usually composed of stylized foliar and floral arabesque in gold, highlighted with touches or dots in colour (*see no. 10*). Decorative elements of this type were almost certainly taken from Sassanian art, but many different forms were soon developed and perfected by Qur'ān illuminators. The rectangular panel was progressively reduced in width until it occupied no more than the space of a line of script (*see nos. 10 and 11 for comparison*), and was later often replaced by a line of gold ornamental Kufic script (*see nos. 1b, 2, 8, 12, 13, 20, 22 and 27*); exceptionally, instead of gold the Kufic script is in colour (*see no. 15*).

The broad and cumbersome early palmettes of the *sūrah* headings (*see no. 10*) are no doubt also a direct borrowing from Sassanian art, but these were later modified into more perfect and elegant forms (*see nos. 2, 6, 8, 13 and 22*); in later centuries they were little used if not altogether discarded (*see no. 23*). In some cases the *sūrah* heading is enhanced by elaborate marginal ornaments of geometric and floral design which may even extend to the text zone (*see no. 1b*).

Most of the 3rd-4th/9th-10th century calligraphic Qur'āns have a double page frontispiece, and a similar pair at the end. The ornamentation is nearly always the same in design and illuminative elements, generally consisting of an oblong rectangle with a palmette attached to its outer end, the predominant colour usually being gold with highlights in sepia, black or brown (*see nos. 16 and 18*).

One of the main characteristics of Kufic is that it is angular; it is a script of many right angles, open rectangles and squares, whence the rather inadequate terms, 'square Kufic' and 'rectangular Kufic', which are sometimes applied to it by Western scholars to distinguish it from its more developed forms or the early scripts derived from it.

Originally Arabic letters were written without any dots or diacritics; even today only long vowels and consonants are represented by letters, the remainder, which includes the short vowels, are represented by orthographical signs. Since several Arabic letters have exactly the same character outline, it is difficult to distinguish the form of one letter from that of another without devising a distinguishing mark for each of these letters.

In order to ensure the correct pronunciation and interpretation of the Qur'ān, it became imperative to solve these main problems of early Arabic writing. Attempts for the reform of Arabic writing were made as early as the 1st/7th century and these resulted in decisive changes and modifications which may be grouped into three basic systems. The first was the introduction of a system formulated mainly by Abū l-Aswad ad-Du'ālī (d.69/688), using coloured dots as diacritics representing the short vowels and other orthographical signs such as the *hamzah*, the *shaddah*, the *maddah*, the *sukūn*, the *tanwīn*, etc., with the red dots usually reserved for the vowels. Continued reforms resulted in the establishment of a basic system of 'letter pointing' to distinguish the consonants that were exactly alike in character form. This was achieved by the use of dots or short diagonal strokes above or below the relevant letter and the use of certain vowel signs which were adopted from the Syriac. The establishment of this basic system is attributed to the famous al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf ath-Thaqafī (d.96/714). Further reforms resulted in the modification and enlargement of these two basic systems until they were superseded by the system formulated by al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (d.170/786) which is more or less the conventional system used today. Although the latter system was hardly ever used in early Kufic, it was used at an early date in Eastern Kufic script; and there seems to be a general opinion that it excelled the others in the early 5th/11th century.

Specific reference to the type of diacritics or orthographical signs used in individual exhibits is briefly described in the catalogue entries as relevant (*see nos. 1b, 7, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 16*). In some Qur'āns, the Kufic script is richly supplemented by a complex system of diacritics (*see no. 23*), whereas in others the Kufic script is devoid of diacritical dots, letter pointing marks or other orthographical signs (*see no. 11*).

¹*Hā'* is an Arabic letter having the numerical value of five.

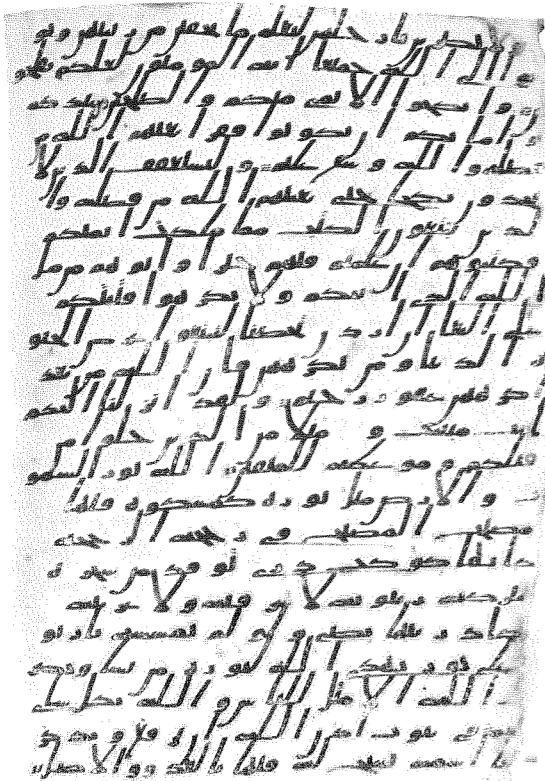
1a
Sūrat an-Nūr (Light), XXIV, 32–45, in a Qur'ān copied on vellum in the early Arabic script called *al-mā'il* in the late 2nd/8th century, probably in Mecca or Madinah. It is believed to be one of the two oldest extant Qur'ān manuscripts. It is written exceptionally in vertical format and is devoid of any diacritical marks other than an occasional letter pointing indicated by short strokes.

31.5 × 21.5cm; 23 lines; 121 folios.
London, British Library, Or. 2165, ff. 67v–68r.

1b
Sūrat an-Najm (the Star) and sūrat al-Qamar (the Moon), LIII, 60–62 – LIV, 1–2, from a Qur'ān copied on vellum in black Kufic script, probably in the 3rd/9th century in Kairouan.

The vowels are indicated by red dots according to the system of Abū l-Aswad and smaller black dots are used for letter pointing according to the system of al-Ḥajjāj, together with other diacritical marks used as orthographical signs. The verse division is marked in the text by a large rosette in gold and brown consisting of six petals overlapping a hexagonal ground of brown outlined in gold. Other verse endings in the text are not marked, and this single rosette appears to form part of the sūrah heading and its marginal ornaments.

The splendid sūrah heading consists of a line of ornamental gold Kufic script attached to a large marginal medallion consisting of a six-pointed star in gold on a ground of brown surrounded by two gold circles, with two small gold leaves at either side of the outer circle. The design of the star is interesting in that it is obtained by overlapping three joined leaves over a triangle, thus the floral and



1a

geometric elements combine to produce a stellar motif most appropriate to the title and text of the sūrah. The remainder of the margin is filled with two stylized lotus buds in gold, brown and green, above and below the marginal medallion.

Oblong 15 × 21cm; 6 lines; 7 folios.

Tunis, National Library, Rutbi 10.

Case 1

2
Sūrat at-Takāthur (Acquisitional Rivalry) and sūrat al-'Asr (the Afternoon), CII, 8 – CIII, 1, from a Qur'ān copied on vellum in black Kufic script in the 3rd/9th century, probably in Iraq or Syria.

The vowels are marked in red diacritical dots, with green and yellow dots for the *hamzah* and *shaddah* respectively, according to the system of Abū l-Aswad. The verse divisions are marked by a gold rosette with a green centre, outlined in fine brown dots.

The splendid sūrah heading consists of a line of ornamental Kufic, with a palmette projecting into the margin. The palmette is composed of highly stylized gold foliar and floral arabesque, highlighted with blue and green with delicate touches of warm brown.

Oblong 22.5 × 32cm; 5 lines; 1 folio.

Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 1

3
Sūrat ash-Shu'arā' (the Poets), XXVI, 175–205, from a Qur'ān copied on vellum in black Kufic script in the 3rd/9th century, probably in North Africa.

The vowels and the *hamzah* are indicated by red and green dots respectively, according to the system of Abū l-Aswad. Short diagonal strokes in black are used for letter pointing, according to the system of al-Ḥajjāj.

The verse divisions are in gold, every fifth and tenth verse being followed respectively by an ornamental *hā'* and a roundel, and the remainder by trefoils made up of a pyramid of gold circles. The roundels on these pages are inscribed, in words, with the numbers 180 and 190.

Oblong 21.5 × 31.5cm; 11 lines; 38 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 1397, ff. 14v–15r.

Case 1

4
Sūrat al-A'rāf (the Heights), VII, 19–20, 22, from a Qur'ān copied on vellum in black Kufic script in the 3rd/9th century, probably in North Africa.

The script is well disciplined and more spaced and elegant than usual. The vowels are indicated by red diacritical dots, with two dots positioned together to indicate the *tanwin*.

Oblong 29.5 × 40cm; 5 lines; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 1

5
Sūrat al-Balad (the Land) and sūrat ash-Shams (the Sun), XC, 7 – XCI, 13, in a Qur'ān in black Kufic script, copied on vellum in the 3rd/9th century, probably in Iraq or Persia.

The sūrah heading is in gold ornamental Kufic on arabesque, in a rectangular panel with beaded frame. An elaborate foliar palmette projects into the margin.

Oblong 19.5 × 29cm; 12 [14] lines; 50 folios.

Tehran, Iran Bastan Museum, 4279, ff. 39v–40r.

Case 1

6 [withdrawn]



1b

7
Sūrat an-Najm (the Star), LIII, 8–11, 51–53, from a Qur'ān copied on vellum in black Kufic script, probably in the late 3rd/9th century in Kairouan.

Red and green diacritical dots are used for vowels and other orthographical signs, two red dots being positioned together for the *tanwin*, with smaller black dots for letter pointing, according to the systems of both Abū l-Aswad and al-Ḥajjāj; but with certain variances denoting a slight development.

The tenth verse is marked by a large marginal roundel, intricately composed of a series of overlapping hexagons anchored around a central circle, forming a dynamic symmetrical rotation. An inter-text roundel of similar design and colours marks the fifth verse on the other page.

Oblong 15 × 20cm; 6 lines; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Library.

Case 1

8
Sūrat ar-Ra'd (Thunder) and sūrat Ibrāhīm (Abraham), XIII, 43 – XIV, 1, from a Qur'ān copied on vellum in black Kufic script, probably in the late 3rd/9th century in Kairouan.

The vowels are indicated by red diacritical dots, with yellow dots for the *hamzah*, according to the system of Abū l-Aswad.

The splendid sūrah heading consists of a line of gold ornamental Kufic script outlined in brown, giving the title of the sūrah and the number of its verses, with a palmette in the form of a roundel tapering to a point and projecting into the margin. The palmette is composed of gold foliar arabesque suggesting open-work engraving, enhanced with brown and black dots.

Oblong 15.5 × 23cm; 6 lines; 10 folios.

Tunis, National Library, Rutbi 74.

Case 1

9
Sūrat Yūnus (Jonah), X, 46–61, in a Qur'ān copied on vellum in black Kufic script in the late 3rd/9th century, probably Iraq or Persia.

The vowels are indicated by red diacritical dots, with green dots for the *hamzah*, according to the system developed by Abū l-Aswad.

The verse division is marked by a gold rosette with a green centre, with the final form of the letter *hā'* in gold being used as a fifth verse count.

Oblong 21.5 × 31.5cm; 15 lines; 365 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 21, ff. 129v–130r.

Case 2

10
Sūrat al-Anbiyā' (the Prophets) and sūrat al-Ḥajj (the Pilgrimage), XXI, 112 – XXII, 1, from a Qur'ān copied on vellum in black Kufic script in the late 3rd/9th century, probably in Kairouan.

The vowels are indicated by red diacritical dots and the *shaddah* by a saffron dot, according to the system developed by Abū l-Aswad, with occasional letter pointing by short diagonal black strokes.

The sūrah heading is a rectangular field of gold foliar arabesque highlighted with green, containing the title of the sūrah and the number of its verses in white Kufic script, with a palmette of gold arabesque outlined in reddish brown projecting into the margin. The gold arabesque of the palmette is also highlighted with similar colours.

Oblong 23 × 32cm; 3[5] lines; 1 folio.

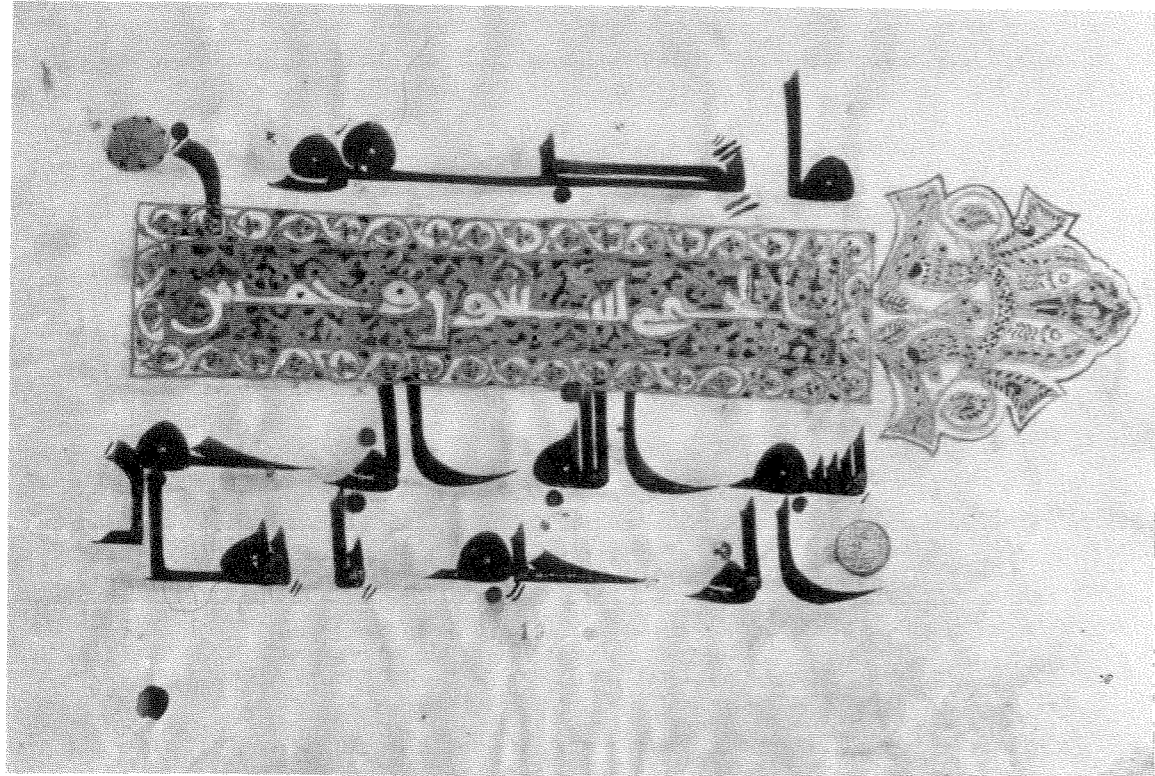
Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 2



8

10



11

Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (the Confederates), sūrat Luqmān (Luqmān) and sūrat as-Sajdah (the Adoration), XXXIII, 34-36, XXXI, 33-34, XXXII, 1-4, from a unique Qur'an copied on blue vellum in gold Kufic script, probably in the early 4th/10th century in Kairouan.

The compact script is without diacritical marks for the vowels, and its letters are unpointed. In its normal position in this Qur'an the left-hand folio precedes that on the right.

The sūrah heading is a gold strip consisting of ten units of small floral design attached to a gold palmette of gold foliar arabesque projecting into the margin.

Oblong 31 × 41cm; 15 lines; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 2

12

Sūrat al-Anfāl (the Spoils of War) and sūrat at-Tawbah (the Immunity), VIII, 65-66, 75 - IX, 1-2, from a Qur'an copied on vellum in black Kufic script, probably in the early 4th/10th century in Kairouan.

The vowels are indicated by red diacritical dots, with two red dots positioned together above or below the letter indicating the *tanwīn*, according to the system of Abū l-Aswad. Short diagonal strokes in black are also used to mark letter pointing, according to the system of al-Ḥajjāj.

The verse division is marked by a short strip in gold and brown. The sūrah heading consists of the title of the sūrah and the number of its verses in gold ornamental Kufic script and a palmette projecting into the margin. The palmette, which is outlined in black, is composed of gold foliar arabesque outlined in brown, with its centre highlighted by blue.

Oblong 25.5 × 35cm; 10 lines; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Library, Rutbi 528.

Case 2

13

Sūrat as-Sajdah (the Adoration), XXXII, 17-18, 30, from a Qur'an copied on vellum in black Kufic script, probably in the early 4th/10th century in Kairouan.

The vowels are indicated by red diacritical dots according to the system developed by Abū l-Aswad, with two red dots positioned together indicating the *tanwīn*.

In its normal position in this Qur'an, the left-hand folio (verses 17-18) precedes that on the right which contains the last verse of sūrat as-Sajdah, followed by the heading for sūrat al-Aḥzāb (the Confederates).

The verse divisions are indicated by gold rosettes, and the sūrah heading is a line of gold ornamental Kufic attached to a palmette projecting into the margin. This palmette is composed of foliar and floral arabesque, in gold outlined in brown with black dots at the centre.

Oblong 17.5 × 30cm; 5 lines; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Library.

Case 2

14

Sūrat at-Taḥrīm (Banning), LXVI, 1, 3, from a Qur'an copied on vellum in black Kufic script, probably in the early 4th/10th century in North Africa.

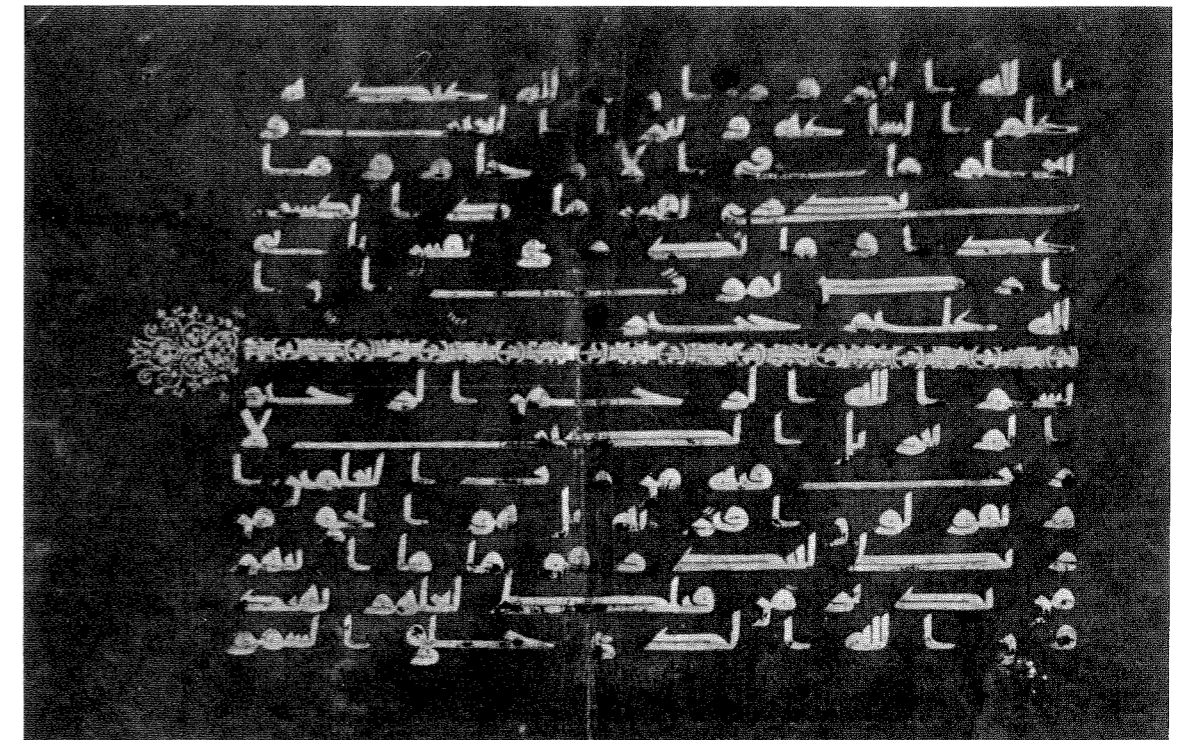
Diacritical dots in red, blue and orange are used to indicate the vowels, the *hamzah* and the *shaddah* respectively, with two red dots positioned together above or below the letter indicating the *tanwīn*, according to the system developed by Abū l-Aswad. Short diagonal strokes in black are also used to mark letter pointing, according to the system of al-Ḥajjāj.

The verse division is marked by a rosette in gold and red. In its normal position in this Qur'an, the left-hand folio (verse 3) precedes that on the right (verse 1).

Oblong 22.5 × 31.5cm; 5 lines; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Library.

Case 3



11

15 Sūrat an-Nahl (the Bee) and sūrat al-Isrā' (the Night Journey), XVI, 112-114, 128 - XVII, 1-2, from a Qur'an copied on vellum in black Kufic script in the 5th/11th century, probably in Kairouan.

Red diacritical dots indicate the vowels, two positioned together being used for the *tanwin*, and yellow and green dots for *hamzat al-qaf'* and *hamzat al-waṣl* respectively, along with other diacritical marks which indicate a slight development to the system of Abū l-Aswad.

The sūrah heading consists of two lines of ornamental Kufic script, coloured pure red, yellow and green as in the diacritical dots used. It has not hitherto been known that such pure colours were used in Qur'an illumination at such an early date. Certain characteristics of this sūrah heading are still evident in much later West African Qur'ans.

Oblong 21 × 26.5cm; 8 lines; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 3

16 Frontispiece to a Qur'an copied on vellum in gold Kufic script of the 4th/10th century, probably in Kairouan.

This full-page illumination, which is a splendid specimen of its type, is composed of a rectangular field of gold and brown, bordered by a braided frame. Strips of beaded gold, with touches of sepia and outlined in white, form four triangles juxtaposed in such a manner as to form a central diamond bordered on either side by two half diamonds. The central diamond is adorned by a four-sectioned circle of the same beaded strips, with the half diamonds containing half circles. The white outlines highlighting the gold strips loop and intersect, creating the impression of strapping the various compartments to the outer frame. Each of the four triangles contains a stylized olive tree in gold with a leaf on either side. A palmette, projecting from the rectangular frame into the margin, is composed of gold foliar arabesque highlighted with deep blue and outlined in black.

Oblong 15 × 20.5cm; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Library, Rutbi 198.

Case 2

See Plate I

17 Sūrat al-Anbiyā' (the Prophets), XXI, 50-54, from the same Qur'an. The exquisite gold Kufic script is outlined in brown.

The vowels are indicated by red diacritical dots, with two dots positioned together for the *tanwin* and green and blue dots for the *hamzah* and *shaddah* respectively, according to the system developed by Abū l-Aswad. Short diagonal strokes are also used for letter pointing according to the system of al-Ḥajjāj.

The ordinary verse division is marked by a gold rosette surrounded by a blue circle, the fifth verse being indicated by a gold roundel with a blue centre and red surround. The tenth verse count is a marginal roundel of overlapping gold petals, outlined by a faintly drawn outer circle marked with red dots, and with an inner beaded circle containing a gold inscription on a red ground.

Oblong 15 × 20.5cm; 5 lines; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Library, Rutbi 198.

Case 2

See Plate II

18 Frontispiece to a Qur'an copied on vellum in Kufic script in the 4th/10th century, probably in Kairouan.

This full-page illumination, which is a fine specimen of its type, and most likely from the same gold Qur'an, is composed of a rectangular field of gold and black, bordered by a band of gold chainwork highlighted with black, framing a central plane divided by braided strips of gold and black into two square units, each of which is further divided into triangular compartments interlinked by varying forms of the same gold braid. These geometric forms are distinctly outlined in white. The ground of the central portion is filled with gold geometric and foliar patterns highlighted with black: the side triangles within each square being filled mainly with small diamonds, while the triangles at top and bottom contain a stylized olive tree within a circle with a leaf on either side, all in gold and highlighted in

black. The predominant geometric feature of the illumination as a whole is that of various triangles within two square units, framed by the rectangular band of gold chain.

Oblong 15 × 21cm; 1 folio.

Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 3

19 Sūrat al-Mujādilah (the Pleading Woman) and sūrat al-Ḥashr (the Banishment), LVIII, 11 - XIX, 1, probably from the same gold Kufic Qur'an.

The sūrah heading consists of an inscription giving the title of the sūrah and the number of its verses in ornamental gold Kufic script outlined in black, within a rectangle of white ground with vertical lines in very faint brown, the whole being bordered by a frame of scrollwork in gold and blue.

Projecting into the margin is a roundel in gold and blue, the ground of which is sectioned into several diamonds, with two gold leaves clasping it to the rectangular frame. The gold rosette marking the end of the preceding sūrah is prolonged horizontally into a stem holding two stylized leaves, also in gold outlined in black.

Oblong 15 × 20.5cm; 5 lines; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 3

See Plate III

20 Sūrat Fāṭir (the Creator) and sūrat Saba' (Sheba), XXXV, 39-40, XXXIV, 53-54, XXXV, 1, from a Qur'an copied on vellum in black Kufic script in the 4th/10th century, probably in Kairouan.

The vowels are indicated by red diacritical dots according to the system of Abū l-Aswad, with exceptionally fine black dots for letter pointing according to the system later used in Maghribi script. In its normal position in this Qur'an, the left-hand folio precedes that on the right.

The sūrah heading consists of a line of gold Kufic script outlined in brown, giving the title of the sūrah and the number of its verses, attached to a palmette projecting into the margin. The palmette is composed of gold foliar arabesque, highlighted with blue and brown and outlined in blue.

Oblong 25.5 × 35.5cm; 10 lines; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 3

21 Sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), II, 141-143, from a Qur'an copied on vellum in brown Kufic script in the 4th/10th century, probably in Kairouan.

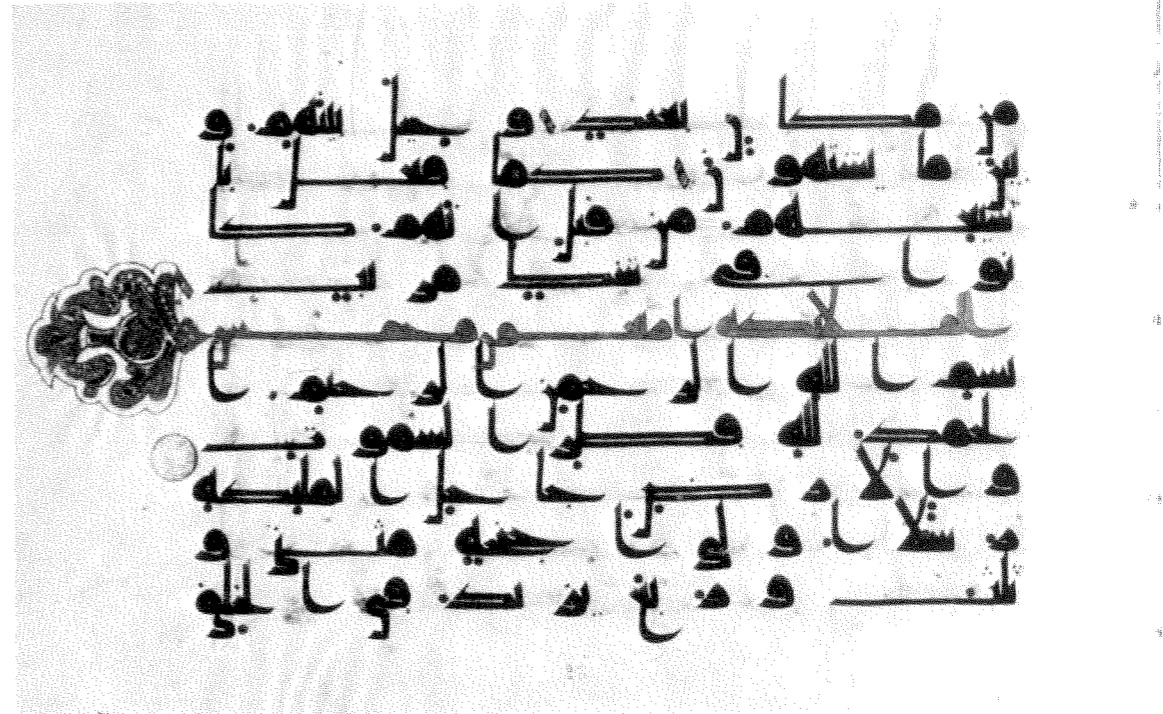
The vowels are indicated by red diacritical dots and the *hamzah* by saffron dots, according to the system of Abū l-Aswad, with short black strokes for letter pointing, according to the system of al-Ḥajjāj.

The verse division is marked by a roundel consisting of a red circle at the centre, surrounded by two thin circles faintly drawn in brown ink. The letters are relatively small, more angular and symmetric than usual and more compact, with the looped character outline of the letters more disciplined into perfect circles.

Oblong 24 × 38cm; 13 lines; 1 folio.

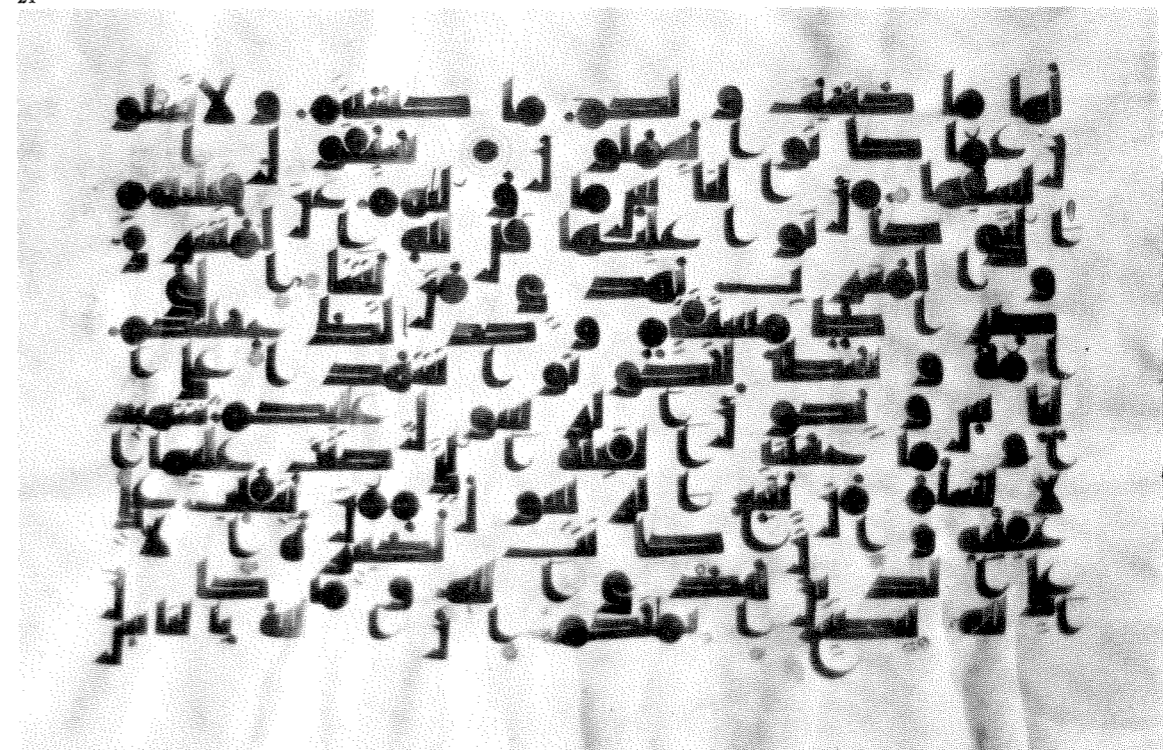
Tunis, National Library.

Case 3



20

21



22
Sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), II, 1-5, from a Qur'ān copied in black Kufic script on vellum, probably in the 4th/10th century in Kairouan.

Red diacritical dots indicate the vowels, with smaller black dots indicating letter pointing. The verse division is marked by a gold rosette on a ground of brown, surrounded by a circle of gold.

The sūrah heading is a line of gold ornamental Kufic script outlined in brown, giving the title of the sūrah and the number of its verses, and a palmette of gold foliar arabesque on a white ground projecting into the margin. The palmette is composed of gold foliar arabesque on a white ground with the eyes of the first two leaves filled in rich blue, the whole palmette being outlined in a softer blue.

Oblong 25 × 35cm; 10 lines; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Library.

Case 3

23
Sūrat al-Kawthar (Abundance), sūrat al-Kāfirūn (the Unbelievers) and sūrat an-Naṣr (the Victory), C, 1-3 - CIX, 1-6, CX, *Basmalah*, from a Qur'ān copied on vellum in black Kufic script, probably in the late 4th/10th century in Kairouan.

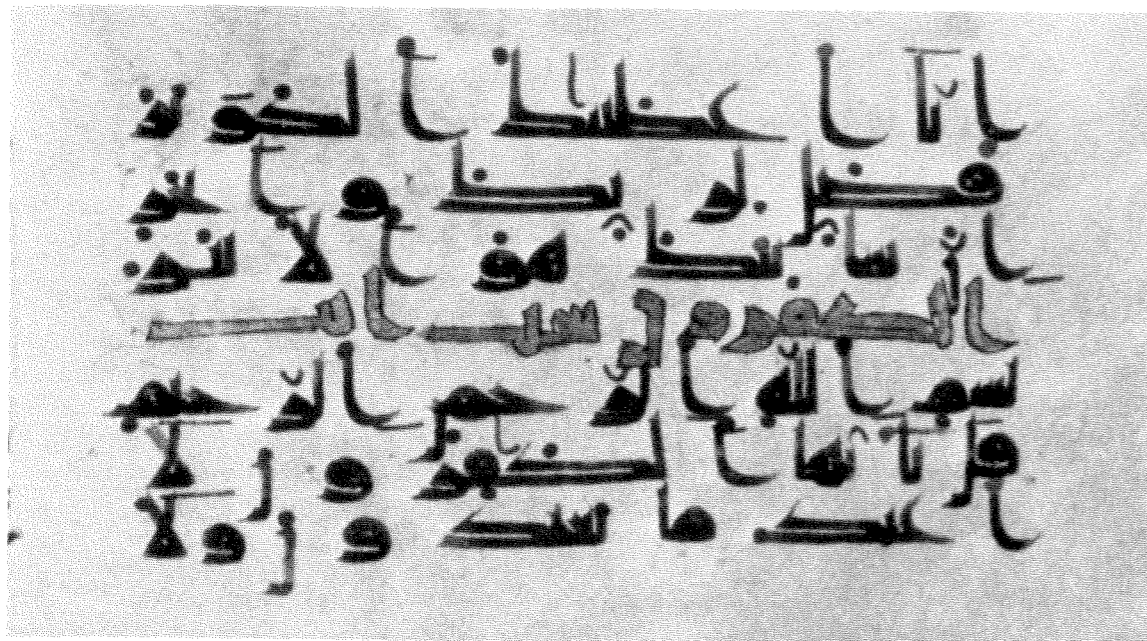
A more developed and complex system of diacritics is used for the various orthographical signs. Red, green and saffron dots indicate the vowels, *hamzat al-waṣl* and *hamzat al-qaṭ'* respectively, with other red diacritical marks for the *shaddah*, the *maddah* and the *sukūn*. This interesting system of diacritics deserves a special analytical study which the scope of this catalogue does not permit.

The sūrah headings are in the form of a line of ornamental gold Kufic script outlined in black, giving the title and the number of verses of the ensuing sūrah.

Oblong 11 × 16.5cm; 7 lines; 8 folios.

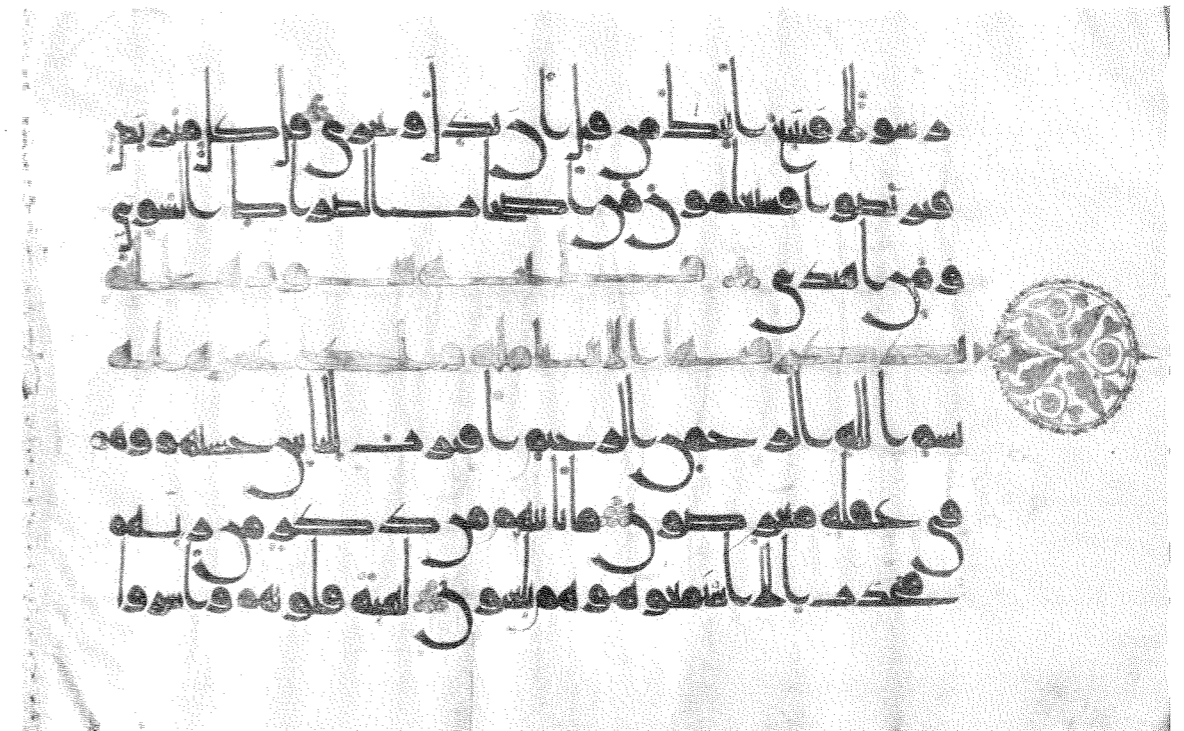
Tunis, National Library, *Rutbi 257*.

Case 3



Western Kufic

Kufic in its original form is, as we have seen, characterized by its rectangularity. Another noticeable feature is the relative lack of strokes below the line. But in the 4th/10th century, in Tunisia and other adjacent countries, there is a slight but noticeable rounding of angles and also an increase in the depth of sublinear curves. These features are among the heralds of Maghribī script, which was developed from Western Kufic. In some types, nos. 25 and 26 for example, the flourish below the line is triangular rather than curved, but its depth is none the less remarkable. (See also page 19.)



24
Sūrat Ṭā-Hā (the Letters Ṭā' and Hā') and sūrat al-Anbiyā' (the Prophets), XX, 134-135 - XXI, 1-3, from a Qur'ān copied on vellum in Western Kufic script, probably in the late 4th/10th century in Kairouan.

The vowels are indicated by red diacritical dots, with two red dots positioned together for the *tanwin*, and green dots for the *hamzah*. In addition to these diacritical marks which relate to the system developed by Abū l-Aswad, a few other diacritics, relating to the systems of al-Ḥajjāj and al-Khalil ibn Aḥmad, are also used.

The verse division is marked by a stylized trefoil, made up, exceptionally, of six small contiguous gold circles in pyramidal form. The sūrah heading consists of two lines of gold ornamental Kufic script outlined in brown giving the title of the sūrah, its number of verses and its place of revelation. A palmette in the form of a roundel of gold foliar arabesque with a beaded surround of green dots alternating with gold is attached to the two lines of inscription and projects into the margin.

Oblong 33.5 × 49cm; 7 lines; 1 folio.

Tunis, National Library, Rutbi 52

Case 4

25
Sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), II, 255, the *Throne verse*, from a Qur'ān in bold Western Kufic script, copied and illuminated by 'Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Warrāq for the Ḥāḍinah (the nurse) of the Zīrid Amir al-Mu'izz ibn Bādīs in 410/1020; she donated it by deed of *waqf* to the Great Mosque in Kairouan. It is written on vellum in vertical format. The sublinear curves in this script are more triangular than curved.

The script lacks letter pointing, but it has full orthographical signs according to the system developed by al-Khalil ibn Aḥmad; the vowels are marked in red, the *sukūn* and *shaddah* in blue and the *hamzah* and *maddah* in light green.

45.5 × 31cm; 5 lines; 2 folios.

Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 4

26
Sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), II, 212-213, 217-218, from the same Qur'ān of al-Ḥāḍinah.

The round marginal medallion on the right-hand page, and the other diamond-shaped one in the margin of the left-hand page, are composed of floral designs and illuminated in gold and rich brown. Ordinary verse divisions are marked by gold rosettes outlined in brown.

2 folios.

Tunis, National Library, Rutbi 13.

Case 4

27
Sūrat as-Sajdah (the Adoration) and sūrat al-Aḥzāb (the Confederates), XXXII, 26-30 - XXXIII, 1-2, from a Qur'ān copied on vellum in Western Kufic script, probably in the early 5th/11th century in Kairouan.

The vowels are indicated by red diacritical dots according to the system of Abū l-Aswad, with occasional letter pointing by black dots as used in later Maghribi script.

The sūrah heading consists of a line of ornamental Kufic script outlined in brown, giving the title and number of verses of the ensuing sūrah.

Oblong 11.5 × 15.5cm; 8 lines; 10 folios.

Tunis, National Library, Rutbi 74.

Case 4

28
Sūrat al-Jāthiyah (the Crouching) and sūrat al-Aḥqāf (the Sandhills), XLV, 34-37 - XLVI, 1-3, from a Qur'ān copied on vellum in Western Kufic script with characteristics similar to those of the Qur'ān of al-Ḥāḍinah (see nos. 25 and 26), probably in the early 5th/11th century in Kairouan.

The diacritical system used here is that developed by al-Khalil ibn Aḥmad, which is more or less the conventional system used today. The vowels are marked in red, with the *shaddah* and *hamzah* in blue. The verse divisions are marked by rosettes in gold, red and blue, with the final form of the letter *hā'* in gold, indicating the end of fifth verses.

The sūrah heading is a rectangular field framed in gold braid containing ornamental gold Kufic script outlined in brown on a white ground sprinkled with black dots; a black outlined palmette of foliar arabesque, illuminated in gold and colours, projects into the margin.

16 × 12cm; 9 lines; 16 folios.

Tunis, National Library, Rutbi 109.

Case 4

29
Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ (the Narrative) and sūrat al-'Ankabūt (the Spider), XXVIII, 38-46 - XXIX, 18-27, from a Qur'ān copied on vellum in Western Kufic script, probably in the 5th/11th century in Kairouan.

The orthographical signs in red and green are used according to the system of al-Khalil ibn Aḥmad, which is more or less the conventional system used today.

The fifth and tenth verses are marked by small coloured roundels.

Oblong 29 × 37cm; 14 lines; 4 folios.

Tunis, National Library, Rutbi 29.

Case 4

30
Sūrat al-Isrā' (the Night Journey), XVIII, 2-6, in part 1 of a Qur'ān on vellum in Western Kufic script. It was copied in North-west Africa in the 5th/11th century on vellum in a vertical format.

The illuminations of the sūrah headings and verse divisions are similar to those described in no. 31.

The orthographical system used is that of Abū l-Aswad in which red diacritical dots are used for vowels, with yellow dots for the *cutting hamzah* and a red stroke for the *joining hamzah*. Other diacritical marks are *shaddah* signs in red and *sukūn* signs in blue according to the system of al-Khalil.

40.5 × 35cm; 6 lines; 115 folios.

Rabat, National Library, Jim I/1, ff. 50v-51r.

Case 4

31
Sūrat Yūsuf (Joseph) and sūrat ar-Ra'd (Thunder), XII, 111, XIII, 1-2, in part 2 of the same Qur'ān as no. 30.

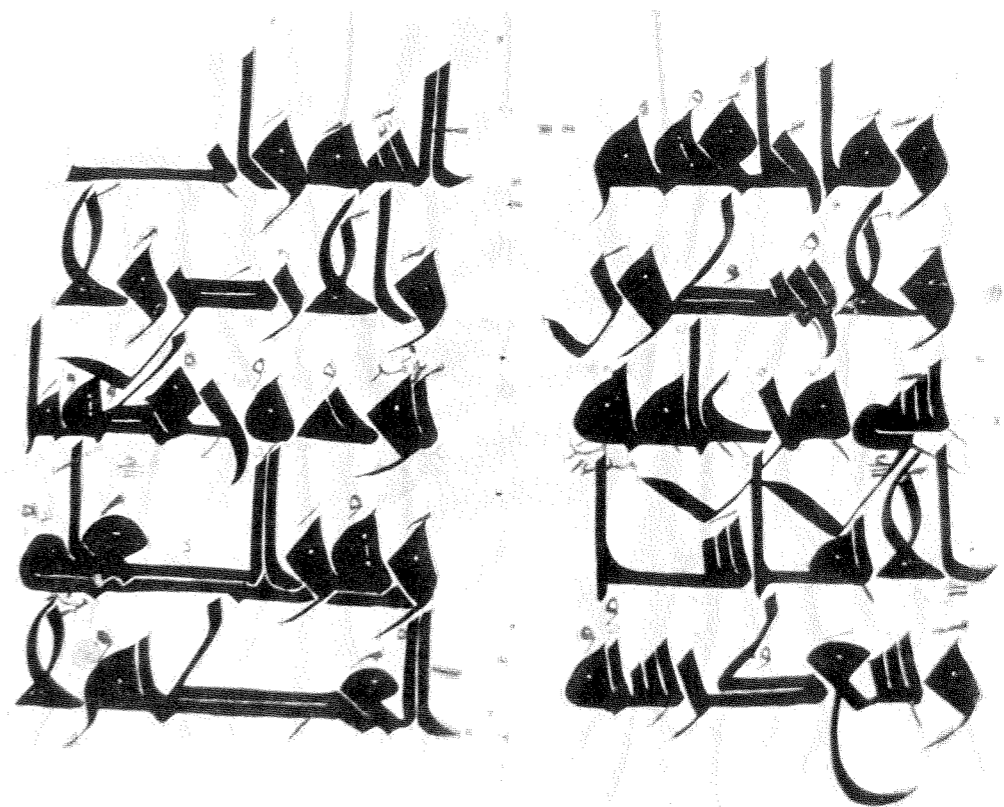
The last verse of sūrat Yūsuf is marked by an elongated rectangle decorated by a border of rope-work in gold and colours. The sūrah heading is a rectangular frame filled with similar rope-work decoration, with a palmette in gold, green and red projecting into the margin. The field within the frame contains the title of the sūrah in white ornamental Kufic script on a ground of red, green and blue diagonal lines. Rosettes in gold, red and green mark the verse divisions.

The diacritical system used is the same as in no. 30.

40.5 × 35cm; 6 lines; 113 folios.

Rabat, National Library, Jim I/121, ff. 55v-56r.

Case 4



Eastern Kufic

4th–7th/10th–13th century

One of the marked characteristics of the Eastern derivative from Kufic – that which has, in the West, earned it the name ‘bent Kufic’ – is that many of the shorter strokes of the letters are inclined from the vertical or horizontal to the diagonal. This, together with the reduction of the thickness of the letters to that of the average cursive writing, makes it considerably lighter and more delicate than its parent script. Within the framework of these modifications, many different possibilities soon manifested themselves. Some styles are compact; others are loosely knit, with the unjoined letters widely spaced from each other. Some are relatively static, while others tend towards the cursive forms (*see* no. 42). But all these, together with the many different ornamental varieties, are clearly aspects of one and the same style.

The appearance of this script in the 4th/10th century coincided more or less with the change from the oblong horizontal format of the earlier Qur’āns to the vertical format now in general use, and also with the change from vellum to paper. This latter medium was widely used in the Islamic world from the second half of the 2nd/8th century, the art of its manufacture having been learnt by the Arabs in Central Asia from the Chinese. It was not until the 4th/10th century, however, that paper was used for Qur’ān manuscripts, the oldest dated example being one in Eastern Kufic script in the Istanbul University Library (A. 6758, dated 361/972). No. 32, shown here for its frontispiece, is an example of Eastern Kufic on vellum.

The system developed by al-Khalil ibn Aḥmad to indicate the various orthographical signs seems to have been more consistently used with Eastern Kufic script, although other systems of diacritics such as coloured dots are known to have been used somewhat less frequently, either by themselves alone or jointly with the system of al-Khalil. Letter pointing in this script was also applied by black dots, and at a fairly early date. (*See* also page 19 above.)

32
Frontispiece to a Qur’ān copied in Eastern Kufic script on vellum in the 4th/10th century, probably in Egypt.

In a central square, over a ground of gold arabesque, four overlapping white circles are linked together by loops of white chains suspended from the corners of the square which is framed by similar chain-work, prolonged to take in a panel of gold arabesque above and below. An outermost border of gold arabesque is outlined in blue as are the gold palmettes in the middle of the outer margin of each page.

19.5 × 13.5cm; 25 lines; 181 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 11735, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 5

See Plate IV

33
Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān (the Family of ‘Imrān) and sūrat an-Nisā’ (Women), III, 199 – IV, 1, in part 4 of a Qur’ān in thirty volumes copied in Eastern Kufic script in Iraq or Persia.

The vowel signs consist of red dots, and other orthographical signs are coloured bluish-green. The sūrah heading is in gold ornamental Eastern Kufic script.

The use of coloured dots as diacritical marks according to the system of al-Aswad suggests that this manuscript belongs to the early 5th/11th century, since by the middle of that century vowel dots had been generally superseded by the diacritical marks developed by al-Khalil ibn Aḥmad which form more or less the conventional system used today.

20 × 17cm; 5 lines; 58 folios.

London, The Keir Collection.

Case 5

34
Sūrat al-Anfāl (Spoils of War) and sūrat at-Tawbah (Repentance), VIII, 74 – IX, 2, in part 10 of a Qur’ān in thirty volumes copied in Eastern Kufic script in Iraq or Persia and illuminated by ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥusayn al-Warrāq in 466/1073–4. The vowels are in red dots and other orthographical signs in blue.

The sūrah heading is in white ornamental Naskhi over a gold arabesque on a red ground picked out with white, in a panel with white and blue borders. The sūrah palmette, of similar content, is exceptionally narrow and long.

26 × 20.5cm; 5 lines; 60 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 4316.

Case 5

35
Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (the Clans), XXXIII, 31–32, at the opening of part 22 of the same Qur’ān.

The marginal palmettes and the gold solar roundels which are suddenly tapered to a small lobe and outlined with blue, are inscribed in ornamental Eastern Kufic with indications of the opening of the new part. The upper panels, which have no inscription, are illuminated with interlacing bands of blue and white on a gold ground.

26 × 20.5cm; 3 [5] lines; 77 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 70, ff. 2v–3r.

Case 5

36
Part of a Qur’ān copied on vellum in Eastern Kufic script in the 5th/11th century, probably in Iraq or Persia.

Diacritical dots in gold and colours are used for the various orthographical signs: red dots indicate the vowels, with green and blue dots for the *hamzah* and the *shaddah*. The use of these diacritical dots suggests the date noted above, for by the middle of that century onward the use of these dots was superseded generally by the use of the other orthographical signs which form more or less the conventional system used today.

The illumination in gold and colours is of a very high standard, with particularly splendid illuminated medallions and other marginal ornaments.

Oblong 13 × 18.5cm; 84 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 74.

Case 5





37
Sūrat at-Tāriq (the Morning Star), LXXXVI, 1–9, in a Qur'ān in Eastern Kufic script copied in the 5th/11th century in Iraq or Persia.

The vowels are in red dots and the verse divisions are in the form of small rayed solar roundels. The sūrah heading is in gold ornamental Kufic script in an oblong blue compartment between two circles, each containing a Seal of Solomon, gold on black. The gold sūrah palmette has almost the form of a roundel. A gold arboreal figure in the left-hand margin marks the passage of five verses.

25.4 × 19.5cm; 5 lines; 36 folios.

Geneva, Collection of H. H. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, 2.

Case 5

See Plate V

38
Sūrat ash-Shu'arā' (the Poets), XXVI, 1–18, in a Qur'ān in Eastern Kufic script, copied in the 5th/11th century, probably in Iraq or Persia.

43.5 × 32.5cm; 15 lines; 15 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 1250.

Case 5

39
Sūrat an-Nūr (Light), XXIV, 31, in a Qur'ān in Eastern Kufic script of a style known as Qarmathian, copied in the 5th or 6th/11th or 12th century in Iraq or Persia.

The vowels are indicated by red dots according to the system developed by Abū l-Aswad, but other diacritical marks have been added according to the later system which finally prevailed.

There is a Persian commentary in Naskhī script, none of which appears on these pages.

33.5 × 26.5cm; 5 lines; 246 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 6573, ff. 210v–211r.

Case 5

40
Sūrat az-Zukhruf (Ornaments of Gold) and sūrat ad-Dukhān (Smoke), XLIII, 71 – XLIV, 9, in a Qur'ān in Eastern Kufic script, copied in the 6th/12th century in Persia.

The sūrah heading is in yellow ornamental Eastern Kufic, with vowels in blue. The verse divisions are rosettes, the fifth and tenth verses being indicated respectively by marginal palmettes and roundels in yellow, picked out with blue and red.

26.5 × 18cm; 17 lines; 320 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 7213, ff. 261v–262r.

Case 5

41 [withdrawn]

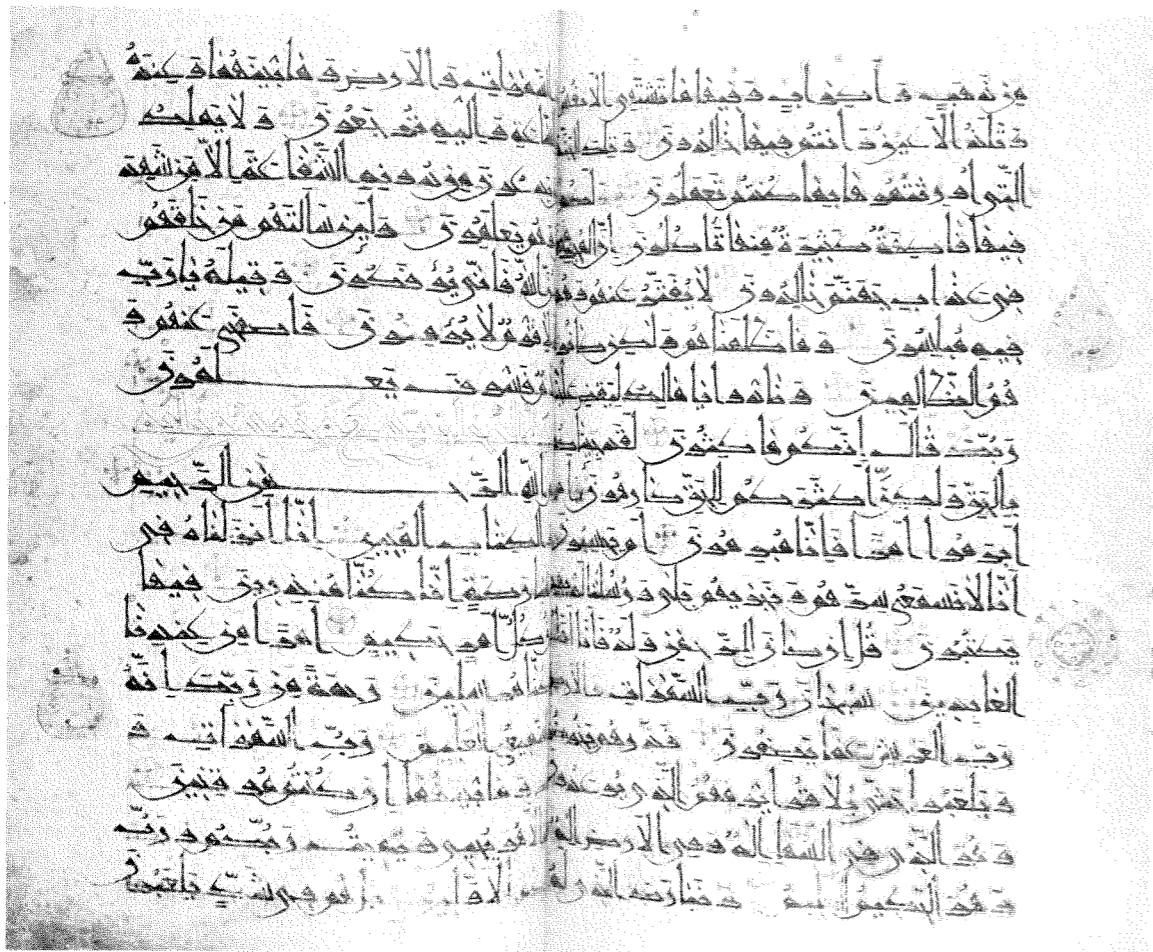
42
Sūrat Ibrāhīm (Abraham), XIV, 27–47, in a Qur'ān in Eastern Kufic script, copied by 'Alī ibn Muḥammad in 620/1223 in Persia.

The script is of an almost cursive style. A small gold marginal 'tree of life' and a gold marginal roundel with a red centre mark the division of the fifth and tenth verses respectively.

19.3 × 15.7cm; 17 lines; 277 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 84.

Case 5



Maghribi

5th-12th/11th-18th century

By the beginning of the 6th/12th century, two derivatives from Western Kufic had been fully developed in Spain and North Africa. Both are known as Maghribi, but the smaller and closer-knit of the two is also known as Andalusian, and sometimes even as Kufic. The other derivative is considerably larger, rounder and less compact, being in some of its modes as loose-limbed as art will allow, with only six lines as compared with twenty-seven on pages of approximately the same size (see no. 44 and compare with no. 45). By the 10th/16th century, when the Moors had finally been driven out of Spain, these two hands had converged into one, and it is in the resulting average-sized script that Maghribi Qur'ans have been written ever since. In Maghribi the thickness of the strokes of the letters, which had remained a characteristic of Western Kufic, has disappeared altogether. The letters are often remarkably thin, especially in deep sublinear curved flourishes which sometimes sweep across the taller verticals of the next line. None of the scripts of the Islamic East, not even Thuluth, have such depth of curve below the line. Another characteristic of a different kind is that the letter *qāf* has only one dot above it, unlike the Eastern *qāf* which has two. The single dot of *fā'* is placed below it in the West to avoid confusion between the two letters. The lightness and grace of Maghribi made it possible to use, with excellent effect as a contrasting complement, some of the most massive ornamental lettering to be found in the whole range of the Quranic art. Particularly impressive in this respect are the *sūrah* headings (see nos. 45 and 50), through which ornamental Western Kufic has continued to be used far longer than its Eastern counterpart.

The Islamic West, generally more conservative than the Islamic East, continued to use vellum, though not to the exclusion of paper, until the 8th/14th century. The oblong format was also used far longer in the West than in the East.

The total effect of Maghribi frontispieces is comparable to that of their Mamluk and Ī-Khānid counterparts, but it is produced by a slightly different means. As in Mamluk frontispieces, a section of symmetrically arranged polygons is formed by the prolongation and subsequent diversion of the lines which shape the points of the central star. But the Maghribi artist broadens these lines into straps from the outset, with the result that they become the most striking feature of the illumination, whereas in the Mamluk and Ī-Khānid equivalents it is the geometrical figures themselves which attract our notice. (See also pages 50 and 66.)

43 Sūrat an-Nisā' (Women), IV, 117-119, in a Qur'an in Maghribi script on vellum, copied in the 5th/11th century, in Spain or North-west Africa.

The vowels are in red, and other orthographical signs in blue-green and saffron.

22 x 17.5cm; 5 lines; 167 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 11780, ff. 64v-65r.

Case 6

44 Sūrat Saba' (Sheba) and sūrat al-Malā'ikah (the Angels), XXXIV, 27-XXXV, 10, in a Qur'an copied on vellum in Andalusian Maghribi script.

The sūrah heading is in ornamental Western Kufic. The ink is of a brownish tint, with vowel marks in red and other orthographical signs in blue.

This undated manuscript is similar in every respect to two dated manuscripts copied in Valencia in the 6th/12th century, Cairo National Library 196 and Istanbul University Library A 6754. It is, therefore, probably from the same calligraphic school as these others.

18.5 x 17.5cm; 27 lines; 134 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 1270, ff. 94v-95r.

Case 6

45 Sūrat an-Naml (the Ant) and sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ (the Narrative), XXVII, 92-XXVIII, 3, in part 39 of a Qur'an in sixty parts, copied on vellum in Maghribi script, probably in Granada in the 7th/13th century.

The sūrah heading is in gold ornamental Western Kufic. The ink is brown, with vowel marks in red and other orthographical signs in blue. Slightly encroaching on the blue and gold sūrah palmette, a marginal 'tree of life' leans up at an angle, as is often the case, to indicate the passage of five verses.

According to tradition, which does not give any precise date or place, this manuscript was brought from Spain to Morocco by a princely family at the time of the Christian reconquest of Granada at the end of the 9th/15th century.

19 x 19cm; 6 lines; 37 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 12523C, ff. 14v-15r.

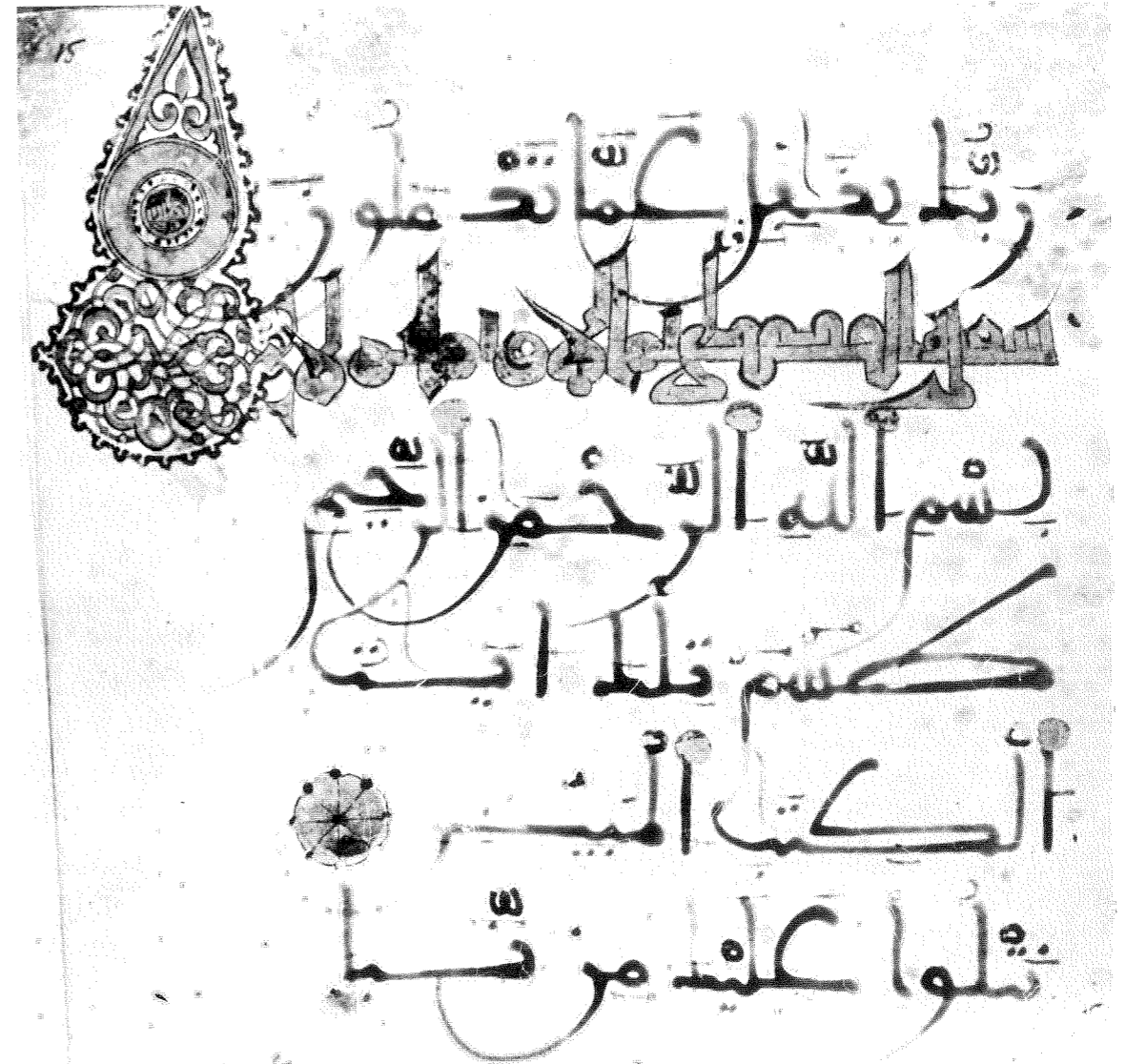
Case 6

46 Sūrat Fuṣṣilat (It has been expounded), XLI, 20-22, in part 48 of the same Qur'an.

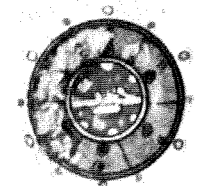
19 x 19cm; 6 lines; 38 folios.

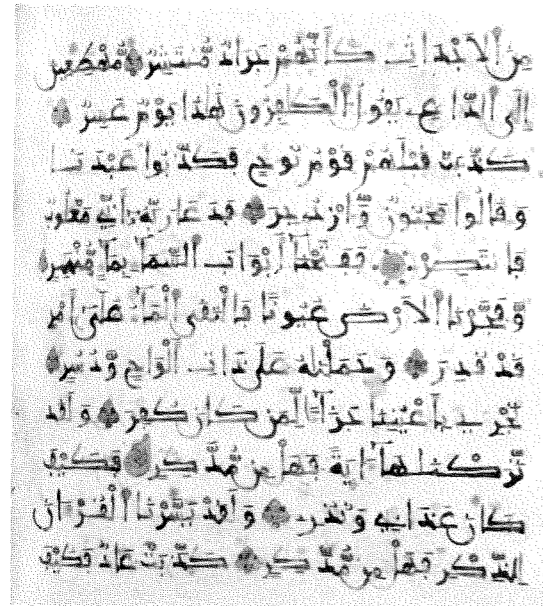
London, British Library, Or. 12523D, ff. 26v-27r.

Case 6



لا إله إلا الله محمد عبده
والصلاة والسلام على
سيدنا محمد وآله الطيبين
الطاهرين أجمعين
اللهم صل على محمد
وعلى آل محمد
الذين هم خير خلق
أخرجهم الله من
الظلمات إلى النور
اللهم صل على
سيدنا محمد وآله
الذين هم خير خلق
أخرجهم الله من
الظلمات إلى النور
اللهم صل على
سيدنا محمد وآله
الذين هم خير خلق
أخرجهم الله من
الظلمات إلى النور





49

47 Sūrat al-An'am (Cattle), VI, 84-88, from part 14 of a Qur'an in sixty parts, copied on vellum in Maghribi script, probably in the 7th/13th century in Granada.

25.5 x 24cm; 7 lines; 56 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 12808, ff. 45v-46r.

Case 6

48 Ornamental pages at the end of a Qur'an copied in Andalusian Maghribi script on vellum in 703/1303 in Granada.

17 x 17cm; 25 lines; 132 folios.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 385, ff. 129v-130r.

Case 6

See Plate VI

49 Sūrat at-Takāthur (Acquisitional Rivalry) to sūrat al-Fil (the Elephant), CII, 1 - CV, 1, from part 4 of a Qur'an in four volumes, copied in Maghribi script on vellum by Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan in 706/1306 in Tunis. The vowels are in red, with other orthographical signs in blue, green and orange. The sūrah headings are in gold ornamental Western Kufic, with red at the tips of the letters. The verse divisions are gold trefoils with dots of blue and rose between the leaves. A gold ornamental hā', not unlike a small palmette, marks every fifth verse.

18 x 16cm; 11 lines; 136 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 11638, ff. 131v-132r.

Case 6

50 Sūrat al-Qalam (the Pen) and sūrat al-Ḥāqqah (the Reality), LXVIII, 34 - LXIX, 9, in a Qur'an in Maghribi script, copied in 975/1568 for the Sharifi Sultan of Morocco, 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad, second ruler of the present dynasty.

40

The vowels are in red and other orthographical signs in blue and orange. In the sūrah heading of gold ornamental Western Kufic the 'eyes' of the letters are filled with blue, as are those of the loose knots of gold with orange centres which mark all the verse divisions except the fifth and the tenth; these latter are marked respectively, in the text by a gold ornamental letter hā' and a rosette, and in the margin by a tree of life and a horizontal palmette. The marginal ornaments are of gold open-work arabesque highlighted with olive green and brown, and surrounded with blue.

27 x 19.5cm; 17 lines; 400 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 1405, ff. 370v-371r.

Case 6

See Plate VII

51 Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening), I, 1-7, in a Qur'an copied in Maghribi script in the 11th/17th century in Morocco.

The illuminative design consists of an upper and lower panel with a central square containing the inscription; and has three full and two half roundels in the margin of each page. The script on f.1v is in gold ink on a white ground, and that on f.2r is in black ink on a gold ground.

44 x 37cm; 7 [17] lines; 305 folios.

Rabat, National Library, Jim III, ff. 1v-2r.

Case 6

52 Sūrat al-Kawthar (Abundance) to sūrat an-Nās (Men), CVIII, 1 - CXIV, 6, from a Qur'an copied in Maghribi script in 1113/1701-2 in Morocco.

The sūrah headings are in ornamental Western Kufic, with palmettes of gold open-work arabesque outlined with blue and with blue finials. An inscription in gold ornamental Maghribi script, in which the eyes of the letters are filled in with red, is placed at the foot of the page indicating the end of the Qur'an.

21.5 x 17cm; 14, 15 lines; 266 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 13382, ff. 284v-285r.

Case 6

53 Illuminated pages at the end of a Qur'an in Maghribi script copied in 1142/1729-30 in Morocco for a prince of the family of the Sharifi Sultans.

Al-Mulk, the sovereignty, and li-Llāh, unto God (i.e. the Sovereignty is God's) are inscribed respectively in the right and left corners of each page, in white ornamental Maghribi script. Between these inscriptions are verses expressing jubilation at achievement and reward.

The illumination in the central square, with its whirling shamsah and overlapping strapwork, is formally typical of Western Islam. What makes it something of an exception is the wide range of brilliant colours. On the outer side of the rectangle on each page is a large semicircular anse, covered with arabesque, and a somewhat smaller one surmounts the rectangle. Here, as also in the central square, the artist has deliberately made distinct differences of colour in the two opposite pages, but not enough to upset their relationship of mutual balance.

This Qur'an was probably sent as a present to one of the Beys of Egypt, since at the end of the text of the Qur'an is a seal bearing the name 'Muḥammad' followed by a note in Thuluth script to the effect that 'Muḥammad Bey' had made a waqf of this Qur'an on behalf of 'his mosque'.

31.5 x 19.5cm; 20 lines; 263 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 25, ff. 261v-262r.

Case 6

See Plate VIII




52


Early Naskhī and Rayḥānī

5th–7th/11th–13th century


In Eastern Islam, more Qur'āns have been written in Naskhī than in any other style, and this natural-sized cursive script was perfected by Ibn al-Bawwāb as early as the end of the 4th/10th century. His only surviving Qur'ān, dated 391/1000–1, now in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, is in Naskhī, and some prefer his robust hand to anything that has followed it. Others find their ideal in the more delicate hand of Yāqūt al-Musta'simī (d. 697/1298), 'the Sultan of the Calligraphers', while many would maintain that even Yāqūt was eclipsed by the best Ottoman and Persian calligraphers of the 9th–11th/15th–17th centuries. The collective example of all these masters resulted in the establishment, throughout the Islamic East, of a Quranic Naskhī script of a very high standard of calligraphy that has been maintained until the present day. Of outstanding interest among the earlier examples are three which bear the signature of Yāqūt al-Musta'simī and which, unlike most of the manuscripts so signed, could well be the work of this late 7th/13th century master. Their illumination belongs undoubtedly to the period of his artistic activity. Two of these are in small Rayḥānī (ar-rayḥānī d-daḥīq) which is very similar to Naskhī but which differs from it chiefly in having less depth of curve below the line. The drawing up and straightening out of such curves means that the letters tend to point more in the direction of the script, which thereby gains in momentum. The vowels of Rayḥānī are written with a finer pen, whereas those of other scripts are normally written without a change of pen, though there is no absolute rule about this.




جَعَلْتَهُ كَالرِّمِيمِ  وَفِي ثَمُودَ إِذْ


قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَمَتَّعُوا حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ فَعَبَّوْا 

عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ

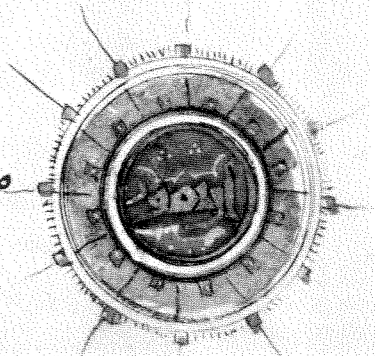
وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ  فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا

فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي

الْيَمِّ وَهُمْ يَلْمِئُونَ وَيُعَادِدُونَ 

أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ 

مَا تَذَرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَتَتْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا



54 Sūrat aṣ-Ṣāffāt (the Ranked Fliers) and sūrat Ṣād (the Letter Ṣād), XXXVII, 20 – XXXVIII, 35, in a Qur'ān in small Naskhī script copied by Abū l-Qāsim Sa'īd ibn Ibrāhīm ibn 'Alī in 427/1036, probably in Iraq or Persia, and illuminated by Abū Maṣṣūr Nāji' ibn 'Abd Allāh.

The sūrah heading is in gold ornamental Eastern Kufic outlined with white over a gold arabesque on a ground of reddish brown with a blue border. The counts for ten verses are in solar roundels, gold on brown, with centres of alternating blue and green, and in the outer margin of the right-hand page, eleven of these, somewhat overlapping, form a chain slightly longer than the text itself. The counts for five verses are in small palmettes between the roundels and the text. In the lower half of the opposite page, after the change of sūrah, the verses are longer and there is room for palmettes between the roundels.

This manuscript belongs to a small group of early 5th/11th century Qur'āns, and pages from it were reproduced by Richard Ettinghausen (see *A Survey of Persian Art*, vol. V, plates 926, 928) and by D. S. Rice (*The Unique Ibn al-Bawwāb Manuscript*, plates XIII, a–b). The others of the four are British Library Or. 13002, Turkish and Islamic Museum 449, and Chester Beatty Library 1430.

18.5 × 14cm; 39 lines; 74 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 7214, ff. 52v–53r.

Case 7

55 Sūrat ad-Dāriyāt (the Winnowing Winds), LI, 40–45, in part 27 of a Qur'ān in thirty volumes copied in Naskhī script by 'Alī ibn Ja'far ibn Asad, probably in Syria.

It was made a waqf in 562/1167 by Abū l-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn Zanji.

A marginal solar roundel, blue and gold, picked out with red, marks the passage of forty verses.

The patron was presumably the brother of Nūr ad-Dīn Maḥmūd, the Zanjid ruler who is famed for his fight against the Crusades, and whose *de facto* successor was the great Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn (Saladin).

This rare Zanjid Qur'ān still has its original binding (see no. 157).

18.5 × 15.5cm; 4 lines; 46 folios.

London, The Keir Collection.

Case 7

56 Sūrat al-Mu'minūn (the Believers), XXIII, 1–, in a Qur'ān in Naskhī script, copied in the 6th/12th century, probably in Iraq or Persia.

19 × 16.5cm.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 220.

Case 7

57 Sūrat ar-Ra'd (Thunder) and sūrat Ibrāhīm (Abraham), XIII, 38 – XIV, 6, in a Qur'ān in Rayḥānī script, copied by Yāqūt al-Musta'ṣimī in 685/1286–7 in Baghdad.

The sūrah heading is in white ornamental Eastern Kufic script over a gold arabesque on a blue ground, with a blue and gold sūrah palmette. The excellence of the script, together with the typically 7th/13th century style of the illumination, points to the authenticity of the signature.

The illumination of the first two pages must have been added about 300 years later, and is a fine example of the Safavid style (see illustration).

34.5 × 24.5cm; 15 lines; 300 folios.

Tehran, Iran Bastan Museum, 4277.

Case 7

58 Sūrat al-'Ādiyāt (the Coursers) to sūrat al-Humazah (the Traducer), C, 4 – CIV, 9, in a Qur'ān in Rayḥānī script copied by Yāqūt al-Musta'ṣimī in 686/1287 in Baghdad. The sūrah headings are in

gold Thuluth script on a white ground, sprinkled with black, the edges of which are faintly tinted with rose. There are no marginal ornaments and the verse counts of five and ten are written in the margin in blue and gold Naskhī respectively. As in no. 57, the opening two pages are typically Safavid in style, but the rest of the manuscript appears to be of the 7th/13th century, and the script is masterly.

35.5 × 24cm; 15 lines; 283 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 120.

Case 7

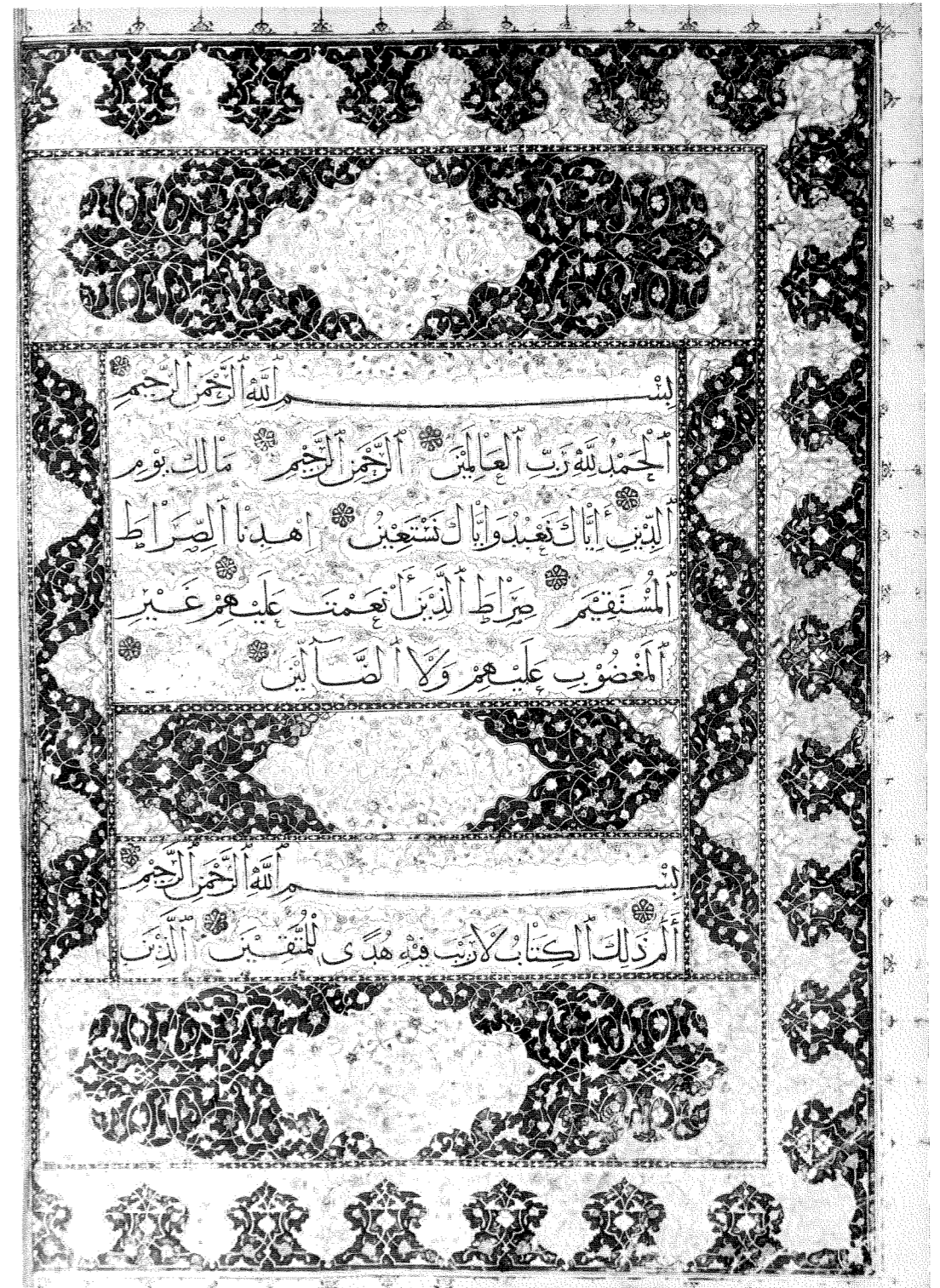
59 Sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), II, 120–142, in a Qur'ān in Naskhī script copied by Yāqūt al-Musta'ṣimī in 688/1289 in Baghdad.

The verse divisions are gold rosettes. A marginal palmette and roundel mark respectively the passage of five and ten verses.

19 × 15.5cm; 17 lines; 211 folios.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 6716, ff. 24v–25r.

Case 7



Early Muḥaqqaq and Thuluth

6th–7th/12th–13th century

The difference between Thuluth and Muḥaqqaq is somewhat analogous to the difference between Naskhī and small Rayḥānī, but it is considerably more marked. The sweeping horizontal sublinear flourishes of Muḥaqqaq give it an impetus which no other Arabic script can equal, while at the same time, in virtue of the height and straightness of its vertical letters, it yields nothing to the others in the way of majesty. This harmonious combination of the horizontal with the vertical, of speed with grandeur, explains its name, which means 'realized', 'consummated', the implication no doubt being that this script marks the realization or consummation of a calligraphic ideal, and for well over three centuries, the 7th–9th/13th–15th and on either side of these centuries (this being perhaps the greatest period of the art in question), Muḥaqqaq was the favourite hand for large Qur'āns throughout the Islamic East.

Thuluth, which comes into its own in inscriptions and headings, is relatively speaking too static to have been a frequent choice as script for a whole Qur'ān, but it often occurs in combination with other scripts (see nos. 61 and 64). The larger Rayḥānī is nearer to Muḥaqqaq than to Thuluth, but it is somewhat more delicate than either. Some of the finest examples of early Muḥaqqaq are in 7th/13th century Qur'āns in the Turkish and Islamic Museum in Istanbul. But we are fortunate in being able to show here a rare mid 6th/12th century example from Egypt (see no. 60), and others of the 7th/13th century from Egypt and from Mashhad.

60

Sūrat al-Ḥajj (the Pilgrimage), XXII, 1–10 in a Qur'ān in Muḥaqqaq script copied by Mas'ūd . . . ibn Muḥammad al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī in 555/1160.

The Divine Name *Allāh* is written throughout in gold. The sūrah heading is in compact white ornamental Eastern Kufic script on a blue ground between square panels of gold. A small palmette (in the form of a roundel with a prolongation at either end) and a large solar roundel, both in gold, blue and white, mark the passage of five and ten verses respectively.

Imād ad-Din Muḥammad al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī, famous both as a politician and man of letters, and in particular as the friend, minister and biographer of the great Ṣalāḥ ad-Din (Salāḍīn) could not have had a son much older than 18 at the time this Qur'ān was written. But training began early, and Qāḍī Aḥmad (*Calligraphers and Painters*, p. 71) mentions a calligrapher who was already renowned at the age of nine. If Imād ad-Din was Mas'ūd's father, the manuscript was probably written in Baghdad, where the family was still living at that time.

This is perhaps the oldest surviving Qur'ān in Muḥaqqaq script.

40 × 30cm (but the margins have been trimmed); 11 lines; 410 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 144, ff. 220v–221r.

Case 8

61

Sūrat ar-Raḥmān (the Compassionate) and sūrat al-Wāqī'ah (the Event), LV, 78 – LVI, 40, in a Qur'ān copied in Muḥaqqaq script, late 6th–early 7th/late 12th–early 13th century, probably in Egypt.

The Divine Name *Allāh* is in gold throughout. The verse divisions are gold rosettes, and the passage of five and ten verses is indicated in the margin by a tree (an upright elongated palmette) and a roundel respectively. The script is characterized by the height and thinness of the long vertical letters. The sūrah heading is in white Thuluth, in gold compartments outlined with white, and there is a gold sūrah palmette.

77 × 45.5cm; 9 lines; 533 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 157.

Case 8

62

Sūrat Yūnus (Jonah) and sūrat Hūd (Hūd), X, 107–XI, 3, in volume I of a Qur'ān in two volumes copied in Muḥaqqaq script, early 7th/13th century, in Egypt.

The sūrah heading, white over a red and black arabesque on a gold ground, is in a somewhat massive ornamental Eastern Kufic script which approaches Western Kufic. The verse divisions are gold and blue six-pointed stars. A gold marginal roundel marks the passage of ten verses.

43.5 × 29.5cm; 7 lines; 327 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 112 I, ff. 135v–136r.

Case 8

63

Sūrat Saba' (Sheba), XXXIV, 1–7, in volume II of the same Qur'ān. A marginal palmette, gold outlined with blue, marks the passage of five verses.

43.5 × 29.5cm; 7 lines; 342 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 112 II, ff. 135v–136r.

Case 8

64

Sūrat ash-Shu'arā' (the Poets) and sūrat an-Naml (the Ant), XXVI, 218 – XXVII, 7, in a Qur'ān copied in Muḥaqqaq script, late 7th/13th century, probably in Iraq or Persia.

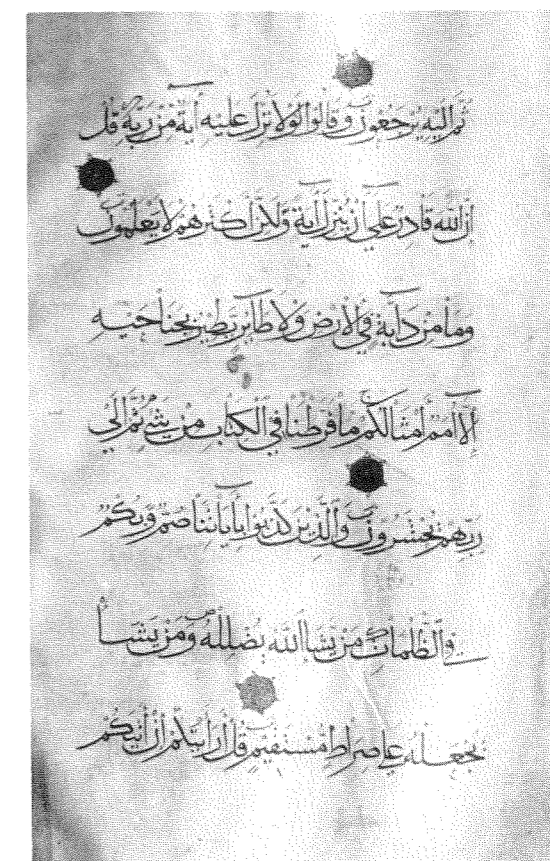
The sūrah headings are in white Thuluth script, and the verse divisions are gold roundels.

45 × 31cm; 7 lines; 387 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 314.

Case 13

65 [withdrawn]



62

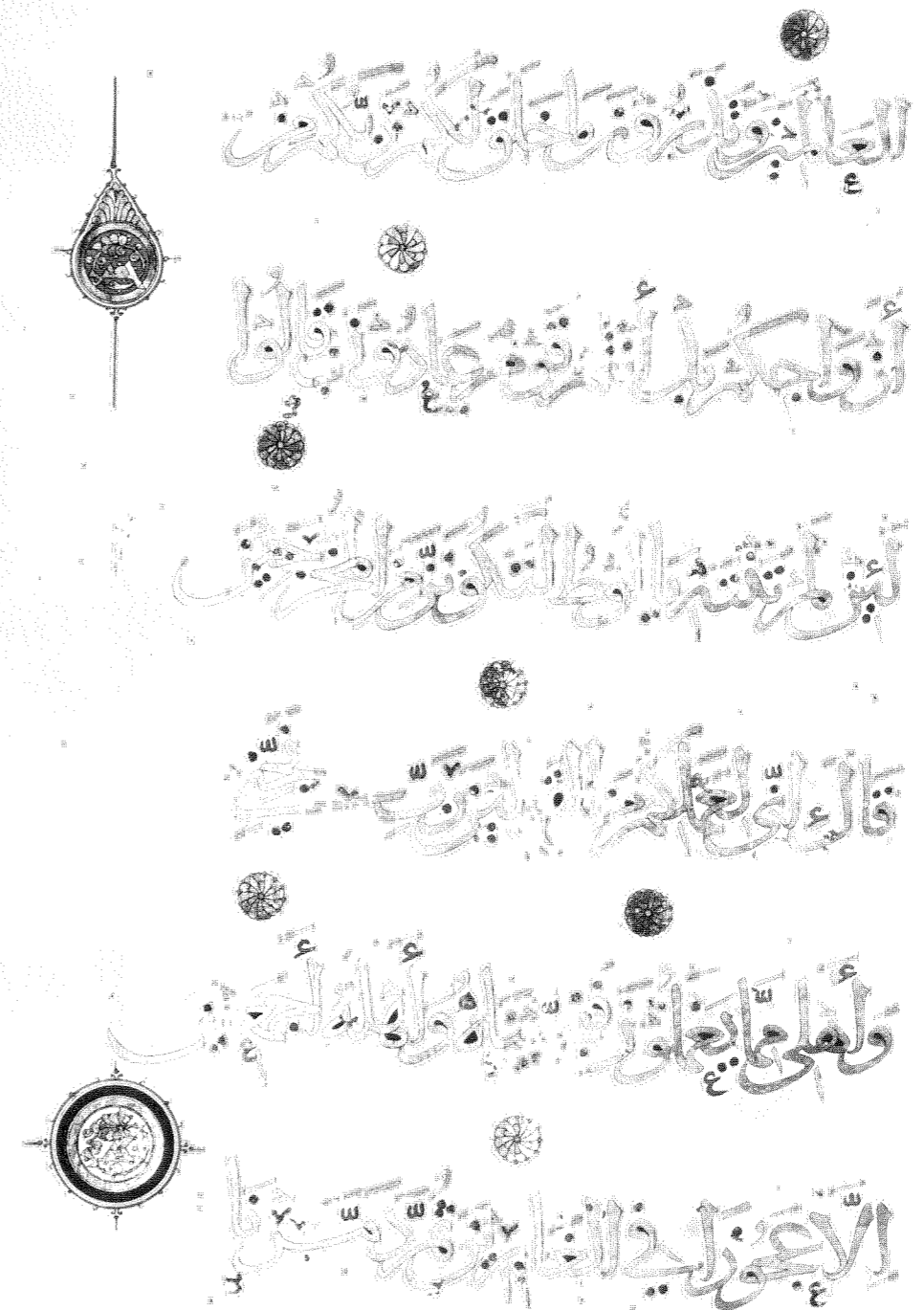
Mamluk

8th–9th/14th–15th century

Muḥaqqaq was, as we have seen, undoubtedly the favourite script of the calligraphers of this period for their large Qur'āns. No. 68, in Thuluth, is a notable exception. The sūrah headings are nearly always in ornamental Eastern Kufic, with an occasional exception in favour of Thuluth. As regards the frontispieces, many of which are on display, the most typical pattern is a large central square surrounded by one or more frames which are prolonged above and below to take in an upper and a lower panel for inscription. The now rectangular whole is surrounded on the three outer sides by a broad band of extroverted arabesque which 'flows' out towards the margins where it terminates in finials, with or without a palmette in the centre of the side margin. This outer band of arabesque, without the palmette, has remained throughout the centuries to this day. What characterizes the 8th/14th (especially in its second half) and the early 9th/15th centuries is the content of the central square, which is nearly always powerfully expansive or centrifugal. The most typical pattern radiates from a centrepiece, often star-shaped or suggestive of a star, the outlines of which are prolonged into a section of contiguous polygons, irregular, but symmetrically arranged, with the outermost figures half disappearing, as it were, beyond the frame in a way which is suggestive of endless, if unseen, prolongation. Often the geometrical elements are so contrived as to repeat the centrepiece on all sides, with the outermost repetitions partially out of sight, as if the artist were seeking to reinforce his purely visual effect with the sound of an echo that reverberates with an ever spreading vibration.

After the frontispiece, the next two pages usually have an illumination of similar proportions, with the Opening sūrah and the first verses of the second sūrah balancing each other in the two central squares or rectangles, and the sūrah headings in the upper and lower panels. The rectangle is always framed, but it may or may not be surrounded by a band of arabesque on the three outer sides. Palmettes are nearly always attached to the outer ends of the panels.

In the 9th/15th century the geometrical sections of the frontispieces tend to be replaced by additional compartments of arabesque (*see no. 91*).



66 Frontispiece to part 1 of a Qur'an in seven volumes copied by Muḥammad ibn al-Wahid and illuminated by Muḥammad ibn Mubādir and Ayduḡhdi ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Badri in 704/1304 in Egypt for Rukn ad-Din Baybars, at that time High Chamberlain, and afterwards the Sultan Baybars II.

'The first seventh' is inscribed in the central eight-angled stellar panel in white Thuluth script over a gold foliar arabesque picked out in white with some green and red on a blue ground. Sūrat al-Wāqī'ah (the Event), LXVI, 77-80, is the text of the white ornamental Eastern Kufic inscription offset by a similar arabesque and ground in the upper and lower panels. The white outlines of the centrepiece are prolonged to form, in each corner of the central square, a compartment in which a blue palmette and an orange ground are partially veiled by a gold arabesque picked out with blue and red. A gold frame surrounds the square and the rectangle, and beyond it is a band of gold open-work foliar arabesque picked out with blue and projecting into the margin with gold lotus flowers and buds in alternation.

No other manuscript by this famous calligrapher appears to have survived.

47.5 × 32cm; 155 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 22406, ff. 1v-2r.

Case 10 See Plates X and XI

67 Frontispiece to part 2 of the same Qur'an.

The illumination is formally similar to that of part 1, but red is here used in almost equal quantities with blue. Sūrat an-Nahl (the Bee), XVI, 98-99, is the text of the ornamental Eastern Kufic inscription in the upper and lower panels.

47.5 × 32cm; 157 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 22407, ff. 1v-2r.

Case 10

68 Sūrat ash-Shu'arā' (the Poets), XXVI, 158-172, in gold Thuluth script in part 5 of the same Qur'an.

47.5 × 32cm; 6 lines; 153 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 22410, ff. 54v-55r.

Case 10

69 Frontispiece to part 7 of the same Qur'an.

The words 'the seventh seventh' are inscribed in white Thuluth over a gold arabesque on a blue ground within a central ten-angled stellar panel. Unlike the other frontispieces, this has no Kufic inscription.

47.5 × 32cm; 166 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 22412, ff. 1v-2r.

Case 10

70 Sūrat Fuṣṣilat (It has been expounded) and sūrat ash-Shūrā' (Counsel), XLI, 51 - XLII, 13, in a Qur'an in Naskhi script, copied by Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Khabbāz in 714/1314, probably in Egypt.

The sūrah heading is in gold Thuluth script. The blue and gold marginal palmettes and solar roundels are centred with red as a ground for the lettering of the verse counts.

32 × 26cm; 13 lines; 332 folios.

London, The Keir Collection.

Case 9

71 Sūrat al-Isrā' (the Night Journey) and sūrat al-Kahf (the Cave), XVII, 107 - XVIII, 1, in a Qur'an copied in Egypt in gold Muḥaqqaq script with vowels in gold over-painted with red. These two colours in the lettering constitute the only element of illumination throughout the whole Qur'an.

In 730/1329-30 the Mamluk Sultan al-Malik an-Nāṣir Muḥammad gave it by waqf to the mosque he had built in the Citadel of Cairo. The manuscript itself was probably written about that date.

55 × 36cm; 8 lines; 730 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 4, ff. 343v-344r.

Case 9

72 Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), I, 1 - II, 4, in a Qur'an copied by Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Muḥṣini an-Nāṣiri in 730/1330 in Egypt for the library of the Mamluk Sultan al-Malik an-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

The text of these opening pages is in gold ornamental Thuluth script, the 'eyes' of the letters being filled with blue, on a white ground with irregular edges surrounded by drawings of foliar arabesque on a finely hatched, slightly tinted ground. The gold trellised frame is prolonged to take in the sūrah panels above and below, and the headings are in massive white ornamental Eastern Kufic over gold foliar arabesque picked out with white on a blue ground. The whole rectangle is surrounded by a narrow blue outer frame which projects finials into the margin. (The illustration is of another folio.)

57 × 38cm; 13 lines; 304 folios.

London, The Keir Collection.

Case 10

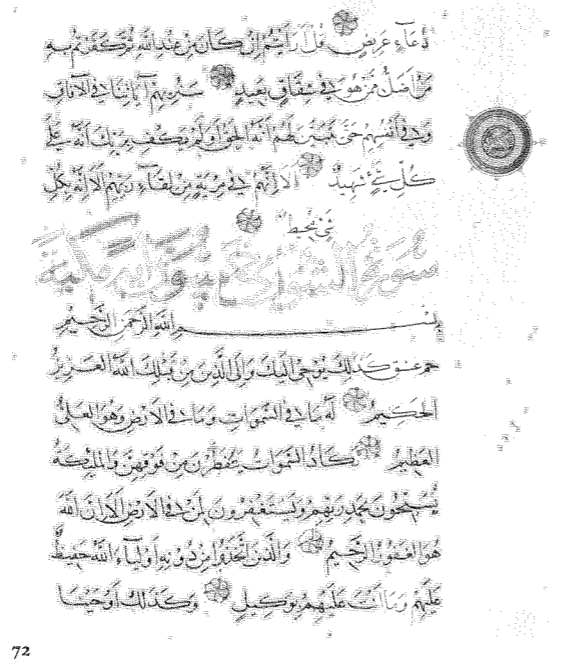
73 Sūrat al-Falaq (Daybreak) and sūrat an-Nās (Men), CXIII, 1 - CXIV, 6, in a Qur'an in Muḥaqqaq script copied by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Kamāl al-Anṣārī al-Mutaṭṭabbib in 734/1334 in Cairo.

The text is on a ground of spiral scroll work, picked out with various subdued colours, which is projected beyond the gold frame into the outer margin in the form of a gold-outlined triangular anse, midway between the upper and lower sūrah palmettes. The sūrah headings in white ornamental Eastern Kufic script are over gold scroll work picked out with red and white on a blue ground.

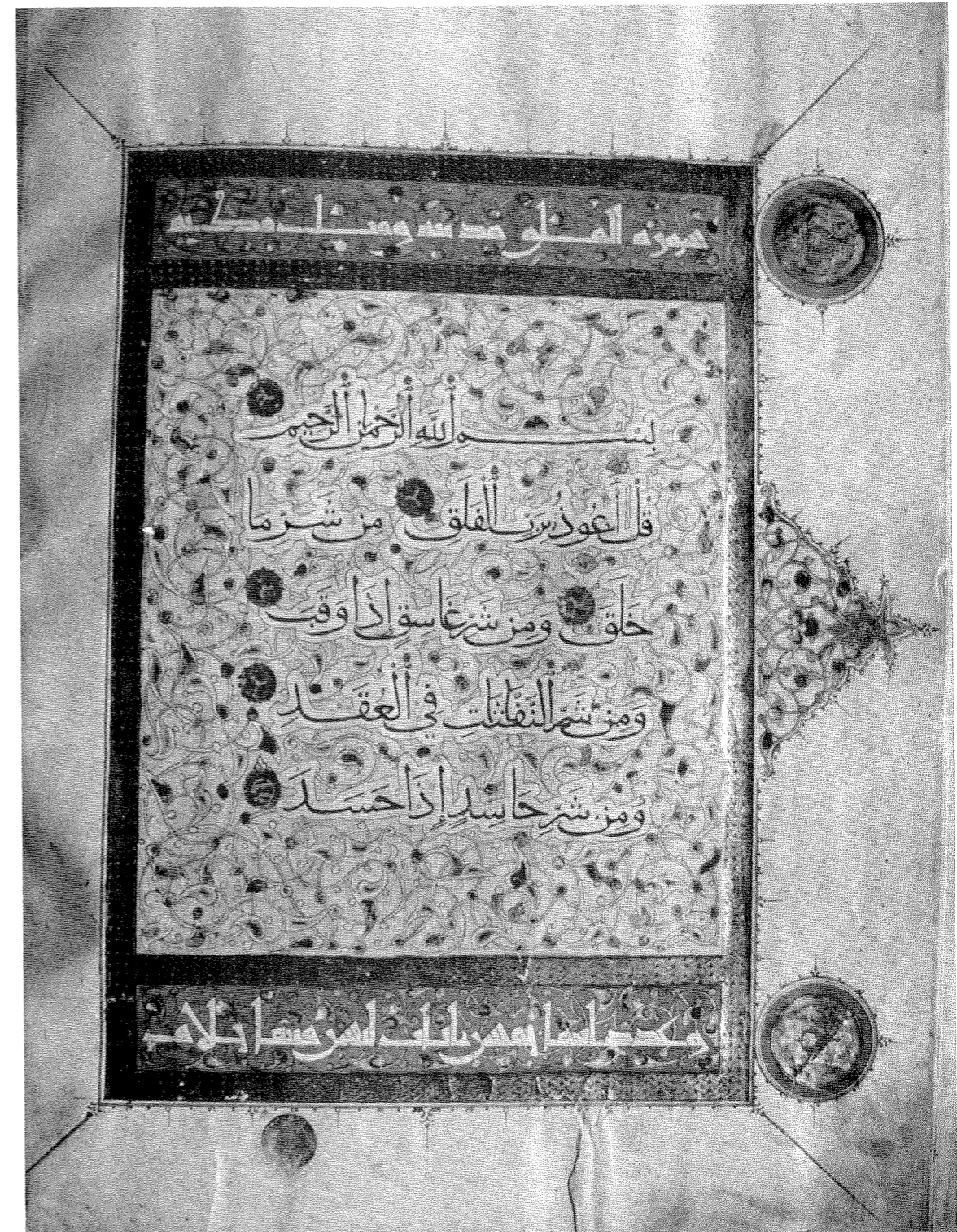
51 × 36cm; 5 lines; 380 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 81, ff. 375v-376r.

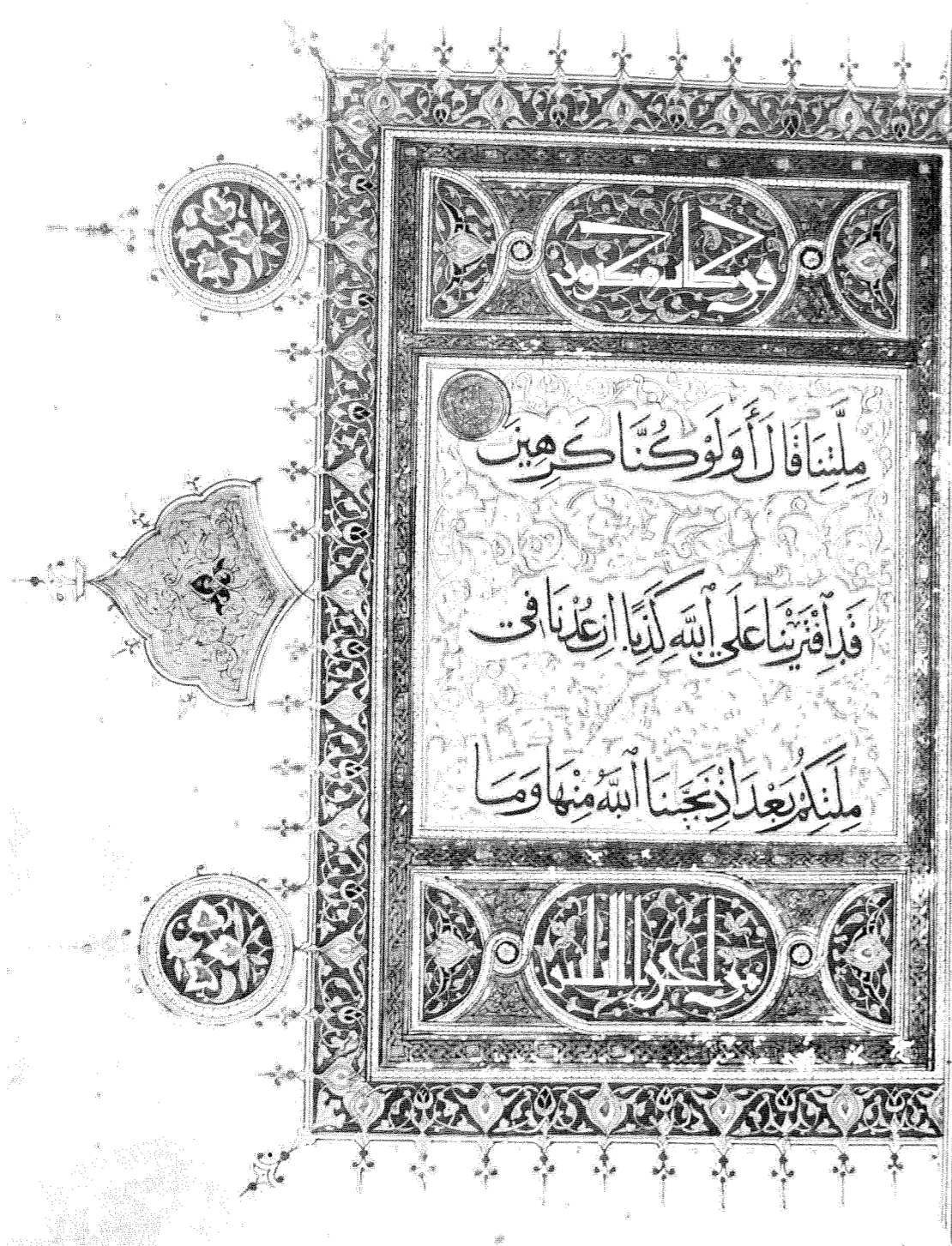
Case 9



72



73



74
Sūrat al-Kahf (the Cave), XVIII, 75–77, at the opening of part 16 of a Qur'ān in thirty volumes in Muḥaqqaq script.

This Qur'ān was presumably written for the Amir Ṣirghītmish to whose *madrasah* in Cairo it was attached by *waqf*. The deed and the manuscript itself are undated, but 757/1356, the date of the founding of the *madrasah*, is no doubt approximately applicable to both.

The part number, etc., is given in the upper and lower panels of the two pages, in white ornamental Eastern Kufic script over a gold foliar arabesque on a blue ground. The text is on strips of white with irregular edges surrounded by arabesque.

38.7 × 27cm; 3 [5] lines; 49 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 60, pt. 16, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 9

75
Frontispiece and sūrat al-A'rāf (the Heights). Part 9 of a Qur'ān in thirty volumes in Rayḥānī script, almost certainly copied in the 8th/14th century in Egypt. The Mamluk Sultan Faraj ibn Barqūq (reg. 801–815/1399–1412, with one year's interruption) donated it by a deed of *waqf*, but the style suggests a date considerably earlier than his reign.

On the right is the only surviving page of the double frontispiece. The illumination follows the pattern outlined above. The centre-piece is a ten-pointed stellar medallion with gold and white outlines prolonged to form a section of alternating gold and blue polygons. The blue ground of the centre-piece (the blue throughout this Qur'ān is of a medium tint, remarkably pure and bright) is overlaid with a gold web-like arabesque in which are ten palmettes, alternately gold and pale jade, all touched with white. These radiate from a small central stellar ornament like a multi-petalled flower. Round the edge of the geometrical section unfinished polygons appear to 'escape' beneath the frame, and a quarter of the centre-piece reproduced at each corner of the rectangle guarantees its 'echo' in four directions. The centrifugal impetus is taken up beyond the frame on the three outer sides by a powerfully extraverted border which consists chiefly of blue, black-lobed palmettes alternating with smaller jade palmettes surmounted by blue ones, all overlaid and surrounded by gold foliar arabesque, mainly open-work but partly filled in with blue and occasional black. Blue finials, larger at each of the outer corners, project into the margin.

On the left is the second page of text (the first having been on the verso side of the missing page), sūrat al-A'rāf (the Heights), VII, 88–89, in Rayḥānī script. In the upper and lower panels are white ornamental Eastern Kufic inscriptions over a gold foliar arabesque on an oval blue ground; above, sūrat al-Wāqī'ah (the Event), LXVI, 78, follows the missing verse 77; below, the inscription is: [the ninth part] of the thirty parts.

Two other volumes of this Qur'ān, parts 4 and 12, are in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Mss. 1464 and 1465.

25.5 × 18.7cm; 3 [5] lines; 37 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 848, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 9

See Plate IX

76
Sūrat Āl 'Imrān (the Family of 'Imrān) and sūrat an-Nisā' (Women), III, 199–IV, 1, in part 4 of a Qur'ān in thirty volumes in Muḥaqqaq script copied in the 8th/14th century, probably in Egypt.

The text is fully vocalized with orthographical signs in black, with recital marks in red and blue. The sūrah heading is in gold Thuluth script, with orthographical signs in gold, blue, green and brown; the verse divisions are gold rosettes with blue and red central petals. A blue and gold oval medallion marks the opening of a new Section.

26.5 × 18.5cm; 5 lines; 20 folios.

London, Collection of H.E. Muhammad Mahdi al-Tajir.

Case 9

77
Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (the Clans) and sūrat Saba' (Sheba), XXXIII, 72–XXXIV, 1, in part 22 of a Qur'ān in thirty volumes, copied in Muḥaqqaq script in the 8th/14th century in Egypt.

The text is fully vocalized with orthographical signs in black. The verse division is marked by gold rosettes with blue centres. The sūrah heading is a rectangular field containing white ornamental Eastern Kufic over a gold foliar arabesque on a ground of blue, and framed by a border of gold and white; the whole rectangular panel being heavily outlined with a frame and six finials in blue, with a palmette projecting into the margin. The palmette is composed of gold foliar arabesque on a ground of blue with a gold circle in the centre containing a smaller palmette in gold.

26.5 × 18.5cm; 4 lines; 30 folios.

London, Collection of H.E. Muhammad Mahdi al-Tajir.

Case 10

78
Sūrat al-Mu'minūn (the Believers) and sūrat Fuṣṣilat (It has been expounded), XL, 83–XLI, *Basmalah*, in part 24 of the same Qur'ān.

The sūrah heading is a panel containing white Eastern Kufic script, with a marginal palmette, the whole being of similar design and illumination to the sūrah heading of the same Qur'ān mentioned above.

An oval medallion surmounted by a palmette, both in gold outlined with blue, indicates the opening of a new Section.

30 folios.

London, Collection of H.E. Muhammad Mahdi al-Tajir.

Case 10



79
Frontispiece to a Qur'an copied and illuminated presumably for the mother of the Mamluk Sultan Sha'bān, Khawandah Barakah; she donated it by deed of *waqf* in 769/1368 to the *madrasah* which she was preparing to found the following year in Cairo.

The illumination follows the already outlined pattern. The centre-piece is a geometrical flower with twelve almost rectangular petals which form, by their overlapping, a twelve-pointed star at the centre of which is another twelve-pointed star, itself centered upon a small six-pointed star. An effect of 'echoing' is achieved by the repetition of a quarter of the flower at each of the four corners of the square surrounding frame. The whole content of this central geometrical section appears to be woven upon a single thread. Beyond the square frame of gold trellis is a second frame flowered with rose-coloured peonies, outlined and centred with gold, alternating with white lotuses, on a ground of reddish brown. Blue and gold predominate in the rest of the illumination, but one is more conscious of the subsidiary colours, especially of green, than in most of these frontispieces. *Sūrat ash-Shu'arā'* (the Poets), XXVI, 192–197, is the text of the white ornamental Eastern Kufic inscription in the upper and lower panels.

71 × 50cm; 11 lines; 319 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 6, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 11

See Plate XIII

80

Frontispiece to a Qur'an written and illuminated for Arghūn Shāh al-Ashrafī in Egypt in the late 8th/14th century. This date and place may be assumed not only from the general style but from the last element of the patron's name which suggests that he was in the service of the Sultan Sha'bān, known as al-Ashraf (the most noble).

The mainly blue and gold illumination follows the already outlined pattern of frontispieces in this century. What characterizes it in particular is the central element of a sixteen-pointed star contained within a large similar star, which is itself within a still larger one.

Richard Ettinghausen (*Arab Painting*, p. 173), draws attention to the Chinese lotuses and peonies in the frame which surrounds the central square. These suggest an influence from the court of the Mongol Il-Khānid Sultans of Iraq and Persia upon this otherwise typically Mamluk frontispiece. The same may be said of nos. 79 and 81.

Sūrat ash-Shu'arā' (the Poets), XXVI, 192–197, is the text of the ornamental Eastern Kufic inscription in the upper and lower panels.

70.5 × 55.5cm; 11 lines; 388 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 54, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 19

See Plate XIII

81

Frontispiece to a Qur'an which was made a *waqf* in 770/1369 by the Mamluk Sultan Sha'bān for his mother's *madrasah* in Cairo (see above no. 79).

The central square is similar to that of no. 80, with a centrepiece of three successive sixteen-pointed stars, one within the other, leading to a geometrical section.

Sūrat al-Malā'ikah (the Angels), XXXV, 29–32, is the text of the white ornamental Eastern Kufic inscription which, exceptionally, surrounds the central square, in panels interspersed with Chinese peonies. *Sūrat ash-Shu'arā'* (the Poets), XXVI, 192–197, is the text of the similar but larger inscription to be seen as usual in the upper and lower panels which convert the whole figure from a square to a rectangle. There is an overall predominance of gold over blue, whereas in no. 80 the two are more or less equal.

84 × 53cm; 11 lines; 410 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 7, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 20

See Plate XIV

82

Frontispiece to a Qur'an copied and illuminated for the Sultan Sha'bān who made a *waqf* of it in 770/1369 for his mother's *madrasah* in Cairo (see no. 79).

A centrifugal impetus is started from an eight-lobed roundel which is repeated on all sides by four similar medallions beyond which eight others, half disappearing behind the square gold frame of this central section, suggest the unseen presence of a further sixteen beyond themselves. The ground of this section is gold, and interspersed between the medallions are small light blue rhomboids, the most outlining of which also partly disappear behind the frame. The arabesque which fills the medallions and the outermost rectangular frame is mainly gold, touched with red, on an ultramarine ground.

Sūrat al-Wāqī'ah (the Event), LVI, 77–80, is the text of the gold ornamental Eastern Kufic inscription over a brilliant turquoise arabesque in the upper and lower panels.

75.5 × 56cm; 7 lines; 379 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 9, vol. I, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 11

See Plate XV

83

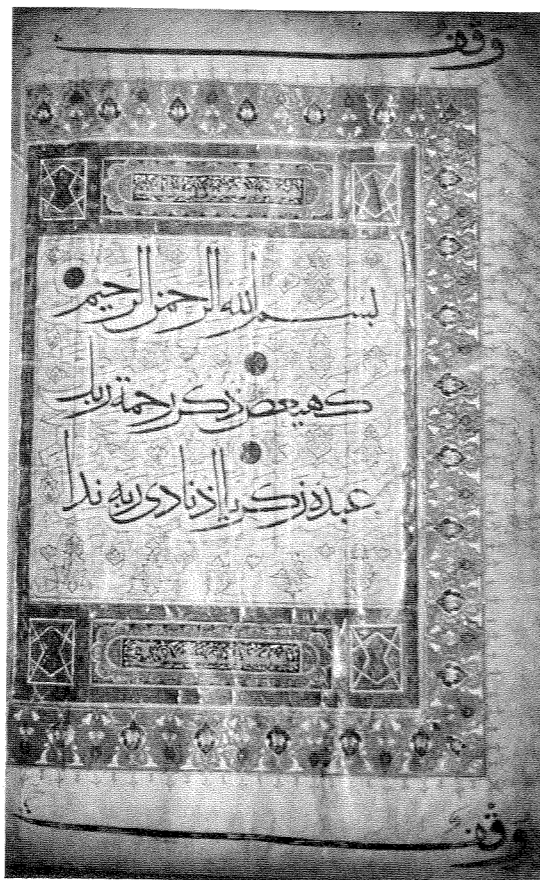
Sūrat Maryam (Mary), XIX, 1–5, at the beginning of volume 2 of the same Qur'an, in Muḥaqqaq script.

Each line is on a strip of white shaped to the letters and surrounded by faintly drawn palmette-like figures on a shaded ground. In panels above and below, the *sūrah* heading is inscribed in bluish-jade ornamental Eastern Kufic script.

75.5 × 50cm; 3 [7] lines; 426 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 9, vol. II, ff. 2v–3r.

Case 11



83

84

Sūrat al-Layl (Night) to *sūrat at-Tin* (the Fig), XCII, 11 – XCV, 8, in a Qur'an in Muḥaqqaq script, presumably from 8th/14th century Egypt.

The three *sūrah* headings are respectively in gold, white and gold, and green ornamental Eastern Kufic, in variously shaped panels. The marginal ornaments, in addition to the three *sūrah* palmettes, are a roundel filled with a complex flower of gold, red, blue-green and white, and two gold 'trees', in shape like the head of a mace. This undated manuscript is remarkable for the variety of its illumination. On each of its 616 pages there are marginal ornaments, sometimes as many as six to a page, and the artist seldom repeats himself. Nor are there two *sūrah* headings alike.

A similar Qur'an, also undated, is in the Egyptian National Library, Ms 128.

46.5 × 34cm; 9 [11] lines; 308 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 1009, ff. 302v–303r.

Case 9

See Plate XVI

85

Sūrat an-Nisā' (Women), IV, 40–47, in a Qur'an in Muḥaqqaq script, with vowels in red, the *hamzah* in yellow and other orthographical signs in blue, probably of the 8th/14th century from Egypt.

The verse divisions are small gold and blue rosettes with a larger one at every tenth verse; the latter is also indicated in the margin by a solar roundel with the number in gold on a red ground broadly encircled with gold and then blue. A palmette outlined in blue, with the number in gold on red, indicates the passage of five verses.

50 × 36cm; 9 lines; 485 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 1401, ff. 64v–65r.

Case 9

86

Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and *sūrat al-Baqarah* (the Cow), I, 1 – II, 5, in a Qur'an copied in Muḥaqqaq script, probably of the 8th/14th century from Egypt.

The text on these pages is in gold, and the *sūrah* headings are in white ornamental Eastern Kufic over a gold arabesque on a blue ground. The manuscript is thought to have been made a *waqf* by the Mamluk Sultan Barqūq.

67 × 49cm; 5 [10] lines; 255 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 12, ff. 2v–3r.

Case 11

87

Sūrat al-An'am (Cattle) and *sūrat al-Kahf* (the Cave), VI, 165 and XVIII, 1–6, in a volume of selections from the Qur'an in Muḥaqqaq script, copied in 800/1398 in Egypt or Syria.

The *sūrah* heading is in white Thuluth on gold with a blue border.

On other pages, illuminations of a style not earlier than the 10th/16th century have been added, together with an attribution of the manuscript to Yāqūt al-Musta'ṣimi, despite the gap of 100 years between the death of Yāqūt in 699/1299 and the date of the colophon.

26.5 × 19cm; 7 lines; 74 folios.

London, The Keir Collection.

Case 12

88

Sūrat at-Ṭalāq (Divorce), LXV, 1–12, in a Qur'an copied in Muḥaqqaq script by 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn aṣ-Ṣāyigh 'with one pen in sixty days' during 801/1397 in Cairo for Muḥammad ibn Baṭūṭ aṣ-Ṣāliḥi from Damascus.

The *sūrah* heading is in white Thuluth on a blue ground with a gold border to which is attached a palmette not only on the outer side but also, exceptionally, on the inner side pointing towards the spine. A marginal palmette and a roundel indicate the passage of five and ten verses respectively.

108.5 × 82cm; 11 lines; 255 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 11, ff. 230v–231r.

Case 21

89

Sūrat al-Isrā' (the Night Journey) and *sūrat al-Kahf* (the Cave), XVII, 100 – XVIII, 8, in a Qur'an in Muḥaqqaq script, probably of the early 9th/15th century from Egypt.

The *sūrah* heading is in white Thuluth over a gold floral arabesque on a blue ground with a palmette in the form of a gold roundel outlined with white and blue, with a blue finial for a lobe. On the right-hand page two marginal medallions, diamond shaped and rectangular, indicate respectively the beginning of the thirtieth *ḥizb* and a prostration; on the lefthand page, a marginal roundel marks the end of the first eighth of the new *ḥizb*. This Qur'an is said to have been made a *waqf* by the Mamluk Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh.

93 × 71.5cm; 61 lines; 305 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 18, ff. 143v–144r.

Case 22

90

Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and *sūrat al-Baqarah* (the Cow), I, 1 – II, 4, in a Qur'an in two volumes in large Naskhī script donated by deed of *waqf* by the Mamluk Sultan Barsbāy to his *madrasah* in Cairo in 828/1425.

The *sūrah* headings are in white ornamental Eastern Kufic over a gold arabesque on a blue ground. The outer part of the illumination is similar to that of the frontispiece (see no. 91) as is also the style of the Kufic lettering.

53 × 39.5cm; 5 [11] lines; 173 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 96, vol. I, ff. 2v–3r.

Case 12

91

Frontispiece to volume 2 of the same Qur'an.

In the central square of gold arabesque on blue the diagonals are subtly indicated in white. *Sūrat al-Wāqī'ah* (the Event), LVI, 77–80, is the text inscribed in the upper and lower panels in gold ornamental Eastern Kufic over a gold and turquoise arabesque on an ultramarine ground. The delicacy of the lettering is typical of the 9th/15th century, and suggests a possible Timurid influence. On the three outer sides, beyond the flowered frames which surround the square and eventually the rectangle, a broad band of arabesque, gold on blue, with small red lotus buds, terminates in finials which are considerably lengthened at the outer corners. There is a mid-marginal palmette on each page.

53 × 41cm; 11 lines; 188 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 96, vol. II, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 12

92

Sūrat al-Isrā' (the Night Journey), XVIII, 104–110, at the end of volume 1 of a two-volume Qur'an similar to nos. 90–91, clearly the work of the same anonymous calligrapher and illuminator, and also made a *waqf* by the Mamluk Sultan Barsbāy, presumably for the same *madrasah*.

The text in Naskhī script, with interlinear bands of flowered arabesque, is set in a rectangular frame edged with finials which are considerably elongated at the four corners from which they project diagonally.

The gold ornamental Eastern Kufic inscription on the opposite illuminated page is the traditional seal for the Qur'an or, as in this case, for part of the Qur'an: 'Truth hath been affirmed by God the Infinite; His noble messenger hath delivered it.'

This illumination marks the end of volume I. It is exceptional in being single and self-sufficient, surrounded on all four sides by finials. In other respects it is similar to the frontispiece of the previous manuscript, save that the central square, with its geometrical elements, is less typical of the 9th/15th century.

53 × 40.5cm; 11 lines; 178 folios.

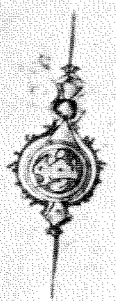
Cairo, National Library, 98, vol. I, ff. 177v–178r.

Case 12



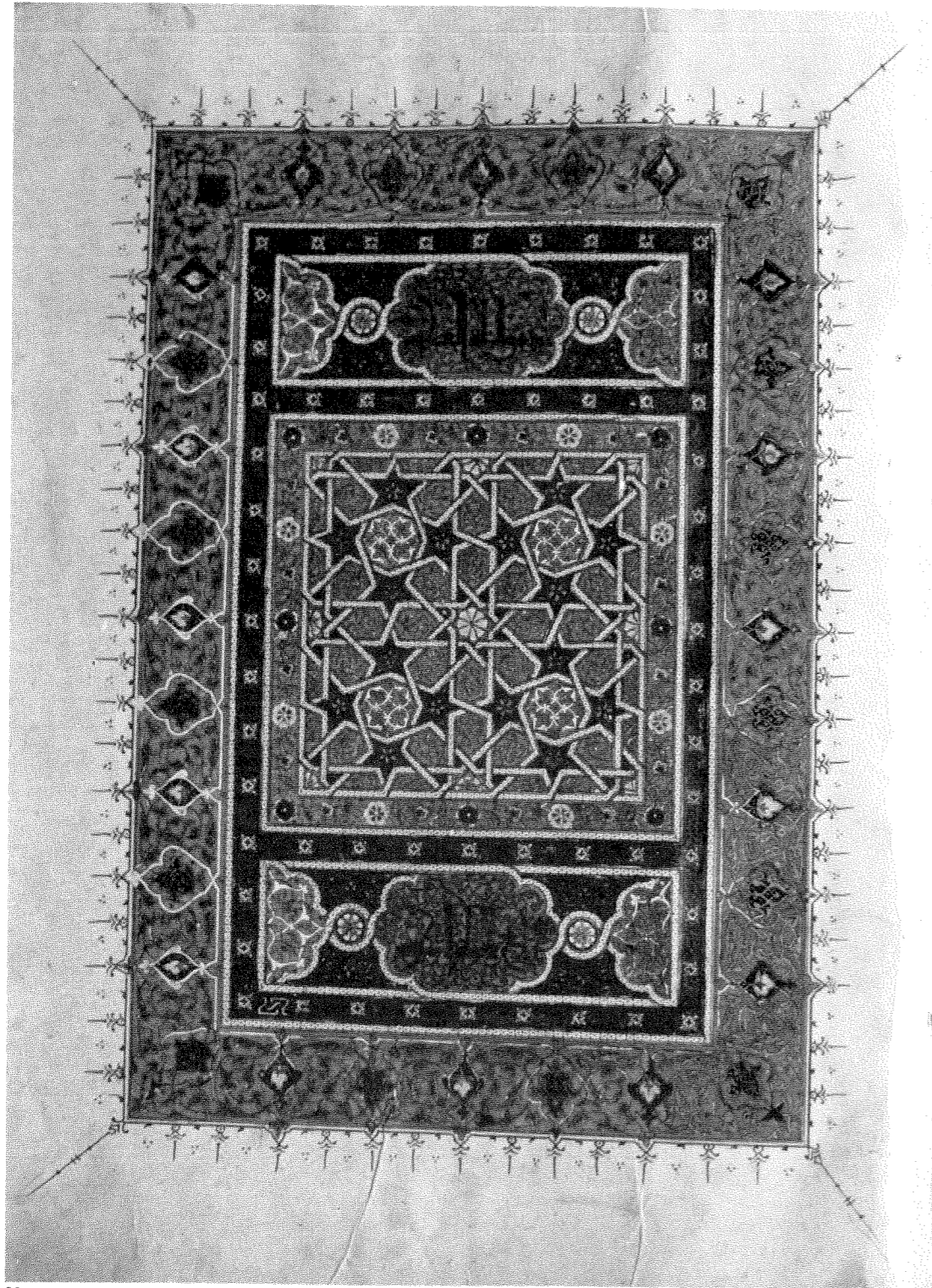
تصاعفها ونوب من لدنه اجر اعظما • فكيف ارحمت
 من كل امه يشهد وحنائك على هولو شهيدا • يومئذ
 يوم الدين كروا وعصوا الرسول لوتسوي بهم الارض
 ولا ركنهم الله حريتا • يا ايها الذين امنوا لا تقربوا الصلوات
 وانتم سكارى حتى تعلموا ما تقولون ولا جنبا الا عابري
 سبيل حتى تغسلوا وازكنتم مرضى او على سفر او
 حال منكم من العايط او لمستم النساء فلم تجدوا ما
 فتيموا بعدا طيبا فامسحوا بوجوهكم وابدانكم
 الله كان عفو عفو • الم تر الى الذين اوتوا نصيبا من

الكتاب يشرون الصلوة ويريدون ان يصلوا السيد
 والله اعلم باعدايبكم وكفى بالله وليا وكفى بالله نصيرا
 من الذين هادوا يخرفون الكلمه عن مواضعه ويقولون
 سمعنا وعصينا واسمع غير مسمع وراعبنا ليا بالسنة
 وطعنا في الدين ولو انهم قالوا سمعنا واطعنا واسمع وانظنا
 لكان خيرا لهم واقوم ولا كفر لهم ولا يؤمنون
 الا قليلا • يا ايها الذين امنوا الكتاب امنوا بما نزلنا مصدقا
 لما معكم من قبل ان نطيس وجوها قدرها على اذبارها
 اولئك هم الذين اصحاب السبت وكان امر الله مفعولا



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْمَذْكُورِ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى
 لِلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ
 وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا
 أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مَلِكِ
 يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
 اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ



92

93
Sūrat Maryam (Mary), XIX, 1–9, in Naskhī script, at the opening of volume 2 of the same Qur'ān.

The general style is similar to that of nos. 90–91, but there are no marginal palmettes.

54 × 40.5cm; 5 [11] lines; 184 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 98, vol. II, ff. 20–3r.

Case 12

94
Sūrat al-Falaq (Daybreak) and sūrat an-Nās (Men), CXIII, 1 – CXIV, 6, in a Qur'ān in Muḥaqqaq script, copied by Abū l-Faḥ Muḥammad al-Anṣārī in 858/1454 in Egypt for the Mamluk Sultan al-Malik az-Zāhir Abū Sa'id Khūshqadam.

The text is on a ground of scroll work picked out with blue.

The sūrah headings in the upper panels and the colophon in the lower panels are in white Muḥaqqaq over a gold floral arabesque on a blue ground with compartments of red and gold on either side. Between the upper and lower sūrah palmettes, a half trefoil anse projects into the outer margin.

88.5 × 61.5cm; 5 lines; 320 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 90, ff. 319v–320r.

Case 12

95
Sūrat an-Nahl (the Bee) and sūrat al-Isrā' (the Night Journey), XVI, 120 – XVII, 7, in a Qur'ān in large Naskhī script, copied by Shāhin an-Nāṣiri, called al-Inbitāni al-Malaki al-Ashrafī, in 874/1469 in Egypt.

The last element in the name of the calligrapher shows that he was in the service of the Mamluk Sultan al-Ashraf Qā'it-bāy.

42 × 28cm; 11 lines; 357 folios.

Manchester, John Rylands University Library, 39, ff. 155v–156r.

Case 10

96
Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), I, 1 – II, 4, in a Qur'ān in Naskhī script, copied in 916/1510, presumably in Egypt.

The sūrah headings are in blue Thuluth script on a gold ground.

The illumination surrounding the text consists of gold floral arabesque on a lapis blue ground, divided into several sections, including the upper and lower sūrah panels, by a thin green frame finely marked with black. The whole rectangle is surrounded by successive frames of vermillion and gold, and blue finials project into the margin.

This manuscript is like a last outpost of the Middle Ages, a fine representative of a style which had already been replaced elsewhere (see, for example, no. 128 which precedes it in date), and which was soon to be superseded also in Egypt as a result of the Ottoman invasion six years later.

32 × 23cm; 13 lines; 304 folios.

London, The Keir Collection, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 12

see Plate XVII

Īl-Khānid

8th/14th century

As in Mamluk territory, the favourite scripts for the larger Qur'āns in Iraq and Persia under the Īl-Khānid Mongols were Muḥaqqaq for the text and ornamental Eastern Kufic for the sūrah headings. There is also a similarity in the total effect of Mamluk and Mongol frontispieces. In both, a formal frame makes finite a content which none the less succeeds in 'escaping', as it were, into the infinite. But a Quranic text is often omitted altogether. Thus, instead of being placed in a central square, with an upper and lower panel for the inscription, the main part of the illumination usually takes up the whole rectangle.

Another difference is that the Persian and Iraqi artists are clearly less bent on emphasizing centrifugal power at the midmost point of their illumination. The centrepiece is often undeniably radiant, but without any deliberate build-up of dynamic expansion. Much of the total effect is gained by the subtle reverberations of the 'echo'. But this and the more direct methods of outward radiation are not mutually exclusive, as we have already seen.

The following detailed analysis of one of the more outstanding Mongol frontispieces, no. 99, will help to complete these general and summary indications. The illumination consists of a cluster of hexagons of gold floral arabesque on grounds of red or blue, with a small hexagon at the centre of each containing a gold flower on a ground of blue or red. Each of the larger hexagons is surrounded by a white-outlined hexagonal frame of gold foliar arabesque on a pale jade ground, every side of which frames one side of each of the two hexagons between which it stands. The unity of the whole is further increased by the intersection of the white outlines to form a small hexagon at every corner of the larger ones, in such a way that each of these smaller hexagons acts as centre for three of the larger ones, which it unites into a symmetrical cluster about itself. The central larger hexagon is unique, in that the blue ground of its centrepiece is projected into the scarlet outer ground with a subtle effect of radiation. Four incomplete hexagons, two on each side, 'escape' beneath the gold trellised frame which surrounds the whole rectangle, and which is itself outlined in blue, with a three-barbed finial at each of its four corners. Attached to the frame in the middle of the outer margin of each page is a gold-bordered palmette, inside which a gold-outlined red peony, with central petals of jade outlined with gold, is surrounded by gold foliar arabesque on a blue ground. The blue outline of the palmette is prolonged into a compact knotted ornament, barbed on both sides, which serves as a base for a small tree-like finial (see no. 99).



Īl-Khānid Qur'āns are considerably rarer than Mamluk ones, partly because the style was more quickly superseded, and partly owing to the destructiveness of the mid 8th/14th century Timurid invasion, which Egypt was spared.

97

Sūrat al-Anfāl (the Spoils of War), VIII, 41, at the opening of part 10 of a Qur'ān in thirty volumes copied in Muḥaqqaq script by Aḥmad ibn ash-Shaykh as-Suhrawardi in 704/1304, probably in Baghdad, and illuminated by Muḥammad ibn Aybak.

The text is on bands of white with irregular billowing edges surrounded by foliar arabesque in a frame of gold trellis prolonged to take in an upper and lower panel, in which indications as to the number of the part etc., are written in ornamental Eastern Kufic. The whole rectangle is surrounded by a crenellated band of arabesque in gold and other colours.

Attached to the outer ends of the panels are marginal palmettes. A typically Īl-Khānid feature of these is the broad band with scalloped edges which surrounds the small central roundel.

Many of the inscriptions in the mosques of Baghdad are by this famous calligrapher who was one of 'the six', that is, the six outstanding pupils of Yāqūt al-Musta'simī (see Qāḍi Aḥmad, *Calligraphers and Painters*, p. 60).

50 × 37 cm; 3 lines; 50 folios.

Tehran, Iran Bastan Museum, 3548, ff. 1v-2r.

Case 13

98 [withdrawn]

99

Frontispiece to part 25 of a Qur'ān in thirty volumes copied in gold Muḥaqqaq script by 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī in 710/1310 in Mosul for the Īl-Khānid Sultan Ūljāytū and his two ministers Rashid ad-Dīn and Sa'd ad-Dīn.

To the description of the illumination already given in the introduction to this section, it may be added that the reds and blues on the right-hand page have retained somewhat more brilliance than they have on the left.

Another volume of this Qur'ān is no. 539 in the Turkish and Islamic Museum, Istanbul, and there is also a fragment in the Suleymaniye Library.

The first of the two patron-ministers mentioned above is the famous Persian historian Rashid ad-Dīn Faḍl Allāh.

57 × 40 cm; 5 lines; 51 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 4945, ff. 1v-2r.

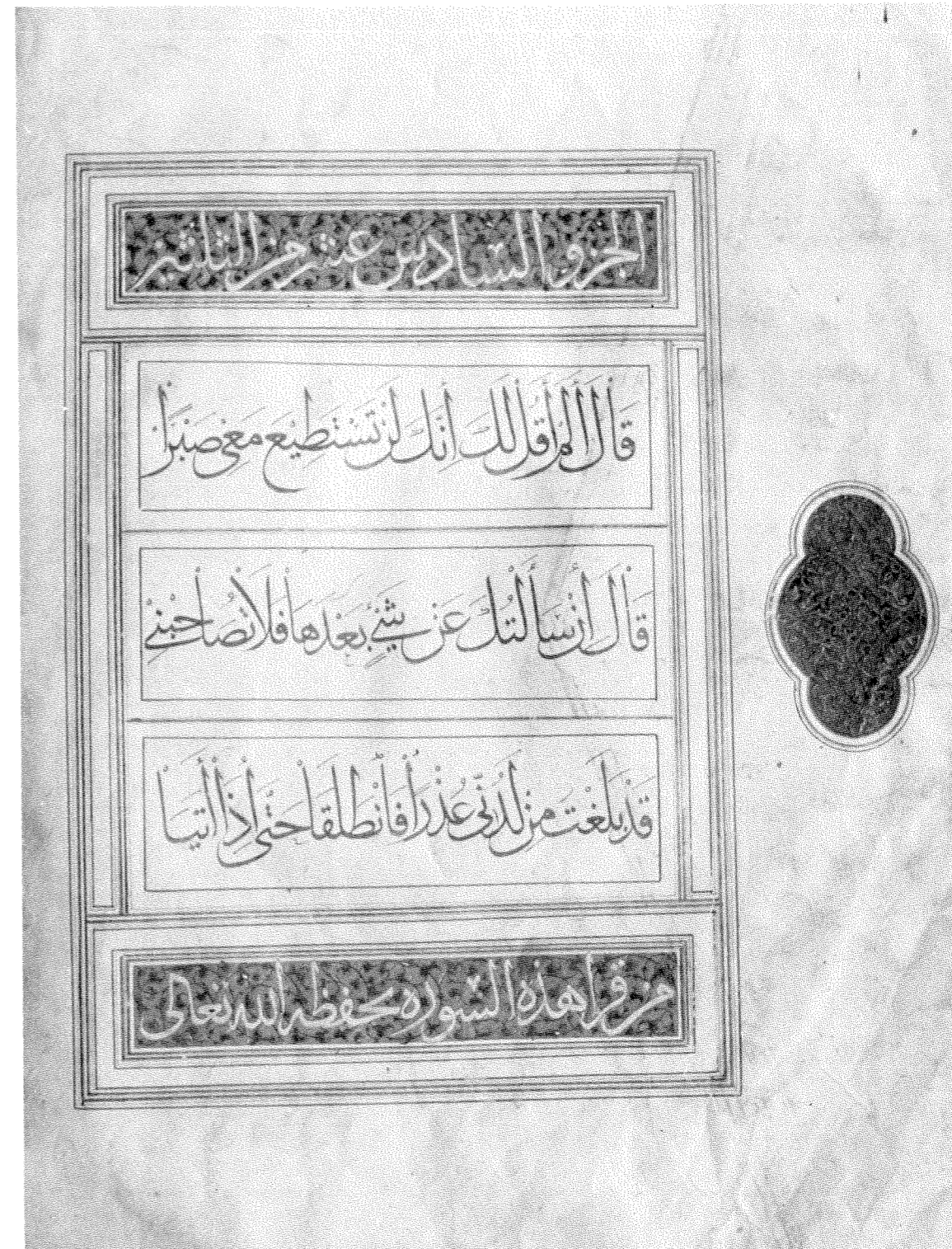
Case 13

See Plate XVIII

100

Sūrat al-Kahf (the Cave), XVIII, 75-78, in gold Rayḥānī script with vowels in blue, at the opening of part 16 of a Qur'ān in thirty volumes, copied and illuminated by 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Hamaḍānī in 713/1313 for 'al-Malik an-Nāṣir Muḥammad'.

Inscribed in the upper and lower panels, in white 'Thuluth script over a gold arabesque on a blue ground, is the number of the part, followed by two sayings of the Prophet about the merit of reading this particular chapter of the Qur'ān.



100

The style, typical of Persia and Iraq under the Īl-Khānids, (compare nos. 97 and 99) is not in itself evidence of the identity of the royal patron, since the Persian artist could have produced the manuscript in Egypt where the Mamluk Sultan of the above name was now firmly settled on the throne for his third and longest reign. But the Īl-Khānid Sultan Ūljāytū, referred to by his pagan name in no. 99, which had been written for him only three years previously, had in fact embraced Islam and taken the name Muḥammad, and the title al-Malik an-Nāṣir (the Victorious King) was sometimes applied to him also. He was moreover a Shi'ī, unlike the Mamluk; and certain Shi'ī prayers at the beginning of one of the volumes (part 27), together with certain honorific titles in the titles in the colophon that are normally associated with him in particular, make it almost certain that it was he who had commissioned this manuscript. It must, however, have been sent to the Mamluk court not long afterwards, probably as a present, since the frontispiece of every volume is somewhat defaced by a deed of *waqf* dated 726/1326 in the name of Abū Sa'īd Sayf ad-Dīn Baktimur as-Sāqī, whose funerary foundation in the southern cemetery of Cairo was thereby endowed with this Qur'ān. The foundation included not only his tomb but also a *khānqah*, that is, a residence for Sufis; and it was no doubt primarily to these that he addressed his instructions in the deed of *waqf* that the manuscript should not only be read but used as a model for copying. In the opinion of Richard Ettinghausen (see *A Survey of Persian Art*, vol. III, p. 1955), this Qur'ān 'must indeed rank as one of the greatest accomplishments of the art of the book'. (See nos. 101-105.)

56 × 41 cm; 3 lines; 39 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 72, pt. 16, ff. 2v-3r.

Case 14

101 Frontispiece to part 19 of the same Qur'ān.

A central twelve-pointed star filled with a flower-like ornament of fine scroll work spreading out to arabesque, gold on white, is surrounded by six hexagonal figures, each formed by a cluster of six irregular polygons of blue and black scroll-work on white around a central hexagon of rich blue. Identical stars and other figures half disappearing behind the rectangular blue and gold outer frames imply that the whole is endlessly echoed on all sides.

Sūrat al-An'ām (the Cattle), VI, 77-80, is the text of the white Tawāqī' inscription over a gold arabesque on a rich blue ground in the upper and lower panels.

37 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 72, pt. 19, ff. 1v-2r.

Case 14

See Plate XIX

102 Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (the Clans), XXXIII, 31-32, at the opening of part 22 of the same Qur'ān.

The inscription denoting the new part is in white Thuluth over a gold arabesque on a blue ground.

35 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 72, pt. 22, ff. 2v-3r.

Case 14

103 Frontispiece to part 23 of the same Qur'ān.

The overall reverberative effect of 'echoing' is similar to that of no. 101, but here the figures are more strictly geometrical. A central six-pointed star of blue arabesque on a white ground is surrounded by six hexagons of similar content, beyond which, on all sides are identical, but half disappearing, stars and hexagons. The space between these elements is entirely filled with gold arabesque on a white ground. In the upper and lower panels of gold arabesque on a blue ground there are no inscriptions.

35 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 72, pt. 23, ff. 1v-2r.

Case 14

104 Sūrat al-Mulk (Sovereignty) and sūrat al-Qalam (the Pen), LXVII, 28 - LXVIII, 5, in part 29 of the same Qur'ān.

The sūrah heading is in gold Thuluth over a blue arabesque on a white ground in a long rectangular panel framed with gold arabesque which is prolonged into the sūrah palmette.

44 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 72, pt. 29, ff. 7v-8r.

Case 14

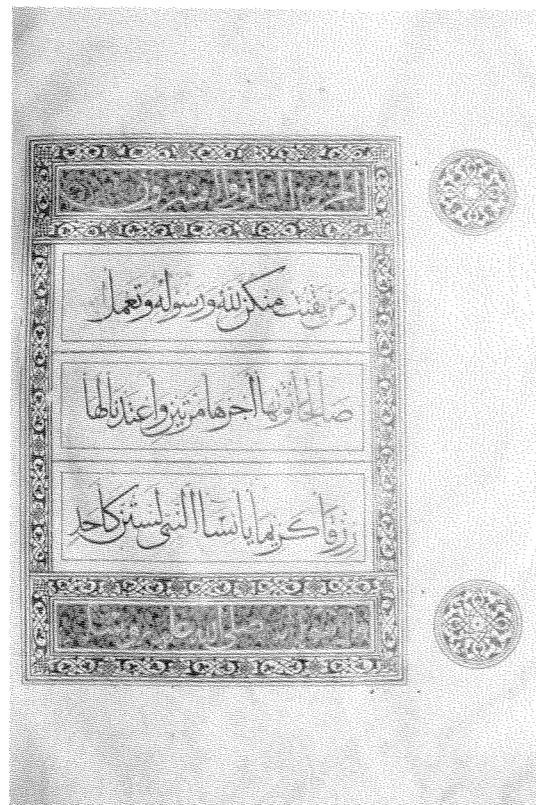
105 Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ (Sincerity) to sūrat an-Nās (Men), CXII, 1 - CXIV, 6, in part 30 of the same Qur'ān.

The two sūrah headings, in white Thuluth over a gold arabesque on a blue ground, are placed one on either side of the last words of the preceding sūrah. The sūrah palmettes are respectively of blue and gold arabesque, and of gold arabesque outlined with blue, both on a white ground.

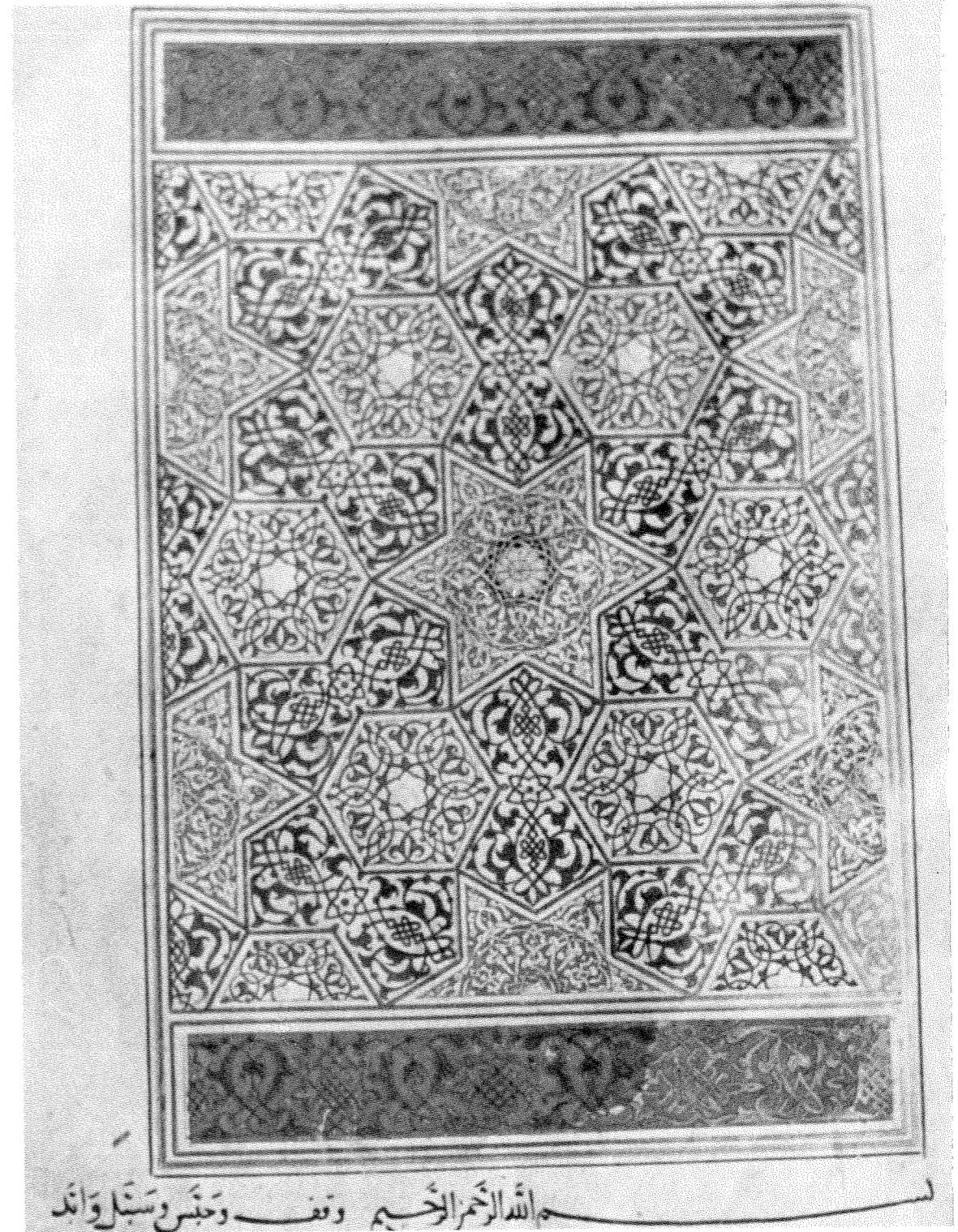
43 folios.

Cairo, National Library, 72, pt. 30, ff. 41v-42r.

Case 14



102



103

106
Sūrat Šād (the Letter Šād), XXXVIII, 8–14, in gold Rayḥānī with blue vowels, in part 45 of a Qur'ān in sixty volumes.

Many folios are missing from this part, and there is no indication of scribe, date or place, but the style (compare exhibits nos. 105 and 110) suggests that it is from 8th/14th century Iraq or Persia.

30 × 21cm; 5 lines; 48 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 1339, ff. 29v–30r.

Case 13

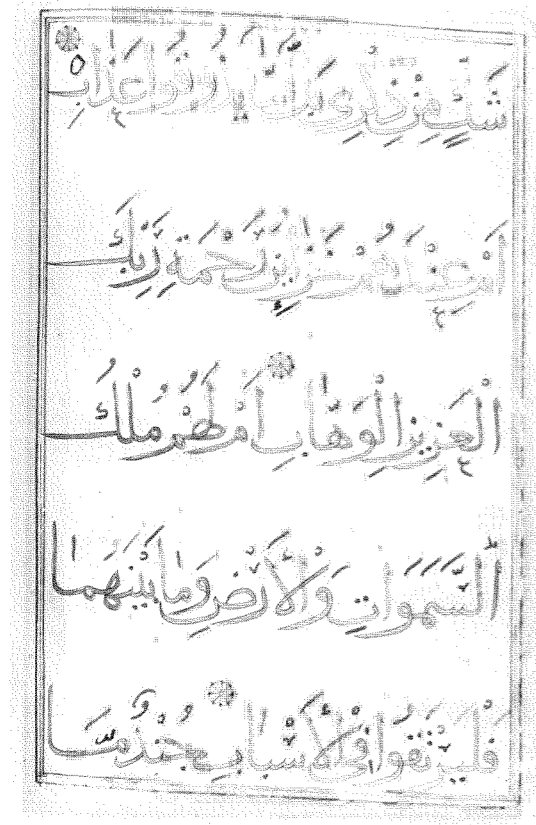
107
An opening in a Qur'ān in Naskhī script copied by 'Abd Allāh aṣ-Ṣayrafī at-Tabrizī in 720/1320 in Persia.

The scribe, who was also a great master of Thuluth script, is the author of a treatise on calligraphy, and he studied the art under two of 'the six', that is, the six outstanding pupils of Yāqūt al-Musta'šimī, namely Yūsuf Mashhadī and Sayyid Ḥaydar. His work is still to be seen in many of the inscriptions on various buildings in Tabriz, where this manuscript was probably written.

29.8 × 20cm; 15 lines; 302 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 279.

Case 13



106

108
Sūrat al-Burūj (the Mansions of the Zodiac) and sūrat at-Tāriq (the Morning Star), LXXXV, 1 – LXXXVI, 6, in a Qur'ān copied in Ghubār script (minute Naskhī) by 'Alī ibn Muḥammad as-Sabzawārī called Bazdar in 728/1328 at Sabzavar on the south coast of the Caspian Sea.

The sūrah headings are in small gold Ruqā' script. The calligrapher mentions in the colophon that this is his sixty-ninth Qur'ān, and that he hopes, God willing, to write a hundred before he dies, or more.

6.5 × 4cm; 15 [16] lines; 467 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 7222, ff. 454v–455r.

Case 23

109
Sūrat al-Faṭḥ (Victory), XLVIII, 1–5, in a Qur'ān in Thuluth script verging on Rayḥānī copied by Muḥammad ibn Shaykh Yūsuf al-Ābārī, called Sayyid al-Khuṭṭāt, in 737/1337.

The Divine Name *Allāh* is written throughout in gold. There is an interlinear Caḡtā'ī Turkish commentary in Naskhī script.

35.5 × 25.5cm; 7 lines; 356 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 293.

Case 13

110
Sūrat Yūnus (Jonah), X, 1–2, in part 11 of a Qur'ān in thirty volumes copied in gold Muḥaqqaq script with vowels in blue by Yaḥyā l-Jamālī ṣ-Ṣūfī in 745/1344–5 in Shiraz.

The sūrah heading is in gold Ruqā' script. Many of the inscriptions on buildings in Shiraz, and also in Najaf, are by this famous Sufi calligrapher, who was a pupil of Mubārak Shāh, one of 'the six', that is, Yāqūt al-Musta'šimī's six outstanding pupils.

50 × 36cm; 5 lines; 42 folios.

Shiraz, Pars Museum, 456 M/P.

Case 15

111
Sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), II, 253, at the opening to part 3 of a Qur'ān in thirty volumes copied in gold Muḥaqqaq script in the 8th/14th century in Persia.

78 × 58cm; 5 lines; 83 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 415, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 15

112
Sūrat al-Jāthiyah (the Crouching), XLV, 33–35, in a Qur'ān in gold Rayḥānī script copied in 777/1375–6 for Tūrān Shāh, possibly in Shiraz.

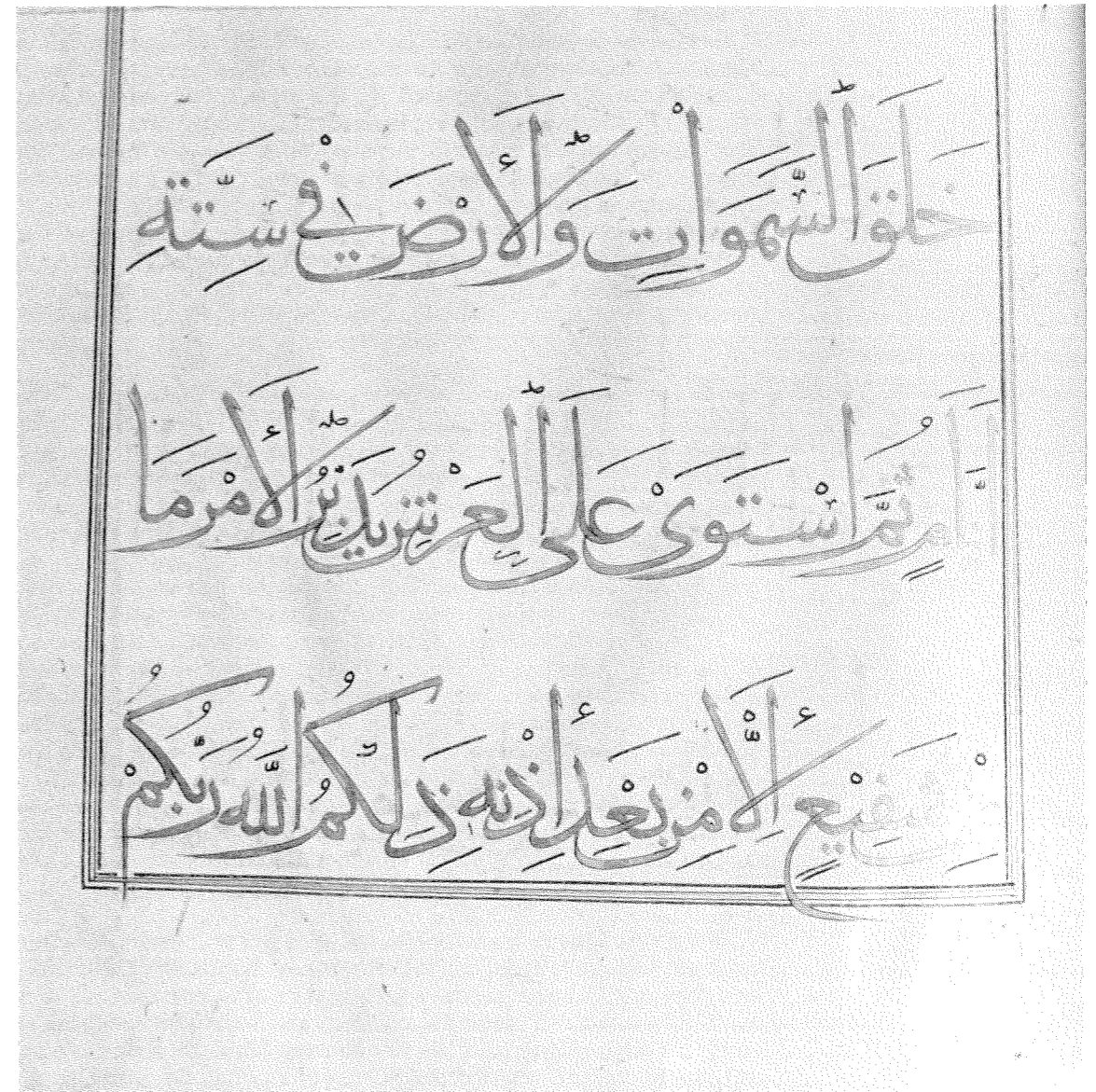
The vowels are in deep blue, and the verse divisions are gold and red roundels outlined with blue. The gold frame surrounding the square of text is prolonged to take in an oblong panel above and below. The inscriptions: 'the twenty-sixth part of thirty parts', and sūrat al-Wāqī'ah (the Event), LVI, 79–80, in the upper and lower panels respectively, are in black Thuluth script in a white compartment surrounded by gold foliar arabesque on a deep blue ground. Palmettes in the form of gold roundels with long blue finials are attached to the outer ends of the panels on the left-hand page only. Between these is a triangular anse, filled with the same blue and gold as the panels.

43 × 31cm; 3 [7] lines; 58 folios.

Shiraz, Pars Museum, 417 M/P, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 15

See Plate XX



110

Timurid and early Ottoman

9th/15th century

The Mongol style of Qur'ān illumination continued after the fall of the Īl-Khānids almost until the end of the 8th/14th century when it began to be gradually replaced by the style that is named after Timūr (Tamburlane). The replacement in question was of a kind that has often taken place in the arts of various civilizations, the change from a large-featured beauty of grandeur and magnificence to an exquisite beauty of the finest intricacy. None the less, Timurid illumination belongs inseparably to the same era as that of the Mongols and Mamluks. It marked, in fact, the end of the era; and, as often happens when a movement draws to its close, on the one hand it is something of a herald of the new that is to come, while on the other hand it pushes certain features of the old to an extreme. The 8th–9th/14th–15th centuries span what might be called the age of the large Qur'ān. But no Qur'āns were larger than some of the Timurid ones. The following anecdote is not irrelevant. 'Umar Aqṭa', left-handed because he had lost his right hand, wrote a minute Qur'ān in Ghubār script, from all accounts considerably smaller than no. 108 in this exhibition, and presented it to Timūr, who disdained to accept it. The great calligrapher went away and wrote a Qur'ān of which each line was more than a cubit long. He put it on a barrow and took it to the Palace. Timūr with all his dignitaries came out to meet him, and loaded him with honours.

To take an example of a different kind, the ornamental Eastern Kufic sūrah heading, in virtue of its somewhat mysterious and feminine delicacy, was a perfect complement to the virile Muḥaqqaq in which the Quranic text itself was written. The Timurids pushed the delicacy in question almost to the verge of invisibility, giving the lines of the letters sometimes no more thickness than the threads of a spider's web, not, it must be admitted, without a certain beauty of effect. As to the sūrah palmette, it continued to be an essential feature of Qur'ān illumination until Timurid times. Then, instead of the single ornament, the palmette was often multiplied (see nos. 115 and 116).

But also, as it were in anticipation of what was to come, it was often omitted altogether as in no. 119. Another anticipation of the 10th/16th century and afterwards, was the use of different sizes of script on the same page.¹ It became a common practice in Timurid times to write the first, middle and last line in large Thuluth or Muḥaqqaq script and the intervening lines in Naskhī or small Rayḥānī (see no. 117).

¹An example of this is to be found as early as the 6th/12th century (see A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Illuminated*, plate 27) but it was no doubt considered too much of a liberty to be accepted at that time, nor was it ever fully accepted by the Arabs themselves.

The 9th/15th century Ottoman Qur'āns show a certain Timurid influence, but the Turkish artists appear to have been more conservative than their Persian contemporaries, preferring to retain the larger featured, less intricate arabesques and the more robust Kufic lettering of the Īl-Khānīd Qur'āns.

113

Sūrat al-Muzzammil (the Enshrouded) and sūrat al-Muddaththir (the Cloaked), LXXIII, 20 – LXXIV, *Basmalah*, in a Qur'ān copied in large gold Muḥaqqaq script by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad at-Tuḡhrā'ī in 809/1406, probably in Persia. The sūrah heading is in gold Ruqā' script.

55.2 × 39.5cm; 5 lines; 67 folios.

Mashhad Shrine Library, 145.

Case 13

114 [withdrawn]

115

Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and sūrat Tā-Hā (the Letters Tā' and Hā'), I, 1–7 and XX, 1–6, in gold Rayḥānī script, in a volume of selections from the Qur'ān copied by Ibrāhīm Sulṭān ibn Shāh Rukh ibn Timūr in 834/1430–1, presumably in Shiraz where he held his court.

The eyes of the letters are filled with lapis blue and the verse divisions are lapis roundels overlaid with gold and with a broad circumference of gold. The almost square rectangle of text is surrounded by a gold trellised frame prolonged to take in panels above and below. The sūrah headings are in ultramarine floriated ornamental Eastern Kufic outlined with turquoise, so fine as to be scarcely visible, over a gold foliar arabesque with touches of red and green on a lapis ground, set in an oval of gold foliar arabesque sparsely flowered with blue and green on a buff ground. This is surrounded by thin green and gold borders beyond which is a broader frame of gold foliar arabesque over lapis, with more thin green and gold borders just inside the gold trellis. Beyond this, on the three outer sides, is a crenellated band of extroverted gold arabesque on a lapis ground. Across this band, pale gold palmettes, centred with lapis and gold and outlined with lapis, project into the margin at regular intervals, ten whole and two half palmettes to each page.

65 × 45cm; 3 [7] lines; 34 folios.

Shiraz, Pars Museum, 430 M/P, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 16

See Plate XXI

116

Sūrat al-Falaq (Daybreak) and sūrat an-Nās (Men), XCIII, 1 – XCIV, 6, in a Qur'ān in Rayḥānī script.

The sūrah headings are in thin white ornamental Eastern Kufic over a green foliar arabesque on a gold ground. The text and headings are surrounded by panels of polychrome floral arabesque on a blue ground with gold trellised frames. The outermost band, on the three outer sides of the page only, has long finials, and a half projecting palmette in the middle of each side.

According to the colophon, dated 837/1434, the scribe was Ibrāhīm Sulṭān ibn Shāh Rukh ibn Timūr. A possible reason for doubting whether the manuscript was actually written by this patron-calligrapher grandson of Tamburlane is that the signature differs from that of a better authenticated spelling of the Ibrāhīm Sulṭān manuscript no. 115. However that may be, there is no reason to doubt the date, and the style is typically Timurid.

34.5 × 24.5cm; [11] lines; 404 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 215.

Case 16

117
An opening in a Qur'an copied in Thuluth and Naskhi scripts in the late 8th, 14th or early 9th/15th century, in Iraq or Persia.

The first, middle and last lines (1, 5, 9) are in Thuluth and the remainder in Naskhi, all in black except for the middle line which is in gold. The signature Yāqūt al-Musta'şimī can scarcely be authentic. 53.2 × 40cm; 9 lines; 346 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 306.

Case 16

118
An opening in a Qur'an copied in Rayḥānī script in the 9th/15th century, probably in Persia.

59 × 43cm; 7 lines; 170 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 420.

Case 15

119
Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening), I, 1-6, at the beginning of part 1 of a Qur'an in thirty volumes copied in Rayḥānī script in the 9th/15th century in Persia. The text on these pages is in gold lettering, the eyes of some of the letters being filled with blue.

The sūrah heading and other inscriptions in the upper and lower panels are in thin blue ornamental Eastern Kufic over a green foliar arabesque on a gold ground.

62.5 × 45.7cm; 3 [5] lines; 49 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 416, ff. 1v-2r.

Case 16 See Plate XXII

120
An opening in part 2 of the same Qur'an in Rayḥānī script.

63 × 46cm; 5 lines; 47 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 417.

Case 16

121
An opening at the beginning of part 17 of the same Qur'an in Rayḥānī script, with headings in ornamental Eastern Kufic.

62.5 × 45.5cm; 3 [5] lines; 53 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 419.

Case 16

122
An opening in a Qur'an copied in Rayḥānī script in the 9th/15th century, probably in Persia.

38 × 26cm; 11 lines; 308 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 141.

Case 16

123
An opening in a Qur'an copied in alternate bright blue and gold Rayḥānī script in the 9th/15th century in Persia.

39.5 × 25.5cm; 11 lines; 386 folios.

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 173.

Case 16

124
Sūrat ash-Shams (the Sun) to sūrat at-Tin (the Fig), XCI, 14-XCV, 3, in a Qur'an copied in Naskhi script in the 9th/15th century in Turkey.

The sūrah headings are in blue or red Thuluth script verging on Ruqā'. The verse divisions are gold rosettes.

The original colophon has been effaced. But instead of an earlier date being substituted, as is usual in such cases, this relatively early

Ottoman manuscript is post-dated by over 300 years to 1206/1791-2 in order that it may be attributed to the famous Sufi calligrapher Darwish 'Alī.

29 × 20cm; 15 lines; 286 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 13386, ff. 280v-281r.

Case 16

125
Sūrat Qāf (the Letter Qāf) and sūrat aḍ-Ḍāriyāt (the Wining Winds), L, 39 - LI, 36, in a Qur'an in Naskhi script. The sūrah heading is in gold Ruqā'.

To mark the opening of part 7 (the seventh seventh) of this Qur'an there is a marginal roundel with gold lettering on white surrounded by an arabesque of gold on blue.

The excellence of the script arouses interest as to the identity of the calligrapher, but the space left for the colophon was never filled in. The manuscript is probably of the 9th/15th century, and the general style of illumination is suggestive of Turkey or some neighbouring region under Ottoman rather than Timurid influence.

26.5 × 16.5cm; 15 lines; 260 folios.

London, British Library, Harleian 3456, ff. 214v-215r.

Case 16

126
Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), I, 1 - II, 4, at the beginning of a Qur'an copied in Naskhi script, on brown tinted paper, in the 9th/15th century, probably in Turkey.

The text is on a ground of a somewhat lighter brown, shaped to fit the letters. The verse divisions are gold roundels. The sūrah headings in the upper and lower panels are in mid-blue ornamental Eastern Kufic script over a gold foliar arabesque on a ground of deep blue in an oblong gold trellised frame. A band of gold and mid-blue foliar arabesque on a ground of deep blue surrounds the rectangle on the three sides. A gold and blue roundel, separate from the rest of the illumination, is in the middle of the outer margin of each page.

21 × 13.5cm; 5 [11] lines; 447 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 4810, ff. 1v-2r.

Case 16 See Plate XXIII

127
Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), I, 1 - II, 55, in a Qur'an in Rayḥānī script, copied by Muḥammad Mu'min ibn 'Abd Allāh Mawārid in 845/1442, in Persia.

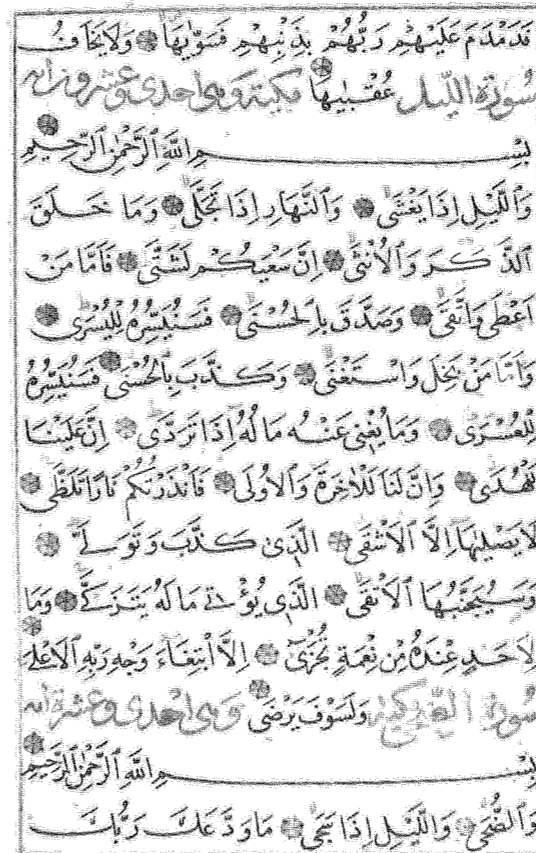
The text is set in a rectangle surrounded by panels, mainly of blue and gold, overlaid with polychrome floral arabesque. A large gold triangular anse, with a smaller blue triangle inside it projects into the margin on either side.

This Qur'an was written for the library of Sultan Abū Sa'īd, great-grandson of Timūr (Tamburlane). Later it was in the library of Tippū Sulṭān of Mysore.

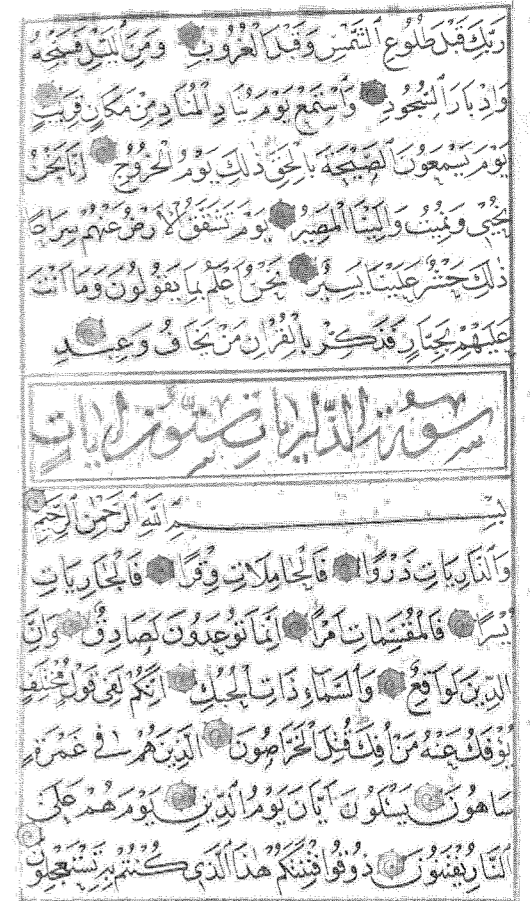
34.5 × 23cm; 6 [11] lines.

St Andrews University Library, 29, ff. 1v-2r.

Case 16



124



125

Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal and later

10th/16th century and later

Amongst the most striking characteristics of the inter-regional style which prevailed from the beginning of the 10th/16th century is a deepening of the tint of blue and a general increase of the use of reds and other hitherto subsidiary colours, though the more or less exclusive combination of blue and gold is always preferred by certain artists. Apart from colour, everything now depends on the arabesque. The Timurids had made little use, in illumination, of the geometrical element, which by the time of the Safavids had become a thing of the past, together with the *sūrah* palmette and the ornamental Kufic *sūrah* heading. There was still an occasional frontispiece, but it now consisted of two large star-shaped medallions of arabesque on opposite pages, with or without a Qur'ān verse in the centre of each. A fine example is to be seen in no. 133. More often, however, the manuscript opened in the middle of the page containing the first chapter of the Qur'ān in Naskhī script and surrounded by panels of arabesque, sometimes so extensive as to leave only a small margin. The adjacent panels are nearly always distinct from each other in colour, but the arabesque is often shared. An example is to be seen in no. 139, where beneath the text itself are fine gold spiraloid stems which spread out on all sides, considerably less visible than the small flowers which they serve to scatter sparsely over the whole illumination. Another typical feature to be seen on these same pages is in the loops and festoons of knotted ribbon-work, powerfully suggestive of the Far Eastern influence which had haunted the Middle and Near Eastern arts of the book ever since the time of the Īl-Khānids (see also nos. 132 and 140).

128

Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening), I, 1–7, in a Qur'ān in Naskhī script, copied by Muṣṭafā ibn Naṣūḥ al-Lāsiki in 910/1504, in Persia, Iraq or Turkey.

The panels of illumination surrounding the text are mainly blue and gold.

25 × 17.5 cm; 5 [17] lines; 250 folios.

Manchester, John Rylands University Library, 43.

Case 17

129

Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and *sūrat al-Baqarah* (the Cow), I, 1–II, 5, in a Qur'ān in Naskhī script copied (according to the Ottoman Turkish colophon) by Shaykh Ḥamdullah Effendi, the perfect Hajji and head of the scribes, in the 10th/16th century in Turkey.

The text is in a central rectangle of gold on strips of white with irregular, cloud-like edges. The main feature of this illumination is a broad outer band of ultramarine and gold diamond-shaped medallions partially projecting into the margin. In the middle of the outer side of each page their sequence is interrupted by a large gold triangular anse, with a smaller triangle of ultramarine inside it. Most of the illumination is overlaid with polychrome floral arabesque.

With regard to the calligrapher, the colophon is clearly referring to Ḥamd Allāh ibn ash-Shaykh, who is considered by many as the greatest of all the Ottoman calligraphers. His honorific title is *Qiblat al-Khuṭṭāt* (the Calligraphers' Point of Orientation). He was the head of a Sufi order, and is said to have taught calligraphy to the Sultan Bāyazīd II (see Cl. Huart, *Les Calligraphes et les Miniaturistes de l'Orient Musulman*, p. 108). If the attribution is correct, this Qur'ān must have been copied before 926/1520, the date of his death.

38.8 × 26.3 cm; 6 [13] lines; 278 folios.

Geneva, Collection of H.H. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, 5.

Case 17

130

Sūrat al-An'ām (the Cattle) and *sūrat al-A'rāf* (the Heights), VI, 164–VII, 17, in a Qur'ān copied in Ghubār script (minute Naskhī) in Shiraz in 950/1543. The *sūrah* heading is in gold *Ruqā'* script and the text is set within a gold circular frame.

Octagonal 6.4 × 6.4 cm; 13 lines; 369 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 2200, ff. 91v–92r.

Case 23

131

Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and *sūrat al-Baqarah* (the Cow), I, 1–II, 4, in a Qur'ān in Naskhī script copied by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Muḥyi l-Harawī in 952/1545 for 'Abd al-'Aziz Khān, Sultan of Bukhara.

The *sūrah* headings are in white *Ruqā'* script, over light blue arabesque on gold, set in an ultramarine surround overlaid with gold and white arabesque and framed with gold trellis. Oblong panels of similar arabesque are on either side of the text. Beyond these, taking in also the upper and lower panels, is a rectangular frame, gold on black picked out with white and pale blue flowers. The outermost frame is of alternating gold and red medallions amid polychrome arabesque on an ultramarine ground. On either side a triangular anse of gold overlaid with fine floral arabesque projects into the margin.

26 × 16.3 cm; 12 lines; 386 folios.

London, The Keir Collection, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 17

132

Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening), I, 1–7, in a Qur'ān in Naskhī script copied in 957/1550 by 'Alā' ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd as-Salchūqī, probably in India.

The text is in white on a gold ground overlaid with floral arabesque which spreads out over the whole illumination. Ultramarine and gold are the predominant colours, with a relatively small but striking touch of vermilion.

This Qur'ān was in the library of Tippū Sulṭān of Mysore until 1213/1799.

39 × 24.5 cm; 4 [12] lines; 336 folios.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Or. 793, ff. 9v–10r.

Case 18

133

Frontispiece to a Qur'ān copied and illuminated in the latter half of the 10th/16th century in Persia.

A central square of light blue is the setting for an eight-pointed stellar medallion of gold with a central circle in which a verse from *sūrat al-Isrā'* (the Night Journey), XVIII, 88, is inscribed in white Naskhī script. Eight palmette-like figures radiate from the circumference of the circle and slightly project between the points of the star into the light blue ground.

In panels mainly of ultramarine above and below the square, verses from *sūrat al-Wāqī'ah* (the Event), LVI, 77–80, are inscribed in white Thuluth script on gold grounds. Beyond the frame which surrounds the rectangle on all sides is an outer border of gold diamond-shaped medallions ringed with ultramarine touched with white. The spaces between them are filled in with red and gold. The whole illumination is sprinkled with flowers, red and white, and gold or light blue according to whether the ground is blue or gold.

36.9 × 24.5 cm; 12 lines; 328 folios.

Geneva, Collection of H.H. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, 4, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 17

134–137 [withdrawn]

138

Sūrat al-A'rāf (the Heights) and *sūrat al-Anfāl* (the Spoils of War), VII, 189–VIII, 1, in a Qur'ān in Thuluth and Naskhī script copied at Herat in 970/1563.

The first, middle and last lines (1, 8 and 15) are in gold Thuluth and the remaining twelve lines, shorter in length, are in two sections of black Naskhī between elongated medallions of gold with blue scroll work. The *sūrah* headings are in white *Ruqā'* script on a gold ground.

The manuscript was once the property of one of Shāh Jahān's ministers, who made an offering of it to the shrine of a Sufi saint, Shaykh Darwish, near Jullundur in the Panjab.

34 × 22.5 cm; 15 lines; 293 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 13087, ff. 83v–84r.

Case 18

139

Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening), I, 1–7, in a Qur'ān in gold *Rayḥānī* script copied in the latter half of the 10th/16th century in Afghanistan or India.

The *sūrah* heading (two words only, one on each page) is in gold *Ruqā'* script.

The text is on an ultramarine ground amid variously shaped panels of gold and ultramarine set in rectangular frames of the same two basic colours which also dominate the broad band that surrounds the rectangle on its three outer sides. This surround is divided down the middle by a succession of contiguous gold medallions in the shape of broadened palmettes, each containing a small palmette of alternate light blue and pink, with a larger medallion and blue palmette at each corner. Projections of blue scroll-work into the margin take the place of the usual finials.

Librarians' notes show that this manuscript was acquired by some royal library in 984/1576. Later it was in the library of the Amirs of Sind, after which it was acquired by the royal family of Delhi.

38 × 24.5 cm; 13 lines; 376 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 11544, ff. 3v–4r.

Case 18

See Plate XXIV

140 Sūrat al-Kahf (the Cave) and sūrat Maryam (Mary) XVIII, 110 – XIX, 31, in a Qur'an in Naskhi and Muḥaqqaq scripts copied in the 10th, 16th century, probably in India.

The sūrah headings are in Ruqā' script. The first, middle and last lines (1, 9 and 17) are in alternating gold and blue Muḥaqqaq on a white ground. The remaining fourteen lines, shorter in length, are in two sections of small black Naskhi on a gold ground sparsely sprinkled with red and light blue flowers, and set between oblong panels containing elongated white medallions in which are smaller lozenge-like medallions of gold and ultramarine picked out with red and light blue and surrounded by gold arabesque. The whole rectangle of text is surrounded on three outer sides by a broad band of ultramarine through which a stream of gold meanders to form a sequence of palmette-like medallions. Both these and their ultramarine settings are covered with floral arabesque; and in the middle of each side, partly projecting into the margin, is a large triangular anse in which is a smaller triangle of vermilion foliar arabesque on an ultramarine ground. The illumination as a whole shows a strong Safavid influence, which would not, however, preclude India as the place of origin.

33.6 × 22cm; 17 lines; 246 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 18497, ff. 118v–119r.

Case 18

141 Frontispiece and Introduction in a Qur'an commentary, Majma' al-bayān li-'ulūm al-Qur'an, by Abū l-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭabarsī, copied in Naskhi script in the 10th/16th century in India.

There are upper and lower panels for title and author, and the illumination in these and elsewhere consists mainly of gold medallions of various shapes on a rich blue ground framed with gold and overlaid with polychrome floral arabesque.

On the first page is a notice of the author in the hand of Muḥammad Qurṭb Shāh, Sultan of Golconda, written in Hyderabad in 1034/1625. The manuscript was presumably at that time in his library.

40 × 27cm; 15 [37] lines; 694 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 25110, ff. 2v–3r.

Case 18

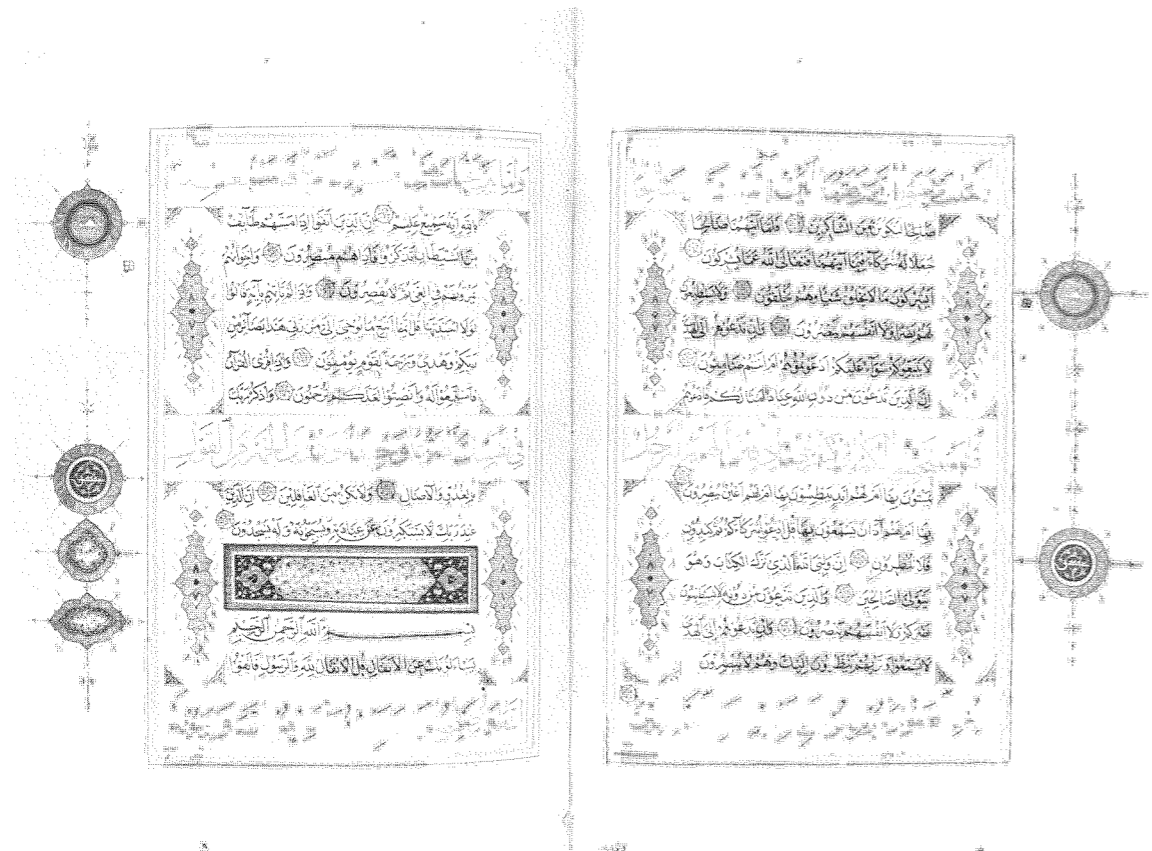
142 Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), I, 1 – II, 4, in a Qur'an copied in gold Rayḥānī script by Yūsuf ibn 'Abd Allāh in 998/1540, in Turkey or Persia.

The vowels are in blue. The sūrah headings are in white Ruqā' script on a gold ground surrounded by ultramarine overlaid with gold arabesque, in rectangular panels above and below the Quranic text, which is between vertical, oblong panels of gold overlaid with blue arabesque. The outermost border on the three outer sides has alternating gold and red medallions surrounded by gold arabesque on an ultramarine ground, with finials projecting into the margin.

45 × 30.5cm; 12 lines; 385 folios.

London, The Keir Collection.

Case 17



143
Sūrat Qāf (the Letter Qāf) and sūrat aḍ-Ḍarīyāt (the Winnowing Winds), L, 44 – LI, 30, in a Qur'ān in large Naskhī script copied for Mubārak Khān Sarawānī by Lād-Muhammad ibn Chānd-Muhammad ibn Wali-Muhammad in 1021/1612 in Afghanistan.

The sūrah headings are in Ruqā' script. It is alleged by an oral tradition that this Qur'ān was given by an Afghan prince to the future Mughal Emperor Shāh Jahān and his bride Mumtāz Mahāl as a wedding present in 1612. Later the manuscript came into the possession of the Nawabs of Oudh.

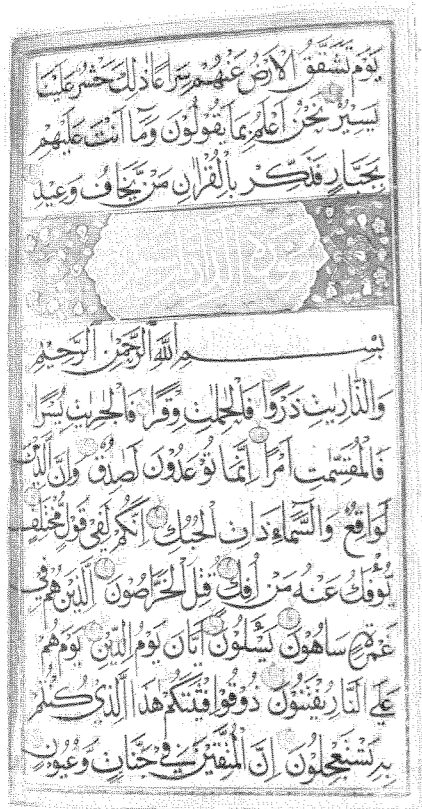
24.5 × 14.5cm; 14 [15] lines; 429 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 13203, ff. 367v–368r.

Case 18

144
Sūrat ash-Shu'arā' (the Poets) and sūrat an-Naml (the Ant), XXVI, 225 – XXVII, 8, in a Qur'ān in Indian Thuluth script copied in the 9th/15th century in India.

The sūrah heading is in gold Thuluth script over a gold foliar arabesque picked out with red on a blue ground. The verse divisions are gold rosettes, and the text is enclosed in thin frames of blue and gold. These are contemporary with the script.



143

82

The sūrah panel and palmette are in keeping with this period as regards their formal outlines, but their illuminative content suggests that they were in fact done at a later date, possibly in the 11th/17th century. It is on their account that the manuscript is placed in this case, since they constitute the most purely Indian feature of the whole exhibition.

A seal shows that this Qur'ān was in the library of Abū l-Faḥḥ Maḥmūd Shāh, Sultan of Gujārat, in 895/1488.

37 × 26cm; 7 lines; 752 folios.

London, British Library, Add. 18163, ff. 457v–458r.

Case 18

145
Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), I, 1 – II, 4, in a Qur'ān in Naskhī script copied by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, in 1094/1682 in India.

The verse divisions are gold rosettes.

33.7 × 23cm; 15 lines; 347 folios.

London, India Office Library, 19, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 18

146
Sūrat al-Mursalāt (the Emissaries) and sūrat an-Naba' (the Tidings), LXVII, 34 – LXVIII, 30, in a Qur'ān in Naskhī script, copied in the late 11th/17th century in Persia.

The sūrah heading is in white Thuluth script on a gold ground. The verse-counts are in marginal medallions in Thuluth script, gold on blue for five verses and blue on gold for ten, inscribed over floral sprays of red and light blue. The opening to part 30 is indicated on a larger gold medallion.

There is an interlinear Persian translation in small red Nasta'liq script, dated 1141/1728.

36 × 22.5cm; 12 lines; 327 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 13371, ff. 313v–314r.

Case 17

147 [withdrawn]

148
Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), I, 1 – II, 4, in a Qur'ān in Naskhī script copied in the 12th/18th century in India.

The text is on strips of off-white with irregular cloud-like edges surrounded by gold. The sūrah headings are in gold Ruqā' script on a similar off-white ground. The verse divisions are gold roundels picked out with rose and blue.

This Qur'ān was in the library of Tippū Sulṭān of Mysore until 1213/1799.

19.5 × 14cm; 14 lines; 318 folios.

London, India Office Library, 6, ff. 17v–18r.

Case 18

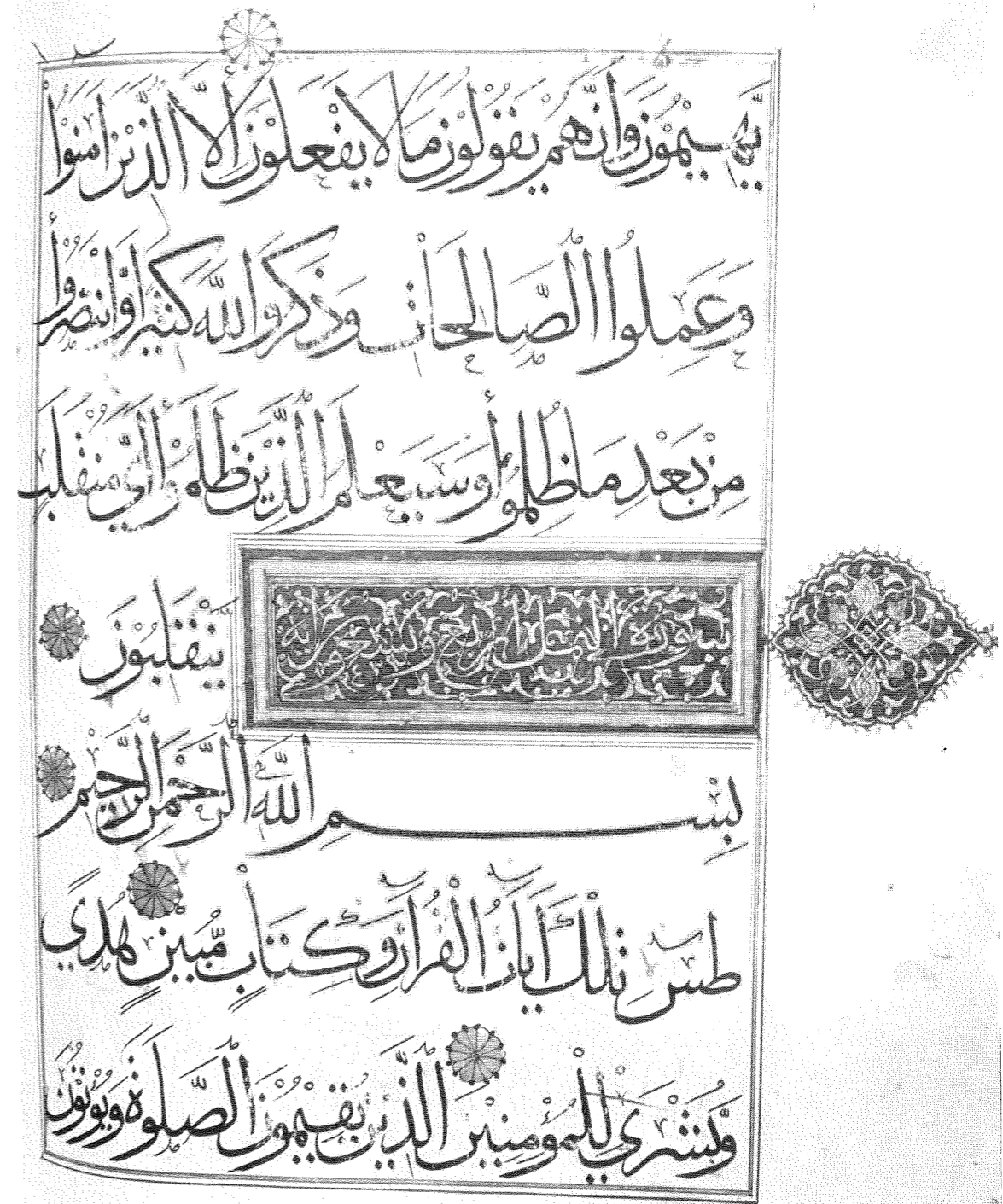
149
Sūrat Qāf (the Letter Qāf), L, 1–16, in a Qur'ān in Indian Naskhī script, copied in the late 12th/18th century in Kashmir.

The sūrah heading is in blue Ruqā' script on a gold ground. The text is black on gold, with an interlinear Persian translation in small red Nasta'liq script on white. Beyond a square frame of flowers on a gold ground there is a broad band of gold floral arabesque on a bright blue ground interrupted by a sequence of gold palmette-like medallions. This sequence is itself interrupted by four blue and gold anses in shape between a triangle and a semi-circle, which project into the outer margins on all four sides.

21 × 12.5cm; 9 [15]; ff. 286.

London, lent by Y. H. Safadi Esq., ff. 147v–148r.

Case 18



144

وَيَلُومُنَّ لِلْكَذِبِ ۖ هَذَا يَوْمٌ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ ۖ وَلَا
 يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَدُونَ ۖ وَيَلُومُنَّ لِلْكَذِبِ ۖ
 هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ جَمَعْنَاكُمْ وَالْأُولَىٰ ۖ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ
 فَكِيدُوا ۖ وَيَلُومُنَّ لِلْكَذِبِ ۖ إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي
 ظِلَالٍ وَعُيُونٍ ۖ وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا نَشْتَهُونَ ۖ كُلُّوْا وَاشْرَبُوا هَيْبَتًا
 بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۖ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۖ وَيَلُومُنَّ
 لِلْكَذِبِ ۖ كُلُّوْا وَتَمَعُوا قَلِيلًا أَنْتُمْ مُجْرِمُونَ ۖ وَيَلُومُنَّ
 لِلْكَذِبِ ۖ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ ۖ وَيَلُومُنَّ
 يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْكَذِبِ ۖ فَيَأْتِي حُدَيْبٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ
 بِسُورَةِ النَّارِ مَعُونَ آمِينَ
 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ۖ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ ۖ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ

كَلَامًا

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ۖ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ۖ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ
 مِهَادًا ۖ وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا ۖ وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَنْزُلًا ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا
 نَوْمَكُمْ سُباتًا ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا ۖ
 وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَاجًا ۖ
 وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً تَنجِيًا ۖ لِيُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ۖ
 وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا ۖ إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا ۖ يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ
 فِي الصُّورِ قَاتُونَ أَقْوَامًا ۖ وَفُجِّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا ۖ
 وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا ۖ إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ۖ
 لِلطَّاغِينَ مَأْتًا ۖ لَابِثِينَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا ۖ لَا يَذُقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا
 وَلَا شَرَابًا ۖ إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا ۖ جَزَاءً وَفَاةً ۖ إِنَّهُمْ
 كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا ۖ وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا ۖ
 وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا ۖ فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا

150
Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), I, 1 – II, 4, in a Qur'ān copied in Naskhī script in the 13th/19th century in Persia.

The illumination surrounding the text consists mainly of panels of gold and ultramarine overlaid with polychrome floral arabesque.

The sūrah headings are in gold on an ultramarine ground.
There is an interlinear Persian translation in red Nasta'liq.

42 × 26cm; 5 [12] lines.

St Andrews University Library, BP 127, ff. 1v–2r.

Case 17

151
Sūrat al-'Ankabūt (the Spider) and sūrat ar-Rūm (the Byzantines), XXIX, 55 – XXX, 6, from a Qur'ān in Naskhī script copied and illuminated by the Persian poet and musician Wiṣāl Shirāzī towards the beginning of the 14th/late 19th century, probably in Shiraz.

The text is on bands of white with irregularly undulating edges, surrounded with gold. The sūrah heading is in gold Ruqā' script over gold arabesque on a gold ground edged with blue, gold, red and green.

30.5 × 20cm; 12 lines; 9 folios.

London, British Library, Or. 12412, ff. 5v–6r.

Case 17

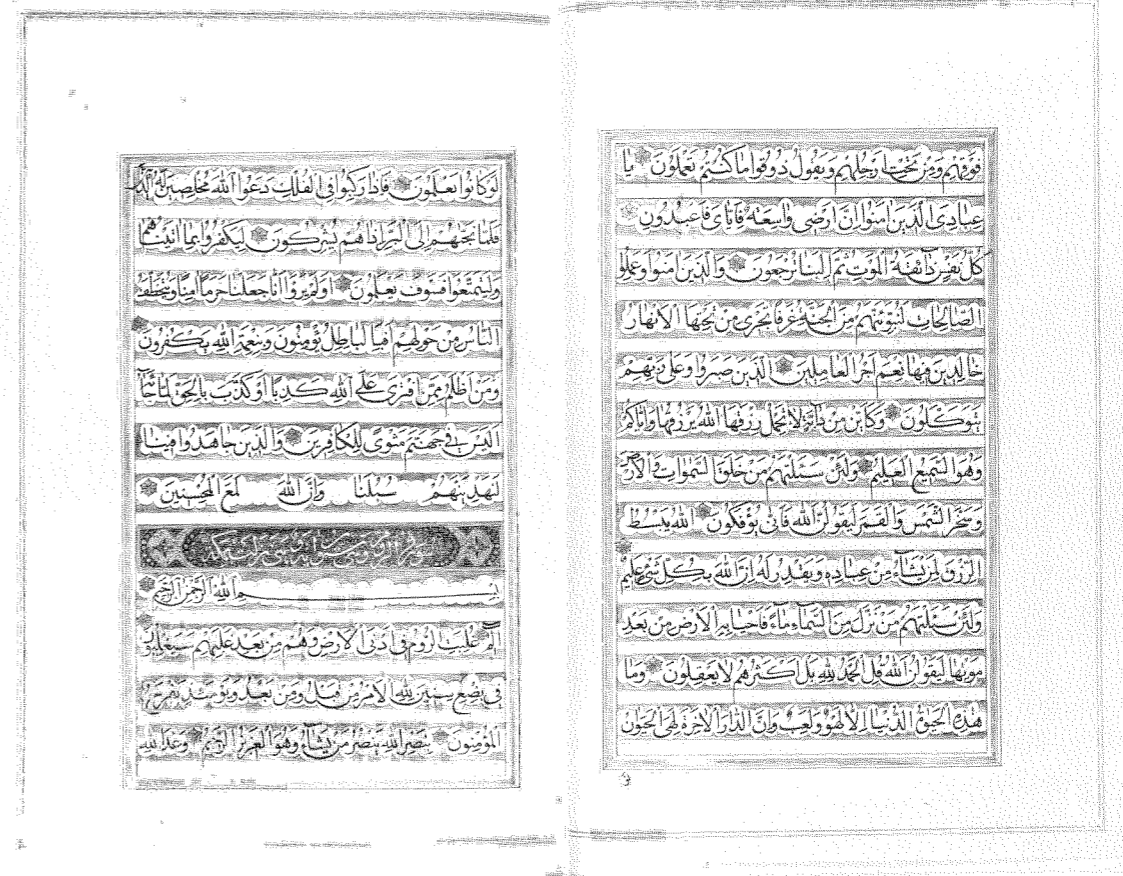
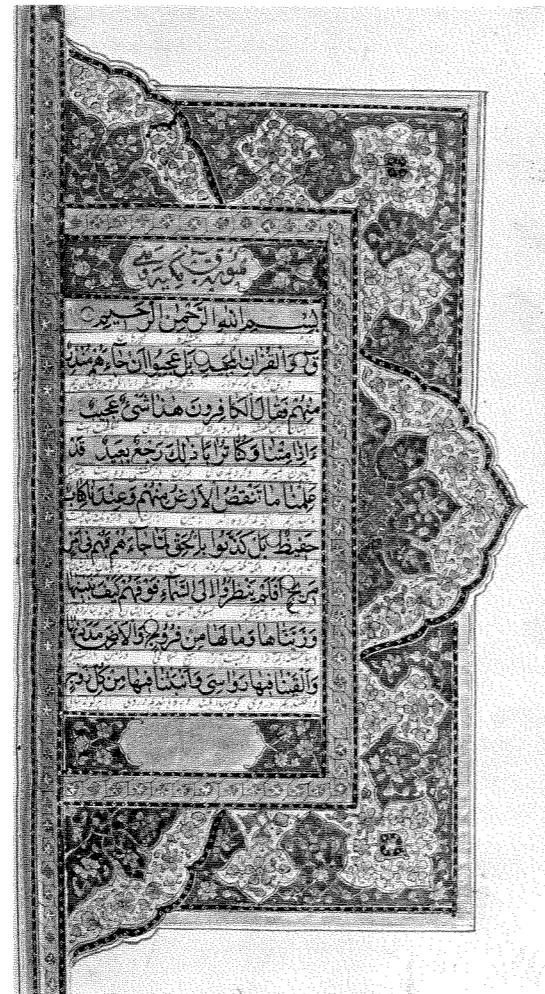
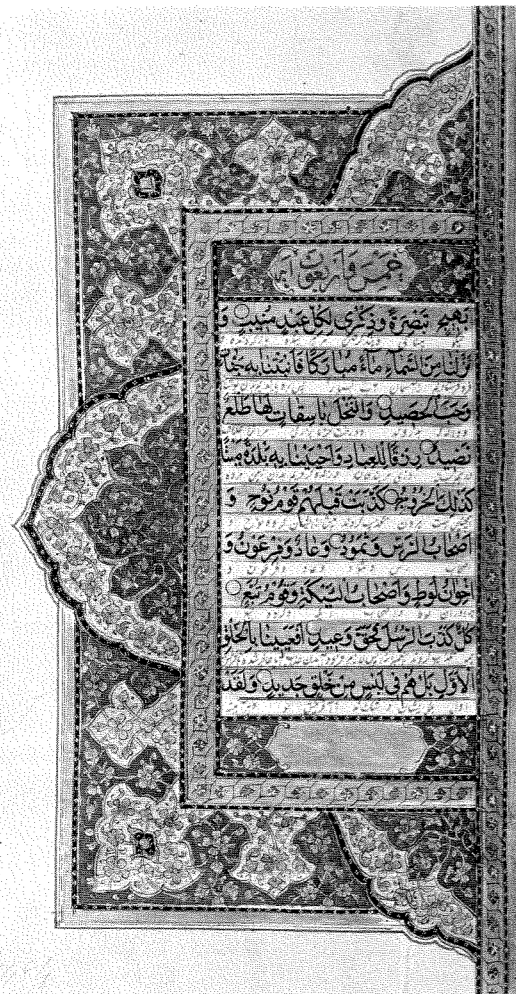
152
Sūrat al-Fātiḥah (the Opening) and sūrat al-Baqarah (the Cow), I, 1 – II, 4, in a Qur'ān in Naskhī script copied by Muḥammad 'Alī al-Iṣfahānī, in 1310/1893 in Persia for the Vazir Mirzā Maḥmūd.

The sūrah headings are in gold Ruqā' script.

22 × 14cm; 7 [19] lines; 234 folios

Mashhad, Imam Riza Shrine Library, 1511, ff. 2v–3r.

Case 17



Qur'ān bindings

An important aspect of the Islamic art of the book is the decoration of bindings. Islamic binders laboured devotedly and with great skill to enrich leather covers, particularly Qur'ān bindings, with various geometric, foliar and floral designs, and achieved a very high standard in the techniques of both 'blind tooling' and gilding.

The technique of bookbinding in leather, with blind-tooled ornamentation, was derived from the Coptic culture of pre-Islamic Egypt. Early examples date from the 4th or 5th century A.D., and by the early centuries of the Islamic era the craft of tooled leather binding had reached an extraordinarily high level. Muslim binders, building on this foundation, carried it to yet greater heights of skill and beauty, culminating in the masterpieces of bookbinding under the Mamluk dynasty in Egypt (*see nos. 159–60*).

Tooled leather bookbinding was also practised in the Islamic regions of North Africa (*see nos. 153–6 from Tunisia*) and, so far as our present state of knowledge goes, it was in Morocco that the practice of gold-tooling originated: no. 158, which was made about 1256 in Marrakesh, is the earliest known example of gold-tooling on leather. In this process, designs were impressed on the leather by means of heated tools on gold leaf. This process, together with the related one of enriching with gold paint the blind-tooled or stamped designs on leather covers, spread from Morocco to Moorish Spain and to Naples, and thence to Venice, where a colony of Muslim bookbinders introduced the methods and designs of Islamic binding to the European book world. Their influence was far-reaching. Islamic techniques of tooling, together with patterns of geometric, floral and foliar design, and particularly the use of arabesque, have left a lasting imprint upon the art of European bookbinding.

153

Lower cover of a blind-tooled Qur'ān box-binding in reddish-brown leather. From Kairouan, 3rd/9th century.

The centre panel contains two parallel lines of ribbon interlacing, cross-hatched and in relief, with small raised discs occupying the interstices. The panel is framed by a border containing a continuous design of S-shaped hatched tools reinforced by raised arcs and punctuated by small rosettes. Three holes pierced at one end of the binding were intended to take two leather thongs, parts of which remain.

15.6 × 23.9cm.

Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 24

154

Lower cover of an oblong Qur'ān box-binding in tooled leather, originally reddish-brown, now blackened round the edges. From Kairouan, 3rd/9th century.

The centre panel, surrounded by a triple frame, consists of an elaborate design of broad interlacing bands, the spaces between filled in with sunken dots. Outside the third frame is a wide border containing a running design of hatched cablework in relief, enclosing a row of sunken dots.

8 × 17.2cm.

Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 24

155

Lower cover of an oblong Qur'ān binding in tooled leather, originally light maroon, but now blackened. From Kairouan, 3rd/9th century.

The centre panel, surrounded on all sides by a triple frame, is filled in with a design of broad interlacing bands of double-hatched strapwork with ridged outer edges. Small tools, including circles and fleurons, fill the open areas in the design. The border is of hatched cablework, ridged at the outer edge like the central strapwork with a striated tool.

11.2 × 17.5cm.

Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 24

156

Lower cover of an oblong Qur'ān binding of black leather of coarse grain. From Kairouan, 5th/11th century.

The centre panel is occupied by four parallel rows of six circular rosettes tooled in high relief, each decorated with striations in the form of rays. A raised frame, overlying a cord beneath the leather, surrounds the centre panel and is itself surrounded by a wide border of continuous hatched cablework design.

13 × 20.2cm.

Tunis, National Institute of Archaeology and Art.

Case 24

157

Original 6th/12th century blind-tooled binding of brown goatskin, laid down on a later binding. The outer frame is densely ornamented by small decorative tools, and it encloses a plain panel of natural leather, containing a cusped central ornament similarly tooled.

The binding contains a part of a rare Zanjid Qur'ān copied in Naskhi script by 'Ali ibn Ja'far ibn Asad, probably in Syria. It was made a *waqf* in 562/1167 by Abū l-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn Zanji, who is presumably the brother of the Zanjid ruler Nūr ad-Dīn (*see no. 55*).

18.5 × 15.5cm.

London, The Keir Collection.

Case 24

158

Original 7th/13th century gold- and blind-tooled binding of brown goatskin, laid down on a later binding. The geometrical design of interlaced broad strapwork is constructed around a pattern of eight-pointed stars. The strapwork forms compartments tooled in gold, with closely compressed interlace of small tooled ropework, filled in with dots and rosettes. There is a matching flap. This binding is of cardinal importance in the history of bookbinding as the earliest known example of gold tooling on leather.

The manuscript it encloses is volume 7 of a ten-volume Qur'ān, copied about 654/1256 at Marrakesh in Morocco by the Almohad Amir Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Murtaḍā, who reigned from 646–665/1248–1266.

28 × 22cm.

London, British Library, Or. 13192.

Case 24

159

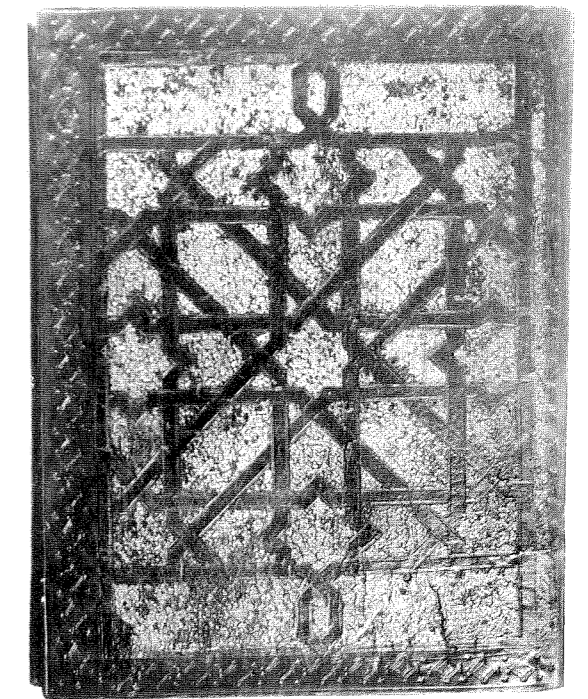
Brown goatskin binding over paste board, with gold and blind tooling. An outer and an inner border, with elaborately tooled corners, contains a large centre ornament outlined in blind and gold with gold fleurons at top and bottom, blind strapwork tooling, and a gold six-pointed star in the centre. The heptagonal flap is filled with blind strapwork tooling and gold dots around a large centre circle with geometrical shapes tooled in gold and blind.

Part 25 of a Qur'ān written and bound for the Amir Aitūmish al-Bajasi towards the end of the 8th/14th century in Egypt. Other volumes and detached bindings of this Qur'ān have survived (*see no. 157*).

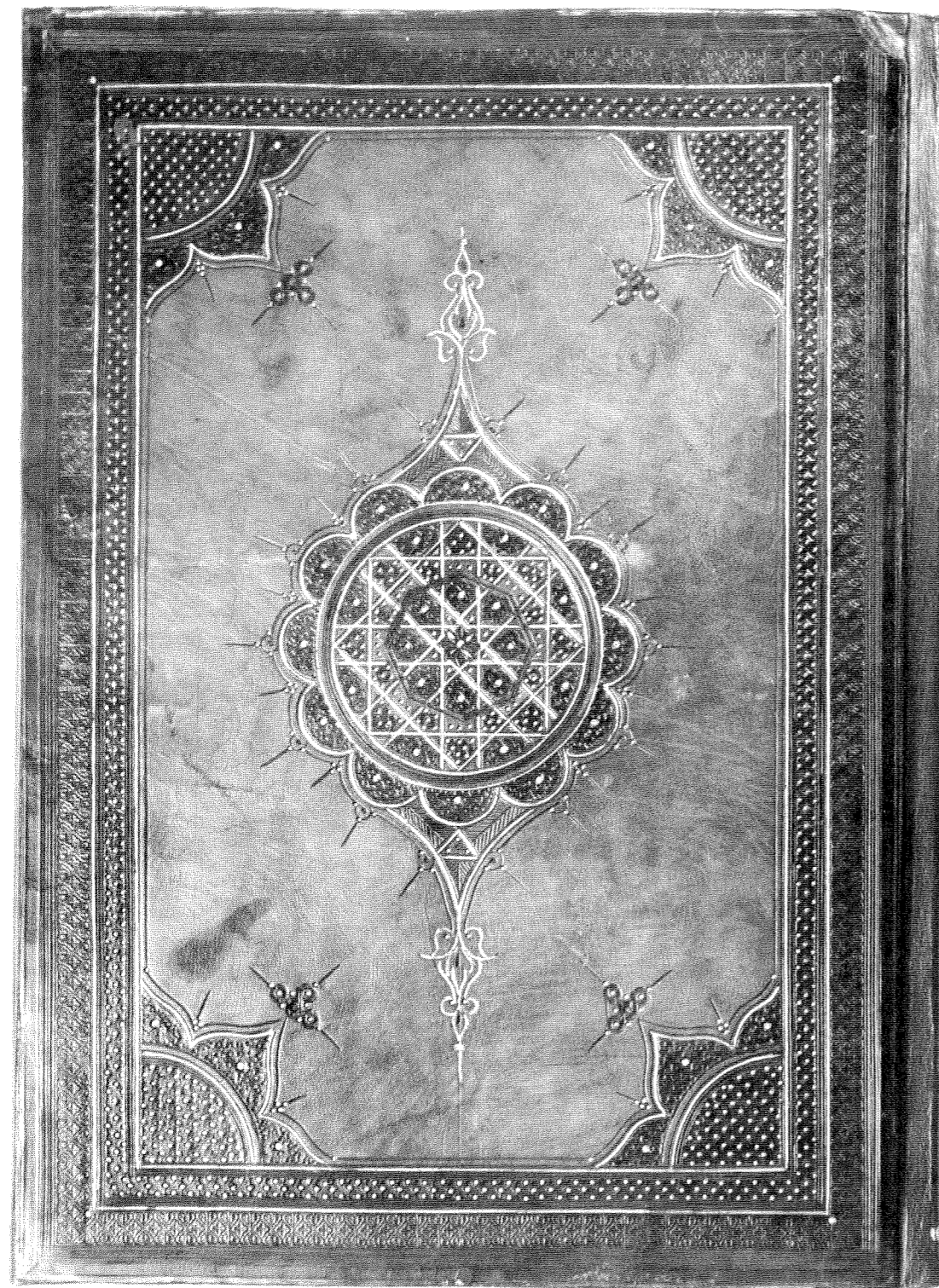
40.5 × 27.5cm.

London, British Library, Henry Davis Gift.

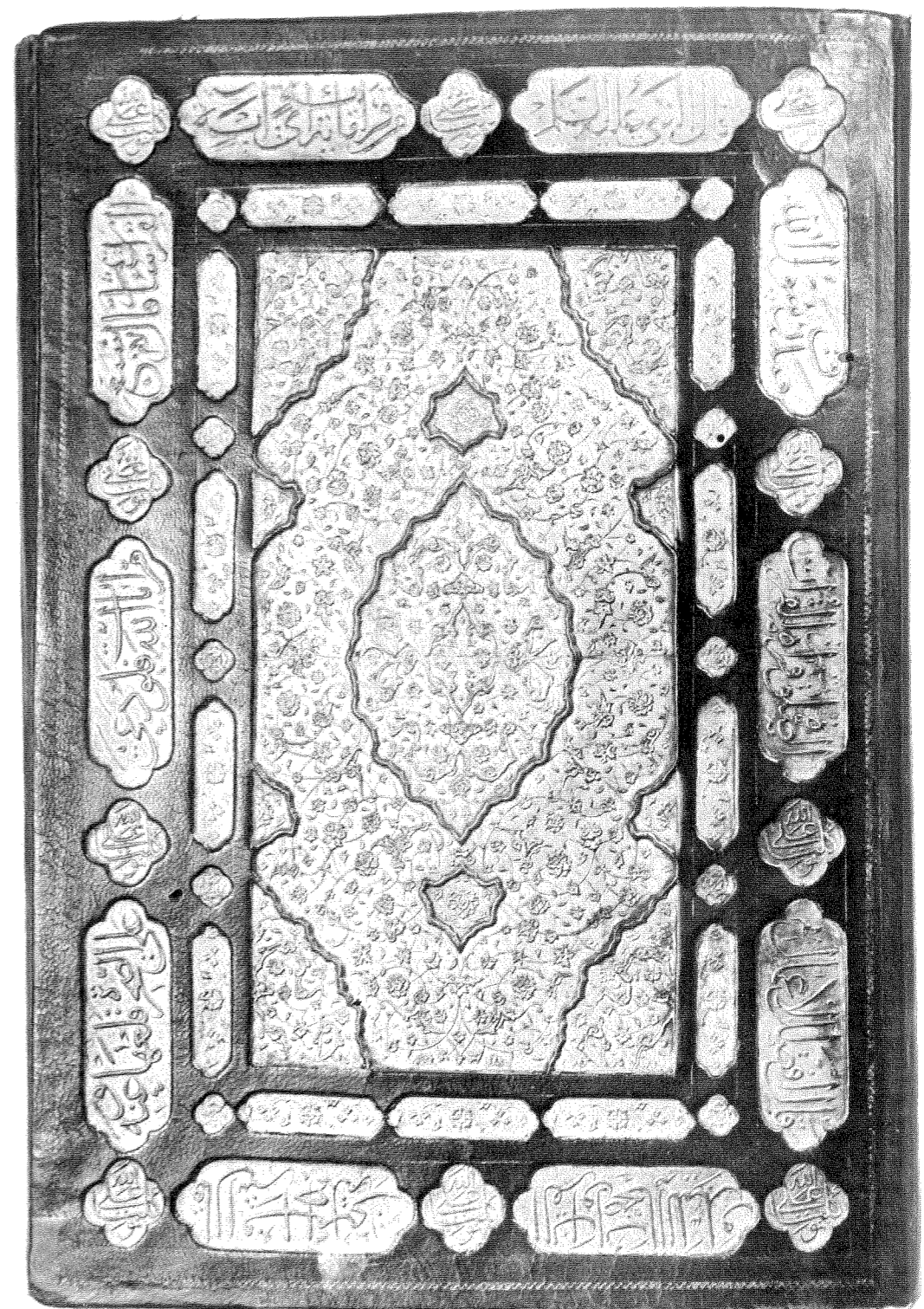
Case 24



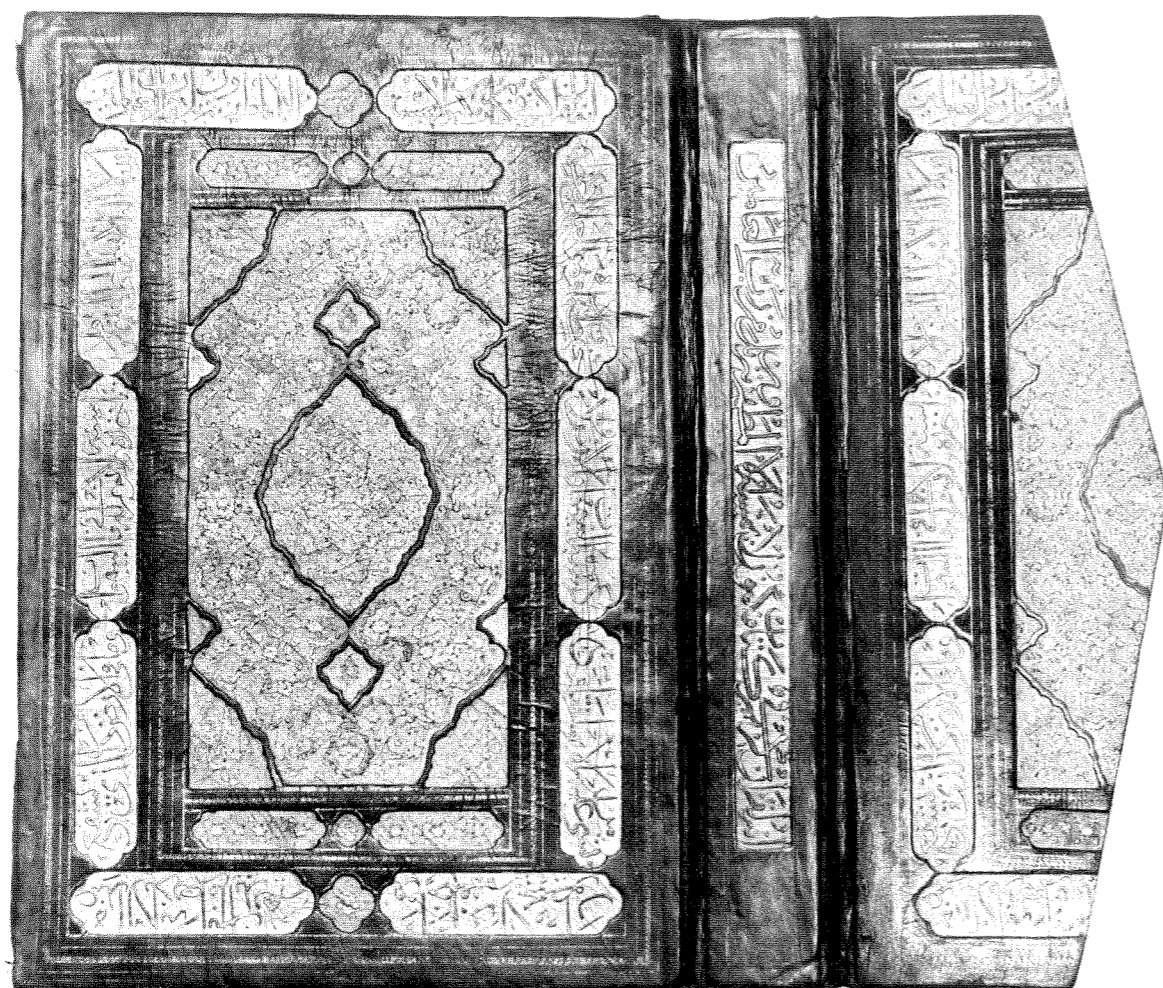
158



160



163



164

92

160

Brown goatskin binding over paste board, tooled with a design which closely resembles that of another volume from the same Qur'ān (see no. 154). The circular central ornament is blind-tooled and gold-tooled, with scalloped edges offset with rays and with elongated gold fleurons at top and bottom. Inside the circle is a geometrical design of intersecting gold lines overlaid with a tooled octagon containing rosettes and gold dots. The flap has a border and frames to match those of the cover, and a circular ornament with gold-tooled design based on a ten-pointed star, surrounded by ropework interlace in blind, punctuated with gold dots.

Part 7 of a Qur'ān copied, illuminated and bound for the Amir Aitmish al-Bajāsī (d. 803/1400). A fine example of Egyptian binding of the Mamluk period, late 8th/14th century.

37 × 27cm.

London, British Library, Or. 9671.

Case 24

161

Detached Qur'ān binding of brown goatskin, decorated on front and back covers with an identical design in blind tooling with gold dots. With a frame filled in with small decorative tools, the central panel is dominated by a bold design of broad interlacing strapwork against a dense background of small ropework tools. Six compartments enclosed by the strapwork contain a pattern of white dots, originally tooled or painted in gold. Sixteen larger border dots retain their gilding. There is a matching flap.

From a Qur'ān of the Mamluk period, copied in Muḥaqqaq script with splendid illumination in gold and colours in the late 8th/14th century in Egypt (see no. 76).

26.5 × 18.5cm.

London, Collection of H.E. Muhammad Mahdi al-Tajir.

Case 24

162

Detached Qur'ān binding of brown goatskin over limp boards made of layers of thin discarded paper. Blind-tooled design consisting of a broad frame, densely ornamented with small ropework tools, and integral cornerpieces similarly tooled. The frame encloses a plain panel of natural leather, containing a cusped central ornament of ten arcs and rays filled in with ropework tooling. Traces of gilding remain on the few tooled dots at the corners and centre. There is a matching flap.

From a Qur'ān of the Mamluk period, copied in large Muḥaqqaq script, with excellent illumination in gold and colours in the late 8th/14th century in Egypt (see nos. 77–8).

26.5 × 18.5cm.

London, Collection of H.E. Muhammad Mahdi al-Tajir.

Case 24

163

Dark brown morocco binding over paste board, with Sayings of the Prophet embossed on sunk gold border panels enclosing a large recessed central panel blocked in gold with a floral tendril pattern. This panel contains a central ogival medallion with detached pendants and cornerpieces. The doublures are of light brown leather cut away in a series of border panels and a large central panel, all of which are filled in with cut-paper filigree of gold arabesque over backgrounds of blue, turquoise, orange and black paper. There is a matching flap.

The binding encloses a copy of the Qur'ān, contemporary with the binding, in fine Muḥaqqaq script with illuminated margins. Persia, 11th/17th century.

36 × 25cm.

London, British Library, Or. 13279.

Case 24

164

Detached Qur'ān binding of dark brown morocco over paste board, with a broad surrounding frame consisting of a chain of sunk gold panels stamped with verses from the Qur'ān. The entire large central panel is blocked in gold with a continuous floral tendril pattern. The central medallion, pendants and cornerpieces are outlined in gold-painted leather, with their centres decorated with silver paint. The doublures are of light brown leather, framed with a sequence of wide border panels inlaid with royal blue and turquoise paper, over which is pasted a design of gold arabesque in cut-paper filigree. The central panel consists of a continuous mosaic of smaller inlaid panels coloured in blue, orange and turquoise, with a similar gold paper filigree inlay. This design is repeated on the flap. Persia, 11th/17th century.

41.5 × 28cm.

London, British Library, Or. 62.e.

Case 24

93

Glossary of Arabic words

basmalah, the expression 'bi-sm Allāh ar-Raḥmān ar-Raḥīm', in the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, which appears at the head of every sūrah of the Qur'ān with the exception of Sūrah IX, at-Tawbah.

fā', a letter of the Arabic alphabet.

hā', a letter of the Arabic alphabet.

hamzah, a letter of the Arabic alphabet representing the glottal stop. *Hamzat al-waṣl* (the joining *hamzah*) is an initial *hamzah* which loses the quality of a glottal stop, except in pause, and the word is thus assimilated with the previous word. *Hamzat al-qat'* (the cutting *hamzah*) keeps the quality of the glottal stop at all times.

hijrah, the flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Madinah in A.D. 622; this is taken as year one of the Islamic Era.

ḥizb, a thirtieth part of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān is so divided to enable the reader to complete the reading in a month.

ḥuffāz, the plural of *ḥāfiẓ*, a person who has committed the Qur'ān to memory.

khānqah, a residence for Sufis.

maddah, an orthographical sign in Arabic, denoting a long 'a' vowel after a glottal stop.

madrasah, a college for traditional Muslim education, usually attached to, or part of, a mosque.

qāf, a letter of the Arabic alphabet.

shaddah, an orthographical sign in Arabic, denoting the doubling of the letter over which it is placed.

shamsah, a solar roundel used in Qur'ān manuscripts as a verse division.

shujayrah, a palmette in Qur'ān manuscript illumination, usually projecting horizontally into the margin.

sukūn, an orthographical sign in Arabic, denoting that the letter over which it is placed is vowelless.

sūrah, a chapter of the Qur'ān.

tanwīn, an orthographical sign in Arabic, used only on the final letter of a noun, adjective or participle, which denotes that the word is indefinite.

waqf, a religious endowment.

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