Geometric Decoration | Geometric Decoration and the Art of the Book

‘The work of decorating the Qur’a attracted bookbinders, calligraphers and illuminators.’

The total prohibition of figurative representation in the Qur'an meant that only abstract motifs or 'illuminations', particularly geometrical ones, were used as decoration. This decorative work attracted a range of different artistic specialists, such as bookbinders, calligraphers and illuminators, and ended up spreading to other disciplines, such as weaving, metalwork, carpentry, monumental inscriptions and architectural decoration. The most common format used for Qur'ans was a vertical rectangle, although square and horizontal examples were made.



Name:
Leather binding

Dynasty:
Hegira, end of the 3rd–beginning of 4th centuries / AD 9th–10th centuries
Aghlabid, Fatimid

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
The embossed leather cover was often decorated with medallions, geometric patterns and kufic script and the whole was framed by a braided geometric motif.



Name:
Qur'an binding

Dynasty:
Binding: Hegira 7th–8th centuries / AD 13th–14th centuries, Qur'an: Hegira 531 / AD 1178 Almohad

Details:
Royal Library
Rabat, Morocco

Justification:
The embossed leather cover was often decorated with medallions, geometric patterns and kufic script and the whole was framed by a braided geometric motif.



Name:
Bookbinding

Dynasty:
Probably late hegira 9th / 15th century Mamluk

Details:
Victoria and Albert Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:
The embossed leather cover was often decorated with medallions, geometric patterns and kufic script and the whole was framed by a braided geometric motif.



Name:
Qur'an binding

Dynasty:
Hegira late 8th century / AD late 14th century Mamluk (Bahri)

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany

Justification:
The embossed leather cover was often decorated with medallions, geometric patterns and kufic script and the whole was framed by a braided geometric motif.