

# 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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.

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