

Geometric Decoration | Geometric Decoration and the Art of the Book

'Illuminators took great care in the decoration of the first (fatiha) and last pages (khatima).'

Considering the sacred nature of the book, illuminators took great care in the decoration of the first (fatiha) and last (khatima) pages, the whole of which was often illuminated. The beginning of a verse (sura) was often marked with a cartouche, and pages would sometimes be framed with more or less elaborate geometric patterns. The date and place of manufacture, and occasionally the recipient, would normally be indicated on the colophon.



Name:
Frontispiece of a Qur'an

Dynasty:
Hegira 4th century / AD 10th century (second half) Fatimid–Zirid

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
In all of these examples of the Qur'an, the fatihat al-Kitab (opening of the book) and the khatimat al-Kitab (closing) have full-page illuminations consisting of geometric designs.



Name:
Half of the Holy Qur'an

Dynasty:
Hegira 8th–9th century / AD 14th–15th century Mamluk

Details:
National Museum of Damascus
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
In all of these examples of the Qur'an, the fatihat al-Kitab (opening of the book) and the khatimat al-Kitab (closing) have full-page illuminations consisting of geometric designs.



Name:
Qur'an

Dynasty:
Hegira 9th / 15th century (c. AH 874 / AD 1470) Ottoman

Details:
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:
In all of these examples of the Qur'an, the fatihat al-Kitab (opening of the book) and the khatimat al-Kitab (closing) have full-page illuminations consisting of geometric designs.



Name:
Qur'an

Dynasty:
Hegira Ramadan 713 / AD December 1313 Mamluk

Details:
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:
In all of these examples of the Qur'an, the fatihat al-Kitab (opening of the book) and the khatimat al-Kitab (closing) have full-page illuminations consisting of geometric designs.



Name:
Mamluk mashaf

Dynasty:
Before hegira 771 / AD 1369; during the lifetime of the original owner Mamluk

Details:
Islamic Museum, al-Aqsa Mosque / al-Haram al-Sharif
Jerusalem

Justification:
In all of these examples of the Qur'an, the fatihat al-Kitab (opening of the book) and the khatimat al-Kitab (closing) have full-page illuminations consisting of geometric designs.



Name:
Page from a Qur'an

Dynasty:
Hegira 3rd–4th centuries / AD 9th–10th centuries Abbasid

Details:
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:
In all of these examples of the Qur'an, the fatihat al-Kitab (opening of the book) and the khatimat al-Kitab (closing) have full-page illuminations consisting of geometric designs.
