

Geometric Decoration | Geometric Decoration and the Art of the Book

‘Geometric patterns were gradually replaced by floral decoration, which was considered to be more refined.’

The first medium for religious manuscripts was parchment, which was progressively replaced by paper for reasons of convenience and economy. Equally, geometric patterns were gradually replaced by floral decoration, which was considered to be more refined. Geometric motifs, such as the ones used in the frame, became secondary elements. Calligraphy was used for decoration, especially 'squared' kufic script which was written in all different directions.



Name:

Kufic Qur'an manuscript

Dynasty:

Hegira 3rd century / AD 9th century Abbasid

Details:

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

Justification:

Each hizb (one-sixtieth of the Qur'an) is decorated at the beginning and at one-half, one-quarter and one-eighth of the way through, with roses or medallions, both geometric and floral, in the margins of the page.



Name:

Qur'an leaf

Dynasty:

Hegira 8th–9th centuries / AD 14th–15th centuries Mamluk

Details:

Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities (Medelhavsmuseet)
Stockholm, Sweden

Justification:

Each hizb (one-sixtieth of the Qur'an) is decorated at the beginning and at one-half, one-quarter and one-eighth of the way through, with roses or medallions, both geometric and floral, in the margins of the page.



Name:

Qur'anic manuscript No. 7

Dynasty:

Hegira 7th century / AD 13th century; restored AH 1117 / AD 1705 Mamluk;
restored in the Ottoman period

Details:

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

Justification:

Each hizb (one-sixtieth of the Qur'an) is decorated at the beginning and at one-half, one-quarter and one-eighth of the way through, with roses or medallions, both geometric and floral, in the margins of the page.



Name:
Qur'an

Dynasty:
Hegira 842–57 / AD 1438–53 Mamluk

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
Each hizb (one-sixtieth of the Qur'an) is decorated at the beginning and at one-half, one-quarter and one-eighth of the way through, with roses or medallions, both geometric and floral, in the margins of the page.



Name:
Album of Ahmed Karahisari

Dynasty:
Hegira 10th century / AD 16th century Ottoman

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

Justification:
Two good examples of squared kufic script are the words 'Praise be to Allah' at the top, and a verse from the Qur'an (sura 92) below, separated by the Basmala ('In the name of God, the merciful the compassionate') in the centre.
