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TWO LEAVES FROM A KORAN WRITTEN IN EASTERN KUFİ

IRAN OR IRAQ; 11TH CENTURY

19.1 × 16.2 CM AND 19.2 × 16.05 CM

The very earliest Korans have no decorations accompanying the text, but *sura* headings and verse markers of various kinds quickly attracted the interest of calligraphers and illuminators.

The gold-decorated *sura* headings on these fragments from the same manuscript take up as much as a third of a page, and considerable emphasis was placed on original, imaginative ornamentation. One of the two margin medallions is not only ornamented, but also contains the word “Mecca,” denoting that this chapter (*sura* 67) was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in that city. Most of the Koran is believed to have been revealed in Mecca and the rest in Medina.

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*The Holy Quran in manuscript : a selection of fine and rare Holy Quran leaves and manuscripts exhibited by the National Commercial Bank of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia : collection formation by Bernard Quaritch Limited of London, Jeddah National Commercial Bank, Jeddah 1991, cat.no. 7a; Sotheby's, London, 12/10-2000, lot 7;*

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*The Holy Quran in manuscript : a selection of fine and rare Holy Quran leaves and manuscripts exhibited by the National Commercial Bank of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia : collection formation by Bernard Quaritch Limited of London, Jeddah National Commercial Bank, Jeddah 1991, cat.no. 7c; Sotheby's, London, 12/10-2000, lot 8; Kjeld von Folsach: Art from the World of Islam in The David Collection, Copenhagen 2001, cat.no. 4;*