



## **Qur'an Manuscripts: Calligraphy, Illumination, Design**

*By Colin F. Baker*

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While the significance of the written word reverberates through both Judaism and Christianity, nowhere does the physical presence of scripture matter as much as it does in the Islamic world. Recent controversies over Qur'an desecration by U.S. military personnel serve to illustrate just how revered the book continues to be in Muslim culture. Proof of the devotion the book inspires can also be gleaned by examining the sumptuously produced illuminated Qur'an manuscripts reproduced in this volume.

Arabic manuscript authority Colin Baker explores the central place of the Qur'an in Islamic society, but he also focuses on the manuscripts as physical objects, including a look at the celebrated calligraphy and the masterful artists who developed it. Numerous full-color images display the breadth of illumination styles and production materials used. *Qur'an Manuscripts* is a concise and readable overview of the long history of these manuscripts from across the wide Islamic world, from the eighth century to the end of the nineteenth, and from Spain to Southeast Asia.

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