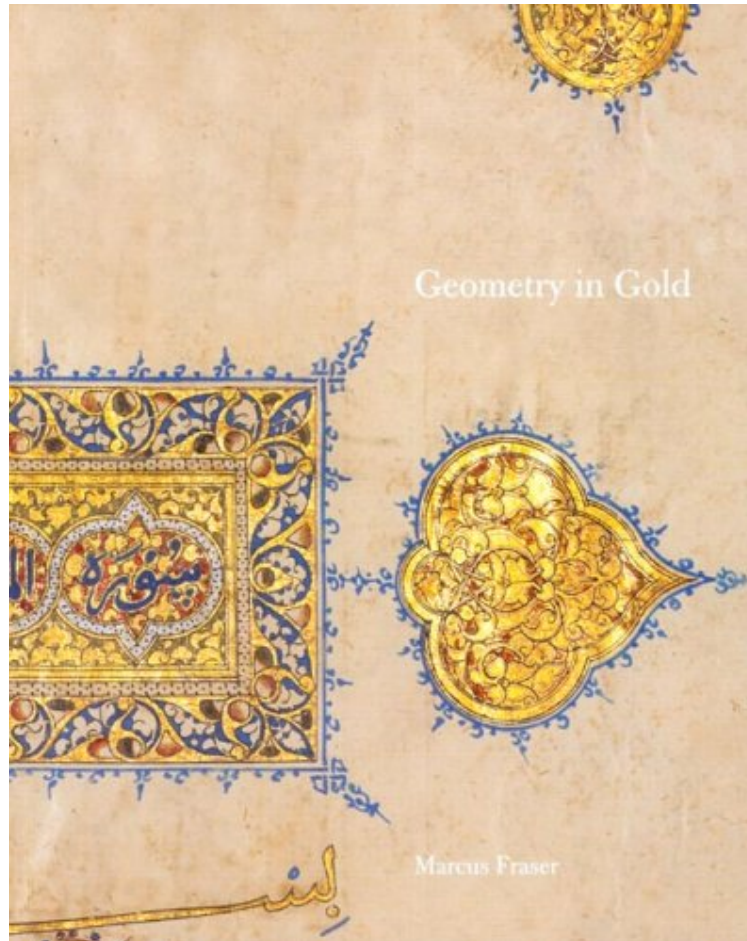


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Geometry in Gold: An Illuminated Mamluk Qur'an Section

Marcus Fraser

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This book is devoted to a monumental and superbly illuminated very large early fourteenth-century Mamluk Qur'an in muhaqqaq script. It constitutes the final part (Juz' 30) of a superb two-volume Qur'an of which the first volume is preserved in the National Museum in Damascus while the second volume, from which the present section originates, is widely dispersed. Remarkably, here the final part of the Qur'an is reunited with its magnificent and richly decorated double finispieces, thus reassembling what must have been among the most striking and lavishly illuminated sections of the entire manuscript. The high degree of inventiveness along with the overall quality of the manuscript point to the work of a master artist. Especially the geometric proficiency suggests the work of Muhammad ibn Mubadir, one of the

leading illuminators in Mamluk Cairo at the turn of the thirteenth century. Although little is known of the life of this artist, his illumination in the Baybars al-Jashnagir Qur'an, now in the British Library, and a Qur'an copied in 1306-10 for an unknown patron, now in the Chester Beatty Library, constitute some of the most celebrated achievements of Mamluk Qur'an illumination.