

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Ottoman Quran Box

18th century

Wood, mother-of-pearl and tortoise shell

99cm high, 51cm wide and 36cm deep

Stock no.: A5199

This cabinet is elaborately decorated all over in mother-of-pearl and tortoise shell; it stands on four legs with vertical designs of alternating tortoise shell and mother-of-pearl. Two doors on the front open to reveal two shelves in the main compartment and there are four drawers to the front with escutcheons. The large bottom drawer has ornate vegetal designs in the corners and around the escutcheon. The doors on the front are decorated with a tall floral design in mother-of-pearl inlay surrounded by a rectangular frame of ornamental designs. The upper part of the cabinet has a pediment with classical style roof gable ornaments in mother-of-pearl; the decorative motif in the middle is a substantial flower head in mother-of-pearl surrounded by flowing vegetal scrolls, all set against tortoise shell. The sides of the box have geometric patterns as have the borders on the front. The shape of this cabinet is very unusual, and it may have been used for storing the Quran. The profuse application of mother-of-pearl and tortoise shell all over in the decoration of this cabinet, combining geometric and vegetal patterns, has been done in a balanced manner, resulting in a striking piece.

