The Ottoman Turks have been at the forefront in a remarkable and fascinating art for over five centuries. This art is the hem-i hat, or hat in short, the Islamic calligraphy that is not originated among Turks yet whose most magnificent examples have been produced by Turks who adopted it with a religious fervor and passion.

We have to stress at the outset that whenever an art has a practical aspect that makes it useful and attractive for the societies, we also see that its scale of use and acceptance becomes larger. In a similar vein, the Islamic calligraphy has asserted itself with its increasingly aesthetic power along the centuries during which it was a medium for reading and writing.

By the Turkish calligraphy, we mean the artful scripts that Turks created using the letters of Arabic origin that they adopted as the medium for literacy after they accepted Islam. But we have to add that the Arabic letters had gained gradually certain aesthetic elements following the emergence of Islam which was accelerated in the second half of the 7th century and had become already an important art in its own right even before the integration of Turks into the Islamic world. Therefore, let us first discuss briefly the structure of the Arabic letters and their development in the early ages of Islam.

The most concise definition of calligraphy found in the Islamic sources is that "hat is a spiritual mathematics that is created by using material tools." The art of hat has perpetuated aesthetically over centuries in the spirit of this definition. The artful expression of aesthetics by merely drawing lines over plain backgrounds that generally lack colors is not a familiar practice for the Western painters, hence the Islamic calligraphy has long proved itself to be a source of curiosity and imagination for them. From this vantage point, the Islamic calligraphy needs to be considered as a higher form of art that expresses an aesthetics that cannot be otherwise revealed in painting, hence it is something that is beyond painting, and not as an inferior and primitive form of art that is less developed than it.

Many letters in this system of script undergo transformation depending on whether they are placed at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the words. The fact that the letters are embodied in a rather dynamic form when articulated in the art, the glamour of appearance as they are combined
with each other, and especially that it is possible to write the same sentence or words in different combinations all enabled the script to possess infinity and novelty - the trademarks of all arts in general. As individual letters may be written in various forms, the abundance of the forms of letters depending on the styles of calligraphy that are going to explain below is truly amazing.

The Arabic alphabet that is adopted by almost all communities that accept Islam with primarily a religious sensitivity, became a common asset for all the Islamic ummah several centuries after the emergence of Islam. Accordingly, the expression "Arab hatt" (the Arabic calligraphy) that was a correct description form its beginnings and origin, was replaced by "Islam hatt" (the Islamic calligraphy) following this expansion.

Originally, the emergence of this art too was of a religious nature. Because the high importance attributed to the Islamic calligraphy by the Muslims stems from their effort to search for the best aesthetic expression deserved by the Koran in its articulation in a written form, in other words, making of muhaife. Later the art had been perfected in aesthetic terms regardless of its content-religious or not. As the Renaissance arts had been shaped by religious themes and perpetuated so for ages, we may conclude that it is a social phenomenon that an art like the Islamic calligraphy may be born on the religious basis and increasingly be characterized by non-religious themes.

The Arabic letters that are also called the nabaci script because it was used by the Nabait tribe that lived in today's Jordan and Syria before the advent of Islam and originally related to the Phoenician alphabet indeed did not seem to be too capable of becoming such an aesthetically powerful medium in later ages because they were composed of very simple signs. The Arabic calligraphy gained a dignity with the emergence of Islam and especially after the Hijra of 622, and became the medium of literature for this new and the last monotheistic religion.

The Arabic calligraphy initially had few users, but as the opportunities for learning and teaching multiplied, it was equipped as to reflect fully the Koran as well as the Arabic language. Harake signs were invented in order to signify the sound of consonants by the nature of Arabic language. Moreover, a method was developed that would distinguish between similar letters by dots which are placed in different places and in varying numbers for a given letter. With the time, certain letters without dots (haraf-i nāthmī) were invented in order to distinguish letters without dots from similar letters in order to prevent confusion. Both dots, harake and letters without dots have played a very important role in turning calligraphy into an art by virtue of their decorative forms. Also the haraf-i ta'rif (alif and lam) that is used frequently thanks to the nature of Arabic has been instrumental as an element of balance in the beauty of the script.
THE FORMULA BISMILLAHİRRAHMANİRRAHİM IS WRITTEN BY SULTAN MAHMUT II, BY USING CELİ SÜLÜS CALLIGRAPHY AND GOLDEN GILD

MUSEUM OF TURKISH AND ISLAMIC WORKS OF ART

QUATRAIN WITH HADİS-I ŞERİF (HADİTH), WRITTEN WITH MUHAKKAK, NESİH CALLIGRAPHY WRITTEN BY HASAN RIZÂ.

(ANN ARBOR, MI, ABDULHAMİD II COLLECTION, NR. 242)
Panel by Mehmet Aziz Efendi which shows tuğra (sultan’s signature), the formula bismîl-lahîrrahmanîrrahîm; sülüs, nesîh, celi divanî, nestalîk and divanî calligraphy types.

(Necib Şarici Calligraphy Collection)

“Tevekkülü Alallah” by Çarşambalı Haci Arif Bey written with golden gild and celi sülüs calligraphy.

(Topkapi Palace Museum)
The Holy Koran which is written on a thin paper coated with starch and egg white, is specifically rolled to be protected from external factors. It is written with Gubari calligraphy. Spaces between the square, circular and likewise structures formed by writings written with Kufi calligraphy at the top, are oriented with motifs that reflect the characteristics of the era. The Koran has a golden gilted silver cover.

Banned Korans, which were protected in covers were usually made of valuable metals like gold and silver, which had small dimensions and were written with Gubari calligraphy, were tied up in ceremonies and wars, as implied by its name, to the stem of metallic device (a crescent or sometimes a star or tulip) on top of the banner.
The Arabic calligraphy got perfected by taking the names of anbari, hitter, mukki and medeni after the Hijrah, all taken from the names of the regions where they were most developed in various periods. Koran, the first written Islamic text that was put into the form of a book was written with black or brown ink without kawakeb and dots on the leather in the style of mukki-mukki script and there was naturally little concern for artistic expression in its first copies. Over the time this script has been diverged into two styles: the kufi style that took its name from the Iraqi town of Kufa was characterized with sharp corners and used extensively in reproduction of Koran copies and in documents. The other round and soft style that lacked sharp corners and therefore tended to be written more swiftly, was used in everyday life and proved to be capable of becoming a medium of art. This style gained new dimensions and currency especially in Damascus during the Umayyad era (661-750), and new calligraphy styles started to be generated by using the pen tips in certain width in the 13th century. The first known styles among these are, celil that was used in large letter writings and somar (tusmarr) a standard of large letters that was generally used in the official correspondence. Two more pens and hence two more styles were later created: suluseyn by taking the two thirds of the tombar pen, and sülüs by one third of it. More new styles of calligraphy were invented such as rejas, kalentsi-n-wisf, hafis-i-n-wisf, hafis-i-ribis, most of which later lost popularity.

Some of the new styles of calligraphy were written following the tombar style with the pen of the same name whose tip was reduced in certain ratios such as half, one third or two thirds of it as can be understood from their names and the script gained new characteristics with each new pen type. Consequently, the noun for the pen, kalen that is at the same time the name for the writing tool became synonymous with the name of the art, hat when the calligraphers referred to these ratios of the pens. However, the term hat, instead of kalen was used for those styles such as kuus and nisva which are developed for certain areas of use without the requirements of any reduction of the size of the pen tip.

The demand for books and hence the number of verrak, people who wrote and reproduced them grew considerably thanks to the significant developments in the area of knowledge and arts in large centers, especially in Baghdad during the Abbasid era (750-1258). The style of calligraphy which these verrak used in reproducing the books at the time was called cerraki, mukakkah, nusibi or iraqui. At the end of the 18th century, the scripts started to be called anli and nus-
developed the styles of zerekā and rika. Finally, a master called Yakut al-Mustas'mi (d. 1298) emerged in Baghdad as a master who perfected the method of Ibnul' Bevab by improving the aklamāt-sīte, in other words, the styles of sīlātī, naṣīḥ, muḥakkab, ṭahānī, tekqūr and rika to their glory in the 13th century. He invented the practice of cutting the red pen tip in a curve instead of cutting it straight that had been the practice until his day which endowed the writing an amiable character. Aklamāt-sīte, by establishing themselves as the standard of Islamic calligraphy together with all of its principles actually gave also rise to the gradual weakening and eventual disappearance of many other calligraphic styles including sīlātī, dīrās, ṭanqaw, muḥaffāz, barqm, ṭalūs, muṣālik, miṣrah and the like, nor to mention those other styles that we have indicated above.

Following the death of Yakut, his notion of the aklamāt-sīte spread from Baghdad to Anatolia, Egypt, Syria, Iran and Marwān-nabīr through his disciples and was considered as an appealing art by all the Muslim rulers and dynasties that governed these lands. The new generations of calligraphers took Yakut as an example for their artistic career and tried to continue his method as much as their talents and training would permit, however this calligraphy style could not escape degeneration as Yakut remained a distant figure in the past. This historical juncture also signifies the beginnings of the golden age of this art at the hands of the Ottoman Turks.

The Islamic calligraphy, one of the most prominent of all Islamic arts reached a culmination during the Ottoman centuries with its aesthetic power and the persistence of its perfection and gained a new identity that could characterize it as "Turkish Calligraphy." Yakut al-Mustas'mi, who enabled the art to reach gradually its climax at the hands of Arabs through his disciples during the Abbasid and later Ilhanid states in Baghdad and whose style was dominating all Muslim lands passed away at the time the Ottoman state was emerging. The kufi script which was widespread in previous periods had lost its dominance, instead aklamāt-sīte had taken over. Nevertheless, there are only few calligraphic examples left of the Fourteenth century during which the Ottomans were engaged in campaigns to expand their borders, chiefly those pieces on certain monuments because of the havoc that characterized the age, especially the destruction the Ottomans suffered at the hands of Timur at the beginning of the next century. A few pieces left from the period of recovery following the reign of Gèlbè Mehmed shows us that the Yakut style had already been accepted in the Ottoman lands then covering the territory in Anatolia and the Rumeli. As an example demonstrating that the teaching and practicing of the Islamic calligraphy was commonplace in the provincial centers of Anatolia where the Ottoman civilization had spread, we can take the town of Amasya in the second part of the fifteenth century, apart from the capital cities such as Bursa and Edirne. With the conquering of Istanbul during that time, this unique town that would shortly become the center of culture and art for all the Islamic world persisted its leadership in the calligraphy until today.

Even though we lack information on whether the first Ottoman sultans during the initial 150 years retained an interest in the Islamic calligraphy, we certainly know that Mehmed the Conqueror attributed importance to the art in conjunction with his interest in other fine arts. Yet we do have some of the works of Şeyh Hamdullah (1429-1520), the future genius of calligraphy, that were commissioned by the Bayezid the vicegerent who ruled in Amasya as a governor, for the library of his father. We also know from their signatures that two great figures of the Fatih era were Yahya (d.1477) and his son Ali Sofi (XVth century) who produced the cili silku scripts on some of the küthbes (inscriptions) on monuments that played an important role in Islamicization of the newly conquered town of Istanbul. The first members of the Ottoman dynasty who had an interest in calligraphy is Sultan Bayezid II and his son Korkut; both had learned the aklamāt-sīte from Şeyh Hamdullah in Amasya.

Şeyh Hamdullah who came to settle in Istanbul right after the enthronement of Sultan Bayezid was enthroned started to practice the style in the most perfect manner which he inherited from Yakut.
al-Musta'sim through his master Hayreddin Ma'raqî (717–738). He undertook an aesthetic evaluation of the works of Yakut present in the palace treasury upon the encouragement and advice of Sultan Bayezid II, and successfully created a new and prominent style of calligraphy by blending them with his own artistic case. This work which he accomplished during a minimum four month religious seclusion in probably 1485 made Şeyh Hamdullah the pit, the master of the Turkish calligraphy. Because the aklam-i sittâ that ruled the calligraphy circles until his time was identified by the understanding of the Abbasid era. After this date, the aklam-i sittâ in Şeyh's style spread to all Ottoman lands and led to fading away of Yakut's style. The letters and the groups of letters that Şeyh had chosen for the style may be found and shown to be scattered in Yakut's works. We need to search for the genius of Şeyh Hamdullah in his selection of the beauty and its reproduction in the calligraphy.

Ahmed Karahisari (1469–1536) whose name emerged soon after Şeyh tried to regenerate the Yal-kut style calligraphy in the Ottoman land and produced works carrying this effort. However, the resistance against the style of the Şeyh could last only for another generation of calligraphers and eventually the style of Karahisari was forgotten and doomed. The cevi script, one of the aklam-i sittâs that was perfected by Şeyh and his disciples was generally used in copying the Mushaf, sâlûs established itself as the most prominent script individually or along with tâsi, and the scripts of mahbûkah and reyhanî gradually lost their currency towards the end of the 17th century. The use of the script of teceli' narrow as its place was already filled by the scripts of divanî and celi divanî, and rehce script under the name isvâ'î hatu was used in calligrapher's signatures and in isvâ'î name (diploma) of calligraphy.

The school established by Şeyh Hamdullah was transmitted over generations through his son-in-law Şikûrî Hâfîz (d. after 1543), his son Mustafa Dede (1495–1538), and other calligraphers of the same lineage. Among the important calligraphers in the school were Pir Mehmed (d.1580), the son of Şikûrî Hâfîz, Halil Erzurumlu (d.1631) and Derviş Ali (d.1673).

Hafiz Osman (1642–1698) who received his initial training from Derviş Ali and completed it with his disciple, Suyolcuzade Mustafa Eyyubi (d.1686) appraised the aklam-i sittâ in the style of Şeyh for a second time and created a new style on the basis of it. In this way, these six styles of calligraphy passed a second phase of purification although some of them were already out of currency, and consequently "the style of Hafiz Osman" replaced that of Şeyh Hamdullah in a short time as new calligraphers adopted his style eagerly. However, the script cevi sâlûs which was invented to be legible from distance meanwhile had retarded in comparison to its development in the 15th century. Then, we come to the end of the eighteenth century when we see the figure of Mustafa Rakım (1758–1826), a calligrapher who may be called a genius on his own right and who examined the sâlûs of Hafiz Osman thoroughly in order to be able to develop the notion of sâlûs that he learned from his elder brother Ismail Zîhlî (d.1806) and combine it with the celi style. Celi sâlûs style reached its perfection which is unsurpassed until present through his disciples, Hağım (d.1845) and Reçai (1804–1874) and especially in the hands of Sami Efendi (1838-1912). Among the followers of this school who wrote plates and kitâbes (inscriptions) in celi sâlûs in unprecedented complexity of isâ'î (combinations) we find, Çarşamba Arif (d.1892), Abdullah Qâmil (1815–1906), Nazif Bey (1846–1913), Toğrulî Janalî Hâkkî Almanbazar (1873–1946), Ömer Vâdi (1880–1926), Enis Vâdi (1883–1945), Hamid Ayya (1891–1982), Halim Özyazıcı (1898–1964) and Macid Ayrar (1891–1961). Mahmud Celâeddin (d.1829) who lived in the same period as Mustafa Rakım did not find same following since his style in celi sâlûs remed earther motions and rough in comparison to Rakım's sense and dynamic style. Meanwhile, Esma İhsen (d.1780), the disciple and the wife of Mahmud Celâeddin is considered as the most successful female calligrapher as she followed gently the school of Hafiz Osman in sâlûs celi style.

Two distinct schools were created in sâlûs, rehce and nûkî (isvan) in the nineteenth century by two of the unique masters of calligraphy inspired again by Hafiz Osman school: Mustafa İzet Effendi (1801–1876) and Mehmed Şevki Efendi (1829–1887). The distinguished representatives of the school of Mustafa İzet Efendi are his disciples Şevki Bey (1819–1880) who was also very successful in celi sâlûs, Muhsinзадe Abdullah Bey (1832–1899), Abdullah Zîhlî Efendi (d.1879), Kayıqâde Hafiz Osman Efendi (d.1894) and Hana Rize (1849–1920) and Ali (d.1902), the disciples of Şevki Efendi. Also prominent among the disciples of Şevki Efendi are, Bulût Arif (1830–1909) and Fevzi (1861–1916). Aeziz Efendi (1871–1934) who was a disciple of Arif Efendi is the calligrapher who taught the style to the Egyptian calligraphers during his professorship (1923–1933) in the Madrasa of TahirîîUhur in Cairo. Kâmil Aldik (1861–1941), the disciple of Sami Efendi and at the same time the Reçai Haiartmr (the chief of all calligraphers) was also well-known in Cairo thanks to the pieces he wrote during his travels there.

Let us now mention about the scripts that the Ottomans used in their official correspondence: The primary script is ta'lîk assumed this name since its letters seem to be hanging and was created in Iran by developing tevki' and nûkî' which is a finer version of it and blending them with the local ras-
Tes and Ta'lik was further improved by the Persian mångi (the clerks) who were engaged in official correspondence. The Ottomans had before used tekvi and less frequently raka as the official scripts of the state, and started to get familiar with ta'lik from the Persian royal clerks who were brought to Istanbul after the war of Mehmed II the Conqueror with Akkoyunlu (1472). The script got a significant change at the hands of the Ottomans and began to be called divanı. Celi divani, the more developed version of divani, was decorated with kahve (signs of vowel) and became the primary script to be used in high level government correspondence after the sixteenth century. Both scripts that were not permitted to be used in non-official correspondence and taught solely in Divanı Hamami (the Royal Cabinet) reached their perfection in the nineteenth century and persisted well into the twentieth century.

We think that these two official scripts which are hard to be read in comparison to other styles of script and have the heightened end letters in each line of the text were deliberately chosen to prevent general access into the official texts and insertion of unauthorized phrases in between the lines, thus ensuring the complete security of the official correspondence.

The ta'fi (the imperial seal) which is a decorated form of the name of the Ottoman sultans on all their written orders (such as ferman, berat, mesgur, etc.) is first used by Orhan Gazi (1324). The ta'fi was used in the sixteenth century and especially sixteenth century which are admired decoratively with select examples of ta'fi (golden illumination) by time lost some of their glory and calligraphers started a search for a new balance towards the end of the eighteenth century. Finally, Mustafa Rashed who was mentioned earlier reformed the form of ta'fi significantly during the reign of Sultan Selim III and the new form obtained a prominence especially in the ta'fi of Sultan Mahmud II. The most perfect form of ta'fi is found in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II at the hands of Sami Efendi who combined together the concepts of mathematics and aesthetics.

Another script that was liked by the Ottomans is the ta'lik script that is called nesli or ta'lik in Iran. Ta'lik unlike other scripts is plain and simple, and written without the use of kahve that enable the pronouncing of the consonants in Arabic, hence making it suitable for Iran. Ta'lik is the birthplace of ta'lik which found a large use in artistic as well as in official documents involving divanı (poetry books), psi (theological) and kustu (juridical) issues. The phases of development in the kudum al-ta'lik script that we have just mentioned thanks to its widespread use ultimately led to a modification in its original form and this new style was called molla ta'lik, most probably because it had abolished the ta'lik. The script adapted a new name and a style under the Ottomans who preferred to call the new style ta'lik that otherwise had been called nesli ta'lik.

The ta'lik script that was important in books especially in its finer versions (burde, hafi) since the second part of the sixteenth century spread within the Ottoman lands in following the style of nesli ta'lik. The perfect form created by Mir İmam'dı Hasan (1554-1615), the great Persian calligrapher, was transmitted to Istanbul through his disciple Derviş Abdı (d.1647) and became immediately popular in artistic circles. Therefore all the Ottoman calligraphers of ta'lik in the eighteenth century such as Durmuşdede Ahmed (d.1717), Karbaca Mehmed Refi (d.1768), Şeyhülislam Veşefi (d.1768) were called either İmam'ta'lım (Imam of Anatolia) or İmam-ta'lım (Imam the Second). Mehmed Esad Efendi (d.1798) who was called Yasari because his right arm was paralyzed and therefore he had to write with his left hand was a disciple of Dedezade Mehmed Efendi (d.1759) and appointed aesthetically the Imam's calligraphy and blended his own version of ta'lik in 1780 which actually would become later the Ottoman standard of ta'lik. Yasari Mutasim İzzet Efendi (1770-1849), produced many precious works especially using the celi ta'lik style by accomplishing those points that his father seemed to be weak. Sami Efendi who continued the school more enthusiastically contributed to the transmission of this artistic beauty into the era of the Turkish Republic through his disciples such as Nazif Bey, Hüsnü Yüoglan (1869-1940), Ömer Vasıfi and Necmeddin Oktay (1883-1976).

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the art of calligraphy reached its apex after dominating five centuries of the Ottoman history and manifesting a national character, and accordingly the works of calligraphy proliferated and multiplied. The reason for this culmination is the perfection of the celi style which is the most eye-catching of all bar during the same period, as well as the increase in quantity of levhas (plates) which was the most preferred area of writing and inlaid (inscriptions) which are often carved in marble and situated on the facade of both civilian and religious architectural works. In older times, we see more often manuscripts such as Mushaf and divan, etc., kel'us, namely those works as voluminous as books that are written only on one side of the page in one or two styles of bar with decorated margins, and muraqqa'as that are prepared by combining many kel'us into one book in the form of an album. After celi sülüs and celi ta'lik perfected, we can see that levhas in large dimensions written in these styles started to dominate the architectural works. Hilyes, those works invented by Hafız Osman and giving the account of the physical as well as the spiritual qualities of the Prophet Muhammad started also to grow in multitude as well as in physical dimension during the XIXth century.

The equipment and tools the calligraphers used also represent an important share in the whole range of the Ottoman fine handicrafts. In order to perform calligraphy, the calligraphers use handmade papers that are colored in different colors and polished in the style that is called arah. The ink used in calligraphy is also special; it is murrkebe (the sooted ink) is produced by crushing the mixture of sweet and Arabic glue in pensile and adan murrkebe (the golden ink) by crushing gold leaves. Lil (red) and zoruk (yellow) inks are also often used. Distinct hands of craftsmen emerged who produced and sold dirvi (its cylindrical type is called kubur), the tool in which ink bottle and reedpen are past, tools like kalenitraş and makra which are used to sharpen the reedpen. Their use for calligraphy aside, these tools themselves prove to be pieces of arts in their own right.

The art of calligraphy that was transmitted from one generation to the next through a training
based on a master-disciple relationship and certified by the title (diploma) in the Ottoman culture could survive well into our day because of the fact that it could regenerate itself and that it has no aspect open to the western influence unlike some other arts.

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The ART OF ILLUMINATION IN THE OTTOMANS

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ne could hold the view that the practice of illuminating, gilding, adorning and embellishing the margin of pages started with the Qur’an manuscripts copied in the 9th -10th centuries. It may be observed that during the Middle Ages and afterwards, sultans and their entourage and the wealthy citizens donated gilded copies of the Qur’an to holy places. As for the Anatolian bourgeoisie, they adorned large scale copies of Mevlana’s the Mevlevi with embellishments illuminations, and donated them to the Tomb of Mevlana. Besides the Qur’an, usually literary and historical works have also been illuminated at the palace workshops or at the private workshops of artists in cities for book lovers sultans and rich people. Great amounts of money have been paid for the papers of those works, for the gold and other paints, and to the artist who illuminated them, called illuminator or gilder (müzehip).

The text of the manuscript is important for the design of the illumination. In Qur’an copies of the Ottoman period, namely from the 14th century up to the second half of the 16th century, the first pages were designed to be fully ornamented, which was called levha (plate) illumination (Bursa TIEM. 208; İstanbul TIEM. 446, 448, TSM. E. H. 58). In the pages where the beginnings of the Sections (serhats) of Fatih and Bakar are laid down, illumination constitutes a frame surrounding all around the text. Sometimes, on both sides of the texts of these two surahs, a rectangular or square-shaped illumination is added, which is called koluk (TSM. H. S. 1b-2a). In some cases, the illuminator enlarges this framing illumination with fully ornamented borders and adding semi-circular or triangular jurs (başlak) towards the sides of the pages; and he also illuminates the empty spaces between the lines of the first surah (Section). The beginnings of the other surahs of the Qur’an are illuminated in the form of a horizontal rectangle, called başlık (title). The margins of the pages are illuminated with series of gül (rose) figures having a special meaning in Islamic parlance (since it represents the Prophet). In special cases, the colophon (ketçe) page is also illuminated. In the 14th century, copies of the Qur’an, the surah of Mevlevi (the Virgin Mary) were adorned in the forms of levha or pamsı (frame), too (Bursa TIEM. 208).

Among the prayer books, e. g. in the copies of Fatih el-Hayr, illu-