used in the colophon of 705/1305-6 to refer to Aydughid's work outlining Ibn al-Wahid's calligraphy. This meaning of ash'ara to denote outlining was current in later times. James, Qurans of the Mamluks, 234, n. 50, noted that in the catalogue of the manuscripts in the Khedivial collection produced at the end of the nineteenth century, the script of a Mamluk Koran manuscript is described as written in gold and outlined (rash'a'ara) with black ink.

132. Gacek, 'Arabic Scripts,' 145. This was the case with Ibn Basin, al-Nuwayri, al-Athari, and al-Sayyid, whose dates range from the early fourteenth century to the end of the period. Ibn Basin also claimed that it had been invented by his father. Al-Tayyibi's illustrations show a more rectilinear version than that used by Ibn al-Wahid. See al-Tibi, Calligraphy According to Ibn al-Bawwab, 90-3.

133. Al-Tayyibi's illustrations of ash'ar are found on pages 90-3, those of jali al-muhaqqaq on 67-73. See also Mohamed Zakariya, The Calligraphy of Islam: Reflections on the State of the Art (Washington, DC, 1970), 32, 36, and fig. 24, the modern calligrapher and expert on calligraphy who describes ash'ar as a hybrid of thuluth, muhaqqaq, and naskh that was used for many large Koran manuscripts and often confused with muhaqqaq.

134. Gacek, 'Arabic Scripts,' 147.

135. According to al-Qalqashandi, Subh al-a'sha, 3:46-9, tumar could be written according to the rules of either muhaqqaq or thuluth, but according to al-Athari, Tanayut, 370 and 373, cited in Gacek, 'Arabic Scripts,' 147 and n. 94, it should be written according to the rules of muhaqqaq.


137. Gacek, 'Arabic Scripts,' 145.

138. According to al-Nuwayri, for example, ghubar was a smaller version of tiqa', just as haswati was a smaller version of naskh. According to al-Qalqashandi, ghubar was derived from both tiqa' and naskh, and according to al-Athari, it was a smaller version of naskh and had no filled loops (tans), though he added that some blending of letters may be allowed.


141. Gacek, 'Arabic Scripts,' 146.


CHAPTER NINE

Other Styles and Centers

The main regions where fine calligraphy was produced in the Islamic lands during the later middle period were Iran and Iraq under the Mongols and Turkomans (Chapter 7) and Egypt and Syria under the Mamluks (Chapter 8), but distinct styles of Arabic script also developed in other regions. Three stand out: Anatolia, which was partitioned among various principalities known collectively as beyliks; India, notably the northern half, which was under the control of the Delhi sultanates; and the Maghrib, which was divided between three rival Berber dynasties in North Africa and the Nasrids in southern Spain, or Andalusia. Calligraphers and clerks in Anatolia and India, regions bordering Iran that were opened to full-scale Islamization only in this period and used Persian as the main literary language, adopted the metropolitan styles developed in nearby Iraq and Iran under Yaqut and his followers, a natural development in this age of Mongol prestige and Persianate culture. The Maghrib was different. By this period its population had already become heavily Islamicized, using Arabic as the language of writing and religion, and the styles of calligraphy there developed from local roots (see Chapter 6).

In this period merchants and mystics also carried Islam to other areas, and the calligraphic styles that developed in these three provincial regions, in turn, seem to have been the source for styles elsewhere, particularly for Koran manuscripts which were used in proselytism. Thus, the bilingual Koran manuscripts produced in Anatolia seem to have been carried to Central Asia and thence to China, where calligraphers in this period began to produce their own Koran manuscripts, which bear many similarities to those that had been produced in Anatolia and Iran. Similarly, Indian manuscripts in the distinctive bihari script were transported to the Yemen, where they set the foundations for a local style. Maghrabi manuscripts too may well have been carried across the Sahara to central Africa, but none has survived the vicissitudes of the hot and humid climate there.

The styles used in various places often share many features, particularly as calligraphers, patrons, and manuscripts often moved. Shirazi calligraphers, for example, took the naskh with long swooping tails marked by an angled bend, a distinctive style associated with
the patronage of the Timurid prince Ibrahim Sultan in Shiraz in the opening years of the fiveh century [Figure 7.10], along with related styles of painting, to both Anatolia and sultanate India. The movement of people and books, the transference of designs through paper models, and the ability of calligraphers to copy the styles used elsewhere make it difficult to distinguish a manuscript penned in Anatolia from one made in sultanate India at approximately the same time. The same bilingual copy of the Koran [Figure 9.2], for example, has been attributed to Anatolia, Central Asia, and India. The difficulty in localizing individual styles is exacerbated by the lack of rigorous studies on the calligraphy from this period, as scholars, particularly Westerners, have traditionally focused attention on the kufic styles associated with the early period of Islam. Until more work is done, we must depend heavily on colophons and other criteria, including types of paper and styles of painting, to establish regional groupings among the large mass of fine calligraphic specimens that survive from this period.

Anatolia

Anatolia, the plateau corresponding to modern-day Turkey, had been Islamized since the eleventh century, but only in the period 1250-1500 is it possible to trace a distinct tradition of calligraphy there. The first center of production was Konya, the city in the middle of the region that was the capital of the Rum Seljuqs, who ruled in name, if not in fact, from 1081 until the beginning of the fourteenth century. The manuscripts produced there cover a range of subjects and were designed to fit different clienteles. Some are copies of the Koran, at least one a pocket-book, but the main language at the court of the Rum Seljuqs was Persian, and many manuscripts contain works of Persian literature. A few are prose, but fine manuscripts of Persian verse are more common. The first surviving copy of Firdawsi's Shahnama, a fragment dated 614/1217, can be attributed to Konya and the patronage of the Rum Seljuqs. So can the earliest copies of Jalal al-Din Rumi's rhyming poem, Mathnawi-yi Ma'nawi (The Mathnawi of Intrinsic Meaning), including a manuscript finished in Rajab 677/November-December 1278 [Figure 9.1]. Some of these manuscripts were also illustrated. One, if not the earliest illustrated Persian manuscript to survive – a copy of Ayvaz's verse romance Varga and Gulshah – is attributable to Konya c. 1250. Other illustrated manuscripts made there contain traditional favorites, such as the animal fables known as Kalila and Dimna, found in a manuscript dated 661/1262.

Despite the variety of subject, language, and format, all of these manuscripts are written in naskh, which was the main text script in Anatolia, as in nearby Iran. The naskh hands range in aspect, from the loose, rather sprawling one used for the manuscript of Varqa and Gulshah to the tighter, more controlled one used for the Kalila and

Dimna. We can use a page from the copy of the Rumi's Mathnawi-yi Ma'nawi [Figure 9.1] as representative. The author, Jalal al-Din Muhammad (d. 1273), known as Balkhi (from Bokh, his home town), Rumi (from Rum, meaning Anatolia), or Mawlavi (our master), is regarded as the greatest master of Persian mystical verse. This voluminous 27,000-verse poem, an encyclopedia of Sufism, that the Timurid poet Jami called 'the Koran in the Persian tongue,' is only part of his prodigious output, written largely in ecstatic trances. After Rumi's death, his tomb and hospice in Konya became the center of the Mawlavi order, which continued to gain fame under his son and successor Bahar al-Din Sultan Valad until it become one of the best-known Sufi orders in Islam, famous for its devotion to the arts, especially music.

According to the endowment registration on folio 312b, this manuscript was given to Rumi's shrine in 678/1279 by Jamal al-din 'Abdallah ibn Muharrak, freed slave of the Seljuk vizier Fakhr al-Din 'Ali ibn Husayn known as Sahib Ata. It had been transcribed the year before by Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah al-Qunyavi al-Validi from an archetype that had been corrected and emended by the author and his assistant Husam al-Din Chelebi. The manuscript therefore seems to be the first clean copy of the text to survive. Each regular page has twenty-nine lines of text in four columns, although on the opening pages [Figure 9.1] the text is reduced to seventeen lines and two central columns that were then framed by wide gold margins. This manuscript is an almost exact contemporary of the Koran codex transcribed by Yaqut at Baghdad in 685/1286 [Figure 7.1], and comparing the two manuscripts shows the differences between de luxe editions of Persian poetry and Arabic prose produced in Anatolia and Iran in the later middle period.

One major difference is size. This copy of Rumi's Mathnawi is remarkably large. Each of the 312 pages of thick paper measures 50 x 32 cm. The sheets are thus half-baghadadi size, far bigger than other manuscripts produced in Anatolia at this time and twice the size of the sheets in Yaqut's Koran manuscript, which are one-quarter baghadadi size. The pages in the Rumi manuscript are the first examples of such standardized large sheets of paper to survive, pre-dating by a generation the half-baghadadi sheets used in Koran manuscripts transcribed by Ahmad al-Suhrawardi [Figure 7.2] and his contemporaries. The use of such very large paper for a copy of Rumi's lyric poetry not only shows the wealth available to this Sufi order in Anatolia and its connections to the metropolitan school in Iraq and Iran, but also indicates that innovations such as large and standardized sheets, like the medium itself, may well have been used first for non-Koran manuscripts and only later for copies of the Koran. Both the Mathnawi and the Koran manuscripts have some three hundred folios, and so to fit the long poem in a single-volume codex, Muhammad al-Qunyavi penned more than twice as many lines per page as Yaqut did and used lines that are only two-third as high. The
Rumi text is thus more compact. The two calligraphers choose
different scripts for the different subjects – naskh for the poetry, rayhan
for the Koran – and different methods to ensure textual accuracy.
Muhammad al-Qunyavi used the traditional pointing system for
Persian, in which cha’ is marked with a single dot and dal is trans-
scribed as ‘dal, as in the chu and konad in the opening line (Figure
9.1a). Like Yaqt, Muhammad al-Qunyavi also used a small ha’, sad,
or ‘ayn to mark unpunctured (muhmad) letters, as in hikayat in the
second hemistich of the first line or muharram at the beginning of
the fourth line from the bottom. Final ha’ is often connected to the
preceding dal or ra’, as in the words biinirda and nalida in the second
line. This feature, often known as the Yaquti connection, is also
found in the Ayyuqi manuscript copied c. 1350, showing that Yaqt
simply standardized a feature that had been typical in the area for
some time. In Rumi’s poem, short vowels are unmarked, as meter and
rhyme provide clues to pronunciation. In contrast, the Arabic prose
in Yaqt’s Koran manuscript is fully pointed and vocalized, and the
repeated long slashes used to indicate short vowels add rhythm and
order to the visual aspect of the page.

The calligraphic aspect differs as well. Muhammad al-Qunyavi’s
naskh is clear but jerky. Individual words slope slightly from upper
right to lower left. Alif is tiny and serifless. By contrast, Yaqt’s
rayhan is compact and posed firmly on a flat baseline. Letters are of
uniform size, and alif bears his characteristic spikey serif. Muhammad
al-Qunyavi’s strokes vary in width, particularly the tails of final nun,
ta’, ya’, and similar letters, which extend further both vertically and
horizontally and thicken at the tip. Yaqt’s strokes, by contrast, are
of uniform thickness. In addition, Muhammad al-Qunyavi’s words
crowd and pile up at the end of the hemistich, whereas Yaqt’s are
evenly spread out across the line. Over the course of the next century,
calligraphers will exaggerate these traits found in Muhammad al-
Qunyavi’s naskh until they mature into a full-fledged nasta’liq. In
contrast, Yaqt’s more refined and balanced hand leads to the impe-
rual Koran manuscripts transcribed in muhajar in his followers in
the next generation.

Another point of contrast between the two manuscripts is the
illumination. In both cases it was probably done by a separate person.
That in the Rumi manuscript was executed by Mukhlis ibn ‘Abdallah
al-Hindi. His name suggests that he, like the calligrapher of this man-
uscript, was a first-generation convert to Islam, but his epithet al-
Hindi (from India) suggests that he emigrated from afar. He worked
on various types of manuscripts made for various local patrons, for he
also illuminated the pocket-size Koran manuscript produced at the
madrasa of Sa’ad al-Din Kubak in Konya. Yaqt probably worked
with an unnamed illuminator, and the team approach was clearly the
standard with his followers, not only in Iraq with Ahmad al-
Sührawardi, who worked regularly with Muhammad ibn Aybak ibn
‘Abdallah on thirty-volume Koran manuscripts [Figure 7.2], but also

Figure 9.1 Opening text page from a copy of Rumi’s Mathnawi-yi Ma’navi with twenty-nine lines per page transcribed by Muhammad ibn ‘Abdallah al-Qunyavi al-Valadi in Rajab 67/November–December 1278. This is the first clean copy of Rumi’s lyric masterpiece, once called the Koran in Persian verse, to survive. The large-size manuscript is transcribed on paper of half-baghdadi size, the first surviving example of such large paper, which was then used under the Ilkhans at the beginning of the fourteenth century for monumental Koran manuscripts. The text is transcribed in a regular and readable naskh, and the large size and fine gold illumination show the resources available to the Sufi order in Konya in the late thirteenth century.
in Egypt with Ibn al-Wahid, who worked with a team of three illuminators for his seven-part Koran manuscript (Figure 8.13). Nevertheless, the amount and type of illumination differs in the two manuscripts. At least one area of difference—the rulings around the written area—is due to subject matter: in the copy of Rumi's Mathnawi, the rulings regularly run over the text (Figure 9.1a), whereas in Yaqui's Koran manuscript (Figure 7.1a) they carefully skirt the sacred word. Other differences seem to be due to local traditions. The Rumi manuscript (and the pocket-size Koran manuscript made in Konya) is lavishly illuminated with twenty full or 'carpet' pages composed of central fields surrounded by borders as well as other double pages like this one with a central field of text surrounded by wide gold borders. On all of them, the illuminated block is set within two thin blue rulings decorated with corner finals and repeating tricolor motifs. The outer edges of the pages are further embellished with roundels and ovoid cartouches that resemble the five and ten verse markers in Koran manuscripts, but with knotting or strapwork replacing the inscribed words. Koran manuscripts by Yaqui and his followers have similar marginal decoration and opening double pages with elaborate frames, some of it redone in later times, but no full pages of illumination. When commissioning de luxe copies of Rumi's masterpiece, or of the Koran, Sufi patrons in Anatolia expected lavish illumination, when using a fine copy of the Koran in Baghdad, the reader expected refined calligraphy.

With the dissolution of Saljuq power in the fourteenth century, much of Anatolia passed under the political sway of various local principalities, or beyliks, but the Mawlawi shrine at Konya continued to be a center of manuscript production under Sultan Valad (d. 1312) and his successors. Some manuscripts produced there were, naturally, copies of Sufi works by Jalal al-Din and his son, and they continue the traditions of calligraphy (and illumination) already established in the late thirteenth century. Members of the order also produced Koran manuscripts that combine elements from both the Ilkhani and the Mamluk styles of calligraphy and illumination, to judge from a large thirty-part volume of the Koran, whose final section dated Rabbi I 734/November 1333 is signed by Husayn ibn Hasan nicknamed [al-mulaqqab bi] Husam al-Mawlawi.

Though the most important, Konya (and the Mawlawi shrine there) was not the only center of manuscript production in the region during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and another group of Koran manuscripts can be traced to eastern Anatolia/north-western Iran. The manuscripts in this provincial group are distinctive, both visually and textually: they are written in an unusual— and somewhat ungainly— hybrid script, and they have an interlinear translation in Chaghatai and/or Persian. The dates for the group are bracketed by three datable or dated codices: a manuscript with both the Persian translation of al-Tahari's commentary and a Persian interlinear translation made for Rabib al-Din Abur'l-Qasim Harun ibn 'Ali Zafar Dindan, who served as vizier to the last Atabeg of Azerbaijan, Mansur al-Din Ushek, from 1220 to 1225, and two copies with Chaghatai translations, the first transcribed by Muhammad ibn Shukh Yusuf al-Abari and finished on 10 Ramadan 737/12 April 1337, and the second dated mid-Rabi' II 764/January-February 1365. We can take a page from a fourth manuscript—a copy with interlinear translation in two languages, most of which is now in the John Rylands Library in Manchester (Figure 2.3)—to represent the group.

The Koran manuscripts in this provincial group are all multi-part, but the format and number of lines per page vary: this page belongs to a thirty-volume copy with three lines to the page. At least one other copy follows the same format, but two others are different. The manuscripts also range in size and shape: this one is landscape, almost squarish (29 × 27 cm). The other dispersed manuscripts with three lines per page is the same height, but narrower (29 × 19 cm); the others are also portrait and range in size from medium to large. Despite these physical differences, which imply a lack of standardization and a single school of production, these manuscripts share a common style of calligraphy and illumination. The script combines traits from both the thuluth and nisbaqqaq styles used in the metropolitan areas. It is exaggerated and idiosyncratic in aspect. Strokes vary in thickness. Most are thick, but a few are thin, as here with the
Emergence of Regional Styles in the Later Middle Period

lam of bi-kaf in the first line (Figure 9.2a) and the alif and lam of al-
rahim (Figure 9.2b) in the third line. Many letters have distinct
shapes. Final mim at the end of the line, for example, has a long
swelling tail. It typically descends below the other letters, as here in
'alayhim and al-rahim (Figure 9.2b), but can extend halfway down
the page. Other tails are extended horizontally. The tails of waw
and nun often curve forward to encompass the following word, as
here in al-tahmain, and final ya' often curves back under the preced-
ing word, sometimes projecting all the way across the right margin.15
Kaf is written with a little kaf at the top of the stroke, as here in bi-
kaf (Figure 9.2a). Final ha' has a tall uppercase with an ovoid eye
and is often surmounted by the initial form of the letter with a long tail
(Figure 9.2c).16 In this manuscript, as in the pocket-sized one made in
Konya in 677/1278 and the Arabic/Chaghatai manuscript dated
737/1337, the word allah is written in gold so that it jumps out from
the rest of the text. Here, however, it is done in a single fluid stroke
in which alif connects to lam (Figure 9.2d). Many of these paleo-
graphic features are also found in manuscripts produced in Anatolia,
such as the large Koran codex copied by the Mawlavi Sufi in 734/1333.27
So are many features of the illumination, such as the
losenges and strapwork in the chapter titles and the red-hatched
ground.18 Though scholars have proposed various locales for these
manuscripts, ranging from Anatolia to Central Asia and even India,
the close relationship of both script and illumination to other manu-
scripts (and objects) produced in Anatolia suggests that is the correct
provenance for this manuscript and the center of production for the
group.

Most Koran manuscripts in this group contain a single translation
written in a small naskh, diagonally (or in one case, in zig-zag lines)
below the Arabic, but the Rylands manuscript (Figure 9.2) contains
two translations. The upper line is Persian, the second in Chaghatai.
János Eckmann, a Turkologist who studied the text in this manu-
script extensively, suggested that the translation, which displays
Qurkhanid language with Khwara'mizdan touches, had been made in
the twelfth or early thirteenth century.19 Innovations introduced by
the copyist, however, suggest that this particular manuscript was
made later. On the basis of the paleography, Eckmann attributed it to
the second half of the thirteenth or the first half of the fourteenth
century.20 The period 1230-69 was the time when a group of poetic,
judicial, linguistic, and religious works, including translations of the
Koran, were composed in Chaghatai. Many authors were bilingual
writing in both Persian and Chaghatai.21

On the basis of other considerations such as format and illumin-
ation, David James attributed this particular manuscript to the
patronage of the Qaramanids, a Turkoman dynasty with Sufi roots
that controlled south-central Anatolia and the Mediterranean
and were noted for their encouragement of Turkish, rather than Persian,
as the language of administration.22 Individual volumes of this type
of multi-part manuscript were read when placed open on a wooden
Koran stand, known as a rahla,23 and David James connected the
unusual squarish shape and palmette border of the Rylands manu-
script to a specific Koran stand made in 677/1278-9 for the tomb of
Jalal al-Din Rumi and preserved in the Konya Museum.24 Such bin-
linul Koran manuscripts would have been especially useful to new
converts to Islam as well as for proselytism. Sufi brotherhoods were
instrumental in bringing Islam to Anatolia, and Sufis' role in at least
one of these bilingual manuscripts (the one in Masliah) is clear from
the copyist, who was the son of a Sufi shaikh.25

Sufis were also active in spreading Islam among the Turks of the
steppe,26 and they and others must have taken such bilingual Koran
manuscripts across Central Asia as far as China. The growth of
Muslim communities there necessitated the production of Koran
manuscripts, and the earliest codices made in China date from the
fifteenth century. The first dated copy of the Koran known to have
been made there (Figure 9.3) was, according to the colophon, trans-
scribed and illuminated by one Hajji Rashid ibn 'Ali al-Sini (the
Chinese) on the last day of Muharram 804/9 October 1401 in the
Great Mosque in Khansalg (modern Beijing), which is identified as
one of the cities of China.27 A second manuscript in the same collec-
tion, was, according to its colophon, transcribed by Shams al-Din ibn
Taj al-Din in the Dar al-Hadi Shaddas in Madihat Yunnan, again
identified as one of the great cities of China, on 1 Ramadan 875/21
February 1471.28

These two Koran manuscripts made in China in the fifteenth
century share many features. Each of the surviving volumes is a juz'
from a thirty-part manuscript, the standard type used in Iran for pre-
sentation copies made in Iraq and Iran since the fourteenth century
(Figure 7.2). The two Chinese volumes share the same format: both
measure 25 × 17 cm and are therefore quarter-baghdadi or medium
size, with five lines to the page set inside a double red ruling. Both
have black ink for text and vocalization and red ink for other punc-
tuation such as full stops, a combination used in contemporary
Timurid Koran manuscripts (Figure 7.1). In short, the layout derives
from the metropolitan style developed in Iraq and Iran.

The idiosyncratic script, however, resembles that used in
the provincial group with interlinear translation (Figure 9.2). Both of
the two Chinese manuscripts are copied in a variant of mubhaqag script.
Vertical strokes are particularly thin, and the hook at the top is large
and often detached from the vertical stroke, so that the letter looks
like a flag. The serif was probably written separately. Final ha' is a
large, ovoid loop (Figure 9.3a), and some letters, especially ra', mim,
and 'ayn, have exaggerated tails that project into the margin or the
line below. Kaf is sometimes written with a little kaf in place of a bar.
There are also occasional unauthorized connections between letters,
especially in common pairs of letters, such as alif-lam, or in common
phrases, such as 'ala kulli shâyin (Figure 9.3b). To judge from his
such as ovoid and oblong cartouches (Figure 9.3). The manuscripts made in China, however, incorporate distinctly Chinese motifs, including peonies and a cloud-band used as the opening medallion and on the binding on the earlier manuscript. In both cases the cloud-band has been transformed into Arabic writing, with the basmala on the binding and the rhyming phrase *al ha*lih min al shaytan al rajim (*I take refuge in God from Satan the accursed*) in the opening medallion. This type of multi-part Koran manuscript with five lines to the page remained standard in China for many centuries.

In Anatolia, the Qaramanid rulers of central and eastern Anatolia were eventually absorbed by a rival beylik, that of the Osmanlis, or Ottomans, who became the most successful of all the independent principalities that flourished in the region during this period, expanding their realm to include much of the plateau and all of Thrace. The Ottomans' original home lay on the Byzantine frontier in north-west Anatolia, and their first capital was on the northern foothills of Myasian Olympus (Mt Ulu Dag) at Bursa. It was an important center of the silk industry, and even after the Ottoman capital was moved to Edirne in 1402, Bursa retained its pre-eminence as the site where the early Ottoman sultans were buried. It was also a center of manuscript production.

The finest manuscript produced for the Ottomans in the early fifteenth century is a very large single-volume copy of the Koran. Regular pages in the 282-folio manuscript have nine lines of text on an unframed page that varies in color between cream, ocher, and pink. The top, middle, and bottom lines are penned in a large *rayhan*, the others in a smaller *nasib*. The middle line is written in gold outlined in black, the others in black. Sura headings are penned in white thuluth set against a red and gold scrolling ground. The two sets of opening pages in this Koran manuscript (Figure 9.4) are more elaborate. At the top and bottom are large lines of stylized kufic set against a scrolling arabesque. These headings give the names of the *suras* and pious phrases about the revelation. The intermediate lines of text are reserved in cloud bands, and the intervening ground filled with a floral arabesque in blue and gold set against pink hatching with the occasional triple-dot pattern. The same design is found in a musical treatise entitled *Muqadid al-balab*, transcribed by Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Ilyas for the Ottoman sultan Murad II in 838/1434-5, and so this copy of the Koran can be attributed to the same milieu and date.

The splashy Koran manuscript in Bursa shows how calligraphers in Anatolia adopted the Six Pens standard in Iran during this period. On regular pages, the calligrapher juxtaposed different sizes of script, an arrangement particularly popular in Iran, as with the Koran manuscript transcribed by Zayn al-‘Abidin ibn Muhammad al-Shirazi for the Aqquyunlu ruler Ya‘qub Beg in 888/1485 (Figure 7.13), but less so in Egypt and Syria, where reading was more important than appearance, for the odd arrangement somewhat disturbs the flow of
The styled kufic used for the headings in the Bursa manuscript also continues the type used since the early fourteenth century in Koran manuscripts produced for both the Ilkhanids (Figure 7.2) and Mamluks (Figures 8.1 and 8.5), but the letters have been further attenuated, with the tops of the stems bent at right angles and additional but textually irrelevant devices added to form symmetrical pairs. The main text scripts derive from those used in contemporary Iran, especially Shiraz. The naskh used for the text is a small neat hand with the large bowl on final nun and other letters typical of the Shirazi style that was transported to both Anatolia and India. The large line of rayhun for the middle line, with blind eyes, resembles the one used in the Koran manuscripts penned by the Timurid prince Ibrahim Sultan.  

Using these models, the anonymous calligrapher of the Bursa Koran penned a good but not great hand. His spacing is occasionally awkward, so that he had to squeeze in some letters at the end of the line, as here at the top left. Individual letters and connections between letters are also stilted, as in the word al-muṣif̲iḥun (those who will prosper) in the center of folio 3a (Figure 9.4a) where the fa’i is ungainly and pitched slightly to the right, and the connectors to lam and ha’ flat. The lavish illumination in this manuscript subsumes the mediocre hand, and the effectiveness of this manuscript derives more from size and color than from calligraphy.

After Timur’s army had burned and plundered Bursa in 1402, the Ottomans transferred the capital to Edirne and then, following the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, to Istanbul, where the sultans and their courtiers became important patrons of the arts. Mehmed II (r. 1444–81, with interruption) maintained a large library of both Greek and Islamic manuscripts, and his vizier Mahmud Pasha was also an important patron of books. They are mainly scientific treatises, but also include three copies of the Koran as well as several illustrated manuscripts. Artists, particularly from Iran, were attracted to the new capital, where they created new styles in many media, including the book arts. Papermakers developed a new and improved type of paper, with a harder sizing that allowed for a higher burnish. Illuminators also adopted a more brilliant style, with a lavish use of gold. Similarly, in the 1460s and 1470s bookbinders developed a new style, replacing the tan leather used earlier with a plain dark color, selected for maximum contrast to the burgundy doublets decorated with filigree centerpieces against an intense gold ground. The increased demand for books to supply Mehmed’s burgeoning library and the new religious complexes in the city meant that binders had to speed up production, so they introduced textile bindings, some covered with striped or plaid tabby, others with velvet covers.

The new style that permeated the Ottoman arts of the book in the 1460s and 1470s was heavily dependent on Persianate models. Whereas earlier taste had been modeled in part on Mamluk work,
Persianate designs and practices based on enlivenantly growing floral motifs now came to the fore in the so-called ‘international Timurid style’ disseminated through a central design studio [naqqash-khang] like the one that the Timurid prince Baysunghur had established at Herat in the early fifteenth century.11 Persianate models were also adopted for calligraphy, and calligraphers who emigrated from Iran, voluntarily or otherwise, were partly responsible for introducing new scripts.

Many of these new scripts can be seen in a stupendous scroll dedicated to Mehmend II [Figure 9.5].52 Measuring more than a meter and a half in length and written partly horizontally and partly vertically, the scroll contains a selection of texts. Most are in Arabic, including Koranic excerpts, prayers, and Traditions. At the end are panels of assorted scripts [thuluth, ta’liq, and nastaliq] in white on a black ground with eulogies in Persian to Mehmend’s saintliness [isas dust], wise judgment [asaf tayy], and Solomonic justice. Beneath a panel in square kufic is the signature in nastaliq of the calligrapher ‘Ata’allah ibn Muhammad al-Tabrizi and the date 4 Rabi’ 1862/28 January 1458. The scroll is a calligraphic tour de force, presumably intended to impress Sultan Mehmend, to whom it is dedicated.

The calligrapher, whose signature appears near the bottom, was one of the Persian scribes in Mehmend’s chancery. To judge from his epithet, he was a native of Tabriz. He may have been attracted by the scriptorium that Mehmend had established in his new capital and designed the scroll to win the sultan’s favor. It is thus a roll equivalent of al-Tayyibi’s calligraphic album dedicated to the Mamluk sultan Qansawh al-Ghawri [Figure 8.4].53 ‘Ata’allah was evidently successful in finding work in the Ottoman capital, for he later transcribed a fine copy of Ruka al-Din al-Astarabadi’s treatise on rhetoric entitled al-Waffiya, which was completed there during the last ten days of Rajab 871/26 February–7 March 1467.54

In addition to the Six Pens, the scroll dedicated to Mehmend contains examples of many other scripts. At the very top (not visible in this detail) is an illuminated heading in blue with gold chiastic lotus-scrolls typically of work from contemporary Shiraz. This is followed by a line of thuluth whose outlined letters spell out Koran 3:35: a well-known verse about God’s majesty and power as master of the kingdom [malik al-mulk] who bestows the kingdom (al-mulk) on, and seizes it from, whomever He wills. Next comes the dedication, a pear-shaped medallion inscribed in large and bold thuluth jali in gold on a blue ground lauding Mehmend as the just sultan, the Solomon of his age. Beneath the medallion is another line of thuluth with the benediction asking God to perpetuate his Mehmend’s kingdom [malik] and sultanate.

Both text and script work to associate Mehmend with God. The Koranic excerpt mentions God’s power over the kingdom, a term picked up in the benediction beneath, written in the same script. The two outlined bands frame and set off the large and colorful dedicatory...
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medallion. Its text, bi-rasm-i hadrat-i sultan-i ‘udil sulayman-i zaman muhammad (for the just sultan, the Solomon of the age, Muhammad) reads up from the bottom. The words are superposed and the letters intertwined around the tall stems so that they seem to stand like a row of fence posts rising from the curved base and bowls of the letters. The effect recalls the marching verticals of the Mamlik tughra [Figures 8.9 and 8.10]. Over time, Ottoman calligraphers gradually exaggerated the stylization of the dedicatory medallion. They sometimes wrote the letters in mirror reverse, a technique called mutahana (doubled). They also intertwined and stacked words and added color, all for decorative effect. These features can be seen in the dedicatory rosette in a small copy of an anthology made for Mehmed’s son Bayazid II [r. 1481-1512].35 Form took precedence over meaning, as the designs were meant to be recognized faster than they were read. The trend culminated in the elaborate tughra(s) designed for the Ottoman sultans and found on the top of all official documents [Figures 11.15-11.17].

Beneath this opening dedication on Mehmed’s scroll is a line of kufic with interlaced stems containing the basmala and the phrase wa bihi tasta’in [and in Him we seek aid]. Such a kufic with interlaced stems had been part of the epigraphic repertory in early Iran since the eleventh century, but by this period was reserved mainly for illuminated titles in manuscripts. This panel is set above a larger one in muhaqqaq Juli with a similar text containing the basmala and the phrase wa bihi thqatti [and in Him is my trust]. The muhaqqaq Juli has the same juxtaposition of tall and regularly spaced verticals with round letters used in the dedicatory medallion. Visually, it once again connects Mehmed with God.

The scroll also contains another type of calligraphy derived from the epigraphic repertory: a panel in square kufic. This script, often called banna’i [builder’s script] because of its origins in bricklaying, came to be known as ma’qill [square] because of its shape.36 In addition to architecture, it was used to write sacred names and pious phrases arranged in decorative patterns on paper and other materials, such as cloth. Like the dedicatory medallion, those phrases in square kufic could be recognized visually faster than they could be read literally.

The scroll also contains one of the earliest surviving examples of zoomorphic calligraphy in which the figures of a bird and a lion are rendered in script. This type of script plays on the inherent ambiguity between text and image, meaning and form. Such calligraphic pictures became very popular in later times in both Iran [Figures 10.13] and Anatolia [Figure 11.14]. Though the earliest example to survive, this design does not necessarily mean that the idea of calligraphic pictures developed under the Ottomans. Since the calligrapher ‘Ata’allah seems to have emigrated from Aqqoyunu, Iran, it is much more likely that the idea of calligraphic pictures developed there. No examples have survived owing to the destruction of the Aqqoyunu archives, but ‘Ata’allah’s scroll gives us an idea of what kind of inventive work must have been produced there.

The new style of book art that developed in Istanbul in the late fifteenth century was spurred in part by the Ottoman conquests in north-west Iran. Mehmed, for example, requested rare books and albums [muhaqqiq] as part of the ransom he demanded after capturing the the Aqqoyunu prince Yusuf Mirza in 1472. These works may have formed the basis of the collections of drawings and calligraphy in some of the albums now preserved in Istanbul.37 Following the Aqqoyunu defeat at Basikent in August 1473 and the Ottoman conquest of Tabriz in the following year, Mehmed forcibly removed artisans to Istanbul, where they may have introduced further innovations to traditional styles.38 The hanging ta’liq was one of the scripts that was transformed at this time; it changed from a chancery into a literary script and was used not only for documents but also for manuscripts. From the late fifteenth century, clerks in the Ottoman chancery, like those elsewhere, had used ta’liq for documents written in Persian. One of the first examples to survive is a fathnama issued by Mehmed I Chelebi c. 1435.39 This type of proclamation or letter was issued to announce victory in battle or the successful conclusion of a military campaign.40 The earliest examples, whose texts are preserved only in later accounts, were composed on the actual battlefield by one of the sultan’s secretaries and were shorter and straightforward.41 Fathnma(s) produced later in the chancery were longer and more polished, and some even seem to have been more of a literary exercise than the usual type of propaganda. Many fathnma(s) issued after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the establishment there of the royal chancery [divan-i humayun] are preserved in the archives of the Topkapi Palace.42 Magnificent specimens produced under Mehmed II are calligraphed in Persian in an extremely careful version of the hanging ta’liq script.43 We cannot connect any of these court documents with named calligraphers, as the chancery clerks who produced them, technically known as epistolographers, did not sign their work.

For a short while, this script was also used at the Ottoman court to transcribe manuscripts. A prime mover in the script’s transmission and change of function was Sayyid Muhammad, a muqattah, or clerk, in Mehmed’s chancery.44 To judge from the epistles used in his signatures, he came from a notable family in Shiraz.45 According to the Ottoman historian Idris Bitlisi, Sayyid Muhammad served as secretary (uyuncu) to the Aqqoyunu ruler Uzun Hasan and was among those captured at the battle of Basikent.46 Once brought to Istanbul, Sayyid Muhammad found work as an epistolographer and calligrapher.47 The earliest work that he made for the Ottomans is a collection of exemplary letters (insba) copied for Mehmed in Rabi’ I 881/July 1476.48 The calligrapher’s latest signed work is a Risala, or treatise, dated Ramadan 893/August–September 1488 issued under Bayazid II [r. 1481–1512].49
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Figure 9.6 Sufi treatise transcribed by Sayyid Muhammad Munshi at Istanbul in 882/1477–8.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, clerks from the Aqquyunlu chancery like Sayyid Muhammad Munshi introduced the hanging ta’liq style to the Ottoman chancery. It was used there not only for documents but also for literary works, including manuscripts and individual specimens. Sayyid Muhammad Munshi’s style is regular, balanced, and rhythmic, features adopted from the contemporary nasta’liq style typically used for copying contemporary manuscripts in Persian.

A copy of Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi’s sufi treatise Hikmat al-Ishraq dated 882/1477–8 [Figure 9.6] illustrates how the ta’liq style brought by Sayyid Muhammad Munshi from the Aqquyunlu to the Ottoman court was transformed into a text script. The calligrapher used many of the conventions seen in the calligraphic style executed by the Aqquyunlu clerk ‘Abd al-Hayy Ibn Hafliz Shajkh Muhammad al-Bukhari [Figure 7.14], such as the dotting of letters with two dots and a dagger. Sayyid Muhammad’s script shows characteristic features of ta’liq like the left serif on alif and the unorthodox ligatures between letters. Alif is regularly connected to lam in the prefix al- [Figure 9.6a]. The stylization is extreme in common words and phrases like the exhortation alhumma (O God), the third word in the treatise [Figure 9.6b]. The stylization has extended to the kufic used for the basmala in the heading, whose strokes are thinner and more elongated than usual. Compared to the script used in Aqquyunlu documents, Sayyid Muhammad’s ta’liq is more even: the lines do not rise at the left and the last letter of each line is not as elongated. Individual words slope downwards, but the baselines are relatively flat. The elongated strokes on kaf form a strong rhythm, particularly in the opening line with the invocation. This is countered by the round fat tail of final ‘ayn as in al-shafi and lil-mushfi in line three [Figure 9.6a]. Nor surprisingly many of these features are adopted from nasta’liq, the hanging script used by calligraphers in western Iran at this time to transcribe Persian literature, especially poetry, and also adopted in the Ottoman court atelier. This attempt to turn ta’liq from a documentary into a manuscript script, was, however, short-lived. Under the Ottomans the hanging ta’liq style soon evolved into a distinctive script used for documents written in Turkish. Since this was developed by scribes working in the chancery (divan), it became known there as divani.

India

As early as the eighth century, sea-faring Muslims had carried Islam to the mouth of the Indus river, and in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Ghaznavids and Ghurids had brought Islam overland from eastern Iran and Afghanistan into northern India. A few Koran manuscripts were produced in the region in succeeding centuries,76 but only under the sultans of Delhi (1206–1555) did northern India become a major center of Islamic culture and learning, with chanceries and scriptoria that produced many documents and manuscripts. A rare decree surviving from the period of sultanate rule shows how a distinct style of ta’liq developed from the round hand style used to transcribe manuscripts. The document [Figure 9.7], a long scroll made of paper backed with cotton, a combination of materials typical of the area, contains a proclamation issued at Delhi in 725/1325 on the orders of Muhammad ibn Tughluq.77 At the very top is an invocation to God. Below is the large tughra, or emblem with the ruler’s name and titles, Abu’l-Mujahid Muhammad ibn Tughluq al-sultan. His name is written in an attenuated script with very long stems some five times the height of the bodies of the letters. This signature is extremely stylized: the sin of al-sultan is so short...
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Figure 9.7 Scroll on paper backed with cotton with twenty lines of script issued by Muhammad ibn Tughluq at Delhi in 725/1325. This scroll is a rare example of a decree to survey from pre-Mughal India. It shows how the regular naskh hand used for transcribing manuscripts was transformed in a chancery hand that later became ta'liq. The hand is marked by unauthorized connections and distinct forms of kaf with a long bar and ra' with an angled tail.

Other Styles and Centers

as to be virtually missing, and the nun is enlarged and set as a huge single letter which sweeps across the tail extenders like a bow. Mamluk sultans also used a related style of tall verticals in their tughras (Figures 8.10) and related metalwares (Figure 8.9) as did early Ottoman rulers in their dedicatory medallions (Figure 9.13), but this type of stylized script with elongated verticals became typical of Indian epigraphy, as in an extraordinary basalt panel commemorating a foundation in the Bengal capital of Gaur by the sultan Babur in 871/1466-7.

The Tughluq decree was issued to ensure that government officials accord the Sturjan (non-Muslim) community favorable treatment in recognition of its loyalty. In subject, then, the Tughluq decree resembles the one issued by the Fatimids offering protection to the monks of Sinai (Figure 6.7), but the layout is different. Here, the twelve lines of text are written in pairs, with eight more closely set lines at the bottom giving the name of the issuing agent, Muhammad Tughluq's vice-regent [nābi 'azim] Ulugh Barbak Qutlugh Firuz Malik. The scripts in both decrees include several unorthodox connections, notably alef to the following letter (Figure 9.7a) and dal to final ha' (Figure 9.7b). Nonetheless, this script is distinct. Although the lines slope upwards to the left, individual words are set on a slight downward slope, emphasized by the long, sloping bar of kaf that begins with a pronounced hook (Figure 9.7c). The final tail of a word, particularly ya' (Figure 9.7a), nun, and kaf (Figure 9.7c) is often extended in anticipation of enclosing the next letter or word, which is nested in the space created. The stroke often widens at the end into a wedge (Figure 9.7a). In other cases, the tail or final stroke is sharply angled. Dal is unusually large. In comparison to contemporary documents issued by the Ilkhanid (Figure 7.13) and Mamluk (Figure 8.11) chanceries, the Indian hand is much more jagged, with irregular rhythms and spacing.

As Francis Richard pointed out, the script used in the Tughluq decree resembles the round hand used for contemporary manuscripts, such as a copy of Ayn al-Qudat al-Hamadani’s mystical treatise Zubdat al-Haqqat [The Cream of Truths] completed on Friday 3 Shawwal 796/20 August 1394. Individual words in the manuscript also slope to the lower left and often contain unauthorized connections. Final ra’ often ends with a sharp upwards hook, used repeatedly at the end of the sixth line of the document (Figure 9.7a). The text of the manuscript can be called naskh, but the one in the document is more mannered and verges on ta’liq. As in contemporaneous Anatolia, the scripts used in the chancery of the Delhi sultanae shared features with those used in contemporary manuscripts, and these samples document the development of a regional Indian style.

Over the course of the next centuries, calligraphers in the eastern lands, perhaps because of their geographical separation from Iran and the Mediterranean region, where the main calligraphic developments
were taking place, used an increasingly mannered script to transcribe the Koranic revelation. Like the maghribi style developed at the other end of the Islamic lands, the script used in India became extremely stylized and visually distinct. This stately and slow-moving script has wedge-shaped letters, with thick round bowls for endings and wide spaces between words. This tendency to wedge-shaped endings is already apparent in the Tughluq decrees, as in the tails of final ta’ of hadrat and final ya’ in dibli and ta’ala (Figure 9.7a) in the fifth line of the text.

This distinctive script used exclusively in India came to be called birahi script, but the origin of the name is obscure and even its correct vocalization disputed. It is sometimes, without justification, thought to refer to the Persian word for spring (bahar). More probably, it refers to the state of Bihar in north-eastern India, a region usually under the sway of outside rulers: annexed by the Delhi sultanas in the fourteenth century, it belonged to the sultans of Jajnpur in the fifteenth and was later held by the kings of Bengal before it became subject to the Mughal sultans. In Muslim times Bihar itself was a relatively unimportant town surrounded by Buddhist monasteries (whence its name, from the Sanskrit vihar, monastery), and in the five and sixteenth centuries Shah Sut transferred the capital of the province to Patna.

The earliest surviving manuscripts in birahi script date to the late fourteenth century. Abd Allah Chaghatai refers to a Koran manuscript in the Kabul Museum in this style transcribed by Qadi Abu Bakr Ya’qub ibn Nasir al-Din at Lahri (Sind) on Friday 17 Rajab 776/26 August 1374, but this manuscript is unpublished and perhaps now lost. Better known is a small copy of the Koran once in the collection of Sadruddin Aga Khan, completed, according to the colophon, on 17 Dhu’l-Qa’dah 807/21 July 1369 by the scribe Mahmud Sha’ban, who was living in the fort of Gaiyur (modern Gwaloar). Each of the regular folios in the 350-folio manuscript has thirteen lines of text, with an interlinear Persian translation in a smaller and rounder naskh. The top, middle, and bottom lines are written in black; the intermediate lines alternate in red and blue, with the Persian translation written in the opposite color. In addition, there are thirty-four illuminated double pages, thirty marking the division of the text into sections, three others at the beginning of the manuscript, and one at the end. The illuminated pages have headings in thuluth or broken cursive script sandwiching five lines of text, the top, middle, and bottom lines written in gold and the intermediate ones in red and blue. The riot of color and vegetal decoration virtually overpower the somewhat awkward text script. It is an early version of birahi, notable for its irregular strokes and varied rhythms. Allih is pitched slightly to the left, and many final letters have long horizontal flourishes that balance the comparatively short verticals. The words sit on a flat baseline, and the intervals between words are emphasized by the contour panels around the words. The most

notable letters are the large dal, which is almost as tall as allif, and final ya’, which has a sharp angle, both features found in earlier sultanate documents and manuscripts.

Birahi script came to the fore in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. It can be seen in several Koran manuscripts, including one dated 888/1483 in the Bjaipur Archeological Museum (Figure 9.8), as well as many fine examples which are undated but usually attributed to the late fifteenth century. These manuscripts vary in size: the Bjaipur manuscript and an undated one in the Khali Collection (QUR 602) are very large (approximately 50 x 31 cm), but undated copies in the British Museum and the Khali Collection (QUR 257) are medium-size (50 x 30 cm). They are all copied on crude paper that has been eaten away by the acidic green pigments used for illumination. Each regular page has from eleven to fifteen lines of birahi script, sometimes with an interlinear Persian translation or a commentary written in the margins. Like the Gwaloar manuscript, these ones often have multiple illuminated pages, not only at the beginning and end of the text but also in the middle. The manuscript in Bjaipur, for example, has three lines of large script sandwiching ten lines of