Figure 10.11 Letter with eleven lines sent by Shah ‘Abbas to King Charles I of England, c. 1665.

This letter requests that the Persian silk merchants in England be granted the same favorable conditions that English merchants received in Iran. The lines are widely spaced to underscore the status of the sender. Divine names are emphasized in gold, and the terms friendship and union repeated several times.

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sa’unan (authority) and azamat (magnificence) is stretched out to form a seat for the opening letters of the next word. Overall, the letter projects an impression of authority, sublimity, and restraint.

As well as using nastaliq for new purposes, scribes and calligraphers in this period also streamlined the script so that it evolved into a new form. Just as calligraphers had adapted the original or old style of ta’liq into a new form sometimes called shikasta-yi ta’liq (broken ta’liq), but more commonly just ta’liq, so too the need to write faster led calligraphers to develop a new style of nastaliq in which letters and words that should be detached are sometimes joined. This new and streamlined style of nastaliq, which came to the fore by the seventeenth century, became known as shikasta-nastaliq (broken nastaliq), usually shortened to simply shikasta.92

In shikasta, calligraphers are allowed to make more unauthorized connections than in regular nastaliq, joining alif, djalal, ra’/za’/ zha’, and waw to the next letter.93 These unauthorized connections differentiate shikasta from all other scripts in one significant way. In other scripts, a non-connecting letter forces the calligrapher to end his penstroke before the end of the word. As a result, the calligrapher may need to add two or more penstrokes to write a single word, in addition to adding diacritics. In shikasta, by contrast, the calligrapher completes each word in a single penstroke. He may even write more than one word in a single penstroke, for unauthorized connections are permitted not only within a word, but even between words. Calligraphers writing shikasta often run the conjunction waw and the preposition ba (with) to the following word, and in bureaucratic copperplate calligraphers often run two or even more independent words together in a single penstroke.

These unauthorized connections mean that calligraphers can write shikasta faster than any other script. Pointing is required only when absolutely essential. Vertical letters are shrunk, and the combination of extra ligatures and short verticals creates an unusually dense

Persian. The calligrapher used gold ink to highlight divine names. These include not only allah (God) at the beginning of line four, but also masihya (Christian) and ‘ulwiya (sublimity) in line three. To add visual distinction to these last two, the unsigned calligrapher stretched out the hanging stroke of the sin and the connector between ya’ and waw. The main purpose of the letter was to ensure that silk merchants from Persia, when conducting business in England, would be granted the same favorable treatment that English merchants received in Persia. The words ulfiš (friendship) and yaganagi (union) are repeated several times, along with dusti (friendship). The letter closes with expressions of goodwill and good fortune.
which set off the script from the background and enhance its graceful and fluid aspect. In most cases, the size of the letters and the consequent legibility is subordinated to the flow of the pen.

Shikasta achieved a definitive style over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One of the early pioneers was Muhammad Shafi' Haravi Husayni known as Shafi'a [d. 1670-1], and hence the script was sometimes called shafi'a'yi or shif'a. Another was his contemporary Murtadaquli Khan Shamlu [d. 1688-9], whose work shows a cramped script containing letter combinations that were later dropped. Calligraphers at this time were still working to develop a consistent canon, but had already stylized their signatures.

Most modern scholars consider that shikasta reached its peak of artistic perfection under Darvish 'Abd al-Majid Taliqani, who gave the script its distinctive form. Although renowned during his lifetime for his skill in shikasta, he died aged thirty-five, in 1771 at Isfahan, a pauper, having done most of his work during the last fifteen years of his short life. He penned many different kinds of short specimens, ranging from literary works such as ghazals by the lyric poet Hafiz to letters and petitions, such as this one written in 1183/1769-70 pleading for money from an unnamed person (Figure 10.12) and mounted in an album in concertina form.

'Abd al-Majid's distinctive signature in the bottom left corner illustrates how disconnected letters are run together in shikasta to form patterns. The last four words [Figure 10.12a] give the calligrapher's name and the date: faqir 'abd al-majid sana 1183 (the poor 'Abd al-Majid in the year 1183/1769-70).

Most notable is the streamlining of letters and words. Ghayn loses its head, as in darigh, the penultimate word of the second line. Slashing diagonals are used for the cross-stroke of kaffah, as in bargis, the word at the top left of the first line [Figure 10.12b]. kam-tam and bandagan, the second and third words of the second line; and kamin, the center word of the last line. Final nun is a long sweeping stroke that ends in a right hook, as in min, the middle word of the second line, or kamin, the word just below it in the third line. Kih [Figure 10.12c] is reduced to the logograph of the upsidedown hook or spiggle already used in the Aqqoyunlu letter written in shikasta-yi ta'liq [broken ta'liq] (Figure 7.14).

'Abd al-Majid's aesthetic aim in composing this letter was to create a pattern of whiplash curves. Thick penstrokes contrast with hair-thin endings. Left-sweeping curves balance right-curving endings. Tight
is clear that the patron had entered an oral or less-refined written petition before copying this final, formal, and polished version recording that the plea was successful. The main text is written in eight longer lines, with the jubilant resolution of the case added in seven shorter lines, written upside down between the original lines of text.

In keeping with standards of the time, the document begins with laudatory honorifics, directed from a pleading subordinate to a powerful superior and written in couplets at the top. The text itself begins in line two with the conjunction kih, reduced to its regular logograph. The petition notes that last year’s taxes had been reduced, but that this morning when the officials ‘Abbasquli Khan, Aslan Beg Afshar, and Mirza Mohammad Muhsin (named in the middle of line 4 after the wide space) appeared to collect taxes, they requested the earlier, higher amount. So the official Fadallah Beg, along with the petitioner’s son Mirza Musa (named at the end of line 5), has been dispatched to request that another copy of the earlier order reducing taxes be sent to the petitioner, ‘Abbasquli Khan, and other subordinates. The official Aslan Beg, however, was supposed to be kept in the dark about the whole matter, for reasons, the document says, best known to the recipient, thereby hinting at behind-the-scenes intrigue. Piled up at the right of the bottom line (8) is the signature of the calligrapher, described as the least of servants [al-‘abd al-aqall], Mirza Kuchik Khan, and the date 1310, corresponding to 1795–6 (Figure 10.13a). The final line of the resolution, written upside down at the top, repeats that the document was written at the command of the honorable Haji Maskhr. At the end of the line, the text is again signed by [mashaqahu] the calligrapher Mirza Kuchik Khan, and the date 1310/1795–6 (Figure 10.13b).

The document exemplifies the reductions, smoothing, and stylization typical of shikasta. Words are piled within the swooping strokes of previous words and stacked at the far left. Dots are arranged in neat triads, and the upper strokes of kaf elongated. These swooping strokes, recumbent curves, and piles of dots are distributed to form patterns and establish a regular rhythm across the page. These features are particularly noticeable in set phrases such as the opening of the first line of the original text and the calligrapher’s signature and date at the end of both plea (Figure 10.13a) and outcome (Figure 10.13b). In the calligrapher’s name, the letters of kuchik are written in a single stroke, formed by eliding the jaw to a circular cha and reducing the final kaf to a shallow bowl, with the upper strokes of the two kafs added above as two long parallel lines. The date is written as usual with a single sweeping stroke for sana (year) as the seat for the numerals 1310. The eye revels in the overall composition without having to decipher individual words, which in many cases are all but impossible to read. Legibility is subsumed by pattern.

The added frills made shikasta increasingly difficult to read, and despite various nineteenth-century attempts to simplify it, along with contemporary prose, it remained the script of documents and
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decrees, while nastāʿīq retained its pre-eminence as the main calligraphic style. Qajar rulers were highly educated in traditional Persian literature and the arts, and a staggering quantity of beautiful books, typically written in a graceful and compact nastāʿīq lavishly decorated with gold, ultramarine, and carmine, was produced during their rule from 1779 to 1925. Few examples, however, have been published, particularly in the West, as this period has traditionally been seen as one of stagnation and decline. Even as the arts of the period are now being reassessed, most Western surveys concentrate on figurative painting, architecture, or the other arts. To some extent this situation is being redressed in Iran today, where various Islamic and calligraphic centers are producing lavish facsimile studies of nineteenth-century masters such as Mirza Muhammad Riza Kalhur (1829–93).102

Known as fakhr al-kutṭab (prince of calligraphers), Kalhur was the most important calligrapher of the nineteenth century, credited with reviving the style of nastāʿīq calligraphy developed by Mir Immād. Mir Immād’s successors in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had developed a more elongated style of nastāʿīq with wider spaces between words, but Kalhur reintroduced the more compact tradition, writing words on a smaller scale in a single motion, shortening the strokes and connectors, and piling words together to create a thicker skeleton. He also maximized the contrast between thick strokes made with the full width of the nib and thinner terminals, which are nonetheless written firmly. In these ways, he is said to have created a new harmony between black ink and white paper. To write faster, he omitted dots and curved the serif or hook at the beginning of letters.

Kalhur is also credited with developing a new method of teaching calligraphy. In the traditional system, students learned by copying, repeating first individual letters of the alphabet and then specimens by the master, until they finally qualified to receive a license (navaż) to teach. Kalhur, who did not like teaching, developed his own methods to maintain student interest and encourage their aesthetic awareness. First, he calligraphed phrases and verses that he deemed suitable for the students’ ability at the top of the page. Then, he urged students to copy that phrase underneath his model, at the same time practicing the shapes of individual letters or words on the page. Kalhur is also said to have revised the method of preparing the reed pen.103

Kalhur devoted most of his life to practicing calligraphy, but had few students. The most famous was Mirza Zayn al-ʾAbidin Sharīf Qazvini, known as the king of calligraphers (malik al-khāṭṭatīn).104 Kalhur also destroyed most of his own work as unsatisfactory, and though he calligraphed a few fine manuscripts, he is best known for his black practice compositions (siyāḥ mashāq) in which he practiced and perfected his style of penmanship. The collection of eighty-three examples recently published by the Arts Center in Tehran ranges from precise copies of quatrains in the style of Mir Immād to neat pages from literary works in Kalhur’s own compact nastāʿīq to almost abstract compositions, in which Kalhur covered virtually the entire surface with black ink.105

In the nineteenth century, nastāʿīq was also adopted in Iran for lithographed books. The process of lithography, invented by Alois Senefelder in Germany at the end of the eighteenth century, entails writing or drawing on a specially prepared stone surface, using a greasy crayon or special ink.107 The stone is then etched, leaving the design in relief, from which an unlimited number of prints can be taken. Lithography produces an image in mirror reverse, and so for large pages calligraphers had to write on transfer paper and then transfer the designs to the stone. Knowledge of lithography reached Iran by 1840, and the makers of books there quickly recognized it as the easiest, cheapest, and most effective way of disseminating texts, especially as there had long been opposition to the printing press for both religious and practical reasons. This process allowed calligraphers to use their finest scripts, which were traditionally considered more appropriate than typeface for transcribing the holy Koran and other sacred texts. Lithography also had the advantage that the book press was not required to invest in the very large type font required to print Arabic script and the stones could be reused until they broke.

From the 1840s onwards many lithographed editions of the classics, popular fiction, and translations from Western languages were printed at Tabriz and Tehran.108 One example is a copy of Nizami’s Khamsa (Figure 10.14) transcribed by Ali Asghar Tatrish and printed at the establishment (sinʿet-kart) of his Excellency Muhammad Riza at Tabriz in 1264/1847–8. The copyst, who was active over two decades from 1846 to 1868, also calligraphed an edition of the collected works of Saʿdi printed at Tehran in 1283/1868–9. He hailed from Tatris, the region between Avah and Qum in Jībāl province, and was known as the ‘little’ Aʿlī from Tatris to distinguish him from his predecessor Aʿlī Akbar Tatrisi (‘big’ Aʿlī from Tatris). d. 1834–35 who had worked at the court of Fath Aʿlī Shah, earning the epithet Scribe of the Sultan (katib al-sultan).109

ʿAli Asghar transcribed the large volume of Nizami’s Khamsa using a legible and clear nastāʿīq. Each of the 330 pages has a central written area with twenty-three lines of nastāʿīq written in four columns. In virtually all cases the central written area is surrounded by a marginal text with another forty-four lines of nastāʿīq written diagonally in two columns. Such a marginal text, already common in manuscripts written in Shiraz in the late fourteenth century, was very popular in Qajar manuscripts as well.110 The diagonal arrangement left space for triangular thumbpieces half down the outside margin, and the ones in this book are filled with an astonishing variety of drawings, ranging from demons and signs of the zodiac to plants and flowers. On two pages the marginal text is replaced with

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Figure 10.14 Colophon page to the Haft Paykar from a lithographed copy of Nizami’s Khamsa transcribed by ‘Ali Asghar Ta’rifashi, illustrated by ‘Ali Quli Khuyy, and printed at Tabriz in 1264/1847-8. ‘Ali Asghar Ta’rifashi used a compact, well-formed nastalig to pen the lithographed edition of Nizami’s classic poem. On many pages the margin is filled with additional lines of text written on the diagonal, but the colophon page contains marginal illustrations by ‘Ali Quli Khuyy showing the various stages of the lithographic process.

drawings of birds and flowers like those found on contemporary lacquered mirror-cases and pen boxes.

In addition to the marginal decoration, the book has thirty-eight illustrations by ‘Ali Quli Khuyy. The leading and most prolific illustrator of lithographed books printed during the first decade of production in Iran (1847–57), he worked in the traditional technique of line-drawing, which was later replaced by a style incorporating European techniques such as modeling. Most of ‘Ali Quli’s illustrations depict traditional subjects found in earlier illustrated manuscripts, such as Bahram Gur in the seven pavilions, but the space surrounding the curiously-shaped colophon to the Haft Paykar (Figure 10.14) is filled with a composite drawing showing various stages of the lithographic process. At the bottom workers prepare the special ink, at the left other workers smooth the stone, and at the top the calligrapher inscribes the stone under the watchful eye of the patron, who is smoking a waterpipe. The rectangular illustration beneath the triangular colophon shows the press in operation, with a barefoot worker (his slippers carefully placed on the floor next to him)

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moving the pedals to set the machine in motion, while assistants place sheets of paper under the plate. Such a process continued to be used for printing books in Iran well into the twentieth century.

Pictorial writing

In addition to elaborating the traditional scripts, both round and hanging, calligraphers in the later period in Iran also developed other techniques of integrating these scripts with pictures in what can be called pictorial writing. Most of the techniques had existed before the age of empires, but they became particularly widespread during this period and the results often blur the distinction between calligraphy and painting.11 These compositions were not part of the arts of the book, rather, like qit’a, they were calligraphic specimens meant to be mounted separately. They were made for a variety of tastes and pocketbooks, from the courtiers to sufis, as both individual compositions and popular designs that could be reproduced for a wider audience. In addition to their immediate visual impact, they often contain riddles and puns, both verbal and visual and sometimes even a combination of the two.

One technique was zoomorphic calligraphy. Known from at least since the fifteenth century (see chapter 7), zoomorphic compositions became particularly popular in Iran during this period, as calligraphers skillfully shaped words and phrases into the form of birds, animals, and human faces. In order to be readable, calligraphers chose texts that were, by necessity, well known, such as the basmala, sacred names like God, Muhammad, ‘Ali, Hasan and Husayn, pious invocations, and short prayers. They could be written in any script or combinations of scripts. Deciphering these pictures was a sort of game, like a crossword puzzle today, as the shape of the image was often a visual pun on the text it contained.

One of the most stunning examples is the splendid figure of a lion done in gold thuluth letters set against a brilliant blue ground decorated with a delicate arabesque scroll punctuated with red, white, and green flowers (Figure 10.15). The composition has been cut-out, pasted on a panel of pink card, and incorporated in an album in Istanbul.113 The text contains the famous prayer to ‘Ali known as the Na’d ‘Ali after the first words of the opening line (na’d ‘alyyan):

Call upon ‘Ali, revealer of miracles
You will find him a comfort to you in crisis
Every care and every sorrow will pass

The calligrapher cleverly arranged the text to fit the lion shape, beginning with the lion’s ear and continuing clockwise around its body.114 The tail, for example, is outlined in a gold border representing the sweeping tail of the final ya’ in the ‘Ali that begins at the top of the
This lion is one of the finest examples of zoomorphic calligraphy, done in expensive pigments such as gold and lapus lazuli. It is clearly the work of a court calligrapher, like the example of the basmalah in the form of the bird penned in Gilan (the province south of the Caspian) by Ibn Haji Muhammad ‘Ali of Isfahan and presented to the Safavid prince Mahmud Mirza, son of Shah Isma‘il.118 Other examples are more modest and reflect folk piety. They became particularly popular with Belkachi derivives in Anatolia [see Chapter 11] and also in India [see Chapter 12].

Such zoomorphic compositions were used not only by Muslims, but also by other Persian-speakers in the area. The well-known design of a cock in the Harvard University Art Museums, for example, contains the name of Bah‘a’allah, founder of the Bah‘i faith.119 In its left claw, the cock grasps an open book whose two pages are inscribed in shikasta with a long Arabic prayer by Bah‘a’allah addressed to a suffering adherent named Zia and advising him to be patient. A cartouche at the lower left bears the signature of the calligrapher, Mishkin Qalam, and the date, 1305/1887–8. Mishkin Qalam, whose name literally means amber-scented pen, was the most famous Bah‘i calligrapher. He may have been in the service of the Bah‘, who at that time was living in exile near Acre in Ottoman-controlled Palestine. The finely drawn cock served as something of an emblem [nughta] or letterhead, as the text in shikasta could be changed to suit the occasion. It thus represents the finest of calligraphy in service to religious promulgation.

A second form of pictorial writing that became popular in the age of empire was micrography, the technique of using words written in a small script to form an image. It had been used since medieval times, in both Arabic and Hebrew manuscripts.120 The earliest examples form geometric shapes and objects, but in this period calligraphers went one step further and arranged the words written in the tiny ghubar [dust] script to spell out a larger word or phrase. They often transcribed these texts on long [up to five meters] scrolls, which were unrolled and read aloud, and thus achieving the maximum juxtaposition of small script and large format. By reading the inscription written in the larger script, the reader is said to have transmitted the hidden text in ghubar, written in the letters themselves and sometimes in the frame around the letters. In this way the writing enhanced the apotropaic nature of the texts. These plays of words–on-words can be considered the visual equivalent of the riddles [ma‘ama] popular with contemporary poets and littérateurs.

These scrolls were made in a variety of forms and formats to suit a range of tastes. In one section (Figure 10.16), the words written in tiny letters are arranged to spell out a variant form of the profession of faith, ‘God, there is no god but He’ [allah la ilaha ila huwa] transcribed in thuluth letters. By uttering pious phrases such as this one, the
reader may be said to have read the entire text of the Koran. The phrase also recalls the opening words of the call-to-prayer: ‘God is Great, I testify that there is no god but God.’ To underscore the relationship of the text to prayer, the calligrapher has set the phrase in a cartouche arrangement recalling a prayer rug, with the larger scalloped niche at the left side imitating the shape of a mihrab and indicating the direction of prayer. In this way, the calligrapher has created both a verbal and a visual pun. On other examples the large texts, usually written in thuluth characters, but occasionally in reserve in nastā’iqr, spell out prayers or common Koranic verses that were considered apotropaic. Few of these scrolls are dated, but most surviving examples can be attributed to the eighteenth or nineteenth century. This scroll, for example, has the seal of the Qajar ruler Nāṣir al-Dīn Shah (r. 1848–96) and belonged to the royal collection. Others were made for more popular tastes.

In a third and related technique known as gulzar (literally, rose garden or full of flowers), calligraphers replaced the tiny words used in micrography to decorate a large phrase with flowers. The technique was used in Iran at least since the early sixteenth century. One of the first known examples is a calligraphic specimen with pious phrases penned by Zayn al-Dīn Mahmūd [Figure 10.17]. The calligrapher had an impressive pedigree: a student of Sultan ʿAlī Mashhādī, he was, in turn, the teacher of Mir ʿAlī Haravi. This is a complicated exercise with two related sentences in thuluth. The one in blue outlined in red is a paraphrase of a well-known Koranic phrase, found most closely in 18:38, saying that God is the most forgiving, full of mercy (huwa al-ghafurahuṭrahmat). The phrase in black outlined in white is a response: I put my trust in the forgiveness of the
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dots, as in an album with the Fatiha (Sura 1) penned by Muhammad Kazim in 1317/1839-40. The decoration consists mainly of flowers, but also includes the odd bird or animal. Plants and animals were thus not considered inappropriate to the Koranic revelation, and when penning poetic texts, calligraphers even added landscape scenes to the repertoire.

Artists in the later middle period further blurred the relationship between calligraphy and painting by penning inscriptions in a large and elegant nasta’liq that was then set within an elaborately painted background. The master of this fourth technique, virtually the opposite of gulzar, was Isma’il Jalayir (d. c. 1870). Son of the calligrapher Haji Muhammad Zaman Khan, Isma’il attended the Dar al-Funun, the polytechnic institute founded in Tehran under the prime minister Amir Kabir, and studied calligraphy with Murza Ghulam Riza. Isma’il became a leading artist at the court of Nasir al-Din Shah, painting scenes of harem ladies and dervishes as well as religious subjects. He worked in many media and techniques, from oil and lacquer to grisaille, favoring Edenic landscapes, often inspired by European prints and engravings.

This large sheet by Isma’il Jalayir (Figure 10.17) is an homage to ‘Ali ibn Husayn, the fourth Shi‘ite imam idealized as the perfect worshipper and therefore known as Zayn al-Abidin (ornament of the worshippers). The text begins at the top center with an invocation to God as the Dear, the Munificent (huwa al-‘aziz al-wahhab) in place of the usual basmala. It is flanked by invocations to the Prophet’s nephew and son-in-law ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, whom Shi‘ites regard as the first imam: ‘O chosen one! O ‘Ali, peace be upon him (ya ‘ala ‘alayhi salam). The central line of text written in very large ‘alif measures more than 11 cm high; black nasta’liq is an invocation to this ‘Ali’s grandson, ‘Ali ibn Husayn, the fourth imam often known as Zayn al-abidin. Inserted at the bottom between the dots vocalizing the large black invocation is the artist’s signature, drawn by ‘aqamah; the poor Isma’il, identified first as the painter (al-musawwir) and then as calligrapher (al-kattab). Though the composition was executed in the reverse order (first the calligraphy and then the painting), Isma’il Jalayir considered his painterly talents more important than his calligraphic ones. The last word in the line is sana (year), but the numerals showing the date were apparently cut off when the sheet was mounted and trimmed.

All of the calligraphy is executed in a large and bold nasta’liq. The size of the dots shows that Isma’il Jalayir used a pen some 3.4 cm wide to write the large black inscription, but a much smaller pen (diameter 0.5 cm) to write the red inscriptions. The latter forms follow the traditional style of nasta’liq, but the ink is much more transparent than the opaque ink used earlier. The transparent ink makes it possible to see where the black ink pooled at the end of a stroke, as at the top of ‘alif in ya’ and the final tails in ‘alif, ibn, and husayn; and the beginning of nun in hasan. These variations between opaque and translucent were carefully planned to create a rhythm of light and dark across the line, and they represent the idea of shading transferred from European art to Islamic calligraphy.

The bold calligraphy was then surrounded by a richly textured ground. The sweeping haw ‘al-husayn divides the composition diagonally, with a group of domed buildings filling most of the upper left. Painted in a Europeanizing style, the buildings have been carefully fitted to the strokes of the calligraphy. The uprights of ‘alif and lam at the beginning of al-salam, for example, frame a tower reminiscent of the contemporary Shams al-‘Imara and similar private apartments added to palace complexes in Tehran by Nasir al-din Shah. The shadda marking the doubling of the sin is set against the dome of a large pavilion.

Juxtaposing the architecture in the upper left is a landscape with people and animals in the lower right. It too has been carefully fitted around the letters. The large bowls at the end of ‘alif, ibn, and husayn are filled with vignettes. The first on the right shows ‘Ali seated before his young sons Hasan and Husayn. Other turbulent figures represent religious dignitaries, but there are also hunting scenes and depictions of women that seem to have nothing to do with the subject of the composition.
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This type of picture combining word and image illustrates changes that occurred in popular religion in Iran during the nineteenth century.\(^1\) The ulama became more important in the lives of ordinary Shiites through the doctrine of taqlid (following the dictates of a mutahhid) and the evolution of a single authority in the figure of the marja‘ al-taqlid (reference point for emulation). The first to achieve this position was Shaykh Murtada ibn Muhammad Amin Ansari, who emerged as mutahhid marja‘ al-taqlid exactly at this time (c. 1855) and remained so until his death in 1864. Popular religious fervor was enhanced by the increasing practice of the rawda-khāna, the recital of Husayn’s suffering, and the introduction of the ta‘ziya, the passion play about the tragedy of Karbala.\(^2\) Special performance centers known as takiyyas were set up for these plays, which were performed during the month of Muharram, and holy days, such as the birthdays of the imams, were also celebrated, often with the help of large painted canvases. This calligraphic painting invoking Zayn al-‘Abidin reflects the popular veneration of the imams, and the combination of calligraphy and figural vignettes shows that in Qajar Iran religious veneration was no bar to figural representation.

Notes

1. The history of this period is treated in the third volume, The Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times, of Marshall G. S. Hodgson, The Venture of Islam, 1974, especially in its introduction. This monograph describes the history of calligraphy in terms of master-pupil relationships, tracing the development of the six pens from Ibn Muqla to Ibn al-Bawwab, Yaqut, his six followers, and their followers who worked for the Timurids. The book then turns to an exposition of the masters of nasta‘liq, tracing its origins to Mir ‘Ali Tabrizi and its development under the Timurids and Turkomans. Dust Muhammad then recounts the history of painting and painters in a similar fashion before concluding with three short accounts of the scribes, painters, and illuminators who worked in the Safavid royal scriptorium. Although the beginning of his account is clearly apocryphal, the chronicler’s information becomes more accurate the closer he gets to his own time, when he was writing from personal experience. Furthermore, he tried to rely on the specimens that he included in the album, whose pages, though reassembled, often illustrate his points. In short, Dust Muhammad’s preface is the first art-historical account of the history of Persian calligraphy and painting.

2. The type of preface written by Dust Muhammad was soon imitated by other authors. In 964/1556–7 Quth al-Din Yazdi, storyteller qisaa-khanī and calligrapher at the court of Shah Tahmasp, wrote a biographical treatise on scripts and painters, Risalati dar tārīkh-i khāṭa wa nāqqashān. The text was composed for an unknown album made for Tahmasp and remained in circulation for centuries. One copy was made in 1017/1607, another in 1016/1605–6, and a third sometime in the eighteenth century. Husayn Khadijvān has published an abridged translation Risāla-i dar tārīkh-i khāṭa wa naqqash, 957/1354/1938: 666–82.

3. Quth al-Din’s treatise made an immediate impact at Tahmasp’s court, for it was plagiarized and used in a boldened version in 972/1564–5 by the person who compiled the album Hāsib, either the amir Ghayb Beg or the calligrapher Sayyid Ahmad Mashhadi.

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Art History in Sixteenth-Century Iran, Studies and Sources in Islamic Art and Architecture, Supplements to Muqarnas [Leiden, 2001], became more popular under the Safavids. The earliest intact album is the one compiled after 945/1538 by Shaghāl Khālid muḥbad[ Keeper of the Seal for the Shah] Tahmasp [UL, E1 432]. The text [Thackston, Album Prefaces, i–i] is replete with puns involving the terminology of calligraphy and writing that it can be rendered into English only via an abridged translation.

Much more famous, mainly because it is much clearer and more explicit, is the contemporary preface by Dust Muhammad for the album of calligraphic and pictorial specimens [TKS, H3154] he prepared for Bahram Mīrzā [1517–49], brother of Shah Tahmasp [Thackston, Album Prefaces, 4–7]. The author, whose full name was Dust Muhammad ibn Muqalla, was a calligrapher and possibly a bookbinder, but not a painter [for a critical biography, see Charyar Adal’ Autopis, in absentia: sur la date de l’introduction et de la constitution de l’Album de Bahāram Mīrzā par Dust-Mohammad en 951/1544], Studio Iranica 19, no. 2 [1990]: 219–36; ‘Les artistes nommés Dust-Mohammad,’ Studio Iranica 22, no. 2 [1993]: 219–96. In the album preface, dated at the end by a chronogram equivalent to 951/1544–5, the Safavid scribe traces the art of writing to Adam and the perfection of kufic script to the prophet’s son-in-law ‘Ali ibn Abī Talib. ‘Ali, he continues, appeared in a dream to the ‘Abbasid calligrapher Ibn Muqla and instructed him to write thulth, muhaqqaq, and naskh, which he calls the ‘Arabic script.’ From this point onward, Dust Muhammad describes the history of calligraphy in terms of master-pupil relationships, tracing the development of the Six Pens from Ibn Muqla to Ibn al-Bawwab, Yaqut, his six followers, and their followers who worked for the Timurids [Chicago, 1996], p. 12]. The book then turns to an exposition of the masters of nasta‘liq, tracing its origins to Mir ‘Ali Tabrizi and its development under the Timurids and Turkomans. Dust Muhammad then recounts the history of painting and painters in a similar fashion before concluding with three short accounts of the scribes, painters, and illuminators who worked in the Safavid royal scriptorium. Although the beginning of his account is clearly apocryphal, the chronicler’s information becomes more accurate the closer he gets to his own time, when he was writing from personal experience. Furthermore, he tried to rely on the specimens that he included in the album, whose pages, though reassembled, often illustrate his points. In short, Dust Muhammad’s preface is the first art-historical account of the history of Persian calligraphy and painting.
Dynastic Styles in the Age of Empires


Qazi al-Din was also the oral source for a longer and better-known Turkish treatise on calligraphers and painters entitled Munagib-i Hunavarvan [The Exploit of Artists], composed in 995/1586-7 by the Turkish poet and historian Mustafa 'Ali (1541-1600), sometimes known as 'Ali Efendi [for a comprehensive and well-documented biography, see Ronald L. Fleischer, Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa 'Ali (1541-1600) [Princeton, 1986]. An intellectual and bureaucrat in the Ottoman administration, Mustafa 'Ali was appointed finance minister in Baghdad in 1585. Although he found the city a relative backwater and his appointment a political disaster, Mustafa 'Ali took advantage of his year there to immerse himself in the Persianate milieu. At least thirty poets lived in the city, including Qazi al-Din Yazdi, who had emigrated to Baghdad c. 1566. Mustafa 'Ali apparently acquired a copy of the Persian calligrapher's treatise, and this work, along with their friendship, spurred 'Ali to compose a similar one. Mustafa 'Ali's secretarial source was 'Abdallah Khatibi [khatibi talat], one of the foremost calligraphers at the Ottoman court, and Munagib-i Hunavarvan is a major source of information for the development of calligraphy at both the Safavid and Ottoman courts. The text has been edited and published several times in modern Turkish, Munagib-i Hunavarvan, ed. Ibâne Mahmut Kemal Inal [Istanbul, 1926], and Munagib-i Hunavarvan, Hattat in ve Kitab SancÄ±lÄ±rnin Destanlar [Menakib-i Hunevarvan], ed. Mugaç Cunburu [Ankara, 1963].

Qazi al-Din's treatise, probably through the intermediate version in the preface to the Amir Ghayy Beg album [Hs161], also served as the source for the third, and best-known, treatise about Safavid calligraphy, this one composed a decade later by Qazi Ahmad. The title of this book is a sayyidat [descendant of the Prophet] and a scribe in the chancery who had served as adviser to the Safavid prince Ibrahim Mirza at Mashhad. Ibrahim Mirza was one of the main patrons of the book in the early sixteenth century and maintained a large scriptrium, most of whose members were well known to Qazi Ahmad himself. Qazi Ahmad composed his treatise in 1004/1596, expanded it in 1007/1598-9, and rewrote it a decade later in 1011/1601-2 (see Yves Portier, 'Notes sur le "Colostan-e honar" de Qazi Ahmad Qumri,' Studia Iranica 27, no. 2 [1988], 207-31, Akimushkin, 'Sources']. In the first versions Qazi Ahmad referred to his work as a risala [treatise or epistle], the expanded version was called Gulistân-i Hunar [The Rose-garden of Art], the title by which it is usually known today. B. N. Zakhofer published a Russian translation of the work in 1947; this served as the basis for Minorsky's 1959 English translation, Calligraphers and Painters: A Treatise by Qazi Ahmad, Son of Mir Munshi (Cincinnati 1952).

4 Thus, chronicles like Shams al-Din Muhammad Wasi in the preface to the Shah Isma'il II album compiled in 984/1576-7 [TKS 2138, folio 44a, text and translation in Thackston, Album Prefaces, 33] speaks of the eight basic and subsidiary scripts: thuluth, muhaqqaq, nashti, riyati, tabiq, ta'liq, and nastaliq [that is, nastaliq].

5 Habibollah Fat'ali, Atlas-i Khat: tabiq dar khattâ'î-i islamî [Tehran, 1931/1931], 446-50; William Hanaway and Brian Spooner, Reading Nasta'liq: Persian and Urdu Hands 1500 to the Present [Costa Mesa, CA, 1995].

6 Some Muslims today consider such images as blasphemous, see, for example, the deletion of certain images from films and books mentioned by Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, 'The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field,' Art Bulletin 85, no. 1 (March 2003): 176.

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Munshi Qumri Qazi Ahmad, Gulistân-i Hunar, ed. Ahmad Sahyald KhansARI [Tehran, 1333/1974].

In the introduction Qazi Ahmad presents a now-standard account of the origin and development of the art of writing, going back to the creation of the reed pen and the perfection of writing by 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. As Zakhofer pointed out in his preface (Qazi Ahmad, Calligraphers and Painters, 33), Qazi Ahmad combines the mystical idea of the written word with the concrete demands of production. He considered, the written word a talisman and the process of writing a magical art connected not only with the master's technique and skill but also with his spiritual and moral character. Purity of writing is therefore equivalent to purity of the soul.

Qazi Ahmad divides the main part of his original treatise into three parts. In Chapter 1, he discusses Thu'luth and other scripts resembling it. Chapter 2 covers Ta'liq, and Chapter 3 Nastaliq, including a verse treatise by the famous Timurid calligrapher Sultan 'Ali Mashhadi. Qazi Ahmad's later version concludes with a section on the work of artists, gilders, stencilers, gold-sprinkling, cut-outs, paper coloring, and the like. The later version (manuscript in Minorsky's translation, Qazi Ahmad, Calligraphers and Painters, 195-291) Qazi Ahmad, Gulistân-i Hunar, 161-70) contains an appendix on ruling, gilding, diluting lapis lazuli, and preparing various colors, ink, and other accessories of a scriptorium, but this is written in a different style, so Minorsky concluded that it was added by some technician and was not the work of Qazi Ahmad himself.

In addition, Qazi Ahmad's treatise is less a history of writing than an anthology, or tadkhila, a typical form of Persian literature. The main emphasis is on the biographies of artists, and the work is thus an artistic chronicle. This was by no means a new form, and Qazi Ahmad, like the author of the preface to the Amir Ghayy Beg album [Hs161], Thackston, Album Prefaces, 34-91, cobbled some of his material verbatim from earlier sources. Sometimes, he acknowledged his sources, as with the treatise by Sultan 'Ali Mashhadi [Gulistan-i Hunar, 64-78, Calligraphers and Painters, 106-35]. Sometimes he did not. One of Qazi Ahmad's unidentified sources was Bahram Mirza's secretary Budaq Qarvi, a secretary-clerk [munshi] and official in the tax office under Tahmasb, who compiled his own treatise on calligraphy entitled Trabalh, munboqqaq, nasht, rayhan, tawqi, riqa, ta'liq, and nastaliq [that is, nastaliq].

5 Habibollah Fat'ali, Atlas-i Khat: tabiq dar khattâ'î-i islamî [Tehran, 1931/1931], 446-50; William Hanaway and Brian Spooner, Reading Nasta'liq: Persian and Urdu Hands 1500 to the Present [Costa Mesa, CA, 1995].

6 Some Muslims today consider such images as blasphemous, see, for example, the deletion of certain images from films and books mentioned by Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, 'The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field,' Art Bulletin 85, no. 1 (March 2003): 176.
7. For the theory of the two pens, see Yves Porter, 'From the "Theory of the Two Qalam" to the "Seven Principles of Painting": Theory, Terminology, and Practice in Persian Classical Painting,' *Musques* 17 (2000), 109-118; Roxburgh, *Prefacing*, 199. The theory is also mentioned in Dust Muhammad's preface composed the following year (H2154), Thackston, *Album Prefaces*, 111 and was incorporated regularly in later works such as Shams al-Din Muhammad Wasti's preface dated 984/1576, Thackston, *Album Prefaces*, 32. The introduction to Qadil Ahmad's treatise (*Gulistan-i Hunar*, 9; Qadil Ahmad, *Calligraphers and Painters*, 49-50). For Safavid historiography, and the albums, see Roxburgh, *Prefacing*.

The connection between conservatives' aversion to painting and Tahmasp's rejection of it is fully to be explored, especially with an eye to both dated examples and texts. The groundwork for a cliché by Dickson and Welch, *The Houghton Shahnama*, sought to include painting as one of the acts forbidden in Tahmasp's periodic acts of repentance (lawbe), in which he renounced such irreligious activities as pigeon-flying, shaving one's beard, and listening to tanbur (a stringed instrument) and noqara (double-drum) music, and closed taverns, opium dens, and brothels where such forbidden acts as wine drinking took place (Abolala Soudavar, 'Between Safavids and the Mughals: Art and Artists in Transition,' *Iran* 37 (1999), 49-66). At least two such edicts are known, dated to early 940/late July 1544 and 965/1555-6 (Adle, 'Dust-Mohammad,' 239-41; Marianna Shreve Simpson, Sultan Ibrahim Mutez's *Hafiz Awarag*: A Primacy Manuscript from Sixteenth-Century Iran [New Haven and London, 1997], 339 n. 12). The relationship of painting to these edicts remains unclear, and scholars have suggested other reasons for Tahmasp's disinterest in the arts - ranging from avarice, overpowering on his new capital, and even eye problems. For a discussion of some of them, see Ehsan Ebrahim, 'Description contemporain des peintures murales disparues des palais de Shah Tahmasp a Qazvin,' in *Arts et sociétés dans le monde iranien*, ed. Chahryar Adle (Paris, 1983), 117-24; Adle, *Autorsia*, 242; Adle, 'Dust-Mohammad,' 241; Soudavar, 'Between Safavids and Mughals.'

8. On this subject, see the recent series of essays, Bernard Heyberger and Sylvia Naor (eds.), *La Multiplication des images en pays d'Islam de l'estampie a la telecricion* (170-176 sicle), Istanbuler Texte und Studien [Würzburg, 2003].

9. The reason why is unclear. It may be connected with the paucity of new architectural constructions in the sixteenth century, on which see Susan Babić, 'Building on the Past: The Shaping of Safavid Architecture, 1501-76,' in *Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran, 1501-1776*, ed. Jon Thompson and Sheila R. Canby (Milan, 2003), 39-49. They were, for example, fewer new mosques and madrasas which might have required new calligraphers of the Koran. More likely, the lack of Koran manuscripts can be connected with the increase in secular manuscripts, especially of Persian poetry.

10. Shiraz was more important than the two other contemporary centers of calligraphy. According to the Herati tradition established under the Timurids, for example, the Koran manuscripts copied for the Shi'ite ruler of Bukhara, 'Abd al-'Aziz, by

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14. The calligrapher and chronicler Budiqa Qazvini, who visited Shiraz c. 1576-7, described the commercial nature of small family businesses that flourished there (the translation is given in Oleg F. Akimushkin and Anatol A. Ivanov, *The Art of Illumination*, in *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia 14th-16th Centuries*, ed. Basil Gray [Boulder, CO, 1979], 10 and n. 74). There are in Shiraz many writers of *nusseh* all copying one another, making it impossible to distinguish between their work. The women of Shiraz are scribes, and if they couple as if they were drawing. The author of this report visited Shiraz and ascertained for himself that in every house in this city the wife is a copyist (kafirī), the husband a painter (müsawwir), the daughter an illuminator (musahhabī) and the son a binder (mavajibī). Thus any kind of book can be produced within one family. Should anyone want to obtain a book or illuminated books, they could be produced in Shiraz within a year. They all follow the same pattern, so that there is nothing to distinguish them.' Budiqa Qazvini's account, however interesting, has lost the ring of fantasy. It is impossible to imagine that an illiterate person could copy whole manuscripts.
ecstatic sayings, and his writings, particularly his voluminous commentary on the Koran, are still popular. For example, Ruzbihan Baqlı, The Unveiling of Secrets: Diary of a Sufi Master, trans. Carl W. Ernst (Chapel Hill, NC, 1977). Ruzbihan Baqlı's tomb in Shazู became a major shrine center [The Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition, ed. H. A. R. Gibb and others (Leiden, 1960), Ruzbihan], J. Spencer Tringham, The Sufi Orders in Islam (Oxford, 1974), 54 and 54. Carl W. Ernst, The Shamhulu Guide to Sufi Temple Pilgrimage (London, 1997). In the early fourteenth century, his great-great-grand-son 'Ez-d-Din Mas'ud added a new section to it, and a number of Ruzbihan's relatives and followers were buried there. The tombshrine became a center of pilgrimage, visited by the globe-trotting Rûq Bâttûta in 1354 [Ibn Battuta, The Travels of Ibn Batûtah, ed. and trans. H. A. R. Gibb (New Delhi, 1993 [1958-71]), 2:167-17]. Ruzbihan was often mentioned by his contemporary, the Ilkhanid geographer Hamdallah Mustawfi [Hamdallah Mustawfi Qazvini, Nuzhat al-Golub, ed. Mohammad Dahir-au-Din (Tehran, 1336/1936), 1:321]. In the later part of the century, the shrine waned in popularity and by the fifteenth century it had fallen into oblivion.

Ruzbihaniyya was a derivative of the Kazaruniyya, a Sufi order (tariqa) that developed around the tomb of Shâkh Abû Ishâq (d. 1034) in Kazarun. It continued to be a center of pilgrimage and manuscript production until the seventeenth century. See Filiz Çagman and Zeren Tanmâ, 'Manuscript Production at the Kazaruni Orders in Safavid Shiraz,' in Safavid Art and Architecture, ed. Sheila R. Canby (London, 2002), 42-8. For the latest word on illumination in the early Safavid period, see Sheila R. Canby, 'Safavid Illumination,' in Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran, 1502-1776, ed. John Thompson and Sheila R. Canby (Milan, 2003), 153-54.

By way of comparison, the written area in the pages by Zayn al-Abîdîn occupies just under one-half of the page.

Illustrated in black and white in James, Qur'ans and Bindings, pl. 48.

Illustrated in black and white in James, Qur'ans and Bindings, pl. 59; and in color in Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, Islamic Arts, Art and Ideas (London, 1997), no. 180.

We know this because another double page detached from its original Koran manuscript (Washington, DC, Freer-Sackler S16.6.683-3; Glenn D. Lowry and Milo Cleveland Beach, An Annotated and Illustrated Checklist of the Vees Collection (Washington, DC, 1988), nos. 7-9; Sheila R. Canby, 'Safavid Illumination,' 5.6) contains an almost exact copy of the decoration, but the text is laid out differently.

Illustrated in color in Arberry, Koran Illuminated, pl. 7; Anna Comandini, 'Travelling Pattern: A Qur'anic Illumination and its Secular Source,' in Safavid Art and Architecture, ed. Sheila R. Canby (London, 2002), 2, has suggested that the colophon should be interpreted as hendisad, a literary device expressing an idea by means of two words linked by 'and' rather than a grammatically more complex form such as an adverb qualifying an adjective. Such an explanation is unnecessarily complicated, particularly as Ruzbihan signed both illumination and writing in other manuscripts and there is no reason not to accept the usual interpretation, as James did, that Ruzbihan was both calligrapher and illuminator of this fine Koran manuscript.

See the discussion by James, After Timur: Qur'ans of the 15th and 16th Centuries, 133-15.

There are, of course, exceptions, and a few manuscripts, like the one transcribed by Muhammad Husayn ibn Muhyî al-Harawi in the Keir Collection, are written only in a large naskh or muhaqqaq.

Again, the manuscript in the Keir Collection is exceptional: it maintains the traditional layout, with Surâ 1 on folio 2b and the beginning of Surâ 2 on folio 3a.

This is the case, for example, with a Koran manuscript in Tehran (INM, no. 4397; Mahdî Bayâni, Abîl wa hâlî fi khushnîsîn: nasta'îq nîvîsân, 2nd edn (Tehran, 1363), 1053; Galehchi az qur'ânî-yi khântî mi tarz-i darvâs-i islâmî [A Selection of Koran Manuscripts in the Museum of the Islamic Era] (Tehran, 1375/1996), 73) transcribed by Pir Muhammad al-Sabouni (the second) in 929/1523-1524. Ruzbihan was responsible for both the main Koranic and additional divinitory texts in another manuscript dated 935/1524-5 (Khalili Collection, QUR121; James, After Timur: Qur'ans of the 15th and 16th Centuries, no. 39). Both text are found in another sumptuous manuscript of the Koran, finished in mid Sha'ban 955/July 1542 (Khalili Collection QUR 729; James, After Timur: Qur'ans of the 15th and 16th Centuries, no. 43). Very similar in size, format, and quality to the one penned by Ruzbihan in the CBL, it belonged to the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. James suggested that it might have been a present from Shah Tahmasp. Provenance is thus not a useful way of identifying origin.

On the inscriptions from Isfahan, see Lutfallah Hinarat, Gâmitây-yi abâh-i târikhi-i isfahân (Tehran, 1350/1977), 401-68. On 'Ali Riza, see Sayyâ, Abîl wa hâlî fi khushnîsîn, no 655; Encyclopedia Iranica, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (London and New York, 1985), 'Ali-Reza 'Abbâs.' 'Ali Riza was born and raised in Tabriz, and in his youth often carried the epithet al-Tâbrizî. The dates of his birth and death are unknown, but extant works mark a career stretching over three decades (1585-1617). Said to have been an autodidact in nasta'îq, 'Ali Riza was trained in the Six Peny by 'Ala' al-Dîn Muhammad al-Tâbrizî, better known as 'Ala' Beg (d. 1553), a calligrapher who had also designed many of the inscriptions in mosques in Tabriz (Qâdi Ahmad, Gulistan-i Hûsain, 38-40; Qâdi Ahmad, Calligraphers and Painters, 82-81). In 1585, to escape the Ottoman invasion of Azerbaijan, 'Ali Riza emigrated from Tabriz to Qâbus, but then moved to Khurasan, to join the entourage of Farhad Khan Qâramanlu, 'Abbâs commander-in-chief and an active patron of the arts and letters. Shah 'Abbâs, noting 'Ali Riza's proficiency, soon asked the calligrapher to join the royal scriptorium.' 'Ali Riza is said to have made this move on 1 Shawwâl 1001/July 1593, after which he abandoned the epithet al-Tâbrizî in favor of al-'Abbâs.' 'Ali Riza's favor with the shah waxed, and the calligrapher soon replaced Sâdîq Beg Afsâr as royal librarian (kitâbâh-î). Over the next decades 'Ali Riza produced many calligraphic specimens as well as designs for inscriptions. In his own day, 'Ali Riza was most famed for his nasta'îq, in which he closely followed the style set by Mir 'Ali Harawi. He used nasta'îq for calligraphic specimens and architectural inscriptions, such as the gold-embossed plaques for the shrine of Imam Riza at Mashhad dated 1011-13/1602-4 (The Arts of Islam, exhibition catalogue, Hayward Gallery (London, 1976), no. 347). In modern times, however, 'Ali Riza is best known for his work in thuluth, particularly the inscriptions on tile mosaic decorating the buildings around the mausoleum in 'Abbâs' new capital at Isfahan.

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37. On this problem, see Contadini, ‘Travelling Pattern.’
39. The translation in the Khalili copy, for example, was newly composed for Shah Sulayman in 1084/1673–4 by ‘Ali Riza ibn Kamal al-din Adrakani. See the comments in Bayani, Contadini, and Stanley, The Decorated Word, 136. For Mafjili, see El’z, ‘Madshii, Mullal Muhammad Bakir.’
41. Ahmad was born in Nayriz, a town in the mountains of Fars on the route between Shiraz and Kirman. He worked mainly in the capital Isfahan, where he was closely associated with Shah Husayn. In the first decade of the shah’s rule [1648–70], Ahmad Nayrizi often signed works using the epithet saltani royal and had access to prized works in the royal collection, such as a copy of the Sallatul salatidansheen transcribed by Taqti. After the brutal Afghan invasion of 1722, during which Isfahan was sacked and the shah deposed, Ahmad Nayrizi took refuge in the house of one Haji Muhammad Sarraf. Despite the lack of court patronage, Ahmad continued to produce fine manuscripts for another two decades.
42. At least ten Koran manuscripts in his hand are known. This one, CBL 1561, has been published by Arberry, Koran Illuminated, no. 177; James, Qur’ans and Bindings, no. 67. The Khalili Collection has a similar manuscript dated 1118/1706–7 (JUR 346; Bayani, Contadini, and Stanley, The Decorated Word, no. 13) as well as a smaller one dated 1153/1740–1 (JUR 384; Bayani, Contadini, and Stanley, The Decorated Word, no. 54). A slightly different copy penned by Ahmad Nayrizi in Sha’ban 1117/December 1705 for Muhammad Ibrahim Beg yazbashi [the calligrapher and rebound in 1217/1802 with lacquer covers praising Fath ‘Ali Shah, has been published in Mohammad Hasan Seman, Golestan Palace Library: A Portfolio of Miniature Paintings and Calligraphy [Teheran, 2000], 53–8. Since Nayrizi and Tabrizi look very similar in Persian, this manuscript (no. 638) was misattributed to Ahmad Tabrizi by Badri Azahay, ‘Fahr-i qu’inni-yr khat-yr kitaabkhana-yi saltanatni’ [Teheran, 1351/1981], no. 6.
43. As in a page of calligraphic specimens dated 1321/1709–10 (Khalili Collection, CAL 63, Safwat, Art of the Pen, no. 160).
45. There are, for example, at least forty examples of his work in the collection of the Gulistan Library, many of them once owned by Mirza

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37. An example in the Art and History Trust Collection [Abolala Soudavar, Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection [New York, 1992]], 174 contains a commentary in naskh, signed by Ahmad Nayrizi, on the Koranic phrase (6:162) that life and death belong to God. Ar. 2810/1103–4 in which Ahmad provided the copy was signed 1253/1839 in shikasta explaining that he copied the calligraphy at the request of Nuri ‘Ali Khan as an exercise when recovering from a severe leg ache.
38. Safwat, Art of the Pen, no. 163.
40. E.g., a calligraphy dated 1248/1832–3 with a description of a wolf by Ibn ‘Unqa al-Farazi [Khalili Collection, CAL 88; Safwat, Art of the Pen, no. 164]. In this example, however, the spaces between the lines are filled with clouds decorated with flowers, and the somewhat fussy decoration detracts from the readability of the text.
42. See, for example, a cut-out specimen in nasta’liq penned by Fath ‘Ali Shah and now in the collection of Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan; Anthony Welch, Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World [Austin, TX, 1986], no. 67.
45. Qaedi Ahmad, Gulistan-i Hunay, 42–56; Qaedi Ahmad, Calligraphers and Painters, 84–99.
46. Gulistan-i Hunay, 52–3; Calligraphers and Painters, 95.
48. See, for example, the decree issued on 1 Jumada II 910/10 November 1504 on the authority of Shah Isma’il ordering the restitution of unwarranted taxes levied on the fieldmorn near Qazvin belonging to a certain Amir Husayn [Art and History Trust Collection, Soudavar, Art of the Persian Courts, no. 55; Soucie, ‘Calligraphy in the Safavid Period,’ 3:1–4 and 31].
49. The document has been published in Sheila R. Canby, Goldne Age, no. 40. I thank her for providing a letter from the British Museum’s file by A. H. Morton, who read the full text of the document, from which I draw my conclusions here. Qaedi Ahmad [Gulistan-i Hunay, 47–9; Calligraphers and Painters, 89–90] mentioned several people who were in charge of the correspondence of the shrine of Imam Riza: Mawlayn Nasir-i Astarahadi (who had two sons who were also scribes, Sultan Mahmud and Isma’il) and Baha’ al-Din Husayn (who had a son, Muhammad Qasim).