DYNASTIC STYLES IN THE AGE OF EMPIRES

The calligraphic specimen (qit'a) was the most common exercise penned by Ottoman calligraphers. The typical example contains a line of large thuluth containing an aphorism and several shorter lines of smaller naskh containing hadith. The two texts run concurrently from page to page, and need to be read separately. The individual specimens were usually mounted on pasted board and bound, as in this case, in an album in accordian format.

Painted in gold ink (Turkish surme altın, Persian zaf indih) and typically finished not by the calligrapher himself, by an illuminator who furnished the gold calligraphy to a matte finish that contrasts with the bright ground.98

To make such large compositions, calligraphers elaborated the technique of stencils and pouncing that had been used to transfer designs to various surfaces such as pottery or stuccoed walls. Designing large compositions was a time-consuming and expensive process, and those done on white paper with black ink could easily be damaged in pouncing. Hence, artists began to make intermediate copies on dark brown or black paper using a special yellow ink made from arsenic-based orpiment. These materials had two advantages: the orpiment ink did not build up on the paper, and mistakes could be covered with black ink and rewritten with orpiment. In addition, this method allowed the calligrapher to reproduce copies far more quickly, for he could paste the original composition on several sheets of paper and prick the group of sheets at one time, thus producing several intermediate copies from a single original.99 After pouncing, the calligrapher could use a narrow-nibbed pen to trace the dots and draw the outline of the letters, which could then be inked in or filled with flowers in the gulzar technique (Figure 11.18). Master calligraphers, however, could use a reed pen with a wide nib to simply rewrite the letters using the dots as a guide.

One of the first masters in designing such calligraphic panels was Mustafa Raqim (1757–1826).100 Renowned for his proficiency in large scripts, which he also used for monumental inscriptions, Mustafa Raqim applied the principles that Haфиз Osman had developed for thuluth (Figure 11.4) to the large style known as jali (Turkish cell). To reproduce these compositions, Mustafa Raqim also made stencils, some of which are still preserved.101 A fabric panel in the Sabancı Collection (Figure 11.11) gives a good idea of the fine quality of Mustafa Raqim’s work.102 The main text is written in two sizes of thuluth jali, with the words ingeniously fitted together to form phrases that can be read on three levels of expanding complexity. The large letters on the bottom line contain the names God (Allah) and Muhammad. They can be read in conjunction with the three words written in the same large script on the upper line to form the rhyming phrases allah huwa rabbi məhammed nabi (God, He is my Lord, Muhammad is my prophet). Fitted around the large letters are complementary phrases in smaller letters that can be read alongside the main words to form an expanded version of the profession of faith: ‘la ilaha illa llaah la ilaha illa llaah wa rabb al-’alamin; məhammed səla allah səlaybu wa salam nabi (God, there is no god but Him, my Lord and Lord of the Two Worlds, Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, is my prophet). The text is remarkable for its balance and symmetry. Note, for example, the way that Mustafa Raqim sprinkled vocalization and diacritical marks regularly throughout the composition and designed the square arrangement of
cross-bar of kaf. Ali'i is a vertical stroke that begins below the baseline and ascends with a flourish to intersect with qaf mim. It is mirrored in the curved tail added to final mim and encasing the whole triangular composition that is written separately from the main inscription. Mustafa Raqim omitted all dots in his signature, although other calligraphers who adopted his style included some of them.

These large calligraphic compositions, striking in the boldness of their color and script, were one of the most notable Ottoman contributions to the art of calligraphy. They were justly popular, and even larger examples could be painted on wood. The most famous are the eight roundels designed in 1859 by Qadi 'askar Mustafa Izzet to be hung below the dome in the interior of the congregational mosque converted from the great church of Hagia Sophia [Figure 11.12] in Istanbul. Written in thuluth jali in gold on an ultramarine ground, they contain the names of God, Muhammad, his sons Hasan and Husayn, and the four orthodox caliphs. The largest of their type, they measure a colossal eight meters [twenty-five feet] in diameter. The eight sacred names are written in enormous thuluth jali, whose strokes measure some 35 cm wide and must have been enlarged by squaring. Smaller versions survive on both pasteboard and wood. As on Mustafa Raqim's panel [Figure 11.11], the benedictions following each name are fitted in the interstices to fill out the circular compositions. On the wooden roundels, the gold letters are carved in relief to reflect the light. The calligraphic compositions are usually left plain, although, on at least one pasteboard example with the name of God, a floral spray was added to fill the ground below. When hung in the pendentives of the dome of Hagia Sophia after its conversion into a mosque, the roundel with the name of God was hung to right of the mihrab and the one with Muhammad to the left. The two panels, which extol the two pillars of Muslim faith, were immediately visible to anyone entering the main doorway. The panel with allah (Figure 11.12a) is particularly striking, with an artful tughrā-like arrangement of the benediction jali jalal [may his majesty be exalted]. The two words share the same vertical stroke of lam, but the two introductory jims are set slightly below each other, a visual evocation of the verbal reverberation of God's name.

The most exotic of the calligraphic compositions popular in late Ottoman times--and one at the other end of the spectrum from the large panels in thuluth jali--is the gold leaf, in which the dried leaf served as the matrix for a calligraphic composition. The calligrapher could use leaves from various types of trees [e.g., horse chestnut, fig, or mulberry] or plants [e.g., ivy, or rose], but the most popular was the hardy tobacco, a plant introduced from the New World and a favorite in the Islamic lands since the early seventeenth century. Using ink or pigment mixed with gum arabic to strengthen the leaf structure, the calligrapher applied the composition to the back of the leaf, which could be positioned either horizontally or vertically.
Typical examples measure $15 \times 10$ cm, a tenth the size of the panels. Using a pin, the calligrapher then pierced the leaf, delicately removing the tissue and leaving the skeleton of membranes exposed. The technique of inscribing the leaves of trees or plants seems to have developed in Bursa in the late nineteenth century. These leaves were particularly popular with Sufis, perhaps because they equated the fragility of the leaf with the temporality of the human condition. Many examples are preserved in the museum around the tomb of Jalal al-din Rumi at Konya. Sometimes, the inscriptions on these leaves attest to their Sufi affiliations. Some invoke the name of Rumi or depict his turban. Another invokes the name of ‘Abd al-Qadir, suggesting an affiliation to his Sufi order, the Qadiriyya.

It is unclear exactly what function these leaves performed. They show no signs of mounting, whether in albums or on walls of shrines, perhaps they were simply rarefied souvenirs.

Most of the texts inscribed on these leaves are short phrases written in a tall thuluth with elongated verticals. The texts are often placed symmetrically around the leaf’s central stalk, which is highlighted in color. Some short texts are written in mirror reverse, others are set in a pear-shaped frame. The compositions seem to have been taken from larger works in other media, though their monumentality belies their tiny size on the leaves. One example (Figure 11.13), written in red instead of the usual gold, contains a quotation from the Surat Yusuf (12:64) saying that God is the best caretaker and the most merciful of the merciful. The design, with its striking initial ba’s, copies a calligraphic specimen signed by the late...
nineteenth-century calligrapher Husni Efendi. Other tobacco leaves are inscribed in gold with the names of God, Hasan, Husayn, and the four orthodox caliphs. Their texts copy the monumental roundels designed by Qadi-Askar Mustafa 'Izzet to hang in Hagia Sophia (Figure 11.15).

The Ottomans, like some Muslims today, preferred words to pictures. Unlike their counterparts in Iran, court artists experimented little with combining pictures and words, and the only type of pictorial writing that flourished in the Ottoman lands was zoomorphic calligraphy. The Shah Mahmud Nishapuri album compiled at the Ottoman court c. 1560 contains a splendid example of a lion drawn in gold by Mir 'Ali Haravi (Figure 10.15), and this beast became a favorite figure for certain Shi'iite groups, especially the Sufi order known as the Bektaşı. The Bektaşı came to venerate 'Ali as the originator of the Koran (sahih-i risale) and the lion of God, of whom Hazüzi Bektaşı was said to be the reincarnation. Hence Bektaşis often composed zoomorphic calligraphies in the shape of a lion. These popular images were often explicated symbolically. Thus, the lion's paws usually had five claws, said to represent the pentad of God, Muhammad, 'Ali, Hasan, and Husayn, and the lion's red tongue signified that 'Ali was the spokesman (nagg) of Muhammad. Many faces were drawn with the text in mirror image, symbolizing the esoteric (zahiri) and exoteric (batin) aspects of being. The letters in these zoomorphic calligraphies were tallismanic, and the basic text could be supplemented by additional words or characters, making the content extremely difficult to read.

The Bektaşı hung these calligraphic images on the walls of lodges (tekkes), tombs, meeting houses, and even private homes, but despite their widespread use, surprisingly few have survived, perhaps because they were willfully destroyed after the establishment of the Turkish Republic. A few are preserved in ethnographic museums, including one that depicts a lion, the symbol of 'Ali, surnamed Haydar (lion), killing a serpent, who represents the black, or lower, soul. The picture is composed of a verse by the Persian mystical poet Farid al-Din 'Attar (d. 1220) saying that it is not everybody's role to kill the evil soul in the body, to cut (changed in the text to 1 cut) into pieces the serpent in the cradle is the work of Haydar. Disentangling these calligrams is often difficult, and hence to make sure that the reader got the message, the calligrapher repeated the verse in a readily readable naskh at the lower right followed by the date 1310/1795.

These Bektaşı images were part of popular culture, but such compositions were also designed by famous calligraphers at the Ottoman court. Some took the shape not of living beings, but of objects like a ship. One penned by Isma'il Durdi in 1103/1690 contains the names of the Seven Sleepers mentioned in the Koran (18:8). Cartouches at the side contain two of the ninety-nine names of God: Opener (jattab) written in mirror reverse and Forgiver (ghaffar). The image had talismanic properties: the ship represents the boat to salvation, for which God will open the door. The ship was a popular image: another example composed of the profession of faith was penned by Seyyid Sha'ban in 1277/1860. Another familiar zoomorphic composition was a stork, a bird praised for its piety in performing the pilgrimage to Mecca. Isma'il Zuhdi, older brother and teacher of Mustafa Raqim, for example, penned the phrase basmala wa bihi (in the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, and to Him) in black thuluth outlined in gold in the shape of a stork (Figure 11.14). The composition begins at the
stork’s rear, with the three initial alifs of alallah, al-rahem, and al-rahim serving as its tail and the repeated lam-ra’a of the latter two words as its legs. Perhaps the most artistic touch in the calligraphy is the loop of the final mim in al-rahim, which serves as the bird head. The letter mim also represents the number forty, the abbreviation for Muhammad, recipient of the Divine Word.123 Isma’il’s name floats to the left of the stork’s head, almost like prey ready to be pecked. To the right is a rendering of the haram at Mecca. Such images of Mecca and Medina were popular at this time, used to illustrate pilgrimage manuals and tiles as well as descriptions of the Prophet (hilyas), which are decorated with a similar elaborate floral border.124 Below the stork’s feet is the date 1013/1604-5, presumably a miscalculation for 1213/1798-99. This is one of the earliest of such images of a stork, which was often repeated in slightly varying forms. Isma’il Zahir’s younger brother Mustafa Raqim made one dated 1223/1807-8.125 So did the nineteenth-century calligrapher Bektashi Nuri.126 Such images attest to the popularity of zoomorphic calligraphy in the Ottoman lands, albeit not in court circles.

The hanging scripts

In addition to the round hands, calligraphers in the Ottoman lands, like their counterparts in Iran and elsewhere, often used different types and sizes of the hanging scripts. Chancery scripts used a hanging script for documents. The earliest surviving examples issued by the Ottoman court in the early fifteenth century had been written in ta’liq, the hanging script also used in Persian charters (see Chapter 9). Following the establishment of the imperial chancery at Istanbul in 1453 and the proliferation of both personnel and documents, Ottoman scribes began to elaborate ta’liq script, developing the distinctive Ottoman style known as divani (literally, belonging to the chancery), since its use was restricted to the chancery.

The original divani script seems to have been unvocabularized, as in a deed issued by Cem Sultan in mid-Rabi’i 1286/ mid-May 1481.127 The lack of vocalization made the script difficult to read, so scribes began to elaborate it by adding vowels, reading signs, and decoration. The new form is sometimes called jali divani, meaning not large divani, but clear or evident divani. Like ta’liq, this stylized chancery hand is written in widely spaced lines that ascend to the left. The extreme stylization and increasing number of unauthorized connections make it not only challenging to write and read divani, but almost impossible to have words or lines interpolated in it. The script thus insured confidentiality and protected documents from forgery.

Chancery scripts used divani for many official documents, including correspondence, endowment deeds (waqfiyya), edicts (Persian firman, Turkish ferman), grants of titles, land, and privileges (berati) appointments (manushur), and the like. Such documents were quite numerous: it has been estimated that some 3,400 were issued yearly under Sulayman. The documents were typically embellished at the top with the sultan’s personal emblem, or tughra, which was also arrayed on seals and engraved on coin dies.128 Each sultan had his own emblem designed at the time of his accession and continued to use it throughout his reign. Since sultans did not sign their documents, the tughra was the ultimate authentication, affixed by the chancellor in the imperial chancery (Turkish nisançil). Paul Wittek first categorized the four main components of the ottoman tughra.129 The first is the monogram proper (Turkish seri, literally palm), the lower portion with stacked letters bearing the name of the owner. The second comprises the shafts (Turkish tug, standard), three vertical projections at the top joined by S-shaped strokes (Turkish zalif, lock or tress). Third are the loops (Turkish beyze, egg or oval), two concentric circular extensions on the left. The fourth are the picner-like projections extending from the ends of the loops on the right (Turkish koj, arm, or hancer, dagger). The calligrapher usually drew the tughra, which, like a large-scale composition in thuluth (levha), could then be handed to an illuminator for decoration. Over time, the text became longer and the calligraphy more intricate.130 The earliest were written in lampblack, but later under Muhammad II, better known as Mehmed the Conqueror, gold was introduced. The illumination also became increasingly elaborate. Under his son, Bayazid II, the background between the letters was filled with cobalt blue and decorated with pears.131 Nevertheless, the calligraphy remained the basic structure of the tughra. The desire to get the calligraphy correct seems to have encouraged mechanical means of reproduction, and there are a few samples of pricked and stamped tughras.

Turks had already used the tughra in pre-Ottoman times.132 The earliest Ottoman example—that made for Sultan Orhan in 734/1324 contains only the monogram proper, with three vertical projections (med by the alifs) in Orhan and Osman. It lacks the three S-shaped sih, the loops, and the picner-like projections.133 The other elements were added in steps. Bayazid I’s tughra added the title khan to his father’s name, written as the larger of the two loops. Murad II’s tughra included the epithet al-muzaffar (victorious), written at the top of the monogram. Mehmed’s tughra added the adverb dar’iman (eternally), written inside the smaller loop.

The basic shape of the Ottoman tughra was thus developed by the time of Mehmed the Conqueror, but it reached its classic form under Bayazid (Figure 11.15). The sultan’s given name, Sulayman, is written at the bottom of the stacked letters, surmounted by his title bâsh. His father’s name and title, Selim Shah, fill the third and fourth lines. The two names are connected by the genealogy ibn (son of), written in the inner loop, while the large outer loop contains the final um of the word khan, with the initial kha written on the fifth line. The stacked letters and continuing on the left shaft representing if. The epithet al-muzaffar dar’iman fills the rest of the strokes, It
Figure 11.15  Diagram of the tughra made for the Ottoman sultan Salayman.

The Ottoman sultan's emblem, or tughra, was composed of four parts: the monogram proper, the shafts, the loops on the left, and the projections on the right. It was drawn up at the sultan's accession and affixed to all documents issued in his name. This one reads Salayman Shah ibn Selim Shah Khan, may his victory endure.

begins on the right shaft. The S-shaped stroke represents initial alif, which is connected to the straight shaft, representing lam. The following letters mim, zay, and jaa occupy the three loops at the line, with the upstroke stroke of jaa taking up the middle shaft. Final ra' is written as a horizontal flourish in the middle of the smaller loop.

Symmetry and balance were clearly of great concern, as the emblem was meant to be recognized as much as read. To ensure symmetry, the calligrapher fitted certain letters, such as the final la' of the two shahs, next to each other on the bottom line. For balance, the calligrapher also added the two S-shaped flourishes on the middle and left shafts. Unlike the right flourish, which represents the initial alif in al-muqaddas.

Figure 11.16  Land grant issued in the name of Sultan Salayman and dated 21 Rabi‘II 959/16 April 1552.

The document grants lands, together with the revenue from silk rearing in villages in the province of Tripoli in Lebanon, to the sultan's wife, Harem Sultan, for her foundations in Jerusalem. It is a fine example of jali tughra. At the top is the sultan's emblem, or tughra, written in gold and blue and set against a ground of flowers and arabesque scrolls.

these two flourishes do not represent letters. They are unnecessary to the form and meaning, but add symmetry to the composition.

A simple form of tughra, rendered in gold or black, was used on most official correspondence and edicts, but a fancier type, written in blue outlined in gold, was used on documents written in the chancery and known as divani. The spaces between the letters of the tughra are decorated with flowers and arabesque scrolls, with a different design in each interstice, and the varying designs make it possible to date detached tughras by comparing them with those still attached to dated documents. A good example is found on this edict issued by Salayman on 21 Rabi‘II 959/16 April 1552 (Figure 11.16). The illustrator filled the inner loop of the tughra with plants and braided fillets and the outer loop with spiraling scrolls sprouting feathery leaves and blossoms. Different areas are contrasted by setting the designs against a plain or a gold ground. Both layout and designs are similar to those found on a detached tughra, which can therefore be
DYNASTIC STYLES IN THE AGE OF EMPIRES

dated to the late 1550s. In other tughras issued under Sulayman, the illuminator added flowery branches that grow between the shafts. Sometimes he also extended the blue and gold scrolling pattern around the whole tughra to form a large triangular composition. In addition to the artistic glory of the tughra, the scroll issued by Sulayman (Figure 11.16) is important for the historical value of its text. Written in fine divani, the document grants lands, together with the revenue from silk rearing in villages in the province of Tripoli in Lebanon, to the sultan’s wife, Hürrem Sultan, for her foundations in Jerusalem. Most imperial documents begin with the invocatio, containing a short prayer with the names of God (He is God, the ruler, the mighty, etc.). This text was usually written in gold. Sometimes it was inscribed on a separate piece of paper that was attached to the top of the document above the tughra, and hence it has often been detached, as in this example. The text itself opens below the tughra with a line in gold divani beginning nishan-i sharif [this noble sign]. This phrase was typically granted on documents granting an imperial title, privilege, or property, but not on edicts. The opening was standardized in both content and execution, and the calligrapher exaggerated the cursive of the letters to form a pattern of loops, sometimes punctuated by dots. The main text of the grant follows below in twelve lines of black divani, with gold used for highlights. As with ta’liq, the scribe extended the last letter of each line with a large loopy flourish to prevent additions. When the text ended over several sheets of paper, the secretary often wrote a small sad over the joins. This letter was an abbreviation for the phrase sabih al-wasit, attesting that the sheets were in correct order and a precaution against fraudulent replacement or interpolation. The calligrapher usually wrote the date on the bottom line, with the place where the document was issued written off to the left side preceded by the word maqam.

Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Ottoman tughra became more elaborately decorated until the illumination threatened to overwhelm and obscure the basic structural design. This process led to a basic reform by Mustafa Raqin at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Calligraphy instructor to Sultan Mahmud II [r. 1808–39], Mustafa Raqin was also charged with drawing up the designs for Ottoman currency, which also bear the tughra. Mustafa Raqin’s new design for the tughra maintains the same basic format as the one used in earlier Ottoman times, but his different proportions and introduces more curvilinear strokes. The shafts bend slightly and slope to the left, ending with beveled terminals. The S-shaped curves or locks begin lower down on the shafts and are also more curvaceous and of uneven thickness. To balance the left-sloping pile of letters, Mustafa Raqin added a new phrase on the right, ullah [the just]. It is written in an extremely stylized way, with ‘ayn virtually in independent, rather than initial forms, and the upstroke of lam as a central divider. To balance the epitaph...
DYNASTIC STYLES IN THE AGE OF EMPIRES

Figure 11.17 Imperial appointment issued by Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid II on 1 Rabii' II 1300/7 February 1885. This patent appoints 'Abdallah Pasha, governor of Rumeli, to the imperial Council of State. The words are written on a diagonal slope within bands that rise at the left side like the prow of a ship and hence this form of jali divani is often called safina [ship]. At the top is the sultan's taghra, a finely executed but rather static design.

OTTOMANS IN ANATOLIA, BALKANS, EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

styles in different parts of the same work. Shaykh Hamdallah, for example, was not only a master of the Six Pens, but also trained in nastā'īq. His copies of the Koran often end with divination tables (tahānam) or other Persian texts written in this hanging script. Similarly, the scroll that he transcribed with samples of the Six Pens (TKS E.H. 2086) ends with a passage in nastā'īq.

It is no surprise that this type of hanging script developed in Iran became popular in Turkey, as many Iranian calligraphers emigrated to Istanbul in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, where they penned fine manuscripts in Persian, the literary language of the Ottoman court, and Ottoman Turkish. For example, Muhammad Sharif, a calligrapher from Tabriz, transcribed several fine manuscripts of the collected poems composed by Sultan Sulayman under the penname Muhhibi. The finest manuscript, dated on the last day of Sha’ban 973/21 March 1566, has double columns of nastā’īq separated by panels brilliantly illuminated by Kara Memi. The calligrapher may perhaps be the Muhammad Sharif mentioned by the Safavid chronicler Qadi Ahmad as a master of the nastā’īq style.

The Ottoman court in Istanbul assiduously collected manuscripts and calligraphic specimens (qit'a) penned by famous Iranian calligraphers in nastā’īq and other scripts. Many of the most sumptuous calligraphic albums are preserved in the court treasury there. Works by Safavid masters of nastā’īq from the court of Tahmasp were particularly prized, and many of the finest works by Shah Mahmud Nishapuri are found in Istanbul. One is the unusual Koran manuscript he penned in nastā’īq [Figure 10.7] that Tahmasp presented to the Ottoman sultan Murad III on his accession in 1574. Another is the Shah Mahmud Nishapuri Album, whose opening double page in nastā’īq is signed by the master. Each page contains the Fatiha (Sura 1), but the layout differs slightly on each page, probably to show Shah Mahmud’s mastery of this elastic script.

One of the most striking images in the Shah Mahmud Nishapuri Album is a cut-out of a lion by Mir ‘Ali Haravi [Figure 10.15]. Not only did its form of a calligraphic lion become popular with the Ottomans, but so did its cut-out technique, an art that reached dazzling heights under Sulayman. One of the most stunning examples [Figure 2.7] is a short manuscript signed by the cut-out calligrapher ’Abd al-Hayy ‘Ali. The final folio [8b] contains a dedication to the sultan’s son Shahzada Muhammad [d. 1543], and so the work can be dated c. 1540. The text contains forty short Traditions, each written horizontally in one line of white tawqī’i’ pasted on pages of deep rose or olive-green. The first Tradition begins with the standard opening: “The Prophet, upon him be peace, said” (qala al-nabi ‘alayhu al-salam). The remainder start ‘And also from him’ (wa ‘anhu), sometimes adding the benediction ‘upon him be peace’ (‘alayhu al-salam) if the hadith was short enough to leave sufficient space for the qualifier. For example, the hadith written in the middle line of the left page begins: ‘And also from him, upon him be peace,’ followed by a gold roundel marking
the beginning of the short Tradition: 'The key to prayer is ritual ablution' [rinifah al-salat al-tahur]. Each Tradition is followed by a twoline exposition in Persian verse which has been cut-out in light blue or tan nasta’iq. The Persian verses in the middle of the page are set diagonally, but the Traditions at the bottom of the pages are followed by two hemistiches set horizontally in boxes, with the final two paraphrasing the Tradition written in corresponding boxes at the top of the next page. This layout makes for a symmetrical arrangement on facing pages, though to finish the Persian verse corresponding to the Arabic hadith at the bottom, one needs to go to the next page. Layout and symmetry have taken precedence over readability.

The Arabic text in tawqi’ is marked by unauthorized connections between letters. The most common is alf to lam. This combination makes up the Arabic demonstrative prefix al-[the], occurring frequently, three times, for example, in the middle line on the left page. Waw is often connected to the following letter or word, as in the word al-salat in the same line or the phrase wa-anhu at the beginning of each hadith. This rising tail of waw forms a sublinear rhythm and emphasizes the strong horizontal quality of the script. These connections also made it easier for ‘Abd al-Hayy to cut-out the letters, but they also make it difficult to maintain the necessary distance between letters.

In contrast to the horizontal tawqi’ of the Arabic hadith, ‘Abd al-Hayy used the hanging nasta’iq for the Persian verses. Each word is written on a sharp diagonal, and final letters, particularly kaf and za’, as well as medial sin/shin, are lengthened and widened to add internal rhythm. The elastic and elongated nasta’iq contrasts with the compact and compressed tawqi’, a contrast heightened by color. The sumptuousness of the calligraphy is enhanced by corner panels filled with exquisite illumination, probably by Kara Memi, and the whole page set within gold-flecked marbled borders. The binding is equally astounding: it displays a garden that has been cut-out, pasted to pasteboard, and covered with varnish. Composed of roses, tulips, prunus, violets, dianthus, and iris, the garden marks the first known appearance of florists’ flowers in Ottoman court art.

The hanging nasta’iq script remained popular in Ottoman lands for centuries for both manuscripts and calligraphic specimens. The greatest master in the eighteenth century was Muhammad As’ad [d. 1798], known as Yasari (the left-handed), because he was paralyzed on his right side and forced to use his left hand.118 Like most calligraphers of the time, Muhammad Yasari designed both monumental inscriptions and smaller works on paper.119 He is particularly renowned for his calligraphic specimens (qit'a) intended for albums. Many copy compositions by the Safavid master of nasta’iq, Mir ‘Imad (Figure 10.9), such as this page [Figure 11.18] that Muhammad Yasari transcribed for his diploma in 1167/1754.120 His nasta’iq so closely follows Mir ‘Imad’s style that the Ottoman calligrapher was sometimes known as ‘Imad-i Rum (the ‘Imad of Anatolia).

Muhammad Yasari’s work follows Mir ‘Imad’s composition in both diagonal layout and nasta’iq characterized by elongated curves that widen at the end of the stroke. Nonetheless, tiny but significant differences distinguish copy [Figure 11.18] from original [Figure 10.9].120 Muhammad Yasari’s lines are slightly more sloped and his calligraphy is slightly more spacious. He standardized letter shapes, notably final wa and lam. He also smoothed out the line. His copy, for example, shows slightly less difference between thick and thin strokes in the last word of the poem, nist. Most importantly, Muhammad Yasari also changed the spacing to set off words with slightly wider spaces. In the opening words of line two, for example, he widened the space around the second word, dar, to set it off from the first word kib and the third tab’. Such spacing was important in a region where Persian was not the native language. His regularization of shape and spacing enhanced readability, but decreased flexibility. In short, Muhammad Yasari did for Mir ‘Imad what Shaykh Hamdallah had done for Yaqut: regularize the letters and spacing.
Muhammad Yasari’s son, Mustafa ‘Izzet, known as Yasarizade, is said to have perfected the rules set down by his father for the nastalıq style used in Ottoman times and known there as ta’liq. As in Iran, the letters were measured in terms of dots formed by pressing the nib of the pen on the paper. Succeeding calligraphers practiced by making exact copies [taqlid] of Yasarizade’s work, as with this page (Figure 11.19) from an album penned at the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth century by Haji Nazif (1846–1913). The text contains Khâgani’s ode on the Prophet, written as twenty-four specimens (qit’â) penned in a hanging script on marbled paper. These two pages describe the Prophet’s eyebrows. As is typical in the hanging script, words are unvoiced. Each letter is measured in terms of dots. Yasarizade had penned his dots in the same black ink used for the text, but Haji Nazif enlivened the page by using red for the dots. He also added the exclamation sâ’y (persevere) under each line of the poem, a motif frequently used to separate lines in these teaching exercises. The sweeping flourish fits the space between the lines and adds visual interest and unity to the page. It also shows the calligrapher’s discipline and skill, as all eight examples, written freehand, are virtually identical.

In addition to literary texts on paper, Ottoman calligraphers in the nineteenth century used the hanging nastalıq script for other works. The small size was also used for legal opinions (fatwa), and a large size was used for large-scale compositions that could be hung on the wall (lehtewa). Calligraphers also inscribed the occasional leaf in gold ink using nastalıq script. The texts typically contain prayers or invocations in Arabic, though one unusual example contains a prayer in Turkish, saying that ‘I drown in the sea of insubordination, I plead for your help, O messenger of God.’ In general, these examples show a flatter baseline than the hanging nastalıq used for Persian.

As part of his program of modernization following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1924, Atatürk outlawed the use of Arabic script. Calligraphers continued to maintain traditional scripts, especially for religious purposes, but they became increasingly stylized and removed from daily life. At the end of the century, however, interest in calligraphy revived, and in modern times Turkey has become one of the main centers of Islamic calligraphy (see Chapter 13).

Notes
1. Annemarie Schimmel, Islamic Calligraphy, Iconography of Religions XXII, 1 (Leiden, 1970), pls. 30–1, illustrates various of these textiles as well as a scene of men embroidering the kisswa in Egypt in the 1930s. For an example of one of the eight gold-embroidered bands [known as hizam, belt] for the kisswa, probably made in Egypt in the nineteenth century, see M. B. Piotrowsky and J. M. Rogers, Heaven on Earth: Art from Islamic Lands, Works from the State Hermitage Museum and the Khalili Collection (Munich, 2004), no. 47.
2. Farhad Pasha [d. 982/1574–5], a student of Ahmad Karabasari, for example, was a vizier, Yusuf known as Demirci Kulu [d. 1005/1611–12] was a cannon-founder. See J. M. Rogers and R. M. Ward, Suleyman the Magnificent (London, 1988), 55. In addition to these professional artists and teachers whose names and biographies have been passed down for generations, other practitioners included professional copyists, who worked on commission, and salaried teachers of penmanship, who often instructed the young in primary schools. There were also amateurs who devoted their spare time to writing. As these calligraphers did not generally take on pupils, these groups were not as influential, and their names and styles were not transmitted in the written record.
3. One of the best-known practitioners of the art at the dawn of the twenty-first century is Uğur Derman, for a biography, see Chapter 13. Derman has been a student and friend of many of the last practitioners of the traditional styles, and his work is particularly valuable for its discussion of materials and techniques.
4. See the charts of these masters given in the various surveys of Ottoman calligraphy, such as M. Uğur Derman, Letters in Gold: Ottoman Calligraphy from the Sakıp Sabancı Collection, Istanbul (New York, 1998), 86–8; Manjich Bayani, Anna Contadini, and Tim Stanley, The Decorated Word: Qur’ans of the 17th to 19th Centuries, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (London, 1999), 66–74.
5. Sulayman Sa’d al-Din Efendi Mustaquinzâde, Tuḥfat al-Ruḥatât, ed. Mahmud Kemal (İstanbul, 1938). Although the treatise includes...
calligraphers working in the Arab and Persian lands, it is most valuable for its information about Ottoman calligraphers active in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Mustaṣjtazmaz drew upon a long Ottoman tradition of biographical writing. His predecessor was Sa‘id-i Suyuṭi’s Muḥammad b. Abū al-Walā‘a al-Miṣṣaṣṣ (Makarim al-Athar, ed. S. A. Gürsoy, Istanbul, 1980). One of the earliest authors working in this tradition was the poet and Persian Mustafa ‘Alī, whose Maṣāḥif-i Ḥarām-i Ḥasan-i Aṣfarī was written for the Ottoman sultan Murad IV in 1640 AD. It is a major source not only for the Ottomans, but also for the Safavids for a detailed description of this work, see Chapter 10. Modern Turkish scholars have not been aware of the importance of these sources. Kemal’s edition of Mustaṣjtazmaz in itself marked a watershed: it was the last official book printed in Arabic script in Turkey before Atatürk’s reforms.


Like other chroniclers in the Ottoman period, al-Zahidī presented his history of calligraphy as a series of master–pupil relations, but his account differs from the standard ones. He skipped most of the works of the Six Pens, beginning instead with Şahîy Hamdallah and tracing a chain of transmission corresponding to that given in the license granted to the master calligrapher of his day, Hasan al-Rusulī (the license survives in the library of McGill University; see A. G. E. von Luschan, The Diplomata of the Egyptian Calligrapher Hasan al-Rusulī, Munich, 1913). In addition to the pupils of Şahîy Hamdallah and Darvish ‘Ali, al-Zahidī added a section on the transmission of Şahîy Hamdallah’s school in Egypt in the eighteenth century. The work is basically a genealogy linking his time, as exemplified by Hasan al-Rusulī, to the past.

7. Derin, Letters in Gold, 7–15. I. Gündüz Kayaoglu, ‘Divhīr’, in M. Uğur Derin in Ay Astracan, ed. Irvin Cemil Schick (Istanbul, 2000), 555–68. It is generally assumed, though not explicitly proven nor necessarily true, that the same materials and tools were used throughout the period.

8. The last one was typically used for the three majuscule versions of the Six Pens, known in Turkish as sihil, muhakkak and tevki, and as the one used to give the text as a whole in the Persian manuscripts, the one for nesih, rehvan, and rik‘a.

OTTOMANS IN ANATOLIA, BALKANS, EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN


10. In one of his letters, Schick, ‘Tâzâkâ Bâlâselînes’e Göre Süsüs Hattûna Dair Baz İstatîlât’, in M. Uğur Derin in Ay Astracan, ed. Irvin Cemil Schick (Istanbul, 2000), 456–82, compiled the terminology used in this particular treatise, defining the terms with the help of other sources, both printed and secondary, and writing them out as an illustrated glossary. I thank him for his help in translating this example.


13. Hamdallah’s father, Mustafa Dede, was a Sürahwārī shaykh who had emigrated from Bukhara to Amasya, where Hamdallah was raised. He followed his father’s affiliation and became a Sūr, but switched his allegiance to the Nāṣibīyya and was also associated with the popular Sūr order called the Khalwātīyya, or in Turkish, Helvati. In his lifetime Hamdallah was known as Ibn Shaykh (son of the shaykh), the form he usually used to sign his work. Derman (Derman, Art of Calligraphy, 211) reported that he had never encountered one signed ‘Şahîy Hamdallah.’

14. The court chronicles tend toward the hagiographic and stress the calligrapher’s personal connection to Mehmed’s son, Sultan Bayazid. The recent work by Julian Bayzid and Zeren Tekin, Turkish Bookbinding of the 15th Century: The Foundations of an Ottoman Court Style, ed. T. Stanley (London, 1993), 96–100, shows that the written sources need to be balanced by information taken from extant works in order to compile a more plausible biography of this man whose works are also available in the Dictionary of Arabic Manuscripts (London, 1988). The Dictionary of Arabic Manuscripts is the most complete and detailed source on the subject. Shaykh Hamdallah studied calligraphy under Khayr al-Din Mar’ashi, learning the Six Pens canonized by Yaqut and his followers. While in