IN THE ESTEEMED MEMORY OF
MR. SAKIP SABANCI
THE FOUNDER OF OUR MUSEUM.
Among the many glorious arts of the Ottoman period, pride of place was given to calligraphy, which was regarded as the most prestigious form of art. The Ottoman sultans, some of whom were themselves accomplished in the art of writing, supported calligraphers in much the same way as princes and wealthy patrons in the West sponsored painters. As did Western painters through the nineteenth century, Turkish calligraphers shaped their art through study and emulation of the works of earlier masters. Apart from the obvious beauty of Ottoman calligraphy, what most appeals to me is the important relationship between master and apprentice, and the infinite capacity of this art to renew itself from one generation to the next. Veneration of earlier generations and the continuity of this notion of respect has a moving influence on me.

My father, Haç Ömer Sabancı, was born in the village of Alapıaya in central Anatolia—the son of a poor family of farmers. He did not have the opportunity to go to school, he did not learn to read and write. At the age of twenty, he left home in search of work, walking 125 miles to the city of Adana, where he began working as a laborer in the cotton fields. He took advantage of the opportunities offered to him and finally became the owner of a cotton yarn and textile factory. In time, his business grew, and he moved to Istanbul.

Although Istanbul’s cosmopolitan environment gave my father a healthy appetite for art and culture and he began to collect antiques, he never forgot his roots. My father instilled in his children a pride in our heritage; we are as closely linked to our past as we are to one another. He also inculcated in us a deep appreciation of education and a love of art.

As part of the modernization movement initiated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, the Arabic alphabet was virtually abandoned. I belong to the generation that learned to read and write modern Turkish. Although I do not know the Arabic alphabet, Ottoman calligraphy has become my main focus as a collector. Initially, I was attracted by the beauty and majesty of this art form; later on, I came to understand the importance of protecting and preserving Ottoman calligraphy so that it might be appreciated by a new generation in Turkey and elsewhere.

The Sakıp Sabancı Collection of Ottoman Calligraphy that I have donated to the Sabancı University, with which the Sakıp Sabancı Museum is affiliated, includes works dating from the fifteenth through the mid-twentieth century and is the largest such private collection in Turkey. It is particularly gratifying for me to be able to share this remarkable art that is so emblematic of my own national heritage, but which is still little known to the West.

Sakıp Sabancı
The Prophet Muhammad (AD ca. 570–632) fled from Mecca, and from persecution by the city’s pagan establishment, to Medina to preach his religion in the year AD 622. Muslims take the date of this flight (hijra) as the beginning of their calendar. The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar consisting of twelve months, each 29.5 days long, for a total of 354 days. Thus the Islamic year is eleven days shorter than the solar year, which is the basis for the Western calendar. As a result, for every 33 Western years, there are 34 Islamic years; for every 100 solar years, there are 103 lunar ones. Islamic calligraphers used the lunar, or hijra, calendar to date their works.

In this text, dates are given Western-style. The dates of calligraphic works and of calligraphers’ lives, however, are given according to both the lunar and the solar calendars, with the hijra date supplied first.

At the request of the author, the names of the chapters of the Qur’an, and all other Qur’anic terminology, are given in Turkish transliteration. Thus the Qur’anic invocation of Allah, commonly transliterated as the bismillahi, is given here as the bismile. All technical terms, even those of Arabic origin, are given their Turkish spellings. These terms, which include the names of scripts, represent original, unique, and distinct categories of artistic style and content that have no specific analogues in English. Each term is defined or described at its first mention in the text.

Turkish orthography—until 1928, the Arabic alphabet that had been used to write Turkish was replaced by a modified version of the Latin one—includes a number of letters and symbols that will be unfamiliar to the general reader. Here is a list, along with pronunciation:

- چ. as in jar
- چ. as in cheese
- گ. usually a silent letter
- ی. as in cereal
- ی. as in pit
- چ. as in jar
- چ. as in cheese
- گ. usually a silent letter
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- ی. as in pit

A circumflex, or şapka (hat), placed over a vowel lengthens it.

During Ottoman times, Muslim children were usually given a single name at birth. To distinguish themselves further, they would often take on names that identified their fathers or referred to their occupation or place of origin. A young man could take on a köşge, or patronymic, using the Persian suffix -zade (son of), as in Yesarzade, or the Arabic word for "son", Ibn or bin, as in Ibn-i Şeyh or Hasan bin Mustafa.
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Turkish orthography—until 1928, the Arabic alphabet that had been used to write Turkish was replaced by a modified version of the Latin one—includes a number of letters and symbols that will be unfamiliar to the general reader. Here is a list, along with pronunciation:

- c, as in jar
- ç, as in cheese
- ğ, usually a silent letter
- ğ, as in égg
- i, as in jet
- ğ, as in jéllë

A circumflex, or şapka (hat), placed over a vowel lengthens it.

During Ottoman times, Muslim children were usually given a single name at birth. To distinguish themselves further, they would often take on names that identified their fathers or referred to their occupation or place of origin. A young man could take on a kana, or patronymic, using the Persian suffix -zade (son of), as in Yesarizade, or the Arabic word for "son", ibn or bin, as in Ibn-i Şeyh or Hassan bin Mustafa.

A place name could also be added to a person's name, using either the Arabic ending -i or the Turkish ending -i (or -î). Thus, Mustafa Kutahü and Kutahüli Mustafa both describe Mustafa of Kutahya. A word signifying a person's occupation, rank, or title could also be applied as a name. For example, the calligrapher Mustafa Rakim, named Mustafa at birth, acquired the appellation Rakim, which means "writer" or "calligrapher", when he became an accomplished artist. Other examples include Kadıasker (Supreme Judge) Mustafa Izet Efendi, Çömez (Apprentice) Mustafa Efendi, and Şeyh (Sheikh) Hamdullah. Nicknames were also possible, as in Deli (Crazy) Osman.

Honorifics such as Efendi (Master, Gentleman) or Hanım (Lady) were used by members of literate or clerical society. A person who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca was called Hacı (Pilgrim). The title Bey (Sir, Mister) has a less religious connotation and was more closely associated with civil authorities.

Over the course of their lives, people might acquire more than one such appellation. Repeating the entire multipart name can be unwieldy and repetitious, and for that reason, the names can be shortened in various ways. Yesarı Mehmed Esad Efendi, for example, can properly be referred to as Yesarı Mehmed Efendi, Yesarı Efendi, Mehmed Esad Efendi, or Esad Efendi—often within the same paragraph. This usage is reflected in this book for the sake of simplicity and readability, and as an example of Turkish style.

The works in this catalogue were measured in centimeters. Folios are identified as r (recto) or v (verso). In Ottoman books, the recto is the left-hand page; the verso is the right-hand page.
THE GENEALOGY OF OTTOMAN CALLIGRAPHERS

A major factor in the development of the art of calligraphy among the Ottoman Turks was the strong and continuous master-and-student system. To clarify this tradition, four genealogical trees have been prepared. The first is of calligraphers in the "ahlâm-ı sitte" (six scripts), from Şeyh Handullah (829/1429–926/1520; see cat. nos. 1–2) to our era. The tree is limited, however, almost exclusively to calligraphers represented in the catalogue. With Necmeddin Okşay (1300/1883–1396/1976; see cat. nos. 69–70), the great artists Mustafa Halim Özyazı (1315/1898–1384/1964) and Hamid Ayaş (1309/1891–1402/1982) form the final links in a genealogy unbroken for five hundred years. The second and the third genealogical trees show the calligraphers again of the "ahlâm-ı sitte" whose education took place outside this system: Ahmed Karahişârî (875/1470–963/1556; see cat. no. 6) and Mahmud Celâleddin (1163/1750–1245/1829; see cat. nos. 36–39).

A third genealogical tree has been prepared for Ottoman islâmî calligraphers, some of whom are represented in the catalogue, beginning with the founder of the style, Yesârî Mehmed Es'âd Efendi (d. 1213/1798; see cat. no. 34).
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Tophaneli Mahmud
(6.1080/1669)

Süyyi Ahmed
(6.1099/1688)

Durmuşzade Ahmed
(6.1129/1717)

Kâtipzade Mehmed Refi'
(6.1182/1768)

Dedezade Mehmed Said
(6.1173/1759)

Yesâri Mehmed Es'ad
(6.1213/1798)

Arabzade Mehmed Sü'dullah
(6.1259/1843)

Yesârizade Mustafa İzzet
(6.1265/1845)

Abdülfettah Efendi
(6.1314/1896)

Kadıasker Mustafa İzzet
(6.1293/1876)

Kabruszâde Ismail Hakkı
(6.1279/1862)

Ali Haydar Bey
(6.1287/1870)

Sâmi Efendi
(6.1330/1912)

Çarşanbâh Arif Bey
(6.1310/1892)

Tahsin Hilmi
(6.1330/1912)

Hasan Rıza
(6.1338/1920)

Necmeddin Okuy
(6.1396/1976)

Hacı Nazif
(6.1331/1913)

Mehmed Hulusi Yazarın
(6.1358/1940)

M. Halim Ozyazıcı
(6.1384/1964)