Note that this is a general scheme; many different models of the hilji also exist (see cat. no. 19 for an example).

The most popular hilji are written in sulus and nesli; in muhabbat, sulus, and nesli; and in tevhid. In the last century, large hilji lesehan, using cilm scripts, were made to be hung on walls. Early hilji lesehan were pasted on wooden panels, as large paper for making big sheets of cardboard was not available. Most of these pieces are now full of holes, having fallen victim to woodworms. As more-sizable paper became available, subsequent hilji lesehan have escaped this fate.

Illuminators took great pains to decorate hilji lesehan with the art of tevhid (illumination). The pieces were gilded abundantly with yellow and green gold. To make them worthy of depicting the dignity of the Prophet, some hilji were even written in gold ink in the zere-endid method. Occasionally, too, one comes across a hilji with miniatures of Mecca and Medina just above the brunels.

FERMANS, BEYATS, AND MENJÜRS

Specialists at the Ottoman Imperial Council of State prepared various official documents, including fermans (imperial edicts; cat. no. 79), beyats (which included imperial titles of privilege and grants of freehold property [mâlik beyat]; cat. nos. 73, 75–78, and 80–81), and menjûrs (imperial appointments; cat. nos. 82–83). The tughra (calligraphic emblem) of the reigning sultan was inscribed at the head of the document, and before it came a short prayer. Originally, these documents were made as tomarus (scrolls) or pleated for safekeeping. Here, these documents will be discussed from the standpoint of their calligraphy and illumination, rather than their content and meaning.

Just as nations today represent themselves with symbols or emblems, so in Ottoman times a calligraphic emblem represented the state. That emblem was the tughra, a calligraphic treatment of the reigning sovereign’s name which would be official so long as that sovereign remained on the throne. The earliest example is the simple tughra of Sultan Orhan Gazi (r. 1326–62).

The tughra consists of the sovereign’s name, his patronymic, and the invocation el-mausîf îdâmê (the ever-victorious), written in a special shape. Tughras are also encountered consisting of the names of Sufi saints, a verse from the Qur’an, or a hadîth (saying of the Prophet Muhammad). Figure 19 shows the main elements of the tughra: the birûn or âzâr, which is the monogram proper; the tughra or elîf (shafts); the zîves (tasses); the âzâr yağû and da yağû (inner and outer oval); and the ince or kols (dagger or arms—the double tail-like projections growing out of, and to the right of, the oval).

The tughra developed slowly, achieving its basic form in the reign of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (1451–81). It reached its classic, lavish form during the reign of Sultan Süleyman I, the Magnificent (1520–66), in keeping with the splendor of that period. The tughra was written in gold ink, delicately outlined in black ink. From the period of Mehmed the Conqueror on, the spaces between the letters were illuminated, a practice that continued until the mid-nineteenth century. All the skills of the illuminator were displayed in these works so that, from time to time, the tughra itself was nearly hidden behind the decoration, like a bride behind her veil (cat. nos. 76–77). From the first quarter of the seventeenth century, a certain coarseness was sometimes evident in the illumination, and from then on, the tughra began to degenerate.
that this is a general scheme; many models of the hijye also exist (see cat. no. 19 ople).

Most popular hijyes are written in sülüs and hakkâk, sülüs, and rehî; in rear. In the y, large hijye lehûs, using celli scripts, were e hung on walls. Early hijye lehûs were wooden panels, as large paper for making of cardboard was not available. Most of is are now full of holes, having fallen woodworms. As more-sizable paper lable, subsequent hijye lehûs have escaped

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417. AND MÊNŞIİS

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The tugra consists of the sovereign’s name, his patronymic, and the invocation el-muasâfer diwânî (the ever-victorious), written in a special shape. Tugras are also encountered consisting of the names of Sufi saints, a verse from the Qur’an, or a hadîth (saying of the Prophet Muhammad). Figure 19 shows the main elements of the tugra: the bârû or song, which is the monogram proper; the tug or els (shafts); the zâfiz (tassels); the idh bârû and dh bârû (inner and outer oval); and the hanger or hâl (dagger or arms—the double tail-like projections growing out of, and to the right of, the oval).

The tugra developed slowly, achieving its basic form in the reign of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (1451–81). It reached its classic, lavish form during the reign of Sultan Süleyman I, the Magnificent (1520–66), in keeping with the splendor of that period. The tugra was written in gold ink, delicately outlined in black ink. From the period of Mehmed the Conqueror on, the spaces between the letters were illuminated, a practice that continued until the mid-nineteenth century. All the skills of the illuminator were displayed in these works so that, from time to time, the tugra itself was nearly hidden behind the decoration, like a bride behind her veil (cat. nos. 61–77). From the first quarter of the seventeenth century, a certain coarseness was sometimes evident in the illumination, and from then on, the tugra began to degenerate.

With the revolution of shape and dimension in calligraphy brought about by Mustafa Rakim at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the tugra was transformed into a masterpiece of proportion. It was no longer thought necessary to illuminate it, but, under Western influence, the tugra was often surrounded with radiating sun rays in gold. While Rakim’s style of tugra is frequently found on monumental inscriptions, it is rarely seen on documents issued by the Imperial Council of State. The most beautiful examples of the tugra, simple and without illumination, were produced from the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz until the end of the Ottoman epoch (1861–1922; cat. nos. 60, 82, and 83).

In early Ottoman times, official documents were written only in tevâk’ or rehî’, because these scripts are easy to read. Beginning in the sixteenth century, however, the more difficult diwânî and cehdiwânî were used and thus entered their most perfect and regularized period. Although it is the right of the calligrapher to sign his work, the documents that came from the Imperial Council of State never bore signatures for the tugra or the text. It is said that the official calligraphers who worked at the Council of State had to take an oath never to use either divânî or cehdiwânî outside the council.

Black, red, green, and blue inks, as well as gold, were used to write the tugras and the divânî and cehdiwânî scripts on fermons, berats, menşûris, and other official documents. The choice of which of the two scripts to use, which colors, and whether or not to use a gold-sprinkled background (şer-eşam) was not arbitrary. Each had a specific meaning in Ottoman protocol.

A CALLIGRAPHER’S TRAINING

Children would begin to study calligraphy at their local elementary school to determine if they had any talent for it. To work at beautiful writing at a young age trains the eye in visual proportion and aesthetic value. Early lessons were a means of advancing those with talent and inclination for the art.

The great masters of calligraphy received a
regular monthly or daily salary from their positions at the Imperial Council of State, the Imperial Palace Service (Enderûn-ı Hümâyûn), or the lâke, or from teaching posts at a school or endowed institution such as the meşhâne, which was a calligraphy studio attached to a religious college. Master calligraphers also gave private lessons at their homes on appointed days. Even the poorest of these calligraphers expected no remuneration from their students, however, not even gifts. This tradition has been scrupulously observed up to the present.

From the earliest days, calligraphers were required to have the proper certification to practice the art. The novice calligrapher had to have his teacher’s written permission, the ıçâzetnâme. Without it, he could not put his signature on his work.

To learn calligraphy, the student (tâbe) goes to the hoca, or teacher, who writes a model line, while the student is watching, for the student to study and copy. This text is called a meşk (model or lesson). To receive this model for study is called meşk almak, to take the model; to teach it is called meşk etmek, to do the model. (Meşks are discussed in the entries for cat. nos. 34–35 and 51.)

The student studies the meşk of the teacher and makes copies that are as close to the original as possible. This practice is called tablı. To correct the lesson, the hoca writes the correct forms, measured in dots, directly beneath any letters or words that do not meet his approval. This is called pikartma (extraction). Using the corrected lesson as a guide, the student prepares a new meşk. If the teacher or master (ustûd) sees a shortcoming, he again writes his pikartma under that part of the lesson (fig. 2).

In meşk exercises, the sâlih and neșih scripts are shown sometimes separately, but most often together (cat. no. 51). The same teacher teaches both scripts. T rolk is always studied separately, and usually with a different teacher (cat. nos. 35–35, 63–64). Because their use was confined to the Imperial Council of State, the tâve and the divâni and celâ divâni scripts were taught only there. Rûk’û, which had utilitarian rather than artistic value, was first taught at elementary school and later was quickly mastered at the various official departments and offices.

Novices whose aptitude was weak were eliminated while still practicing the mürkû (singles) exercises (cat. nos. 34 and 51); that is, meşks composed of single and double letters. Those who passed this stage could look forward with hope to a future as a calligrapher. The next step would be the exercises called mürkû (compounds; cat. nos. 35, 63–64), which involved words and sentences of more than two letters. Students studying sâlih and neșih would copy in Arabic one of the long poetic odes called kâdâs (cat. no. 36). Those studying rolk would write a kâdâ in Persian or Turkish (cat. nos. 35, 63–64). Finally, the novice would practice writing well-known Qur’anic verses, hadis, prayers, letters of the alphabetic numbering system (abced hubs, a series of mnemonic words arranged in alphabetical order from one to a thousand, and heavily used for dating purposes), and epigrams concerning the art of calligraphy. Writing these texts would help the student develop an understanding of composition. Students who made steady progress and continued with weekly lessons could work through these stages in three to five years. Those who finished would receive diplomas. The diploma, which gave them the right to sign their own works, is called an ıçâzetnâme (permission document); receiving the document is called ıçâzet almak (receiving permission). When signing a work,
thly or daily salary from their positions in the Imperial Palace or as court scribes. The most important institution was the mevkâne, which was a calligraphy studio and a religious college. Master calligraphers received private lessons at their homes on days. Even the poorest of these calligraphers expected no remuneration from their students, even if it was a gift. This tradition has only been observed up to the present. At the earliest stage, calligraphers were expected to have the proper certification to practice. Without this certificate, the novice calligrapher had to have his permission, the iocañname. Without it, he would be unable to sign his work.

In calligraphy, the student (iocañname) goes to the teacher, who writes a model line, while the student is watching. For the student to study and test, he calls a mevk (model or lesson). To study a model for study is called mevk almak, to do a line; to test it is called mevk etmek, to do a line (mevk is discussed in the entries for nos. 35 and 51).

Advent studies the mevk of the teacher and then it is as close to the original as his practice is called taklid. To correct the hoca writes the correct forms, measured exactly beneath any letters or words that do his approval. This is called paks. Using the corrected lesson as a guide, the student prepares a new mevk. If the teacher or the student sees a shortcoming, he again writes under that part of the lesson (fig. 2).

Exercises, the sulus and nesih scripts are netimes separately, but most often at the end of the lesson (no. 51). The same teacher teaches both scripts. Taklid is always studied separately, and usually with a different teacher (cat. nos. 33 and 53-64). Because their use was confined to the Imperial Council of State, the taklid and the divanî and cilt divanî scripts were taught only there. Rûa, which had utilitarian rather than artistic value, was first taught at elementary school and later was quickly mastered at the various official departments and offices.

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Students earn their teacher’s iocañname (permission) by copying a suitable work by one of the great masters, selected by their teacher. Like the practice of copying the teacher’s mevk, this process is also known as taklid, or imitation, which has a special meaning in regard to calligraphy. The calligrapher carefully observes the selected composition, imprinting it on his memory. He then writes it on paper with near-photographic fidelity (cat. no. 39). The writing must be so close to the original that if the student’s work were superimposed over the master’s, no difference would be visible. This difficult feat requires the calligrapher to analyze thoroughly the style and technique of the calligrapher he is copying. Even calligraphers at the height of their art take pleasure in taklid, as a sign of reverence for the work of a great master. No tracing is employed in this process, and forgery is not an issue. Rather, the calligrapher indicates in the signature that the work is a taklid and cites the name of the person whose work is imitated. The kotu format is usually selected for imitation, and the finished copy constitutes the student calligrapher’s iocañname. Sometimes, however, a section of the Qur’an, or even the whole masbah, is written as an iocañname for a student of nesih. The iocañname in the dust and nesih is treated as a student of the sulus and nesih.

After the student has written the imitation for an iocañname in sulus and nesih and it is approved by the teacher, the teacher writes under it, in ruk (or, as it
was later called, hattat-i icâsi, or icâsi script), the permission text, ıçnâme, granting the student’s diploma. For a student of ta’lik, the ıçnâme is written in hurde ta’lik. The wording of this text, which is in Arabic, is traditional (fig. 22). The permission formula that is generally used, with some changes or additions, can be translated as follows: I give permission [icâsi or içn] to the writer of this beautiful ıçnâme [student’s name] to sign his name under his work. May God prolong his life and increase his knowledge. I am his teacher’. Here the teacher writes his name and the date.

At last the student has earned the right to the title hattat, or calligrapher. At an icâsi or icâsi assembly), which usually takes place in a mosque, the new calligrapher’s illuminated work is presented to a ‘jury’ composed of masters of calligraphy. This pleasant and auspicious ceremony has been maintained into our own time. Even renowned calligraphers who, for whatever reason, could not receive their icâsi at the usual time would not break with this tradition and so received their icâsi later in their careers.

Throughout the Ottoman era, the most advanced calligrapher in terms of ability, sagacity, and seniority, as determined by the calligraphers themselves, was called the reis-i hatatîn, or chief of the calligraphers. On his death, another would be named. The eldest of the living calligraphers was called the cenghül-hatâtin, or the sheikh of the calligraphers, out of respect, but this title was honorary, not official.

Finally, a word about signatures. Over the centuries, the tradition took root to sign a calligraphic work in Arabic, regardless of whether the text was in Turkish, Arabic, or Persian. There were various signature formulas beginning with an Arabic verb: katabahu, namazâhu, harrarahu, or sawaddahu (Turkish spellings: ketebhû, nemekehû, harrerêhû, and sevodehû), all of which mean ‘he wrote it’. The word preferred among calligraphers to mean ‘signature’ was ketebê. If the work were a mezk or a karalama, it would generally be signed mepekabhu (he wrote it as a mezk) or with the calligrapher’s name only.

The calligrapher would add Arabic qualifiers to his name, such as fâdîr (the poor), habîr (the lowly), and miṣnû (the sinful)—all terms of humility to deflect any charge of conceit. To show gratitude to his teacher, the calligrapher would cite his teacher’s name and sometimes even add a genealogical tree of the calligraphers of his particular school. At the end of the signature, the calligrapher would ask God to forgive them all, even those who would look at the work.

Works were usually signed in the same script as the text. The hurde ta’lik script was considered the most appropriate for signing ta’lik ıçnâmes and celi ta’lik leshas. Signatures for works in sâlim or nesîh can be signed in râhû, which has come to be called icâsi yasur. Râhû calligraphy can be used to write cenghülâmes for other branches of knowledge, such as for classical religious education, Sufism, and so forth (fig. 21).
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Works were usually signed in the same script as the text. The huruf ta'lik script was considered the most appropriate for signing ta'lik kit'as and cev ta'lik lehas. Signatures for works in sûāl or resül can be signed in huruf, which has come to be called ıçağ yeşin. huruf calligraphy can be used to write ıçına for other branches of knowledge, such as for classical religious education, Sufism, and so forth (fig. 21).

FIGURE 21.
Calligrapher unknown
Folios 4r and 4v from the Persian-language most eloquent ode for Sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512), 15th-16th century.
Hurry ta'lik, ink, colors, and gold on paper, 20.5 x 13.2 cm.
ISM 330-1950-5-X
TURKISH CALLIGRAPHY TODAY

Turkish calligraphy reached its height of perfection in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But in 1928, it received a heavy blow when the Turkish Republic supplanted the Arabic alphabet with a modified version of the Latin alphabet. Even though formal instruction in the art was re instituted at the Academy of Fine Arts (now Mimar Sinan University), Istanbul, in 1936, the academy was unable to ensure the training of new calligraphers. As the remaining Ottoman calligraphers died, one by one, this historical chapter seemed closed.

In fact, however, the master-and-student system has continued to produce new calligraphers, with the help of the Center for Islamic History, Art, and Culture (IRCICA), in Istanbul. In addition to its program of publications and conferences, this organization announced in 1986 an international calligraphy competition, to be held every three years. Calligraphers from all Islamic nations, and participated in the most recent competition. It is pleasing to see that the young Turkish calligraphers are reaching a professional level in the art and are once again increasing in number.

Legibility is the prime goal of the art of calligraphy. While this is indeed the essence of the art, the splendid beauty that resides in the calligraphic strokes should be appreciated as well. 'To read beautiful calligraphy,' Kadasker Mustafa Izzet Efendi noted, 'is like smelling the aroma of a tulip.' Even for those who cannot read the texts, this volume gives a glimpse of the spiritual elegance and grace that was to be found in the Ottoman tulip garden.
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FIGURE 23.
I/M, ink, colors, and gold on paper.
29.2 × 19.8 cm
The inscription was granted by Semî Efendi (1553–1598–1600–1711).
The illumination is by Hâfizeddin Tekâbûlû (1283/1866–1298/1919).
Derman Collection, Istanbul.