5. QUR'AN

This fine Qur'anic codex, or ms’hif, was written in the style of Syuk Hamdullah (see cat. nos. 3–4), probably by one of his students. It was copied in an excellent naskh script, thirteen lines per page, on 346 9½×6½ cm.

The latter naskh (naskhi illumination) and iñsha (signature), which occur at the end of the volume, have been cut out, perhaps by a thief years ago. With the latter naskh, it is impossible to know whether the director of the illumination signed the work. (Because the illumination of most ms’hifs was a joint effort by different artists, their individual signatures were not given; only the director signed.) Judging by the style of illumination of the ms’hif (the two illuminated opening pages, folios 1 and 2r, shown here), this Qur’an can be dated to the late days of the reign of Sultan Suleyman I, the Magnificent (or the Last; r. 1520–66).

In a ms’hif, the entire text of the Rûза–the opening chapter of the Qur’an—is written on the right-hand page (folio 1v). The first verses of the second chapter, Al-baqara (The Calf), are written on the left-hand page (folio 2r), following the layout of the Rûza: the number of lines and the dimensions of the writing space are identical. The top, bottom, and outside margins are illuminated, not the gutters where the pages join. The color scheme of the two illuminated pages is the same; the design of the left is a mirror image of that of the right, making the two pages a unified whole. Although subsequent pages reserve larger areas for the text, their layout echoes that of the Rûza.

In this example, the design elements are very well balanced. The verse steps in the text portion of the article are in the style called külâ or qâf takrûr, empty areas are filled with leaf and branch motifs. The ng motifs in the margins—rather like floral and geometric designs alternating between the pages’ dominant leafy blue and gold—are in the same style. They emerge from golden külâ (kwâl) motifs that contain the text area. All the colors and designs serve to harmonize the sixteenth-century-style illumination with the cream-colored paper.

The sâmi külâ (rectangular areas) on each side of the text space is painted on a gilded background. The designs in these areas can also be seen on green tiles decorating the Pirâv Room of Sultan Murad III (r. 1573–95) at the Topkapı Sarayi, Istanbul.

On the other pages of this ms’hif, the chapter heads and the qur'a, hajj, and rosy rosettes are executed in lapis and gold.
5. QUR'AN

ISTANBUL, 16th CENTURY
INK, COLORS, AND GOLD ON
PAPER
DIMENSIONS 27.2 X 18.5 CM
BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE, PARIS

This fine Qur'anic codex, or mushaf, was written in the style of 'Abd al-Hamid ibn al-Husayn (see cat.
no. 1–2), probably by one of his students. It was copied in an excellent and script. Thirteen
lines per page, on 748 folios.
The folio 16th (colophon illumination) and 46th
(signature), which occur at the
end of the volume, have been
cut out, perhaps by a third
year ago. With the folio missing, it
is impossible to know whether
the director of the illumination
signed the work. 'Because the
illumination of most mushafs
was a joint effort by different
artists, their individual
signatures were not given; only
the director signed.' Judging by
the style of illumination of the
arabesque (the two illuminated
opening pages, folios 1r and 2r,
shown here), this Qur'an can
be dated to the late days of the
reign of Sultan Sulayman I, the
Magnificent (or the Langriver,
r. 1520–66).

In a mushaf, the entire text of the surah—the opening chapter of the Qur'an—is written on the
right-hand page (folio 1r). The first verses of the second
chapter, al-Baqara (The Cow), are
written on the left-hand page
(folio 2r), following the layout
of the Fihrist: the number of
lines is the same and the dimensions of the
writing space are identical. The
top, bottom, and outside
margins are illuminated, but
not the gutter where the pages
join. The color scheme of the
two illuminated pages is the
same, the design of the left is a
mirror image of that of the
right, making the two pages a
unified whole. Although
subsequent pages reserve larger
areas for the text, their layout
emulates that of the fihrist.

In this example, the design
elements are very well balanced.
The verse stops in the text
portion of the arabesque are in the
style called badeh or pabadeh,
empty areas are filled with leaf
and branch motifs. The 5g
motifs in the margins—
lancerlike floral and geometric
designs alternating between the
pages’ dominant blue bands
(blue and gold—are in the same
style. They emerge from golden
badeh (cloud) motifs that contain
the text area. All the colors and
designs serve to harmonize the
sixteenth-century-style
illumination with the cream-
colored paper.

The badeh (rectangular area) on each side of the text
space is painted on a golded
background. The designs in
these areas can also be seen on
badeh tiles decorating the Privy
Room of Sultan Murad III (r.
1574–95) at the Topkapi Sarayi,
Istanbul.

On the other pages of this
mushaf, the chapter headings
and the qeur, kahf, and roh
rosaries are executed in blue and gold.
Ahmed Şemseddin Karahisârî was born in Aşkûn Karahisâr, a west-central Anatolian city, but his exact date of birth is unknown. We do know, however, that he died in 963/1556, aged nearly ninety, so we can safely assume he was born a little before 875/1470. One report states that his first master was Yahyâ es-Sâfî (d. 882/1477), one of the calligraphers of the age of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (r. 1451–81), but the reliability of this report is suspect, for Ottoman sources regularly confuse this Yahyâ es-Sâfî with a later namesake. It is likely, however, that Karahisârî benefited from the calligraphic works of the earlier Yahyâ es-Sâfî. The master to whom Karahisârî always acknowledged apprenticeship, as he did in the Qur'an illustrated here, is Esedullah-i Kirmâni (d. 893/1488), but we do not know where he studied with him.

Karahisârî is known as the revolver in the Ottoman state of the style of Yaquû-l-Mustasîmî (Yaquûl, d. 698/1298), thereby earning him the title of Yakût-I Rûm, or the Yaquûl of Asia Minor. There is a mufshîf dating from the later years of his life which, in his own words, he 'copied in imitation of Yaquûl in finely written nasîh. This style could not compete with Şeyh Hamdullah's style (see cat. nos. 1–2), however, and so was abandoned by the following generation. We may say that Karahisârî's style accomplished a double task: putting an end to Yaquûl's style and bringing three of the six scripts—sââs, nasîh, and râkî—closer to the Ottoman taste. Only in es sûsî was Karahisârî's style more effective than that of the sheikh.

Karahisârî's surviving works include Qur'âns, prayer handbooks, kitâbs, and musâhkâns. Although there are surviving es sûsî works cut in marble and worked on tiles, these bear no signature, and it is impossible to tell whether they are by him or by his student Hasan Çelebi (d. after 1002/1594), whose style was identical. In addition to Hasan Çelebi, Karahisârî's students Dervâş Mehmend (d. 1000/1592), Ferhat Paşa (d. 982/1575), and Muhydrod Halife (d. 983/1575) are worthy of mention.

Karahisârî died in 963/1556. It is said that he copied the inscription for his gravestone himself, but the exact location of his grave, in the Sufiîe quarter of Istanbul, is unknown.

6. QUR'AN

ISTANBUL, 938/1531
INK, COLORS, AND GOLD ON PAPER
BINDING 19-6422.8-04
SIM 100-0098-AK

Ahmed Karahisârî was about seventy when he copied this Qur'an, dated 948/1531. It is written in a small sââs script, seventeen lines per page, which allowed him to complete the mufshîf in only 236 folios. This Qur'an is notable for its extremely fine example of the zabjîfe, or frontispiece. Islamic bound manuscripts always begin the text on the right-hand page (folio 10). The back of the first page of text (folio 10) is called the zabjîfe, from the Arabic word for 'back', ahr. This page can be left plain so that notations concerning the book or its owner can be added, or it can be illuminated. The financial resources of an Islamic state or dynasty would determine whether works prepared under its patronage would be finely illuminated with one, two, or, more rarely, four zabjîfes. In a Qur'an, the zabjîfe could consist of a simple illumination, or it could include one or more Qur'anic verses worked into the design. The central element could be circular, elliptical, or shield-shaped. In works other than Qur'ans, the illuminator's license (ownership inscription) could be on this page. In short—until the sixteenth century, when the practice fell out of use in the interest of economy—the zabjîfe gave illuminators an opportunity to create an artistic tour de force, independent from the calligraphy.

The double zabjîfe shown here includes a passage from Sîn and The Night Journey (Qur'an 17-88). "Say: If all mankind and Jesus were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could never produce it, even if they supported each other to try. The verse is written at the center of circular cutouts, on a gold background, in white-lead ink. This magnificence is continued in the extraordinarily fine illumination of the wâlîfe, kitâb, and chapter headings of this mufshîf.
impossible to tell whether they are by him or by his
closest students. In addition to Hasan Çelebi, other
students were also mentioned.
Karaduman died in 963/1556. It is said that he
copied the inscription for his gravestone himself,
but the exact location of his grave is unknown.
5. QUR'AN

Nothing is known of Mustafa bin Ibrahim, who completed this Qur'an in Muharram 959/January 1551, except that he was from Selanik (present-day Thessaloniki), as is indicated by his signing himself Selanik. The manuscript has thirteen lines per page, on 336 folios. Written in an attractive naskh script, it gives the impression of having been copied quickly and easily. Compared to the double column in Karshubert's ms. (cat. no. 6), the single column in this volume is quite uninspired; verses 77–78 of chapter 56 of the Qur'an are written within a circle, in a thickish naskh script. The pages show here—folios 137v and 138r—consist of verses 126–28 from chapter 66 through verses 1–10 of chapter 17. The smalls in this ms. are rather heavily decorated with gold and lapis-lazuli-blue illumination that is of middling quality. The chapter headings are not illuminated; instead, the titles are written in naskh script, in gold ink outlined in black. The open symbols are without illumination, and the dots (verse steps) are quite plain. The volume has been rebound. It is not known where this ms. was written.
Nothing is known of Mustafa bin Ibrahim, who completed this Qur'an in Muhammad 939/1532, except that he was from Selmik (present-day Thrakomiria), as is indicated by his signing himself Selmik. The masyaf has thirteen lines per page, on 336 folios. Written in an attractive script, it gives the impression of having been copied quickly and easily. Compared to the double cursive in Karachuri's masyaf (cat. no. 6), the single cursive in this volume is quite uninspired; verses 77–89 of chapter 50 of the Qur'an are written within a circle, in a chelkia old script. The pages shown here—folios 137v and 138r—consist of verses 125–28 from chapter 16 through verses 1–10 of chapter 17. The masyaf in this masyaf is rather heavily decorated with gold-and-lapis-lazuli-blue illumination that is of middling quality. The chapter headings are not illuminated; instead, the titles are written in red script, in gold ink outlined in black. The qur'a symbols are without illumination, and the divisions (verse stop) are quite plain. The volume has been rebound. It is not known where this masyaf was written.
Mahmud Efendi studied calligraphy with Selanikli Mustafa bin Nasuh from Selanik (Thessaloniki), who had been a student of Şeyh Hamdullah (see cat. nos. 1-2) while the sheikh still lived in Amasya. Mahmud Efendi’s first employment was as a scribe at the religious court. Later, he was appointed kadi (judge of Islamic law), first of Baghdad and then of Diyarbekir. He died while in that post. Mahmud Efendi trained his son, Ahmed Paşa, in the calligraphic style of Şeyh Hamdullah. Ahmed Paşa served as a vezir, or minister of government, and as a heyterheji, or governor general. He died in 1020/1611.
HMUD EFENDI

Muhammad Efendi studied calligraphy with Mustafa bin Nasuh from Selânik in 1831, when he was a student of Şeyh İskâm (see cat. nos. 1-2), while the sheikh was still alive. Mahmud Efendi’s first employment was as a government official, first as a judge of Islamic law, then as a judge of Diiârîbekir. He died while in Mahmud Efendi trained his son, Ahmed in calligraphic style of Şeyh Hamdullah. He served as a vezir, or minister of the sultan, as a beylerbe, or governor general. 1020/1611.

8. KEIF

This work by Kadi Mahmud Efendi consists of only chapter 18 of the Qur’an, written on twenty folios. Both the ink and the variety of scripts are noteworthy. The pages shown here are folios 18a and 18b, which include the end of the chapter and the calligrapher’s signature. The writing format is organized as follows: the first line is written in naskh script with blue ink; the following two lines are in naskh script in black ink; next is one line of naskh in gold ink; two lines of naskh in black ink; and, finally, one line of naskh in blue. In the triangular corner areas of the last page, the calligrapher used the signatures of the chapter—hâlî, or The Cursed-in-Rah, script, using black ink. His signature appears in red (di) ink in the lower part of the left triangle, along with the date 1258/1841. All the scripts are smaller than customary, and the text areas are not framed with golden borders. In addition, instead of golden borders (verse-step rests) between the verses, as was usual, there is simply a space. Şeyh Hamdullah had abandoned the practice of writing Qur’ans using multiple scripts from the group known as the six scripts. Here, Mahmud Efendi used two of the six—naskh and naskh-in alternating lines and in different colors, almost as a reminder of an earlier epoch. It is not known where Mahmud Efendi wrote this work.
Yusuf bin Abdullah lived in the district of Tophane in Istanbul. Since he was the slave of an ironsmith employed at the cannon foundry, he was nicknamed Demircikulu, meaning 'Slave of the Ironsmith'. The signature of the calligrapher at the end of this Qur'an incorporates the previously unknown name of this ironsmith, so identifying him as Ali Agha. Bin Abdullah means 'son of Abdullah', which was the traditional patronym for slaves. Demircikulu served as ulufeli dwac, the person who recited prayers at the furnace before the fire was lit at the cannon foundry. Later the sheikhs of the Karabaş Devish Lodge in Tophane took over this function. The aforementioned lodge was built by Karabaş Mustafa Agha, Head Eunuch of the Imperial Harem in 937/1531 and is still used as a small mosque. Demircikulu learnt the art of calligraphy from Devish Mehmed (d. 1000/1592), Ahmed Karahisari's apprentice, as he mentions in the epitaph he wrote for himself while he was still alive. According to hearsay, his master for divani script was Tazâde Mehmed Bey (d. 996/1588). Demircikulu was the last representative of the Karahisari school of calligraphy, which upon his death was abandoned entirely in favour of the Şeyh Handullah style.

The alt tiiina inscriptions on tiles and marble at Kilis Ali Mosque in Tophane are among the outstanding examples of Yusuf bin Abdullah's work. Upon his death at the age of 100, according to the hiri calendar, in 1020/1611, the calligrapher Hasan Üsküdarî (d. 1023/1614) filled in the missing date on his gravestone, which can still be seen in the cemetery of Karabaş Mosque. A century later, a young man named Yahya Fahreddin discovered a reed pen in the soil while he was cleaning the grave, and was inspired by this discovery to study calligraphy.
bin Abdullah lived in the district of Istanbul. Since he was the slave of an employed at the cannon foundry, he was a Demircikulu, meaning 'Slave of the Irons'. The signature of the calligrapher at the beginning of the Qur'an incorporates the previously mentioned name of this ironsmith, so identifying İ. Agha. Bin Abdullah means 'son of which was the traditional patronym for ironworkers served as a şehit', the person who sacrifices his life at the furnace before the fire isinnon foundry. Later the sheikh of the dervish Lodge in Tophane took over this. The aforementioned lodge was built by Ýustafa Agha, Head Eunuch of the harem in 1376/1377 and is still used as a mosque. Demircikulu learnt the art of dervish Mehmed (d. 1400/1472), rahibi's apprentice, as he mentions in the text. He wrote for himself while he was still ordaining to hear was, his master for dervish Tazade Mehmed Bey (d.1396/1458). It was the last representative of the school of calligraphy, which upon his abandoning entirely in favour of the Seyh style. İlişik inscriptions on tiles and marble at Mosque in Tophane are among the examples of Yuusuf bin Abdullah's work. Each at the age of 160, according to the I. in 1320/1611, the calligrapher Hasan (d. 1323/1614) filled in the missing date response, which can still be seen in the f Karahaf Mosque. A century later, a named Yahya Fihreedin discovered a the soil while he was cleaning the grave, inspired by this discovery to study...