up to the level of those by Sami Efendi (see cat. nos. 59–62).

Şevki Efendi’s works earned him a well-deserved popularity, for they are free of defects and reflect his individuality. His close friend Sami Efendi was not far from the truth when he said of Şevki Efendi, ‘He couldn’t write a letter poorly even if he wanted to.’

Şevki Efendi put equal care into all his writings, regardless of the status of those who commissioned them. He did the same with the practice sheets he prepared for his pupils. He worked as a nasta’i teacher in the Mevlevis, which trained military scribes, in the Beyazit quarter of Istanbul. At the same time, he taught calligraphy to the sons of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) for two and a half years. His principal job, however, was in the Secretariat of the Ministry of War (Harbiye Nezâreti Mektubu Kalemı).

A man of virtue and integrity, Şevki Efendi died on Şabban 13, 1904/May 7, 1887, and was buried near his uncle’s grave in the Merkez Efendi Cemetery, Istanbul. Among the best-known of his many pupils were İhaç Arif Efendi (see cat. no. 55), Fehmi Efendi (d. 1933/1915), Pazarcıklı Mehmed Hulusi Efendi (d. 1926/1908), and Ziyaeddin Efendi. The eminent artist, teacher, and physician Dr. Süheyl Ünver (1858–1986) was his grandson.
of those by Sami Efendi (see cat. nos. 55, 56). His works earned him a well-deserved fame, and he is often mentioned in relation to his master, Mevlâna. His work on the art of calligraphy is still regarded as a classic.

His main teacher was Efendi, who was a prominent calligrapher in the Ottoman Empire. Efendi's main contributions to the art of calligraphy were his mastery of the naskh script and his ability to combine elegance and precision in his work. He also wrote extensively on the art of calligraphy and was considered one of the greatest masters of the time.

In addition to his work on calligraphy, Efendi also played a significant role in the development of the art of illumination. He was one of the first artists to combine calligraphy with the use of gold and silver leaf, creating works that were not only visually stunning but also artistically innovative.

Despite the decline in the popularity of calligraphy in the Ottoman Empire, Efendi's work and that of his students continue to be studied and appreciated by scholars and enthusiasts alike. His legacy remains a testament to the enduring beauty and significance of this art form.
MUHSINZADE SEYYID

ABDULLAH HAMDI BEY

1245/1829-1317/1859

Seyyid Abdullah Hamdi Bey belonged to the Muhsinzade family, which twice produced a grand vezir of the Ottoman state. He was born in the Karuçeşme quarter of Istanbul, on the European shore of the Bosphorus, in 1245/1832 and developed an interest in calligraphy while he was in school. His interest became professional after he took lessons from Kadastro Mustafa Efendi (see cat. nos. 44–45). He attended gatherings hosted by his teacher until the latter’s death in 1293/1876. Muhsinzade was one of Mustafa Efendi’s best students.

For a while, Muhsinzade worked in the Scribal Department (Sıddiket Mektubu Kalemi) of the Central Office of the Ottoman imperial government (the Başbâli). Upon the death of Şevki Efendi (see cat. nos. 50–51), he was appointed calligraphy teacher at the Mençe-i Kütâb-i Askeri (a school for training military scribes), in the Bayezid quarter of Istanbul. At that time, Sultan Abdulhamid II (r. 1876–1909) conferred on him the title of resûl-i hattâbî, or chief calligrapher. Additionally, he was charged with copying the well-known biography of the Prophet and collection of hadîs titled al-Shifâ, by al-Qâdi Iyâd (476/1083–544/1149). He would write one part every day and give lessons at the Mençe-i Kütâb-i Askeri on Mondays. He spent the rest of his time growing flowers and trees in the garden of his seaside villa. He copied several musâbâ and numerous ketâb and lehban. Abdullah Bey is described as a genuine and noble person with an exceptional temperament.

Muhsinzade Abdullah Bey maintained a close friendship with the calligrapher Şefik Bey (see cat. nos. 48–49) until the latter’s death in 1297/1880. When their teacher Kadastro Mustafa Efendi heard that they frequently met to talk about calligraphy, he advised them, ‘Those who have nothing to do with calligraphy will get bored with your talk and become hostile to you. In the company of such men, talk about the things they, too, can talk about. Speak of calligraphy only when you are by yourselves’.

Abdullah Bey died on Rebi‘ülhîd 12, 1317/August 20, 1859, and was buried in the hâşive (enclosed cemetery) in the Eyûb quarter of Istanbul. The fine inscriptions that he wrote for the entrance to the Haci Köpek Mosque and for its fountain, in the Sultanhamami quarter, can still be seen today.
LAMDI BEY

Mustafa Izzet Efendi (also known as Muhiyyi al-Din Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab) was a prominent scholar and theologian of the 18th century. He is known for his work on the development of the Hanbali school of Islamic law in the Turkish Empire. His contributions to Islamic thought and education were significant, and he is remembered as a key figure in the intellectual history of the Ottoman Empire.

53. PRAYER HANDBOOK

ISTANBUL, 1288/1871
MOUH.
INK, COLORS, AND GOLD ON PAPER
BINDING 21.8x23 CM
BBM 165-3905-566

This prayer handbook consists of selected verses from the Qur’an. It is written in Kufic script, thirteen lines per page, on sixteen folios. Muhiyyi al-Din completed this handbook on 18 July 1288, and it was copied by one Ahmed Zehni in a Western-influenced style. The binding is also in a Western-influenced style.

Abdullah Hamdi Bey belonged to the family of the Hamdi Bey, which produced a grand figure in the Ottoman state. He was born in the quarter of Istanbul, on the European side of the Bosphorus, in 1248/1832 and showed interest in calligraphy while he was in school. He became professional after he returned from his studies in the Middle East. He attended gatherings as a teacher until the latter's death in 1873.

Muhitnâde worked in the Scribal (Sarâfet Mektûbi Kalemi) of the Pen and the Ottoman empire in the late 19th century. Upon the death of Şevki at. nos. 50–51, he was appointed as the Mene’-i Küttâb-ı Azeri (a position in the Ottoman court), and later, at the court of Sultan I (r. 1786–1909) conferred on him the title of hattat, or chief calligrapher. He was charged with copying the well-known works of the Prophet and collection of the Shihâb, by al-Qâdi Ilyad (411AH). He would write one part of the manuscript, and then the other part would be written by the other calligraphers, who would divide the work among them.

Abdullah Bey maintained a close relationship with the calligrapher Şeffik Bey (see cat. 151) until the latter's death in 1297/1880. Other calligraphers such as Kâzım Azeri and Mustafa Izzet Efendi bey frequently met to talk about the art of calligraphy. Those who have worked with calligraphy will get bored with the same style of writing. In the company of such calligraphers, people can talk about the things they think can talk about. Speak of calligraphy only when you are by yourselves.

Abdullah Bey died on Rebi‘ul-‘Alâ 12, 1317/August 20, 1899, and was buried in the Haci Kâzım (enclosed cemetery) in the Eyüp quarter of Istanbul. The fine inscriptions that he wrote for the entrance to the Haci Kâzım Mosque and for its fountain, in the Sultanhamam quarter, can still be seen today.
Hafiz Osman Nuri Efendi was born in the southwestern Anatolian city of Burdur. He came to Istanbul to acquire a religious education and to learn calligraphy, which he studied with Kadiasker Mustafa İzet Efendi (see cat. nos. 44–45). Although the date he received his çapû is not recorded, it is known that, after the death of his teacher, he continued his studies with the Kadiasker’s student Muhsinzâde Abdullah Bey (see cat. no. 52). Kayıszâde Hafiz Osman Efendi pledged to employ his perfect nesh script only in copies of the Qur’an and the Dehâli’t-Hasrol.

Hafiz Osman Nuri Efendi lived mostly in Istanbul but from time to time resided in his hometown of Burdur. Aside from his activities as a calligrapher, he taught at primary schools and served as imam for some of the government ministers during Ramazan. It was when he was leading the night prayers on Ramazan 4, 1311/March 11, 1894, that he began to bow and breathed his final breath. He was buried in the Merke Efendi Cemetery, in Istanbul. The epitaph for his grave was copied by Muhsinzâde. It includes Qur’an 12:12—‘Send him [Joseph] with us tomorrow, so he can enjoy himself and play’—the last verse Hafiz Osman Nuri Efendi had written during his lifetime, in his incomplete 107th muskuf.

Of all Kadiasker Mustafa İzet Efendi’s students, two are remembered for their skill at copying the Qur’an. One is Hasan Rıza (see cat. no. 65), and the other is Hafiz Osman Nuri Efendi. Each wrote (although not exclusively) 64-herkenar Qur’ans, fifteen lines per page, with each page ending at a verse-step dârâz. Copies of these muskufs were printed in the finest way possible at the time and received wide circulation, especially among students memorizing the Qur’an. Because of the similarity of their names, Kayıszâde Hafiz Osman Nuri is often confused with the great Hafiz Osman (see cat. nos. 16–18), although the earlier calligrapher is not known to have written Qur’ans in the 64-herkenar format.
Osman Nuri Efendi was born in the
Turkish city of Burdur. He came to
acquire a religious education and to
study, which he studied with Kadiasker
yet Efendi (see cat. nos. 44–45). At the date he received his call to the
priesthood is not known, after the death of his
father's extended family, he continued his studies with the
student Muhsinzade Abdullah Bey (see
Kavuşşahade Hafiz Osman Efendi). He pledged to
perfect his script only in copies of the
the Devlet-i Hayriyye.

Osman Nuri Efendi lived mostly in
Istanbul from time to time, residing in his
hometown of Burdur. Aside from his activities as a
priest, he taught at primary schools and served
as a government minister during
the period when he was leading the night
prayers on 4 Rabi’i’th Thani, 1184, that he
wrote and breathed his final breath. He was
buried in the Merkez Efendi Cemetery in
Istanbul. He was mentioned in the
Muhsinzade's account. The
Qur'an 12:12—'Send him (Joseph) with
r', so he can enjoy himself and play—the
Qur'an 12:12. He had written a
script of the incomplete 19th century.
Kadiasker Mustafa Izzet Efendi's
two are remembered for their skill at
writing Qur'ans. One is Hasan Riza (see cat. no. 47),
and the other is Hafiz Osman Nuri Efendi.
Although not exclusively, the
Qur'an was written in gold ink by
Muhsinzade Hafiz Osman Efendi.
(Hassan Efendi was born in
Istanbul, the son of Lybi, the
Sićir Efendi, one of the
illuminators of the period of Sultan Mahmud II
[828–39], see cat. no. 47). Nothing is known about Hassan
Efendi's career except that he
developed his art from his father.)

53. QUR'AN

ISTANBUL, 1280/1864
INK, COLORS, AND GOLD ON PAPER
BINDING 15 X 10.8 CM
SMALLITO-008-KHO

Shown here are folios 1–4: (the verso) of a leaf
written in a delicate naskh script, with thirteen lines per page, on 381
folios. According to his own note in the colophon, this is
the nineteenth Qur'an that
Kavuşşahade Hafiz Osman Efendi
wrote. He was to complete
forty-six more in the
remaining twenty-two years of his life, which suggests that he
could finish a copy in five or
six months. In his youth, he is
known to have been able to
write even more swiftly. This
copy was finished near the
middle of Rabi’i’th Thani
1280/June 1864.

The chapter headings, between plain
cursive verses, are written in an
elegant naskh script, in gold ink.
This Qur'an was illuminated in
the technique of gold-ink
writing (gold-ink
writing). The method was
developed by Muhsinzade Hafiz Osman Efendi,
(Hassan Efendi was born in
Istanbul, the son of Lybi, the
Sićir Efendi, one of the
illuminators of the period of Sultan Mahmud II
[828–39], see cat. no. 47). Nothing is known about Hassan
Efendi's career except that he
developed his art from his father.)
Mehmed Ali Efendi was born in a quarter of Istanbul known as Cırşır, or Haydar, and is also known as Haydarlı Ali Efendi. Employed as a clerk in the Ministry of Finance, he studied sülüs, nesih, and kili sülüs with Şefik Bey (see cat. nos. 48–49) and won wide admiration with his novel and perfect compositions. He also won the respect of his teacher’s teacher, Kadiasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi (see cat. nos. 44–45).

Few calligraphers have had such a firm hand. With a fine pen and thin paper, Mehmed Ali Efendi used to trace the works of great masters, making his own private record of their writing. These tracings—which were intended as a research tool, and should not be confused with tablih calligraphy—are as sharp and fine as a strand of human hair. Ali Efendi could trace even such tiny scripts as nesih, winning no small acclaim. Another aspect of Ali Efendi’s success at tablih is worth noting. He would say to his students one day, “Today, let us be Rakım”. And on that day they would follow the style of Mustafa Rakım (see cat. no. 32). On another day he would say, “Today, let us be Celâleddin”. And they would write that day in the style of Mahmud Celâleddin (see cat. nos. 38–39). Ali Efendi’s ability to write in these two sharply divergent styles is a mark of his great talent.

After living his life with the simplicity of a dervish, Ali Efendi died and was buried in the Karaağaç Cemetery, in the Üsküdar district of Istanbul, but the site of his grave is no longer known. His epitaph, which has been preserved although it was not cut into stone, gives the date of his death as Rebiilülevel 30, 1320/July 7, 1902.

54. LEVHA

ISTANBUL, 1937/1940
OZU JULES
INK AND GOLD ON PAPER MOUNTED ON CARDBOARD
50. 345.7 × 31.5
Stk. 357–0068.CA

The text of this levha is a poem in Ottoman Turkish:
I held fast to the skirt of purity and God’s pleasure forever.
I embraced the dust of the Prophet’s feet forever.
Perplexed and powerless

was my response to the unexpected.
I found shelter in the court of God’s grace forever.

Ali Efendi was the consummate follower of the method of Kadiasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi and Şefik Bey. In this piece, each line is composed in a harmonious way, giving the whole extraordinary elegance. The levha was written in 1937/1940. The decoration of the borders reflects the taste of the age.
LI EFENDI

I Ali Efendi was born in a quarter of Knk as Cicek, or Haydar, and is also called Ali Efendi. Employed as a clerk for Finance, he studied tajdid, naskh, and safik Bey (see cat. nos. 48–49) and won the admiration of his novel and perfect style. He also won the respect of his master, Kadiasker Mustafa Izzet Efendi (44–45).

Theigraphers have had such a firm hand, and thin paper, Mehmed Ali Efendi the works of great masters, making him record of their writing. These tracings—intended as a research tool, and should be used with calligraphy—are as sharp a strand of human hair. Ali Efendi could chch tiny scripts as naskh, winning no small acclaim. Another aspect of Ali Efendi's success at tajdid is worth noting. He would say to his students one day, 'Today, let us be Rakim'. And on that day they would follow the style of Mustafa Rakim (see cat. no. 33). On another day he would say, 'Today, let us be Celaleddin'. And they would write that day in the style of Mahmud Celaleddin (see cat. nos. 38–39).

Ali Efendi's ability to write in these two sharply divergent styles is a mark of his great talent.

After living his life with the simplicity of a dervish, Ali Efendi died and was buried in the Karacaahmed Cemetery, in the Üsküdar district of Istanbul, but the site of his grave is no longer known. His epitaph, which has been preserved although it was not cut into stone, gives the date of his death as Rebiulvel 30, 1320/July 7, 1902.

54 LEVIA

THE WIRE, 1892/1893
INK AND GOLD ON PAPER MOUNTED ON CARDBOARD 37.5 × 23.5 CM
SSM 153–0658–CA

The text of this leaf is a poem in Ottoman Turkish.
I held fast to the skirt of purity and God's pleasure forever.
I embraced the dust of the Prophet's feet forever.
Perplexed and powerless

was my response to the unexpected.

I found shelter in the court of God's grace forever.

Ali Efendi was the consummate follower of the method of Kadiasker Mustafa Izzet Efendi and Safik Bey. In this piece, each line is composed in a harmonious way, giving the whole extraordinary elegance. The leaf was written in 1297/1880. The decoration of the borders reflects the taste of the age.
Ahmed Arif Efendi was born in Filibe, the present-day city of Plovdiv, in southern Bulgaria, in 1252/1836. Alongside his religious schooling, he studied 'ilmi and mehfil with a local calligrapher by the name of Ismail Sâhib, from whom he received his iṣqaṭ. In 1293/1876, as the Ottomans began to withdraw from Rumelia (the European provinces of the empire), and massacres of Bulgarian Muslims ensued, Arif Efendi fled to Istanbul and settled there. He opened a grocery store in the Sarayhane quarter, and for that reason is known more commonly as Bakkal (the Grocer) Arif Efendi than as Filibeli Arif Efendi.

When Şevki Efendi (see cat. nos. 50–51) saw the calligraphy that Arif Efendi had written before coming to Istanbul, he encouraged Arif Efendi to continue with the art. As a student of this exceptional master, Arif Efendi began the study of calligraphy all over again, from the beginning. He studied with zeal and, with a masterful iṣqaṭ, earned a second iṣqaṭ in 1301/1883. He abandoned the grocery trade and began teaching calligraphy in the medrese (Islamic theological school) of the Nuroğlu Mosque and at his home. Among the hundreds of students he taught, the finest was Şeyh Azizü’r Rifa‘î (1288/1871–1353/1934), who himself taught for ten years in Cairo, thus ensuring the spread of Şevki Efendi’s style throughout the Islamic world.

Arif Efendi suffered a stroke and spent the last five years of his life paralyzed. He died on Ramazan 2, 1327/September 17, 1909, and was buried in the Edirnekapı Cemetery, Istanbul, near the grave of the calligrapher Ismail Zuhdi (see cat. no. 31).

Haci Arif Efendi left countless examples of his
Arif Efendi was born in Filibe, the city of Filik, in southern Bulgaria, in 193/1858. Alongside his religious schooling, he and his fellow students were taught to write with a calligrapher by the name of Sâhir, from whom he received his first lessons in calligraphy. The Ottomans began to show interest in their European provinces of Rumelia, and the calligrapher taught Arif Efendi to write the Ottoman script as well. He settled in Istanbul and opened a grocery store in the Sarayburnu neighborhood, where he is known today as Baklaz (the Grocer) Arif Efendi by his friends.

Eski Efendi (see cat. nos. 30–31) saw that Arif Efendi had written a beautiful copy of the Qur'an in a calligraphic style that was simple and elegant. He encouraged Arif Efendi to pursue the art of writing. As a student of this master, Arif Efendi began to study the art of writing, and he eventually became a master calligrapher himself. He moved to Istanbul and opened a grocery store where he taught calligraphy to his students. Among his students, he taught the famous writer Şeyh-i İdris (1288/1871–1353/1934), who himself became a master calligrapher and writer. The style of Arif Efendi's writings is simple and elegant, and it is still admired today.

55. QUR'AN
FILIBE, BEFORE 1900/1910
INK, COLORS, AND GOLD ON PAPER
BINDING: 24 x 12 cm
DIMENSIONS: 30 x 20 cm
SHOWN HERE AREfolios 123v AND 125r OF AN OTTOMAN QUR'AN WRITTEN ON HILF BAY QUR'ANI PAPER
This Quranic manuscript is one of the finest examples of Ottoman calligraphy. The script is elegant and precise, with each letter clearly defined and spaced. The layout is well-organized, with each page containing a specific number of verses.

The writing in this manuscript is in the Ottoman script, also known as the Cufic script. It is characterized by its elegant, flowing lines and the use of gold, red, and blue inks. This manuscript is also notable for its fine gold decorations, which add a touch of elegance to the text.

The manuscript was copied in Istanbul during the 19th century, and it is one of the finest examples of Ottoman calligraphy. The style of writing is elegant and precise, with each letter clearly defined and spaced. The layout is well-organized, with each page containing a specific number of verses.

The writing in this manuscript is in the Ottoman script, also known as the Cufic script. It is characterized by its elegant, flowing lines and the use of gold, red, and blue inks. This manuscript is also notable for its fine gold decorations, which add a touch of elegance to the text.
Hacı Mehmed Arif Bey was born in Istanbul, where he lived in the Çarşamba neighborhood, in the Fatih district; he became known as Çarşambağlı Arif Bey. Despite the similarity of their names, Çarşambağlı Arif Bey should not be confused with his contemporary Filibeli (or Bakkalı) Hacı Arif Efendi (see cat. no. 55).

Çarşambağlı Arif Bey studied sülüs and aseb with Haşim Efendi (d. 1267/1851), a student of Mustafa Rakım's (see cat. no. 33). He studied taʾlîk with Kibrisazâde Ismail Hâkî Efendi (1200/1785–1279/1862) and Ali Haydâr Bey (1217/1802–1287/1870). Arif Bey wrote beautiful compositions in celt sülüs in Rakım's style, and taʾlîk in the style of Yeşârîzade Mustafa Izzet Efendi (d. 1265/1849). He also made elegant mirror-image compositions (mirâme) and was famous for his ability to attribute authorship of unsigned calligraphic works. In celt sülüs, celt taʾlîk, and the tughra, he achieved the same level of artistic success as his contemporary Sami Efendi (see cat. nos. 59–62). Indeed, during their lifetimes, there was no perceptible difference in the quality of their work. But because of Arif Bey's early death, his work was eclipsed by that of Sami Efendi, who was blessed with two more decades of artistically productive life.

Arif Bey died in 1310/1892 and was buried in the Yâvedud Cemetery, in Deferdor.  

56. LEVHA  
İSTANBUL, 1900/1884  
ÇİL / SİLÇ  
COLORED ON PAPER MOUNTED ON CARDBOARD  
150 × 120 CM  
SM 190/1061 – CHA  
A yellow paint was used in place of gold in this celt sülüs composition, which was prepared by an illuminator using a stencil made by Arif Bey. Many of Arif Bey's celtas were prepared in this manner. The text reads: 'In it (the holy precinct of Mecca) are the clear signs of God's governance and the place where Abraham stood to pray' (Qur'an 3:97). The calligraphy takes an elliptical form, the result of the artist's laying out the letters in their most logical and legible positions. This elliptical off (composition) is placed within a rectangular frame and finished with floral bouquets in the European mode. The equilibrium of the composition is emphasized by the strong verticals of the six off/letters, which divide the strip into seven strips, giving the whole an elegant appearance.
Aryüzade Mustafa İzzet Efendi (d. 1265/1849). He also made elegant mirror-image compositions (mirrored) and was famous for his ability to attribute authorship of unsigned calligraphic works. In cıı, cıı ta’liık, and the tuğra, he achieved the same level of artistic success as his contemporary Sami Efendi (see cat. nos. 59–62). Indeed, during their lifetimes, there was no perceptible difference in the quality of their work. But because of Arif Bey’s early death, his work was eclipsed by that of Sami Efendi, who was blessed with two more decades of artistically productive life.

Arif Bey died in 1310/1892 and was buried in the Yavuzdud Cemetery, in Defterdar.

56. LEVHA

ISTANBUL, 1320/1884
COLORS ON PAPER MOUNTED ON CARDBOARD
397 X 26 CM
INV. 130-0065-136A

A yellow paint was used in place of gold in this cıı su composition, which was prepared by an illuminator using a script made by Arif Bey. Many of Arif Bey’s works were prepared in this manner. The text reads: (In the holy precinct of Mecca) are the clear signs of God’s governance and the place where Abraham stood to pray (Qur’an 3:357).

The calligraphy takes an elliptical form, the result of the artist’s laying out the letters in their most logical and legible positions. This elliptical suıı composition is placed within a rectangular frame and finished with floral bouquets in the European style. The equilibrium of the composition is emphasized by the strong verticals of the six of letters, which divide the suıı into seven strips, giving the whole an elegant appearance.