When the Calligraphers College (Medresetül-hattatîn) opened in Istanbul in 1332/1914, he enrolled in order to learn cîhlî and the nûvrî from Tugrakeş Hakki Bey (see cat. no. 67); in two years’ time, he received an appointment at the school to teach the making of ebru and akrâr paper. It was Necmeddin who invented the process for making marbled floral pictures (çigeli ebru) and the resist process for producing marbled calligraphy (soğuk ebru), an extremely difficult art.

With the encouragement of Tugrakeş Hakki Bey, he began to cultivate roses in the one-acre garden of his house, in the Tugartepesi neighborhood of Uskudar. Necmeddin raised four hundred different species of roses. One of his students, Dr. Şüeyl Unver (1898–1986), jokingly used to call him the ‘Rose Reprobate.’

A man of many talents, Necmeddin became interested in bookbinding when, in 1544/1925, he came across some old stamps used to tool designs in leather. With the help of the bookbinder Bahaddin Efendi (see cat. no. 57), he was able to make splendid book covers using the classic design known as şems. He also spent years restoring precious bindings in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library. His teaching activities, begun at the Calligraphers College, continued in 1555/1936 at the Academy of Fine Arts (now Mimar Sinan University), where he taught until retiring in 1567/1948. He gave lessons in his own home until his eyesight began to fail.

Throughout his career as a calligrapher, Necmeddin gave particular attention to the ta’llik and celi ta’llik scripts, at the encouragement of Sami Efendi. More than 140 of Necmeddin’s lehban and kâse are preserved at Mimar Sinan University. His works are also in museums and private collections. In addition, thanks to the efforts of his students in ebru and classic bookbinding, these two arts have been saved from oblivion.

Because Necmeddin was skilled at so many arts, he was also known as hâzâfer, or he who practices a thousand arts. When a law mandating the use of surnames was passed in Turkey, in 1934, Necmeddin chose as his family name Okyay, from ok (arrow) and yav (bow), because of his interest in archery. He died on Muhrar 23, 1356/January 5, 1976, and was buried in the Karacaahmet Cemetery, in Uskudar.

This great artist wasted hardly a moment of his ninety-three years of life. One of his greatest skills was his ability to attribute authorship of unsigned Ottoman calligraphic works and to determine the dates when they were produced. From his youth on, he painstakingly collected calligraphic works; a large part of his collection was presented to the Topkapı Palace Museum in 1961; the rest was moved to the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts and to the Türkpetrol Foundation, in Istanbul, following his death.

The author of this book is pleased to acknowledge that he is indebted to Necmeddin Okyay for much of the firsthand information presented in these pages, which he obtained from the master in personal communications during more than twenty years of study and friendship.

70. LEVHA

ISTANBUL, 1352/1933
INK ON PAPER MOUNTED ON WOOD
89.7 X 69 CM
S150-1502-NO

Necmeddin Okyay was the last great practitioner of the style of Ottoman ta’llik (length) to perfectionism by Sami Efendi.

celi ta’llik is usually written in a straight line, but here the calligrapher has used the script to compose an off-a-difficulty piece. The text is pîyatt u múhabbat (your intercession, O Prophet of God). Both the kh (T) of pîyatt and the tc (TV) of Nûvrî (y) are written in their bâbût (connected) forms, parallel to each other. Above them is written the name of God, Allâh.

An interesting anecdote about this leaf was told by both Necmeddin Efendi and Fuad Şemsî Iğdır (1886–1974), who commissioned the work. In 1932, Fuad Şemsî Bey acquired an empty picture frame that had been made by Nefzî, the chief frame maker in the service of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909). The frame—pressed and gilded, and 119 centimeters wide—was damaged but still magnificent.

One day, Fuad Şemsî Bey met Necmeddin Efendi and, hoping to pique his interest, asked, ‘Does any calligrapher nowadays come to mind who could be trusted to write a work worthy of this frame?’ In fact, it is extremely difficult to compose a work of calligraphy to its given dimensions. Only a very experienced artist can do it well, as Fuad Şemsî Bey was certainly aware.

Necmeddin Efendi responded that if he was told the dimensions of the frame, he himself would see whether anything could be done. He wrote the leaf and decorated it with his own hai’dârâ (a simple marbled paper) and gave it to Fuad Şemsî Bey as a gift.
Calligraphers College (Medresetül-
nered in Istanbul in 1332/1914), he
rider to learn oil állâs and the tughu from
Kimya Bey (see cat. no. 57); in two years’
ived an appointment at the school to
king of ebru and dâhir paper. It was
who invented the process for making
al pictures (çapkalı ebru) and the rest
producing marbled calligraphy (zâbšâ
nely difficult art.

Encouragement of Tugrâkî Hakki
n to cultivate roses in the one-acre
house, in the Toygarpetesi
p of Üskûdar. Necmeddin raised four
rent species of roses. One of his
Süheyl Ünsar (1898–1986), jokingly
in the "Rose Reprobrate."

Necmeddin became bookbinding when, in 1344/1925, he
ome old stamps used to tool designs in
the help of the bookbinder Bahaddin
Cat. no. 57), he was able to make
k covers using the classic design known
also spent years restoring precious
the Topkapı Palace Museum Library,
activities, begun at the Calligraphers
ised in 1355/1936 at the Academy of
Mimar Sinan University), where he
ertainty in 1367/1948. He gave lessons
me until his eyesight began to fail.
out his career as a calligrapher,
s, in particular attention to the kelim
th, at the encouragement of Sami
than 140 of Necmeddin’s books and
erved at Mimar Sinan University. His
 manuscripts and private collections,
thanks to the efforts of his students in
ic bookbinding, these two arts have
m oblivion.

Necmeddin was skilled at so many arts,
nown as hajıfar, or he who practices a
. When a law mandating the use
of passed in Turkey, in 1924, Necmeddin

chose as his family name Okây, from aš (arrow) and
joy (bow), because of his interest in archery. He died
on Muharram 29, 1396/August 9, 1976, and was
urned in the Karacahmed Cemetery, in Üskûdar.

This great artist wasted hardly a moment of his
ine in his ninety-three years of life. One of his greatest skills was
his ability to attribute authorship of unsigned
Turanian calligraphic works to determine the dates
when they were produced. From his youth on, he
painstakingly collected calligraphic works; a large part
of his collection was presented to the Topkapı Palace
Museum in 1961; the rest was moved to the Museum of
Turkish and Islamic Arts and to the Türkpetrol
Foundation, in Istanbul, following his death.

The author of this book is pleased to
acknowledge that he is indebted to Necmeddin
Okây for much of the firsthand information
presented in these pages, which he obtained from
the master in personal communications during
more than twenty years of study and friendship.

70. LEVHA

ISTANBUL, 1355/1936
QUR’AN
INK ON PAPER MOUNTED ON
cARDSTOCK
8.5 x 7 CM
SM 1067-1067-AO

Necmeddin Okây was the last
great practitioner of the style of
Turanian calligraphy brought to
perfection by Süheyl Ünsar.
Gift is usually written in a
straight line, but here the
calligrapher has used the script
to compose an ifi– a difficult
feat. The text is ijâba, i.e., prostration (your
interruption, O Prophet of
God). Both the 1st (y) of ijâba
and the 2nd (y) of Xâh (y) are
written in their tâbšâ (extended)
forms, parallel to each other.
Above them is written the name
of God, Allah.

An interesting anecdote about
this ifi was told by both
Necmeddin Ehfenidi and Fuad
Süheyl İnâsin (1886–1974), who
commissioned the work. In
1932, Fuad Süheyl Bey acquired
an empty picture frame that
had been made by Lodos, the
chief framer in the service of
Süheyl İnâsin II (r. 1376
1956). The frame—gilded and
gilded, and 111 centimeters
wide—was damaged but still
magnificent.

One day, Fuad Süheyl Bey met
Necmeddin Ehfenidi and, hoping
to pique his interest, asked,
"Does any calligrapher nowadays
come to mind who could be
trusted to write a work worthy of
this frame?" In fact, it is
extremely difficult to compose a
work of calligraphy to fit
dimensions. Only a very
experienced artist can do it well,
as Fuad Süheyl Bey was certainly
aware.

Necmeddin Ehfenidi responded
that if he was told the
dimensions of the frame, he
himself would see whether
anything could be done. He
wrote the ifi and decorated it
with his own ifi—a simple
marbled paper—and gave it
to Fuad Süheyl Bey as a gift.
Hamid Aytaci was born in the city of Diyarbakir, formerly known as Amid, in 1309/1891, and for this reason sometimes signed himself 'Hamid u'l-Amidi'. His real name was Şeyh Musa Azmi, a name common in that region, and as a young man he used the signature Azmi.

Musa Azmi came from a family whose members included calligraphers, and he was interested in the art of calligraphy from a young age. While at primary and secondary school in Diyarbakir he took lessons in art and calligraphy. In 1324/1906 he came to Istanbul to study law, and afterwards enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts. Upon the death of his father Zulfikar Ağa he was forced to earn his own living, and began to teach calligraphy and art at a school, while also working as a calligrapher at several printing houses. He took one lesson in sülüs and nesih from Haci Nazif Bey before the latter's death.

Musa Azmi Bey then took a job as calligrapher at the General Staff Printing House in Beyazid, where he worked with Emin Efendi (1300/1883-1364/1945). He spent one year studying cartography in Germany, and upon his return began to do freelance calligraphy in his spare time, under the pen-name Hamid. When the General Staff objected to this, he resigned from his post and opened a calligraphy shop called Land of Writing in Cagaloglu. From this time onwards he used the signature Hamid. He used to say, 'I began by learning calligraphy with the name Azmi, and then, praising God, took the name Hamid' (the puns on the words azmi, meaning to begin, and hamid, to praise, are lost in translation).

Hamid Bey made the acquaintance of renowned calligraphers like Kâmil Efendi, Hakki Bey and Hulüs Efendi at this time, and in the course of conversation with them developed his calligraphic taste to the point where he was accepted by the masters of the age; no mean accomplishment in Istanbul, where standards in the art of calligraphy were more demanding than anywhere else.

Hamid Aytaci devoted his long life to art, continuing to work until a year before his death on 24 Recep 1402/18 May 1982. However, the work he produced towards the end of his life does not attain the excellence of earlier periods. His finest works of calligraphy, produced largely between 1341/1923 and 1385/1965, became well-known throughout the Islamic world. Although he wrote in every type of script, it was for celli sülüs that he was most famous. He wrote two Qur’ans in nesih, one of which was printed.

Following the death of Halim Hoca in 1964, Hamid Bey began to teach calligraphy, and many of his students became eminent calligraphers.

He wrote dome and panel inscriptions for several mosques in Istanbul, including Şişli, Eyüp Sultan and Fındıklı Molla Çelebi, and the inscription band for Hacı Koşkeğ Mosque in Sultanhamam (unfortunately the latter was spoilt during repairs).

After his death, Hamid Bey was buried close to the tomb of Şeyh Hamdullah in Karacaahmed Cemetery, in accordance with his last wishes.
Hamid Aytaç was born in the city of Diyarbakır, then as Amid, in 1309/1891, and for this reason signed himself ‘Hamid-i’ as his real name was Şeyh Musa Azmî, a name he used when he came from a family whose members were aspiring to be calligraphers, and he was interested in the art of calligraphy from a young age. While at primary school in Diyarbakir he took lessons in calligraphy. In 1324/1906 he came to Istanbul, and after his enrolment at the Mehter school, upon the death of his father he was forced to earn his living teaching calligraphy and art at a school, working as a calligrapher at several mosques. He took one lesson in sülüs and nesh Nazif Bey before the latter’s death.

Hamid Bey then took a job as a calligrapher at Bağdat Avenue, where with Emin Efendi (1820–1882) he spent one year studying cartography, and upon his return began to develop his style. When the General Staff objected to his work and opened a shop called Land of Writing in his spare time, he decided to establish his own and, at the name Hamid’ (the puns on م، meaning to begin, and هامد, to start in translation). He made the acquaintance of renowned calligraphers like Kamil Efendi, Hakki Bey and Ali at this time, and in the course of his career developed his calligraphic point where he was accepted by the public; no mean accomplishment in the standards in the art of calligraphy manding than anywhere else.

Hamid Aytaç devoted his long life to art, continuing to work until a year before his death on 24 Reçeb 1402/18 May 1982. However, the work he produced towards the end of his life does not attain the excellence of earlier periods. His finest works of calligraphy, produced largely between 1344/1923 and 1385/1965, became well-known throughout the Islamic world. Although he wrote in every type of script, it was for celi sülüs that he was most famous. He wrote two Qur’ans in nesh, one of which was printed.

Following the death of Halim Hoca in 1964, Hamid Bey began to teach calligraphy, and many of his students became eminent calligraphers.

He wrote dome and panel inscriptions for several mosques in Istanbul, including Şişli, Eyüp Sultan and Fındıklı Molla Çelebi, and the inscription band for Hacı Köçek Mosque in Sultanhamam (unfortunately the latter was spoilt during repairs).

After his death, Hamid Bey was buried close to the tomb of Şeyh Hamdullah in Karacaahmed Cemetery, in accordance with his last wishes.
72. YARLIQ OF MEHMET

72. YARLIQ OF MEHMET
THE CONQUEROR

EDIRNE, 1654/1655
INK AND AN EARLY FORM OF
DITIE
INK ON PAPER
49.500 CM
SSM 155-016-8SM

This yarlıq or edict was written in Edirne during the reign of
the seventh Ottoman sultan, Mehmet the Conqueror
(1654–1681), in the Safer
864/mid-December 1459.
The document is headed by a
long imperial monogram
composed of the words
'Mehmet, son of Murad II, the
Eternal Victorious', and
written in a calligraphic style
that combines characteristics of
ancient naskh and diya'i. At this
time it was customary to use
naskh script for short official
Ottoman documents and diya'i
for longer ones. Although
ancient naskh, which was the
inspiration for diya'i script, is
usually considered to have been
introduced to Istanbul in 1473,
this edict provides evidence that
its influence on the naskh and
diya'i scripts used for official
documents goes back
considerably earlier.
The word yarlıq is sometimes
encountered in old texts as an
alternative term for jaziye or
rezki. This yarlıq concerns the
conveyance of the villages of
Gavdar Hürri and Velgar Hür,
in D Festo from Mahmud
Celâbi, the son of Firmə
Hâşim, the sultan’s aunt, to his
sister, Sitti Hâşim, through a
trust. Sitti Hâşim (d.1480),
referred to as the ‘crown of all
women’, was the wife of
Mehmet the Conqueror.
72. YARLIC OF MEHMET THE CONQUEROR

This yarlıg or edict was written in Edirne during the reign of the seventh Ottoman sultan, Mehmet the Conqueror (1451–1481), in mid-Safar 864/mid-December 1455. The document is headed by a title (imperial monogram) composed of the words "Mehmet, son of Murad Han, Eternaally Victorious," and written in a calligraphic style that combines characteristics of ancient tugh and dîvân. At this time it was customary to use tugh script for short official Ottoman documents and dîvân for longer ones. Although ancient tugh, which was the inspiration for dîvân script, is usually considered to have been introduced to Istanbul in 1479, this edict provides evidence that its influence on the tugh and dîvân scripts used for official documents goes back considerably earlier.

The word tugh is sometimes encountered in old texts as an alternative term for jëfûr or hûrûf. This tugh concerns the conveyance of the villages of Geydir Huri and Velgâr Hure, in Doinzen from Mahmut Çelebi, the son of Emir Hiron, the sultan's aunt, to his sister, Sitti Hërun, through a trust. Sitti Hërun (d.1466), referred to as the "crown of all women" was the wife of Mehmet the Conqueror.
73. BERAT OF BAYEZID II

ISTANBUL, 1453/1508
INK AND GOLD/BLACK INK ON PAPER
77 x 56.3 CM
SM 406-0055 38A

This brief (document granting an imperial title, privilege, or property) dates from the reign of the eighth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Bayezid II (1481–1512). It was issued from Istanbul on the last day of Rebi’ul Hidaj 921/late August 1508. The text, written in lamplight ink, reads: Baysid bin Muhammad bin Isma’il bin ‘Umar bin Yaqub bin Isma’il (Bayezid, son of Muhammad Hüs, the ever-victorious). The text opening (or sifira) is as follows:

An interesting feature here is the early form of the 'attas script, with the letter shapes undeveloped. At this point, the script did not use vowel signs and other markers to fill the spaces in the channel-shaped letters as it did in examples written since the age of Süleyman I, the Magnificent (or the Langzeit, 71 1570–66), when the script acquired a new personality.

This type of brief is called a sanad (statement of boundaries). Addressed to Muhittin Bey, the governor of the akit (division of a province) of Ohrid (present-day Ohrid, Macedonia), it defines the boundaries of a mine in the district of Timišoara (now Demirhisar) and says no one may interfere in the affairs of this area.
73. BERAT OF BAYEZİD II

This brief (document) granting an imperial title, privilege, or property dates from the reign of the eighth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Bayezid II (1389–1512). It was issued from Istanbul on the last day of Rebiulâh (945/late August 1538). The text, written in lampblack ink, reads: Şehzâde Bayezid Hâdi [i.e., Bayezid, son of Mehmed II, the Conqueror]. The brief opening (or 1917–1918), as well as the text following, is written in the cili dots script using lampblack ink. An interesting feature here is the early form of the cili dots script, with the letter shapes undeveloped. At this point, the script did not use vowel signs and other markers to fill the spaces in the channel-shaped letters as it did in examples written since the age of Bayezid I, the Magnificent, or the Lawgiver, r. 1451–1506, when the script acquired a new personality.

This type of brief is called a murāzîh (statement of boundaries). Addressed to Mustafa Bey, the governor of the nahia (division of a province) of Ohrid (present-day Ohrid, Macedonia), it defines the boundaries of a zone in the district of Timârhor (now Demirhisar) and says no one may interfere in the affairs of this area.
75. BERAT OF SELİM II

This bursa dates from the reign of the eleventh Ottoman emperor, Sultan Selim II (1566–74). It was issued from Edirne in the month of Qumâdâdži 1567/November 1567. At the top is the sultan’s signature, written in dark blue and outlined in gold. It reads: Selim Şah-b-i Sâliyman Şah
Ibn el-mücaffâ-dînî Şelim
Shah, son of Suleyman Shah
Han, the ever-victorious. The open areas within the signature are decorated with various eye-catching motifs.

The first line of writing is a formula that begins sâliyman (this noble sign). This formula, which is not used on bursas, is written in gold ink in gold ink; the rest of the text is in the same script, but written in lampblack ink. The text is in the style preferred during the reign of the previous Ottoman emperor, Sultan Selim I, the Magnificent (or the Laoqer). 27 spots (gold spots) are placed in a calculated pattern over the lines of writing, emphasizing both the shape of the line and the wealth of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century. This type of bursa is known as a valinizâ (property grant).

The text says that the lad (judge) of Istanbul, Mehmed Efendi, has prepared the legal measures in accord with Islamic law for Sultan Selim II to grant certain properties in the district of Timurâne, (now Demirhisar), in the Pasa amâne, to the Grand Vezir Sokollu Mehmed Pasa (1565–1579).
This hat dates from the reign of the eleventh Ottoman emperor, Sultan Selim II (1566–74). It was issued from Edirne in the month of Guessal 973/November 1574. At the top is the sultan’s sign, written in light blue and outlined in gold. It reads: Selim Şah-i Suleyman Şah ısa effective in the name of Selim Shah, son of Suleyman Shah, the ever-victorious). The open areas within the sign are decorated with various eye-catching motifs.

The first line of writing is a formula that begins ejne-i serif (this noble sign). This formula, which is not used on ferrets, is written in gold ink in the rest of the text is in the same script, but written in lampblack ink. The text is in the style preferred during the reign of the previous Ottoman emperor, Sultan Suleyman I, the Magnificent: for the Lawgivers (522/1516–1524). The signs (gold spots) are placed in a calculated pattern over the lines of writing, emphasizing both the shape of the line and the wealth of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century.

This type of text is known as a millette (property grant). The text says that the bail (judge) of Edirne, Mahiddin Efendi, has prepared the legal measures in accord with Islamic law for Sultan Selim II to grant certain properties in the district of Timizhan (now Dermishlar), in the Pasha mosque, to the Grand Vezir Sokollu Mehmed Pasha (1505–1575).
76. BERAT OF MURAD III

ISTANBUL, 983/1575
TUGRA AND EDEN HEAD
INK AND GOLD ON PAPER
B.80 534. 2 CM
SM8 660-0008-SMU

This berat dates from the reign of the twelfth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Murad III (1574–95). It was issued from Istanbul during the last ten days of the month of Safar 983/early June 1575. A short invocation is written at the top of the document in a small script. Underneath is the sultan’s tugra, written in lampblack ink and outlined in gold ink. Some areas between the letters of the tugra are completely filled in with gold ink. The tugra reads: Şah Muradâ
his Selim Şah Râş ol muhaffiziâ
(Şah Murad, son of Shah Selim Han, the ever-victorious). The entire text is written in naskhi script, using lampblack ink. The naskhi (gold script) above the lines of text are closely spaced.

This document defines the boundaries of real property in the Bergas district granted by Sultan Murad III to Grand Vezir Sokollu Mehmed Paşa (1575–1579).
This bract dates from the reign of the twelfth Ottoman emperor, Sultan Murad III (1574–1575). It was issued from Istanbul during the last ten days of the month of Safar 982/early June 1575. A short invocation is written at the top of the document in a small script. Underneath is the sultan’s signature, written in lampblack ink and outlined in gold ink. Some areas between the letters of the text are completely filled in with gold ink. The signature reads: Şah Murad / is Sinan Şahli få râz-ı muâzin âdâ-i Muâzin (Shah Murad, son of Shah Selim Han, the ever victorious). The entire text is written in cili alâvi script, using lampblack ink. The text (gold spots) above the lines of text are closely spaced.

This document defines the boundaries of land property in the Bergas district granted by Sultan Murad III to Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha (1575–1577).