The *Dala’il al-Khayrat* of Muhammad ibn Sulyaman al-Jazuli (d. c.1465) was one of the most widely read prayer books in the later Islamic period and enjoyed popularity not only in al-Jazuli’s native Morocco but also in the rest of North Africa and the Ottoman Empire. Copies from the eastern Islamic world are much less common, however. This manuscript is a rare Central Asian copy in which the strikingly original colourful illustrations and diagrams are much more numerous than those in western copies. The work, of which the full title is *Dala’il al-Khayrat wa Shawarit al-Anwar fi Dirkat al-Salat ‘ala al-Nabi al-Mukhtar* (Indications of Good Works and Rays of Light Concerning Prayers for the Chosen Prophet) consists of a prayer for the Prophet Muhammad, a description of his tomb in Medina and a discussion of his various names. In North Africa it became common to illustrate the Prophet’s tomb, along with other holy sites in Medina such as the tombs of the Caliphs Abu Bakr and ‘Umar and the mimbar (pulpit) in the Mosque of Medina. In Ottoman copies the repertoire was frequently expanded to include depictions of the holy sites of Mecca, of which no mention is made in al-Jazuli’s original. The expansion of the illustrative programme of copies of the *Dala’il al-Khayrat* accompanied the work’s growing popularity as a guide for pilgrims about to undertake the hajj.

In the present copy, the illustrative programme has been even further extended to include pilgrimage sites and paraphernalia not normally found in *Dala’il al-Khayrat* manuscripts. Many of these additional illustrations, such as those of the various mountains around Mecca and Medina and the *Suq al-Layl*, the area of Mecca in which Muhammad was born, are found in the great Persian pilgrimage guide of the period, Muhayi al-Din Lari’s *Funun al-Haramayn*, which was widely read in the eastern Islamic lands. The designs for other illustrations, such as those of the al-Aqsa mosque and the soles of the Prophet’s feet, probably derive from images found on other media such as Ottoman tiles and pilgrimage charts made in the Holy Cities, largely, it seems, for the Indian market. The wide illustrated repertoire, clearly culled from a variety of sources, suggests that the manuscript was intended to be some sort of comprehensive guide to the most important Sunni pilgrimage sites.

The decoration of the manuscript also suggests that the artists drew from multiple sources. Some surprisingly archaic elements, such as the use of Eastern Riffic script for the titles and of illuminated shamsa (medallions), suggest that the artists were copying elements from sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Persian or Ottoman manuscripts. Other elements, however, are strikingly original – the tree with red blossoms that opens the manuscript, the colourful scrolling roses that fill the ground of the illuminated frontispiece, and the rose bush that closes the manuscript would seem to be inspired more by Central Asian textiles than manuscript production. Other unusual features in the design include distinctly Chinese-looking architectural elements in many of the illustrations, as well as a genealogical tree of the author, assembled in the shape of a tapering mosque.

The script of the main body of the text is a firm and measured naskh, similar to the type popular in North India, particularly Kashmir, though thicker and more compact.
The steadiness and regularity of the hand is seen to particular effect in the section dealing the ninety-nine names of God, with each name separated from the next by a small gold roundel. The calligrapher has also demonstrated his skill in the opening shamsa, in which the contents of the Dalâ’îl al-Khayrât are listed in blue thuluth in a circular motion around the centre of the device.

A double-page colophon in red thuluth gives the date of the completion of the manuscript as 23 Sha’bân 1308 (3 April 1891 CE) and the name of the scribe as “Haji Muhammad Niyaz b. Nur Muhammad al-Khuqandi”. The scribe’s name, al-Khuqandi, suggests that the manuscript was copied in Khoqand in the Ferghana valley, an attribution consistent with the quality of the work and the Chinese influence apparent in some of the design. From the late eighteenth century Khoqand was the seat of an independent khanate that annexed Tashkent in 1809 and rivalled Bukhara in power. Thanks to its strategic location in the fertile Ferghana valley on the border of Chinese Turkistan, the khanate prospered from its agricultural hinterland and trans-
Eurasian trade and was home to a vigorous commercial and cultural life despite its turbulent politics. In 1876 the whole khanate was annexed by the Russians, who were eager to establish direct control over such a strategically sensitive area. This manuscript, completed more than a decade after the annexation, is an example of the continuity and development of Islamic traditions in the earliest period of Russian imperialism.¹

¹ See J.M. Rogers on Nahla Nassar’s discussion of Dāhil manuscripts from North Africa and the Ottoman Empire in Rogers 1996, p. 106.
² For an illustrated copy of Lari’s text, see State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, inv. no. VP-947, illustrated in St Petersburg 2000, no. 15, p. 112.
³ For such pilgrimage paraphernalia, see ibid., nos. 18-20, pp. 112-16.
⁴ See EBo, art. “Khokand”.

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Front Cover: Detail of cat. 31, Large Qur’an in Maghribi script on parchment
Back Cover: Detail of cat. 21, sura heading medallion coinciding with a black division

Half title: Cat. 33, The Prayer of ‘Ukashā’
Frontispiece: Cat. 13, Large Qur’an leaf in Kufic script
Page 4: Cat. 47, Album of painting and calligraphy
Page 5: Details of cat. 21, sura heading medallion and geometric marker

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