Introduction: Islamic Book Arts in Indiana University Collections

In his treatise on scribal practices, tools, and technology, the Zirid ruler al-Mu'izz b. Badis (d. 1062) is keen to establish that Islamic traditions linked to the pen have stimulated a written heritage that is prolific and enduring. With the aid of graphic tools and their supple supports, calligraphers and painters have contributed to the vast and rich corpus of book arts that have flourished in Islamic lands from as early as the seventh century until the present day. While practitioners in the "art of the word" attempted to present knowledge through writing, artists, preferring the "art of the form," strove to depict the world around them by means of the picture.

Although calligraphy and painting often are considered two discrete methods of communication, they frequently are combined in creative syntheses. In Persian and Turkish spheres in particular, practices of graphic and pictorial representation are linked through the metaphoric potential of their shared tool, the pen or quillam (Figure 1.1). From the very beginnings of Islam, the pen has been heralded as the primordial tool used by God to reveal sacred scripture and to record man's actions in his book of deeds. The pen's prime status—as engendering all of creation and transmitting divine knowledge to humankind—is in part due to its intimate association to God, who is described in the Qur'an as "He Who teaches by the pen."7

Calligraphers lauded the pen for its ability to produce form, thereby connecting the practice of writing with God's creative force (Figure 1.2). This symbolic analogy between calligraphic forms produced by the writer's quillam and God's tracing of life forms with his own "pen of creation" without a doubt elevated the calligrapher's status and legitimized his chosen profession. By extension, God could be understood as the most majestic of calligraphers, giving beautiful form to primal substance and therefore active in moderating the diffusion of knowledge. This recurring emphasis on the primacy of the word, along with the consequent practice of writing, reveals Islam as a semantic and logocentric culture par excellence.8

Unlike calligraphers, artists were cautious in drawing parallels between their creation of form and God's fashioning of the universe. This prudence appears to have been due to their fear of being accused of usurping God's exclusive ability to create life. Although warnings against painters are not included in the Qur'an, they do appear in collections of hadiths (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad). In one instance, the Prophet is recorded as refusing to enter his house when he notices that his wife 'A'isha has bought a cushion with images, proclaiming:

Anything which the pens have given fruit the ages have not dared to erase.

al-Mu'izz b. Badis
"The painters of these pictures will be punished on the Day of Resurrection. It will be said to them, 'Put to life in what you have created.' The angels do not enter a house where there are pictures.’ To a large extent, such statements help to explain both a perceived lack of pictures and/or the general adversity to images in Islamic cultures.”

Despite such admonitions in hadith collections, Islamic artistic traditions are far from being aniconic or iconoclastic, thus revealing the multiple disjunctures between religious prohibition and pictorial production.1 In what may seem at first glance a paradoxical predicament, paintings thrived in a variety of Islamic cultures. For example, in Arab lands, frescoes adorn the walls of palaces and baths, and pictures are included in illustrated books such as scientific treatises and bellettistic works produced especially from ca. 700 to 1000. In Persian spheres, figurative imagery complemented historical, biographical, and poetic texts produced from about 1300 to 1900, while in Mughal India, portraiture (Figure 1.3) and allegorical representation formed two powerful modes of royal representation especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During these two centuries, Ottoman Turkish visual traditions flourished as well, having embraced the pictorial mode as a means to illustrate epic, romantic, and biographical tales or to convey scientific and military knowledge. In many instances, paintings functioned as illustrations of written narratives and thus provided descriptive or interpretative augmentations to a reading experience, while simultaneously adding an aesthetic dimension to the production of Islam’s written heritage.

From the sixteenth century forward, Persian painters in particular were keen to align their occupation with that of calligraphers, since both fields required mastery of linearity, contour, balance, and rhythm of form. A number of authors wrote treatises on the subject during the Safavid period (1501–1722), postulating that painting and calligraphy emerged from the same impetus to fashion form through the pen. Safavid authors identify two kinds of qalam: either a reed pen and thus vegetal (nabaiti) in nature, or a painting brush and thus animal (hayvani) in nature. This theory of the “two pens” in effect was employed in an attempt to elevate painting to the rank of calligraphy by stressing both practices’ basic use of modules and their ability to divulge information.29 Because of its technical similarities to the art of calligraphy, painting too could be justified as an exalted pursuit and a praiseworthy vocation, as the eminent sixteenth-century Safavid calligrapher and author Dūst Muhammad notes: “Painting is not without justification (mit bi asli), and the painter’s conscience need not be pricked by the thorn of despair.”30

Despite various injunctions against images and image-makers in the hadith, painting nevertheless prospered alongside calligraphy to create a binary system of visual and textual communication in Arab, Turkish, and especially Persian lands. Both practices were bound together by the qalam, itself perceived as an authoritative and consecrated instrument.
of primordial origins. Practitioners of the calligraphic and pictorial arts also were unified through their shared dedication to experimenting with form and developing new technologies to transmit knowledge in its various iterations.

Following suit, a discussion of the frequent connections between calligraphy and painting, and their shared tools and materials, is offered here, via the exploration of Islamic book arts held in the Lilly Library of Rare Books and Manuscripts, the Indiana University Art Museum, and the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction at Indiana University, Bloomington. Materials include writing implements and decorated papers, Persian and Ottoman Turkish illustrated manuscripts, miniature books from various geographical spheres, printed books from Ottoman Turkey, modern calligraphic specimens, and Persian erotica. These many works underscore the variety of book arts in Islamic traditions from the ninth century to the present while testifying to the richness of Indiana University’s collections.

Arabic belongs to the group of Semitic languages that includes Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac. Although whether the Arabic alphabet developed from Nabataean characters or from Syriac script remains unclear, Arabic displays the same morphological and phonetic characteristics of other Semitic languages, most prominently a trilateral root system, guttural and fricative sounds, and the precedence given to consonants over vowels. Furthermore, as in the written form of other Semitic languages, words in Arabic are constructed through the creation of ligatures between letters of the alphabet, and words are transcribed from the right to the left margin of a page.

Arabic script was already in use ca. 300–600. Lapidary inscriptions dating from these early centuries in north and south Arabia record personal dedications and religious feelings or issue laws and other public decrees. These graffiti reveal that Arabic in its written form did not follow exact orthographic criteria, and it was not until the seventh century that Arabic script became more or less codified. With the need to record the oral revelations of God to Muhammad through the Qur’an—as well as to solidify the newly emergent politico-religious Muslim community through record keeping, official decrees, and the transmission of knowledge—Arabic became an autonomous idiom and its script consequently underwent a process of standardization. The rise of Arabic and its writing system thus was simultaneous with the emergence of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula.

Parts of the Qur’an initially were inscribed on ephemeral materials such as bones, palm leaves, and stones as a means of recording the Prophet Muhammad’s oral recitations. To avoid divergences in—and to ensure the permanence of—Qur’anic revelation, Muhammad’s recitations were collected and codified under the first two rightly guided caliphs (al-rashidun), Abu Bakr (d. 634) and ‘Uthman (d. 656). From this time forward, the Qur’an was carefully recorded on more long-lasting
and flexible materials, first on parchment (dehaired and cured animal skin) and later on paper (macerated flax or hemp fibers). Along with the technology of the supple, foldable support—whether it be parchment or paper—emerged the book or codex (mushaf), a concrete form at the very heart of scriptural production, scholarly and administrative practices, and artistic endeavors in the Islamic world.

The earliest Islamic books that survive comprise a series of approximately forty thousand parchment fragments, yielding approximately one thousand Qur’anic manuscripts, found by a team of German scholars in 1979 under the roof of the Great Mosque of Sana’a in Yemen. These parchment folios date from the seventh to the tenth century, and vary in size, from minute pocket editions to monumental volumes. Leaves are in the oblong format and contain Qur’anic verses written in black or brown ink in a square, angular script commonly referred to as Kufic. Vowel marks usually are indicated by dots in red, gold, or green ink, and markers separating verses (qasas) often take the shape of floral rosettes.

Many parchment fragments of Kufic Qur’ans are scattered in international collections, and Indiana University holds a single folio with verses 26–28 of chapter 45, entitled “The Adoration” (al-Fussilat), on its recto and verso (Figures 1.4 and 1.5), as well as a fourteen-folio section containing, for example, the chapter heading of chapter 70, entitled “The Stairways” (al-Ma’arij), written in gold ink and provided with a decorative finial in the left margin (Figure 1.6). These Qur’anic fragments display a sharp Kufic script, penned either in black or dark brown ink, at five to seven lines per folio. Words expand or contract to fit the exact length of each line. Red dots on the fourteen-folio fragment appear both above and below the text line; these serve as diacritics to mark the normal vocalization of the text. On the other hand, the single-folio fragment displays gold dots on both the recto (hair side) and the verso (flesh side). These gold dots give more precise directions on reciting the text by bringing the reader’s attention to each unvocalized consonant (sukun), the duplication of a consonant (tasliha), and the accusative nunnation (tamwi’).

The fourteen-folio fragment (Figure 1.6) also bears a large gold fifty-verse marker on its third line of text, as well as a beautiful chapter (sura) heading for chapter 70, typically entitled “The Stairways” (al-Ma’arij), but here given a title according to the first two words of the chapter—“So asked the questioner”—followed by the total number of its verses. The gold ink and the marginal finial mark the chapter heading apart and serve to visually demarcate the text’s break for the reader. Furthermore, the variant chapter title is intriguing but not truly remarkable, since in the early period one sees suras sometimes entitled by the first word or series of words contained in the first verse rather than a peculiar term or animal (such as cow, spider, or ant) that is mentioned in the subsequent
narrative.\textsuperscript{22} This chapter title does not truly present an aberration of the Qur'\textacutednas\textsuperscript{nic text per se.

Indiana University's Kufic Qur'an falls into "Group One" of Kufic Qur'\textacutednas as devised by the scholar Estelle Whelan; this group comprises Qur'\textacutednas executed in a horizontal format, containing thirty sections (aj\textacutednas), liturgical breaks, and sura titles with numerals in an archaic, and thus possibly ritualistic, form. Such examples differ from other Qur'\textacutednas identified as "Group Two" and produced in vertical format, which do not contain aj\textacutednas or sura titles and therefore do not seem to have fulfilled liturgical functions.\textsuperscript{23} Although Whelan argues that Kufic Qur'\textacutednas belonging to "Group One" may have been produced in the Hijaz area or in Iraq, at present there is no firm method of establishing an exact provenance for these kinds of portable and peripatetic materials.\textsuperscript{24} Despite these limitations, it is possible to suggest, based on paleographic style, ornamental details, and the gold-painted sura heading, that the fourteenth-folio Kufic Qur'an was made in the ninth or tenth century, possibly for liturgical purposes rather than for private use.

Kufic script (and its variants) evolved from lapidary inscriptions and rightly can be said to be a "natural product of the chisel."\textsuperscript{25} Although this angular script's use in Qur'\textacutednas survived for a number of centuries, the style eventually gave way to more fluid cursive scripts, which initially evolved out of the impetus to make written communication in administrative circles more swift and efficient. From the tenth century onward, new proportioned cursive scripts were formulated by the calligrapher Ibn Muq\textacutedla (d. 939) and later developed by his equally famous successors Ibn al-Bawwab (d. 1022) and Ya\textacutefat al-Musta\textacutensini (d. 1298).

Together, these three leaders and their pupils created the calligraphic school known as the "six pens" (al-a\textacutelam al-s\textacutedt\textacutedla), which include the six scripts naskh, thuluth, muhaqqaq, rayhani, taw\textacutedni, and ri\textacutedga. At the same time as these six "pens" or scripts matured, Arabic as a written system was perfected through the formulation and systematic use of diacritics. From the tenth to the thirteenth century, therefore, cursive lettering started to replace the rigidity of Kufic; the Arabic writing system became fully codified and thus wholly legible; and paper surpassed parchment as the medium of choice.\textsuperscript{26}

Through these new cursive scripts, artists explored the aesthetic dimensions of calligraphy, thereby transforming scribal practices into an active pursuit of "beautiful writing" (huss al-kh\textacutedat). Artistic writing surpassed the simple necessity of transcription, and as a result calligraphy emerged superior to scribalism.\textsuperscript{27} Expressive but controlled and pleasant to the eye, Islamic calligraphy presents an artistic system of written forms that practitioners elevated beyond simple vocation. As the calligrapher Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi (d. after 1009-1019) remarks, "Handwriting is a difficult geometry and an exacting craft. [It is the jewelry fashioned by the hand from the pure gold of the intellect]."\textsuperscript{28} Through these many practices and surviving testimonies, it is clear that calligraphers understood their practice of "beautiful writing" as an intellectually rigorous enterprise.

Ibn Muq\textacutedla was the first to expound a standardized system of proportional writing (al-kh\textacutedat al-mansub), in which he described the relative size of each letter. Each letter's size was based on the dimensions of the al\textacutedf, the first letter of the alphabet, itself shaped like a vertical line. The height of the al\textacutedf was determined by a (variable) number of diamond-shaped rhombic points, created by slightly pressing down the reed pen's diagonally slit nib. Ibn al-Bawwab furthered Ibn Muq\textacutedla's rhombic system by inscribing the al\textacutedf into a circle; the al\textacutedf served as a yardstick with which to determine the height of subsequent letters, and the circle's radius provided their relative length.\textsuperscript{29} This proportional system, based on the rhomboid-based al\textacutedf module, has been used, altered, and perfected by practitioners of cursive scripts from the tenth century until today.\textsuperscript{30}

Calligraphers practiced proportioned scripts based on the rhombic system in their practice sheets (Arabic mashiq, or Turkish me\textacutedk), which they used to teach the art of "beautiful writing" to their pupils and to practice their craft prior to carrying out a final product.\textsuperscript{31} For example, the Turkish calligrapher Âziz Efendi (d. 1534) created a cursive me\textacutedk in black ink, which he signed and dated 1348/1939 (Figure 1.7).\textsuperscript{32} This calligraphic piece, which includes prayers to God and other laudatory expressions in Arabic, is carefully marked by a series of rhomboids showing the relative height and width of each letter. Although the
exercise appears mathematical in its approach, it is not impossible that
the rhomboids were added later and thus inserted a posteriori to give the
calligraphy its presumed structure, rather than vice versa. Regardless of
the actual function of the rhomboids, this specimen may have been used
as a sample to teach a pupil the rules of calligraphic practice, or it may
have been commissioned as an "exhibition piece" for a patron interested
in the calligraphic process.

According to the Safavid calligrapher Sultan ‘Ali Mashhadi (d. 1514),
who wrote a famous treatise on calligraphy, the art of beautiful writ-
ing was essentially a "spiritual geometry." The rules for writings were
many, and calligraphers had to pay particular attention to the shapes,
arrangements, and proportions of their letters, especially their ascents
and descents. We are told by Sultan ‘Ali and other author-calligraphers
that, in order to perfect this "spiritual geometry," the student must col-
lect and imitate the writings of masters so as to "saturate" his eye. This
practice of observation through the eye (nażari) is followed by manual

training through the pen (galami).13 By combining both the theoretical-
observation and applied-practical aspects of the craft, calligraphers
were able to establish particular rules governing both the principles and
the teaching of calligraphy.

A pupil who had mastered calligraphy was granted a diploma (Arabic
ijaza, or Turkish icazet) by his master(s). This certificate of compe-
tence in calligraphy typically includes a text transcribed by the pupil:
often a hadith, verses of the Qur’an, or a proverb. Usually two scripts,
such as thuluth and naskh, were used to display the pupil’s ability to
work in various calligraphic "pen." At the bottom of each ijaza, one
finds the master’s or masters’ signed permission, in which he or they
grant authorization to the pupil to sign his own calligraphic works with
signatures that include the Arabic expressions katabahu (written by),
harabahu (composed by), and sawwahahu (copied in black by or black-
ened by).14 The ijaza thus allowed the student calligrapher to become
a licensed master, to sign his calligraphic compositions, and to take on
pupils of his own.

Some Ottoman Turkish icazets were so beautifully executed and
illuminated that they became collector’s items. One of them (dated
1179/1769), for example, is lavishly decorated with marginal gold sprin-
king and illuminated panels (Figure 1.8). This diploma includes a hadith

FIG. 1.3. Calligrapher’s diploma (icazet) issued to Mustafa Efendi by ‘Ali Efendi, Turkey, dated 1227/1812, 23.5 x 18.8 cm, no. 01.14, Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington.
mounted to a pasteboard (a thin board made of pasted sheets of paper), is by the Ottoman Turkish calligrapher Mehmed Şefik (d. 1880), who also notes that his composition is a copy of an earlier specimen executed by the famous Ottoman Turkish calligrapher Hafiz Osman (d. 1898). Based on comparable pieces executed by Mehmed Şefik, the Lilly levha was probably executed ca. 1878, that is, almost two centuries after Hafiz Osman’s template—thereby demonstrating that calligraphic masterpieces inspired a long chain of artists to transcend the mere practice of penmanship in order to perfect the more elevated art of “beautiful writing.”

While calligraphers and scribes undertook the transcription of texts, other artists in book ateliers within the Islamic world provided assistance with ancillary arts, such as bookbinding. Protective covers for books or quires of folia began as early as the production of Qur’anic manuscripts. For example, a number of wooden boxes covered by tooled leather made in the tenth century were found alongside Kufic Qur’ān fragments in the Great Mosque of Sana’a. These book-bindings are—much like the Qur’āns they contain—oblong in shape; they also include leather thongs with pegs and loops in order to keep the box hinged shut and thus to ensure the protection of the parchment folia from dust, dirt, and other elements. During the first few centuries of Islam, bookbindings were therefore designed for protecting and containing parchment leaves rather than for “binding” them into a single, solid tome.

As parchment was replaced with paper and the horizontal page format gave way to a vertical one, the shape and function of bookbindings changed as well. Although they could be tooled and decorated in a variety of ways, Islamic bindings essentially retained the same basic shape from the tenth century onward (Figures 1.10 and 1.11). This shape was no longer a box but rather a kind of envelope, constructed with three main structural components: first, two leather-covered boards made either of wood or pasteboard compose the front and back covers of the book; second, these cover boards are held together by a flexible leather spine; and third, an envelope flap is attached to the back cover and wraps around to the front cover in order to protect the book’s fore-edge. The book’s reader can also use the envelope flap as a bookmark or tuck it under the text block in order to slightly elevate the pages when reading. The folios of the book are sewn together and then affixed to the spine, thus transforming the binding into a kind of skin that is inseparable from the quires of folios. In their technical treatises on the subject, a number of practitioners in fact describe the various parts of a bookbinding by comparing them to parts of the human body, thereby stressing the functional integrity of a binding’s constituent members.

Most frequently, the leather binding is fashioned or decorated in one way or another by using a tool, manipulated in a freehand fashion, or by stamping the leather with ornamental designs. Sometimes, the
prepared and dyed leather is heated to make it more malleable to these decorative imprints, which include a wide range of designs, such as ornamental strapwork; center pieces shaped like suns, disks, or mandoras; and floral corner pieces.9

In Timurid and Safavid Iran (ca. 1400–1700), figural compositions begin to appear on bindings covering Persian epic and romantic poems, while pious inscriptions at times decorate the cover of Qur’ans. One beautiful Safavid binding covers a Qur’an probably transcribed by the calligrapher ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. Muqaddam in Herat (in modern-day Afghanistan) in 1571 (Figure 1.12). This stupendous binding belongs to a series of thirty individually bound sections (miṣwa) of a Qur’an now dispersed in a number of international collections.10 The Lilly Library is fortunate to own the ninth section (miṣwa) of this multi-volume work, the large scale and luxurious design of which intimate that it was an elite, perhaps even royal, commission. The leather binding is stamped with a polylobed, central mandora and vegetal designs, and is framed by a series of cartouches bearing a hadith on the virtues of the Qur’an—all brushed over in gold. The lavish attention paid to the binding foreshadows the high value of the Holy Book enclosed within, itself transcribed using copious amounts of gold and lapis (see Figure 1.17). Similarly, the binding’s doublure (inner cover) also has benefited from close attention:
During the eighteenth century, bookbindings remained items that could add appeal and monetary value to a book, whether calligraphed by hand or mechanically produced by the newly emergent printing press. For example, Ottoman Turkish books printed in Istanbul by Ibrahim Müteferrika (d. 1745) during the 1720s and 1730s might be mistaken for manuscripts if one were to look only at the stamped leather bindings and doublures; sporting fine filigree work (see Figures 5.3 and 5.4). Some of Müteferrika’s printed books also were covered in bindings that combined both stamped leather and blue-and-white marbled paper, revealing a new experimentation with multiple media within the confines of the book’s cover (see Figure 5.3).

Instead of relying solely on covers clad in leather, Persian artists developed new technologies for their bookbindings from the fifteenth century onward. The most important of these consisted in the use of lacquer covers made of paper-mâché thinly coated with plaster, itself painted over with vegetal and figural compositions and then covered with a protective varnish. Although lacquer binding appeared in works from Persian lands already during the Timurid and Safavid periods, it truly flourished during the nineteenth century under the sponsorship of two powerful Qajar monarchs, Fath ‘Ali Shah (r. 1797–1834) and Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–1896). At this time, lacquer was used not only for bookbindings but also for a variety of other objects, most especially pen-boxes and mirror-cases. Scholars have attributed its pervasive use to a growing Persian interest in the European (farangi) technique of oil painting, which also displays vivid colors covered in high varnish.

Lacquer paintings on boxes, cases, and bindings include hunting scenes, epic and romantic episodes, and even depictions of Christian subjects like the Virgin Mary and the infant Christ. Lacquer bindings containing religious texts, however, tend to shy away from figural imagery and instead represent an almost endless variation of floral motifs, as displayed on the covers of a Qur’an dedicated to Nasir al-Din Shah, signed by the Qajar calligrapher Muhammad ‘Ali al-Tibrizi and dated 1270/1853 (Figure 1.4). These kinds of floral motifs may have been inspired by printed designs found in European herbalists like the Hortus Floridus (Garden of Flowers) published in 1644 by Crispin de Passe, which may have arrived in Iran through merchants and traders as early as the mid-seventeenth century. Floral designs also may have been learned by Qajar painters who had gone to France to train with French painters and returned to Iran having fully assimilated contemporary European pictorial conventions, which they then passed down to their pupils. Europeanizing trends and tastes thus infiltrated not only Persian painting but bookbinding traditions as well.

In addition to floral bouquets, another favored motif included in Qajar lacquer bindings is the flower-and-nightingale (gol-i-bulbul) design. This kind of composition varies because it draws upon a wide range of possible motifs from the natural world, with flora represented...
by irises, narcissi, tulips, and roses, and finally by various birds and butterflies. A girl's folded cover, decorated with a glistening gold background and filled with rose, tulip, and narcissus, is shown (Figure 3.5). The poet's expression of the delights of love and the beloved is associated with the following verse:

To the victor my love is given,

In the particular case, the coded language of Hafez's poetry is conveyed in the best representation of the flowers, animals, and animals on the reverse of the reverse in the representation of the flowers. In other words, the book's cover enhances the figural theme deeply embedded in Hafez's lyrical poems.

Much as a binding may preclude the contents of the text it contains, the reverse of the reverse of the reverse plays an important role in the present context. The text is provided in English and Persian, and in the present context, it is important to note the following:

1. The text is provided in English and Persian.
2. The text discusses the use of code in Hafez's poetry.
3. The text also highlights the role of the reverse in conveying the figurative theme.

**ILLUSTRATION AND ENHANCING THE TEXT:**

In the present context, the use of code in Hafez's poetry is discussed, and the role of the reverse in conveying the figurative theme is highlighted. The text is provided in English and Persian, and it is important to note the following:

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1600 forward they also appear on single-sheet calligraphic and figural compositions.

Supported by modern scientific analysis, technical treatises on calligraphy and painting by authors such as al-Mu‘izz b. Badis and others reveal the extent to which pigment-makers mastered their craft and therefore contributed to the tonal complexity of illumination and illustration. By pulverizing plants or metals, decanting them, and moistening them in a water solution that included gum arabic and sometimes egg yolk, artists were able to create a vibrant palette of liquid colors. They drew upon the possibilities offered by both organic and inorganic materials, which included (most prominently) gold, silver, lapis lazuli, ultramarine (blue), cinnabar (red), orpiment and arsenic sulfide (yellow), verdigris and copper (green), white lead (white), and charcoal and soot (black).
Gold and lapis lazuli were used most frequently in book illumination during the Timurid and Safavid periods (ca. 1400–1700), and after the eighteenth century bright vermilion, made of crushed cinnabar (mercury sulphide), dominates as well. Illumination in sixteenth-century Persian Qur’an is used as a visual clue to mark the beginning of a particular section (juz') of the Holy Book (Figure 1.17). The number of the juz' is typically inscribed in a decorative headpiece (suratwah) or section heading (‘uyun) at the top of the folio. Besides helping the reader to distinguish the incipit of the Qur'anic text, illumination is used in such cases as a way to emphasize the work’s title or section number—a method that is especially important because Arabic script has no capital letters, and thus no large-scale initials mark the beginnings of sections as they do in European manuscripts.

Gold appears not only in the Qur'an’s illuminated headpiece; it is also used to fill in sura markers shaped like flowers or sun disks and to create decorative frames filled with floral designs and vine scrolls. Finally, gold ink is employed to transcribe parts of the Qur’an proper (such as every fifth line of text), in which case the technique is referred to as “chrysography,” or writing in gold. This lavish use of glittering and expensive material helps to increase the intensity of the believer’s encounter with the Qur’an and to visually highlight its sacred qualities. In Qur’ans and other religious texts, therefore, illumination is an appropriate method for glorifying the sacred character of scripture, as well as elevating and emphasizing important doctrinal or theological points.

Illumination can assume a rather independent role at certain points in the text, especially at its beginning or at important section breaks. The Qajar Qur’an made in 1327/1909 and dedicated to Nasir al-Din Shah, for example, includes a lavish double-page opening using large amounts of gold, lapis lazuli, and vermilion (Figure 1.18). The illumination dazzles but still contains a message written in gold letters: the two blue central medallions contain a petitionary prayer (du'a), identified as such in the red finials. All around the composition appears a frame with alternating red and blue registers that include the names of all the suras in the Qur’an, written in gold ink. This frame is in turn decorated with a series of finely executed interlocking arabesques, also based on the three principal colors of gold, blue, and red. In this case, the impetus to decorate was driven by a desire to embellish the formal appearance of the Qur’an, to give weight to the du'a invoked prior to reading the sacred text, and to create an index of the Holy Text’s constituent suras.

Illumination can also be used for section breaks throughout a text and for its colophon (signature panel) at its end. When used in a colophon, illumination not only highlights the author’s name and the date of completion but also provides a formal buttressing for a final prayer addressed to the Prophet Muhammad. For instance, in a copy of al-Bukhari’s Sahih (Collection of the Prophet’s Sayings), a text second in theological importance after the Qur’an, the colophon text is contained in a polylobed medallion on a blue ground and framed in gold.
FIG. 1.28. Double-page illuminated opening containing a prayer and the names of all areas. Qur'an dedicated to Nūn al-Dīn Shāh (r. 1458–1586), probably Tabriz, 1420/1523, 30 x 24 cm. Buckets, Q, folio 2r–2v. The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

(Figure 1.28). Again, gold, blue, and red dominate this illuminated panel, the design and layout of which is rather typical of Ottoman Turkish manuscripts made in North Africa. The colophon text, which is entirely written in gold, informs us that al-Bukhari’s Sahih was completed in the middle of Safar 1185 (ca. June 20, 1769) by the calligrapher Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Mahdi al-Huw. The colophon also provides terminal prayers for the Prophet Muhammad and his family. As a result, the separate illuminated panel allows the manuscript to end with a decorative splash, highlighting the calligrapher’s name and glorifying the Prophet through the fitting mechanism of lavish ornamentation.

Besides the Qur’an and religious texts, Persian epic and poetic tales often are illuminated and illustrated from the early fifteenth century onward. A number of luxury editions of Persian poems include a double-page illuminated opening containing an ex libris or dedicatory note, followed by another double-page composition representing a royal feast or hunt. One folio in the Indiana University Art Museum contains an illuminated panel dedicating a (no longer extant) manuscript to Sultan Husayn Mirza Bayqara (r. 1469–1506), the last Timurid ruler based in
the royal city of Herat (Figure 22). The folio is beautifully decorated with gold and lines patterns, strengthening and focusing attention on the gold leaf and gold leaf patterns, which run parallel to the text. The gold leaf is used to create a feeling of elegance and sophistication.

Despite its location, Herat and the surrounding areas were known for their rich cultural heritage, and the use of gold in the manuscripts reflects this. The gold leaf was used to highlight important parts of the text and to create images that complement the text.

The use of gold leaf in the manuscripts was not limited to Herat. It was also used in other regions of Persia, and the use of gold leaf was a common practice in the region during the Islamic period. However, the use of gold leaf in the manuscripts of Herat was unique because of the skill and craftsmanship of the artisans who created them.

The use of gold leaf in the manuscripts of Herat was not only a matter of aesthetics, but also a way of expressing power and authority. The use of gold leaf in the manuscripts of Herat was a way of expressing the power and authority of the royal family and the ruling elite.

Furthermore, the use of gold leaf in the manuscripts of Herat was also a way of expressing the wealth and prosperity of the region. The use of gold leaf in the manuscripts of Herat was a way of expressing the wealth and prosperity of the region, and it was a way of showing the wealth and prosperity of the region.

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muted; despite its serene hue, however, the verdigris used in producing the green paint has oxidized and corroded several sections of paper in the middle of the page.

The twin issues of authenticity and longevity—as previously discussed in relation to the Shaybanid continuation and imitation of Timurid artistic tastes—often surface when examining Persian illustrated manuscripts, since it appears that many items remained unfinished because of lacking funds, because they were taken as booty during military campaigns, or because they were transferred as a familial or diplomatic gift into another elite patron's kitabkhana. While some Timurid manuscripts from Herat found a new home in Shaybanid Bukhara, others went through Turkman hands and eventually arrived in Tabriz, where they were completed by artists active in the royal book atelier of Shah Isma'il (r. 1501–1524), the founder and first ruler of the Safavid state in Iran. Just like the painters and calligraphers who produced them, Timurid manuscripts also made their way southeast to the Indian subcontinent, where they contributed substantially to the formulation of the Mughal painterly style. And finally, Mughal manuscripts themselves also could have long and complex lives, both within Mughal and Sikh milieu in India or after leaving for Iran either as spoils after the 1739 conquest of Nadir Shah (r. 1736–1747) or in subsequent Indian-Persian commercial activity.

One early Mughal illustrated manuscript of Jami's Haft Awrang (Seven Thrones) in the Lilly Library (Allen mss. 11) bears witness to such peregrinations. It includes seven colophons signed by four different calligraphers, placing the manuscript's production in Kabul around 999–1000/1592–1593. The manuscript comprises 310 folios of highly polished Indian paper, along with some thicker replacement folios made of Persian rag paper that is at times dyed light blue. It also includes twenty paintings, most of which are in the full-page format, executed with intricate geometric patterns created with a thick impasto and high patina not typical of the Mughal palette. In one case, a painting is decorated with marginal compositions in a light wash (depicting birds, trees, and lions attacking deer) that attempt to approximate Mughal decorative borders (Figure 1.12). In many cases, architectural details or vegetation within the composition break through the painting's frame. Although the paintings appear to have been added at a later date—possibly at the turn of the twentieth century in Iran, in a revivalist or (in perhaps less euphemistic terms) "fake" Mughal style—the manuscript's original text places it among the earliest recorded manuscripts produced in Mughal India. Its date of 1592–1593 and its production in Kabul, which served as capital between 1546 and 1556, suggests that it was commissioned by the second Mughal ruler Humayun (r. 1530–56) or someone in his entourage after he returned to Kabul from his exile, which included an artistically fruitful stay at the court of the second Safavid ruler, Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576).
After an efflorescence of illustrated manuscripts in Mughal India and Safavid Iran during the sixteenth century, the seventeenth century witnessed the efflorescence of a new genre of painterly practice: the single-page portrait. While many single-folio compositions and colored sketches were produced in Iran for a non-royal clientele, including a sophisticated cultural class interested in leisurely activities, numerous single-page paintings produced in Mughal India catered directly to a ruler and his immediate social circle, using the hieratic language of form to convey the sitter’s power or wealth. Such works, which often were included in Mughal albums of calligraphies and paintings, are heavily illuminated with gold and decorated with textured borders, while the sitter is represented usually in profile or in three-quarters profile and seated either singly or holding audience. The Mughal profile bust portrait of the seventeenth century, moreover, bears the undeniable imprint of European pictorial conventions, which arrived through Jesuit missions and trade activities during this period.  

To convey the high status of their Mughal sitters, portraits of rulers such as the emperor ‘Alamgir I (r. 1658–1707) include details of kingship—embroidered canopies or robes, jewel-encrusted garments, gems such as pearls and rubies, and plummed turban ornaments (Figure 1.32). Rulers and men of high rank tend to be represented with attitudes of detached reverence, and therefore such compositions, which symbolically remove the represented person from the minutiae of human affairs, make strong statements about temporal and spiritual authority.‘Alamgir himself became rather detached and austere later in life, shunning music, dance, and painting, so to find several single-page portraits of very high quality dating from his reign might seem odd. As Stuart Cary Welch has suggested, it is possible that painters active in the royal book atelier realized that the Mughal emperor might close their workshops soon after his accession to the throne, so they strove to exceed themselves on his behalf, in effect using pictorial flattery to try to ensure their professional stability.

Moving forward to the modern period, the output of Islamic art is best represented by a substantial corpus of oil paintings on canvas and lacquer paintings on book covers (see Figures 1.14–1.16) executed for the Qajar rulers of Iran over the course of the nineteenth century. Although Qajar oil paintings on canvas are not represented in the collections of Indiana University, there nevertheless exists an exceptional collection of approximately sixty Persian erotic paintings and drawings in the Kinsey Institute (Figure 1.44). Alfred Kinsey (1894–1956) and his team of researchers actively collected paintings, sketches, prints, and objects that contain sexual, erotic, and pornographic contents because they deemed such artifactual data to be indispensable sources of information to complement the scientific or clinical observation of sexual practices worldwide. In fact, after having written his groundbreaking yet controversial studies on Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (1948)
and Sexual Behavior in the Human Female (1953), Kinsey himself had planned to write a volume on erotic expression in the arts. 

The Persian erotic sketches and paintings in the Kinsey Institute, some of which include notes mentioning a 1957 "Kellermann Expedition" to Iran, appear to date from about 1880 to 1950. Although to date the material has not been the subject of close study, a selection of the Kinsey drawings and paintings were used as illustrations in Gabriele Mandel's Oriental Erotica, one of very few studies to examine eroticism in Islamic textual and visual sources. The Kinsey materials represent a rather broad range of sexual subjects, including same-sex practices, group sex, prostitution, sexual education, voyeurism, and transvestism, and they highlight these practices' presumed close relationship to drugs, alcohol, and other psychopharmacological stimulants. Perforce, a number of questions emerge concerning this rather exceptional group of Persian erotica: in what ways are the scenes reflective of contemporary sexual practices in Iran? What was or were their purpose(s)? Who was their target audience and toward what market or collectors were they principally geared?

With regards to the extent to which these erotic paintings reflect Persian sexual customs, a few preliminary answers can be offered thanks to Afshin Najmabadi's recent study entitled Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity. In her examination of Qajar sexuality and sexual practices, Najmabadi demonstrates that gender was not necessarily conceived as a strict male-female binary in late Qajar Iran— at least not until heteronormalization became an indexical mark of modernity over the course of the twentieth century. Until this time, male same-sex practices in homosocial
settings (such as coffeehouses and taverns) were quite common, and even as late as 1921 a census of Tehran shows that the practice of adult men keeping younger males as their sexual companions—a practice known as "keeping a male" (adam-dari)—was still alive and well.10

Iranians began to change their sexual practices during the nineteenth century, due either to internal cultural and social developments or as a reaction to increased contact with Europeans, who deemed adam-dari and other related sexual practices "deviant" and thus "sinful." Curiously, it is precisely at this time that many foreign visitors to Iran—such as Richard Burton (1821–90)—began to write travelogues in which they record Persian sexual practices not only through eyewitness accounts but also based on superannuated clichés.11 It is perhaps for these reasons that some late Qajar eroticism attempts to look "retro-Safavid" in style, since the Safavids were viewed by Europeans as being sexually uninhibited and proud of their alcoholic excesses.12 In other words, older subjects could touch a foreign collector's antiquarian sensibilities.

It is possible to suggest that Persian erotic works were produced at least to a certain extent with a Euro-American clientele in mind—that is, for a base of customers with presuppositions of Persian sexual practices. The existence of this presumed customer group appears rather synonymous with what Irvin Schick has defined as "ethnopornography," the anthropological mode of western cultural production that describes the sexual practices of Muslims through an essentializing description of what was seen as most aberrant by a western audience13—in this case, same-sex practices and group sex, combined with an excessive use of alcohol and drugs.14 Local artists in Iran appear to have purposefully catered to foreign patrons by producing sexually explicit paintings and drawings in Qajar and Safavid styles and by representing themes that would most appeal to the overseas visitor, whose hedonistic curiosity about the sexual "other" was matched by his pecuniary power. Although they cannot be taken at face value as documentary evidence of sexual practices in late Qajar Iran, at the very least the Kinsey erotica can be said to have titillated traveling collectors while also reinforcing their largely eroticizing assumptions about sexual practices in Islamic lands.

From illumination to illustration and finally to erotica, the production of visual arts in Islamic traditions, and especially in Persian cultural spheres, is undeniably rich and varied. Lavish ornamentation adds a sacralizing dimension to holy scripture while also providing visual cues to the text's stopping and beginning points. Furthermore, painting heightens the reading experience by activating the reader's visual imagination through a pictorial form embedded within an illustrated manuscript, thereby accentuating the close and frequent connections between texts and images in Islamic artistic production. Paintings also can serve as buttresses for the delineation and promotion of royal authority, especially in a Mughal context, and therefore need not always

be attached to, or defined by, a text template. Finally, paintings such as Persian erotica could be produced with a potential foreign consumer in mind, and therefore market forces could determine some of the more notable developments in Islamic pictorial practices in the modern period.

From the last decades of the twentieth century up to the present day, Islamic painting and calligraphy have gone through a stunning revival. In Iran, calligraphers are revisiting older forms under the aegis of the Institute of Calligraphers of Iran (Anejvan-i Khushnivān-i Iran),15 while Iranian painters have not only experimented with new forms and techniques but also explored older Persian styles in what Hamid Koshmirshekan has described as a distinctly Iranian "neotraditional" movement.16 Artists working in the Arab world have been active as well in reviving both calligraphy and painting. As highlighted by the recent exhibition "Word into Art,"17 artists working in the Middle East today often explore both fields simultaneously, turning textual forms into visual compositions or using the written word as a primary device for pictorial inspiration and communication. These contemporary explorations of the visual arts in the Islamic world demonstrate the ways in which word and form often merge, creating a binary system of visual production that traces its lineage back through many centuries of calligraphic and painterly practices.

Perhaps nowhere in the Islamic world have artists been as active as they have been in contemporary Turkey. Since ca. 1980, various branches of Turkey's government have supported efforts to promote the handcrafts for both export abroad and sale within Turkey. At the same time, well-to-do Turkish collectors, such as the Sabancı and Koç families, have become increasingly interested in and appreciative of traditional Turkish art forms. Also since 1980, Istanbul-based IRCICA (Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture), an international institution dedicated to researching, publishing, and documenting various aspects of Islamic culture, has flourished. Among IRCICA's activities is an annual calligraphy competition, subsequently published as a catalogue.18 Furthermore, academic institutions have sponsored exhibitions of modern Turkish art, with curators commissioning Turkish works specifically for the occasions; notable among these is Henry Glassie's exhibition "Turkish Traditional Art Today," held in 1990 at the Indiana University Art Museum.19 The museum's rich collection of neotraditional Turkish art is a direct result of this exhibition and therefore bears testament to the ways in which such collections are created and sustained within today's museological context.

With Turkey's current stability after a long period of relative turbulence (World Wars I and II and military coups from the 1960s to 1980)—combined with the revival of traditional crafts for the purposes of cultural tourism, the emergence of affluent foreign and local collectors, and the institutional sponsorship of the arts via IRCICA and art
museums worldwide—the time certainly has been right for a reemergence of Islamic calligraphy and painting in contemporary Turkey.

Alongside these factors, two other trends have also helped stimulate artistic production in Turkey: a revitalization of what is seen as a distinctly “Islamic” identity and a growing interest in environmental issues and ecological materials, both of which can be seen, essentially, as reactions to globalization and its adverse effects on local identities and products. At the same time as linguistic and cultural homogenization and mass-produced goods have steadily come to dominate the global marketplace, various local practices and groups have emerged to resist what is seen as the damaging uniformity and “streamroller effect” of global culture. In other words, increased regionalization and the revival of “indigenous” cultures have acted as primary impetuses for reconstituting a sense of belonging and identity in an increasingly transnational and closely fused world system.  

In Turkey, the formulation of a religious (Islamic) identity in lieu of a transnational one has represented cultural conservatism in the arena of culture and the arts. As noted succinctly by one Turkish writer in connection with the practice of paper marbling, “Culture and art are like trees. Healthier and more vigorous are the roots, better and [more] delicious are the fruits. We should pay attention to our roots so that they will not die.” For this particular scholar and practitioner of marbling, arts in general serve as a quest to understand God’s natural order—and so, by extension, constitute a religious quest through the vocabulary of form—while simultaneously fortifying cultural roots so that they do not decay and vanish from view. Artistic practice is thus understood as an essential component of the invigoration and fortification of cultural identity in a period otherwise marked by the gradual dissolution of cultural barriers and distinctions.

Likewise, anxiety about mass-produced goods, artificial materials, and synthetic goods has prompted varied attempts to “return to nature.” Ecological and environmental movements worldwide are advocating energy conservation, while cultural and social groups are active in promoting organic and locally produced foods. In the field of artistic production, as well, practitioners have embraced natural products, spurring a return to such materials not only as a revival of cultural identity but, just as significantly, as the quintessential mark of modernity. Turkish painters and calligraphers today prefer organic substances, for example, by seeking out natural pigments drawn from the earth (toprak boyaları) for use in their paintings and marbled papers. Even their tools and materials—such as reeds for pens, animal hair for painting brushes, and macerated rags for paper—underscore the fact that the natural world is at the forefront of modern Turkish art and its overarching discourse, making Turkish marbling an especially prized and highly sought after commodity today.

The Indiana University Art Museum is home to a strong selection of modern Turkish marbled papers and calligraphic designs (Figure 1.23). Marbling (Turkish ebru, from the Arabic ahbī, meaning “cloud-shaped”) was particularly popular in Ottoman Turkish spheres from the seventeenth century forward. Marbled papers seem to be the descendants of colored and decorated papers that were first imported into Persian lands through pan-Asian trade over the course of the fifteenth century. As a result, scholars have largely considered marbling an offshoot of dyed and tinted papers that were initially imported from China and then imitated within the Islamic world in an attempt to approximate the decorative value of foreign luxury items while simultaneously reducing the high cost of importation.

The technique of marbling involves preparing a basin filled with a solution in which gum tragacanth—a gum obtained from a leguminous plant that swells in water—is used as an emulsifying, suspending, or thickening agent. Once the solution is ready, the marbler uses a paintbrush, usually made of horsehair bundled together and tied to a stick with wire thread, to sprinkle paint onto the surface of the solution. The darker colors are sprinkled on first, followed by lighter ones. Once a pattern emerges or is created by using a comb or awl (Figure 1.26), a paper is placed onto the surface of the solution and lifted carefully. The suspended pigments impress themselves onto the paper, which is
hung to dry and then used for various purposes, such as decorating the doublures of a book or providing an ornamental frame to a calligraphic composition (see Figures 1.27 and 1.28).

In the late twentieth century, marbling became a pursuit unto itself rather than merely an auxiliary decoration to another work of art. Besides the many factors mentioned above that lead to a veritable renaissance of Turkish arts over the course of the past few decades, it appears that for marbling in particular today's aesthetic sensibility for pure form has been a guiding factor as well. In the aftermath of abstract expressionism and formalism, marbling found a proper home in Turkish pictorial practices as a neotraditional reinterpretation and redeployment of modern abstract painting. With marbling’s delimitation of flatness and its engagement with pure form, it is possible to imagine that theoreticians of modern art in support of the aesthetic values of abstract formality might well herald the practice as quintessentially progressive. For these reasons, modern Turkish marbling is a powerful double construct:

for many Turkish artists, it is a revival of traditional art forms, and for the acculturated tastes of the western collector it is a highly collectible item that can be interpreted, judged, and thus subsumed into a well-established Euro-American criterial system of connoisseurship.

At the same time as marbling has been revived, so has calligraphy in Arabic script, despite the fact that modern Turkish has used the Latin alphabet since 1928 and therefore only a small percentage of individuals
in Turkey are proficient in reading and writing Arabic script today. The revival of Arabic calligraphic pictures, also known as pictograms or pictorial calligraphies, and calligraphic compositions containing Qur'anic verses is therefore quite intriguing: why do artists produce forms that are largely illegible and incomprehensible to most viewers in Turkey and collectors in Europe and America?

One possible (though not dominant) answer is that these materials were made specifically for a museum setting and therefore were intended to fit within the dominant scholarly narrative about Ottoman Turkish art, which puts precedence on both small- and large-scale calligraphic compositions. For example, the "Verse of Light" (ayat al-sunn, Qur'an 24:31) written on a marbled paper (Figure 1.27) was composed by Yusuf Sezer (b. 1966), a professional calligrapher who remains active in a calligraphy studio in Istanbul, at the behest of Henry Glassie, curator of the 1993 exhibition "Turkish Traditional Arts Today." When organizing his show, Glassie arranged a virtual qibla wall in the museum's galleries and asked Sezer to create a circular and contextual calligraphic composition, as frequently found in mosques, to adorn the wall. Sezer produced a composition blending calligraphy and marbling, and stated that "today, without spoiling the classical style or the special characteristics of Turkish calligraphy, it is possible to strive toward newness with modern creations." For Sezer perhaps the "newness" of his piece consisted in the bold juxtaposition of a bright yellow roundel inscribed in black script on a piece of paper decorated with an equally vibrant, albeit visually disjunctive, mauve-and-white marble of porphyry, a work that de facto revives both practices of calligraphy and marbling while simultaneously inscribing them into a daringly new system of color combinations.

Perhaps more pleasing to the eye in its muted blue and beige tones is Şerif Tuğtekin's pictogram that shapes the biyamılık into a standing stork (Figure 1.28). The calligraphic stork (leylek) is by no means a new one—there are many others that resemble Tuğtekin's composition, including one drawn by Mustafa Rakiš Taşmektepli (d. 1769). These pictographic works bear testament to the calligraphic tradition of copying the works of masters for both learning the tools of the trade and paying homage to a master's eminence. They also establish a clear pedigree between modern Turkish artists and the most famous Ottoman Turkish champions of calligraphy, thereby forming an unbroken link that gives weight and legitimacy to the craft as it is revived and practiced today.

Furthermore, such pictograms are reminiscent of those that were produced by the Bektashis, a Sufi order of dervishes well known for its calligraphic pictures, which were placed on walls of Sufi lodges (tekkes), tombs of saints, and meeting houses. As a consequence, it is also possible to suggest that these modern calligraphic iterations are intended to have Sufi or mystical overtones, linked as they are both to Bektaşi pictorial traditions and to the widespread practice of Islamic letter mysticism. For some practitioners, these art forms may be linked to a kind
of New Age mysticism that manifests itself, at least on one level, through a revivalist form of the arts—namely, the calligraphic pictogram. From their beginnings to their revival, the traditional Turkish arts of calligraphy and marbling bear witness to the ways in which the book arts in Islamic traditions have continued to be practiced and updated according to the values and expectations of artists and patrons in today’s art world. They also form a continuum for more than ten centuries of artistic traditions and offer fresh perspectives on what is—and certainly promises to remain—a living and lively tradition. The many materials in Indiana University’s collections help to provide new evidence of such traditions, as well as a small but fascinating peek into the rich written and artistic heritage of Islam.

NOTES


2. The Arabic term for pen, qalam, is derived from the Latin word calamus, itself taken from the Greek calamus, meaning the shaft of a feather or a quill.

3. Qu’ran 1:144.


7. As Crenshaw notes, the prohibition against images in Islam appears influenced by Jewish practices (especially Talmudic ban on graven images) and did not arise until the late 8th century perhaps at the Council of Nicaea in 787 (see K. A. C. Creswell, “The Lawfulness of Painting in Early Islam.” in Art Islamica 9-10 (1949): 193-206).


12. For a further discussion of Semitic languages, see Robert Hetzron, ed., The Semitic Languages (New York: Routledge, 1995) on the contribution of Nabataean and Syrian to Arabic script, see Yosef Haim Sabato, Islamic Calligraphy (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), 7-8, and for a general overview of the evolution of the Arabic script, see Sherif Ibrahim’s discussion of script standardization in chapter 3 of her Islamic Calligraphy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 8.

13. Prittska Smolcik sees these reasons—religious coping with the Qur’an, governmental (writing offices, licenses), and private (copies of books and correspondences)—as the main reasons for the rise of Arabic script. See Prittska Smolcik, “The Arts of Calligraphy,” in The Arts of the Book in Central Asia, 240-247, ed. Basil Gray (Boulder, Colo.: Shambhala, 1997), 7.

14. Pedersen, The Arabic Book, 15. Although the Qur’an was reedited in the mid-8th century as a matter of need (such as coins, inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, Qur’anic manuscripts, etc.) produced after the mid-period reveals variants and suggest that the Qur’anic text was not yet entirely fixed. Despite these slight deviations, it is clear that the Qur’an was canonized rather speedily by the initiative of the state (see Michael Cook, The Koran: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 133). For a more controversial public discussion of the Qur’an as a historical document, collected and edited in successive stages and thus a pseudo- or diachronic text, see Toby Lester, “‘When Is the Koran?’ Atlantic Monthly 283 (January 1999): 43-57.

16. That is any animal skin (goat, sheep, camel, gazzelle, etc.) that has been deburred by enzymes or lime velvets is more precisely the skin of a calf. Paper making techniques were transferred to the Islamic world after the Battle of Talas in 751, at which time Chinese paper makers were taken as prisoners by the Chinese forces in Central Asia. Chinese paper was made from the bark of the mulberry tree. However, due to the absence of the tree in Central Asia, linen rugs were used as a source of fiber, which was then retted into a pulp,摸索, and dried in the sun. Although paper was introduced to the Islamic world in the 8th century, parchment continued to be used (especially for Qur’anic manuscripts) until the 12th century because it was more durable and impervious than paper. From the 13th century onward, parchment was almost exclusively placed by paper, the quality of which improved over the centuries, and which was cheaper and faster to produce. See Helen Lovelock, Islamic Manuscript Paper: The Study of the Ancient Craft (London: Don Baker Memorial Fund, 1993), 12-13 and Pedersen, The Arabic Book, 60-65. Portier, the Arabie Book, 66-68, 99-100, Karabag, Arab Paper. trans. Don Baker and Susan Dittman (London: Archetype Publica- tions, 2003), and Jonathan Bloom, Paper Before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the First 2000 Years (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).


18. The term “Kufic” is derived from the city of Kufa, known for its early school of protomanscripts and scribes. The term “Kufic” is retained here to refer to early angular style of proportional writing in Arabic (as most recently in Black, Islamic Calligraphy, 92).

19. However, François Descheke prefers to abandon the misleading term “Kufic” and instead classify these scripts from the Abbasid period (750-1250) into a set of formal categories (see The Abbasid Traditions: Qu’ran of the 9th to the 14th Centuries, ed. Julian Raby, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, vol. 6 (Oxford: Four Square Foundation in association with Ammanth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1993), 57.

20. Such papier mache consist of a host and a flexible skin. The leading consists of foliages left behind by the removed hair, and thus the ink penetrates into the foliages grooves and remains relatively well preserved. On the other hand, ink worn off easily from the smooth flesh side.

21. Red dots typically represent vowels, while green dots can be used for other purposes, such as prolonging the long “a” (al-awwad). Green dots also appear to have been used as corrections of red dots, and thus may be linked to the varying Qu’ranic reading (qur’aniyya) traditions. On the use of green and other colored dots, see Yasin Dut- tan, “Red Dots, Green Dots, Yellow Dots & Blue: Some Reflections on the Visualisation of Early Qur’anic Manuscripts—Parts I and II,” Journal of Qur’anic Studies 8 (1996): 149-142 and 9 (2000): 1-24, and Estelle Whelan, “Writing the Word of God: Some Early Qur’anic Manuscripts and Their Millets.” Part I, Art Orientalis 60:1121.


23. Whelan, Writing the Word of God, 123-125. The archaic numeral form in this heading appears as hundreds, tens, and units (rather than the other way around). Whelan interprets this archaic numeral form as a sacred word made of counting and thus essentially ritual in character.

24. In early Kufic Qu’ran includes a combination providing an exact place and date of production. Even the Qu’ran of the Abbasid governor Amr (r. 780-795) donated to the Great Mosque of Damascus in 786 and believed to have been made in that same year, does not record a place of production. See François Descheke, “The Qur’an of Amr: Manuscript of the Middle East 5 (1990-1991), 69-68.


26. There appear to be many reasons why the foliose scripts were codified by ca. 1000. Of the three possible reasons include the use of the red pen and paper; the important role of chancery scribes, who preferred review scripts in their day-to-day dealings; and possible political motivations (for a review of
In some cases, a diploma may include the calligrapher's chain of teachers reaching all the way back to the Prophet Muhammad himself (see Ahmad Gakic, "The Diploma of the Egyptian Calligrapher Hassan al-Hubbali," Manuscripts of the Middle East 4 [1991]: 44-55). In the Ottoman tradition especially, the calligraphic diploma (sijatname) was well-established practice (on which, see Uğur Derman, "Tarih ve siyaseti izah etmekte ve telkin suzuluyor," in VIT Tarih Kongresi [Ankara: Ankara Tarih ve Tarih Kitabevi, 1993], 765-781). Also see a comparative Ottoman sijat dated 1524 in the Library of Congress (Ms. no. 44-145-134) in Christine Grether, Selections of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish Calligraphy (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 2009), http://international.loc.gov/italia/ apoytcl/alamhome.htm, accessed December 27, 2012, as well as a diploma dated 1241/1823 in McWilliam's and Roukhch, Traces of the Calligraphers, 79.

For the life and works of Mehmed Şefki, see Ali Albazhan, Osmanlî Datşar Sanatî Tarihî, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Yaqob Kılıç Yayıncılık, 2004); 4th, 5th Satranç, Satranç ve Derin, Calligraphers et Témoins, Part I, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Kebap, 1951); and Sohbet, Calligraphers et Témoins, 171.

See the same haddith panel in 8th- and 9th-century works by Mehmet Şefkî, see Seri, Hat Satranç ve Mehmet Hatârati, 173-175; Acar, Tarih Hat Satranç, 132; Derman, Calligraphers et Témoines, 111 (fig. 38). 36. Urvashi Dubbawala, "Some Aspects of Early Bookbinding from the Great Mosque of Sanâa, Yemen," in Scribal and Manuscript Cultures of the Mediterranean: Orient-Dérive, ed. François Déroche and Francis Ricciarelli (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1995), 25-44. 37. Special thanks to Emily Borsuk and to the editors of the MIP for permission to reproduce their text. 38. For a helpful diagram of the book cover’s components, see Adam Gakic, "Arabic Bookbinding and Terminology as Portrayed by Bašâ İbnâ Ibnîn in his Kitâb 'Ala 'Insân al-Tâ'asî" (Manuscripts of the Middle East 4 [1991]: 168-187) and Gülzâr Bedi, Body Language (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 106.

For example, Bašâ İbnîn included a treatise on bookbinding in the last quarter of the 11th century, in which he calls a book that envelop flat on its (addur), the cover a cheek (shâb), the spine a back (硒), the fore-edge a chest (cuba), and the upper cover the plate (bîbat) of a flat (waqf). See Gakic, "Arabic Bookbinding and Terminology," 161. 39. For quick guides to the book cover decorative motifs, see Bees et al., Islamic Bookbindings and Bookbinding. 40. For other kinds of book cover designs belonging to a manuscript dated into McWilliams and Roukhch, Traces of the Calligraphers, 46, fig. 25, and other early 19th-century lacquer bindings with floral designs in Gulshan Palace Library, Portfolio of Miniature Paintings and Calligraphy (Tehran: Zarrin and Simin Books, 2006), 36 and 46. 41. For other kinds of lacquer objects, see Boz Roxton, "Persian Lacquer in the Bern Historical Museum," Int. Rev. 4 (1970): 47-50.

42. Robin, "Qajar Lacquer," 156; and Robinson, "Lacquer in the University of Oxford, 1846 and fig. 8.

For comparative 19th-century lacquer book covers with gulデザインs, see McWilliams and Roukhch, Traces of the Calligraphers, 6 fig. 26; and Gulshan Palace Library, 7.


For the preparation of red colors in particular, see M. Ali N. Harris, "The Science of Pigments," 35-57.

The term ‘vermeil’ has been used in a...
variety of ways. According to some scholars, it should be used to identify the entirety of the illumination on the first page of text in a manuscript, while according to other scholars, it is only the illumination of the upper part (in particular, the title itself). The Arabic term sawark (in Persian, azarik; and in Turkish, sertav) designates a full page of illumination. There is still no scholarly consensus and so the terms "seriff" and serif continue to be used interchangeably (Adam Crecel, ""Un- wane: 2. In Manuscript Production,"" Encyclopaedia of Islam, ed. vol. 1, 1913-1922).

Akushkin and Ivanov, "The Art of Illumination," 46.


7. See Gouyon and Verdugo-Novell, L’Iwer d’Iver arabe, 99-100, cat. no. 87-88.

The inscription reads: "Pecora the officer of the library of the fortified palace (the illustrious padshah), epistle of the Timurid family, Sultan Husam Mirza Bayqara, may God perpetuate his rule. (In Persian): Khurramen e khanum, padshah e naman, Khosrow e dawlbam ten timur khahun, Sultan Husam Mirza Bayqara, khahun Allah Abad mulukha.

15. Sultan Husam’s usual honorific titles, Abu’l-Ghazi and Baghdaḏ, do not appear in the dedication. Instead, the unusual expression Khurramen e khanum appears. Furthermore, the expression timur khahun normally would not have been used for the name of the Timurid dynasty during Sultan Husayn’s rule. At this time, the Timurid family was referred to as subh-i qara or timur, not timur khahun. These odd terms of phrase suggest that the inscription is not an original Timurid illumination. I wish to thank Mark Sabbeh for discussing these terms with me.


26. See Brittanny Page’s chapter in this volume, which focuses on Shah Ismail’s Sibgh Islamit and Shamseddin Khani produced in Lahore ca. 1553.


29. After Shah Ismail’s victory against the White Sheik (Aq Qoyunlu) Turkmans and his proclamation as ruler in 1512, a number of manuscripts fill into his hands. The most famous among these is a copy of the Khamsa (Quintet) of Nizami originally produced for the Timurid prince Bahar b. Baykurmos (d. 1427). The manuscript was commissioned for the Aq Qoyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan by his son Khan. At Uzun Hasan’s death and in 1512, his brother Yaḥyā Beg, a devout Muslim, took over the manuscript, had its text completed in 1512, and ordered a dozen paintings added by its court painters. At the moment of Shah Ismail’s victory, the manuscript was still unfinished when it passed into his library in 1512. For reasons in 1512-1515 the Timurid monarch commissioned his artists in Tabriz to add designs to the paintings in the work. The original manuscript (Topkapi Palace Library, f. 176) includes 527 folios and miniature paintings. However, three paintings were removed from the original manuscript and are now held in the Keiz Collection (formerly in London and now on loan to the Islamic Art Museum, Britten). For a further discussion of the manuscript and its peregrinations, see Goshy, The Golden Pages of the Timurid World, 257-278. For a general discussion of the manuscript and its paintings, see idem with Mamoun Fartash, Shahs (Atlanta: Hardcover Press, 1971), 9-17. For a detailed study of the manuscript and its paintings, see idem with Mamoun Fartash, Shahs (Atlanta: Hardcover Press, 1971), 9-17.

39. With Imperial Mughal Painting, pl. 37 (a lavishly single-page painting representing the Darbar of Alamgir) also see pl. 34 and pl. 38 (Alamgir hunting).

40. The most thorough discussion of Persian oil paintings in the future is included in Ehsan with Ektesabi, Oil Paintings. Other materials of the Qajar period are included in a related volume of articles published in Iranian Studies 31-45 (2000).


The question about which market Qajar pornography was sold is raised (but not answered) in Robinson, "Qajar Lascivious," 143.

On the other hand, Mould hypothesizes that these works were produced as souvenirs for western tourists who were avid collectors of such subjects (Mould, Oriental Erotica, 68).


89. Ibid., 24.


91. On Safavid sexuality, see Najmabadi, Women with Beards and Men without Beards, 15; on Safavid alcoholic practices, see Ruth Mitchell, The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Deliriums in Iranian History, 1001–1600 (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 2002), 81, and on Safavid erotic sketches, see Elin Aitken, The Brush of the Master: Drawings from Iran and India (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 59, cat. no. 22 (a tiptit sketch of two youths embracing outdoors, mid-17th century), and 80, cat. no. 55 (a sketch of an old man making an indescible and highly suggestive gesture to a youth, also mid-17th century).


93. In the 19th century, the use of alcohol rose in Iran, in part due to contact with Europeans and the importation of liquor (Mitchell, The Pursuit of Pleasure, 2002). Around 1860, cigarette smoking became popular alongside the water-pipe (ghaybi), a fine way of social interaction in Qajar Iran (Ibid., 213, 210).

94. For a discussion of the revival of calligraphy and the handcrafts in Iran, see Blunt, Islamic Calligraphy, 150.


97. See further information about IECICA, see its website: http://www.iecica.org/.


102. Glassie, Turkish Traditional Art Today, 122.


105. Pictograms are called in Turkish (erbil), or words painted into variously shaped compositions (Glassie, Turkish Traditional Art Today, 150). The most prominent shapes include the leaf, mosquee, tower, dervish, lion, and star.

106. Glassie, Turkish Traditional Art Today, 155.

107. Ibid., 151.


110. On letter mysticism as it relates to pictograms in the Ottoman period, see Annamelech Schimmel, "Calligraphy and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey," in The Derwill Lodge, ed. Lichthe, 247–252.