upper surfaces. The lower edge of the wood inlay is dominated by a zigzag pattern. The lid is arranged as a quadrilateral, with the same materials by edge. The sides of the box are decorated with cusp and octagonal motifs. The octagonal motifs are symmetrical and are linked to each other by small cuts to form the lines of drawing. The lid is a tour de force.
upper surfaces. The lower edge of the box is encircled by additional patterns of bone and wood inlay dominated by a zigzagging pattern. The totoiseshell and mother-of-pearl on the lid is arranged as a quadrilaterally reciprocal pattern, and the side panels of the box are composed of cusped symmetrical forms. Another example, one with a rounded lid (Fig. 34), uses the same materials but limits the use of bone and dark wood to the lower edge. The sides of the box are decorated with an alternating sequence of two units, one composed of split palmettes, the other of a rosette set amid leafy branches. The units are symmetrical and are linked to each other. The designer also arranged the leaves and stalks so as to imply that they overlap, lending a sense of naturalism and animation to what might otherwise have been a more static design. Achieving this effect required small cuts to be made in the mother-of-pearl, the darker material inside them resembling the lines of drawing. The lid is a tour de force of craftsmanship (Fig. 35). A line of reciprocal
FIGURE 36
Pen box with hinged lid, inscribed with a prayer in the form of the tujra and the phrase “He [God] is” (bismi), Turkey, c. 1550, steel overlaid with silver and gold, 9.6 × 2.2 × 3.8 inches (24.5 × 5.5 × 9.6 cm). The prayer written in the form of the tujra, the imperial Ottoman monogram, is identical to a calligraphy signed by Şeyh ʿOmar al-Vas∥Si∥d∥.

OPPOSITE | FIGURE 37
Detail of fig. 36 showing the prayer in the form of a tujra.

Silhouetted forms encircles the base, and the upper surface of the lid is divided into three parts. The two ends contain symmetrical compositions of split palmettes and flowers, and the central rectangular panel arranges an inscription in a flowing thuluth script over scrolling split palmettes. The stalks of the palmettes emanate from the center, where they form a heart-shaped knot. The thuluth inscription reads: "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful" (A. bism Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim), the invocation that opens almost every Qur'anic chapter and a phrase of special importance for calligraphers, as noted by ʿAli b. Abi Talib.

Lidded pen boxes continued to be fashioned from metal into the early modern period. One stunning example (FIG. 36) from Ottoman lands employs gold and silver overlay on a steel hinged body. Wires of gold and silver were hammered into grooves cut into the steel to make various patterns composed of split palmettes, flowers, leaves, dots, and inscriptions. These were organized as continuous bands of repeating pattern, as around the base of the lid, or into cartouches that appear collectively as figures over a ground (the cartouches contain medallions flanked by finials), as on the sides; or as a monumental inscription framed by four corner pieces, as on the lid. Even the lock that fastens the lid to the body of the pen box is decorated with an intricate overlay of silver and gold. The inscription taking pride of place at the center of the lid assumes the visual form of an Ottoman imperial monogram (tujra), though rather than giving the reigning sultan’s name and titles, it comprises a prayer (FIG. 37). The text
surface of the lid is divided into three ions of split palmettes and flowers, scription in a flowing thuluth script palmettes emanate from the center, inscription reads: "In the name of ʾl-ʾRahman al-ʾRahim), the invocation phrase of special importance for

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replicates a calligraphy designed by Şeyh Ömer al-Hasıf Sivas, who was active in the mid-1900s.27 Even as one opens the pen box, the level of decoration is no less in magnitude (FIG. 38). The flat interior surface of the lid is decorated with silver and gold overlay; a majestic, symmetrically-organized “He [God] is” (A. hasıf) in mirror repeat occupies center place, flanked by wavy floral sprays of feathery golden leaves terminating in silver flowers. At both ends of the inner surface of the lid, an overlay of gold palmettes and silver dots traces the form of an intricately cusped cartouche. The interior compartment of the pen box is undecorated steel terminating at one end with a built-in inkwell. Its upper surface is overlaid, and the lid to the inkwell is bracketed by hinges and a clasp.

Other materials were used to make more portable pen cases, which often combined inkwells. Among the most common forms, and certainly the simplest to produce, is a tall cylinder (T. kubah) that separates into two parts (FIG. 39). Objects of this form could also be used to carry documents. These three examples—from left to right—are made from carved ivory decorated with a scrolling vine of flowers and grapes set over a crosshatched ground and surmounted by a large floral motif on the upper surface of the lid; a wooden casing covered with pieces of mother-of-pearl arranged in a fish-scale pattern, the top end covered by a domical wooden form decorated with an opal, each piece separated by brass ring mounts; and a pasteboard shell covered in a pliable dried leather decorated with gold (resembling the paper doublures of the binding in FIG. 24).

In each example, the cylinder opens to allow pens to be removed for use or to be stored and safely carried. The mother-of-pearl inlaid pen case also has two chambers for storing an inkwell (T. boks) and the calligrapher’s sand. The small inkwell, made from brass, is stored in the lower end of the pen case and has two lids, a feature designed to prevent ink from leaking.28 Other examples of the cylindrical form were made from lacquered papier-mâché, sometimes applied over a metal casing to make them more robust, and decorated with various subjects, mostly floral motifs (FIG. 40).29

Another form of portable pen case (T. divri) positioned the inkwell on the exterior and at one end of the tubular arm that contained the pens (FIGS. 41 and 42). This was a type that had its antecedents in the 1900s. Examples from the Ottoman lands (FIG. 43) in the late 1700s and 1800s are characterized by pronounced end pieces with engraved decoration, one of the end pieces hinged and carrying a metal loop by which the pen case could be attached to the calligrapher’s belt. The barrel-shaped inkwell similarly carried a hinged lid and was the most decorated element of the object, and sometimes included inscriptions. Many of these pen cases are fashioned from silver with engraved decoration enhanced by gilding or niello; some imperial examples are studded with cabochon rubies. Maker’s marks and the imperial monogram (T. Tuğra) are frequently stamped on pen cases: the Tuğra may reflect the involvement of the imperial mint, whose stamp guaranteed the medium. An example from India (FIG. 41) articulates the pen case as two cylinders of twisted form, resembling barley sugar sticks; a domical hinged lid covers the inkwell; and a number of attached chains could have been used to suspend the pen case from the waist. Various forms of metal were used to make this kind of pen case, including brass and bronze, while rarer examples were of wood.30
asif Sivasi, who was active in the mid-
18th century. A large, silver and gold overlay, a majestic,
mirror repeat occupies center place,
leaves terminating in silver flowers.
Clay of gold palmettes and silver dots
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