
This series forms the core of the album. The earlier album or calligraphic scroll from which it came appears to have been damaged along its left side, as the last letters of the lines of thulūḥ are missing. This damage presumably necessitated the present remounting, which is notable for the fine renderings of peonies in the 18th-century style on nos. 4 and 5. The series was signed at the end by Isma‘īl, who is to be identified with Nefes-zade Seyyid Isma‘īl Efendi, a contemporary of Dervis Ali who died in AH 1090/AD 1679–80 (Rado 1984, pp. 118–19). The six compositions are formed from two continuous texts, one in thulūḥ, the other in nastaʿlīq. The first is a long aphorism, while the second is a series of Hādīth.

NO. 10. An anonymous qī‘ah. Ottoman, second half of the 17th century.

This specimen of the muḥaqqaq and nastaʿlīq styles can be safely attributed to Hafiz Osman, the most famous Ottoman calligrapher after Seyh Hamdullah. He died in AH 1110/AD 1698–99, and during the last years of his life he was appointed calligraphy tutor to Sultan Mustafâ II. This event marked the integration into court life of the revival pioneered by the likes of Dervis Ali and Nefes-zade Seyyid Isma‘īl.

Both teachers of Osman. It appears very likely that this specimen and nos. 11–13 contain the remains of a calligraphic scroll giving models for the Six Peni produced by Hafiz Osman after one by Seyh Hamdullah.

An original scroll of this type is preserved in the Topkapi Palace Library (ئ.ح.2086; see Serin 1992, pp. 184–89). The upper section, in muḥaqqaq, is a fragment that includes a baş말ah (compare Serin 1992, p. 184), while the lower section was cut from a page bearing Hādīth in nasta‘līq.


This specimen is one of the most attractive and satisfying pieces in the album. Signed by Hafiz Osman but not dated, it consists of a line in a monumental script above three Hādīth rendered in 13 lines of nasta‘līq. The Hādīth are written at an angle of 45 degrees, and the repetition of the extended kāf, together with the extension strokes of certain other letters, establishes a perfect rhythm throughout. The upper composition, containing the aphorism, 'And because of gratitude all blessings continue', is well known from other examples by Seyh Hamdullah (see especially Serin 1992, p. 188, where it is labelled taqżīf) and by the circle of Prince Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh in the early Timurid period (Los Angeles 1989, fig. 39).
NO. 12 An anonymous qīṭʿah. Ottoman, probably 17th century.
The striking specimen measures 15 × 21 cm and consists of a line of an ascending thulth script above four lines of muhaqqaq al-khaṭṭī (compare Serin 1992, p.186, where they are labelled as such). The text in the upper panel is similar to that in this position in no.1, and reads: 'The Meccan, Medianan, Has[himite] Prophet said...'. While the text beneath contains fragments of two hadiths. The illumination includes two fine depictions of roses in the 18th-century style, which are matched by the exquisite rosebud motifs of no.13.

NO. 13 An anonymous qīṭʿah. Ottoman, 18th or 17th century.
The piece measures 10 × 12.5 cm and consists of a well-known composition in one line of thulth (compare Serin 1992, p.186, where it is labelled as such) above six lines of naskhi, giving the text of six hadiths. The naskh hand is of a Yaqti type unusual in a 17th-century Ottoman context.

NO. 14 A qīṭʿah by Fakhrī. Ottoman, before 1618.
This composition is in a fine nastaʿlīq hand and was executed in the découpage technique by Fakhrī (d.1618), the most famous Ottoman exponent of this art form, which seems to have originated in Iran in the 15th century and to have spread from there to Ottoman Turkey (Geneva 1995, pp.262–63). He showed consummate skill in reproducing calligraphic compositions, particularly those in nastaʿlīq, so that they look as if they were done with a pen. This example, which measures 114.5 × 8 cm, is in the form of a Persian poetic qīṭʿah.

NO. 15 A qīṭʿah by Mir ‘Ali Hanavi, Herat or Bukhara, before 1545.
This piece contains two calligraphic compositions, one in large, the other in small nastaʿlīq. The whole piece measures 18 × 9 cm, and one was signed by Mir ‘Ali Hanavi, one of the great Iranian masters of this hand. He worked in Herat until forced to go Bukhara in 1528, where he remained until his death in 1545. Many of his compositions are in the form of short Persian poems, also called qīṭʿahs, which he copied in the format illustrated in the larger of the two panels. Mir ‘Ali was a poet, and quite a number of these verses are his own. The bulk of his work was acquired by the Mughal emperors Jahangir (1605–1627) and Shah Jahan (1627–1658), but others came to Ottoman Turkey, as this example shows.

Nos. 16, 17 Two qīṭʿahs by Fakhrī al-Bursawī. Ottoman, before 1628.
These two compositions in the découpage technique are by the same artist as no.14, although in both these cases he signed himself Fakhrī al-Bursawī, that is, Fakhrī of Bursa. As with no.14, the two are in the form of Persian poetic qīṭʿahs. They were executed in white, blue and yellow paper on pink and blue grounds.
Unlike the previous item, which was assembled from a variety of sources, this album was composed as a single piece by the great late-Ottoman calligrapher Mehemet Şefik. It is an exemplar, of the type known as a ḍabādī album. The inner faces of the first and last boards and both faces of the remaining six are mounted with a sheet of paper measuring 13.5 x 19.2 cm, which bears five lines of script: three lines of ṣadūq alternate with two of naṣīḥ. The same text is copied in both styles and runs continuously through the album. It commences with a prayer, ‘Lord! Make things easy and do not make them difficult! Lord! Make it end well!’. Then, on sheets 1b–6b come the ḍabādī al-mufaḍḍa, showing the letter forms of the Arabic alphabet in their unjoined state, and in combination with each other letter form. Sheet 7a was devoted to the ḍabādī, the Arabic alphabet arranged according to the numerical values given to each letter; sheet 7b contains pious invocations; and sheet 8a contains a Ḥadīth of the Prophet, ‘Scribes and tailors exhaust the strength of their eyes. May God curse anyone who harms them!’ At the end of the second line of naṣīḥ is the colophon, in ṣadrīḥ, ‘The servant of the People of the Čuna, Mehemet Şefik, the sinful, 1295’.

Exemplars, or sets of model letter forms, were produced by Ottoman calligraphers from Şeyh Hamdullah onwards (Safwat 1996, pp.12–13). By the 18th century the format of these sets had become standardized. The single and joined letter forms and the ḍabādī were de rigueur. Other elements were optional, as was the form of the colophon, if there was one. The prayer at the beginning of this exemplar was frequently used, and the final pages usually include a prayer or pious invocation, as well as a Ḥadīth or aphorism. These may have been intended as a demonstration of compositional skills, which were of great importance for all calligraphers, as they were often called upon to compose public inscriptions in a large format. For example, Mehemet Şefik, who was responsible for this album, was instructed to extend the inscriptions on the walls of the Great Mosque of Bursa after the earthquake of 1855. Most exemplars contain ṣadūq and naṣīḥ, although sometimes other scripts occur. These two scripts were the ones most frequently used by Ottoman calligraphers and mastery of them was therefore essential. Initially, such letter sets would have been made solely for the use of students and aspiring calligraphers, who would have copied them exactly in order to improve their hands. To this end a system of rhomboid dots, based on nib widths, was sometimes included, to show the proportions of the letters. At a later date many seem to have been produced by leading calligraphers for other purposes. Some were made as gifts, and some may have been made with the implication that a calligrapher was never so good that he did not need to practise his basic skills.

The man responsible for this album, Mehemet Şefik, came from a family of minor officials in imperial service. He elected to study calligraphy and was a pupil of his maternal uncle, Kazasker Mustafa ʿIzzet, and of Ali Vasti. In 1845 he became calligraphy tutor to the members of the Sultan’s brass band, a post previously occupied by his uncle. He occupied the post until his retirement in 1879, and this exemplar was produced in the final year of his imperial service. In the same year, 1878–79, Mehemet Şefik produced an exemplar that was recently sold by Bernard Quaritch Ltd (catalogue 1213, item 33). The format of the album and the final series of compositions are identical, and the two albums provide further evidence of the ability of Ottoman calligraphers to reproduce a composition exactly, apparently without mechanical aids.

The covers are of emerald-green leather and bear a centre-and-corner composition filled with arabesque scrolls, all painted in gold, with some tooling. The doublures are of pale-blue pásiche moirée.
A sampler setting out the principles of the nastā'īq style of script, bound together with a pupil's attempts to reproduce the models provided. Most later Ottoman samplers are in a combination of naskh, the refined copyhand used for the Qur'an and other religious texts in Arabic, and thuluth, the preferred monumental style, but a minority are devoted to nastā'īq. A mastery of this style was a sign of an educated gentleman, since it was used, among other things, to write poetry in Persian and Ottoman Turkish. In the 18th and 19th centuries it emerged as a rival to thuluth, since a modified form was often employed to write monumental inscriptions in Arabic.

Ottoman nastā'īq samplers are usually arranged in the vertical format, as here. The 20 boards of item 29 are mounted on either side with 38 sheets of paper measuring 30 × 19.5 cm. Some sheets are of plain paper, some of paper dyed a variety of colours, and some (boards 1b, 3b, 8a, 9a, 16b) are of fine marbled paper. The borders are faced with paper dyed various shades of dark and light pink. The album is in two parts (boards 1b–8a and 8b–20a) with separate numbering (sheets 1–14 and 1–24). The first part begins with the letter forms, or muqaddat, alone and in combination (sheets 1–12). They include the šīm, which is omitted in thuluth-and-naskh samplers. This is followed on sheets 12–14 by the munakkabāt, in which samples of text are given to show letters 'in combination'. Here the sample is a poetic work in Persian. Between each two lines there is a graffiti, usually interpreted to mean sa'y, or 'persevere'.

The second part repeats the same formula, but without the graffiti. The muqaddat are on sheets 1–21, and the munakkabāt on sheets 21–24. These folios are written in nastā'īq of not such a high quality, and this text appears to be the work of a pupil, with corrections by his teacher, who probably wrote sheets 1–12: between the lines letters are repeated with their proportions indicated by rhomboids; the letters are occasionally accompanied by guidelines which indicate the difference in levels at the beginning and end of a letter; and there are instructions in note form, written in Ottoman, at several points. These last make the album an interesting source on the aesthetics of Ottoman nastā'īq calligraphy.

The covers are of brown leather with gilt tooled decoration in a Europeanizing style. The doublures are of paper dyed green.
Two Great Indian Traditions

ITEM 28

Calligraphic scroll
Mughal, probably Burhanpur, AH 1085/AD 1674-75
461 x 30 CM

This magnificent scroll (tiwah) is a rare survivor of a form that must once have been common in court circles in the Middle East, Central Asia and India. In almost every other case surviving scrolls of this quality have been cut up and pasted into albums (compare ITEM 25 above). In this example almost the entire length is occupied by selections from a poem in Arabic, the Qadidah Lamiyyah al-'Arab by the pre-Islamic poet al-Shanfara, while the last 34 centimetres of the scroll contain a number of aphorisms, anecdotes and Hadiths. The text finishes with a colophon in the name of ʿAbdallah, with the date AH 1084. The scroll was originally written in a combination of the thuluth and naskh scripts, the hands used in India for official and religious inscriptions, but nine inscriptions, all written upside down, were added to the scroll after its completion, converting it into a calligraphic exemplar. Eight of these contain specimens of scripts not included in the original text, while the last gives the total number of scripts on the scroll. One of the eight also establishes that the scroll once belonged to the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) while he was resident in the Deccani town of Burhanpur.

The poem of al-Shanfara is one of the finest examples of a lamiyyah, an ode in which each distich ends in the letter lam. Little is known of the poet, and until relatively recently the authenticity of the ode had never been entirely accepted. However the publication in 1977 of the Kitab al-Manhib wa'l-Masābir of Ibn Abi Tahir Tayfur (d.853) established its authenticity beyond reasonable doubt. The complete poem should consist of 67, or possibly 68, couplets, but the version given here has only 47, and two of these are interpolations (couplets 21 and 39). The text was arranged according to calligraphic rather than literary priorities, so that each couplet forms a line of thuluth. These lines were designed to look beautiful rather than to contain its whole text; any words left over were supplied beneath, in naskh. Between most of the lines of thuluth up to couplet 35 there is a commentary on the more obscure words employed by the poet, written in naskh. The poem is preceded by a hashshāh and a line giving the name of the poet, and it is followed by a two-line prayer of thanks. These four lines are also in thuluth.

After the poem there are four panels of decreasing size which contain the anecdotes, aphorisms and Hadiths, written in naskh hands of decreasing size. Along the vertical sides of these panels there is a saying of Khusraw Anushirvan, often used in albums of calligraphy,
written in a style called *muhāqqiq* in an accompanying note but clearly relating to the *thuluth* seen on the rest of the scroll. The text ends with two compositions in *thuluth* separated by the colophon, which is in a style labelled as *riqa*.

The original scroll consists of ten separate sheets of buff-coloured laid paper pasted together. The lengths of the sheets are as follows: 47 cm to the first join, at verse 5; 38.5 cm to the second join, at verse 12; 48 cm to the third join, at verse 16; 43 cm to the fourth join, at verse 21; 42.5 cm to the fifth join, at verse 25; 48 cm to the sixth join, at verse 29; 43.5 cm to the seventh join, at verse 33; 48 cm to the eighth join, at verse 39; 15 cm to the ninth join, at verse 41; 60 cm to the end. It will be noted that the interpolated verses, 21 and 29, occur at points where sheets join. They are from an unidentified ode ending in *yam*, and both were written in a slightly smaller variety of *thuluth*. This suggests that after the pieces had been pasted together gaps at these points in the text were supplied by another hand. Such a procedure emphasizes the role of the scroll as an example of calligraphic virtuosity rather than as an actual text.

As a later date the scroll was trimmed along the sides, and new margins made of coarser paper were added, bringing the width to 30 centimetres. The join between the two types of paper was disguised by the addition of a blue band two centimetres in width along the edge of the original scroll. The blue bands are decorated with a repeat leaf pattern in gold which matches the decoration of the scroll itself.

As we have seen, the main scripts used in the body of the scroll are identified by Persian inscriptions as *thuluth*, *nasib*, *riqa* and *muhāqqiq* (and as scripts nos 1–4). Eight blank areas within the text have been used to insert examples of other styles, identified by accompanying notes and numbered 5–8. These additions, which are in *tawqīf*, *tāḥ, rāyḥān* and *shikastah*, have been inserted carefully, so as not to disturb the symmetry of the overall design. A ninth Persian inscription, in a blank panel between verses 26 and 27, reads, ‘The total number of scripts in this scroll, including *shikastah*, is eight.’ The one *shikastah* inscription (no.8), in a blank panel between verses 24 and 25, the midpoint of the scroll, reads, ‘Written for the enlightenment (būḥad) of ‘Alamgir Paddah Ghuzi [that is, the Emperor Aurangzeb] at the imperial residence of Burhanpur.’ This dedicatory inscription must refer only to the supplementary examples that illustrate scripts 4–8, since these were written over the illumination.

Burhanpur is situated on the north bank of the Tapti, in what is now Madhya Pradesh. It was added to the Mughal empire by Akbar in 1599, and the city became Aurangzeb’s capital as governor of the Deccan for his father Shah Jahan in 1611. From 1681 to 1683 he made it his headquarters while investing Bijapur. Most of the emperor’s later years were spent campaigning in the Deccan, and he never returned to Delhi. In this context it is possible that the scroll in its original form (without the additional notes) came into Aurangzeb’s possession a decade and more after it was produced, as part of the booty the Emperor is known to have taken from Golconda upon its capture from the Qutbshahi dynasty in 1687. The most compelling evidence for this is the close similarity between this scroll and calligraphic fragments from the same poem (and from the hand of a calligrapher of the same name!) that were included in an album compiled in Hyderabad or Golconda *circa* 1590 but added to on subsequent occasions (see James 1987; Safvat 1996, nos 72, 73).

Another possibility is that after the completion of the scroll in 1674–75, ‘Abdallah added the calligraphic inscriptions at Emperor Aurangzeb’s request so that it included examples of all eight scripts listed above, instead of simply nos 1–4. It is also possible that the scroll was written by ‘Abdallah and that the inscription to this effect was inserted by the calligrapher after the completion of the illumination. Then, at some later date the examples of styles nos 5–7 were added, with the *shikastah* of the existing dedicatory inscription making up the full eight hands. This would explain why the extra scripts are written upside down, namely, to follow the alignment of the (earlier) dedicatory inscription.

Matters would be clarified somewhat if we knew more of the calligrapher himself. He is probably the ‘Abdallah who copied several pieces bound in a Mughal album which was sold in Paris in 1999. These examples are signed *al-wād ‘Abdallah* (like the present scroll) and *Hāji ‘Abdallah*, and dated 1665, 1675, 1677 and 1679. He can also be identified with the scribe who signed himself simply ‘Abdallah on several pieces dated between 1669 and 1690 (Bayani 1984, p.1087, no.215). This person may have been ‘Abdallah Darayat Khan, a scribe of Awrangzeb whose father worked for Shah Jahan (Muhammad-Husain 1910, p.106). None of the pieces mentioned bears any reference to where it was written, but an undated page in a Deccani album signed by a Hāji ‘Abdallah ‘at Hyderabad’ (see James 1987, p.242) may well be by the same person. In any event, the ‘Abdallah who executed this scroll was an outstanding practitioner of the art of the scribe, while the scroll itself must be considered a very important example of Indian Islamic calligraphy.
Single-volume copy of the Qur'an

India, AH 1157/AD 1744-45
500 folios, 17.5 x 10.5 cm

The manuscript is written on a fine, thin laid paper, with 13 lines of naskh to the page, and the text is surrounded by black and gold rules that define an area measuring 13.5 x 7 cm, which has been sprinkled with gold. The colophon, which gives the name of the scribe, Muhammad Murad, and the date of copying, was written in white naskh over a gold panel and is somewhat faded, so that the date 1157 can be detected only under ultra-violet light.

Surah headings are written in white naggi on gold cartouches within narrow illuminated panels. Verses are punctuated with gold discs and each rak'ah is indicated by a circle in the margin bearing the letter 'ain, a common feature of Indian copies of the Qur'an. Marginal devices and inscriptions indicate the beginning of each thirtieth part of the text (juz'), and each quarter, third and half of every juz'. The text is also divided into seven unequal parts, with the pages at those points fully illuminated. This articulation of the text, which is rarely found outside the Indian subcontinent, allows daily readings extending over the course of a week.

The opening pages (folios 1b, 2a) are the most elaborately illuminated in the manuscript, the work being in a style associated with the Mughal court. The eight other illuminated openings in the manuscript (they include folios 2b and 3a and the two last pages of text, as well as the beginning of the remaining six sevenths) are less elaborate and of a varied design. On each the text is written in 'clouds' reserved in a gold ground, and the margins are filled with a different type of gold floral scroll. The beginning of each seventh is also marked by an illuminated head-piece.

The manuscript is bound in 19th-century Ottoman covers of maroon morocco painted in gold with a centre-and-corner composition filled with arabesque scrolls and framed by a border of multiple rules. The doublures are made of a bright-red paper printed in gold with a pattern of interlacing curves and dots. There is a leather wallet decorated in the same style as the binding.
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