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THE NASSER D. KHALILI COLLECTION OF ISLAMIC ART

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THE DECORATED WORD

Qur’ans of the 17th to 19th centuries

by Manijeh Bayani, Anna Contadini and Tim Stanley
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Foreword

Islamic manuscripts form one of the great intellectual and artistic patrimonies of mankind. Their importance has long been recognized in the non-Muslim West, where private individuals and public institutions have been collecting them for at least four centuries, but most are still to be found in the lands where they were made. Despite the efforts of several Muslim governments in the Near East and beyond and of institutions such as the Manuscripts Commission of the League of Arab States, neither the total number of these works nor a full list of their locations can be given. This is so even in the case of Arabic manuscripts, the most extensively studied group. Nevertheless, it is clear that the numbers involved are considerable. A substantial proportion of these contain the text of the Holy Qur'an, for no other work can have been copied out by hand so often in the course of the last 1400 years. The majority of surviving Qur'ans are simply written and sparsely illuminated, but many are magnificent examples of the arts of the calligrapher and illuminator.

The largest and finest collection of Qur'ans is undoubtedly that of the Topkapi Palace Library in Istanbul, which contains the major part of the former imperial library of the Ottoman sultans. There are also important collections in the library attached to the Astan-i Quds-i Razavi, the shrine of the Imam Riza in Mashhad; in the Museum of Ancient Iran in Tehran; in the National Library in Cairo; and in various libraries and museums in India. While circumstances have made the huge Topkapi collection well-nigh comprehensive, the others are not only smaller but have a more regional bias.

Collecting activity in Europe and North America has led to the accumulation of large numbers of Islamic manuscripts, and as a matter of course these have included copies of the Qur'an. The main collections of Qur'ans outside the Muslim world are to be found in the British Library in London, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the Vatican Library in Rome, and the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. However, with the exception of the Chester Beatty Library, the acquisition of this material was never pursued as systematically as in the case of literary, historical and scientific manuscripts. Even though the text of the Qur'an is invariable, palaeographic, aesthetic or historical criteria could have been used to determine what entered these collections, but, with the one exception, no attempt was made to apply such criteria.

It was with an awareness of the need for a consistent approach of this kind that I began to form a collection of Qur'anic manuscripts some 30 years ago under the auspices of the Khalili Family Trust. During this time attempts have been made to secure examples from every period and every part of the Islamic world. As a result the body of material acquired is notable for the wide range it covers. This material can now be used to illustrate the entire spectrum of Qur'anic manuscript development, and, as there are often several examples from the same period, comparisons can be made both within the period and between contemporary manuscripts from different areas. The items in the Collection are of great historical and aesthetic importance. They have been conserved and, where appropriate, restored, and in some cases this has led to interesting discoveries.

With this volume the Qur'anic manuscripts that I have brought together will have been published as the first four volumes of the general catalogue of the Collection. My hope was that, when the publication of these four volumes was complete, they would constitute the most comprehensive survey of Qur'anic calligraphy and illumination yet undertaken, and I am glad to say that this aspiration is well on the way to being fulfilled. The first three volumes, which cover the period before 1600, appeared in 1992, and they set a new standard in the subject, earning the respect of specialists and the admiration of those with a more general interest in Islamic art. It subsequently became clear that the Collection’s holdings of later Qur’an manuscripts are so substantial that they could not be contained in the fourth volume in the series, which has therefore been divided into two parts. This first part deals with two categories of material. One consists of Qur’ans produced in the Islamic empires that controlled the
Mediterranean world, Iran and India; it includes all the examples produced in North Africa and India after 1500 and the Iranian and Ottoman Qur'ans of the 17th and 18th centuries. These large sections are prefaced by a smaller group of manuscripts representing Qur'an production 'beyond the Islamic empires', which contains material from China, from the coastslands of the Indian Ocean, and from sub-Saharan Africa. The second part will publish the Iranian and Ottoman Qur'ans of the 19th century, which form part of the world's last great flowering of manuscript production.

This catalogue has had a long and complex gestation, and it has benefited from the contributions made by several people. Some of the original identifications were made by David James, who was responsible for the catalogues of the Qur'anic material from the 11th to 16th centuries, while he was on secondment from the Chester Beatty Library. Dr James also made extensive notes on some items, which were later used as the starting-point for two of the essays published below, and these have been credited in the footnotes. Subsequently, Anna Contadini prepared drafts of the entries that form the substance of the first half of the book, but ceased working on our project when she moved to a teaching post at Trinity College, Dublin. I am pleased to say that she has since been appointed to the faculty of my own alma mater, the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. At the same time, Manijeh Bayani, who has been an important contributor to the study of the Collection as a whole, took responsibility for drafting the Iranian and Indian sections. More recently Tim Stanley, the deputy curator of the Collection, undertook the task of combining the material these authors had provided and supplementing it with his own contributions. Manijeh Bayani had drawn on a wealth of comparative material and Persian literary sources in evaluating the Iranian and Indian items, and Tim Stanley was able to balance this by extracting significant information from Turkish and other sources, and he provided other important data by paying close attention to distinctive codicological features. These two authors have also been able to supply no less than ten essays on different manuscripts and groups of manuscripts in the Collection, all of which provide new interpretations, and several of which are the first in their particular field. As a result, and despite the very varied nature of the Qur'an manuscripts concerned, through their combined efforts the contributors have been able to maintain the standard set by François Déroche and David James for the first three volumes in the series, and I am grateful to them for their fine work.

Dr Julian Raby, the general editor of the series, played an important role in bringing this volume to completion, and he deserves my thanks. These are also due to Helen Loveday, for her technical analysis of the papers employed; to Diane Dixon-O’Carroll, who provided the drawing on p. 13; to Christopher Phillips, for his photography; to Ankit Associates, who created the design; to Alison Efenny, who was text editor at Azimuth Editions; and to Lorna Raby, who supervised the production process. Wendy Keelan and Sally Chancellor provided invaluable administrative help.

The time and resources needed to bring together the manuscripts recorded in this catalogue and to arrange for their publication has been considerable, and I cannot conclude without acknowledging the tolerance and affection shown to me by my wife, Marion, and my sons, Daniel, Benjamin and Raphael. They have my gratitude.

Nasser D. Khalili
London, 1999
Noble exceptions. Qur’an production beyond the Islamic empires

Most of the Qur’ans in the Khalili Collection are from what are generally considered to be the main centres of Islamic civilization, in the Mediterranean coastlands, in the Middle East, and in India. The Qur’ans presented in this section, however, were produced in other parts of the world, in areas that are not normally studied by specialists in Islamic art. The ‘marginal’ zone from which they come is, like the core territory of the Islamic world, of enormous dimensions – it stretches from China (cat.1–3), through South-east Asia (cat.4) and East Africa (cat.5) to the Sahel region of West Africa (cat.6, 7). The period under discussion is also longer than that considered in the rest of this volume, for it covers the 500 years from the 13th century to the 19th. The physical character of the manuscripts is as varied as one would expect in pieces produced in regions so far apart and at such different periods. The two 15th-century examples from the Sahel (cat.6, 7) are not even bound in the same manner as the other items, as they are loose-leaf books, and their bindings resemble portfolios with open ends, top and bottom. At the same time, the illumination of cat.7 is reminiscent of contemporary West African textile designs, while one of the two 15th-century Qur’an sections from China (cat.2) is decorated with motifs that are of a distinctively local character.

Despite their diversity, the traditions of Qur’an production considered here were all affected by certain common factors associated with their location on the periphery of the Islamic world. In the regions where these traditions grew up Islam was not introduced as the direct result of the Arab conquests of the 7th and 8th centuries AD, as it was in the Mediterranean world, the Middle East, western Central Asia and north-west India. It was brought there through peaceful contact, which was primarily commercial in character. Muslims first settled in China during the Tang period (618–907), both as merchants and as colonists. Some came overland from the west, while others arrived by sea from the south and made their homes in ports such as Hangzhou and Guangzhou (Canton), where the celebrated Tang-period minaret of the Huaxisheng mosque still stands. As we shall see, however, the most important factor in the growth of this community was the Mongol invasions of the 13th century. Thereafter Muslims formed a majority in eastern Central Asia, annexed by the Qing dynasty in the 18th century, but in China proper Muslims remained a minority living under pagan rule. On the surface the development of Islam in the coastlands of the Indian Ocean and in the Sahel seems very different, as penetration by Muslim merchants and by missionaries following trade routes led eventually to the establishment of Muslim states. Yet these never achieved the wealth and power of the great empires of the Islamic heartlands, which had such a profound influence on artistic production from the Abbasid period onwards.

In other words, the regions of the marginal zone shared a type of history different from that of the central Islamic lands, and this led in turn to differences in the nature of Qur’an production. Specialists in Islamic art tend to define that art in terms of dynastic styles, but this cannot have the same significance for regions governed by non-Muslim dynasties, as in China, or where the resources available to local rulers were too meagre to allow great acts of royal patronage, as in sub-Saharan Africa. In both cases the result was a degree of stability in Qur’an production over long periods, with changes occurring piecemeal rather than as the result of the concerted reformulations of taste that characterized successful dynastic states.
China. Qur’ans of the Ming period

by Tim Stanley

The establishment of the Mongol empire by Chinggis Khan (reg. 1206–1227) had an immense effect on the history of Islam. In many ways, of course, this effect was detrimental. Countless Muslims lost their lives; many of the great cities of the medieval period were left as heaps of ruins, with their agricultural infrastructure destroyed; and a large part of the Muslim world fell under pagan rule for the first time since the Islamic conquests. The formation of the Mongol empire was also accompanied by great movements of population, as the invaders amalgamated many non-Mongol elements into their forces and swept them into the lands settled by Muslims. When Chinggis Khan and his descendants undertook conquests in China, however, the process was reversed. The armies they assembled incorporated large numbers of their Muslim subjects from the western regions of the empire, and this led to a great increase in the Muslim population of China – the total at the end of Mongol (Yuan) rule in 1368 has been estimated at four million.¹ In this respect, then, the Mongol expansion contributed to the geographical spread of Islam, of Persian, the language the newcomers used in their daily life, and of Arabic, the language of their religion. As we shall see, in later periods manuscripts in these languages were produced all over China – material in the Khalili Collection was copied in provinces as far apart as Gansu in the north-west (1369–93), Hebei in the north-east (cat.1), and Yunnan in the south-west (cat.2).²

Many Muslims who entered China under the Mongols participated in the government of the country at the highest levels, and the whole Muslim community was given a privileged status second only to that of the conquerors themselves.³ A celebrated member of this Muslim elite was Shams al-Din ‘Umar of Bukhara, known as Sayyid-i Ajall (1217–1279). He first entered Mongol service under Chinggis Khan, and he was commander-in-chief of one of the three war zones under Qubilai Khan (reg. 1260–1294), the first emperor of the Yuan dynasty. From 1273 until his death six years later Sayyid-i Ajall was governor of Yunnan, the province created after the conquest of the kingdom of Nan Zhao in 1253. Yunnan, which had a predominantly Buddhist, Tibeto-Burman population, became a focus of Muslim settlement, and Muslim primacy there was maintained for some time by the succession of Sayyid-i Ajall’s sons as governors after his death.

In 1368 the Yuan dynasty was overthrown by the first emperor of the Ming dynasty, resulting in a restoration of Chinese supremacy within the empire. The Ming regime excluded Muslims from government service and sought to integrate them with the indigenous population. The eventual effect of this policy was that, through intermarriage and the adoption of the externals of Chinese culture, such as dress and language, the Muslims of China became Chinese Muslims (bultu). The use of Persian and Arabic declined, and by the late 16th century a Muslim apologetic literature written in Chinese had emerged. Nevertheless, this sinification had very little effect on the Qur’ans and other Islamic religious books produced in the Ming period.

The Khalili Collection includes four such manuscripts. Two of these, cat.1 and 2 below, are single parts of two 15th-century Qur’ans prepared in 30 parts; the third, 588993, is a collection of devotional texts in Persian and Arabic copied by a female scribe in 1548; and the fourth, cat.3, is a complete Qur’an in 30 parts produced in 1605. Examples of ornament in a Chinese style can be found in these manuscripts,³ and they have one or two other features that mark them off from books of Middle Eastern origin, such as the character of the paper employed, and the use of small stars to decorate the binding. In most other respects, however, all four are typical examples of the Islamic codex as it had developed in the eastern half of the Iranian world in the pre-Mongol period. The text was copied in ink on paper with a reed pen, the use of which is betrayed in the deliberately uneven endings of some downward strokes; the manuscripts have extensive illumination in colours and gold, which served as decoration and to express the structure of the text; and the text on each page is surrounded by a frame of two red rules. In cat.1, cat.2 and the Khalili Collection’s devotional manuscript of 1548 the original structure of the manuscript has been preserved to a large extent; and this shows that the gatherings are quaternions, that is, groups of four bifolia, which were sewn at four stations. The bindings, which have an envelope flap attached to the lower cover, are of leather over pasteboard, worked in gold and in blind with tools (and the stamps mentioned above), and lined with textiles. Perhaps most importantly, the
The four Khalili manuscripts show considerable technical and stylistic uniformity, even though, as noted above, they were produced at different times over a period of 200 years and in cities separated by vast distances. In the case of the Qur'anic material this standardization extends to the page dimensions, the presentation of the text in a five-line format, and the type of surah headings, verse markers and illumination employed. A further feature shared by the Khalili pieces, and indeed by the majority of the published material from China, is that they come from Qur'ans in 10 sections. This suggests that the uniformity they displayed was underpinned by a strong tradition of Qur'an recitation, either as a part of the life of the Muslim community as a whole, in more private contexts such as mausolea, or within a widespread Sufi fraternity.

The earliest Chinese Qur'an section in the Khalili Collection is cat.1, which was completed in what is now Beijing in 1401. The illumination includes a setting for the first lines of text on folios 2b and 3a, and the layout used here is found on the opening pages of almost all other published Qur'an sections from China. The plain text area is surrounded by a broad illuminated frame composed of four sections, two horizontal panels top and bottom, and a narrow vertical panel on either side. In cat. 1 the panels were painted gold, and the motifs were reserved in brown and blue grounds painted over the gold. The overall effect is generally typical of Qur'anic illumination of the later Middle Ages, but the central text area is...
surrounded by a narrow frame formed by single black rules, and this has 'mistred' corners, suggesting depth. In other words, we are tempted to see the text as through a window, for which the illumination forms a grandiose frame. The same effect can be seen in the panels in the same position in cat. 3, but here the 'misted' frame occurs not around the central text area but within the four illuminated panels that frame it. This Qur’an was produced more than 200 years after cat. 1, but the illuminator remained true to the same model in almost every other respect; only the motifs in the lower horizontal band are different. In an almost contemporary non-Qur’anic manuscript, however, the plain ‘misted’ frames seen around the text areas in cat. 1 have been developed much further. The work in question is a book of Qadiri devotions produced in 1614, and in the illumination of the opening pages individual ‘misted’ frames of this type surround each of the four illuminated panels on each page. The frames fit together, with the result that the illuminated panels look as though they have been fitted into a relatively complex piece of three-dimensional joinery, which has been left undecorated. Needless to say, such an illusion is completely alien to the Islamic tradition. The same feature occurs on the opening pages of cat. 2, which was completed in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province, in 1471. It has been suggested, though, that the illumination in this Qur’an was executed in two stages, one contemporary with the manuscript, the other attributed to the late 17th century or the early 18th. In fact the illumination is all of a piece (see below, p.18), and the similarity of the design with the Qadiri manuscript of 1614 suggests that all the decoration in cat. 2 was added more than 100 years after the text was completed – although the Qadiri manuscript may, of course, be a facsimile of an earlier original.

These (relatively minor) developments in illumination, and parallel innovations in bindings, appear to be the only substantial changes in the Chinese Muslim tradition of book production in the Ming period. The Chinese tradition clearly remained undisturbed by developments in Qur’anic production that occurred in the Iranian world after the Mongol invasions, and as a result it became increasingly archaic as compared with Middle Eastern products, reflecting the isolation of Chinese centres of production from their counterparts in the Islamic empires. Amendments were introduced gradually, reflecting the assimilation of the Muslims to Chinese culture. It is difficult to be categorical, as so little material has been published, and so little of that is securely dated; but it does seem that the more dramatic stylistic changes, exemplified by the decidedly Chinese marginal illumination in cat. 2, occurred after the fall of the Ming and the advent of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

1. Israeli 1977.
3. For what may be a portrait of a Persian administrator in China in the Yuan period, see Soudavar 1999, no.1.
4. This work in the Chinese style should not be confused with the chinoiserie employed in the Islamic art of the Middle East.
5. See, for example, Bahrami & Bayatzi 1978, no.31; Paris 1987, no.32.
6. A Qur’an of 182×1649 in the Khalili Collection (James 1992a, no.27) was attributed by David James to Eastern Iran or India, but the same arguments could be used to attribute it to China. See, for example, Arbey 1965, nos 243, 244; James 1980, no.87; Sotheby’s, 28 April 1995, lot no.107; 27 April 1994, lot no.35; 19 October 1994, lot no.43; 18 October 1995, lot no.12; 15 October 1996, lot no.12; 29 April 1998, lot nos 34, 35; Christie’s, 28 October 1994, lot no.62; 27 April 1995, lot no.48; 17 October 1995, lot nos 26, 37, 38; 25 April 1996, lot no.31; 15 October 1996, lot no.62; 21 April 1997, lot no.24; 14 October 1997, lot no.64; and similar material sold in Paris, including Claude Beisigard, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 23 September 1997, lot nos 18a–90, 8.
7. The only exception appears to be Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, nos 178, 179; Arberry 1967, no.244; James 1980, no.87.
8. Cf. such important examples as James 1992a, no.12.
11. See the chapters on Elhamid Iran in James 1988, for example.
Part 29 of a Qur'an in 30 parts
Great Mosque of Khanbaliq, 30 Muharram 804 (9 October 1401)

This Qur'an section (juz') is of considerable importance, because of its early date, and the precise character of the information given in the colophon. From this we know the manuscript was completed by Haji Rashid ibn 'Ali al-Suni on the last day of Muharram in the year 804 in 'the Great Mosque of the city of Khanbaliq, one of the cities of China'. Khanbaliq was the former seat of the Mongol emperors, renamed Beijing when it became the Ming 'Northern Capital' in 1421, and the Great Mosque is presumably to be identified with the present Niu Jie Si ('mosque on Ox Street'), although this received its present form only in 1427.1

The script used by Haji Rashad is the distinctive form of muhaqqaq used in Chinese Qur'ans in 30 parts, of which this is the oldest published example. The scribe wrote painstakingly, although the effect is not as elegant as in 13th-century Qur'ans from the Middle East, which probably served as the model for manuscripts of this type. This is due in part to the manner of execution. The vertical strokes are overly thin, for example, because of the way the scribe turned the pen, and the tawbah, or serif, on some letters alif, lam and qayn was not produced as part of the same stroke as the ascenders to which they are attached. There is also a problem with the relative size of the letters, as matru', rai, qayn, and na' are too large. This is not to say, however, that the script lacks its own clarity and grandeur. The collation of the text was carried out in an unusual manner, as mistakes were pasted over with pieces of paper and rewritten. Some errors remain, though: on folios 42b–43a, for example, we find wa-'annaka written as wa-lam naku', and on folio 50b we find 'alismahum for 'adilhim.'

Haji Rashad was also the illuminator of cat.3. The manuscript opens with a roundel bearing the words dhu'ul-dhu bi-l-lah min al-shaytan al-rajiqm, 'I seek refuge in God from Satan the accursed' (illustrated on p.10). The inscriptions are in an ornamental script in which the letters appear to be dissolving into cloud-like forms, and it is arranged in a rotating design, with the circumference of the circle acting as a notional base line. The roundel is surrounded by a frame consisting of narrow side panels filled with a cable motif and broad upper and lower panels. This frame recurs on folios 28 and 30, where it surrounds the three lines of text, and on folio 50b, where it surrounds the roundel containing the colophon. In all these cases the upper panel is divided into compartments by interlaced arcs, while the lower panel is filled with a tight pattern of interlace flanked by a pair of stylized lotus blossoms. As the surah headings were left plain, the remaining illuminated elements are the verse markers and the marginal devices, medallions and a cartouche, marking the division of the text into four quarters.

The brown leather binding (illustrated on p.13) does not appear to be contemporary with the manuscript, as the shadow of a flap seen on the first page of the original text block is of a different shape from the present flap. Nevertheless, it appears to be of some antiquity and may have been added as early as the 16th century.2 The main feature is a large central roundel very similar to that on folio 2a but containing the basmalah, which was reserved in a ground tooled in gilt. The binding has been relined with turquoise cotton, but the evidence of the other Ming-period Qur'ans in the Khalili Collection indicates that the original doublures would also have been of cloth.
Part 17 of a Qur’an in 30 parts
Yunnanfu, 1 Ramadan 173 (21 February 1471)

This fine Qur’an section was written by Shams al-Dīn ibn Tāj al-Dīn in the Dar al-Hadith madrasah in Madinat Yunnan, one of the great cities of China, on 1 Ramadan 173. "Madinat Yunnan" is probably a translation of the Chinese name Yunnanfu, which was applied to the city of Kunming as capital of the province of Yunnan. The text is written in the distinctive niṣbaqaṭ style also seen in cat.1. In other respects, too, this manuscript is very close to the earlier Qur’an section in terms of its size, the number of lines to the page, the red rules used to frame the text area, the presentation of the surah headings, and other features.

It appears that the manuscript was left unilluminated when it was produced in the 15th century, as the decoration is in a mixed style that can be attributed to the 17th century or later (see p.15 above). The first page bears a rounded containing the words kalim Allah, "the word of God", in an ornamental script, which may be a fluid form of riqa'. The inscription is in gold on a green ground, and the rounded is edged with a blue band outlined in gold, which is decorated with a Chinese scroll motif in gold. The rounded is surrounded by cloud motifs in a variety of colours. Illumination in the same style is found on the following two pages, where it was used for the decorative elements of Chinese origin that extend into the margins from the ornamental frame around the text. The frame itself is in a second style, which is very close to that found in cat.1 and consists of Middle Eastern motifs executed in colours on a solid gold ground. A sinicizing note is provided by the borders that surround each panel. These were executed in ink on a plain ground and suggest a three-dimensional wooden or other frame. It has been suggested that the two styles show that the manuscript was decorated at two different periods, but they are more likely to be contemporary. They were both executed in the same type of paint in the same range of colours, and the apparent difference is due to the use of a plain ground for the first style, and a ground covered with gold for the second.

A rounded in the margin of folio 26a indicates the middle of the Qur’anic text and bears the word, niṣf, ‘half’. On folio 32a there is a geometric motif marking a point for ritual prostration (sajdah). The niṣf marker is in the first style, whereas the sajdah marker is in the second style.

The first word of part 17 was written on folio 1a, and the first word of the following part appears on the final folio. These are in the same hand as the main text, but they were obscured when three-quarters of both pages were covered with blue, self-patterned silk, cut in a lobed pattern along its outer edge. This silk probably formed the lining of an earlier binding, but the boards themselves now have plain leather doublures. The binding, made of brown leather and worked with two stamps and one tool, is very similar to that of cat.1 in design (the covers have a central medallion bearing the basmalah in the same ornamental script) and technique (one stamp and the tool are of the same pattern as those used on cat.1). The quality, though, is not as high, and these covers appear to be of much more recent date, perhaps as late as the 19th century. As such they are a witness to a long, stable tradition of binding.
China. Qur’ans of the Ming period

3
Qur’an in 30 parts
China, Ramadan 1013 (January–February 1665)

Between 34 and 65 folios, 24 x 18 cm, with 5 lines to the page
Material A stiff, light-brown laid paper, lightly burnished; there are approximately ten laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent chain lines or rib shadows. The bifolia were cut from composite sheets of paper
Text area 16 x 11.5 cm
Script The main text in muhaqqiq, written in black, with reading marks in red; surah headings and marginalia in red naskh
Scriptor Abu al-Latif ibn Shams al-Dar al-Sini
Illumination Extensive decoration on folios 22–34; text frame of one red rule; verses marked by devices in red
Documentation A colophon
Binding Perhaps contemporary
Accession no. Q34992

This Qur’an represents a very conservative rendition of the type of 30-part copy seen in cat. 1, which was produced two centuries earlier. As was noted above, the similarities extend to the motifs chosen for the illumination on the opening pages. The one difference is that the two lotus elements do not occur in the lower panels, which are filled with an interlace pattern.

The illumination is confined to the opening pages of text, except in the thirtieth part, which has similar decoration on the last pages of text (folios 32b–33a). In the other sections the last pages of text are laid out to receive illumination, but this has not been executed. On these pages the panels to be decorated were ruled in red ink, which was also used for the rules framing the text area, the verse markers, the reading marks, and the few marginal inscriptions. These last include a letter ‘ain for each tukait; the words rub’, nisf and thulathat arba’ indicating the end of each quarter of the text; and occasional reading and other instructions, often in Persian, such as agar nab ištād [sic] kufr ast, ‘if not [recited] standing, it is blasphemy’ (part 4, folio 34a).

The bindings are of brown leather and are decorated with various combinations of ruled devices, rows of stamps and single stamps. On the covers of part 1, for example, there is a design of four panels surrounding a central field, an arrangement clearly derived from the illumination of the opening pages in Chinese Qur’ān sections, including this copy. The panels are each filled with a row of stamps, while the central field contains a ruled lozenge, which surrounds a central lobed figure. The spaces in and around these devices are decorated with single stamps. Other features of the bindings were destroyed during restoration, but traces of cloth on the first and last pages of each section show that the covers originally had cloth doublures, which were pasted over the end leaves. The lack of comparative material means that these bindings are difficult to date.
4
Single-volume manuscript
Indonesia, 18th century

425 folios, 31.5 x 22 cm, with 14 lines to the line (top to bottom) in a line
Material: Amscr, a laid paper, 20 sheets, 8 pages
and chain lines are ruled in a band close to the margin
Text area 21 x 11 cm
Script: The main text is written in black, with
reading marks, and is
in a hand close to that of the
inscription in the margin in white
Illumination: Extensive
on folios 1b-2a, 416b-417a, 1 text framed
alternating black and yellow
marked by yellow
golden devices
and proclamations
Binding: Modern
Accession no. Q9183
Published: Verona

1. The end of the Qur'an is followed
by a prayer, which is
foot of folio 46a.
2. Cf. Berg 1963
3. See, for example,
1997, nos 1-41.
4 Single-volume Qur'an
Indonesia, 18th or 19th century

The Indian Ocean

The littoral of the Indian Ocean includes Arabia, the original home of Islam; and from an early date Arab armies carried their religion to other regions along its shores, so that by the 8th century AD it was established from the Gulf of Aden as far east as Sind. In subsequent centuries Islam spread to the whole of the vast African and Asian coastline of the Ocean, a process that eventually led to the formation of Muslim states. In most cases, though, Islam was first introduced not by military conquest but by traders and by missionaries following trade routes. This was the origin of Islam in Indonesia, where cat. 4 was copied in the 18th or 19th century, and of the Muslim Swahili culture of East Africa, of which cat. 5 is an expression.

The fine illumination in cat. 4 is mainly concentrated on three double-page spreads that mark the beginning of the text (folios 1b–2a), the half-way point (folios 208b–209a), and the end of the text (folios 416b–417a). The end of the first half of the text is also illuminated (folio 208a), and marginal ornaments mark each eighth of a juz. This decoration was executed in red, yellow and a very dark green, with the motifs or decorative script in white. The composition on folios 416b–417a is similar to that on folios 1b–2a, but the central fields are blank.

The main text is in a large hand of great poise and regularity. This is of the regional type described as 'Jawi', a term that referred to the island of Java and in a more general sense to the whole of South-east Asia (Bidd al-Jauah). 2 Jawi is, then, used for any form of the Arabic script written by Muslims of this region, from the plainest naskh to the most elaborate decorative hand. 3 It is therefore of limited value. The hand of cat. 4 may be better defined as a fine Indonesian copyhand distinguished from the classical naskh of the Middle East by a limited number of mannerisms, such as the slight slant to the left.

The surah headings are in red and are mostly set in a panel framed top and bottom by double red rules. This panel is otherwise plain except for brief inscriptions recording the number of verses, words, letters, etc. in the surah in question.
A Qur’an once in Zanzibar. Connections between India, Arabia and the Swahili coast

by Tim Stanley

The trade routes that ran from the Arabian Sea southwards along the East African coast were frequented from Antiquity by merchants in search of African raw materials such as gold, ivory and rock crystal and of slaves. In the Islamic period this commerce expanded and gave rise to permanent settlements, some on the coast itself, and many on offshore islands. The main towns developed into rival city-states, but they shared a population of mixed African and Middle Eastern origin, which was united by a common religion, Islam, and by the use of the Swahili language. The Swahili states so early as the early 8th Middle Ages, but their independence was brought to an end by the Portuguese, who arrived in the region at the very end of the 15th century. Their control over the ports lasted until the end of the 15th century. In 1698 they were ejected from Mombasa with the aid of the ruler of Oman, and by the end of the 17th century they had been excluded from the coast north of Mozambique. The Swahili ports then fell under Ommani suzerainty, although they enjoyed a great deal of autonomy until the reign of Sayyid Sa'id ibn Sultan (1846–1856). Sa'id moved his capital to Zanzibar in 1839, and a separate sultanate was established there on his death.

The period of Portuguese rule did not affect the strength of Islam in the Swahili settlements, and even after the coming of the Omanis, a majority of whom were members of the 'Ibadi sect, most Swahilis remained loyal to the Shafi'i school, which had been well-established by the 15th century.

The manuscript in its religious tradition required the use of Qur'ans and other books, many of which survive.

Nevertheless, only one locally produced Arabic manuscript has been published in full. This is the second volume of a Qur'an bound in two volumes, preserved in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society in London. Another Qur'an with East African connections is cat. 5 below, which was copied in AD 1182 (AD 1749). According to an accompanying document, the Qur'an in the Royal Asiatic Society was 'got at Witu and belonged to the Sultan of Witu who was deposed', which probably means that it was taken as plunder in 1891, when the British sacked this small state on the East African mainland. The manuscript is undated, but it seems that it was already old when the sack of Witu occurred. Simon Digby, who published the manuscript, noted that its endpapers bore late 18th-century watermarks, and he concluded that the endpapers were added when the manuscript was rebound in two volumes, in 1800 or thereabouts, and that the production of the original, therefore dated in the late 18th century. This is supported by the nisba, al-Siyawi, borne by the scribe responsible for the manuscript. The name associates him with the small settlement of Siyo on the island of Pate, which was a great centre of Islamic learning and manuscript production in the 18th and 19th centuries. It seems very likely that the Qur'an was produced in Siyu and was removed from Pate in the early 1860s, when the island's rulers, the Nabhan dynasty, were expelled by Sayyid Majid ibn Sa'id of Zanzibar and took up residence in Witu.

Whereas the Witu Qur'an is not dated but can be associated securely with Pate, the Khalili Qur'an, cat. 5, is securely dated, but its place of production is far from clear. The scribe's name, 'Hajj Sa'd, son of the late Umar Din', suggests that he was not from an Arabic- or Persian-speaking area; and a note on folio 79 shows that by Safar 1255 (April–May 1839), almost a century after it was written, the manuscript was in Zanzibar, having been acquired at that date by 'Abd al-Qadir Ibn al-Shaykh al-Salah Umar, a native of Oman who had settled on the island. It is possible, then, that cat. 5 was copied in Zanzibar, which in 1749 had not yet gained the prominence it acquired under its Ommani rulers. It is also possible that, as Ommani domination established itself on the island in the first half of the 19th century, the Qur'an was brought there from another centre of learning.

The Witu Qur'an and cat. 5 are very different in stylistic terms. The Witu Qur'an was copied in an excellent large hand, with elements both of the tibrut style and the mulaqqaz. The limited decoration consists of patterns and inscriptions in the natural colour of the paper reserved in red and black grounds. The script of cat. 5, however, shows some similarities to the scribal idiom of the so-called Bihari Qur'ans produced in India from the late 14th century. The Bihari style is characterized by the angularity of some letter forms as compared with equivalent Middle Eastern styles; by a tendency to exaggerate the contrast between thick and thin caused by changes in the angle of the nib; and by the way
The line was composed as a row of separate words, with spaces between them, rather than as continuous sequences of letters and groups of letters, as they appear in almost all other forms of Arabic script. The hand of cat. 5 shares the tendency to angularity, and some letter forms, such as those of ‘awwal and ‘wil, are very similar in both. The two other features are lacking, however, as the ductus is relatively even, and there are no spaces between the words. On this basis alone it would be difficult to link cat. 5 and the Indian Qur’ans, but they also share other features. One is an unusual type of vocalization. In most Qur’anic hands the vowels ‘af‘alab and ‘a’zarab were regularly written at an angle of 45 degrees, while in cat. 5 and in Bihari Qur’ans, these vowels were written as horizontal strokes. At the same time some Bihari Qur’ans were written in two sizes of script, as is the case in cat. 5. In one published Bihari fragment, for example, there are 17 lines to the page, and the first, ninth and seventeenth line are in a larger hand than the remainder, while in cat. 5 there are 15 lines to the page, with the first and fifteenth line in the larger hand. Unlike Middle Eastern Qur’ans in two sizes of script, where different styles were employed in different registers, the larger hand in the Bihari examples and in the Khalili Qur’an is essentially an expanded version of the smaller script, or vice versa.

These similarities may be coincidences, or the result of reliance on the same model, but there are sound reasons for proposing that the earlier style of script played a role in the formation of the hand of cat. 5, either directly or through an intermediary. This seems all the more likely in view of the presence of the 17-line Bihari fragment referred to above, which was recovered from the ruined great mosque of Dāwrān in Yemen. Jan Just Witkam, who published it, noted three Yemeni Qur’ans which he felt showed signs of affiliation to the Bihari mode of Qur’an production. Thus the patterns of trade, missionary activity and pilgrimage that have linked the coasts of East Africa, Arabia and southern Iran to western India for centuries have inevitably had an effect on the material culture of these regions. And if, as seems likely, cat. 5 is of East African origin, a model for its relationship to Indian prototypes is offered by Ronald Lewcock, who explained features of East African mosques, tombs and residential buildings by reference to the Islamic architecture of Western India from much the same period as the Bihari Qur’ans (13th–15th centuries). With regard to architectural decoration, for example, he concluded that, ‘In the 13th century the East African coast seems to have begun to receive a strong injection from the culture of Western India, from which emerged the architectural style which became fixed as most characteristic for the decoration of buildings for many centuries. After a brief and somewhat transient period of Portuguese influence on the culture of the coast, the hegemony of Oman and Muscat reintroduced the links between the African coast and the Arabian Gulf; but by this time the coastal towns were either in decline or firmly fixed in patterns which the later Islamic styles could barely effect.’
This Qur’an, one of the earliest known from the East African coast, was copied in AH 1162 (AD 1749) by Hajj Sa‘d, ‘son of the late ?Abd ‘Umar Din’. We do not know where Hajj Sa‘d worked, but by Safar 1355 (April–May 1839) the manuscript was in Zanzibar, for a note on folio 72 records that it was acquired at that date by ‘Abd al-Qadir ibn al-Shaykh al-Salih ‘Umar, a native of Oman who had settled on the island. Other notes record that in AH 1229 (AD 1815–14) a man called Ahmad, ‘a slave of His Excellency’ (‘abd sarkar), purchased the Qur’an for 100 reals from another man, called Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Shaykh (folio 8a); and that in Ramadan 1289 (November 1732) it became the property of Sa‘d ibn ‘Umar ibn Shaykh Mahmoud al-Zanjibari (folio 292a).

The text is copied in two sizes of script. The larger was used for the first and last line, the smaller for the remainder. Comparison with the smaller, naṣīḥ text used for the surah titles, for writing out alternative readings in the margins, and for other supplementary texts suggests that this script is an expanded form of naṣīḥ. But in some respects, such as the angular letter forms, the horizontal vowel signs and the combination of large and small scripts, it resembles the script of the so-called Bihari Qur’ans produced in India in the late 14th to early 17th centuries (see pp. 16–17 above). The opening pages of the Qur’anic text (folios 7b–8a) are illuminated in red, a muddy yellow, black and olive-green. The text is set within roundels, which are flanked by bands filled with a white cable motif. Other bands above and below the roundels contain quotations from the surahs al-Hijr (5, verse 87) and al-Waqi‘ah (66, verses 77–80), in black. Traditions on the importance of these two surahs and their efficacy as charms are inscribed in the panels above the text and are continued in the margins. All the alternative names for al-Fatiha are also given.

The undecorated surah headings in the remainder of the manuscript contain more details than is normal, including the number of words and the number of letters in each surah, as well as the number of verses according to the count of Kufa. Differences in the numbers of verses between the counts of Kufa, Mecca and Medina are also noted. The verses are punctuated by markers of two types. One has the shape, circular with a point at the top, of the independent form of the letter ha‘, which was often used to mark groups of five verses in other traditions. These devices were executed alternately in red and yellow. The second, and less common, type consists of an inverted triangle in yellow, surrounded by three small red circles, one to each side. Bold circular ornaments painted in red, yellow and white were placed in the outer margin to mark some divisions of the text and sajdabs, with the word juz‘, bi‘ah or sajadah written in white in the centre, on a red ground. Other sub-divisions, down to a quarter-bi‘ah, are noted in the margins in red. Variant readings are given as marginal glosses in red and black naṣīḥ, with their authority mentioned at the beginning of each. Letters in green in the body of the text relate to the authority on which a reading or verse division was based.

The Qur’anic text occupies folios 7b–28b of the manuscript and is preceded and followed by a number of short complementary texts. Folios 1–5, for example, contain a compendium of Qur’anic lore. This consists of a collection of Hadiths on the virtues of reading the Qur’an (1b–2b) and a work in 12 sections explaining technical details of Qur’anic recitation, such as assimilation (taddīb) and the lengthening of vowels (madd), and their relationship to the reading marks placed over the Qur’anic text; the information given in the surah headings (awwāl al-sirrāh); the punctuation of verses; the orthography employed, which is that of Basra; and the marginal inscriptions, including alternative readings and excerpts from al-Baghawi. There are other texts on Qur’anic recitation (folio 6) and the canonical readings (folio 284a) and two sequences of prayers (folios 7a, 284b–285b).
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الله بضلاه و رحمة عالى على إيمان قنوتكم.
نار نار للذين كفروا. و إنما العمل السلمة اعتز الله بتذكيرهم.
الله هبوا إلى الدارين. و إنما سلتكم لعلهم يتساءلون.
نسوون أن نذكر الله و أن نستغفر له و أن نستعين به.
إلا أن سأذن له أن أنزل بهما. يا سليمان ملك بإسم الله الحليم.
هو كلما كتسا قلبه فوجدها آثارهم أو أن نصلح لهما فخراً.
ببه و ها هنا قلبه. و لا هذه آثارهم. و إنما أحزنتنا.
فإذا أفرحاً فحثنا. و انفع ذا سروراً. و إن الله عزيز و قهراً.
الله يهدي الذين يتقون. و إن الذي يظلمون. إنما يظلمون.
لا يفلت منهم أحد منهم إلا ما كتب الله له من النبل.
و إن يعذب السائلين عليهما. فللمتلون الحق. إنما يظلمون.
فإن أكلتما بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم.
The Qur’anic script of Western Sudan. 
Maghrbi or Ifriqi?

by Tim Stanley

The Khalili Collection contains two loose-leaf Qur’ans, cat. 6 and 7 below, that are products of a recognizably West African tradition. The two were produced in Western Sudan in the 17th century, and, like other examples of their type, they were written in a characteristic Maghribi hand and have painted decoration in vivid earth colours. The earliest physical evidence for Qur’an production in the region is provided by a specimen examined by A.D.H. Bivar in Maiduguri in Bornu in 1939. It had interlinear glosses in an archaic form of Kanembu, while the margins contain a commentary in Arabic, the Jamiʿ al-ahdab al-Qur’ani al-Qurubbi, which was completed on Sunday, 1 Jamada’ul-Ulha 1280 (27 October 1669). Bivar was able to show that the family of the scribe who added the commentary had been resident in Bornu as early as the last quarter of the 13th century. He therefore concluded that this Qur’an, and three other copies with Kanembu glosses he saw in Northern Nigeria, were produced in Birni N’gazargamu, the former capital of the Bornu empire, which was destroyed during a revolt of the local Fulanis in 1868. In the same year the Fulanis also sacked Askalawa, the capital of the sultanate of Gobir, and another Qur’an published by Bivar was supposedly looted from Yunfa, sultan of Gobir, at this time. As Yunfa came to the throne in 1799, Bivar dated the Qur’an circa 1800. A more precisely dated example was formerly in the Newberry Library in Chicago. It was written by a scribe called Sayrallah for Malam al-Qadi ibn al-Husayn of Bornu and was completed on 8 Rabi’ al-Awwal 1310 (13 July 1894). A curious note follows the colophon, ‘But the scribe is in Tunis, in Bab Suwayyqah.’ He wrote it in the settlement [badad] of W. Z. K. The author of the note hastened over the spelling of this last toponym, adding, ‘in the settlement of W. Z. K.’ It may be, therefore, that the scribe copied the manuscript on a journey from his home in Western Sudan to Tunisia. 

The hazardous trade routes that took the scribe Sayrallah across the Sahara to the North African coast were the means by which Islam had established itself in the Western Sudan many centuries before. The first stages in this process took largely unchronicled because they were initiated by commercial contact rather than military conquest, but movement between Muslim North Africa and the trading cities of the Sahel, the southern ‘shore’ of the Sahara, was already under way in the ninth century AD. It is clear that the ‘Sadami’ style of calligraphy seen in Qur’ans from the Sahel came to the region by the same routes, for, as noted above, it is a type of Maghribi hand. It has the Maghrab system of diacritics, distinguished by the single dot above the letter ‘af and the single dot below the letter ‘f+. The letter form ‘sadda lacks a final ‘tooth’, following the Maghribi rather than the Middle Eastern model. 

Less certain is the Sudani style’s identification with the Ifriqi script, asserted by Bivar and others. 

Ifriqi, a general term for the style of Arabic script current in Ifriqiyyah (modern Tunisia and eastern Algeria) in the early Middle Ages, was used by the historian Iba Khaldun, writing circa 1350. He related how the Spanish Muslim refugees who had settled in the cities of Ifriqiyyah ‘attached themselves to the ruling dynasty (in Northwest Africa). In this way their script replaced the Ifriqi script and wiped it out. The scripts of al-Qayrawan and al-Mahdiyyah were forgotten, once the custom and crafts of (these two cities) were forgotten. All the various scripts of the inhabitants of Ifriqiyyah were assimilated to the Spanish script used in Tunis and adjacent regions, because there were so many Spaniards there after the exodus from eastern Spain. The (old script) has been preserved in the Jarid, where the people had no contact with those who wrote Spanish script. 

The ‘Spanish script’ in question can only be what are now called the Maghribi hands, which have been current in Tunis from Ibn Khaldun’s time until today (see p. 42 below); while the character of the Ifriqi script to which the historian referred can be judged from a Malakite legal text in the Khalili Collection (MS 305, illustrated opposite). The manuscript contains two sections of the Mukhtalif of Sahm and was copied in AH 406 (AD 1015), almost certainly in al-Qayrawan, for it was made hubus (that is, waqf) in that city for the followers of the Malik school of law. The script is a good copy-hand related to the script François Déroche classified as ‘New Style III’ (NS III), which we know was in use in parts of the Maghrib (al-Qayrawan, Córdoba, Palermo) in the 10th century AD. Nevertheless, it has some features of contemporary Middle Eastern mudeb, such as the medial form of the letter ‘s’. The text has almost no diacritics, and it is therefore impossible to tell whether the Maghribi or the Middle Eastern system was

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used; but the sīd/dād letter form ends with a pronounced 'ooth', which sets this hand apart from the Maghribī group as a whole, including its Sudani subset. The same may be said of a manuscript cited by Adrian Brockett.33 Brockett accepted Bivar's description of the Sahelian hand as Ḳurṭī and proposed a derivation from the neo-Kufic (Déroche nos.1) hand seen in the Qurʾan written in AD 1020 for the nursmaid of the Zirīd ruler Ibn Badis. The published pages from this manuscript show that a direct relationship is impossible,34 not least because here too the sīd/dād letter form follows the Middle Eastern pattern.

Bivar argued that the Iṣfīṣī style of script was introduced into the Sahel by the Almoravids during their invasion of the Upper Niger region from what is now Mauritania. This occurred in the later 11th century, when the Almoravids' main force was making its way north into Morocco, where Marrakech was founded as their capital in 1062, and then, in 1086, over to Spain. Other forces remained in the south under the leadership of Abu Bake ibn Ḫumar (d.1087), who is often credited with the extension of Islam southwards and westwards into Ghana, the gold-rich state that encompassed the headwaters of the Senegal and the Niger. The Almoravid conquest of Ghana is no longer accepted as a historical reality, however, and it is thought that the empire's conversion to Islam was a peaceful process that occurred in the early 11th century.35 There was, then, no Almoravid conquest by which the Iṣfīṣī script could have been transmitted to the Western Sudan. What is more, the Almoravid empire did not control Iṣfīṣīyyah, the home of the Iṣfīṣī script and the region from which the Almoravids would presumably have caused it to be diffused.36

We may conclude from this that the style of script first seen in the Bornu Qurʾans of the 17th century is definitely not a relic of the ancient Iṣfīṣī hand in use before the triumph of the Maghribī mode described by Ibn Khalduń. We can say this because Iṣfīṣī was not a member of the Maghribī group of scripts, whereas the Sudanese hand is. Iṣfīṣīyyah may well have been the source of the Sudanese style, as that region and Bornu lay at either end of active trade routes and shared an attachment to the Malikite school of law. If this was the case, however, the transmission of the style can only have taken place after Iṣfīṣīyyah had adopted the Maghribī mode. The Sudanī style of script was not, though, confined to Bornu; it was used throughout Western Sudan. It is therefore equally possible that it came to the Sahel from another part of the Maghrib.37


5. Bivar 1968, pp.7–8 and pl.2.


7. A suburb named after a gate in the north wall of the stadthut of Tunis; see, for example, Lézine 1977, p.10. 2. I have not been able to identify Wāṣi/Wāṣa, which may have been a settlement or a district, as Bālad means both.

8. Although none of the other published Qurʾanic material from the 19th century is explicitly associated with Bornu, official correspondence reproduced by Bivar (1959, pls 1, 11) shows that the Sudani version of the Maghribī script was still in use there under Shaykh Muhammad Amin al-Kanemi (reg.1812–1835) and his descendants.


11. This is clear from the history of Abu Yazid al-Nukkari, who was born in the Western Sudan, the son of a Kharjīte merchant from southern Tunisia, and who led a major revolt against the Fatimid in Iṣfīṣīyyah in 904/943–4; see Stern 1968; Bivar 1968, p.1.

12. Bivar 1968, p.7. See also Houas 1886; Van den Boogaert 1985. Houas made 'Sudani' one of the four regional types of calligraphy in the Maghribī style, while Van den Boogaert gave it a cognate relationship with the Maghribī group as a whole.


6
Single-volume Qur'an
Western Sudan, 17th century

This loose-leaf Qur'an and the very similar cat. 7 are of a type that was being produced in
Western Sudan by 1800,1 and which was preceded by a very similar type being produced
in Bornu by the 17th century at the latest (see above, p. 32).2 The hand of this manuscript
is characteristic of Qur'ans written in Western Sudan. It may, however, be distinguished
from some other examples by such details as the medial form of the letter ˌba'. Here ˌba' has
the form of two loops of the same size resting on the horizontal base line,3 which appears
to be an autonomous development from the standard Maghribi form seen in 17th-century
examples.

In other respects, too, the manuscript is typical of Western Sudanese production. These
include the illumination, the loose-leaf structure and the wallet-like binding. The illumina-
tion is notable for its vivid colours and variety of patterns. Double-page compositions,
which consist of a pair of panels containing contrasting designs, each with round 'haxps'
projecting into the three outer margins, mark the beginning of each quarter of the text,
and there is a smaller decorative panel between surahs 1 and 11. The text is further divided
into sixty hizbs, indicated by marginal devices that are all of the same size and shape but
vary greatly in the colours and patterns used to fill them. Multiple versions of the same
device are used to mark each seventh (sub) of the Qur'anic text and each point for ritual
prostration (sujud), while rectilinear devices mark each eighth of a hizb.4

Surah headings were written in red and are always followed immediately by the basmlah,
which completes the line. The verse markers have three forms. Single verses are punctuated
by a group of three yellow dots outlined in red; every fifth verse by what appears to be a red
letter ˌba' outlined in dark-brown ink; and every tenth verse by a roundel, with a
yellow centre and four red dots in the border.

The Qur'an consists of 866 loose folios, made up of 222 bifolia and 38 single folios. As in
other manuscripts of this type, they were not gathered in quires but were merely assembled
in a pile. Two folios discarded during the copying process because their bear defective text
were used as 'end pages', and at either end of the text block, and of rough y the same
dimensions, there is a piece of flexible pasteboard edged with leather.5 Most of the manu-
script was made from the same type of European paper,6 which bears a watermark of the
treasure type. It indicates that the paper was produced by the Galvani mills of Pordenone
in the Veneto, which dominated the Western Sudanese paper market in the 19th century.6

The binding, like book covers from other parts of the Islamic world, consists of an
upper and lower cover, a spine, and a two-part flap. It was used in a different manner,
however. It is not attached to the loose-leaf text block but wrapped around it, and the flap
was closed over the upper cover so that the leather thong attached to its point could be
wrapped around the binding to keep it secure.7 The binding is of light-brown leather over
pasteboards, which are exposed on the interior. The covers and flap are decorated with
horizontal registers tooled with repeats of a single small stamp and separated by triple
rules. The spine and 'hinge' for the flap bear a diaper pattern formed by double rules, with
the same stamp at the crossings.

488 folios, 22.5 x 17 cm, with 14 lines to the page.
Material: A smooth, cream, European laid paper, untrimmed; there are approximately 12 laid lines
to the centimetre and chain lines at intervals of 0.5 cm.
Text area: 14 x 8.5 cm.
Script: The main text in the Sudani variant of the Maghribi script, written in dark-brown ink, with
vowels, sukun and shaddāh in red, and hamza marked by a yellow dot; surah headings and marginalia
also in Sudan; in red and dark-brown respectively; the surah headings have diacritics, vowels, sukun and
shaddāh in dark-brown, and hamza marked by a yellow dot.
Illumination: Full-page illumination on folios 12-12, 110-116, 215B-215A, 31B-31A; decorative panel before surah 11 on folio 12b; verse markers; marginal devices marking each eighth of a hizb, each sub, and each prostration.
Binding Contemporary.
Accession no. 07/1010.
Published: Venoot 1997, no. 17.
7

Single-volume Qur’an

Western Sudan, late 19th century

328 folios, 22.8 x 16.2 cm, with 15 lines to the page

Material: A smooth, cream, European machine-made paper, unburnished

Text area: 17 x 8.5 cm

Script: The main text in the Sudani variant of the Maghribi script, written in dark-brown ink, with vowels, sukuns and shaddahs in red, and hamzas marked by a yellow dot; surah headings and some marginalia in Sudani, in red, with diacritics, vowels, sukuns and shaddahs in dark-brown, and hamzas marked by a yellow dot; other marginalia in Sudani in dark-brown ink

Illumination: Full-page decoration on folios 1b–22a; extensive decoration on folios 2b–3b; ornamental panels on folios 13v, 17v, 33v, 39b; verse markers; marginal devices marking each eighth of a bayt, each iṣra, and each prostration

Binding: Modern

Accession no.: QUR.109
Published: Vernier 1997, no. 26

This Qur’an is very similar to cat. 6. The most striking difference is the wrote, machine-made paper on which it was written. In addition, all 328 folios are single leaves, and there are no end boards. Instead, folios 1 and 328 had another sheet of paper stuck to them as reinforcement.

There is also a good number of marginal inscriptions in the same red script as the surah headings. Some give alternate readings and instructions on recitation technique, while others give information supplementary to the headings, namely, the numbers of verses, words and letters in each surah.

The illumination, which was executed in dark-brown ink, an earthy red and yellow, is less lavish than in cat. 6 but is of outstanding quality and inventiveness. Each quarter of the Qur’anic text is marked not by double-page compositions but by single panels (the largest, 7 x 7.5 cm) between the end of surahs vi, xvii and xxxvii and the beginning of surahs vii, xix and xxxviii. On folio 2b the whole of surah 1 and the title of surah 11 are written within a patterned frame, and there are five roundels of different design in the outer margins of this page and that opposite.

7 folio 26

7 folio 16v

7 folio 12
The Mediterranean world after 1600

Unlike the regions discussed above, the Muslim lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea had formed part of the Islamic heartlands from the beginning of the Muslim era, in the 7th and 8th centuries AD, and many of the greatest centres of Islamic power had been situated there. North Africa was the home of several great Muslim empires, including the Fatimid caliphate, which was founded in Ifriqiyyah in AD 909, and the Almoravid and Almohad states, which had capitals in Morocco from the 11th century. In the later 15th and the 16th centuries, however, their successors found themselves increasingly threatened by the Spanish monarchy to the north and the Ottoman empire to the east. The contest between these two powers meant that by the beginning of the 17th century Morocco was the only independent state in North Africa, a situation that endured until the 19th century. Despite this retrenchment, local Qur'an production maintained its identity, and, as we shall see, copies made in Morocco show only limited and very gradual change. Indeed, while there were moments of cultural accommodation with the Middle East, it seems that in general the 17th to 19th centuries were a period of resistance to foreign, that is, Ottoman, models. To some extent this was also true of the Ottoman provinces of Tripoli, Tunis and Algiers, where the Maghribi script — but not the Maghribi style of illumination — remained in use for Qur'ans (see cat.12 below). This script was also employed for a variety of other purposes, including legal documents, and its survival was no doubt ensured by its association with the Malikischool of law, to which the population of these provinces, like those of Morocco and Western Sudan, adhered.

In the eastern Mediterranean the 16th century was a period of Muslim expansion, but in the process one Islamic power gained ground to the exclusion of all others. The Ottomans absorbed their great rival, the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt and Syria, in 1516–17, and they subsequently consolidated their hold on south-eastern Europe. The minor states and Italian colonies of the Aegean coasts and islands were eliminated, and the conquest of Cyprus in 1571 left Crete as the only major non-Ottoman territory in the region. The integration of these territories, which had previously been subject to a variety of political systems, was a long process that was not intended to impose complete uniformity and never did so. This evolving political complexity was reflected in Qur’an production. In the 17th century a remarkably uniform type of Qur’an manuscript found favour in the Ottoman capital (see pp.60–75 below), but it was not dominant in the Arab provinces, where pre-Ottoman types were still being produced, as cat.13 and 14 show. The second of these, which was probably copied in Syria, continues a Mamluk tradition, while the first, which was written in Cairo, appears to have been based on an Iranian prototype.

In the 18th century, however, Istanbul seems to have established an artistic hegemony over the whole Levant. There was a considerable movement of scribes out from Istanbul to the provinces, and they took with them the capital’s noble tradition of naskh and thuluth calligraphy, associated with Şeyh Hamdullah. Some returned home, as in the case of ‘Ali ibn ‘Abdallah, the scribe of cat.21, but others remained in the provinces and established sub-schools of their own. Muhammad Nuri founded such a tradition in Egypt, and cat.32 is a product of it, having been written by an important pupil of his called Isma‘îl Wâbitî. Even though it was copied in Cairo, its character was clearly determined in Istanbul.
North Africa. The maintenance of a tradition

by Tim Stanley

We know almost nothing certain about Qur'an production in the western Islamic world until the period after the Almohad conquest of Spain in 1145, when Valencia was evidently an important centre.¹ The collapse of Almohad power in the Iberian peninsula after 1212 and the loss of most of the major Muslim cities there to the kingdom of Castile led to the disruption of Qur'an production, with many Spanish scribes moving to North Africa. Indeed, as we have seen in connection with the fate of the Iftiri script (p.32 above), they moved there in such numbers and were so highly regarded that they more or less extinguished the local writing styles. The Spanish scribal tradition, which employed the Maghribi form of Arabic script, was continued during the Nasrid period in Granada (1232–1492),² the Marinid period in Morocco (1269–1578),³ and the Hafsid period in Ifriqiyyah (1317–1574).⁴ The Castilian-Aragonese conquest of Granada in 1492 and the final Ottoman annexation of Tunis in 1574 left Morocco as the only independent Muslim state in the region, but, as noted above, this did not necessarily restrict manuscript production in the Maghribi style to that country. In the Ottoman provinces of Tripoli, Tunisia and Algiers imperial chancery styles and the Istanbul tradition of naskh and thuluth calligraphy were employed in some contexts, but the Maghribi script continued to be employed for other purposes, as cat.12 shows.⁵

In Morocco the two dynasties that succeeded the Marinids – the Sa’dis (reg.1515–1661) and the ‘Alawis (reg. from 1621) – have both included manuscript patrons of importance. In AH 971 (AD 1565), for example, the Sa’di ruler Mawlay ‘Abdallah commissioned a Qur’an that is now in the British Library in London.⁶ Another copy was completed in Marrakesh in AH 1008 (AD 1599), under ‘Abdallah’s most celebrated successor, Ahmad al-Mansur (reg.1578–1603). It later came into the possession of one of Ahmad’s sons, Mawlay Zaydan (reg.1625–28), and it was among the thousands of books and household effects belonging to the sultan that were captured by Spanish pirates off the Moroccan coast about 1617.⁷ The books were presented to King Philip III of Spain, and the Qur’an is now in the Escorial library,⁸ having survived the fire there in 1671, which destroyed half the sultan’s manuscripts.

Mawlay ‘Abdallah’s Qur’an is similar in several respects to the fragment that forms cat.8 below, which can therefore be attributed to the Sa’di period.⁹ The illumination is of the same type, and both manuscripts were written in a medium-sized Maghribi hand, with no frame around the text area. The Escorial Qur’an, on the other hand, was written in a smaller, finer hand, and the text area is surrounded by a frame of gold, black, red and blue rules. Text frames were a feature of Middle Eastern manuscripts, and their appearance in Morocco may well have been a minor result of Ahmad al-Mansur’s policy of emulating the Ottomans in order to strengthen his state in its conflicts with Spain and Portugal.¹⁰ The use of text frames in Qur’ans did not immediately become the norm, to judge by a copy dated AH 1028 (AD 1618),¹¹ but they do occur in a Qur’an written in AH 1115 (AD 1701–2),¹² and in a spectacular example in Cairo that dates from AH 1142 (AD 1729–30).¹³ In short, the frames had become a standard feature of fine Qur’an manuscripts by the ‘Alawi period (compare cat.9–11 below). In non-Qur’anic manuscripts of the 17th and 18th centuries, too, text frames are seen in the finer examples, such as an elegant copy of the Dala’il al-khayrat that has been dated to the mid-17th century.¹⁴

The Qur’ans of 1618 and 1701–2 have surah headings in a mannered form of Kufic, written in gold in spaces left between the surahs. In both cases, too, the colophon was written in an illuminated panel, in the decidedly fluid variant of thuluth used in the Maghribi. In the Qur’an of 1729–30, as in the Dala’il manuscript of the mid-17th century, the headings were written in Kufic within illuminated panels. In other fine non-Qur’anic manuscripts of the mid- and late 18th century, however, the style of script used for illuminated headings was the regional variant of thuluth. This is the case in the head-piece of volume 1 of an elegant copy of the Mafath al-ghayb of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi made in AH 1169 (AD 1755–6), for example;¹⁵ and it occurs, too, in a series of copies of a work on the Hadith by the ‘Alawi sultan Muhammad II (reg.1757–1790). Three of these, all preserved in the Royal Library in Rabat, are dated AH 1198 (AD 1783–4).¹⁶ All these types of heading are found in cat.9, a two-volume Qur’an that probably dates from the second half of the 18th century. Most headings are in gold Kufic and are set in the spaces between surahs; but the illuminated headings of surahs 1, 11, 111 and 199, which coincide with the
North Africa. The maintenance of a tradition

beginning of the first, second and third quarters of the text, were written inṭuthb, while that for surah xxviii, which marks the beginning of the fourth quarter, is in Kufi. The two colophons are set in similar panels and were written in ṭuthb. The variety seen in cat. 9 may be seen as transitional, for in the 19th century the ṭuthb style became standard for surah headings, as cat. 10 and 11 show.

Although the use of text frames and of headings in ṭuthb may be seen as developments away from the Maghribi tradition towards the Middle Eastern mode of Qurʾan production, another change shows a return to an earlier, specifically Maghribi practice. This is the restoration of the square format. The Qurʾān of the ʿAḍ-&dil period discussed above, including cat. 8, are much longer than they are wide, in the manner of Middle Eastern Qurʾāns, whereas medieval Maghribi Qurʾāns tended to be square. Cat. 9 was cut down when it was rebound, and so it is impossible to know what its original format may have been; but cat. 10 and 11 are still enclosed in their original bindings, and they are perfectly square. This revivalist format was also used for some of the fine copies of the Dalaʿil al-khayrāt produced in considerable

numbers in the 19th century, while other fine books have the normal, vertical format. Written with great care, often in a range of coloured inks, and decorated with splendid illumination, these manuscripts provide a brilliant codex to a great tradition of book production that had lasted since the first square Qurʾāns were copied in the Maghribi script, in the 13th century or earlier.

The question arises as to whether the bindings of cat. 10 and 11 are also revivalist in character. They are so similar that they are surely the product of the same workshop. The outer covers bear an all-over pattern of geometric interlace, based around a small central star and composed of bands tooled in gilt with a cable pattern; the bands appear in relief, as the compartments between them are sunken. Each compartment contains a single stylized, plant-based motif, tooled in blind, with the surrounding field painted gold; and the whole composition is surrounded by a frame tooled in gold with a single large stamp that creates a guilloche pattern in which stepped bands frame a quatrefoil motif. The model for this work ought to be the strikingly similar, and celebrated, binding of a Qurʾān manuscript in the
Royal Library in Rabat (MS.12,609), which has been attributed to the 12th century as the Qur'an to which it is attached was copied in AH 573 (AD 1177-8).\textsuperscript{22} It has to be admitted, however, that the binding in question is so similar to the covers of cat.10 and 11 that it is more likely to be the product of the same 19th-century Moroccan workshop. The central panels of interlace on the Rabat binding are approximately the same size as those on the Khalili examples, and the all-over pattern, the cabling in gilt along the bands of interlace, and the motifs inserted within the sunken compartments are all identical. As the Rabat Qur'an is larger (16.5 x 16.5 cm), the difference has been made up by creating three gilt borders in place of one; and the stamps employed for these borders are of the same general types as those used in

making the Khalili Qur'an bindings. The similarity between the Rabat binding and the 19th-century specimens in the Khalili Collection is balanced by the dissimilarity between the Rabat binding and the contemporary covers of a celebrated 13th-century Qur'an from the hand of the Almohad caliph `Umar al-Murtada,\textsuperscript{23} which are close in character to a Mamluk type of binding with an all-over pattern of strapwork filled with texturing tooled in gold.\textsuperscript{24} This is further compelling evidence that the present binding of the Rabat manuscript was attached to it in the 19th century, perhaps when it entered the royal collections. The style of binding produced at this time may well have represented a revival of medieval Maghribi types, but the evidence to prove this has yet to be found.
the Qur'\n to that the binding of the same text in gilt was identical. As the gilt borders in this document were square, however, an alternative solution is represented by the copy of the 120 volumes produced by Mohammed al-Qasas in 1166 (AD 1759-60); see Paris 1990, no. 131.

1. James 1992a, pp. 89-91; see also


3. The Qur'\n listed at James 1992a, p. 89, nos 1, 4, 5, 15 and 16 have been published at Granada & New York 1992, nos 74, 75, 76, 79 and 80; while James's nos 8, 10 are Derrnan 1982, nos 18, 21. Other dated examples are Sotheby's, London, 32 April 1992, lot no. 316, copied in Valencia in 1156 (AD 1740), a Valencian Qur'\n of 1175 (AD 1773-74); now in the

4. Royal Library, Rabat, MS. 15640; see note 2 above; and one produced in

5. In 1982 (AD 1573) a copy produced in

6. Example of Marind Qur'\n is the first and last volume of an eight-

7. Example of Hadid Qur'\n are the last volume of a four-part copy

8. Ab\n al-Aziz in 1245 (Biblioth\que Nationale, Paris, ms arabes 389-92); D\roche 1985, nos 105-6; Paris 1990, no. 145; Paris 1991, p. 499 but cf. Paris 1990, no. 114; and perhaps three volumes (1, 11, 19) of the Emperor Charles \ during the sack of Tunis in 1332 (Biblioth\que Nationale, Paris, ms arabes 438-40); D\roche 1985, nos 89-92; Paris 1990, no. 114; Paris 1991, p. 143.

9. For copious Tunisian examples, see Chabou \ 1985; Paris 1995.

10. British Library, Or.1344; Ling\ & Safadi 1976, p. 24; Ling\ & Safadi 1976, pls 7-8; Ling\ & Safadi 1978, figs 79-80.

11. Jones 1987, p. 313. It is not clear why the sultan's property was loaded on to a ship in the first place.


13. A Qur'\n section in the Chester Beatty Library (Ms. 1566) has been attributed to the same period; see James 1986, no. 92.

14. Cf. Stanley 1996, no. 20. The information given there about al-Mansur's manuscripts, which was also the starting point of the present essay, was kindly provided by Dr Nadia Erzini. For a full exposition of the subject, see Erzini, forthcoming.


17. National Library, Cairo, Ms. 13; Ling\ & Safadi 1976, no. 151; Ling\ & Safadi 1976, pl. 212-14.

18. Royal Library, Rabat, Ms. 88; Stielmann 1987, p. 19; lower illustrations; Paris 1990, no. 521, illustrated on p. 76.

19. Royal Library, Rabat, Ms. 16,460; Paris 1990, no. 158.

20. Royal Library, Rabat, Ms. 17,878 (Stielmann 1987, pp. 99, 113, 181; Paris 1990, no. 5,140); Ms. 11,147 (Stielmann 1987, p. 186; Ms. 13,98; Stielmann 1987, p. 98; Paris 1990, no. 139).

21. James 1992a, nos 19, 20, for example.

22. Not all 13th-century Moroccan Qur'\n were square, however. An alternative solution is represented by the copy of 120 volumes produced by Mohammed al-Qasas in 1166 (AD 1759-60; see Paris 1990, no. 511.

23. See, for instance, three copies in the Khalili Collection, MS 270, MS 270 (De Bijz & Stanely, forthcoming). Other examples include MS 16,460 in the library of the Qarawi\n mosque in Fez (Paris 1990, no. 542), which was produced in that city in late 12th century (AD 1393-4); and Mes 5,166 in the Public Library, Rabat (Paris 1990, no. 169).

24. An example is MS 15640 in the Khalili Collection, which was copied for the future Alaw\ su\an Hama\ II in 1685; see Maddison & Savage-Smith 1997, cat. 20.

25. The same tool was employed on the brilliantly coloured binding of MS 456 in the Khalili Collection; see note 2 above.


27. Ricard 1935-6, pp. 117-18; see Ling\ & Safadi 1976, no. 113; Granada & New York 1992, p. 123, fig. 10.

28. For a Marind example, see Tannida 1990, fig. 13, for example; also Raby & Tannida 1993, pp. 8-9.
The manuscript consists of six folios written in a bold Maghribi hand with a thick-knibbed pen. The text on folios 1–2 is from the surah al-Baqara (2, verses 141–150); that on folio 3 is from the surah Al-în (3, verses 33–9); while those on folios 4–6 are also from al-Baqara (2, verses 150–151, 337–340, 341–342, and 187–196 respectively). The illumination, which is of good quality, is restricted to the elaborate medallions in the margins, which were painted in gold, red and blue.

The manuscript has no documentation, but, as noted on p. 42, it is similar in some respects to a Qur'an in the British Library, London, which was copied in AH 971 (AD 1568) for the Sa'di ruler of Morocco, Mawlay 'Abd Allah al-Ghalib bi-llah (reg. 1557–1574). It may therefore be attributed to the period from the unification of Morocco under Sa'di rule, in 1549, to the fall of the dynasty in 1659.

The pages are currently bound in Kashmiri lacquer covers. These have a white ground decorated with an overall floral pattern in gold, with details in red and blue, and there is a triple border.
9 Qur’an in two volumes
Morocco, 18th century

Both parts have 16 folios, 21.2 x 16.6 cm, with 14 lines to the page.

Material A thick, cream European laid paper, burnished; there are eight laid lines to the centimetre, and chain lines arranged at intervals of approximately 2.7 cm

Text area 15.8 x 10.3 cm

Script The main text in Maghribi, written in black, with the words Allah, Al-lah, bi-lah etc. and Muhammad in gold outlined in black; the vowels in red, hamza as yellow and green dots, and sukun, shadda etc. in blue; the headings of surahs 1, 5, 17, 28 and 19 and the inscriptions on folios 163a and 163b of both parts in gold thuluth; other surah headings and all marginalia in gold Kufic.

Illumination Full-page decoration on folios 2b, 16b of part 1 and folios 12, 16b-164a of part 2; extensive decoration on folios 1b-14 of part 1; text frames of gold, black, red and blue rules; markers in text for each quarter-half; headings of surahs vii, xix, xxxvii and concluding inscriptions in both parts set in illuminated panels; marginal ornaments marking other surah headings, line divisions and qa‘das

Binding Modern

Accession no. Q.1149

2. Rabat, Royal Library, MSS 1378; Sijelmassi 1987, p.95.

Six other manuscripts containing works by this sultan are listed; see Sijelmassi 1987, pp.42-6.

This copy of the Qur’an was prepared in two volumes, and each half began and ended with a double-page illumination. Six of the original eight pages survive. They each bear an overall strapwork design formed from white bands edged in gold, and the compartments formed by the bands are filled with stylized floral motifs in gold on blue, red, black or green grounds. Each pair of pages displayed a different design. Those at the beginning of each volume are formed around a central star-polygon. They can be compared with the single published page from the frontispiece of a four-volume copy of the Jami‘ al-Sabib of al-Bukhari produced by a Tunisian scribe in AH 1115 (AD 1700-21) and decorated in the Moroccan style.1 Those at the end are paratactic compositions with two vertical rows of small star-polygons (part 1) or knots (part 2). This last design is close to that of a frontispiece executed for the Alawi sultan Muhammad III (rég. 1757-1794).2 In fact, there is a general resemblance between the illumination of cat.9 and that of a series of manuscripts in the Royal Library in Rabat. These all contain works written by Muhammad III, and two are dated 1784 and 1787.3

The illumination on the opening and closing pages of cat.9 is completed by motifs that extend into the outer margins. There is a lobed device at each corner, and a roundel on a long 'stalk' half-way down the page. They are all filled with gold arabesques on a natural ground set off with red dots. On the first pages of text (part 1, folios 2b-3a) this arrangement was reversed: there is a lobed device in the centre, with a roundel above and below. In this case the arabesques, executed in gold and blue, are on a red ground. The first two surah headings are grouped at the top and bottom of folio 2b. Written in the Maghribi version of thuluth, they are set in elegant illuminated panels. Similar panels occur at the beginning of the second, third and fourth quarters of the text, where they contain the headings of surahs vii, xix, xxxvii and at the end of each volume, where they contain a short prayer.

Roundels containing gold arabesques on a natural ground accompany the other surah headings, which are in gold Kufic. The other marginalia consist of the words rub' ('quarter') and ni‘f ('half') in gold Kufic, marking fractions of each birah, and roundels containing the word bi‘ah in gold Kufic on a red ground. These last are accompanied in the body of the text by a triple-dot motif in gold set off with red and blue dots, but there are no verse markers.

The text was written in an elegant Maghribi script, with the words Allah and Muhammad in gold throughout. It is made even brighter by the colour coding of the vowel and other signs, and by the introduction of a frame of coloured rules around the text area.
10
Single-volume
Monaco, probably

305 folios, 11.3 x 11 cm
to the page
Material: A smooth, cream
machine-made paper
Textarea: 7.7 x 6.8 cm
Script: The main text is
Maghribi hand; surahs
black; gold, the rest in black
Allah (and wu-l-lah), 8
red or blue; the vowels
hamza as yellow red
and wa-aa, chaddah-
surah headings and
Maghribi diacriticals, in green
prayer on folio 191a
Illumination: Extensive
on folios 1b–32; text:
black and blue roles;
for each eighth of a
of surahs vii, xvi, xxi,
cluding prayer on folio
illuminated panels; 36
mers marking surah divisions and sajdahs
Bibliography: Contemporary
Acquisition no. 02343.1

1. Shulman 1897, see
p. 69 (pl. 132).
2. Chester Beatty Lib
James 1881, nos. 21, 17.
3. Cairo National Lib
Tawwuf 1606; Mor.
4. For a signed speci-
of this family, see, for
National Library, Ta-
al-Amidiyyah 1861,
dated art 1213 (5017)
1954, no. 10. Cf. also
1954, nos. 22–36. Of
the family appear to
Tomic, see Chabbi.!
Single-volume Qur’an
Morocco, probably Fez, 19th century

This Qur’an bears witness to the remarkable florescence of manuscript production in Morocco in the 18th and 19th century, under the patronage of the ‘Alawi sultans. Many of the examples in the Royal Library, Rabat, were published by Sijelassi,1 while other, particularly fine specimens are a copy of the Dalal’al-khayrat in Dublin, which has no less than 60 illuminated pages,2 and another in the National Library, Cairo, dated 1871.3 This style of manuscript production is associated with the Awlad al-Hilu who worked at Fez in the 18th and 19th centuries.4

The opening pages (folios 1b–2a) have an illuminated panel of the same size and shape as the text area in the rest of the manuscript, with complex extensions into the outer margins. The two panels each have a central rounded from which the rest of the composition radiates. In addition to gold, the colours used were yellow, blue, red, orange, black and white. The roundel on the right contains the text of surah 11, with the title and basmalah worked into the orange and blue cells above. The roundel on the left contains the heading of surah 11. The headings of surahs vii, xix, xxxviii and concluding prayer on folio 303 are in white thulth illumination. Extensive decoration on folios 1b–2a: text frames of gold, black and blue rules; markers in text for each eighth of a bighi; headings of surahs vii, xix, xxxviii and concluding prayer on folio 303 are set in illuminated panels; marginal ornaments marking surah headings, bighi divisions and sajadahs.

Binding Contemporary
Accesion no. Q01345

1. Sijelassi 1987; see, for example, p.57 (ex. 174).
2. Chester Beatty Library, ms. 1499;
3. Cairo National Library, ms.
Tassawwuf 1606; Moutin 1905, pl. 49.
4. For a signed specimen of the work of this family, see, for example,
National Library, Tunis, ms.
al-Ahmadiyyah 621/107/73, which is
dated 1213 (AD 1798); Chabouh
1989, no. 10. Cf. also Chabouh
1989, nos. 14–16. Other members of
the family appear to have worked in
Tunis; see Chabouh 1989, no.8.
North Africa. The maintenance of a tradition

11
Single-volume Qur'an
Morocco, 19th century

349 folios, 11.2 x 10.7 cm, with 13 lines to the page
Material A smooth, cream European machine-made paper, unburnished
Text area 8.1 x 6.3 cm
Script The main text is in a reduced form of Maghribi, in black, with the vowels in red, hamzah as red and green dots, and sukun, shaddah etc., in blue; surah headings and concluding prayer on folio 348a in Maghribi shadd; marginalia in a minute script, in blue
Illustration Illuminated panels containing the titles of surahs i, vii, xii, xxxvi, text frames of red and blue rules; simple markers in text for each eighth of a fitch and each sajdah
Binding Contemporary
Accession no. Q09175

Cat. 11, which was written in a small, neat hand, is very similar to cat. 10, although it is not as sumptuous. The manuscript begins with a one-line prayer, which is followed by the heading of surah 1. This is set in an illuminated panel, with a roundel in the margin beside it. The same composition occurs at the beginning of each quarter of the text.

The binding, too, is very similar to that of cat. 10, although the doublures are mostly plain, except for small floral motifs in the corners and a single rope border, all worked in gold.

12
Single-volume Qur'an
Ottoman North Africa, 19th century

469 folios, 23.6 x 16.7 cm, with 14 lines to the page
Material A smooth, cream to grey European machine-made paper, barely burnished; laid lines are cross-hatched, and chain lines are arranged at intervals of 2.6 cm
Text area 17 x 11 cm
Script The main text in Maghribi, written in black, with the vowels, shaddah and sukun in red, hamzah as yellow and green dots, and reading marks in blue; surah headings and marginalia in a script resembling Maghribi shadd; in red
Illustration Extensive decoration on folios 1b–2a; decorative frames around the text and the headings of surahs vii, xii on folios 114a, 213b; text frames of two red rules; markers in text for each quarter-dash; surah headings; marginal ornaments marking text divisions and sajadahs
Binding Contemporary
Accession no. Q072465

The text of this Qur'an is presented in the same way as in the Moroccan examples published above, except for the layout of folios 1b–2a, where both surah headings are arranged at the top of each page, within illuminated head-pieces. This composition seems to have been borrowed from 18th- and 19th-century Ottoman Qur'an production. The illumination, executed in a sketchy but attractive style in red, yellow, blue and green, seems to have been painted directly onto the paper, without any preliminary drawing. The surah headings are accompanied by decoration in the same style and colours, but this stops after surah xxxvi.

The binding is in red morocco with blind-tooled decoration, of which a central medallion with pendants is the main feature. On the fore-edge section of the flap there is a cartouche containing verse 79 from the surah al-Waqi'a (120), written in shadd. A quotation from the same verse is included in the head-pieces on folios 1b–2a.
13

Single-volume Qur’an

Egypt, probably Cairo, 26 Dhū ’l-Qa‘dah 1026 (25 November 1617)

Cat.13 was copied in Egypt in 1617, exactly a century after the Ottoman conquest. For much of that period manuscripts continued to be produced in the Mamluk style, although their decoration became increasingly hybrid, due to the adoption of many elements derived from 15th-century Iranian styles. The illumination of cat.12, however, does not derive from these precedents but must have been based on a 16th-century Iranian model from a centre other than Shiraz, such as Tabriz, Qazvin, Isfahan or even Baghdad.7

The illumination of cat.13 is concentrated almost entirely on the opening pages of text and consists principally of panels with blue, gold and black grounds overlaid with polychrome floral motifs arranged in chains or on spiralling scrolls. The use of grounds of three colours sets this example apart from Ottoman work of the period, in which blue and gold only were used, as does the lack of a border around the composition. The text on the opening pages is arranged in seven lines and written in a combination of naskh (lines 1–3, 5–7) and muhaqqaq (line 4). The combination of lines in a larger muhaqqaq and a smaller naskh base and the presentation of the text within a series of ruled compartments are features of the manuscript as a whole and were probably based on the same 16th-century model as the illumination.

This type of layout was particularly popular in 15th- and 16th-century Iran,8 and the fashion is found in Mamluk Qur’ans from the early 16th century,9 and in some spectacular 16th-century Ottoman examples.10 By the 17th century, however, it had fallen out of favour in major centres of Qur’an production such as Istanbul and Isfahan and survived only in secondary centres in India (see cat.61 and 62) and, it seems, in Cairo.

The copyist of cat.12 was Muhammad ibn Khidr, who described himself, in sub-standard Ottoman Turkish, as muqatt’a-‘i-riqaq bi-diyar-i Mysr. This appears to mean, ‘who is charged with the tax farm on foodstuffs in the lands of Egypt’, and Muhammad ibn Khidr must have been either a tax farmer or an official who supervised the farm on behalf of the state. Muhammad ibn Khidr was clearly a competent scribe, but his work in muhaqqaq in this manuscript was done with a nib that was too narrow to allow him to reproduce the full majesty of the original. We may therefore presume that he was unused to work on this scale. All in all, the manuscript has the air of a one-off produced by a man who was not a professional Qur’anic calligrapher and who was attempting to imitate a magnificent product of another land and another century.11

The material placed after the Qur’anic text, which ends on folio 320a, also suggests that the scribe based his work on a Safavid model, for, after a short prayer and the colophon on folio 320b, there is a falsāmah, a work explaining how to use the Qur’an for divination, on folio 321a–b. Such an appendix is a common feature of Iranian Qur’ans but is unusual in Ottoman examples.

An early owner of cat.12 was a man called Muhammad Subrah, whose oval seal is dated AH 1053 (AD 1643–4). Much later, on 9 Rabi‘ al-Thani 1243 (30 October 1827), the manuscript was made waqf by al-Shaykh Hamid Efendi ibn al-Shaykh Ahmad Efendi ibn al-Shaykh ‘Ubayd al-‘Attar. According to the inscriptions on folios 1b, 2a and 4a, Shaykh Hamid carried out this pious act for the soul of his unmarried daughter Fatimah, who had died in the plague of AH 1242 (AD 1826–7).
The Levant in the 17th century

14
Single-volume Qur’an
 Probably Syria, AH 1268 (AD 1657–8)

This manuscript, which was written in a clear naskh hand by a scribe who is otherwise unknown, illustrates the survival into the 17th century of a pre-Ottoman tradition of book production, for it has many of the features of a Mamluk manuscript, such as the lack of a ruled frame around the text. A Syrian, rather than an Egyptian, provenance seems likely, as the manuscript shares a number of features with 18th- and 19th-century Qur’ans from Syria, including the use of red for the surah headings, which lack a surrounding panel; the transformation of the final ‘ayn marbūţah in those headings into a knot; and the use of an arrangement of three red ‘inverted commas’ to punctuate verses.

The text commences with two pages (folios 1b–2a) illuminated in a rather debased revival of a Mamluk style of the 14th century; it may be compared, for example, with the decoration of a Qur’an in the Khalili Collection produced in Damascus circa 1330–40.

The margins of the manuscript contain a full set of alternative readings, noted in red naskh, and each is accompanied by a letter or series of letters in black that indicate which of the seven authorities accepted by Ibn Mujahid of Baghdad (d. AD 936) reported the reading in question. In explanation of these notations another hand has added an appendix after the Qur’anic text, on folios 207b–209a, which ends with a key presented in tabular form.

The manuscript bears a number of impressions of a poorly engraved late Ottoman seal, and on folio 12 the words Hamda’un takafti (‘wisegf of Hamda’) have been inscribed in Turkish.
كما هو الحال في الجملة السابقة، فإن الآية الثالثة من سورة البقرة هي:

"فَأَمَرَيْهَا الْمُنَاضِجَةُ أَنْ يَبُرُّواْ مَا أَلْصَاتُواْ مِنْ حِبَّةٍ مِّنْهَا إِلَّآ إِلَىٰ أَيُّهُمْ نَفْسُهُ وَيَلْهَبُواْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيَيْهِمْ وَيَهْبُواْ إِلَىٰ قَبْطُوسَةَ أَحَدَهُمْ مِنْ أَحْمَامٍ إِلَىٰ أَحْمَامٍ إِلَىٰ ذَلِكَ يُبِينُهَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ"
Istanbul and its scribal diaspora.
The calligraphers of Müstakim-zade

by Tim Stanley

Ottoman history after 1620 was long regarded as a period of decline, a long descent from the glories of the 16th century to the empire’s collapse during the First World War. This generalization can be regarded with scepticism, not least because the ‘decline’ took so long. The Ottoman empire was one of the longest-lived of Islamic states, and its very longevity indicates that its rulers were able to adapt themselves successfully to the enormous changes that occurred over the empire’s 600-year history. Nevertheless, the conditions that prevailed after 1600 were very different to those current in the previous century, and this was reflected in artistic production, including that of fine Qur’an manuscripts. The type of Qur’an copied in Istanbul and elsewhere in the 17th and 18th centuries can be judged from the examples in the Khalil Collection; and through them we can observe the revival of production after a period of crisis in the early 17th century. This transition—from crisis to revival—can also be traced in the literary sources of the period devoted to calligraphy. The most important of these was the Tuhfat-i khattâtîn (‘The pick of calligraphers’) of Müstakim-zade Süleyman Sa’deddin Efendi (d.1788). In this book Müstakim-zade provided biographies of all the most important calligraphers known to him through other works and through his own experience. He did not confine his researches to the Ottoman Turkish tradition, and his work is also a summation of writing on calligraphy in the Arab lands and Iran. But the Tuhfat is especially valuable for the history of Ottoman calligraphy between 1600 and AH 1152 (AD 1739–8), when the work was completed. The succession of Sultan Selim III one year later, in AH 1163 (AD 1748) ushered in a new age, expressed in the abandonment of classical models in Qur’an illumination and the belated flowering of the ‘Baroque’ style.

Decline or change?
The notion of decline was first formulated by the Ottomans themselves in the later 16th century. According to the celebrated man of letters Mustafa Âli (d.1600), for example, the decline had come about because the government had strayed from the standards set earlier in the century. But Âli and other Ottoman sources for the decline theory are works of polemic disguised as traditional advice-literature. They were designed to advertise the superiority of one set of policies over another, and they should not be judged as dispassionate observations on contemporary events. It should be borne in mind, too, that the authors of these tracts were not critical of the system as a whole, since they wished to control it, not destroy it. They were therefore confined to accusing their political enemies of unwarranted changes to the imperial system. This essentially conservative discourse about who was and who was not true to the Ottoman tradition became typical of Ottoman culture in the 17th century, and, as we shall see, it is reflected in metropolitan Qur’an production of the period, which remained unquestioningly loyal to certain 16th-century models.

In the late 16th century the Ottoman imperial system was in fact reaching the climax of a series of changes that were the inevitable result of its expansion in the first half of the 16th century. The wealth acquired during these conquests funded patronage of the arts on a spectacular scale, as in the architectural projects undertaken by Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent and his immediate successors, and in the magnificent Qur’an manuscripts prepared for them by Ahmed Kasıhhâri (d.1556) and his adopted son, Hasan Çelebi (d. after 1596). Towards the end of the 16th century, however, the imperial system entered a period of crisis, marked, for example, by the collapse in the value of the silver akçe, the Ottoman unit of account, and the so-called Celali revolts in Anatolia. The end of the boom shook the system of government severely, and, although the empire did eventually recover from this crisis, when it did so the nature of that system, and consequently the pattern of patronage, had changed for good. The sultan was now enclosed by an immense household in which other figures, such as the sultan’s mother, known as the Valide Sultan, and the chief eunuch of the harem, who was entitled the Agha of the Abode of Felicity, often played a more important role than the sultan himself. Even those sultans who were able to re-establish their personal authority had much less freedom of action than their predecessors, as they had to manipulate various factional interests in order to stay in power. As a consequence they were no longer in a position to direct the resources available to the state towards major
projects of their own. Harking after the great days of the 16th century remained a common preoccupation, and it had its effect on the arts, but it could not alter the underlying factors that determined the character of the empire.

Patronage restrained

The tradition of the sultan's personal patronage on the grand scale survived into the 17th century, as the mosque complex of Sultan Ahmed I (reg.1603–1617) in Istanbul and the illustrated manuscripts of Ahmed's son Osman II (reg.1618–1622) testify. As early as the reign of Sultan Murad III (1578–1595), however, Mustafa Ağa had been critical of the vast sums spent on the imperial household, and his examples included the production of an illustrated copy of one of his own works, the Nusrat-namâ, or 'Book of Victory'. The trappings of sultanic power, which included the commissioning of illustrated manuscripts, were consuming vast resources; while the essence of that power was passing into other hands, which Mustafa Ağa considered unworthy. The successors of Osman II clearly had, or were allowed, much less money to spend on architecture and books. In celebration of his military victories Osman II's brother Murad IV erected palace buildings, and a limited number of illustrated manuscripts were produced for patrons in his circle, but this sultan established no great religious foundation.

One example of Murad's patronage of books is known from an anecdote related by Müstakim-zade. When the sultan resolved to conquer Baghdad, he sought to please 'certain pious souls' by summoning the calligrapher İmam Mehmed Efendi (see cat.17 below) and commanding him to write a copy of the Qur'an. But the calligrapher refused to accept the commission until the sultan had agreed his fee: "Set the price so that, God willing, the task may be completed with both the prayers and the reward worthy of the honour you have bestowed upon me." The Sultan of the Age was astonished. "How much do you want?", he asked. "I cannot write it for less than a thousand piastres", came the firm reply. When the sultan offered to pay him a thousand gold ducats 'below the line' (i.e. in addition to any account he might submit), the calligrapher was, of course, extremely pleased and began work. On Murad's return from the conquest of Baghdad (he landed in Istanbul on 28 June 1639), İmam Mehmed Efendi brought the Qur'an to court, and the sultan examined it with care, noting that the calligraphy was better at the end than at the beginning. When quizzed on this, İmam Mehmed declared that, 'the beginning was written while I was worried about the conquest of Baghdad, and the end was written while I was picturing the joy occasioned by the conquest and the rejoicing that would accompany your arrival.' For this nimble reply he received another thousand ducats as a gift from the sultan, which prompted Müstakim-zade to quote the hemistich, 'A quip can be worth a thousand dinars.' The story throws an unflattering light on the quality of the work prepared for Murad, and İmam Mehmed's attitude to the sultan seems to have been far from obliging. It may also reflect the political situation at the time. In 1632, soon after he had assumed personal rule of the empire, Murad was nearly toppled by a prolonged army mutiny, and he turned for support to a number of factions within the population of the capital. These included a group of puritan clerics known as the Kadızade, the followers of Mehmed Bırgevi and his pupil Kadızade Mehmed Efendi, and the Kadızade may well have been the 'pious souls' whom Murad sought to please in commissioning the Qur'an from İmam Mehmed.

The patronage of Murad's successors followed much the same model: they were modest patrons of the private arts associated with the role of sultan, but their public works were characterized more by restoration and repair than by novel undertakings. This was partly the result of the decrease in the personal power of the sultan, but it also reflected a wider change in the circumstances of the empire. By the beginning of the 17th century the Ottoman state had reached the limits of its potential as an aggressive power and had therefore ceased to expand significantly – and to generate plunder, which had largely funded the major artistic enterprises of the 16th century. The empire was therefore thrown back on its own resources, which were necessarily devoted more to the sustenance of existing institutions than to the creation of new ones. In earlier periods royal patronage had had a determining effect on the character of Ottoman art, so that changes in taste generated within the court were eventually reflected...
in production for a wider market, at least in Istanbul and the Ottoman heartlands. The limitations now placed on that patronage had a notable effect on production. Change for its own sake stopped, and any change that did occur was evolutionary. These circumstances could never allow the creation of work of the outstanding quality that had been seen in the 16th century, and so the period after 1600 may indeed be seen as a period of artistic decline. Yet the artistic output of the 17th century does have an identity of its own. It may be called traditionalist in that it perpetuated forms developed in an earlier age, but this does not necessarily tell the whole story, as an examination of the 17th-century Ottoman Qur’ans in the Khalili Collection shows.

**Qur’ān production in the 17th century**

The character of 17th-century Ottoman Qur’ans was marked as much by selection as traditionalism. In the 16th century there had been considerable variety in Qur’ān production, both in terms of the style of calligraphy, illumination and binding and of the presentation of the text and the programme of decoration. In the following century, however, this variety became greatly restricted. Consequently, most fine copies from this period are of the same general type, while other possible models were set aside. Such selectivity can be seen in Ottoman art in previous periods, but the loss of some types had been compensated for by the creation of others, usually by means of imperial patronage. As a result variety had never been lost. Now that imperial patronage had receded, a variety of themes was replaced by variations on a single theme – at least in Qur’āns produced by scribes resident in Istanbul or trained there (for provincial work, see cat.13, 14 above). This formula is exemplified by seven 17th-century Ottoman Qur’āns in the Khalili Collection (cat. 17–21, 23, 24 below). These manuscripts are medium-sized single-volume Qur’āns, suitable for personal use, while other pieces of the same period in the Collection are one volume from a medium-format Qur’ān in 30 parts copied by Hafiz Osman in 1687–8 (cat.22), and, if the date in the colophon is correct, a large-format single-volume copy produced by an illuminator called Seyyid Abdullah in 1694 (cat.25).

In all seven medium-format, single-volume examples the main text was written in the naskh script, in the style attributed to the calligrapher Seyh Hamdullah, a contemporary of Sultan Bayezid II (reg.1481–1512), while surah headings and other supplementary inscriptions were marked as such by being written in the riqa’ script, usually in a contrasting colour. The main text was always presented in a simple, straightforward manner, and never in the more complex layouts employing different sizes and styles of script, seen, for example, in the superb Qur’ān written by Ahmed Karahisi in AH 935 (AD 1534–7) in a combination of the naskh and muhaqqaq styles, and in cat.13 above. All seven 17th-century examples under consideration have extensive illumination, and this decoration follows a more or less consistent programme, which is similar to that found in fine 16th-century Qur’āns by Seyh Hamdullah and his school. The 17th-century programme does not, however, include the purely decorative double-page frontispieces that occur in the best examples of 16th-century work.

On every page the text is set within a frame, which generally consists of a wider gold rule outlined with thin single or double black rules, often accompanied by an outer rule in red or blue; and it is punctuated with illuminated verse markers, either in the form of whorls, or discs divided into six segments. The surah headings were set in plain gold panels (cat.18), in plain gold panels with a coloured border (cat.24), or in more elaborate arrangements of a central cartouche and small areas of fragmentary floral scrollwork (cat.17, 19–21, 23). In all but two copies (cat.17, 19) the margins are set with ornamental devices. A few of these show the points in the text where the reader has to make a sājādah, or prostration, while most mark the division of the Qur’anic text into 30, 60 and 120 parts, allowing a believer to read an equal amount of text at regular intervals. The absence of these marginal devices from cat.17 and 19, which date from 1642–41 and 1656 respectively, shows that they were not a standard element of Ottoman Qur’āns in the mid-17th century, although it is clear that they became standard at a later date. What is more, the devices in cat.18, which dates from 1645–4, are in a decorative style unrelated to the plain gold settings for the surah headings, and this raises the possibility that these devices are later additions.
In the absence of double-page frontispieces, the most extensive decoration was the illuminated setting for the first two pages of text (usually folios 1b and 2a). On these pages the text areas were reduced in order to accommodate the first surah on the right-hand page, and they form the central compartments in a symmetrical decorative composition. There is a broad horizontal panel above and below each central compartment, and a narrow vertical panel on either side, and the whole arrangement is usually surrounded by a continuous broad frame with a lobed outline. In cat.17, however, it has a straight outline, and in cat.18 the frame was replaced by a pair of ‘crests’ of the type also found on the first page of text in cat.22 and in other 20-part Qur’ans. The stylistic idiom of this ornament, which was dominated by gold or blue-and-gold parti-coloured grounds overlaid with diminutive, spiralling floral scrolls, also dates from the reign of Bayezid II, when it was imported from the scriptoria of western Iran by illuminators who had previously worked for Qaraqoyunlu and Aqqoyunlu patrons. The type of binding employed was derived from the same source in the same reign (see cat.15). It has areas of plain leather contrasting with recessed areas that have ornament

worked in relief and gilded. This style of Qur’an flourished during the 16th century, and on occasion examples of great refinement were produced. In the 17th century, as we have seen, it provided the single theme on which the variations in Qur’an production were based, and this situation continued in the 18th century. There is no more eloquent evidence of its exclusivity in the period after 1650 than cat.25 below, which is notable principally for its unusually large format. In the past, Qur’ans of this size, which were, of course, much more expensive to produce, had been prepared by artists capable of generating layouts and designs that fitted the dimensions of a particular manuscript, and of executing work of commensurate quality. In this example, however, the illuminator responsible for its production merely increased the size of the various elements of a standard medium-format Qur’an of the period, so that it resembles a blown-up photograph of a copy of normal size. The quality of execution, too, is no better than a standard production.
Single-volume Qur'an

This Qur'an is a composite manuscript. The exquisite binding and the fine illumination on folios 12–21 are work of the late 17th or the early 18th century, while the remainder of the text block, written in a small naskh hand, must date from the 18th century at the earliest, judging by the 15-line format and the way that each page ends with a complete verse. At this point, too, the central panels in the illumination on folios 15–17 were overpainted with silver and inscribed in the same hand as the rest of the Qur'an, but in a smaller size.

The illumination of the opening pages is in the style found in manuscripts produced for Bayezid II (reg. 1481–1512), such as a Qur'an copied by Şeyh Hamdullah in 1499 and still kept in the Topkapi Palace. This style, developed from that current in Iran under the Turcoman dynasties of the 15th century and marked in particular by the use of diminutive floral scrolls over gold or blue-and-gold grounds, was the almost exclusive model for Ottoman Qur'an illumination until the emergence of a Europeanizing trend in the 18th century. A late version of the traditional style is seen in the surah headings and marginal ornaments of cat. 15, while the new, Europeanizing style is represented by the decoration on folio 502a, which consists of a bunch of flowers tied by a cord, set on a plain ground within a frame of rules.

The Bayezid II binding of this manuscript is in something close to its original condition, despite at least one renovation. The covers are of brown morocco and are decorated with a centre-and-corner composition; the recessed elements were pressure-moulded with a design of rotating floral scrollwork and then gilded. The doublures have a field of red morocco, with the centre-pieces cut out, gilded and filled with an arabesque design in leather filigree painted green. During a later renovation the leaves of brown leather were added; they are decorated in gold with centre-piece motifs that complement those on the doublures.
The illumination on the remainder of the copy at the earliest, complete verse. As are overpainted in a smaller size.

 Scripts produced for Iran in 1499 and still used under the use of diminutive models for the 19th century and marginal notes by the decoration of a plain ground

 Original condition, decorated with a gilt end in leather filigree and red morocco, added; they are in the doublures.
The triumph of the Şeyh

The processes that gave rise to the traditional and selective character of 17th-century Qur’an production can be examined in more detail in the case of naskh, the main type of script employed. This writing style was one of the group of six calligraphic modes known as the ‘Six Pens’. All six modes had been practised by Şeyh Hamdullah,13 but in general 17th- and 18th-century calligraphers of his school were appreciated for their work in just two, thuluth and naskh – no doubt another example of the selectivity referred to above. It is usual to present the history of Ottoman thuluth and naskh calligraphy as a seamless progression from Şeyh Hamdullah down to the scribes of the first half of the 20th century, such as Hasan Riza (1849–1920) or Ahmed Kamil (1861–1941). This is, though, an oversimplification, since interest in the Six Pens seems to have declined by the end of the 16th century, perhaps as a corollary of the crisis undergone by the Ottoman state at this time.

The main evidence for this comes from 17th- and 18th-century literary sources concerned with calligraphy, principally the Tuhfat-i khattatinit of Müstakim-zade and the works of two predecessors, the Gülzar-i cetab (The rose-garden of proper conduct) of Neşes-zade Ibrahim Efendi (d.1650) and the Da'wbat al-khtbat (Genealogy of the scribes) of Suyolu-zade Mehmed Necib (d.1758). Suyolu-zade and Müstakim-zade’s entries on 17th-century calligraphers indicate that just one individual, Hasan Üsküdarî, was responsible for the transmission of the definitive form of Ottoman naskh calligraphy until his death in AH 1023 (AD 1614–15), thereby ensuring the eventual triumph of the school of Şeyh Hamdullah.

Hasan’s importance is not dependent on the quality of his work, which receives no special praise from Suyolu-zade and Müstakim-zade.13 It rests instead on the fact that two of his pupils, Halid Erzurumî and Imam Mehmed Efendi, who died in AH 1042 (AD 1632–3) and AH 1052 (AD 1642–3) respectively, trained all the great naskh scribes active in Istanbul in the mid-century, when there was clearly a revival of interest in the subject. One of Suyolu-zade’s most revealing comments concerns Derviş Ali, the Elder, who copied cat. 2 below and died in AH 1084 (AD 1673–4): ‘He learned the Six Pens from Halid Efendi [sic Erzurumî] and met and spoke with a number of masters, profiting thereby, and on this account he earned the right to be called “the second founder”. Indeed, this person brought to light the manner of Şeyh Hamdullah at a time when it was all but forgotten.’14 Suyolu-zade defined Derviş Ali as ‘a calligrapher of the reign of Murad IV’, and this sultan may have played some part in the revival of the Six Pens. Murad was, however, a devotee of the hand known as ta’līq by the Ottomans and as nasta’līq elsewhere, which was the one main ‘art’ script outside the Six Pens tradition.

The sultan’s interest in calligraphy in general is indicated by Neşes-zade’s dedication to him of the Gülzar-i cetab.15 This work contains a great deal of technical information on the calligrapher’s craft, which is prefaced by two series of biographical entries (tablâqat), one series covering specialists in the Six Pens,16 the other devoted to the principal masters of nasta’līq. In concluding the latter series Neşes-zade excused himself from naming any further scribes by claiming that, ‘qualified calligraphers in the nasta’līq script are numerous in the extreme, unlike true masters of the Six Pens, who are few and far between.’17 A sense of crisis in naskh calligraphy is also conveyed by the fact that Neşes-zade offered no information on contemporary naskh scribes, not even on Hasan Üsküdarî, who was seen as so important in retrospect. Instead, he ended the series devoted to the Six Pens with a notice on his own master, Demirci-kulu Yusuf Efendi, who died in AH 1018 (AD 1609–10).18 The career of Yusuf Efendi well illustrates the fate of schools of naskh calligraphy other than that of Şeyh Hamdullah in the 17th century. According to Neşes-zade, Yusuf first studied
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with Abdullah Kurni, a former pupil of the Şeyh's grandson Derviş Mehmed Efendi, but he then transferred his allegiance to the school of Ahmed Karahisari, the other leading branch of Ottoman naskh. He eventually constructed an eclectic repertory of his own by adopting Ahmed Karahisari's form of tubah, by modelling his naskh hand on that of Celalzade Muhyiddin of Amasya, a contemporary, and, relative, of Şeyh Hamdullah, and by taking instruction in the Ottoman chancery hand (dream) from Taci Bey-zade Mehmed Celebi. From the 15th-century sources we discover that Yusuf had a number of pupils, of whom Nefes-zade seems to have been the most eminent - Şuyolcu-zade claimed he surpassed both his master and his contemporaries. But none of these had pupils of note, and even Nefes-zade's own son, the celebrated calligrapher Nefes-zade Ismail Efendi (d. AH 1306/AD 1889-90), is described as a pupil of Halid Erzurumi, a bearer of the tradition founded by Şeyh Hamdullah.

Revisitation and Ahmed III

The revival in naskh calligraphy that can be detected during the mid-17th century reached its peak in the last generation of scribes to flourish in the 17th century, who included Hafiz Osman, one of the most distinguished calligraphers in Ottoman history. Hafiz Osman, who was responsible for cat. 22 below, died in AH 1112 (AD 1698-9), and towards the end of his life he gave instruction to Princes Mustafa and Ahmed, the sons of Mehmed IV, and was appointed calligraphy tutor to the elder prince after his accession as Sultan Mustafa II in 1691. These two princes, and all later scions of the Ottoman dynasty, were taught to write a good hand as part of their formal education, which commenced when they reached the age of seven. The beginning of this education, and entry into the world of adults, was marked by special celebrations on the occasion of the young prince's first reading lesson, known as the bed-i besmele, 'commencement of the hsmalhah'. Such festivities were first recorded as occurring when the future Sultan Ahmed III (reg.1703-1730) reached the appropriate age of seven in 1686, and it has been suggested that they were instigated by Feyzullah Efendi, who was tutor to Prince Mustafa before becoming chief mufti in 1671. They may also have owed something to the influence of the Köprülı viziers, not least because Hafiz Osman was attached to the household of Köprülı-zade Mustafa Paşa (d.1694) from a young age. The connection is further illustrated by the fact that Mustafa Paşa's elder brother Ahmed Paşa (d.1676) had been a pupil of Hafiz Osman's teacher Derviş Ali (see cat.18). Indeed, although the Ottoman sources studied here make much of the role of certain sultans in promoting calligraphy, it is notable that the revival of this art form in the second half of the 17th century coincided with the period when members of the Köprülı family held the office of grand vizier, and their role may have been understated. It may be significant that the Köprülıs were the chief residents of Istanbul, the city where the revival took place, at a time when the sultan preferred to live in Edirne, and that the re-establishment of Istanbul as the primary imperial residence, under Mustafa III and Ahmed III, is precisely the point at which the sultan begins to be portrayed as an active figure in the history of calligraphy.

Ahmed III's training as a prince seems to have given him a great taste for calligraphy, which he practised in several different forms, and in the arts of the book in general: as noted above, his patronage returned the quality of manuscript production to a level that had not been seen for a century. His own work included four copies of the Qur'an, now lost, and a number of monumental inscriptions, as well as album pieces. In one album preserved in the Topkapı Palace Library there is a series of ten compositions in the shape of an Ottoman jegbe, while two more contain large-format (sand) inscriptions; in one the inscriptions are in tubah, and in the second they are in muhafiq, another of the Six Pens. The
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decoration of these albums, and of other calligraphic specimens by members of the sultan’s circle, is of the utmost refinement. It combines traditional Ottoman elements with European motifs, and it was executed in a new range of colours and with a Europeanizing use of modelling.\textsuperscript{26} This new court style did not, however, usurp the classical Ottoman manner in Qur’ān illumination, and the passage from the 17th to the 18th century is indicated only by minor changes, such as the disappearance of the framing bands from the side panels on the opening pages of text (see cat.16, for example). The quality of 18th-century Qur’ān decoration is often high, though, and the brightness of the gold and the precision of the detail gives it a vitality often lacking in 17th-century examples. To this extent at least it reflects the renewed elan of book production associated with Ahmed III.

At the end of his muḥaqqaq album Ahmed III recorded that he had modelled his work directly on that of Şeyh Handullah,\textsuperscript{27} and in this he was following his first calligraphy teacher, Hafız Osman, for, according to Suyoluçu-zade, Osman devoted all his efforts to imitation of the Şeyh. As a consequence, he was able to “revive the šeyh’s style and embellish it.”\textsuperscript{28} This observation is confirmed by cat.11 below, for Hafız Osman followed the colophon on folio 172 by the statement, muqilla ‘an kbajż Handallal al-Shaykh rahimahu Allâh, that is, “it was copied after the hand of Şeyh Handullah – May God have mercy upon him!” The practice of \textit{naskh}, that is, reproducing a manuscript or a composition by one’s master or by an outstanding calligrapher of the past, was a long and honourable tradition,\textsuperscript{29} and it seems to have been particularly important in the 17th century. As there had been such a decline in \textit{naskh} calligraphy in the earlier part of the century, those such as Derviş Ali and Hafız Osman who sought to restore it to its pristine state used \textit{naskh} as one means to this end: it gave them direct contact with Şeyh Handullah’s own exquisite hand and allowed them to rid their personal styles of any subsequent distortions.

\textit{Naskh} appears to have played a crucial part in the career of one mid-century calligrapher, Mahmud of Tophane (d. \textit{circa} 1670).\textsuperscript{30} According to Müstakim-zade, as a young man the future calligrapher held the position of \textit{ser-zâkînâs} (“chief repeiter of litanies”) at the dervish lodge of Şeyh Hasan of Cihangir in Istanbul. After taking part in the rites his lodge conducted on the Laylat al-Qadr one year,\textsuperscript{31} Mahmud had a vision of the divine essence,\textsuperscript{32} by which he was inspired to take up the study of \textit{tulub} and \textit{naskh} in the manner of Şeyh Handullah (with Imam Mehmed Efendi) and \textit{nasta’lq} in the style of Mir Imdad (with Derviş Abdi Efendi). He then entered service in the Enderun, the inner sanctum of the imperial palace. There he gained access to a Qur’ān manuscript in the hand of Şeyh Handullah that was kept in the Imperial Treasury and made a facsimile copy of it. Mahmud presented the facsimile to Sultan Mehmed IV, who appointed him his confidential secretary (\textit{kâtip al-sîr}) on the strength of the skill he had shown. Mahmud’s progression from Tulub to a producer of facsimiles is significant, for Müstakim-zade described Mahmud as copying Şeyh Handullah in a spirit of unwavering conformity to his model \textit{naskh}, and \textit{naskh} was also used to describe the blind and implicit obedience to and imitation of one’s master that allowed a Sufi to attain enlightenment.

In his entries on Ahmed III and the masters of his reign Müstakim-zade related a number of anecdotes that illustrate the cultivation of calligraphy at Ahmed’s court. On one occasion in \textit{AH 1136} (AD 1723–4), we are told, the sultan summoned a group of eminent scribes to the palace to join his circle of intimates in a calligraphic \textit{salon}. Those present included Hafız Osman’s most important student, Seyyid Abdullah of Yedikule (\textit{d.AH 1146/AD 1731–2}), and several of Abdullah’s own pupils, including Mehmed Rasim of Eğikaps (\textit{d.1756}) and Şeker-zade Seyyid Mehmed of Maraş (d.1755). Müstakim-zade quotes several of the odes composed by those present to commemorate the occasion, including an example by Ahmed Nedim (d.1730), the greatest poet of the period.\textsuperscript{33} His ode
celebrates the sultan's ability as a calligrapher, as in the distich, 'Those sublime lines you have traced with the nib of your pen—it is fitting that you should hang every one of them on the vault of heaven!' Another reads, 'If Prince Sunqur were alive, I would say to him, 'Look at this, then go and snap your pen in two!'" The reference is to the Timurid prince Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh (d.1435), who was a celebrated patron of the arts of the book and a calligrapher in his own right. The palace collections in Istanbul include a number of albums that contain work in his hand and pieces collected by him, and one page must have been the result of the same type of salon as that conducted by Ahmed I. It consists of the phrase "by the grace of God the sultan al-mas'um ('Because of gratitude benefactions continue') written in naskh script less than 18 times by the calligrapher Ahmad al-Rumi, by Baysunghur himself, and by other members of Baysunghur's circle. It is possible, then, that this album page or some similar piece inspired the sultan to hold his salon. Such antiquarianism has already been noted in connection with the 18th-century revival in bookbinder's lacquer, and it was also directed towards the work of Seyyid Handullah, which was avidly sought out, no matter how remote its location.

In another of his anecdotes Müstakim-zade tells us Ahmed II commissioned Şeker-zade Seyyid Mehmed, one of the participants at his calligraphic salon, to go to Medina to make a facsimile of a Qur'an by Seyyid Handullah preserved there. After performing the Hajj and executing his commission, Seyyid Mehmed returned to Istanbul after Ahmed had been driven from power (1 October 1730). He therefore presented his work, duly illuminated, to Ahmed's successor, Sultan Mahmud I. Thus it was that a Qur'an copied circa 1700 by the founder of the Ottoman naskh tradition and preserved in Medina, more than 2500 kilometres from Istanbul, came to inform the naskh revival in the Ottoman capital in the early 18th century. Suyulu-zade's account continues the story of Seyyid Mehmed a step further. He related that, after Mahmud I was presented with the Qur'an commissioned by Ahmed II, the sultan commissioned a Qur'an of his own, which was to be 'even more beautiful'. The Qur'an Seyyid Mehmed produced on this occasion, and completed in June/July 1733 (November–December 1733), is preserved in the Süleymaniye Library, where it was transferred from the mosque in Istanbul now known as the Yeni Cami. So fine is it that in 1919 (60/1874) Sultan Abdülmecid had a facsimile edition lithographed by the Ministry of Education press in Istanbul for presentation to various grandees. All the copies printed, including one now in the Khalil Collection (cat.16), were illuminated and bound in the manner of a Qur'an manuscript.

A literary tradition
Another of the participants in Ahmed II's calligraphic salon, as recorded by Müstakim-zade, was Suyulu-zade Mehmed Necib, the author of the Dərəwhat al-kuttät. In his introduction to the Dərəwhat Suyulu-zade acknowledged his debt to Nefes-zade's Gültər-i sərab, produced a century or more earlier. Noktar-zade Ismail Efendi, who was comptroller (mashër) to the chief white eunuch, the Ağa of the Gate of Felicity, urged Suyulu-zade to write a book on calligraphers living and deceased. Showing customary reluctance, Suyulu-zade replied, 'As you know, the scribe Nefes-zade Ibrahim Efendi wrote a work on this subject called the Gültər-i sərab. It meets your requirement.' Ismail Efendi answered that the Gültər was a valuable book, but it omitted the many calligraphers who had practised their art since Nefes-zade's day. Suyulu-zade accepted the point and began work on his biographical dictionary of calligraphers. In turn Müstakim-zade acknowledged his debt to both Nefes-zade and Suyulu-zade. In his entry on the latter, for example, he recorded that Suyulu-zade 'compiled a biographical dictionary of calligraphers called the Dərəwhat al-kuttät. The whole of it has been included in summary form in this Təsəqeb
This book is a lithographed facsimile of a celebrated Qur'an completed in Jumada’I-Ukha 1146 (November or December 1731) by Şeker-zade Seyyid Mehmed Efendi. The publication was commissioned by Sultan Abdulaziz in AH 1251 (AD 1874). From the Ministry of Education press in Istanbul to supply him with Qur'ans that could be presented as gifts. The result is of very high quality, and a very precise reproduction of the original, as can be seen by comparing folios 358b–359a of cat. 16 with the same pages in the original, illustrated by Uğur Derman. The quality of the production and the similarity to a manuscript are emphasized by the rich illumination and binding with which the book was furnished.

The identity of an early owner of this example is given in a note on folio 12, which reads, 'One of the gifts from God to his slave Abd al-Tayyib ibn 'Abdallah, muezzin of the Abode of the Caliphate, on 7 Rajab 1264. This Noble Qur’an was decorated by the illuminator 'Abdallah Dedeh ibn 'Ali in the year 1295.' This note raises as many questions as it answers, as 7 Rajab 1264 in the Hijri lunar calendar is equivalent to 9 June 1848, while AH 1295 is equivalent to AD 1878–79. It may be, though, that 'Abd al-Tayyib was using the Hijri solar calendar, in which 7 Rajab 1264 is equivalent to 22 April 1853, and that the second date is an error for AH 1295 (AD 1878).

The circumstances in which the original 18th-century Qur'an were produced are well-known from the accounts given by Sıyoculu-zade and Mısıtkam-zade (see p. 69). It was Seyyid Mehmed’s third Qur’an, as he himself recorded in the colophon (folio 342b). According to Sıyoculu-zade, the first was a facsimile copy of a Qur’an by Hafız Osman that was kept in the Imperial Treasury, while the second was a facsimile of a Qur’an by Şeyh Hamdüllah kept in the Tomb of the Prophet in Medina. The latter was commissioned by Ahmed II, but by the time that the calligrapher had returned Ahmed had been replaced by Mahmut I, who then instructed Seyyid Mehmed to write the third, which was to be even finer. In this case the calligrapher wrote it 'following in the footsteps of the Şeyh' (musaflaan aher al-Shaykh), according to the colophon (folio 341b).

Mısıtkam-zade supplied other details on the calligrapher’s life, reported on the authority of Seyyid Mehmed himself. The calligrapher’s father, Abdurrahman, had been a wealthy confectioner (şekerz) in the town of Manisa in western Anatolia, from which circumstance he had acquired the surname Şekerzi or Şeker-zade. Seyyid Mehmed went to Istanbul, where he trained in thuluth and nastāb calligraphy, first with Ibrahim Kur守护, then with the more celebrated Seyyid Abdullah of Yedikule, who was tutor in this subject at the imperial palace.

Seyyid Mehmed taught calligraphy and ‘was honoured, too, with the post of tutor to the Privy Garden’, that is, to the pages, known as baszans, who worked there. He lived in a house near the Ayasofya mosque and was buried near the grave of Şeyh Hamdüllah when he died in Jumada’I-Ul 1166 (March–April 1753). Mısıtkam-zade criticized him for his preoccupation with taqfiq, that is, reproducing his model in every detail, although ‘it is generally admitted that he had no equal among his contemporaries’.
on Jumada'1-Ukhra
and 1. The publica-
tion was presented as gifts,2
original, as can the original, illus-
tory to a manuscript
book was furnished.
10.2, which
4th, muezzin of
decorated by the
many questions as
June 1848, while
Seyyid was using
885, and that the
produced are
made (see p. 69). It
ion (folio 1422).
Hafiz Osman
of a Qur'an by
was commissioned
had been replaced
which was to be
Seyyid'
accredited on the authority
had been a wealthy
which circumstance
gent to Istanbul,
mi, then with
subject at the
post of tutor to
there.4 He lived
Seyyid Handullah
er criticized him
detail, although
of ours." Both works can, then, be seen as part of a literary tradition, and Müxtakim-zade's work in particular can be viewed as the culmination of that tradition. The first draft was begun in AH 1173 (AD 1759-60), a date yielded when the title is treated as a chronogram. This was two years after Suyuçoğlu-zade's death, and Müxtakim-zade was able to include a large number of contemporary scribes who flourished after Suyuçoğlu-zade's time or had escaped his notice. As noted above, Müxtakim-zade was also able to include many more calligraphers of the past through his use of a wide range of historical sources. It has to be said, too, that Müxtakim-zade's work is better arranged. Suyuçoğlu-zade's alphabetical order could be based on any part of a calligrapher's name, while Müxtakim-zade always used the given name (ism) and then arranged scribes with the same given name alphabetically according to the name of their father, if known.

Müxtakim-zade was born in Istanbul in 1719, into a family of 'ulama'. His grandfather, the Mehmed Müxtasim Efendi from whom he derived his surname, was qadi of Damascus and Edirne and died in 1712. and his father, Mehmed Emin Efendi (d.1750), was master of a madrasah in Istanbul. Both men were closely associated with the Syrian scholar 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi (d.1731), who was a sheikh of both the Qadri and the Naqshbandi fraternities. Müxtakim-zade, too, was deeply influenced by al-Nabulusi's teachings. His own master was Mehmed Emin of Tokat (d.1745), and through him Müxtakim-zade received initiation into the line of the famous Indian Naqshbandi sheikh Ahmad al-Sirhindî (d.1624), whose celebrated Persian letters Müxtakim-zade translated into Turkish in the 1770s. Müxtakim-zade also underwent the training required for entry into the upper echelons of the Ottoman 'ulama', but at the age of 32 he failed the examination that would have given him access to his chosen career. As a result he withdrew into a life of contemplation and private scholarship, as the result of which he was able to produce an estimated 150 works, making him 'the most productive and versatile Ottoman author of the 18th century'. He lived in strained circumstances, without a family of his own, until he was awarded a small stipend by Salih-zade Mehmed Emin Efendi during the short period when Salih-zade held the office of mufti of Istanbul (1773-1776).

Müxtakim-zade's works include three important tadkhila, The genre, introduced into Ottoman literature in the first half of the 16th century, takes the form of a series of biographical entries arranged more or less alphabetically, as we have seen. It is to be distinguished from the taḥqīq genre, to which the biographical section of the Gūlār-i sazāb belonged, and which is arranged diachronically - by sultan's reigns, for example, as in the famous Shaqīq al-nu'mānīyyah ('Anemones') of Taṣkūr-zade Ahmed Efendi (d.1561). This work was devoted to Ottoman 'ulama' and sheikhs of the Hanafi rite, and several anecdotes in the Shaqīq turn up again in Müxtakim-zade's entries. Müxtakim-zade also used similar works on literary figures, including the Taḥbīn al-shu'ārā' ('Memorandum on the poets') of Salim Efendi (d.1745). Müxtakim-zade's non-Ottoman sources were accessible to him both directly and indirectly. In the case of the 'Ayn al-ayn of the Cairene polymath Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (1445-1528), for example, the relationship is direct, as the frequent citations show. An important Persian tradition was available to him indirectly, through a work written by Mustafa Âli, the Mansūq-i humarvað ('Exemplary deeds of the virtuous'), to which Müxtakim-zade refers on a number of occasions. The transmission of this information can be traced in some detail.

In Iran in the 15th and 16th century magnificent albums of calligraphy and painting were assembled for Timurid and Safavid rulers and their leading courtiers, and some began with a scholarly preface. These texts, intended to place the contents of the album in context, are an important source on the history of the two arts of calligraphy and painting in Iran, or, at least, on contemporary conceptions of that history. The best-known is the preface composed by the calligrapher Dust Muhammad for an album he created for the Safavid prince Bahram Mirza in AH 951 (AD 1544-5). Another was added by Mir Sayyid Ahmad Mashhad in AH 972 (AD 1564-5) to the album assembled for Amir Ghayb Beg and completed a year later. Although it has been published as his own work, Mir Sayyid Ahmad's preface reproduces a treatise composed by Qub al-Din Muhammad Qasim-khwan, which itself began life as the preface for an album commissioned by Shah Tahmasp I, in AH 964 (AD 1556-7). Shah Tahmasp's
Hasan Uskudari

d. AH 1035 (AD 1624–15)

Husayn ibn Muhammad
scribe of cat.20

IMAM MEHMED
scribe of cat.27

d. AH 1035 (AD 1624–15)

Seyyid-ı Şeyyid İsmail

d. AH 1040 (AD 1635–36)

Mehmed Belgradi

d. AH 1080 (AD 1669–70)

'Abdullah ibn Jarzar

d. AH 1074 (AD 1664–4)

Mehmed Zade

d. AH 1060 (AD 1649–50)

Hafiz Halil

d. AH 1113 (AD 1703–4)

MUSTAFA AL-KAFAWI
scribe of cat.18

Ahmed ibn 'Abdallah
scribe of cat.21

d. AH 1158 (AD 1753–6)

Mustafa ibn Abo al-Jalil
scribe of cat.16

AHMED MUHARREM
scribe of cat.29

d. 1723

HAFIZ USMAN
scribe of cat.22

d. AH 1110 (AD 1698–9)

Haji Usman Dilaver

d. Cairo, 1715

Mustafa ibn 'Abdallah
scribe of cat.27

d. AH 1126 (AD 1724–5)

MUHAMMAD IBN

Yusuf and
Yusuf ibn RASUL
scribe(s) of cat.13 and 14

Yusuf ibn Rasul
scribe of cat.14

AHMAD IBN MAHMUD
scribe of cat.27

d. AH 1120 (AD 1718–19)

Hoca-ı zade Mehmed
scribe of cat.23

d. AH 1126 (AD 1724–5)

Ibrahim Kurni

d. AH 1150 (AD 1737–8)

Seyyid Abdullah of Yedikule

d. 1731

İsmail Zihidi

d. AH 1144 (AD 1743–4)

Yusuf ibn Rasul

scribe of cats.13 and 14

d. AH 1156 (AD 1754–5)

Ak Molla Onur

d. 1777

Hasan Uskudari

d. AH 1035 (AD 1624–15)

Hafiz Şahin

d. AH 1126 (AD 1724–5)

The school of Şeyh Hamdullah in the 17th and 18th centuries.
The master–pupil relationships of Qur'anic scribes represented in the Khalili Collection
album has not been identified (and may never have been completed), but the text survived in several forms, including the version appropriated by Mir Sayyid Ahmad. One is a 17th-century copy in a miscellany in Tehran, on which the published version of the text is based,17 while another was the copy that Qurb al-Din had with him when he met Mustafa Ali in Baghdad in 1583–6.24 According to his preface, Ali acquired a copy of Qurb al-Din’s work and used it as the basis for the Manāqib-i hancūrād, which he completed in Rabī’ al-Akhīr 995 (March–April 1587), after his return to Istanbul. Ali wrote the work in Turkish, in a prosyl style very different from Qurb al-Din’s rapid summary in Persian, and he added information supplied by Qurb al-Din and others on the calligraphers and painters active in Iran since the 1550s.25 He also complemented the account of the calligraphers and painters of Iran with passages on those active in the Ottoman empire, for which his avowed source was the calligrapher Abdullah Karimi, who had already been mentioned as the master of Demirci-kulu Yusuf Efendi, who in turn taught calligraphy to the author of the Golezār-i savāb.26

Müstakim-zade and the Khalili Collection

The notices that Müstakim-zade extracted from the work of authors such as al-Suyuti and Mustafa Ali give his work considerable breadth and a comparison of the relevant entries in the Taṣfiya with the information given in the colophons of the Qur’ans in the Khalili Collection produced between 1600 and the mid-18th century shows the reliability of his information, at least with regard to the more recent generations of Ottoman calligraphers. The same comparison also establishes the precise location of the great majority of the scribes responsible for the Khalili pieces within the tradition of Şeyh Hamdullah as transmitted by Hasan Üsküdarı; and it allows us to construct a chain of transmission in tabular form that includes the scribes of no less than 17 Qur’ans in the Collection (see table). There are exceptions, of course. Mustafa ibn Huseyin, the scribe of cat.19, has to be excluded because he did not declare an affiliation to a particular master in the colophon of the manuscript, nor is he known from other sources. Yet Mustafa was an official in the imperial treasury when he copied cat. 19 in 1655, and his hand suggests that he was trained by a palace calligrapher tutor belonging to the school of Şeyh Hamdullah.

The Khalili Qur’ans are set in their context by the entries in Müstakim-zade and are shown to be representative of their age. That age was very different from the 16th century, but the changes that had occurred were in fact favourable to Qur’an production and other forms of calligraphy. By 1600 the expansion of the Ottoman state had all but stopped, as noted above. When there were attempts to expand, great efforts were expended to relatively little effect. Thus the conquest of Crete from the Venetians dragged on from 1645 to 1669 and brought the empire to the brink of disaster in 1656, when the enemy threatened the Dardanelles. It was this event, though, which brought about the appointment of Köprüli Mehmed Pasha as grand vizier, and this in turn led to the consolidation of the imperial system under new management. The Ottoman state in 17th and 18th centuries may be described, perhaps too politely, as a period of institutional maturity in which good administrators were more important than military conquerors. The bureaucratic imperative remained a feature of Ottoman government for the rest of the empire’s history, and this is reflected in the prominence given to the art of calligraphy, the bureaucratic art form par excellence, in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Indeed, as the government of the empire fell more and more into the hands of the scribal bureaucracy, whose numbers increased to match, calligraphy enjoyed greater and greater eminence. In this aspect of Ottoman art, if in nothing else, the 19th century was a period of excellence. The foundations for that excellence were laid in the “age of Müstakim-zade”, after 1650, when Ottoman naskh calligraphy underwent a great revival, having experienced a period of decline. The Qur’ans produced fitted the needs of their time, and their form proved remarkably durable.
Istanbul and its scribal diaspora

1. See, for example, Ali, ed. and trans. Tietze.
6. This story has been linked to two Qu’ānins in the Topkapı Palace Library. The first (see Cig 1971 in MS. 325) (Karjat 1962, no. 98) completed in AD 1655-6. The second (see Rado, no. 144) in MS. 325 (Karjat 1962, no. 98), completed in AD 1657-8. Both seem unlikely candidates, as Murad IV conquered Baghdad in 1659, whereas an anonymous copy in the same library (MS. 354) (Karjat 1962, no. 98) completed 42 days after the sultan’s return to Istanbul, on 19 Rabī’ al-‘Awal 1049. My thanks to Irvin Schick for his help with this matter.
9. James 1902b, no. 8 is an example of the prototype, and no. 13 of Istanbul work in the same style.
10. See Raby & Tsunoda 1993, nos. 17, 38, 45, 41.
11. See, for example, James 1902a, no. 17.
15. The dedication to Murad IV and the entry on him as a calligrapher are absent from the edition by Khalil Muallim Rifat, but are to be found apud Hakkak-zade, ed. Dedoçoğlu, columns 112-14:135-8.
16. It is notable that Nefes-zade still used this term rather than referring simply to ‘luhbb and nawkcb’, as Mūsāmāk-zade usually did.
18. Nefes-zade, ed. Rifat, pp. 60-61; apud Hakkak-zade, ed. Dedoçoğlu, column 115-7. After the entry on Yusuf, Nefes-zade comments that many other masters of the Six Penas were not included because they ‘were not up to scratch’ but makes an exception in the case of Serbûc-i-zade Ibârin of Bursa, who died a century before Yusuf Efeni, in AH 932 (AD 1523-4).
20. And 1922, pp. 212-17.
24. Topkapı Palace Library, MS. 2284, which is undated; see Derman 1992, no. 81.
26. See Derman 1982, nos. 83, 84, 86, for example.
27. See Derman 1982, no. 114.
29. See the explanation given by Mahmud Kemal Ilaâl to Prince Muhammad ‘Ali of Egypt, for example (Igül 1991, p. 271).
31. The night of 27 Ramadan, when the first revelation of the Qur’an is commemorated.
32. Mūsāmāk-zade used the technical term musâba‘abâts, which in Islamic mysticism means the revelation one receives on attaining the highest degree of perfection in contemplating the divine essence.
34. See, for example, Rosmer 1900; Gray 1996 (cf. also James 1992b, pp. 18-23).
38. Suyuçoğu-zade, ed. Rifat, p. 68.
40. Hâbi 1305, p. 150; Rado, no date, p. 112.
42. Suyuçoğu-zade, ed. Rifat, p. 3.
43. Mūsāmāk-zade, ed. Mahmud Kemal, p. 473. The marginal annotations in Mūsāmāk-zade’s copy of Suyuçoğu-zade were reproduced by Rifat as footnotes.
44. Mūsāmāk-zade, ed. Mahmud Kemal, p. 61.
46. See, for example, Taşköprüili-zade, ed. Furât, p. 370; Mūsāmāk-zade, ed. Mahmud Kemal, p. 117.
47. See, for example, Mūsāmāk-zade, ed. Mahmud Kemal, p. 614.
48. See, for example, Mūsāmāk-zade, ed. Mahmud Kemal, pp. 160-61, 162.
52. Qad-î Din Qânbâb-khan, ed. Khâdirî Jam, p. 667.
55. See Fleischer 1986, p. 123, n. 36, for examples.
17

Single-volume Qur'an

Probably Istanbul, AH 1052 (AD 1640–41)

336 folios, 25.2 x 13.3 cm, with 15 lines to the page

Material: A smooth, cream laid paper, lightly burnished; there are approximately eight laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines

Text area: 14.2 x 7.6 cm

Script: The main text in naskh, in black, with reading marks in red; surah headings in white riga'; marginalia in gold riga'

Surah Muhammad al-Hafiz, called al-Imām

Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1b–22; text frames ruled in gold, black and blue; verses marked by gold wheels set off with red and blue dots; surah headings and similar headings before concluding prayer (folio 33a) and colophon (folio 33b); marginal devices marking par [folios 754, 11b, 96b]

Documentation: A colophon

Binding: Contemporary

Accesoion no. Q.18:57

1. Topkapi Palace Library, Ms.4.512: Karaman, 1095 AD, no.380.
2. Topkapi Palace Library, Ms.K.231: Karaman, 1099 AD, no.981, where the surah was not given; colophon

Illustrated at Radio, no date, p.96.

According to the colophon, the scribe responsible for this Qur'an was 'Muhammad al-Hafiz, known as al-Imām', that is, Imam Mehmend Efendi, a celebrated calligrapher who received his training before 1052 and continued working until his death in AH 1052 (AD 1640–41). He signed a Qur'an in the Topkapi Palace Library in the same manner as cat. 17, some ten years earlier, on 1 Ramadan 1041 (22 March 1631). Another example was signed simply 'Muhammad al-Imām' and dated AH 1045 (AD 1632–3), while a third Qur'an in the same collection, signed 'Hafiz Muhammad, imam of Mecca', in AH 1045 (AD 1633–4), is also counted as his work.

According to Müstakim-zade, 1 Imam Mehmend Efendi was born in Tokat in central Anatolia and was taught calligraphy by Hasan Üsküdarlı, presumably in Istanbul. As we have seen (p.66), Hasan Efendi, who died in AH 1025 (AD 1614–15), was the main figure in the transmission of the tradition of Şeyh Handullah to the calligraphers of the 17th century. Cat. 17 exemplifies the fine quality of Mehmed's naskh hand, which was the model for a line of Ottoman calligraphers that flourished into the 18th century, as cat. 26 and 29 below show. Müstakim-zade also relates an anecdote concerning Imam Mehmend Efendi and Sultan Murad IV (see above, p.61).

Cat. 17 opens with a double page of elegant illumination, which is notable for the relative simplicity of its layout. The reduced text area is surrounded by four panels defined by narrow bands of pink strapwork, and these are in turn framed by a wide border with a straight edge. The vertical panels on either side of the text have a row of small gold cartouches, each filled with an S-shaped floral scroll. In the panels above and below the text central gold cartouches inscribed with the surah titles are set on parti-coloured grounds in which areas of blue and a greenish tone of gold are separated by half-palmate motifs in gold; scroll set with tiny polychrome blossoms form a continuous pattern over both blue areas and gold. The border is composed of the same elements, with gold rather than greenish-gold for the ground, and is framed on the outer sides by a band of red, gold, black and blue rules from which flower-decked 'darts' in red and blue issue into the margins. The surah headings in the rest of the manuscript are inscribed in white riga'; in gold cartouches, which are set within illuminated panels. There are general similarities between this illumination and that of the opening pages, although the motifs separating the areas of different colours (blue and gold or greenish-gold) include cloud bands as well as split palmettes, and the blossoms on the floral scrolls are larger and of a different type (compare cat.19).

The binding is probably contemporary with the text but appears to have been renovated in the 19th century. The outer covers and the two sections of the flap were produced in an unusual manner. They were covered in the first instance with a layer of leather block-pressed with a continuous pattern of lotus scrolls, and secondly with a layer of brown morocco cut out to form the field of a centre-and-corner composition and a double border of cartouches. This method of production appears to have been an attempt to reproduce the depth and definition of the fine bindings with block-pressed and gilded countersunk elements that were produced in Istanbul from the late 16th century onwards (see cat.15 above).
18
Single-volume Qur’an
Probably Istanbul, AH 1053 (AD 1643–4)

348 folios, 22.5 x 14.5 cm, with 14 lines to the page
Material: A polished, thin, cream laid paper
Text area: 14.7 x 7.8 cm
Script: The main text is in naskh, in black, with reading marks in red; surah headings and inscriptions in marginal ornaments in white riqā‘; other marginalia in gold riqā‘; colophon in black riqā‘
Scribe: Darwish Ali
Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1b–232; text frames ruled in gold, black and red; verses marked by gold whores set off with red and blue dots; surah headings; marginal ornaments marking text divisions and sāḥiḥi; gliding between the words of the colophon on folio 348
Documentation: A colophon
Binding Contemporary
Accession no: QG99
Published Geneva 1991, no. 17

2. Topkapı Palace Library, MS H.241, H.242; Karatay 1964, nos. 1202, 1004, 1123.
5. Topkapı Palace Library, MS H.241; Karatay 1962, no. 1012. The Topkapı MS H.242 (Karatay 1962, no. 1231) is another, undated copy of the first juz’ by Derviş Ali, while MS H.317 (Karatay 1965, no. 1337) Radio, no date, p. 97 is a copy of juz’ 29. For other published examples of the calligrapher’s work, see Derman 1983, no. 11 (a kuranma); 1992, no. 27 (an album piece).
6. Cf. Radio, no date, p. 97, where the margins are filled with floral scrolls in the halkafti technique.

According to the colophon, which follows the end of the Qur’anic text on folio 348a, this Qur’an manuscript was copied by the earlier of two celebrated Ottoman calligraphers called Derviş Ali, and who is therefore identified here as Derviş Ali the Elder. Müstəkim-zade tells us that this Derviş Ali was brought up as a slave in the household of a senior Janissary officer, Kara Hasan-oğlu Hüseyin Ağâ, and ‘in the first bloom of youth’ he served as a subaltern officer (karakalkılık) in the Janissaries. Subsequently he trained as a calligrapher with Hâlid Erzurumî, who, like İsmâ‘îl Mehmed Efendi (see ext.17), was a pupil of Hasan Uşkudârî and thus a member of the school of Seyh Hamdullah. Derviş Ali had ‘thousands of pupils among the great’, including the famous grand vizier Köprülü-zade Fazl Ahmed Paşa, and he was also a teacher of Hafız Osman, who is counted as the greatest Ottoman calligrapher of the 17th century. He died in Ramadan 1084 (December 1673–January 1674).

Suyuçoğlu-zade and Müstəkim-zade report that Derviş Ali copied more than 40 Qur’ans and numerous prayer books and copies of the surah al-An’âm, as well as albums of calligraphy (masrâqa’) and album pieces (qif’ah). This output is reflected in the holdings of the Topkapı Palace Library, where there are at least three Qur’ans produced by him, in AH 1067 (AD 1656–7), AH 1070 (AD 1659–60) and AH 1077 (AD 1666–7),5 and six copies of al-An’âm, with dates between AH 1038 (AD 1628) and AH 1077 (AD 1666–7),6 as well as a copy of the surah al-Kahf made in AH 1080 (AD 1669–70), four years before the calligrapher’s death.7 Another example of his work in the same library is a copy of part 1 of a Qur’an in 10 parts where the first section (to folio 11a) is the work of Seyh Hamdullah, and the remainder was supplied by Derviş Ali in AH 1076 (AD 1665–6).8

Cat.18 was written in a neat naskh hand worthy of a calligrapher of Derviş Ali’s eminence, and the manuscript also contains some fine illumination. This is particularly so in the case of the marginal devices, which come in a variety of forms – lotus blossoms, medallions, palmettes and arabesques – and all have blue floral ‘darts’ above and below, whereas the surah headings are relatively simple, consisting of an inscription in white riqā‘ outlined in black with a rectangular panel of gold. The contrast may be due to the addition of the marginal devices at a later date (see p.62 above). The illumination on the opening pages of text has no border elements but is surrounded by a pair of head-pieces.4 The vertical panels on either side of the text may be compared with those on the opening pages in cat.17, but the horizontal panels are of a quite different design: the shaped gold cartouches containing the surah headings have relatively large gold pendants, for example.

In his entry on Derviş Ali, Müstəkim-zade asserted that the calligrapher’s work was illuminated by a master called Mustafa Surahi, who was taught his art by an illuminator called Abdullah, who was in turn the freedman and pupil of Kara Mahmud of Yenişehir. It may be, therefore, that the original illumination found in cat.18 is an example of Mustafa Surahi’s work.

The covers are in brown morocco and have stamped and gilded centre-and-corner elements. The doublures are of polished vermilion paper.
In the colophon on folio 351a this Qur’an is attributed to a scribe who was probably an official in the Imperial Treasury in Istanbul rather than a professional copyist, and who was not recorded in the biographical literature on Ottoman calligraphers.

The colophon was written in the mixture of defective Arabic and Ottoman Turkish or Persian often used by Ottoman officials (compare the colophon of cat.13). It states that the Qur’an was completed by Mustafa ibn Hüsâyñ in Ramadan 1066 and was copied in the imperial palace, in the building occupied by the Imperial Treasury (fi kibanah-i Khaznâ-ı‘âmireh), in the time of Sultan Mehmed IV (reg. 1648–1687). This building may have functioned to some degree as a scriptorium, as the important manuscripts kept there were used as models by calligraphers of the standing of Mahmud of Tophané and Şeker-zade Seyyid Mehmed Efendi (see p.68 and cat.16 above). Beneath the colophon there is an impression of the seal of a woman called Umm Kulthum, which is dated AH 1205 (AD 1790–1791).

The opening pages of text (illustrated on p.65) have illumination in a format that is standard in Ottoman Qur’ans of the second half of the 17th century. It is similar to that seen in cat.17 above, but the wide border has a lobed edge, with a floral ‘dart’ issuing from the pointed head of each lobe. In addition, the bands that frame the main elements of the design are more profuse and are in different colours (here red, yellow and gold), so that the structure is less clear.

Surah headings are inscribed in white riqa’ on gold cartouches with pointed ends, from which polychrome floral scrolls issue over a blue ground. Each juz’ is marked by a large and rather splendid device that comes in one of two forms, both executed in gold and blue, inscribed with the word al-juz’ in white riqa’, and with blue ‘finials’ above and below. One type is composed of a lotus-leaf medallion with a teardrop-shaped centre; the other is made up of concentric rings of gold petals.

The binding is of particularly fine quality. The covers are of red morocco and have countersunk centre-and-corner elements block-pressed with a design of floral scrolls and cloud bands, these elements being reserved in a gilded ground. The fore-edge section of the flap has a pressure-moulded panel bearing a quotation from the Qur’an, ‘Which none shall touch but they that are clean: a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds’ (sura 111, verses 79–80). The doublures are of plain red morocco, and there are traces of gilding on the upper edges of the text block.
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20

Single-volume Qur'an
Istanbul or the provinces, AH 1088 (AD 1677–8)

The calligrapher responsible for this Qur'an was Husayn ibn Muhammad (Hüseyn, the son of Mehemd), a pupil of Ismail Efendi. In the 1670s, when this manuscript was produced, the leading calligrapher called Ismail was Nezefs-zade Seyyid Ismail Efendi, who died in AH 1092 (AD 1681). He was the son of Nezefs-zade Ibrahim Efendi, the author of the Quzah-i Saadah (see pp. 66, 69–70 above), and a pupil of Derviş Ali the Elder (see cat. 18). The younger Nezefs-zade had many students of his own, including Hafiz Osman (see cat. 22), but Mustakim-zade recorded only one with the name Hüseyn, and as he did not give this Hüseyn’s patronymic, no firm identification can be made.

The calligrapher recorded by Mustakim-zade was Hüseyn Can of Bursa, who served as a clerk in the government department known as the Galleons Office (Kalyonlar) and died in AH 1107 (AD 1695–6). The fine illumination on folios 1a–2b is close in many respects to that on the opening pages of cat. 19, but here the polychrome work was replaced by work in contrasting tones of gold, with black outlines and red highlights. The text area and the four surrounding panels are defined by brown bands textured in a contrasting colour, while the horizontal panels containing the surah headings have an inner border of a textured mauve band.

The binding is of brown morocco and was embroidered in metal wire with a centre-and-corner design surrounded by a wide border, all filled with floral motifs. This decorative technique was used occasionally for bookbindings from the 16th century or earlier, but it was probably always more common in other types of leather wares. Later 17th-century Ottoman leatherwork embroidered in metal thread survives in some quantities in European collections, in the form of saddles, quivers, bow cases and other accoutrements of war. These were acquired as diplomatic gifts, as in the case of a saddle presented to the Polish ambassador by Mustafa II, or as booty, as in the case of the saddle of Kara Mustafa Pasha in Vienna. In some instances the motifs were worked in metal thread against the background colour, which could be that of tanned leather, of dyed leather or, in the more lavish examples, of a silk facing, while in others the motifs and background were worked in contrasting colours within solid blocks of embroidery, as on cat. 20 and, for example, a fine canteen in Karlsruhe.

The fore-edge section of the flap has a pressure-moulded and gilded cartouche filled with the same text as that of the Qur'an in the binding of cat. 19, Which none shall touch but they that are clean: a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds’ (sura 15, verses 79–80). The red morocco doublures have recessed centre-pieces that were pressure-moulded with a design of floral scrolls and cloud bands and gilded.
Single-volume Qur'an

Cairo, 1 Ramadan 1097 (27 July 1686)

The scribe of this manuscript, 'Ali ibn 'Abdallah, completed his work on Monday, 1 Ramadan 1097, while (temporarily) resident in Cairo (al-maṣfīn bi-Misr biwaʿikta).\(^1\) In fact, 'Ali seems to have spent five years or more in Cairo, for another Qur'an he copied there, in AH 1092 (AD 1681), has been recorded,\(^2\) but he must have gone to Egypt from Istanbul, where, as he himself declared in the colophon of cat.21, he trained as a calligrapher with Suyûlçu-zade Mustafa of Eyüp. Mustafa is reported to have died in AH 1097 (AD 1685–6),\(^3\) and this is likely to be correct, as the earliest source for this date is the calligrapher's own kinsman, Suyûlçu-zade Mehmed Necib (see pp. 69–70 above). It would appear from cat. 21 that he died in the earlier part of the year, for news of his death had reached 'Ali in Cairo by 1 Ramadan. Some time after 1687 'Ali must have returned to Istanbul, as Suyûlçu-zade Mehmed Necib, and after him Mustakim-zade, recorded him as living in the Kasımpaşa district, where 'he gave lessons to those who desired them, so that his house was like a school'.\(^4\) 'Ali lived to the age of 70, dying in AH 1138 (AD 1725–6), and made a copy of the Qur'an for every year of his life. One of these he left in his will to pay for his burial rites.\(^5\)

In this example 'Ali wrote in a bold, fluid hand which has a number of features, such as incomplete mālām letters, that suggest he wrote at some speed. He did not, however, lose the clarity that was essential in Qur'an calligraphy. Given 'Ali's training, it is not surprising that he wrote naskh in the style of Istanbul, and comparison with cat. 23 shows that in stylistic terms this manuscript presages the eclipse of Cairo as the centre of an independent tradition. In the 18th century it became the home of a native sub-school within the Ottoman tradition, as cat. 32 below shows.

The illumination in cat. 21 is also similar to Istanbul work of the period (compare cat. 39, for example) but was presumably executed in Cairo. There may well have been Cairene illuminators working in this style in the later 17th century, but it is also possible that 'Ali illuminated the manuscript himself, especially since he reputedly specialized in Qur'an production as a scribe. On the opening pages the narrow vertical panels on either side of the text are filled with paired undulating scrolls formed of half-palmettes (compare cat. 26, where the red highlights give greater legibility). In the borders the areas of blue and gold are arranged in an unusual manner, so that the blue ground forms a zigzag pattern between the gold, and the lobes of the border's edge have been reduced to a straight line interrupted by triangular points. The surah headings in the remainder of the manuscript are inscribed in white riqā' in shaped gold cartouches within illuminated panels that show considerable variety. The panels, which are framed by coloured bands, have grounds painted in one or two tones of gold, overlaid with floral motifs of different types, sometimes combined with half-palmettes. A good deal of variety is also found in the marginal ornaments.

The fine covers are of brown morocco, decorated with recessed centre-pieces pressure-moulded with cloud-scroll and floral motifs, plain but for a gold outline. During a later reworking a simple border of gold rules was added, and it was probably at this time that the exposed edges of the text block were painted with a repeat pattern of sinuous leaves. The doublures are of maroon morocco with a simple border of gold rules.
22

Part 30 of the Qur’an

Probably Istanbul, AH 1099 (AD 1687–8)

28 folios, 24.1 × 16.4 cm, with 9 lines to the page.

Material: A thick, buff-coloured laid paper with fibrous inclusions; there are approximately six lines to the centimetre, and traces of chain lines.

Text area: 14.5 × 8.2 cm

Script: The main text in naskh, in black ink.

Illumination: A head-piece and other decoration on folios 19–22; text frames ruled in gold, black and red; verses marked by gold rosettes, with outlines in black and highlights in red, enhanced with prickling; leaf-based ornaments in the same technique placed at the end of many lines; surah headings; additional decoration on the colophon page, folio 278.

Documentation: A colophon.

Binding: Contemporary.

Accession no. Q.1089

Published: Christie’s, London, 1 April 1982, lot no. 161; Geneva 1993, no. 26.

4. 26:18; 7:1 see Rade, no date, p. 97.
5. Examples of the former are the bindings of this manuscript and cat. 29–31 above. Examples of the latter are Istanbul 1987, no. 0.126; Khalil, Robinson & Stanley 1994–7, no. 130.

The scribe of this Qur’an section was Hafiz Osman, the pre-eminent Ottoman calligrapher of the 17th century, who was recognized by his successors as the greatest exponent of the calligraphic tradition established by Şeyh Hamdullah. This manuscript is a witness to Hafiz Osman’s emulation of the Şeyh, for the colophon on folio 278 is followed by the statement, wauqita ‘an khatn Hamdullah al-Shaykh raḥimahullāh Allāh, that is, ‘It was copied after the hand of Şeyh Hamdullah—May God have mercy upon him!’ The practice of naggī—that is, the reproduction by a calligrapher of a piece by a respected master—was a consistent feature of the Ottoman calligraphic tradition, so that, for example, a copy of the same Qur’an section made by Isma’il Zuhdi in AH 1128 (AD 1714–15), when he was already in his sixties, was also based on an original by Şeyh Hamdullah, while a qī‘ah in the Khalili Collection was produced by Mahmud Celaleddin, who died in AH 1245 (AD 1829–30), after an original by Hafiz Osman, who was in turn copying Şeyh Hamdullah.

The production of Qur’ans in 30 sections (juz’, plural ajā‘) was a longstanding tradition, and the final part, which contains surahs lxxviii–lxxxv, is commonly known in Turkish as the amune cita ‘a, after the first word of surah lxxxv (‘amūna, ‘concerning what?’). In this case, however, the final part may have been prepared as an independent manuscript, for Hafiz Osman’s primary concern was probably to show his skill in reproducing Hamdullah’s hand rather than to create a complete copy of the Qur’anic text.

The script of cat. 22 is notable for its regularity, its clarity and the beauty of its proportions and shows Ottoman naskh at its best. In addition, the manuscript is written on paper of excellent quality and is enclosed in a contemporary binding of brown morocco, with centre- and corner-pieces pressure-moulded with floral scrolls and cloud bands; in their present, restored condition the motifs are red and are set against a gold ground.

It has been suggested that the illumination is 19th-century work in a historicizing style, but, given the manuscript’s status as an hommage to a great calligrapher of the past, any historical references in the decoration would seem to fit the circumstances of its original creation. In fact, though, the design used for the most substantial decorative element, the head-piece on folio 15, is typical of Ottoman work of the period, even in its inclusion of cloud scrolls, for example. These appear in the surah headings of cat. 17, for example, as well as in the head-piece of a manuscript by Derviş Ali, one of Hafiz Osman’s teachers, in the Topkapi Palace Library, and on bindings from the 17th and 18th centuries, both those with pressure-moulded and those with painted decoration.
ottoman calligraphy's greatest exponent of this script is a witness to the practice of naqṣ al-ḥatan — a copy of the same text was already in his possession in the Khalili leads back to an independent tradition, unknown today, of his skill in reproducing Qur'anic text.

Many of its proportions are written on paper in the script of morocco, with gold bands; in their historizing of the script, traces of its original decorative element, in the Qur'anic text, for example, as man's teachers, in manuscripts, both those
Single-volume Qur’an
Istanbul or the provinces, AR 1094 (AD 1682–3)

466 folios, 24.8 x 15.5 cm, with 11 lines to the page
Material: A thin, cream laid paper, lightly burnished; there are approximately 12 lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines. The paper is so thin that individual folios are semi-transparent
Text area 26 x 8.9 cm
Script: The main text in naskh, in black, with reading marks in red; surah headings in white (surah 1:11) or gold hija’i; other incidental in white hija’i
Script: Yusuf
Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1b–12; text frames ruled in gold, black and red; verses marked by gold six-petal rosettes or gold backgrounds, all set off with red, blue and green dots; surah headings and similar heading before the concluding prayer and colophon on folios 465b–466a; marginal ornaments marking text divisions and sajdah
Documentation: A colophon
Binding: Contemporary
Accession no. Q503:13
Published Geneva 1995, no.19

The copyist of this Qur’an gave his name as ‘Yusuf, one of the pupils of Osman, Hafiz of the Mighty Qur’an’, that is, of Hafiz Osman. He may be the same person as Yusuf ibn Rasul, the scribe of cat.14, who also declared himself a pupil of Hafiz Osman.

The opening pages of illumination are of the standard type for the period, with a wide border with a lobed edge. In this case, however, the vertical panels on either side of the text have been replaced by heavy bands of gold strapwork of unequal width: in both cases the inner band is narrower than the outer. The surah headings on these pages were written in white hija’i on gold grounds, but in the rest of the manuscript they are in gold hija’i, set in panels notable for the use of natural grounds for the central cartouches, for the fields on either side filled with floral motifs, executed primarily in gold, and for some of the framing bands. Other such bands are in tones of gold or black, and are all texturized in a contrasting colour with strapwork and other motifs. The rich and varied marginal ornaments are in two tones of gold and colours and were inscribed in white hija’i.

Only the upper cover and flap of the binding survive. They are faced with brown morocco and have pressure-moulded and gilt centre-and-corner elements set in a central field, which measures 20 x 10 centimetres on the upper cover. This is surrounded by a wide border now tooled with two bands of a cable motif in two tones of gold. The doublures are of red morocco and are painted in gold with the outline of a centre-piece and a border of rules.

33 upper cover
Osman, Haфиз son as Yusuf
Osman.
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other side of the text
which in both cases the
text was written in
gold riqāʿ, set
in red marginal
textured in
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with brown
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of gold. The
aisa centre-piece
This manuscript is undated, but the scribe described himself in the colophon as a pupil of Hafiz Osman, who died in AH 1110 (AD 1698–9), and it can therefore be ascribed to the last third of the 17th century or the first third of the 18th. Furthermore, cat. 23 may be by the same scribe, and it is dated AH 1294 (AD 1878–79).

The illumination of the opening pages has the traditional blue and gold grounds, but, as in cat. 23, the blue grounds are reduced to small areas in the borders: there are none in the horizontal panels containing the surah headings, which are here filled with a combination of palmette motifs and floral scrolls. The vertical bands either side of the text area are filled with a row of cartouches containing reverse S-shaped floral scrolls.

Surah headings are in white naskh within plain gold panels framed by coloured panel bands textured with white or, in the case of white bands, black. Textual divisions are marked by finely painted marginal ornaments of great variety. The blue finials with floral motifs are painted with exceptional delicacy.

The binding is of a later date. It is of maroon morocco, and the covers have a central panel filled with a diaper pattern in gold. The border is tooled in gold with a cable pattern. The doublures are of paper.
25

Single-volume Qur’an

Istanbul or the provinces, Ramadan 1105 (April—May 1694)

360 folios, 45.6 x 28.5 cm, with 33 lines to the page

Material: A thick, cream European watermarked laid paper, lightly burnished; there are ten laid lines to the centimetre, and chain lines arranged at intervals of 3.4 cm. The watermark is three six-pointed stars in a crowned shield, with the countermark 85, except on folios 322–29, where it is a crowned two-headed eagle with the countermark 92.

Text area: 26.5 x 16 cm

Script: The main text in naskh in gold outlined in black, with vowels and other shabih signs in black and reading marks in red; surah headings in white qaf on folios 1b–24, elsewhere in gold qaf outlined in black; Srinive al-Mudhakhli Sayyid ‘Abd Allah Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1b–24; text frames ruled in gold and red; verses marked by gold discs set off with blue dots; surah headings; marginal ornaments marking sa‘i’s and sajids.

Documentation: A colophon and a waqf inscription.

Binding: Modern

Accession no.: QUB795

1. Heawood 1910, p. 24. The closest parallel is Heawood 1910, fig. 817, with the countermark 87.

2. Heawood 1910, fig. 2376, for example, was used in London in 1699.


4. ML.1265; Arberry 1967, no. 2059;

5. James 1980, no. 76.


7. ML.1290; Karataş 1961, no. 1279.

This book is extraordinary because of its size—it is roughly four times as large as the standard Qur’an manuscript of the period—and because the script employed was a gold naskh outlined in black, a most unusual choice in an Ottoman context. The effect, though, is not entirely successful. The grandiose illumination of the opening pages, for example, is merely an expanded version of a design worked out for smaller manuscripts—even the miniaturized floral motifs have been blown up to many times their normal size. Such defects presumably came about because the main responsible for copying the Qur’an, who gives his name as Müzehhib Seyyid Abdullah, was by profession an illuminator (müzebbih) and not a scribe; and because as an illuminator he was not used to working on this scale. The rather disturbing impression the manuscript gives may also owe something to the fact that it appears to have been left unfinished. This would explain, for example, why the surah titles were omitted in instances where the last few words of the preceding surah were placed in the panels intended for them.

This Qur’an can therefore be seen as a one-off production made under special circumstances. It may once have been possible to understand the nature of these circumstances from an inscription on folio 12, but this has been obliterated. It may have been a waqf, and has been inscribed at the top of every page of the manuscript that coincides with the beginning of a surah.

Other possible evidence for the history of the manuscript has also proved enigmatic.

The use of European paper for Ottoman Qur’ans seems to have increased from the turn of the 18th century, and this manuscript offers a particularly clear and consistent example from the period when this process began, since the watermarked European paper employed was almost all from a single batch, with each sheet forming a bilobium, due to the size of the manuscript. The paper cannot be dated with any certainty; however, as the watermarks and countermarks found here do not occur together in any other published example. All that we can say is that the watermark found on all but eight sheets—three six-pointed stars in a crowned shield—shows that the paper is probably of Venetian terra firma, while the countermark 85 is found on papers with other marks used in the 17th century.2

Müzehhib Seyyid Abdullah may be another name of Abdullah Efendi of Baruthane, who was recorded by Müstakım-zade as the illuminator of most of the 100 Qur’ans copied by Cinici-zade Abdurrahman Efendi, who died in AH 1137 (AD 1724–5).3 This Abdullah Efendi was a member of a line of illuminators that flourished from the later 16th century until the early 18th: he was the son and pupil of Mustafa Beyazi, who was the pupil of Mustafa Surahi. As we have seen (cat.18), Mustafa Surahi was in turn taught his art by another Abdullah, who was the freedman and pupil of Kara Mahmud of Yenişehir.

A Qur’an by Cinici-zade that may well have been illuminated by Abdullah Efendi of Baruthane is in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin,4 and this illuminator is almost certainly to be identified with the ‘Abdallah ibn Mustafa who decorated another Qur’an in the Chester Beatty Library, which was copied by the celebrated Seyyid Abdullah of Yedikule (see above, p.69) in AH 1121 (AD 1709–10),5 and one in the Topkapı Palace Library copied by Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr in AH 1123 (AD 1711–12).6
Single-volume Qur’an
Istanbul or the provinces, AH 1115 (AD 1703–4)

413 folios, 17.8 x 11.2 cm, with 15 lines to the page.
Material A thin, cream laid paper, lightly burnished; there are approximately nine laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines. The paper is so thin that individual folios are semi-transparent.

Text area 11 x 6 cm.

Inscription The main text in naskh in black, with reading marks in red; surah headings and inscriptions in marginal ornaments in white gold; other marginalia in gold.

Scribe al-Sayyid Mustafa ibn ‘Abd al-Jalil
Illustration Extensive decoration on folios 13–20; text frames ruled in gold, black and red; verses marked by gold six-petal roseettes or whirls, all set off with white, red and blue dots; surah headings; marginal ornaments marking textual divisions and sīqāds; decoration in gold only below the end of the text on folios 42b, 421a, and below the colophon, also on folio 421d.

Documentation A colophon

Binding Contemporary

Accession no. QUR.74


The scribe responsible for this Qur’an, al-Sayyid Mustafa ibn ‘Abd al-Jalil, described himself in the colophon as a pupil of Anber Mustafa Ağa, who is known from other sources to have been a calligrapher and musician employed in the imperial palace in Istanbul. Anber Ağa was himself instructed in calligraphy by Mehmed Belgradi, who was a pupil of Imam Mehmed Efendi, the scribe of cat. 17 above. As we can see by comparing the first lines of the surah al-Shams (11), the hand of cat. 26 is indeed very close to that of cat. 17, although it lacks some of the steady regularity and accomplishment of Imam Mehmed’s rendition.

This manuscript was decorated very much in the manner that became standard in the 17th century, although minor variations can be observed. One, also seen in cat. 25, occurs on the illuminated opening pages and involves the vertical panels on either side of the reduced text area. In the traditional layout these panels were part of a set of five that formed the core of the composition. In this new version they appear as bands of illumination that increase the width of the text area to match that of the panels above and below; these last should contain the surah headings, although here they are blank. On these pages surah 1 and the beginning of surah 11 were written in ‘clouds’ reserved in a gold ground, and they are punctuated by verse markers in the form of relatively large polychrome blossoms.

The surah headings, in white ‘róża’, are set within illuminated panels, most of which are framed by a blue, green, magenta, black or orange band textured in white. The heading itself is inscribed in a plain gold cartouche, and the gold ground on either side has floral scrolls in yellow gold with touches of red. Two tones of gold were also used for the marginal ornaments, which are in the form of one of two types of composite blossoms.

The contemporary covers, of brown morocco, are decorated with a centre-and-corner composition. The elements were pressure-moulded with a design of cloud bands set over floral scrolls. The ground was gilded, and the scrolls were left in reserve, while the cloud bands also show traces of gilding, perhaps in a tone that contrasted with that of the ground. The doublures, which were probably added when the binding was remade, are of marbled paper.
il, described from other palace in Belgradi, we can see by is indeed very accomplishment standard in the in cat. 15, occurs side of the of five that formed illumination that below; these last use pages surah t ground, and they some blossoms. most of which are The heading r side has floral used for the opposite blossom. centre-and-corner and bands set serve, while the d with that oving was remade,
Single-volume Qur'an
Istanbul or the provinces, AH 1124 (AD 1712–13)

27

This manuscript is one of the earliest Ottoman Qur'ans in which each page ends with a complete verse. It also has a 15-line format, which became the standard format for Ottoman Qur'ans in the 19th century. The scribe responsible for it, Ahmad ibn Mahmud, was a pupil of Suyuçoğlu Mustafa of Eyüp according to Müstakim-zade, who had seen a Qur'an written by him in AH 1099 (AD 1687–8) and concluded that, "he was in truth a fine calligrapher". Şevket Rado illustrated the last page of a Qur'an by Ahmad and suggested that it was the one seen by Müstakim-zade, but the colophon is clearly dated AH 1115 (AD 1703–4). The page shown by Rado is, though, very similar to folio 307a of cat. 27: in both cases the colophon, which is preceded by the same short prayer, is written in white riqâ' on an illuminated panel with a gold field. In cat. 27 the concluding prayer occupies folios 304b–307a and is separated from the end of the Qur'anic text on folio 303a by two blank pages (folios 303b and 304a).

The illumination is very similar to that in cat. 26, although on the opening pages the arrangement and type of framing bands is different, and the border has fewer lobes. The surah headings, in white riqâ', are contained within narrow gold panels with fragments of gold foliage at either end and coloured framing bands. The marginal ornaments marking divisions in the text and sajdâh are in six different forms, three of which also occur in cat. 26. They all consist of a small gold cartouche bearing an inscription and surrounded or surmounted by a combination of leaves, petals, stems and tiny rosettes.

The brown morocco covers have a recessed centre-and-corner composition within a broad frame, all pressure-moulded with floral scrolls and gilded. The raised bands of leather on either side of the frame are tooled in gold with a cable motif, and the raised circular areas between the sections into which the frame is divided are tooled in gold with rosettes. The doubleules are of mid-brown leather with a central rosette and ruled borders painted in gold. The flap is a modern replacement.
28

Single-volume Qur'an
Istanbul or the provinces, AH 1130 (AD 1717–18)

261 folios, 18 x 11.5 cm, with 17 lines to the page. Material: A thin, cream laid paper, lightly burnished; there are approximately 11 laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib-shadows or chain lines. Identification of mould markings is difficult because of the highly fibrous nature of the pulp. Text area 12.2 x 6.5 cm. Script: The main text in saqâh, in black, with reading marks in red; surah headings and inscriptions in marginal ornaments in white naskh. Scribe: Muhammad ibn Mustafa al-Kafawi.

Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1b–22; text areas framed by gold and black rules; verses marked by gold rosettes or gold whorls, all set off with red and blue dots; surah headings; marginal ornaments marking text divisions and ajâdâhs; areas of decoration in gold only after the end of the Qur'anic text (folio 26b) and the colophon (folio 261b).

Documentation: A colophon.

Binding: Contemporary.

Accession no. Q3093 (1).


The surname al-Kafawi borne by the scribe of this Qur'an, Muhammad ibn Mustafa, indicates that he was a native of Caffa in the Crimea, which has been known by its Classical name, Theodosia (Feodosiya), since its incorporation into the Russian empire in 1783. In the colophon he also declared himself a pupil of Ismail Efendi, presumably Ağakapılı Ismail Efendi, who died in 1706 or 1707. Müstakim-zade recorded a calligrapher called Muhammad ibn Mustafa al-Kafawi, but he was trained by Mehmed Rasim Efendi and died about AH 1190 (AD 1776–7), and it is therefore difficult to match the two.

The illumination in this manuscript is of the standard type seen also in cat. 26 and 27 but is remarkable for the variety and lurid quality of the colours used. On the opening pages the brightness is counteracted by the use of dark-blue grounds in place of the ultramarine pigment seen in the earlier examples. The brown morocco covers have recessed centre-and-corner elements which have been pressure-moulded with floral scrolls and gilded. The doublures are of mid-brown morocco and are painted in gold with the outline of a centre-and-corner composition.
and ibn Mustafa, indicated by its Classical style.

It was presumably the work of the calligrapher called Esin Efendi and the two.

The opening pages in cat. 26 and 27 but the opening pages of the ultramarine blue
recessed centre-covers and gilded.

in the outline of a
The scribe responsible for this manuscript was a celebrated naskh calligrapher of the late 17th and the early 18th century. Born in Istanbul, he began life with the name Muhammed and was trained as a calligrapher by Hafız Halil Efendi, whose silsilah went back through two generations to Imam Mehmed Efendi, who copied cat. 17 above. Having established himself professionally as a Qur'an scribe, and now known as Muhammed Hattat, he earned the status of hafız by learning the Qur'an by heart. According to Müstakim-zade he changed his name to Hafız Ahmed at this point, although cat. 29 and other works by him show that he continued to use the name Muhammed in the colophon of a Qur'an dated AH 1111 (AD 1699–1700), for example, he placed it before Ahmed,1 while in the colophon of cat. 29 he placed it after. Ahmed Muhammed resided in the Kasampaşa district of Istanbul, near the tekke of Seyyid Osman Efendi, and was buried opposite the tekke when he died in Dhu'l-Hijjah 1135 (September – October 1723).2 His work was continued by his son Abdüllahir Efendi.3

The illumination of the opening pages is of the type in which the border is interrupted by large ‘hap’ shapes. A fringe of motifs in blue and red runs along the edges of the border, but the main body of the design was executed in tones of gold, with black outlines and the modest use of red, green and orange for emphasis. The vertical panels either side of the reduced text area are filled with bands of gold strapwork, and the texturing of the framing bands includes cable and strapwork motifs. The border elements contain formal arrangements of half-palmettes around a central lotus blossom, from which spring scrolls set with rosettes. Some differentiation between the border proper and the ‘hapas’ was attempted by the use of colour: in the former touches of red and orange were applied to the filler motifs, and the edging band includes a green line; in the latter the filler motifs have touches of red and green, and the edging band includes an orange line.

The brown morocco covers have recessed centre-and-corner elements pressure-moulded with scrolls set with tiny but varied blossoms and azə leaves and gilded. The modern doublures and flyleaves are of glossy paper that is pink in colour.
grapher of the late name Muharrem went back through having established in Hattat, he earned kin-zade he her works by him a Qur'an dated in the colophon district of Istanbul, like when he died in his son reader is interrupted edges of the with black outlines panels either side texturing of the its contain formal which spring scrolls the 'haups' was were applied to the filler motifs frame.
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and gilded. The
Single-volume Qur’an
Istanbul or the provinces, mid-18th century

The colophon of this manuscript, on folio 430b, tells us that the scribe was ‘Muhammad al-Sharif, a pupil of our master, [known] as Şeker-zade’. He can therefore be identified as Mehmed Şerif, a pupil of the eminent calligrapher Şeker-zade Seyyid Mehmed Efendi (see cat. 16). Seyyid Mehmed, who died in 1755, held the position of tutor to the pages of the Bosnian court, whose duties included the guarding and tending of the gardens of the Topkapi Palace and other imperial residences along the Bosphorus. It is therefore very likely that Mehmed Şerif was a member of that court, which would explain the description of Seyyid Mehmed as ‘our master’. Mehmed Şerif’s hand is of reasonable quality, but he was not able to achieve the impressive regularity and purity of style attained by his master. The illumination, however, is of excellent quality.

The opening pages show a variation of the traditional layout in which the vertical sections of the border are interrupted by large haphazard motifs (compare cat. 19). A novelty is the band of strapwork that surrounds the pair of panels above the text but not those below the text. The ground colours are the customary gold and blue, while the tiny blossoms and saz leaves and other details were executed in a striking range of colours that includes pink, mauve, orange and a very pale blue.

The surah headings, inscribed in white ṭiqā on a gold cartouche, are all set in narrow rectangular panels with floral and arabesque elements disposed on gold or parti-coloured grounds, all surrounded by an inner gold frame and an outer coloured frame textured in a contrasting colour. In most comparable work the parti-coloured grounds are restricted to combinations of blue and gold or of different tones of gold, and a wider range of colours were used for the framing bands only. Here, however, carmine-red and green as well as blue were used for some grounds. The marginal devices mark only the juz‘ divisions and the sajda‘-h the bīst‘ divisions are marked by marginal inscriptions in gold ṭiqā. The sajda‘ devices are all of the same type, although the colours used do vary, whereas the juz‘ devices are in a multitude of forms none of which occurs more than three times.

One of the original boards has been incorporated in the modern binding as the upper cover. Faced with brown morocco, it has centre-and-corner elements pressure-mounted with floral scrolls that are reserved in a gilded ground. The double leaf is of red morocco, decorated with the outline of the centre-piece on the exterior and a ruled border, all in gold.

The text ends on folio 431b, and folio 432a is blank except for a frame of rules. On folio 431b, however, there are notes recording the birth of five children. These do not often survive on Ottoman Qur’ans. The three earlier notes, anonymous but all in the same hand, record the birth of Ismail Zühdü on 21 Dhul‘-Hijjah 1259 (1 January 1844), of Ayşe Kerime on 23 Ramadan 1261 (2 March 1845), and of Mehmed Reşid on 4 Rabī‘ al-Akhir 1265 (27 February 1849). The remaining two are signed by Ahmed Refik and record the births of his sons Mehmed Aziz, on 76 Ramadan 1285 (31 December 1868), and Mahmud Refik, on 20 Rabī‘ al-Akhir 1288 (9 July 1871). For the last date Ahmed Refik also gave the mālīf equivalent, which was calculated according to the Julian calendar, giving 27 June 1287.
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According to the long colophon, on folios 304b–305a, this manuscript was written by a copyist called Derviş Mehmend Hindi for an Ottoman bureaucrat. This was Mehmend Efendi, a clerk in the Başpamukhâbebe, or chief accountant’s office, which was the largest department of the Ottoman treasury according to sources from the mid-18th century.  

There can be no doubt that, despite his nasuh Hindi (‘the Indian’), the scribe Derviş Mehmend learned to write nasuh in Turkey, since his excellent hand is unequivocally Ottoman. He may have been of Indian descent, or he may have been called Hindi because of some other association, even one so slight as a dark complexion, as in the case of the calligrapher called Ya’kuib Hindi.  

The prefix Derviş suggests that he was an active member of a Sufi brotherhood, and it is possible that his ancestor came to Turkey from India (or Central Asia) because of a connection with one of the major international fraternities such as the Qadîrîyya or the Naqşbandîyya. There were two ‘Indian’ Qâdiri establishments in Istanbul by the mid-18th century. The older of the two, the Horhor Tekkesi, was founded by Sultan Mehmend I as a dervîsh called İshak of Bukhara and became attached to the Qadîrî in the mid-17th century.  

The second, the Hindîl Tekkesi, or ‘Lodge of the Indians’, was founded in Üsküdar in 1737 by the Qadîrî shaykî Fârîzullah Hindi (d.1748).  

There was also a Hindîl Tekkesi in Edirne, where al-Ḥajî Tâyîyib al-Lahawri was shaykî until his death in AH 1111 (AD 1699–1700). Tâyîyib had a son called Ahmad, who moved to Istanbul and then to Mecca, where he performed the duties of a sweeper in the Masjid al-Haram as a proxy for Mûstakîm-zade and other Sûfis in Istanbul. Ahmad’s son Mehmend remained in Istanbul, where he became a herbalist with a shop near the Hippodrome, next to the mosque of Firuz Aga. Mehmend later studied tibi and nasuh calligraphy with Yunûf Efendi of the Ayasofya Medrese nearby and became a copyist.  

He died in AH 1185 (AD 1769–70). This man, whom Mûstakîm-zade calls Muhammad Tâyîyib al-Ahmâd Tâyîyib, may well have been the scribe responsible for cat. 31.  

The opening pages of illumination have the standard type of layout, but there are notable variations in the details. The border, for example, has the usual blue and gold grounds – here dark-blue and a very pale tone of gold stippled with groups of three dots. But the blue areas were reduced, and the gold areas increased, to accommodate a row of large cloud band motifs in a vivid mauve, which enclose areas painted an equally vivid green, or black. The surah headings, written in white riqa‘ script, were set in gold cartouches within narrow illuminated bands, the fields of which are filled with fragments of floral scrolls on a pale-gold ground; the blossoms were painted in the range of bright colours seen on folios 18b–24. These colours also appear in the very varied marginal devices.  

The covers, of brown morocco, have recessed centre- and-corner elements pressure-moulded with a design of cloud bands over floral scrolls. This composition is surrounded by a broad frame that appears to be 19th-century work. It is defined by two bands of tooling and filled with a lightly tooled and gilded design of arabesque scrolls and rosettes. The doublures are of red morocco, with designs drawn in gold.
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1 31 folio 78v-82r

31 folio 78v-82r
32

Qur'an in 30 volumes
Cairo, AH 1165—6 (AD 1751—2)

Each part contains between 20 and 32 folios, 30 x 18.4 cm, with 9 lines to the page.

Material: A number of watermarked European laid papers, dyed cream and varnished until very smooth and glossy.

Text area: 17.5 x 8.2 cm

Script: The main text in naskh, in black, with reading marks in red; surah headings and marginalia in white naskh, now tarnished.

Script: 'Isma'il al-Wahbi (al-Misi)

Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 18-22 of part 1; headpiece and other ornament on folios 17-22 of parts 2-xxx; text areas framed by rules in gold, black, yellow and red (parts 1, 21, 22, 23) or in gold, black, blue and red; there is a simpler silver frame of gold and black rules; verses marked by gold six-petal chrysanthemums or less frequently by gold swags, all set off with stippling and wire, red and blue dots; some also with superimposed designs, such as six-pointed stars, in white, blue, black or red; surah headings: marginal ornaments marking bihu; the colophons undecorated (in x, xi, xiv, xxiv, etc) or set within a gold rhombus (in x, xi, xxii, xxiv) or a gold crescent moon.

Documentation: A colophon at the end of each section.

Binding: Contemporary

Acquisition: 1975.446

1. Al-Jabarti, p. 188.
3. A sheet notice on Ismail al-Wahbi also appears in the Hikmat al-vadaiq al-khairat al-shafii of his contemporary, Muhammad al-Mursada al-Zahidi (d. 1791), who was al-Jabarti's teacher. See al-Zahidi, pp 93-5.

All the sections of this 30-part Qur'an have colophons, but the form varies. In them the scribe referred to himself as 'Ismal, al-Wahbi', or 'Ismal, known as Wahbi', or 'Ismal, known as Wahbi al-Misi' (in parts v, xxvii), as 'Ismal al-Wahbi' (in parts xxiv, xxv), or as 'Wahbi, called by the name of Isma'il' (in parts iv, vi, xxv). In three instances Isma'il gave the name of his master; he appears as 'the late Suyyid Muhammad al-Nuri' in part xxv, and simply as 'al-Nuri' in parts vii and xii. In two colophons, those of parts i and ii, he gave his place of residence as Cairo (Mir al-Qahirah), and in all but two (parts xiv and xxix) he gave the date. In most cases the date is restricted to the year, AH 1165 (AD 1751-2), but in another five the month or the day and month were specified. From this it appears that Isma'il al-Wahbi began his task in late 1751 and completed the parts in numerical order, for he finished part v on 28 Rabi' al-Akhir 1165 (14 February 1752), part xvii on 23 Sha'ban 1165 (6 July 1752), part xix in Ramadan 1165 (July—August 1752), parts xxii and xxiv on 8 and 13 Shawwal 1165 (19 and 24 August 1752), and part xx on Friday night and the night of 'Ashura' in the year 1166 (21 October 1752).

Ismail al-Wahbi was one of the most eminent scribes of his day and was mentioned by a number of contemporary historians. The longest account we have of him is by 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Hasan al-Jabarti (d. 1855 or 1862), who gave the calligrapher's name as Isma'il ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Rumi al-Misi. The name's indicate that Isma'il was a resident of Egypt of Anatolian (Rumi) origin; according to Mustakim-zade, however, he was of Georgian origin. Al-Jabarti wrote, 'He was called Wahbi and was the leading scribe of Cairo. He was a cheerful man, loved by all; a fine, upstanding character who concerned himself with religious knowledge somewhat and studied under the master of his own, Suyyid Muhammad al-Nuri, until he surpassed all his peers. Most scribes of Cairo were his pupils, and he issued jizyeh to many of them. Certain amirs of Cairo asked him to copy out a number of large inscriptions (alshab) to be taken to Madinah and hung in the Prophet Mosque. He did so and was greatly esteemed. He died in AH 1182 (AD 1773—4) in Cairo and was buried with Ibn Abi Jamrah near al-Juyashi, in a grave which he had previously prepared for himself.'

The Qur'an is well-written in an Ottoman naskh hand. The illumination is provincial, though bright and boldly executed. Each volume opens with an illuminated head-piece, and the spaces between lines of text on the opening folios are filled with work in gold. The opening folios of the first volume also have an elaborate border. The 30 parts are well-bound. The covers are of brown morocco, with recessed centre- and corner-pieces with a gilt ground. The doublures are of red morocco and are undecorated. All these features emphasize the imposition of the Ottoman style of Qur'an production on Cairo, one of the most important provincial centres in the empire. Indeed, cat. 32 represents the culmination of a process of acculturation already noted in the context of cat. 31 and cat. 31 above.
In them the names of the two parties were known as Wahbi and 'Abdu'l-Wahabi, called 'Abdu'l-Wahabi, because of the name of 'Abd al-Wahabi. In one account, 'Abdu'l-Wahabi gave his place of allegiance to 'Abd al-Wahabi in AD 1194, but in another he gave his allegiance to Isma'il. The order for the construction of this manuscript was given on 23 Shawwal 1165 and on 24 Shawwal 1165, the 8th and 10th of which month, and the night before of 1166 (Friday, 8th Dhul-Qa'dah 1166). The name of the commissioner mentioned by Ibn al-Muqaffa' is by 'Abd al-Wahabi, the brother's name as mentioned in the two mawsu'as is 'Abdu'l-Wahabi. 'Abd al-Wahabi was the leading calligrapher of the time, and he was also the leading calligrapher who specialized in the master calligraphy of the time. Most scribes were the scribes of the scribes of the time. Ibn al-Muqaffa' mentions that the scribes of Cairo and Madinah were of the same quality, and that Ibn al-Muqaffa' died in AH 1182 (AD 1769). The manuscript was written in a provincial town, and the calligraphy is of high quality, with the use of fine gold. The page is decorated with intricate designs, and the text is written in a fine calligraphic style. The manuscript is a fine example of Islamic calligraphy and is considered one of the finest manuscripts of its time.
33

Single-volume Qur’an

Ottoman, probably Edirne, AH 1668 (AD 1754–5)

339 folios, 18.2 x 12.6 cm, with 15 lines to the page
Material: A smooth, cream European laid paper, burnished; there are approximately 13 laid lines to the centimetre, and char lines arranged at intervals of 2.5 cm
Text area: 14.1 x 7.4 cm
Scribal: The main text is in black, with red reading marks in red, colophons in black, surah headings in white, marginalia in red
Surah headings: in white
Scribal: A smooth, cream European laid paper, burnished; there are approximately 13 laid lines to the centimetre, and char lines arranged at intervals of 2.5 cm
Text area: 14.1 x 7.4 cm
Scribal: The main text is in black, with red reading marks in red, colophons in black, surah headings in white, marginalia in red
Surah headings: in white
Scribal: Hafiz Muhammad ibn Hafiz Ibrahim, known as Imam-zade
Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 15–21; text frames ruled in gold, black and red; verses marked by gold siwar rosettes or hooks, all set off with orange-red and blue dots; surah headings; marginal ornaments marking textual divisions
Documentation: A colophon
Binding: Late 16th or early 17th century
Accession no. Q385
1. Another Qur’an by this calligrapher, his twenty-fifth, is in the Salar Jung Library, Hyderabad. It was completed in mid-Dhu’l-Qadah 1771 (June 1763). See Muhammad Ashraf 1962, no. 110.
4. See Derman 1965, especially p.315.
5. Cf. Topkapi Palace Library, 4316, 77; see Rado, no date, p.37.

The Khalili Collection contains two Qur’an manuscripts written by this calligrapher, the other being cat.34 below. Cat.33 was completed in AH 1668 (AD 1754–5) and was the thirteenth copy of the Qur’an the scribe had made, while cat.34 was completed three years later, in AH 1771 (AD 1757–8). In both manuscripts the scribe gave his name as Hafiz Muhammad ibn Hafiz Ibrahim, known as Imam-zade, and in cat.34 he named his teacher as Seyyid Muhammad (Seyyid Mehmed). There were many scribes called Imam-zade who were active in the mid-18th century, but it seems certain that both cat.33 and 34 are by the same person, since he used a curious, dhaal-like letter za’ in writing the name Imam-zade in both colophons.

Müstakim-zade recorded a contemporary of his called Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, who was a hafiz, a pupil of a Seyyid Mehmed who could well have produced 13 Qur’ans by 1754 or 1755. He was from Edirne, where he was imam of the Noktas–zade quarter in the Kysik district of the city. The Seyyid Mehmed who taught him calligraphy was the imam of the mosque of Balaban Pascha, and he gained his licence as a scribe in AH 1114 (AD 1702–3), when he was 20 years old. From this time on he applied himself as a copyist, producing Qur’an manuscripts and copies of the Dala’il al-khayrat and other works. It would seem highly likely that this scribe was responsible for cat.33 and 34 were it not for a marginal note in one of the copies of Müstakim-zade’s text used for Mahmud Kemal’s edition. This notes that, “There is another calligrapher in Edirne (called) Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, a hafiz, son of a hafiz. He calls himself Imam-zade, and he is currently the imam of the Muradiye.” This second scribe could also be our man. What is clear, though, is that these two manuscripts were produced in Edirne, which, from the number of scribes active there mentioned by Müstakim-zade, appears to have been a great centre of production for calligraphy in the 18th century.

The illumination of the opening pages is similar in layout to that of cat.18. The text area is surrounded by the usual four panels, but the wider outer border seen in most 17th- and 18th-century Qur’ans is missing. In its place we find a crossed head-piece of the type found at the beginning of individual parts of multi-volume Qur’ans (see cat.31, for example) and in many non-Qur’anic manuscripts. This layout leaves a wide, blank margin, which in this case is filled with a reciprocal pattern of palmette and lotus scrolls executed in gold outline and filled with gold wash, known in Turkish as the halkar technique. A touch of colour was added by placing groups of three dots in red or blue in the interstices of the design. The surah headings in the manuscript are in white riga’ and are inscribed on gold panels framed by coloured borders. Textual divisions are marked by illuminated devices of various traditional types in the case of each juz’ and by inscriptions in the margin in the case of each juz’. The latter are in red, in a sketchy hand, and similar inscriptions mark points in the text at which a prostration (sajadah) was required.

The brown morocco covers were tooled and painted in gilt with a centre-and-corner composition and a triple border, all filled with a pattern of palmette scrolls. The later red morocco doublures are matched by red morocco ‘flyleaves’ with the same decoration painted in gold – a central rose motif enclosed by multiple borders in different tones of gold. There is no flap.
...calligrapher, he completed three of his name as Hafiz named his teacher Imam-zaade, dated 33 and 34. The name

On Ibrahim who produced 13 Qur'ans by the quarter in the 1114 (AD 1702-3), he composed, producing a 2. It would seem appropriate for a marginal note in the edition. This by Ibrahim, a pupil of the master, is that these scribes active there was production for calligraphers. The text seen in most 17th-century manuscripts (see cat. 35, 43) is a wide, blank and lotus scrolls of the bakhtari style, with the text in red or blue. The "white riqâ" and commands are marked by red and by inscriptions within and, similar to the required.

In the corner of the scrolls. The latter red and white decoration are different tones...
Single-volume Qur'an
Ottoman, probably Edirne, AH 1171 (AD 1757-8)

468 folios, 18 x 31 cm, with 3 lines to the page
Material A very thin, very crisp, dark-cream laid paper, lightly burnished; there are approximately nine laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines. The paper is so thin that individual folios are semi-transparent
Text area 11.2 x 6.5 cm
Script The main text in nastālīq, in black, with reading marks in red; surah headings and inscriptions in marginal ornaments in white riqa'
Scribal Hafiz Muhammad ibn Hafiz Ibrahim, known as Imam-zaide
Illumination Extensive decoration on folios 1b-24; text framed ruled in gold, black and red; verses marked by gold six-petal rosettes or whorls, all set off with orangy-red and navy-blue dots; surah headings, marginal ornaments marking textual divisions and sajdahs; decoration in gold only around the colophon on folio 408a
Documentation A colophon.
Binding Contemporary
Accession no. 092138
Published Geneva 1995, no. 30

The calligrapher of this manuscript is the same as that of cat. 33. Although there are only three years between the two manuscripts, the style of illumination is entirely different, indicating that it was the work of different painters.

The opening illuminated pages are a variant of the traditional type in which the side panels were replaced by fillers bands, here containing heavy gold strapwork, and the wide outer border was interrupted by a 'harp' shape on either side. The contrast between the hasps and the rest of the border is heightened by the different colours used. The hasps are filled with palmate and floral scrolls in white with touches in red, all on a solid gold ground. The border proper has the same motifs in polychrome on parti-coloured, gold and blue grounds. In both cases the quality of the execution is high. The surah headings in the manuscript, which are in white riqa', are inscribed within gold cartouches in illuminated panels. The remainder of the panel is filled with fragments of the palmette and floral scrolls found in the border and 'hasps' on the opening pages, and the whole panel is framed by a coloured band textured in white. The quality of this work, too, is high, as is that of the varied marginal devices used to mark each juz', bizh and sajdah.

The contemporary maroon morocco covers are of the classical type, with recessed centre- and corner-pieces stamped with floral scrolls and cloud bands painted in contrasting colours. The fore-edge section of the flap has stamped and gilded decoration consisting of two cartouches containing verses 79-80 from the surah al Waqi'ah (11). The doublures are of light-brown morocco, painted in gold with the outline of a centre- and-corner composition. There are later endpapers of marbled paper.
though there are only two leaves, the illuminations are entirely different, with a great deal of ink having been added to the Koran text. The writing in gold and silver on a solid gold background is especially rich, with the contrast between the writing and the background extremely strong. The borders contain many small cartouches, and the whole panel is richly decorated with fine gold work, too, high, as in the majolikah.

They have, with recessed backgrounds painted in contrasting colours. (Further elaboration consisting of strips of paper, the doublets of which are illustrated in the following pages).
Single-volume Qur’an
Istanbul or the provinces, 18th century

The manuscript is undated, but it seems likely that the scribe who produced it was the Mahmud ibn Sinan, who was a younger contemporary of Mustakin-zade. Mahmud was from Erzurum, where he was trained by his father, and the fineness of his hand brought him such fame that he came to the attention of Çeteci Abdullah Pasha.1

The opening pages are of the traditional type, with floral and palmette scrolls on blue and gold grounds. The side panels have been replaced by five bands consisting of a repeat pattern of half-palmettes in pink on a gold ground. Along the edge of the border two types of floral spray alternate, one in blue, the other in red. Each juz’ and each saidah is marked by a marginal device. The forms vary, but they are all standard 18th-century types. Other textual divisions — bixah and groups of ten verses — are marked by inscriptions in five gold rijal. The surah headings are also of a traditional type, in which the heading is set in a gold cartouche flanked by polychrome scrollwork, but the usual framing bands are absent.

The brown morocco binding has recessed centre-pieces with the raised decoration reserved in a gold ground. The corner-pieces and borders were executed in light tooling and painting in gilt. There are doublures of marbled paper.

36

Single-volume Qur’an

Istanbul or the provinces, AH 1182 (AD 1768–9)

352 folios, 19.9 × 12 cm, with 15 lines to the page

Material A polished, deep-cream laid paper, with eight to ten laid lines to the centimetre

Text area 13.3 × 7.5 cm

Script The main text in naskh, in black, with reading marks in red; surah headings and inscriptions in marginal ornaments in white riqa‘; other marginalia in red naskh

Soulie Suleyman, called Hafiz al-Qur’an

Illumination Extensive decoration on folios 15–33; text frames ruled in gold and black; verses marked by gold six-petal rosettes or whirls, all set off with orangered and navy-blue dots; surah headings, with a similar heading for the concluding prayer on folio 331a; marginal ornaments marking textual divisions and safās; decorative panels before and after the colophon on folios 350b–351a

Documentation A colophon

Binding Contemporary

Accession no. QUR/6

Published Geneva 1995, nos. 32

3. Topkapı Palace Library, MS.Y.2145; see Karatay 1962, no. 1535.
4. See, for example, Geneva 1995, no. 41, illustration on p. 89 (folio 2a).

The scribe responsible for this Qur’an describes himself as ‘Sulayman, known as Hafiz al-Qur’an’. Müstakim-zade has an entry on a contemporary calligrapher called Sulayman al-Hafiz, who was a native of Istanbul and trained with Damad-zade Suleyman Efendi,¹ Sulayman al-Hafiz became imam of the Şehzade Mosque and khatib of the mosque of Molla Şerefi. He died in Cairo on his way to the Hajj some time before the completion of Müstakim-zade’s work in 1787. The identification of the two is not certain, as there were at least two other contemporary scribes called Suleyman who also enjoyed the status of hafiz,² and a Qur’an in the Topkapı Library dated AH 1178 (AD 1764–5) was copied by a Hafiz Suleyman who was one of the scribes serving the Imperial Council.³

The Qur’an is finely illuminated, and the layout of the opening pages conforms to the variant of the traditional type in which the side panels are replaced by filler bands, here containing undulating floral scrolls on a blue ground. As usual, a small floral spray springs from the apex of each of the lobes forming the edge of the border, here somewhat flattened. Between each spray there is a small red flourish, derived from the small cloud bands that appear in this position in 17th-century manuscripts.⁴

The Qur’an has very fine contemporary covers in dark maroon leather. The recessed centre- and corner-pieces have a gilt ground, and the pressure-moulded floral-scroll and cloud-band motifs have been painted red. The borders were produced by a different technique, which involved light tooling and painting in gold. The doublures and end-papers are of fine European paper decorated with small floral motifs in green and gold.
37
Single-volume Qur'an
Istanbul or the proximate region

308 folios, 17.2 x 11.5 inches
34 lines to the page
Material: thin, dark brown paper, untrimmed

Measurements: 10.5 x 7.5 x 6 cm

Script: The main text is written in black, with red and blue headings and marginal ornaments.

Illumination: The illumination is extensive on folios 10-22, with two rows of gold, verses marked by gold dots, and red and blue headings.

Binding: Modern binding, with older material.

Accession no.: 5984-11
37 Single-volume Qur'an
Istanbul or the provinces, AH 1188 (AD 1774–5)

388 folios, 17.2 x 11.3 cm, with 15 lines to the page
Material A thin, dark-cream laid paper, burnished to a gloss; there are approximately nine laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows on chair lines
Text area 10.5 x 5.6 cm
Script The main text in naṣīḥa, in black, with reading marks in red; sura headings and inscriptions in marginal ornaments in white riqūṭ; other marginalia in red and black naṣīḥa
Script Muhammad Kutahi
Illumination Extensive decoration on folios 1b–23; text frames ruled in two tones of gold, black and red; verses marked by gold rosettes, set off with red and blue dots; sura headings; marginal ornaments marking textual divisions and sajdah; decorative panels before and after the colophon, on folios 357b–358a, and after the concluding prayer, on folio 358b
Documentation A colophon
Binding Modern, but incorporating older material
Accession no. Q1840

The scribe responsible for this manuscript, Mehmed Kutahi, cannot be identified among the calligraphers of this period recorded by Mūstakim-zade, and the same can be said of the scribes of cat.18–40. These manuscripts were all produced in the years 1774–1790, immediately before and after Mūstakim-zade’s completion of the final draft of his Tuhfāt-i kbatnātih and his death soon after, in 1788. Either theory that the man fell outside his circle, or, as may be the case with cat. 37 and 39, the information he offers is not sufficient to identify the scribe among those of the same name mentioned in the Tuhfāt. The literary tradition picks up again with cat. 41, the scribe of which, Hafiz Çempə, died in AH 1236 (AD 1819–20) and was recorded by 19th-century commentators such as Habib.

The text was written so that the end of each page coincided with the end of a verse and is set in relatively wide frames of rules that incorporate bands in two tones of gold. The fine illumination of the opening pages is notable for the use of red as a ground colour, in addition to the more usual gold and blue, while the marginal devices marking divisions of the text and the sajdahs are in a mixture of styles. Some are in the traditional style, in which stylized plant-based motifs were worked into forms based on rotating or symmetrical arrangements of palmettes, for example, or composite lotus blossoms, while others incorporate roses, depicted naturalistically on a gold ground.
38

Single-volume Qur'an

Istanbul or the provinces, AH 1197 (AD 1782–3)

This Qur'an was signed by a scribe called Khalil al-Rahmi ibn Muhammad. It seems very likely that he is to be identified with a calligrapher called Halil Rahmi who was recorded by Mehmed Süreyya. Halil Rahmi, who was born in Safranbolu in north-west Anatolia, became a muhadits and died in AH 1221 (AD 1706–7). He was buried in Haydarpasha. Mıstakım-zade recorded five scribes called Halil ("Khalil" or "Khalil ibn Muhammad") who were alive when cat. 38 was copied, but none of these can be identified with Halil Rahmi. Halil Siqî ibn Muhammad and Halil Nahit, both natives of Istanbul, can also be excluded because of their second names, their takhallus. Another Halil ibn Muhammad was the son of the grand vizier Ivaz Mehmed Paşa (d. 1743), but he was himself appointed grand vizier in 1769, and he is therefore unlikely to have copied this Qur'an. The fourth, Naçıç-zade Halil Efendi, a resident of Edirne, where he was a student of Hallaf-zade Huseyn Efendi, qualifying as a calligrapher in AH 1153 (AD 1740–41). The fifth was Seyyid Halil of Dimetoka, a pupil of Başçı-zade Hafız Mehmed Efendi in Edirne; this Halil qualified in AH 1167 (AD 1753–4) and had completed 15 copies of the Qur'an by the time Mıstakım-zade wrote the final draft of the Tefsâh.

The opening pages of illumination are of the traditional type, but the colour scheme – predominately gold, with pink and mid-blue framing bands – is distinctive, and a number of changes in detail of the layout may be observed. Bands of gold strapwork have replaced the panels on either side of the text area, and the lobed edges of the border have been flattened out. The border is decorated with the traditional palmettes and floral scrolls, with details mostly in green. The blue floral sprays protruding into the margin from what were the apices of the lobes are matched by red sprays and flourishes in gold. After the last surah there is a pair of floral vignettes with naturalistically painted roses and other blossoms on a gold ground, and at the bottom of the page is a panel with stylized floral scrolls on a natural ground. The motifs in the former and the colours of the latter give this page a distinctive 18th-century character. Surah headings are in white rifat on gold cartouches flanked by fragments of floral scrolls executed in the same colours as those on the opening pages or in polychrome. Marginal devices in a variety of traditional forms but executed in a vivid range of colours mark each juz'.

The brown morocco covers are almost identical to those of cat. 39. They have recessed centre- and corner-pieces pressure-moulded with an elegant pattern of lotus scrolls, reserved in a gilt ground. There is a border of gold cabling. The doublures are of green paper.
It seems very likely that the work recorded in the manuscript was written in northern-west Anatolia, possibly at Aydarkaş. The scribe, Muhammad ibn Harb (whom the unknown author of the commentary identifies as Muhammad ibn Harb), who was recorded as living at Sivas, may have been in contact with Harb ibn Muhammad ibn Harb, who is recorded as having been in Konya in the 12th century. The fourth, fifth, and sixth verses of the commentary (verses 1-3) are not preserved.

The text is written in naskh script, with a more or less uniform line spacing. The script is of high quality, with a few examples of ligatures and a few decorative elements. The text is divided into paragraphs, with a few exceptions. The paragraphs are separated by a line break, and the line breaks are regular. The text is written in black ink.

The pages are decorated with gold and silver ornamentation, with a few examples of illuminated initials and borders. The ornamentation is of high quality, with a few examples of floral and geometric patterns.

The manuscript is in good condition, with a few examples of wear and tear. The pages are thin and slightly yellowed. The pages are bound in a leather cover, with a few examples of wear and tear. The cover is in good condition, with a few examples of wear and tear.

The manuscript is a religious text, with a few examples of the Quran and the Hadith. The text is written in Arabic script, with a few examples of Persian and Arabic script. The text is written in black ink, with a few examples of gold and silver ornamentation.

The manuscript is in good condition, with a few examples of wear and tear. The pages are thin and slightly yellowed. The pages are bound in a leather cover, with a few examples of wear and tear. The cover is in good condition, with a few examples of wear and tear.
Single-volume Qur’an
Istanbul or the provinces, AH 1201 (AD 1786–7)

The scribe of this manuscript was Salih Vehbi, a pupil of Osman Hilmi Efendi, who used an arrangement of the text whereby each page ends with a complete verse.

The opening pages of illumination have ‘hâsp’ shapes projecting over the border both at the sides and top and bottom. The panels either side of the text have been replaced by filler bands and a repeat pattern of half-palmettes in black on a gold ground. Surah headings are in red and gold carouches flanked by fragments of floral scrolls. There are no framing bands. The marginal devices marking each Verses and each surah are of the traditional type, but the gold and colours used are particularly bright.

The most notable feature of the decoration of this manuscript is the illumination on folios 506b–507a. The text on these two pages consists of the surahs al-Falak (cxiii) and al-Nās (cxiv), a short prayer, and the colophon, and they are arranged within a symmetrical arrangement of two circular and two more or less triangular spaces surrounded by illumination that fills a rectangular zone equivalent to the text area on the other pages of the manuscript. The illumination is in three sections. In the middle is a narrow panel of the type used for surah headings, and in the case of folio 506b the panel bears the heading of al-Nās. Above this the circular text spaces are defined by a gold crescent moon, which is surrounded by polychrome floral and palmette scrolls on blue and yellow grounds, arranged to create a blue central field and yellow corner-pieces. The triangular text space below is flanked by lotus scrolls in gold only on a natural ground.

The fine brown morocco covers are very similar to those of cat. 38. They have recessed centre- and corner-pieces, and borders tooled with cabling, all painted in gold. The lotus-scroll motifs in the centre-and-corner elements are reserved in the gold ground.
Istanbul and its scribal diaspora

**40**

**Single-volume Qur'an**

*Istanbul or the provinces, AH 1304 (AD 1789–90)*

305 folios, 20.1 x 12.4 cm, with 23 lines to the page.

**Material** A smooth, cream European laid paper, burnished; there are approximately nine laid lines to the centimetre, and chain lines arranged at intervals of 1.8 cm.

**Text area** 15.5 x 8.8 cm.

**Script** The main text in naskhi, in black, with occasional words in red; surah headings and inscriptions in marginal devices in white ṭiqā; other marginalia in gold ṭiqā.

**Scribe** Hasan al-Nuri.

**Illumination** Extensive decoration on folios 1b–2a; text frames ruled in gold, black, and red; verses marked by gold whorls set off with orange-red and blue dots; surah headings; marginal ornaments marking textual divisions (ʿārāʾ) and some ʿajāibs; panels similar to those used for the surah headings precede the colophon on folio 304a and the prayer on folios 304b–305a.

**Documentation** A colophon.

**Accession no.** QBA 133.

1. This system of presentation has been the subject of a study by François Deroche, as yet unpublished.

Hasan Nuri, the scribe responsible for this manuscript, used an unusual system for the presentation of the text, which is a variant of the format that has the end of a verse at the bottom of each page. Instead of the usual reading instructions being added in red, whole words have been written in ink of this colour in order to show where the same word or words appear in symmetrical positions on facing pages. On occasion the text is arranged within ruled areas of different widths, as on folios 157b–158a, in the surah al-Shura (xxvi).1

Folios 1b–12a have illumination similar in layout to the same pages in cat. 39, although the execution is somewhat different, and the side panels have been retained. They consist of a pattern of interlace in gold, framed by a green band. Surah headings were written in white ṭiqā in plain gold panels, and other divisions of the text are marked by marginal medallions in the case of each juz', and inscriptions in gold ṭiqā in the case of each būkā.

The brown morocco covers have recessed centre- and corner-pieces with pressure-moulded lotus-scroll motifs reserved in the gold ground, and borders tooled with cabling and painted in gold. The doublures are of dark-green paper with a stencilled design in black and red.
Single-volume Qur'an
Istanbul or the provinces, AH 1213 (AD 1798–9)

The scribe of this Qur'an was Seyyid Hafiz Mehmed Salih Çemşir, usually known as Hafiz Çemşir or Çemşir Hafiz. The late 19th-century commentator Habib reported that in his younger days Hafiz Çemşir led his life in a dissolute manner, but with the passage of time he repented and set about making up for his misdeeds. His past behaviour seems to have given him a certain notoriety, because Habib also tells how Hafiz Çemşir's friends chided him about what he would do on Judgement Day regarding the crimes he had committed in the past, and how he would answer for them to his Maker. He replied that he would 'put all his deeds in a sack and bear it on his shoulders up to the Court of Account'. His sense of guilt may well have been the driving force behind his very high rate of Qur'an production (see below).

Hafiz Çemşir was a pupil of Ak Molla Omer Efendi, and he became a calligraphy tutor in the imperial palace, but his fame rests on the quantity and consistency of his own work. This included calligraphic specimens, at least two designs for inscriptions, and a huge number of Qur'ans, which he wrote with great fineness and speed, as though he were made of boxwood (çemşir), whence his nickname. According to Habib, Hafiz Çemşir was reported to have written 366 Qur'ans, but Muhsin-eade Abdullah Efendi had told Habib that in a copy he had seen, the scribe stated that it was his 454th Qur'an. Credence is given to this improbable figure by cat. 41, which was completed more than 20 years before the scribe's death in AH 1336 (AD 1819–20) and was the 123th copy completed by him, according to the colophon.

The opening pages of illumination are similar in many respects to those of cat. 37. The vertical bands either side of the text area are filled with polychrome flower chains interspersed with an unusual c-shaped leaf motif in pink. The surah headings in the remainder of the manuscript have unusually wide framing bands, and the frame of rules around each text area is also unusually wide. There are marginal devices marking each juz', while biybs and qiyads are indicated by inscriptions in fine gold riq'a. The white riq'a used for the surah headings is also very fine.

Following the end of the text there is an appendix explaining the reading notation. This terminates on folio 418b, where the length of the lines gradually reduces to create a triangular block. The spaces within the text frame on either side of this block are filled with floral and palmette scrolls on blue grounds textured with white dots and natural grounds scattered with gold. On the facing page the colophon is contained within a gold crescent (compare cat. 39). The surrounding space is filled with the same type of illumination as appears on folio 418b, and there are decorative panels of the type used for surah headings above and below. In the central cartouches there are bunches of naturalistic flowers in place of the usual inscriptions.

Folio 419b bears a prayer celebrating the arrival of the New Year and asking God's protection. On folio 420a there is a stylized though well-executed painting of Mecca in an oval cartouche. Paintings of this type are common in other types of Ottoman manuscript, such as copies of the Dalâ'il al-khayrât of al-Jazuli, but they are rarely found in copies of the Qur'an.
ly known as Hāflī. He had been Hāflī’s calligraphy tutor of his own work. Hāflī, and a huge enough he were Hāflī Çemir was told Habib Credence is given years before created by him, side of cat. 7. The letter chains interest in the remainder rules around each ı, ı, while bı̇dın is used for the ruling notation. This to create a triangle are filled with natural grounds a gold crescent illumination as surah headings static flowers in asking God’s blessing of Mecca in an Ottoman manuscript, found in copies of
Iran. The late Safavid renewal and Ahmad Nayrizi
by Maniject Bayani and Tim Stanley

Very little attention has been paid to Qur'an production in Iran after 1600, either by specialists in the arts of late Safavid Iran, or by those interested in the formal aspects of Qur'an production in all periods. Thus the exhibition devoted to Shah Abbas and the Arts of Isfahan, held in New York and Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1973-4, included only one Qur'an manuscript, a fine specimen from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Similarly, only one example attributed to Iran in the 17th or 18th centuries was shown in the important exhibition of Qur'ans material displayed at the British Library in 1976. This manuscript, from the Library's own holdings (Ovems.15,771), has an interlinear translation dated AH 1143 (AD 1730-9). Naturally, exhibitions held in Iran have included far more examples, and the relevant portions of some manuscript collections in Iran and elsewhere have been published. The entries on individual Qur'ans in these works frequently provide important information on particular scribes or patrons, but the accompanying illustrations are often poor, if they exist at all, and it would be difficult to develop an overall typology on the basis of the descriptions given. In this context there is an understandable tendency to emphasize exceptional pieces. This is the case with a fine Qur'an in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (ms.1550) that has twice been attributed to 17th-century Iran. The only grounds given for the attribution are that the manuscript's illumination is a deliberate imitation of Timurid work of the 13th century, and that it is known to have occurred in the reign of Shah Abbas I (1587-1629). In fact, the type of naskh employed is characteristically Indian, and the Timurid features of the illumination would have meant more to the Mughals, who were descended from the Timurids, than to the Safavids, who had helped put an end to the dynasty. The Chester Beatty manuscript may therefore be re-attributed to Mughal India, although our knowledge of Indian Qur'an production in the 17th and 18th centuries is no more advanced. This is in itself an obstacle to the study of contemporary Iranian work, since Indian and Iranian book production were intimately linked in this period (see pp.200-201, below).

Another impediment to a study of the period is the extraordinary frequency with which the Qur'ans produced in the 17th century were remade in the 19th century. It may be that one of the pigments used for creating the multiple rulings around the text in these manuscripts was corrosive and ate through the paper, detaching the text area from the surrounding margin. This corrosive action would have taken full effect by the Qajar period, when the manuscripts would have been all but unusable and had to be renovated. On the basis of the material in the Khalili Collection it seems that this involved remargining, often with paper of a contrasting colour, a complete or partial overhaul of the illumination; and rebinding, usually in lacquer covers. While this means that most of the manuscripts are now in fine condition, it has had the unfortunate consequence of eliminating much of the evidence of their original appearance. It is suggested below (cat.49) that the pigment responsible for this disaster was verdigris.

Late Safavid forms

The main type of 17th-century Qur'an that seems to have escaped this fate is represented by the Boston and British Library Qur'ans referred to above. The Boston Qur'an measures approximately 30 x 20.5 centimetres, and i it is therefore slightly smaller than the British Library example (36 x 22.5 centimetres), but the two books have many features in common. In both the text area is framed by multiple rules and is divided by single gold rules into 24 bands, alternately broad and narrow. The 12 broader bands each contain a line of text written in the excellent naskh hand typical of Isfahan in the late 17th century and the early 18th, while the 12 narrower compartments contain Persian glosses in a tiny red nasta'liq hand. In both cases, too, the surah headings are in white riq'a and are set in finely illuminated panels, while the lateral margins on the published pages are filled with ornamental devices marking the end of each group of five and ten verses. The same arrangement of text and interlinear glosses within bands ruled in gold is seen in a number of contemporary examples, including cat. 45 below. The illumination of this manuscript differs from that of the two Qur'ans already described in that the surah headings and verse counts are inscribed in gold riq'a on a natural ground, which in the case of the surah headings is set with fine floral scrollwork in blue.
The opening pages of the Boston and British Library Qur’ans have not been published, but other contemporary examples, including cat. 45, suggest that there was a standard layout for these pages: illuminated panels are set above and below the reduced text area on each page, and there are elaborate crests and richly patterned margins. The detail of the illumination shows some variation, however. Thus the margins of a Qur’an copied by ‘Abdallah Yazdi in AH 1109 (AD 1697–8) display lotus scrolls in gold that are similar to those occupying this position in cat. 45, but they are combined with a larger palmette scroll executed predominantly in blue and gold (compare cat. 47). Such variations, taken together with the very high quality of the manuscripts in question, suggest a certain erudition in the Qur’an production in this period, and it seems reasonable to presume that this was due to a renewal of court patronage. The main piece of evidence for this link is the fact that the interlinear glosses found in cat. 45 – and the other examples of this type – were composed for Shah Sulayman (reg. 1666–1694) by ‘Ali Riza ibn Kamal al-Din Arda’kani in AH 1684 (AD 1763–4). As one would expect with any new form, the Qur’ans in question seem to have been produced within a relatively restricted circle, since Muhammad Hadi ibn Muhammad Amin Shirazi, the scribe who wrote out the interlinear glosses in cat. 45 in AH 1684 (AD 1764), also supplied the glosses in ‘Abdallah Yazdi’s Qur’an of 1697–8.

Two undated and unsigned Qur’ans in the Khalili Collection, cat. 46 and 47 below, can be attributed to the late Safavid period on the basis of their similarity to cat. 45 and the other manuscripts mentioned above. In both, the layout of the text is of the same type as cat. 45, but no interlinear glosses were added. In one, cat. 46, the narrower bands designed to accommodate the glosses have been left blank, unintentionally heightening the contrast with the wider bands, which have a ground scattered with gold, as in cat. 45. In cat. 47, on the other hand, the narrower bands were subsequently painted with a running pattern of floral motifs over a solid gold ground. In both the marginalia survive, written in gold rub’i in the same manner as in cat. 45, but while folios 1b–2a of cat. 47 survive in something like their original condition, the opening pages of cat. 46 were replaced during the Qajar period, and the late Safavid illumination lost.

The renewed interest in Qur’an production under Shah Sulayman and his successor, Shah Sultan Husayn (reg. 1694–1723), indicated by the emergence of a splendid form of Qur’an that incorporated interlinear glosses, was not an isolated phenomenon. Royal patronage of religious life intensified during the reigns of these two shahs, with the result that many features of later Iranian religious practice were given their canonical form at this time. The dominant personality in this process was the Twelver Shi’i divine Muhammad Baqir Majlis (1657–1698), who was the virtual ruler of the country during the last four years of his life, when he held the post of muhtal-fashik (‘chief mullah’) under Sultan Husayn. Majlis’s most important work was the redaction of the entire body of hadiths attributed to the Shi’i imams, which he published in one huge work in Arabic, the Bihār al-anwa’r, or ‘Oceans of lights’. He also translated different sections of the Bihār into Persian, the most celebrated of these books being the Zad al-ma’ādh, ‘Provisions for the hereafter’, which deals with the Last Things. In doing so, his aim was to make this information available to ‘the masses of believers and common Shi’ah with no familiarity with the Arabic language’ ‘the hope that his translations would ‘give new life to the hearts and spirits of the dead-hearted people’. A similar intention must have lain behind Shah Sulayman’s commissioning of a new set of glosses for the Qur’an from ‘Ali Riza Arda’kani.

Other 17th-century Iranian Qur’ans in the Khalili Collection were written in nasb without interlinear rulings or glosses. These manuscripts are modest in scale, but they are the work of accomplished scribes, some of whom evidently attained a high level of esteem among their contemporaries. This is the case, for example, with Muhammad Ibrahīm Qumi, the scribe of cat. 50, and ‘Abdallah Yazdi, who wrote cat. 12 as well as the Qur’an of 1697–8 already referred to; both men were associated with the Safavid court at one time. The lack of contemporary literary or archival sources means, however, that the careers of these and other scribes can only be reconstructed, and their relative importance assessed, by piecing together the information given in the colophons of the manuscripts and other works they produced. At the same time, the original physical character of the manuscripts they wrote is largely lost.
Iran. The late Safavid renewal and Ahmad Nayrizi

because they were subject to major renovation in the 19th century in the manner described above. To judge by what little evidence remains, it seems that these Qur`ans tended to the sumptuous, despite their relatively small size. One indication is the treatment of the surface of the paper within the text area, which are, of course, the only parts of these manuscripts to survive. In cat. 52 the surface was coated with gold before the text was written, and in four other examples (cat. 44, 43, 48, 50) the surface was scattered with gold. In one of these (cat. 48) a gold rule was set between each line of text, and in cat. 44 there is interlinear gilding of the art type.

Ahmad Nayrizi

One result of the renewed interest in Qur`an production under Shah Suleyman and Shah Sultan Husayn was the emergence of Ahmad Nayrizi, the scribe of cat. 53 and 54 below. He is the most celebrated master of nasb that Iran has produced, and one of the most prolific. The signed works so far identified include numerous copies of the Qur`an and prayer-books, as well as calligraphic exercises, work in lacquer, and a Qur`anic inscription in the Chihil Sutun palace in Isfahan dated AH 1127 (AD 1715). The inscription in the Chihil Sutun palace and several other inscriptions noted below show that Ahmad Nayrizi was a leading court calligrapher under Sultan Husayn, but, as with the other scribes mentioned above, this fact and the other details we know of Ahmad's life have had to be extracted from the colophons of his manuscripts and other calligraphic works, since Muhammad Hanan Simsas has shown that the literary tradition regarding his biography, which was initiated by Mirza Sanglah in the 19th century, is completely unreliable. In the colophon of a Qur`an he produced in AH 1124 (AD 1712–13) the calligrapher described himself as 'Nayrizi by birth and Isfahani by residence', showing that he was born in the town of Nayriz in Fars from which he derived his nisbah. His earliest dated work, a prayer book completed in AH 1087 (AD 1676–7), was signed as 'the son of Sultan Muhammad, Fakhr al-Din Ahmad al-Nayrizi', while his name appears as 'the son of Shams al-Din Muhammad, Ahmad al-Nayrizi' in a Qur`an he finished in Shaban 1117 (November–December 1705). From this it appears that his father bore the names (Sultan) Muhammad and the laqab Shams al-Din, and that at the beginning of his career Ahmad used the laqab Fakhr al-Din. Despite the early connection with Nayriz, the available evidence, as accepted by Simsas, suggests that from the accession of Shah Sultan Husayn at the latest, Ahmad's work as a calligrapher took place entirely in Isfahan. He first mentioned the city in the colophon of a prayer book dated AH 1107 (AD 1696–9), again in the colophon of a manuscript dated three years later, and intermittently during the rest of his active life. In the prayer book of AH 1107 the calligrapher referred to himself as 'Ahmad al-Nayrizi al-Sultan', which strongly suggests that he acquired a personal attachment to Shah Sultan Husayn soon after his accession. Ahmad used the sobriquet al-Sultan again on a qiy`ab dated Isfahan, AH 1125 (AD 1703–4), but he later dropped it for reasons as yet unknown. He did not use it even when he was working directly for Sultan Husayn, as in the case of the Qur`an of AH 1124, which is dedicated to the shah, and of the same ruler's vaqifnamah, which Ahmad wrote in AH 1129 (AD 1716–17). Ahmad's close association with the court is further illustrated in the colophon of a manuscript in the Khalili Collection, MSS 386, which is dated AH 1128 (AD 1715–16); this shows that he had access to a copy of the Sahifah al-sajjadiyyah made by Yaqu`i al-Musta`sims and owned by the shah. It seems likely, therefore, that Ahmad received commissions from the court throughout Shah Sultan Husayn's reign. This period was brought to an abrupt and bloody end in 1722 by the Afghan invasion of Iran, during which Isfahan was besieged and then sacked. At this time Nayrizi took refuge in the house of Haji Muhammad Sarraf. As a mark of his gratitude Ahmad dedicated a prayer-book to Haji Muhammad in AH 1142 (AD 1739–40), in which he refers to the incident. Although Safavid court patronage had ceased, Nayrizi continued to produce fine manuscripts for another 20 years and more. The last work accepted as authentic by Simsas was a prayer book Ahmad completed in AH 1151 (AD 1738–9), but cat. 54, below, which was copied in AH 1153 (AD 1740–1), has a note on the last page of the manuscript recording its presentation to Suleyman Khan Qajar by Muhammad Taqi ibn...
Muhammad Hadi al-Husayni of Rasht. Suleyman Khan, who was born in Shiraz in AH 1183 (AD 1769–70), was a cousin of Agha Muhammad Khan (reg. 1779–1797) and a leading figure in the early days of the Qajar regime. In AH 1200 (AD 1783–6) he was put in command of the army operating against insurgents in Gilan, and as a reward for his success there he was given the title I'tizād al-Dawlah in AH 1204 (AD 1789–98). After the death of Agha Muhammad, Suleyman Khan was a claimant for the throne, but he was defeated by Fath 'Ali Shah (reg. 1797–1834), who pardoned him and appointed him tutor to his heir, Abbas Mirza, in Tabriz.24 Suleyman Khan appears to have been a book collector of some note, since many of the manuscripts in the Gulistan Library contain notes and impressions of his seal recording his ownership.25 These include another N ayrizi manuscript, which he made waqf in AH 1219 (AD 1804–5), a year before his death in AH 1220 (AD 1805–6). The authenticity of cat. 54 can therefore hardly be doubted, and, for the moment, this manuscript may be taken as Ahmad N ayrizi's last recorded work. The date of the calligrapher's death is not known.

To judge by the content of his extant work, which consists of Qur'ans, prayer-books and shorter texts drawn from these sources, Ahmad N ayrizi was a pious man. His religiosity may also have led to his specialization in naskh, which by his day had become associated with the Qur'an and other explicitly religious texts in Arabic, in contrast to nashī'ī, which we may describe in general terms as the style of script used for texts in Persian.26 His style of naskh has been applied described as 'a particularly confident, one, characterized by exceptionally well-formed letters. Its most striking features are its relatively large size and the wide spacing of the lines of text. Vowels were given exactly the same weight as consonants, with care taken to ensure that the vowel signs were always placed at exactly the same distance above and below the consonants throughout a passage of the text.27 The circumstances in which he adopted this hand have still to be analyzed,28 but there is some evidence that N ayrizi and his contemporaries were influenced by the work of 'Ala' al-Din Tabrizi (fl. until 1593), whose work he sometimes copied in later life.29 Simsr has dismissed the strong tradition that Ahmad N ayrizi was the pupil of Muhammad Ibrahim Qumi, but two pieces of evidence lend some support to the accounts of Mirza Sanghāki and others – at the very least they explain why these authors thought that Muhammad Ibrahim was Ahmad's teacher.30 The first is a calligraphic specimen in the Khalili Collection. It was written by 'Ala' al-Din N ayrizi in AH 1218 (AD 1803–4) after a piece written by Ahmad N ayrizi in AH 1204 (AD 1789), in which Ahmad had in turn been imitating an example of the work of Muhammad Ibrahim. In the colophon Ahmad described Muhammad Ibrahim, who had died by that date, as ustād wa-ustādī, 'my master and my support'. The evidence for a master–pupil relationship is not conclusive, however, as Ahmad also used the term ustādi to describe 'Ala' al-Din Tabrizi, who, as noted above, flourished in the 16th century.31 The second piece of evidence is the range of media in which the two men worked. Muhammad Ibrahim was a member of a family that provided some of the leading painters of the late Safavid period and was himself an illuminator as well as a calligrapher (see cat. 50). Like the other members of his family, and in line with a growing fashion in the late Safavid period, he decorated lacquer wares with illumination and fine inscriptions. Ahmad N ayrizi, too, decorated lacquerware, as we have seen, and this suggests some connection with a workshop producing such items. In the circumstances, it is possible that the link was provided by Muhammad Ibrahim.

No doubt because of its quality, but also perhaps because he was a leading court scribe who survived the calamity of 1722, Ahmad's naskh was held in the highest esteem by later generations. Indeed, his standing was such that students of calligraphy in later times were told that if they wanted to 'become something in writing, endeavour to become like Ahmad Khan N ayrizi'.32 A second measure of the high regard in which Ahmad N ayrizi's output was held is the notes and seal impressions on his work. For example, while in Kahrul' in AH 1233 (AD 1817–8) an Indian Sh'a'ī paid 100 rupees for a manuscript copied by N ayrizi in Isfahan in AH 1112 (AD 1700).33 The same manuscript later entered the library of Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and now forms part of the Gulistan Library in Tehran, where there are some 40 published examples of N ayrizi's work. These bear the seal impressions and ex-libris of such leading connoisseurs as Mirza Maladi Khan Astahbadi, the secretary of Nadir Shah, as well as the Qajar rulers.
books and shorter may also have led to and other explicitly terms as the style of particularly confident are its relatively the weight as conside rations in which he and his contem plary work he sometimes was the pupil of accounts of Mirza that Muhammad Collection. It was Nayrizi in AH 1120 Muhammad Ibrahim. date, as meti waqf is not conclusive, so, as noted above, in which the two the leading painters see cat. 50). Like the period, he decorated lacquerware, such items. In the who survived iterations. Indeed, his wanted to 'become and measure of the sessions on his work. save for a manuscript entered the library of there are some ibris of such leading as the Qajar rulers
Fath 'Ali Shah and Muhammad Shah. Previous owners also included Prince Farhad Mirza, a grandson of Fath 'Ali Shah, and Mahd 'Ulya, Nasir al-Din Shah's mother. Another, and much less desirable, effect of Nayrizi's high standing is the number of colophons that have been altered to include his name, a number of which have been published by Simsar. 14

Ahmad Nayrizi is traditionally considered the progenitor of the distinctively Iranian form of naskh that had become the standard Qur'anic hand by the beginning of the Qajar period (1779–1924). The truth is that he was only one of a series of calligraphers who made a contribution to the development of the style, which began at an earlier date. This explains why cat. 44, which is dated 1082 (AD 1672) is in the same style as Nayrizi's. It also explains a note added by a 19th century Persian calligrapher, Abü'l-Fazl Savaji, to a manuscript by Muhammad Husayn Kazaruni, 'Muhammad Husayn is one of the calligraphers of the early 12th century. He was a contemporary of Mirza Ahmad Nayrizi, one of a group of naskh calligraphers whose writings could not be distinguished from that of Ahmad Nayrizi. 15 Ahmad Nayrizi's role was to perfect the naskh hand, just as it had been Mir 'Ali Tabrizi's role to perfect nasta'liq. 16

One of the two Qur'ans by Ahmad Nayrizi in the Khalili Collection, cat. 53 below, shows that the calligrapher produced copies that differed in format from the two types described above. Cat. 53 measures 30.5 x 21 centimetres and can therefore be compared with cat. 45, but it lacks the division of the text area by gold rules and the interlinear glosses. It is a clear and powerful statement of the original Arabic text alone. The illumination also belongs to a different tradition, marked by the use of a combination of gold, blue and red grounds, which held sway throughout the rest of the 18th century and into the 19th. The sources of this tradition may be sought in a type of Qur'an illumination employed in Iran and Iraq in the 16th century but usually overlooked in favour of the magnificent products of the Shiraz school. 17 Indeed, many items illuminated in this style, especially the individual sections of Qur'ans prepared in 10 parts, have been classed as Ottoman, although their bindings betray their Safavid origins. 18 David Jamieson has already commented on the lack of documentary evidence for this period, 19 and the history of this group of manuscripts has yet to be written. Our current ignorance of this subject is yet another impediment to a full understanding of the late Safavid renewal in Qur'an production, which set the tone for the Afsharid, Zand and Qajar periods, when the copying, illumination and binding of Qur'ans was clearly held in the highest esteem.
Iran. The late Safavid renewal and Ahmad Nayarzi

1. Welch 1973, no. 88. The manuscript has a lacquer binding (Pope 1958–9, pl. 277) with a border inscription in gold script signed by ‘Ali Riza and dated ‘125’. This figure has been read as AH 1251 (AD 1735), and the scribe identified as ‘Ali Riza ‘Abhari (who flourished a century earlier). It is more likely that the binding was added in the Qajar period, and the date should therefore be read as AH 1251 (AD 1795–9) or AH 1242 (AD 1782–3), when at least two calligraphers called ‘Ali Riza were active (Bayani 1545–56, pl. 50; 1546–57, pl. 3). Welch 1973, no. 18, is a single folio from a Quran of uncertain date.

2. Lings & Safadi 1976, no. 146; Safadi 1978, p. 64, fig. 12. See, for example, Bahrami & Bayani 1538; Gulshin Mazni 1347.

3. See, for example, Arberry 1965; Atabey 1351; Deroche 1981; Arberry 1965, no. 174 and pl. 30; James 1980, no. 66.


9. On these religious developments in general, see, for example, Algar 1977: 10. Raby 1996, no. 165, for example.


14. Bayani 1545–56, IV, p. 20; Atabey 1351, no. 114; Simar 1375, p. 206, no. 8. As we shall see, Ahmad signed his earliest dated work as ‘Ibn Sultan Muhammad Fikhr al-Din Ahmad al-Nayarzi, while his contemporary ‘Abdallah al-Yazdi gave his full name as ‘Ibn Muhammad Muhsin al-Yazdi ‘Abdallah (see cat. 52). In other words, Ahmad, who we know was born in Naryzin, placed the naskh-al-Yazdi after his father’s name. This suggests that ‘Abdallah was a Yazdi by descent but an Ishafan by birth and by residence.

15. Bayani 1545–56, IV, p. 31 (under no. 62); Atabey 1352, no. 326; Simar 1375, p. 206. 2. Note that Bayani 1545–56, IV, which is devouted to naskh calligraphers, was compiled from the author’s notes after his death and does not reflect his methods or views.

16. Bahrami & Bayani 1538, no. 122; Bayani 1529, no. 20; 1545–56, IV, p. 20; Atabey 1351, no. 6; Simar 1373, p. 166, n. 6.

17. Bayani 1545–58, IV, p. 21; Atabey 1352, no. 216; Simar 1373, p. 101, no. 3.

18. Bayani 1545–58, IV, p. 31; Atabey 1352, no. 203 (where the date was read as 1203); Simar 1373, p. 107–6, no. 4.


24. See Atabey 1355, p. 120, for example.

25. Atabey 1352, no. 192.


28. Meldi Bahrami, for example, thought that the new style of naskh developed during the late Safavid period, exemplified by the work of Ahmad Nayarzi, Muhammad Huseyn Kazzari, Muhammad Riza Shirazi and Nasir Kach Shirazi was a product of Shiraz, not because the naskh of these calligraphers were all derived from Shiraz or from nearby towns; see Bahrami & Bayani 1328, p. 133.


33. Atabey 1352, no. 206.


39. Three signed and dated examples were copied in 1371–5 by ‘Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Muqaddam (Bayani 1347–51, IV, p. 315, nos 338); see Joddah 1991, no. 17; James 1921, nos 49, 51 (the latter written in Karbal’a).
This Qur’an was written in a fine naskh hand by a scribe called ‘Imad ibn Ibrahim in 1629, when he was resident in Khalajan al-Shiraz. This calligrapher, who gave his name as ‘Imad al-Din Hassan ibn Ibrahim in a Qur’an he copied in AH 1036 (AD 1626–7), is not mentioned in the crammed sources, but this manuscript clearly shows him to have been a master of the naskh script in the tradition of Yaqut al-Mustasim. He appears to have belonged to a family of scribes, since a man called Karim ibn Ibrahim also wrote a Qur’an while resident in the village of Khalajan near Shiraz. 

The work of ‘Imad ibn Ibrahim in cat. 44 consists of the text on folios 4–318 and 243–334. The surah headings on these folios are also original. They are in the riqa’ style, written in gold outlined in black, and are set against the natural, dark-cream ground, which is decorated with fragments of a floral scroll executed in blue. Each heading is contained within a rectangular panel formed of two sets of horizontal gold, green and gold rules; the sides of the panels were formed by the text frame, and the innermost gold rule of this frame is often broken by the last letter of the surah heading, suggesting that this rule at least is an original feature. At the beginning of the 19th century the manuscript underwent a thoroughgoing renovation, and its current splendid condition is due to this work, which may be attributed to Shiraz on stylistic grounds and dated circa 1818 (see below). The texts on the first folios (to surah ii, middle of verse 8) and on folios 239–42 (surah xxv, verse 33, to surah xxvi, verse 81) were rewritten; the remainder of the manuscript was remargined; and a single folio was added at the front and back. In the course of this restoration some exquisite illumination was also supplied. On folios 24–30 surah 1, al-Fatiha, was written in white riqa’ on a gold ground within a pair of shaped medallions, each set within an illuminated panel, and the margins are adorned with scrollwork in gold and colours on a natural ground. The same scrollwork was used for the margins of folio 3b, which is inscribed with the beginning of surah 11, al-Baqarah. This text was also provided with an elaborate head-piece, which contains the title written in white riqa’, and the interlinear spaces on this and the facing page, folio 44, were filled with tiny floral motifs on gold grounds. A large number of inscriptions were placed in the margins as part of the renovation. They include catchwords; notes in naskh that supply omissions from the Qur’anic text made by the original copyist, ‘Imad ibn Ibrahim; three prayers in naskh, on folios 724, 772 and 792; and elegant ornamental devices mark the principal divisions of the text and the sajadahs – these devices contain inscriptions in gold riqa’ on a plain ground decked with floral elements in blue, echoing the styling of the earlier surah headings. The most striking of the texts, however, is the Khusrāḵ-i gusār (‘Special qualities of the surahs’), the series of badīths on the properties of each surah deriving from Shi’i Imams. Written in a fine shikastah hand and set in illuminated ‘clouds’, the badīths were added by an anonymous scribe in AH 1224 (AD 1809–10), according to a note on folio 314b, but this appears to be an error for AH 1234 (AD 1818–19), the date given in a note on folio 286b. It was probably at this time too that the manuscript was rebound with its lacquer covers, for these are in a style current in Shiraz in the early 19th century.
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47 folios, 14.2 x 9 cm, with 12 lines to the page.

Material: The text is on a fine, cream, gold-sprinkled laid paper, with approximately ten laid lines to the centimetre. Due to the volume of gold on the paper, its origin is impossible to identify. The margins are of a crisp, light-brown, burnished European machine-made paper.

Text area: 6.9 x 5.6 cm.

Script: Main text in naskh, in black, with reading notes in red; surah headings in red ṭaštā (white on folios 1b–2a).

Script and Calligraphy: Hand of Muhammad Taqi al-Shabharti.

Illumination: Ornamental panels surround the text on folios 1b–2a, 19b–20a, 20b–21a and 41b–44a; text frames of a single gold rule; a band of floral monts of 0.6 cm wide, and one gold, one black and one blue rule; color frame of a single gold rule; text areas sprinkled with gold; verses marked with a leaf-like form in blue; surah headings in plain panels formed of single gold rules.

Documentation: Two colophons and a record of acquisition.

Binding: Iranian lacquer cover of the late 19th century.

Accension no.: Q.617.

1. Sotheby’s, London, 11 April 1988, lot no.139.


The scribe responsible for this copy of the Qur’an is known from three other works. The earliest is a copy of the Miftāḥ al-falāḥ of Baha’ al-Din ‘Amili made in AH 1069 (AD 1658–9), while the latest is a copy of the Sīhah fi l-laghab of Abū Nasr Isma‘īl al-Jawhari completed in Shaban 1093 (August–September 1682). The third is a Qur’an in the Islamic Museum in Cairo, produced in Isfahan in AH 1077 (AD 1666–7) for Hajjī Yusuf, who is described as mu’tamad al-khwawis, al-baram al-idliyyah al-idliyyah al-saltanah [sic] al-khaqānīyyah, ‘entrusted with the noble [ladies] of the elevated, sublime, sultanic and imperial harem’. It is clear from this that Muhammad Taqi worked in Isfahan, and that he was connected with the Safavid court.

The Qur’an was prepared in two volumes (folios 1b–200a and 201b–426a, with folios 200b–202a blank), which are now bound together. The text on the first and last openings of both volumes is set in illuminated panels with blue, gold and black grounds, and the text on the other pages is surrounded by a frame containing an undulating stem set with flowers and leaves, executed in gold, red and blue on a natural ground.

The book was remarqued and rebound in the late 19th century. The new margins were ruled in gold with an outer frame, or karmān, and the principal textual divisions (jen‘ and bālū) are marked by inscriptions in gold ṭaštā. Catchwords in black were also added at this stage. A curious feature of this manuscript is the (unreliable) foliation supplied by the scribe in the bottom left-hand corner of the text area on each verso.

The lacquer covers are decorated with a flower-and-bird composition executed in a coppery tone of gold on a black ground, scattered with fragments of a conventional floral scroll in white. The doublelines are of red paper. Lacquerwork of this kind was practised by a number of artists working in Tehran in the later 19th and early 20th centuries, including Razi San’i Humayun, who painted a pen box with comparable decoration in AH 1325 (AD 1868).

On folio 417b, a prayer for the deceased was written in shokastāb script by Rizaquli ibn Muhammad ‘Ali Qumi Tafrashi on 19 Ramadan 1312 (16 March 1893): this may have been the Rizaquli Tafrashi who was first secretary to the chief minister in AH 1313 (AD 1895–6). A note in Persian on folio 424b dated AH 1327 (AD 1909–10) records the purchase of the manuscript for 12 tāmārs from an unnamed Jewish dealer and is accompanied by an impression of the seal of Muhammad Husayn ibn Mubsin, which is dated AH 1278 (AD 1861–2). The seal may be that of Mirza Husayn Navab, son of Mubsin Mirza, who was royal master of the stable on two occasions during the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah (1848–1896).
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Single-volume Qur'an
Iran, perhaps Isfahan, 28 Dhul‘-Hijjah 1682 (16 April 1672)

The scribe of this manuscript, Muhammad Rahim ibn Yusuf ‘Ali al-Nishapuri, is known from one other Qur’an manuscript, which is in the Gulistan Library, Tehran. This was completed on 24 Dhul‘-Qa‘da 1077 (18 May 1667), and Muhammad Rahim stated in the colophon that it was the sixteenth copy of the Qur’anic text he had made. In the colophon of cat. 44 he recorded that this was his twenty-fifth Qur’an, and so the scribe must have completed nine copies in the five years between May 1667 and April 1672.

Cat. 44 was remarqued, repainted and rebound in the mid-17th century, but it is not certain that the surah headings date from this renovation. They were inscribed in gold riq`a within panels defined by single gold rules, and in most cases (surahs 3-23) the field around them was subsequently painted in blue and ornamented with tiny floral motifs in gold, orange and pink. The heading of surah xv, al-Hajar (folio 147b), was treated in a slightly different manner, in that the blue ground of the panel and the diminutive floral motifs in gold and orange have been overlaid with a continuous pattern of spiralling tendrils, executed in a blueish-white. In the margin beside and above this surah heading there are three illuminated devices of the Qajar period, all with spaces for inscriptions and all left blank. This is the only point in the manuscript where such ornament appears.

From folio 347b onwards varied colours were used for the backgrounds of the surah headings, no doubt because of the large number of headings that appear on the last ten pages of the text. Folio 347b-348a, for example, have five headings, two with the standard blue backgrounds (those of surahs xcvi and xcvi), one (surah xcvi) with a mauve ground, and one (surah xcvi) with a pink ground. Blue and mauve or pink grounds also appear on folios 348b-349a and 350b-352a, where the text ends, but on folio 349b-350a all five headings are on blue grounds. Here, however, three of the headings appear to have been executed by a different hand, and in the third of these (surah ccxi, on folio 350a) the blue ground is restricted to a central cartouche, which is flanked by illumination in a style of gold ground. This confused picture suggests that all or some of the panels containing the surah headings had been reworked, but it may be observed that the mauve and pink used towards the end of the manuscript are typical of the style of book illustration and album painting current in Isfahan during the 17th century. This is also supported by the very similar character of the surah headings in a Qur’an copied by Muhammad Ibrahim Qumi in AH 1091 (AD 1680), now in the Gulistan Library.

The lacquer covers have floral decoration of circa 1800, but heavily retouched. The doublure of the upper cover is divided into compartments and inscribed in black naskh with a shahada al-mamah, or physical description of the Prophet, with an interlinear Persian translation of the Arabic text in red nasta‘liq. The doublure of the lower cover has been overpainted in a primitive style with a depiction of ‘Ali and his two sons. The repaintings and the fact that even though the binding has been trimmed at the bottom it does not fit the text block suggest that it was added to the manuscript comparatively recently.

There is a seal impression on folios 1a and 332b bearing the name Fathallah al-Husayn and the date AH 1277 (AD 1860-61).
hampuri, is known

by Ibrahim. This was

stated in the

colophon.

In the colophon

the scribe must have

used in a continuous

script beside and

below the text. The

period, all three of

the surah headings

are now in the

blue. The

cover has been

repaired and a darkened

sector is not the

portion of the

cover. The
text is written in black

naskh

and it appears to be

the original Persian

cover, as the text does not fit

the space. It is

Habib al-Husayni
45
Single-volume Qur’an
Iran, probably Isfahan, AH 1107 (AD 1689–90)

This manuscript is an outstanding example of Qur’an production at the end of the 17th century. In its present state its main components are two prayers, to be said before and after reading the Qur’an, on folios 1b–23a; the Qur’anic text itself, with interlinear glosses and a marginal commentary in Persian (folios 2b–401a); a long note on folio 401b in the name of an owner, Husayn ‘Ali Khan Mu’ayyr-i al-Mamalik; and, on folios 402b–403a, a preface to the interlinear translation, from which we learn that it was composed for the Safavid ruler Shah Sulayman (reg. 1666–1694) by ‘Ali Riza ibn Kamal al-Din al-Ardakan-i in AH 1084 (AD 1673–4).  

According to the colophon on folio 401a the Qur’anic text was written by Muhammad Riza al-Shirazi, who was responsible for two other colophons produced in the 1680s. One, preserved in the Museum of Ancient Iran in Tehran, is dated AH 1094 (AD 1682–3); the other, in the library of the shrine of Imam Riza in Meshhad, was written in AH 1097 (AD 1685–6). Some or all of a number of calligraphers and a prayer book signed Muhammad Riza and dated between AH 1107 (AD 1696–7) and AH 1114 (AD 1702–3) may also be the work of Muhammad Riza al-Shirazi, although it must be borne in mind that he was only one of a number of calligraphers with this name who were active in Iran in this period. The prayer book, a copy of the Sahifah-i sayyid-i yahyâ preserved in the Gulistan Library, Tehran, was completed on 28 Rajab 1092 (1 August 1681) for ‘the most noble, most exalted, the august, the sublime nawaštâh, and in the colophon Muhammad Riza described himself as ‘teacher of the small boys of [my] royal and noble superiors’ (muâlim-i ghulâmân-i kuch-i sârkar-i khâbâb-i sharfâl). If this and other products of Muhammad Riza al-Shirazi, it would mean that the calligrapher was in Isfahan and had established a link with the Safavid court by the early 1680s. This would accord with the stylistic features and layout of cat. 45, which are a product of court culture under Shah Sulayman (see above, p. 126).  

According to a second colophon on folio 401b the interlinear glosses in cat. 45 were completed five years after the main text, in AH 1106 (AD 1694–5), by Muhammad Hadi ibn Muhammad Amin Shirazi, and the same hand was responsible for the preface on folio 402b–403a and the marginal commentary. This calligrapher’s earliest recorded work is a copy of the Usul al-furû‘ of Kâfi which he signed as Muhammad Hadi Shirazi in AH 1091 (AD 1680–1), while his last known work was on the glosses and commentary of a Qur’an that was subsequently donated by Shah Sultan Husayn to the shrine of Shaykh Sâfi in Ardabil. This work had been left unfinished by a scribe called ‘Ali Riza in AH 1082 (AD 1671–2) and was completed by Muhammad Hadi in AH 1111 (AD 1699–1700).  

The use of two different types of paper, one for the text area and another for the margins, appears to have been based on aesthetic considerations, and, not in cat. 42–4, the result of a renovation during the Qajar period. This is indicated by the survival of the original binding, whereas cat. 42–4 have 17th-century lacquer covers; by the use of the same paper for the margins as for folios 402 and 403, the leaves bearing the preface to the interlinear translation, dated AH 1106 (AD 1694–5); by the presence on the margins of the same grid of impressed guidelines as occurs on folios 402 and 403; and, most importantly, by the continuity in the shîkstâh hand between the interlinear translation, the preface on folios 402b–403a, and the marginal commentary.

The manuscript is remarkable as much for the quality of its illumination as of its calligraphy. The first two pages of text (folios 2b–3a) have magnificent head-pieces, as well as panels of exquisite ornament above and below the text. The margins are filled with scrollwork bearing stylized floral motifs, executed in gold and colours on a natural ground, and small fragments of such scrolls are scattered through the text, which is
5. Among them was Muhammad Riza Tahri (d. 1706 or 1707), whom his contemporary Muhammad Safi Isfahani called ‘the foremost calligrapher of the age’ (Bayani 1345–58, 17, pp. 157–63, no. 512; see also Bayani 1345–58, iv, pp. 159–60, nos 126, 153).
6. Indeed, it is possible that cat. 45 was commissioned by the shah himself, and that the inscription of five years before the addition of the supplementary text was caused by Sultan Khan’s death.
8. Bahrami & Bayani 1358, section 3, p. 70, no. 119. For other works by him, see Christie’s, London, 24 November 1987, lot no. 71; 28 April 1998, lot no. 31; Sotheby’s, London, 22 November 1985, lot no. 613; April 1997, lot no. 92.
9. An unusual aspect of this Qur’an is the absence of catchwords and the placing of foliation numbers in the bottom left corner of each verso.
10. Husayn ‘Ali Khan, of whom there is a fine portrait in the Khalili Collection (no. 813; see Vermeule 1997, no. 67), played a prominent role in the reigns of Fath ‘Ali Shah and Muhammad Shah, and at Muhammad Shah’s death in 1828 he was one of the main supporters of his son and successor, Nasir al-Din Shah, holding Tehran against other contenders until his arrival; see Ardakani 1968, pp. 67–81; Mu’ayyir al-Mamalik, p. 744; Badal 1347–51, v, p. 158.
11. For Aqa Muhsin (Muhammad Muhsin Isfahani), see Bayani 1345–58, 17, pp. 157–63, no. 512; for Dust ‘Ali Khan, see Badal 1347–51, 1, pp. 491–500.

punctuated by more elaborate verse markers than the rest of the text. The prayers on folios 18–22, written in gold naskh, have a single head-piece of very similar design but painted in a different range of colours; the margins are filled with the same scrollwork, but without the coloured highlights. By contrast the surah headings are relatively modest affairs: as in cat. 44, the title is in gold riga’, and the natural background is set with fine blue scrolls. Groups of five and ten verses and the main divisions of the text are noted in the margins in simple gold ‘riga’ outlined in black, without the ornamental frames seen in the 17th-century Qur’ans remargined in the 19th century.

The fine covers are of black shagreen and have a recessed corner-and-corner composition and matching border with alternating cartouches and quatrefoils, as well as some decorative painting in gold. The recessed elements are gilt and have pressure-moulded ornament of plant-based motifs. The doublures are of red morocco, with a centre-and-corner composition in leather filigree. In the central medallion and corner-pieces the filigree, worked as scrolls bearing floral motifs, is gilt and set against a ground of midblue cloth, while the large pendants to the central medallion have an arabesque design in black on a gilt leather ground.

In the early 19th century the manuscript became the property of Muhammad Taqi ibn Muhammad Husayn, impressions of whose seal, dated AH 1254 (AD 1838–9), appear on folios 13 and 403b. The Qur’an was subsequently purchased, in Jama’al-d-Ula 1264 (April—May 1846), by Husayn ‘Ali Khan Mu’ayyir al-Mamalik, the treasurer of Muhammad Shah Qajar. The acquisition was marked by the long and elaborately worded inscription on folio 41b, which is not in Husayn ‘Ali Khan’s hand but is followed by an impression of his personal seal, dated AH 1285 (AD 1869). Husayn ‘Ali Khan was a son-in-law of Fath ‘Ali Shah and, as the inscription affirms, belonged to the family which had held the posts of master of the mint (mu’ayyir al-mamalik, ‘assesayer of the realm’) and royal treasurer (khazinah-dar-i sulabat) since the reign of Nadir Shah (1736–1747). Husayn ‘Ali was the third member of the family to hold these posts, which he inherited on his father’s death in 1821 or 1822, and the composer of the inscription hopes that God will continue to grant them to him and to his descendants.

The manuscript seems to have remained in Husayn ‘Ali Khan’s family for some time after his death in 1877: in a note dated 1861 on folio 1a an unnamed scribe recorded the transfer of the marginal notes to a Qur’an copied by Aqa Muhsin Khwahanwiz which belonged to Husayn ‘Ali Khan’s son Dust ‘Ali Khan Mu’ayyir al-Mamalik.
Single-volume Qurʾan
Iran, probably Isfahan, circa 1700

This manuscript is of the same type as cat. 45, although on a reduced scale. No interlinear glosses were supplied, however, so that the narrow bands ruled between the lines of text had been left blank, and the illumination of the opening pages was lost when new front matter was added in the 19th century. The Qurʾan now opens (folios 1b–3a) with a finely illuminated table of surah headings. The headings, in gold ṫātīj, are set within eight-sided figures with blue grounds, arranged in a grid against a gold ground enlivened with floral scrolls. The margins have a plain ground densely decorated with scrolling flowers and leaves, in gold outlined in black, with touches of colour. Similar marginal illumination is found on folios 2b–3a, which are inscribed in gold ṫātīj with a prayer to be read before starting the Qurʾan, and folios 4b–5a, where the main text begins. The main fields of folios 2b–3a have a centre-and-corner composition with blue grounds, interspersed with illumination on a plain ground, and the text appears on the centre-pieces. The text on folios 3b–4a is surrounded by illumination on gold, blue and red grounds. The surah headings, which are in gold ṫātīj outlined in black, are set on a ground sprinkled with gold within a narrow panel ruled in gold. The background is enlivened with leaf motifs, also in gold.

The manuscript has a substantial appendix. The main text ends onfolio 275a, where it is followed by 13 blank lines. Folios 275b, 276a, 277a, 278b and 28a are also blank, while folio 276b has been inscribed with a ḥadīth; and folios 277b–279a with two prayers. Folio 280b begins with a ḥadīth relating to the efficacy of saying a prayer on finishing every group of 100 verses, and this is followed by an explanation of how these groups are marked in the text, which ends, 'I am the humble slave, the sinner Baha' al-Din Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Qar Marsh. The prayers to be recited after each one-hundredth verse are found on folios 280b–281a, and on folios 281b–282a there are instructions on using the Qurʾan for divination, without the key to the symbols employed usually found with such texts. Folio 282b contains a prayer, and there are traces of an inscription which has been erased. Stylistic similarities between the marginal notes and the appendix texts suggest that the former were also written by Baha' al-Din Muhammad, who may have flourished in the early 18th century. Mehdi Bayani recorded two signed pieces that may be relevant. One was by Baha' al-Din Muhammad A'mili and is dated 1118 (AD 1715–16). The second was completed by Baha' al-Din Muhammad al-Hazim, the son of Muhammad Salih al-Aqili, in 1130 (AD 1717–18). The manuscript was restored and trimmed before being attached to its present, European, binding. The covers are faced with red morocco tooled in gold and are lined with marbled paper.
No interlinear annotations to the lines of text. No new frontispiece to the volume (fol. 2a) with a richly illuminated decoration within a frame of colored flowers and tendrils. The text is written in dark ink on medium-sized, slightly worn sheets of paper. Each surah is preceded by an illuminated initial letter and followed by a decorative piece. The manuscript is handwritten in calligraphic script. It is a collection of Arabic legal texts, possibly from the 14th or 15th century. The manuscript is well-preserved and shows signs of age. It is a valuable historical document.
Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, probably Isfahan, circa 1700

245 folios, 24.4 × 15.2 cm, with 15 lines to the page

Material A smooth, cream laid paper, lightly gilded; there are approximately eight laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines

Text area 16.5 × 9.6 cm

Script Main text in naskh, in black, with reading marks in red; surah headings and contemporary marginalia in gold riqa; later marginalia in red riqa

Illumination Folio 1 is decorated overall with gold scrollwork on a natural ground; extensive decoration on folios 1b–32c; each line of text on a ground scattered with gold, within a compartment at 0.8 cm wide defined by gold rules, and separated from the next line by a compartment at 0.3 cm wide filled with floral ornament on a gold ground; text frames of black, gold, blue, silver and green rules, and outer frame of one gold rule; verses marked by gold rosettes with touches of green, red and blue; surah headings

Binding Modern, incorporating older material

Accession no. QUR144


Like cat. 46, this anonymous Qur’an can be dated to the late Safavid period on the basis of its similarity to cat. 45 and other dated examples from the period. In this case, the original illumination of the opening pages survives, although it has been subject to some restoration, which may have been necessary because of corrosion of the paper by one of the pigments employed in the rulings. The illumination of the margins is particularly striking. They are filled with a pattern of large and elegant palmette scrolls, executed in blue with gold outlines and details. The spaces between are filled with two tones of gold, overlaid with diminutive lotus scrolls in a variety of colours. This combination also occurs in a Qur’an copied by ‘Abdallah Yazdi in AH 1109 (AD 1697–8), to which reference has been made above (p.126). A larger version of the lotus scroll motif fills the head–pieces above the two text panels. The text was written in ‘clouds’ reserved in a gold ground, which contrasts with the greener tone of gold used for the interlinear bands of illumination.

In other respects this Qur’an is very similar to cat.46. They were probably of the same size in their original form, although cat.46 has been drastically trimmed, and each has 15 lines to the page. In both cases the text area is divided into 15 wider and 15 narrower bands, and the lines of text were written in the wider bands, on a ground sprinkled with gold. The narrower bands were left blank in cat.46, but in cat.47 they are filled with gold and overlaid with a repeat pattern of a red leaf and a rosette. Every fifth and tenth verse is marked by the words khams (‘five’) and sahir (‘ten’) in gold riqa outlined in black, and other divisions of the text and points where a prostration was required (ṣajdaḥ) were recorded in a similar manner. In both cases, too, surah headings were inscribed in the same type of gold riqa on grounds sprinkled with gold and set off with fragments of foliage. In cat.46 this foliage has been finished in gold, but in cat.47 it was executed in sepia.

The manuscript was trimmed slightly, presumably when it was rebound in its present covers. These are modern, but they incorporate the block–pressed and gilded elements from an earlier binding. It seems unlikely that this was a Qur’an binding, as the motifs include a pair of ducks in the centre–pieces. The other elements, all filled with floral motifs, are pendants to the centre–pieces, corner–pieces and two series of 12 cartouches from the borders.
period on the basis of a case, the original to some restoration, one of the pigments
striking. They on blue with gold gilt, overlaid with occurs in a Qur'an has been made pieces above the two which contrasts tion.
prob’ly of the rimmed, and 15 wider and heads, on a ground that in cat.47 they a rosette. Every ("ten") in gold were a prostration verses, too, surah wrinkled with gold finished in gold,
pound in its present gilded elements ing, as the motifs decorated with floral of 12 cartouches
This small Qur'an was written in a neat naskh hand in the 17th century (compare cat. 50) and was remarried, re-illuminated and rebound in the 19th century, some time before a note recording a birth was inscribed on the last folio in A 7291 (AD 1874–5).

The new work is of the highest quality, and shows the esteem in which 17th-century Qur'ans were held in the 19th century. During the restoration of the manuscript, the first two folios, which contained the first surah and verses 1–18 of the second, were replaced, and the text was rewritten in a hand of the same size as the original and in a similar style (folios 2b–3b). The later script has none of the delicacy and precision of the original, however, and it is noticeable that the interlinear rulings added soon after show up the irregularity of the replacement lines, while the original calligrapher’s work fits neatly between the rules. This contrast gives us some understanding of why the original was so appreciated.

Folios 1b–2a are filled with magnificent illumination. An index of surahs has been arranged around the central panels; written in red riqa’ within gold cartouches, it is set in green-rulled squares. The central rectangular panels contain roundels in which the prayers to be read at the beginning of the Qur'an are written, also in red riqa’ on a gold ground. Folios 2b–3a are decorated in the same splendid manner. The composition consists of a finely illuminated gold frame around the small text areas, panels above and below this containing the surah headings, a pair of head-pieces and a broad frame along the bottom and lower side. The use of cloud scrolls in this design and the prominence of green suggest that this is Shiraz work.

The text frames, interlinear rulings, surah headings and marginal devices marking each juz', bi'ah and sajdah were also added at this time, as were the kamandeh, the narrow gold rules that frame the whole of each opening. In the top right and top left of each kamand there is an inscription in red riqa’ within a frame of gold leaves. That on the top right gives the key word for inshah, that is, using the Qur’an for divination. That on the top left gives the name of the surah. Catchwords were also added at this time, and words missing from the Qur’anic text were written in the margins and sprinkled with gold. Another touch of splendour was added by enclosing the bismah of each surah in a ‘cloud’ reserved in a gold ground. Folios 25b–251a have text frames and a kamand like the rest of the manuscript, and the text frames are filled with illumination centred on two lobed devices containing a prayer written in red riqa’ on a gold ground.

The lacquer covers were painted by the same hand and in the same style as the illumination. The design consists of a centre-and-corner composition surrounded by a frame filled with decorative cartouches, all on a gold ground. In the main field this is set with a double pattern of larger palmett scrolls and smaller lotus scrolls of a 17th-century type. The doublures have a dense pattern of fruiting vines, in gold on a green ground.
(compare cat. 55)

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green ground.
Single-volume Qur’an
Iran, probably 17th century

The Qur’anic text and the concluding prayer written at an oblique angle on folios 161a–164a were written in a style of naṣīḥ typical of the 17th century (compare cat. 42, for example), but the manuscript was repaired at the beginning of the 19th century, when some of the illumination and the binding were added. The reworking of the illumination at this time seems not to have been as thorough as in other examples, and further repairs were executed later in the 19th century, when the remainder of the illumination was added. The original illumination seems to consist only of the ruled frames around the text areas and the words khams (‘five’) and ‘asbr (‘ten’) written in gold riqā’ in the margins of folios 96 and 12a to indicate the end of groups of five and ten verses, a feature missing from the rest of the manuscript. The early 19th-century work includes the opening pages of text (folios 1b–22), as well as the marginal devices on folios 9b, 12b and 12a, while the ornamental elements dating from later in the 19th century include the surah headings and the majority of marginal devices. Another 19th-century addition is the letters placed in the top right corner of each opening so that the Qur’an could be used for telling fortunes.

The damage that made the repairs to this manuscript necessary seems to have resulted from the use of a corrosive green pigment in the preparation of the greenish tone of gold used as a contrast to yellow gold. Where this colour was employed for the ruled frames of the text areas, the pigment has eaten through the paper, and the text areas have fallen out of their margins. This is particularly clear on folio 26, for example, where part of the ruled frame was not repaired; the inner and outer green-gold rules have eaten through the paper, leaving the red and blue rules between them attached to a separate strip of paper. If green gold made with this pigment, which may be verdigris, was in common use for the rulings around the text in 17th-century Qur’ans from Iran, it would explain why so many Qur’ans of this period had to be remargined and re-illuminated in the 19th century.

The lacquer binding added at the beginning of the 19th century, when the manuscript was cut down to fit it, is one of the chief glories of the manuscript. It bears the invocation Ya Sāḥib al-Zamān (‘O Lord of the Age!’) on the upper cover and the date Ah 1219 (AD 1804–5) on the lower cover, which indicates that it is the work of Muhammad Zaman, the court painter to Muhammad Karim Khan Zand at Shiraz. The covers have a gold-on-black border surrounding a sparkling red ground, which was painted with a tangled group of hazelnuts, fruit blossom and flowers. These are arranged as though they were growing upwards from the base of the cover, a motif seen in other work of this painter. The doublures are also fine. The lobed centre-piece and pendants have groups of flowering plants on a black ground and are set on a brown ground worked with a fruiting vine scroll in gold. The narrow border has a polychrome floral repeat pattern on black.
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Single-volume Qur'an
Iran, probably Isfahan, late 17th century

The scribe of this Qur'an, who calls himself Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mudahhibh, may be confidently identified with the celebrated calligrapher and illuminator Muhammad Qumi on the basis of work in the same naskh hand which he signed as Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mudahhib al-Qumi; this includes a calligraphic composition in the Khalili Collection produced in 1691.1 There are no contemporary literary references to Muhammad Ibrahim, and so, as with his contemporaries' Abdullah Yardi and Ahmad Nayrizi, our primary source on his life and work is the documentary inscriptions he added to his work, which includes Qur'ans and other religious manuscripts, calligraphic specimens in nasta'liq and shikasta nasta'liq as well as in naskh, and lacquer pen boxes and book-bindings. From these it is clear that his father was not called Muhammad Nasir, as Mehdi Bayani thought,2 but Hajji Yusuf Qumi.3 He therefore seems to have been the brother of the late Safavid painters Muhammad Zaman and Haji Muhammad, although the identity of the latter is a matter of dispute.4

The earliest recorded example of Muhammad Ibrahim's work is a calligraphic specimen dated AH 1076 (AD 1667–8).5 There is no other dated example for almost 20 years, but the next oldest piece, a Qur'an in the Astari-i Quds Library, Mashhad, completed on 25 Rabi'-al-Awwal 1287 (5 June 1676), was the twenty-eighth copy he had made,6 and we may therefore accept the earlier date. By AH 1092 (AD 1681) Muhammad Ibrahim was employed in the royal scriptorium in Isfahan,2 and in AH 1097 (AD 1685–6) and AH 1103 (AD 1691–2) he copied two prayer-books for Shah Sulayman himself.8 His connection with the court must have continued under Shah Sultan Husayn, since he used the title al-Sultani on lacquer wares dated AH 1105 (AD 1694) and AH 1126 (AD 1695–6),9 although in the following year the title seems to have been transferred to Ahmad Nayrizi, who was reportedly a pupil of Muhammad Ibrahim (see p.128 above). Muhammad Ibrahim's last recorded work is a Qur'an completed towards the end of Rabi'-al-Akhir 1118 (early August 1706).10

In cat.50 the original work of Muhammad Ibrahim is now confined to the main texts on folios 3–104, both the Qur'an itself and a concluding prayer (folios 308–10b), which is followed immediately by the colophon. The manuscript may originally have had illumination by Muhammad Ibrahim himself, given his use in the colophon of the nishab al-Mudahhibh ("the illuminator"), but this was lost in the extensive renovation to which the book was subject circa 1836–7. Other Qur'ans by Muhammad Ibrahim Qumi were also restored in the 19th century. One example, in the National Library, Tehran, was produced in AH 1110 (AD 1690–91) and renovated circa AH 1235 (AD 1818), judging by the date of the marginal naskh texts added by Muhammad Rashid Bigidi,11 while another copy, in the library of the Astari-i Quds-i Rezavi, Mashhad, was originally produced for a female member of the royal family called Zaynab Begum in AH 1177 (AD 1760–61), again according to the date of the marginal naskh texts, which in this case were added by Muhammad Je'far Husayni Asfa.12

In the case of cat.50 this process included reimagining with a paper of a darker tone of cream; a complete reworking of the illumination; the addition of one prayer at the front of the manuscript (folios 1b–2a) and of two prayers at the back (folios 305a–306a); and rebinding. It also seems to have involved the production of facsimile leaves. A note squeezed into the top right corner of folio 2a reads, Qur'ān psb-i kamartn nab jaa 'n ish borg han ('The Qur'an before me lacks nine fascicules and one leaf'), and the single leaf referred to appears to have been folio 20, as indicated inter alia by the presence of the word ʿafādah ('next leaf missing') on folio 19b. It is also clear that the text on folio 2b is a facsimile, as it was written on a sheet of the paper used in the
remargining work, but there is no sign that other leaves bearing the Qur'anic text are replacements, and we must presume that the nine missing fascicules were found.

During the renovation hadith texts were written next to each surah heading, within illuminated panels. These end on folio 301r with a colophon in the name of 'Abd al-Husayn ibn Muhammad al-Isfahani (fl.1824–1857), which is dated AH 1273 (AD 1856–7). Three other types of marginal inscription were also added. One was a sequence of illuminated bi'ch jizz' and sajadah markers, placed next to the relevant part of the text. Another was the name of the surah, written in the ornamental device in the top left corner of each opening. The third type, the letters written in the complementary device in the top right corner of each opening, relate to use of the Qur'an as a means of telling fortunes (asikhabah), and the manuscript now begins, on folio 11a, with a key to these letters.

During restoration of the lacquer covers a gold or silver-gilt commemorative 'coin' was found in the spine. It consists of two thin sheets of metal stamped with the legend, al-salâh 'Ali ibn Musa al-Ridâ, and stuck together. Similar 'coins' of silver, silver gilt and gold were used at weddings and on other festive occasions as a symbol of good luck. At weddings they were thrown at the bride and groom in the manner of confetti, and on other occasions they were given out as symbolic gifts. The legend on this example may connect it with the shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad.

As presently constituted the manuscript has two pairs of two blank flyleaves of a coarse white laid paper; a third flyleaf at the front is of a European cream wove paper, showing part of a watermark. This last bears notes recording three births and two weddings that occurred between 28 Dhu'l-Hijjah 1324 (1 February 1908) and 28 Mihr 1325 in the Iranian solar calendar (20 October 1946).
Single-volume Qur'an
Iran, 20 Jumadâl-Ula 1107 (28 December 1695)

312 folios, 6 x 4 cm, with 15 lines to the page.
Material: A thin, dark-cream laid paper, lightly burnished; there are approximately eight laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines. Due to the uneven distribution of the pulp, mould markings are difficult to discern.

Text area 4.5 x 3.5 cm.
Script: Main text in naskh, in black with reading marks in red; surah headings and marginal verse counts and hajj and juz' markers in red riqa'.
Scriptorium: Muhammad Hashim ibn Shams al-Din Muhammad Riza al-Khwansari.
Illumination: Extensive decoration on folios 1b-24; text frame ruled in gold and black; verses marked by gold discs; surah headings framed by single gold rules.
Documentation: Colophon: Binding: Lacquer covers of the 18th or 19th century.
Accession no. Q55184.

1. Quoted in Bayani 1341-58, 111, p. 725, no. 1039.

According to a note at the end of the colophon this miniature manuscript was the one hundred and sixtieth copy of the Qur'an made by Muhammad Riza al-Khwansari, but, despite his prolific output, there is no mention of a calligrapher with this name in the standard works. It is possible, however, that he is the same identified with the poet and calligrapher Muhammad Riza Isfahani mentioned by Mirza Sanglah.1 This Muhammad Riza was a relative of Sayyid 'Ali Khan, with whom he studied in Isfahan. He later spent some time in India, where he was a pupil of Abu Nasr Isfahani. According to Sanglah, he received a commission from 'Shah 'Abbas' to design the nasta'liq inscriptions for the courtyard of the shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad—presumably he had returned to Iran. Mehdi Bayani doubted that he could have worked for Shah 'Abbas 1, as he reportedly died in AH 1118 (AD 1706-7). If, however, the shah in question was 'Abbas II (reg. 1642-1666) then the Muhammad Riza responsible for this work may have been Muhammad Riza al-Khwansari. Muhammad Riza's eminence is indicated by the title sâdî al-kuttâb ('foremost of scribes') that Sanglah attributed to him, and he was also described as sâtî al-qalam, 'swift of pen', which would explain how he had managed to complete 160 Qur'ans by 1695.

The manuscript was written in a minute naskh script and has relatively modest decoration. The surah headings are not illuminated, for example, having been inscribed in red riqa' on a plain ground. The first two pages of text (folios 1b-2a), however, are set within illuminated frames surrounded by head-pieces, which were rather roughly executed. In the 18th or 19th century the pages of surat 51 were trimmed, and the manuscript was equipped with a new lacquer binding, decorated with floral motifs in gold on a black ground. The doublures have a single hyacinth plant on a gold ground.

51 folios 297b-298a.
'Abdallah al-Yazdi was responsible for six other recorded manuscripts, four of which bear dates between AH 1079 (AD 1668–9) and AH 1179 (AD 1757–8), and which he signed either as 'Abdallah al-Yazdi or as Ibn Muhammad Muhaim al-Yazdi 'Abdallah. One of these, a copy of the Sahih al-Baiy bi Bayn an in the Gulistan Library dated AH 1179 (AD 1757–8), has supplementary texts copied in naskh by Muall Muhradhan Isfahani, a calligrapher who later executed similar work at the court of Shah Sultan Husayn (reg. 1694–1722). On this basis it is possible to attribute a calligraphic specimen in the Malik Library, Tehran, to the same 'Abdallah. This was signed by 'Abdallah al-Sultanhusayni, 'known as Khoash-hal' and dated AH 1179 (AD 1757–8). If this ascription is correct, it would appear that by 1707 at the latest 'Abdallah had become a court calligrapher. The script employed is the form of naskh associated with 'Abdallah's contemporary Ahmad al-Nayrizi, and it was written throughout on a gold ground. The magnificence of the manuscript may also be an indication that it was intended for the shah. The only other original illumination occurs on the first two pages of text (folios 1b–2a).

'Abdallah's colophon is followed by a prayer to be read after completing the Qur'an, and the manuscript ends with an inscription in red ink recording its restoration. This was commissioned by Mirza Muhammad Baqir Muzaffari-bashi from 'Ali ibn Tahir al-Radawi at a cost of 150 tuman. The patron's title of Muzaffari-bashi (head trustee of charitable endowments), and the restorer's surname al-Radaw (Persian Razavi, that is, pertaining to Imam Riza) suggest that the personalities involved in the restoration were attached to the shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad.4

Folio 12a has a cut-down fragment from another manuscript pasted over it, an addition that was presumably made during 'Ali ibn Tahir's restoration. The fragment bears illumination in the form of a lobed device composed of palmate scrolls in two tones of gold on a natural ground. A central, lozenge-shaped area was filled in with blue.

The tips of reciprocal devices can be seen at the top and bottom edges. The original illumination on folios 1b–2a includes a pair of panels containing the surah headings placed above the gilded text areas. These elements are surrounded by two sets of four panels, and these are surrounded in turn by a broad border of floral scrolls on a ground coloured in two tones of gold. The surah headings were originally inscribed in white ink in plain gold panels, but they were overwritten by the restorer in red ink. With the exception of the twenty-second juz', which is marked by a marginal device illuminated in a sketchy 19th-century style, all textual divisions are indicated by marginal inscriptions in red ink. This system includes the use of the letter 'ayn to mark each rukut (reverence), in the Indian manner. This suggests that the manuscript was in India at some point.

The covers are made of gilt leather filigree over red, green and blue grounds, which must be from the doublures of a much larger binding. The doublures are of brown morocco, painted in gold with a framework design.
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a calligrapher who
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are of brown
Single-volume Qur’an
Iran, probably Isfahan, AH 1118 (AD 1706–7)

This Qur’an is the work of Ahmad N ayrizi, who flourished between AH 1087 (AD 1676–7) and AH 1153 (AD 1740–41), when he produced cat. 54 below. He was the most celebrated exponent of the later Iranian style of the na’kho script (see pp. 127–30 above). Cat. 53 was written in a large hand, in which the deliberate and uncompromisingly regular character of the style is fully evident, and the colophon, which is in black riq¹, is an early witness to Ahmad’s residence in Isfahan.

On the first two pages (folios 1b–2a) the text is presented within a ‘cloud’ reserved in gold and is surrounded by illumination in which mid-blue, gold and carmine-red predominate. Panels above the two text areas contain the surah headings in red riq¹ on a gold ground, while those below are similarly inscribed with a quotation from the surah al-Waqi‘ab (11: verses 79–83). This three-part composition is surmounted by a head-piece and framed on two sides by a broad band of illumination. In these elements the traditional floral scrollwork is set mostly on natural grounds. Surah titles were written in red riq¹ within gold cartouches, and these are flanked by stylized designs in red, blue and gold. The main divisions of the text and the sajdahs were also recorded in red riq¹, in marginal devices executed in gold, with the outline of composite lotus blossoms or lobed polygonal cartouches.

Corrections to the Qur’anic text were mostly added in the margin by N ayrizi himself, before the manuscript was illuminated, for they were accommodated by the frames of rules enclosing the text areas. An unusual feature of the manuscript is the presence of catchwords in the same hand and in the same size as the main text and with full vocalization.

The 19th-century lacquer covers have a large floral composition on a sparkling brown ground, framed by a triple border filled with contrasting stylized and naturalistic floral patterns. The lacquer doublures are red, with a vine scroll emanating from a central rosette, and a black border.
1296 (AD 1676-7)
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regular character
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carmin-red
text, "Quraṭ rūd",
which means the
dual retrieval.
In these elements,
the shaded titles were
stylized designs
and were also recorded
as composite lotus
flowers.

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Single-volume Qur'an
Iran, probably Isfahan, AH 1153 (AD 1740–41)

This manuscript was produced by a great calligrapher, and it subsequently belonged to men of eminence. According to the colophon, it was written by Ahmad Niyazi in AH 1153 (AD 1740–41), making it his last recorded work (see pp. 127–8 above). The colophon was written in a minute but well-composed riga’ hand on folio 116a, squeezed between the last line of text and the frame of the text area. As in the colophons of other Qur'ans by him, including cat. 53, the name is vocalized fully as Ahmad al-Nayrizi.1

The illumination and binding may not be contemporary, but they were almost certainly added before 1805. The evidence for this is a note written in Persian, in black riga’, on the last page (folio 116b), which records the presentation of the manuscript to Suleyman Khan Qajar, who died in AH 1220, equivalent to AD 1805–6 (see pp. 127–8 above). Cat. 54 was presented to Suleyman Khan by a man who is called ‘the least of 1222s, the son of Hajji Amir Hadi of Rash’ in the note, and ‘Muhammad Taqi, the son of Muhammad Hadi al-Husayni’ in the accompanying seal impression, which is dated AH 1222 (AD 1767–8). As Rash, the home of Muhammad Taqi’s father, was the capital of Gilan, it is possible that the son made the gift while Suleyman Khan was in that province, but after 1788, the date of the seal.

There are three other seal impressions, but only one of these is partly legible, being inscribed with the title ‘Azad al-Mulk and a date in the 11th century AH (9th century AD). This title was given to two men in this period. The first, Muhammad Husayn ‘Azad al-Mulk, died in AH 1283 (AD 1866–7), when the title was given to a relative of Suleyman Khan called ‘Ali Riza Quvanlu, who seems a more likely candidate for ownership of the manuscript. ‘Ali Riza was an influential courtier under Naser al-Din, Muzaffar al-Din, and Muhammad ‘Ali Shah Qajar and briefly acted as regent for Ahmad Shah (reg. 1909–24) before his death at the age of 90 in 1912.2

The first pages of text (folios 1b–2a) have very reduced areas inscribed with text, measuring 4 x 3.2 centimetres. These have been set awkwardly in an otherwise very finely illuminated composition designed for a text area measuring 6 x 4 centimetres. The gaps have been filled with areas of plain gold and bands of ornament. The final two pages of text (folios 15b–16a) have the same rulings as the other leaves, but here too the actual text areas are much reduced, measuring 6 x 4.5 centimetres; each contains two illuminated headings and two short texts – surahs cxix and cxxi on one page, and, on the other, surah cxxiv and a prayer to be said on completing a reading of the Qur’anic text. The remainder of the area within the rulings is decorated with scrollwork of different types executed in gold and colours on a natural ground. The arrangement of the text on these pages shows considerable sophistication on the part of the calligrapher, which the illuminator was not able to match in one case. The style and excellent quality of the illumination is consistent throughout and is notable for its bright colours, among which gold, red and blue predominate, set off by the highly burnished finish. The verse markers and marginal devices are of the same general types as those used in cat. 53, while the surah headings, in gold riga’, are set in blue cartouches in illuminated panels that are identical throughout.

The lacquer covers have a large floral composition on a sparkling gold ground, framed by a double border of stylized floral motifs on red and black grounds. A similar double border, but with black and green grounds, occurs on the doublures, where a goldfinch perched on a blossoming sprig from a fruit tree is shown against a red ground.
It is generally held that the manuscript was prepared by the famous Persian calligrapher 'Ali Niyazi in the 13th century, and it is believed that the original was written in the 13th century. The manuscript is known for its high quality calligraphy and intricate illumination.

The manuscript contains a collection of poems and writings by various Persian poets, including Hafez, Sa'di, and Shabestari. The text is written in Persian script and is beautifully illuminated with gold and silver inks, as well as colorful pigments.

The manuscript is a valuable example of Persian manuscript illumination and is renowned for its high quality and artistic value. It is a testament to the skill and artistry of the calligraphers and illuminators of the time.

The manuscript is currently held in the British Library, and it is available for research and study by scholars and enthusiasts of Persian literature and manuscript illuminated art.
Single-volume Qur’an
Iran, probably Shiraz, 15 Ramadan 1197 (14 August 1783)

The scribe of cat. 55, Hajji Isma‘il Katib Shirazi, clearly specialized in Qur’an production, as he stated in a note placed beside the colophon (folio 137b) that this was the twenty-eighth copy he had produced. Nevertheless, no scribe of this name is known from other sources unless he is to be identified with a naskh calligrapher recorded by Mehdi Bayani as Isma‘il Shirazi? This man produced a Qur’an in the Gulistan Library dated AH 1214 (AD 1799–1800). It seems unusual, however, for a scribe to have omitted the title Hajji once he had performed the pilgrimage.

The manuscript is written in a small naskh hand, and the first pages of text (folios 1b–2a) are extensively illuminated in a rather sketchy style, primarily in gold, a dull mid-blue, carmine-red and orange. It is clear from the loss of the edges of the composition that the manuscript was cut down at some stage, presumably to match it to its current binding. The surah headings of these pages were written on a gold ground in white riq’at outlined in black, but in the rest of the manuscript they were inscribed in red riq’at in narrow gold bands. Juz’ and bizb divisions are marked in a similar style, by inscriptions in red riq’at set on gold bands running at an oblique angle between the inner and outer ruled frames (the jadwal and the kamas). Groups of five and ten verses are also indicated in the margin, by inscriptions in gold riq’at consisting of the words khamis (‘five’) or ‘asr (‘ten’).

The margins between the jadwal and kamas are illuminated in gold, red and black with an uninspired pattern of a flower within a lozenge. The text on folio 137b consists of the last two surahs, followed by a prayer to be read after a complete reading of the Qur’anic text, with a heading in Persian in the same style as the surah headings. This is followed in turn by a prayer for strengthening the sight, also with a heading in Persian. The first line of the text (the bismalab) is in black naskh on a plain ground, but the remaining five lines were written with a thicker nib on a plain gold ground.

The lacquer binding of the mid-19th century depicts a group of flowers on a plain mustard ground, and the main field is surrounded by a polychrome repeat pattern of flowers and leaves on a black ground. The doublures are decorated with a lobed centre-piece and pendants filled with naturalistically depicted flowers on a black ground. They are surrounded by a gold vine scroll on black.
of text (folios 30b-31a) in gold, a dull brown of the composition which is made clear in red qur’ān and in white qur’ān. The inner and outer borders are also indicated by small lunas (‘five’) or

37b are illuminated with a lozenge. The outer is in black with a thicker nib
56

Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, probably Shiraz, AH 1202 (AD 1787–8)

Like cat. 45, this copy of the Qur'an was designed so that the text could be accompanied by interlinear glosses in Persian. The text areas were divided by gold rules into 28 horizontal compartments, alternately wide and narrow, and the Qur'anic text was inscribed in the usual black naskhī in the 14 wider compartments. This work was accomplished in AH 1202 (AD 1787–8) by a scribe called Muḥsim al-Shīrāzī al-Husaynī. He is known from at least one other Qur'an, dated AH 1220 (AD 1805–6), in which he gave his father's name as Muḥammad Taqī. The patron is named on folio 241b as Khwājah Muḥammad Kazīm, son of the late Muḥammad Hūṣayn Maymandī, who commissioned it as a gift for his eldest son, Khwājah 'Alī Himmat. The gift is dated 4 Ramada' 1222 (8 June 1808). The Persian glosses were not added until Rabi‘ al-Awwal 1221 (May–June 1806), almost 20 years later. A colophon placed immediately after the end of the glosses on folio 240b gives the name of the scribe on this occasion as Asdāllāh. An unusual feature of his work is that he gave translations even for the catchwords.

The manuscript starts (folios 1b–2a) with an index of surah titles, which were written in black or red riqā‘ within a grid of gold and silver squares. This is followed (folios 2b–3a) by a prayer written in gold riqā‘ over gold scrolls within a pair of lobed medallions with cherry-red grounds. The medallions form the centre-pieces of a pair of centre-and-corner compositions in which the pendants to the medallions and the corner-pieces have gold floral scrollwork on blue grounds. The field of the central panels and the surrounding borders are filled with two types of gold scrollwork on natural grounds. The main text of the Qur'an begins on folios 3b–4a, where it is set in 'clouds' reserved in gold, with gold scrollwork filling spaces in this line and the line below a narrow outer frame of gold and black rules; marginal devices marking each bāhī, jīzī and sadāh. Documentation: Two colophons and a record of commission.

Binding: Contemporary lacquer cover.

Accession no. QUR 25

Published: Khalili, Robinson & Stanley 1996–7, no. 74.

2. The reading of the miṣrāb is not certain, as the dots on the ya‘ and the wā‘ have been grouped together above the sura.
3. It seems unlikely that this Asdāllāh was the celebrated nasta‘īq calligrapher Asdāllāh Shīrāzī Kaṭīb al-Sultan, who was still alive in AH 1197 (AD 1881–2).
4. For a description of the binding, see Khalili, Robinson & Stanley 1996–7, Part One, p. 212.
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India after 1600.
Qur’an patronage and the Mughals

by Manijeh Bayani

In contrast to the examples of contemporary Ottoman and Iranian production illustrated above, the Qur’an manuscripts presented in this section are distinguished by their great variety. Such diversity is to be expected in Qur’an production in pre-Mughal India, since there were several independent centres of Muslim culture at this time, and attempts to meet local or regional demand for fine Qur’an manuscripts led to the development of contrasting styles. 1 On the same basis such variety should have diminished as the Mughals’ conquests brought all the centres of Qur’an production under their rule, a process that was finally accomplished in the long reign of the Emperor ‘Alamgir, better known as Aurangzeb (1658–1707). It would appear, though, that the patronage of Qur’an manuscripts was a low priority for the three emperors who preceded Aurangzeb, Akbar (reg. 1556–1605), Jahangir (reg. 1605–1627) and Shah Jahan (reg. 1628–1668), who were more interested in miniature painting and nasta’liq calligraphy. As a result the influence of the Mughal court on Qur’an production was relatively slight, and very different types of Qur’an continued to be produced throughout the 17th century. Aurangzeb’s pious character led him to esteem religious manuscripts written in naskh, a script that he practised himself, and it seems that Indian Qur’an production came of age during his reign. The best 18th-century examples, such as cat. 68–71 below, are magnificent manuscripts by any standards, and they show distinctively Indian features.

Three connoisseurs

The evidence for the Emperor Akbar’s interest in Qur’ans is confined to notes in two copies. One is a fine specimen in the British Library (Add. ms. 18497) with an inscription in Persian stating that it was copied by Hidayatullah al-Husayni in Lahore in AH 981 (AD 1573–4) ‘for the use of the Sultan’, which has been generally accepted as a reference to Akbar. 2 The attribution to Lahore has been doubted, on the grounds that the decoration is so close in style to Shirazi production of the 16th century. 3 It is true that some parts of the decoration of this Qur’an were inspired by Shirazi models, but they were combined with elements of other styles in an eclectic manner that is not seen in manuscripts from Shiraz itself, and some of the pigments used are typical of Indian work. A number of similar Qur’an manuscripts have been attributed to India in the later 16th century, 4 and it seems entirely possible that an offshoot of the Shirazi school was active in northern India during Akbar’s reign. In fact, one Qur’an published below, cat. 62, shows that manuscripts decorated in the 16th-century Shirazi style were being produced in India in the second half of the 17th century, by which time its products were wildly anachronistic in Iranian terms. The second Qur’an with an association with Akbar is an ancient copy in a Kufic script, formerly in the India Office Library. 5 The manuscript bears a dubious attribution to the third caliph, ‘Uthman, as well as an inspection note dated SH 992 (AD 1584), which is accompanied by an impression of Akbar’s seal and a valuation at 8 ashrafis (72 rupees). This seems a very low value, and it may be an indication of the low esteem in which such manuscripts were held by Akbar.

Much the same can be said for Akbar’s son and successor Jahangir. A Qur’an of Yaqut al-Musta’simi that is now in the Salar Jung Library in Hyderabad contains two notes by this emperor, one added in AH 1023 (AD 1614), when it entered his library, and another added in AH 1029 (AD 1620), when Jahangir gave it as a present to Khwaja Hasan Juybari. 6 In the Tuzuk-i Jabangr, Jahangir recorded giving another copy of the Qur’an by Yaqut to a man called Sayyid Muhammad on 22 September 1618, but John Seyller has doubted the accuracy of this account because, ‘any manuscript written by Yaqut ... was quite exceptional in the seventeenth century, and so when a Koran penned by this calligrapher and bearing two inscriptions by Jahangir is found ..., it is natural to conclude that the manuscript must be the very one mentioned by the emperor in his memoire’. 7 There is no reason to accept this conclusion, which is based on the presumption that a ruler as rich and powerful as Jahangir can have owned only one Qur’an by Yaqut, whereas, for example, at least 16 signed and dated Qur’an items by or attributed to Yaqut were still lodged in various buildings within the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul at the end of the Ottoman period. 8 Of course, genuine work by Yaqut is rare, and not all ‘Yaqut’ Qur’ans owned by the Mughal emperor, or any other Muslim ruler, were necessarily genuine works of the calligrapher, as a Qur’an in the Khalili Collection shows. This manuscript, which has been attributed to Shiraz in the
second half of the 16th century, has a spurious colophon in Yaqut's name, and it was probably as a consequence of this that the book was partially, and magnificently, re-illuminated in a Mughal court style in the mid-17th century. We may therefore accept that Jahangir disposed of at least two Qur'ans attributed to Yaqut, which suggests no more than that he valued them as suitable gifts for deserving subjects.

Shah Jahan seems to have shown a little more interest in the old Qur'ans in the imperial library. He applied his seal to at least two, and he noted the re-accession of the copy that Jahangir had given to Khwaja Hasan Jiyahi, and the ownership of two others, one of them a magnificent Qur'an richly gilded in the Khalili Collection dated 1552. Members of his court are known to have commissioned new copies. One example is a Qur'an with interlinear glosses in Persian produced for Ahsanullah Zafar Khan in AH 1044 (AD 1634), while another was copied for a man called Haydar Muhammad in the reign of Shah Jahan. In one case, that of cat. 58 below, we have a Qur'an written by a calligrapher closely associated with Shah Jahan's court. Nevertheless, the man responsible, 'Abd al-Haq Amanat Khan, wrote this manuscript a year or two after he had retired from imperial service, and both literary references and the material evidence, such as the pieces included in albums, show that Shah Jahan's connoisseurship of calligraphy concentrated almost entirely on the nasta'liq tradition. This excluded Arabic texts in general and the Qur'an in particular. In one field alone, that of monumental calligraphy, did Shah Jahan and his father and grandfather show a preference for Qur'anic and other Arabic texts and for the Six Pens, the group of writing styles to which naskh belongs. Thus Amanat Khan began to design inscriptions in the thuluth script for Jahangir, as at Akbar's tomb in Lahore, and continued to work for Shah Jahan on the Taj Mahal and other major projects until he retired in 1659 (see pp. 178–81 below).

A change of policy

Under Shah Jahan's son and successor, Aurangzeb, the Mughals' religious policy was reversed, and the earlier openness towards Hinduism and other religions, which had developed into an extreme form of eclecticism under Akbar, was replaced by stern militancy. One of the first victims of this change was Aurangzeb's brother Darashakoh, who had been Shah Jahan's heir apparent. After his final defeat near Ajmir in 1659 he was captured and put to death, the pretext for his execution being his 'heretical' views.

A note in cat. 72 below, written in a minute nasta'liq hand and dated 23 May 1659, associates this richly gilded Qur'an with the defeated prince and claims that he was given it by his mother, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in 1631. This is one of the earliest Qur'ans that can be linked to a member of the Mughal dynasty, and only the second, after Hibatallah al-Husayni's Lahore Qur'an of 1573–4, to which an Indian provenance can be attributed. Similar notes appear on cat. 60, which was copied by Awrangzeb's daughter, Zinat al-Nisa', and a Qur'an that once belonged to both Awrangzeb and his son Prince A'zam Shah, which is now in the Salar Jung Library (Ms. 199). This Qur'an, the work of a scribe called Haji 'Abd al-Samad ibn Haji Ashraf, was dated 1686, had been presented to Awrangzeb in 1702 by Ghiyath al-Din, paymaster of the jālāb of Ahmadabad. Clearly it had not been commissioned by the emperor himself. Indeed, the earliest Qur'an with an explicit dedication to a ruling member of the dynasty that I have been able to locate is one copied for Muhammad Shah (reg. 1719–1748) and completed at Shahjahanabad (Delhi) on 23 Ramadan 1143 (April 1731). The scribe responsible was Muhammad Riza ibn Muhammad Taqi Tabrizi, who may also have been responsible for cat. 67 below.

Despite the lack of Qur'ans explicitly dedicated to the new emperor, Awrangzeb's interest in Qur'ans and naskh calligraphy cannot be denied. Through manuscripts and literary references it can be traced to the period before the civil war that brought him to the throne. A Qur'an copied by Ibrahim Sultan, the grandson of Timur, in AH 830 (AD 1427) and now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art contains a long note that Awrangzeb added in AH 1048 (AD 1638–9), for example, and we learn from a later source that in the reign of Shah Jahan a scribe whose name was Abdallah, but who was 'better known as 'Abd al-Baqi Haddad', came to India from Iran, where 'in recent times he had borne off the pole ball of precedence' among the writers of naskh and 'had made naskh the bride of calligraphy by embellishing and adorning it in a new manner'. 'Abd al-Baqi presented Prince Awrangzeb with a Qur'an contained
Qu'ran patronage and the Mughals

on a mere 30 folios and other manuscripts he had written and was honoured with the title Yaqt-raqam. That Awrangzeb's interest continued after his accession is shown by the appearance of the seal he used as emperor on a 15th-century Qu'ran he had inherited from his father, and on a rare nasta'liq Qu'ran copied in 1623 or earlier. Awrangzeb also added a note to the Yaqt Qu'ran that Jahangir had given to Khwaja Hasan Juyhari, recording that he had given it back to Hasan's grandson, Khwaja Muhammad Ya'qub. Other evidence is the more frequent appearance on Qu'rans of notes and seal impressions of Awrangzeb's officials — that is, of men who used the sobriquet 'Alangirshahi or some other term to show their attachment to him; examples include four copies in the Khalili Collection, among them the Qu'ran of 1552 he inherited from his father and cat.60 below.

The emperor was also a naskh calligrapher in his own right. According to Muhammad Saqi Musta'id Khan (d.1724), 'The handwriting of His Majesty in the naskh style was exceedingly firm and well-formed, and he showed great energy in writing it. ... He could also write the nasta'liq and sikka styles hands very well.' Awrangzeb's competency in naskh is confirmed by the specimen of the emperor's hand found in Jahangir's Yaqt Qu'ran referred to above. Musta'id Khan also recorded that Awrangzeb had prepared two copies of the Qu'rn in his own hand to the Holy Places, after 7000 rupees had been spent on the text area (laab), the rulings in gold and silver, and the binding. According to an earlier history, the 'Alangir-nama' of Muhammad Kazim (d.1683), the first Qu'rn was prepared while he was still a prince, and the second after his accession. Other copies made by him have been reported, though a modern commentator has also stated that Awrangzeb did not sign his work. If this is true, this practice may be attributed to a belief that authorship of a good deed need not, and should not, be made public since God, from whom any reward would come, was omniscient. If this was the general custom in his reign, it would explain our ignorance of court patronage in this period, as it would have left us no calligraphers or dedications.

Awrangzeb's children, both princes and princesses, were brought up as good Muslims, and we are told that several acquired skills associated with their faith, including naskh calligraphy. His eldest daughter, Zeb al-Nisa, was said to have received 30,000 gold coins from Awrangzeb for having learnt the Qu'rn by heart, a feat also achieved by Muhammad Sultan, Muhammad Mus'zzam, Badr al-Nisa and Muhammad Kambakhsh. Muhammad Mus'zzam, who later reigned as the Emperor Shah 'Alam (rg.1707-1712), also learnt the art of Qu'rn recitation, and Zeb al-Nisa and Muhammad Kambakhsh were skilled 'in writing various kinds of hand'. Zeb al-Nisa appreciated the value of learning and skill; and all her heart was set on the collection, copying and reading of books and she turned her kind attention to improving the lot of scholars and gifted men. The result was that the library a theke of which no man has seen; and large numbers of theologians, scholars, pious men, poets, scribes and calligraphists by this means came to enjoy the bounty of this lady hidden in the harem of grandeur; e.g., Mulli Sa'd-ud-din Aribbil by her order took up his residence in Kashmir and engaged in making a translation (into Persian) of the 'Great Commentary on the Qu'rn', which came to be entitled Zeb-i-tafsan, 'The ornament of commentaries'. Other tracts and books have been composed in her honoured name. Evidence of the pious activities engaged in by Awrangzeb's daughters is also provided by cat.60 below. One of them signed this Qu'rn enigmatically as 'the daughter of Muhyi'l-Din', and two notes, on folios 12 and 178b, inform us that this was his second eldest daughter, Zinat al-Nisa, whom her father had brought up 'in the knowledge of the doctrines and the necessary rules of the Faith'.

Awrangzeb's legacy

Another indication of a change in patronage under Awrangzeb is the greater notice given to naskh calligraphers in literary works. One is the Mir'at al-alam ('Mirror of the world'), a general history to 1667 attributed to Muhammad Bahktiar Khan (d.1668) but actually written by Muhammad Baza Sarajahpur. It contains a series of biographical entries on calligraphers back to the time of Ibn Muqlah, who was credited with inventing the modern, 'proportioned' form of naskh in the 13th
Single-volume Qur’an
Probably India, 17th century

This unusual manuscript has a short colophon that gives only the date of completion, AH 914 (AD 1508–9), which seems improbably early. There is therefore no explicit evidence of when or where it was produced. Nevertheless, a number of minor features, such as the division of the text into quarters of a juz’ and the use of the letter ‘ayn to mark each raka‘ (the reverence made by bowing low enough for the palms to touch the knees), indicate an Indian provenance, while the illumination seems to be Indian work of the 17th century. By the late 19th century the Qur’an was in Iran, where it was rebound in fine lacquer covers.1

The most striking aspect of cat. 57 is its format. Even though the manuscript has evidently been cut down at some stage, the pages are large relative to the size of the script; this is a small, regular naskh hand. This fact, combined with the arrangement of the text in 27 lines to the page, means that the calligrapher has been able to include the whole Qur’anic text on a mere 72 folios (143 pages). This format recalls a Qur’an manuscript reportedly presented to the Emperor Avaranjeb by the Iranian calligrapher ‘Abd al-Baqi Haddad, who had contained the full text on a mere 30 folios (see p. 173).2

The compactness of cat. 57 was achieved in part by running on the surahs one after another – only a short space within the line was left for the surah headings, which were added in red riqā‘. In many cases the spaces left for the headings were not large enough, and the missing information was placed in the adjacent margin. Divisions of the text, prostrations and some reading instructions were also recorded in the margin, in red naskh.

Each raka‘ is also indicated by a gold disc with a decorative outline and finials in blue.

On folios 1b–2a the text is surrounded by a band of illumination 2.5 centimetres wide, which was executed in colours that are now dull. The main motif is a series of gold cartouches containing a polychrome lotus-scroll pattern of a type employed in Mughal manuscripts of the 17th century. There is also a large ‘hasp’ on each side, filled with the same decoration, and a head-piece above the text on folio 1b. The text on these pages is written in ‘clouds’ reserved in gold. On the remaining pages there is an outer border (kamand) 0.9 centimetres wide consisting of an undulating leaf scroll between two sets of gold rules. The leaf scroll was executed in gold on a natural ground, and on folios 2b, 3a and 7a the space between the text area and the kamand is occupied by floral motifs in the same technique.
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century.22 The majority of Mughal calligraphers were famous for their skill in nastālīq; a few were also competent in naskh and the other Six Pencils;23 but only four were known for their expertise in naskh above all else. One was Amanat Khan, who, as we have seen, flourished under Jahangir and Shah Jahan,24 while the remaining three were active, at least in part, under Aurangzeb—a modest but definite increase. The scribes in question were Haji Qasim, who was taught by Fathallah Shirazi and whose own pupils included Prince Aurangzeb himself; Haji Abdallah, who was celebrated for his thulūb and riqa' hands as well as his naskh, and who managed to make an excellent copy of the Qur’an during the 15 days of the journey when he was summoned from Lahore to Delhi by Prince Muhammad Mu’azzam; and Sa'id Amrad (probably Muhammad Sa'id Ansari), who had come to India after establishing a reputation in Iran and Mawara’-al-Nahr, and who was particularly skilled in writing in gold.25

A later and more specialized work is the Tādikirah-i khrashahmarvākān (’Memorial of the calligraphers’), the author of which, Ghulam Muhammad Dihlavi, is better known as Hafeqalamī (d.1835). Hafeqalamī provided entries on a number of other naskh scribes active in Aurangzeb’s reign and of his successors down to the reign of the Emperor Akbar II (1866–77); and in these one can trace the development of a naskh tradition that had its origins in the patronage available at Aurangzeb’s court. In this source, however, the tradition was not shown as a single strand derived from a great figure of the past, as we find in Ottoman and Iranian literature on calligraphy; and two scribes working in one style of naskh, that of Qazi ‘Ismatallah Khan (see below), were recorded as changing to another, described as lāhewvāz (’mixed with that of Lahore’), because it was preferred by their Rohilla Afghan patrons.26 There was also foreign competition, especially from the Isfahani school of naskh associated with Ahmad Nayrizi (fl.1676–1735; see pp.127–31 above). Work in his style was known in India (see pp.200–201 and cat.66 below), and exponents of it were active there in the 18th century.27

The first tradition identified by Hafeqalamī goes back to the ‘Abd al-Baqi Haddad referred to above. Before he returned home to Iran, ‘Abd al-Baqi trained a number of pupils, most of whom are known, also received the title Yaqt-raqam (Khan).28 One of these pupils was the thulūb and naskh calligrapher Muhammad ‘Azif, who, according to Hafeqalamī’s editor, M. Hidayat Husain, received the title Yaqt-raqam Khan from the Emperor Shah Alam II and developed a new style of naskh that became popular in India.29 Five of the many pupils of Muhammad ‘Azif were named, including his nephew ‘Ismatallah, whose follower, Ghulam Husayn Kallu Khan, had been active in Hafeqalamī’s own time.30 A second tradition begins with the Qazi ‘Ismatallah Khan referred to above (see also cat.71 below), who, like ‘Abd al-Baqi Haddad, was credited with ‘seizing the polo ball of precedence’ from his contemporaries and developing a new style of naskh. He produced a large number of Qur’ans and other works and died in AH 1186 (AD 1772–3). Qazi ‘Ismatallah’s school included Hafiz Abu’l-Hasan, who was calligraphy teacher to the future Emperor Akbar II, while another pupil, Mir Imam ‘Ali ibn Mir Imam al-Din, and his son and pupil Mir Jalal al-Din, were attached to the heir apparent, Prince Abu’l-Muzzaffar, who was to be the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah II (reg.1837–1858). The Qazi’s pupils also included his elder brother Fazullah Khan, his nephew Thalallah Khan, and another relative, Miyan Muhammad, who moved to Lucknow after Qazi ‘Ismatallah’s death and was employed as calligraphy tutor to the children of Nawab Hasan Riza Khan.41

By the time that Hafeqalamī was writing, in the early 19th century, the calligraphers of the centres in his orbit, such as Lucknow, Rampur and Delhi, were part of a pattern of provincial schools that covered much of the subcontinent. Reference has already been made to Lahore, and others were to be found in Kashmir to the north (see pp.228–9 below), in Sind to the east,42 and in the Deccan to the south, which, as one would expect, is well-represented in the Salar Jung collection in Hyderabad.43 These local schools were the heirs of a great Indian tradition that had risen above the stylistic heterogeneity and dependence on Iranian models that characterized the 17th century (cat.57–63, for example) to produce some of the most magnificent manuscripts produced anywhere in the Islamic world in the 18th century (cat.68–71, for example). Unfortunately, however, so little attention has been paid to any aspect of Qur’an production in India that it is difficult to evaluate this evidence in the thoroughgoing manner it deserves.
in nasta'liq; a few are set in the Jahuqir and Shah Shazes style, and a few modest but definite names are written in naskh. Shirazi and his style, as recorded for his shahāb and name, were refined by the Ḥafiz Qarqin during the time of the prince Muhammad ibn Ahmad, then the main patron. The style was spread to India after establishment of writing in gold. 35 (For a discussion of the calligraphers see Bābūr, 48, 179, 213.) Ḥafiz Qarqin and his successors are generally said to have been responsible for the development of this unique style of the past, as we now see. Some of this style of naskh, at least, is called shallāqī and is described as naskhī básīlī.
Amanat Khan.  
Master calligrapher of the Taj Mahal  

by Manijeh Bayani

Much of our knowledge of the history of Islamic calligraphy derives from the short biographies of prominent scribes included in a variety of literary works from the medieval period onwards. In most cases the authors of these accounts attempted to give examples of each master’s output. Sometimes these included a particularly well-known copy of the Qur’an, or of the works of Firdawsi or Nizami. Other writers simply listed the number of manuscripts in a given category that the calligrapher had copied – Qur’ans, hadiths, prayer books, albums, and so forth. Special note was made of any monumental examples of the calligrapher’s hand. As most calligraphers lived relatively uneventful lives, their association with a major, or even a minor, building was always a matter worthy of mention. Thus we know that Arghun al-Kamili (fl. 1300–132) produced the inscriptions for several buildings in Baghdad, and that ‘Abdallah al-Sayrafi (fl. 1320–46) did the same for many of the monuments of Tabriz, even though few signed monumental inscriptions produced before the mid-16th century survive. Another calligrapher of the first half of the 14th century, Yahya al-Jamali al-Sufi (fl. 1330–51), wrote an inscription at Persepolis and for Tashi Khatun, mother of the Injuid monarch Abu Ishaq, both of which survive; and Syeh Hamdallah, who died in or before 1325, composed inscriptions that still grace the mosque of Sultan Bayezid I in Istanbul, and authentic examples of his hand on paper can still be found in the same city’s libraries. But such instances are the exception.

From the mid-16th century surviving examples of monumental calligraphy by famous masters are more plentiful. Hasan Celebi, the adopted son of Ahmed Karahisari, designed inscriptions for the Suleymaniye mosque in Istanbul, and many of the Qur’ans and prayer books he produced also survive, though his monumental work has in some cases been subject to various restorations. There are also numerous Iranian examples of monumental inscriptions signed by masters of the mid-16th to 19th centuries, usually executed on tiles. India, too, is rich in signed monumental inscriptions, some painted, others executed in tilework or stone. A substantial portion of these were the work of Iranian émigré calligraphers, such as Jamal al-Din Muhammad ibn Husayn Fakhkhar Shirazi. His father, Jalal al-Din Husayn, was a well-known calligrapher of Shiraz, and there are several examples of his work on paper in public and private collections, including the Khalilî Collection. The son migrated to the Deccan, where in the 1592–93 he produced the inscriptions for many buildings in Hyderabad, capital of the Qutbshahi sultans. At least two examples of his work on paper are also known, one of which was formerly part of a royal Deccani album.

Other calligraphers from Iran were employed at the Mughal courts in northern India, and one of these, ‘Abd al-Haqq Amanat Khan Shirazi, enjoyed particular success both as an official in the service of the Mughal emperors and as the artist responsible for the inscriptions on a series of major monuments, including the most famous of all Islamic buildings in India, the Taj Mahal in Agra. Although ‘Abd al-Haqq’s activity as a designer of monumental inscriptions is now well-documented, his work on paper has remained a matter for speculation. It is most unlikely that ‘Abd al-Haqq copied manuscripts for a living, given the high status he enjoyed, but the copies he held appear to have included that of head of the royal library, and he may well have copied books in that capacity. None, however, has yet been identified, and the only manuscript so far discovered that bears the name of ‘Abd al-Haqq as scribe is a Qur’an in the Khalilî Collection, cat. 38 below, which is therefore of some importance; it was completed in AH 1050 (AD 1640–41), towards the end of the calligrapher’s life, when he was living in retirement near Lahore.

From ‘Abd al-Haqq to Amanat Khan

‘Abd al-Haqq Amanat Khan was the brother of Shukrallah Azfaz Khan Shirazi (1570–1639), a Persian man of letters who emigrated to India by 1608. Their father’s name is given as Qasim, and it has been suggested that he was the Qasim Khatib who made a copy of the Khamsah of Nizami in Shiraz in 1584. This is not unlikely, as throughout the 16th century Shiraz was famous for its scribal families, whose activities extended over several generations. When Shukrallah moved to India, he gained the patronage of ‘Abd al-Rahim Khan Khan, the celebrated courtier of the Emperor Jahangir (1605–1627),
Amanat Khan and the Taj Mahal

and in 1621 or thereabouts he became the personal secretary of Prince Khurram, the future Emperor Shah Jahan (reg. 1628–1658).14 ‘Abd al-Haqq must have accompanied Shukrallah to India, or followed very soon after, and he evidently took immediate advantage of the exalted connections his brother established, for his earliest work was on a project the Emperor Jahangir initiated about 1668. This was the final stage in the construction of the tomb of Sikandra, near Agra, of Jahangir’s father, Akbar, who had died in 1605, and ‘Abd al-Haqq was responsible for the long dedicatory inscription which frames the arch of the main gateway. The work, completed in AH 1022 (AD 1613–14), was executed in relief in white marble, and it shows that ‘Abd al-Haqq had acquired some facility in the grand tradition of monumental inscriptions.15

During Jahangir’s reign ‘Abd al-Haqq was appointed to an important position in the emperor’s library, as is shown by the presence of impressions of his seal on manuscripts that once formed part of this collection.16 An impression of a seal from this period which bears the legend, ‘Abd al-Haqq ibn Qasim al-Shirazi, and the date AH 1037 (AD 1627–8) is found, for example, on the Razm-namah manuscript commissioned by the Emperor Akbar in 1582 and now in Jaipur,17 and the same seal was used on

a copy of the Divan of Hafiz of AH 971 (AD 1570) in the Khalili Collection (see p.178). ‘Abd al-Haqq’s connection with the library continued in the reign of Shah Jahan, for a seal engraved with the legend, ‘Abd al-Haqq Shahjahani, was used on a copy of the Divan of Jami which once belonged to this emperor and is now in the Gulistan Library in Tehran.18 Two other manuscripts in the Gulistan Library,19 as well as a history of Herat in the British Library,20 carry impressions of another seal, engraved with the words, Amanat Khan Shahjahani, and the date AH 1042 (AD 1632–3). ‘Abd al-Haqq must have had this seal made following his acquisition of the title Amanat Khan, which, as we shall see, occurred in June 1632.21 This sequence of seal impressions suggests that ‘Abd al-Haqq held a post in the royal library continuously from the late 1620s well into the 1650s. Indeed, it seems more than likely that ‘Abd al-Haqq’s post at this time was that of head of the library, firstly because he was the designer of inscriptions for the buildings erected by the Mughal emperors during this period, and secondly because he achieved relatively high rank in the course of the 1650s.

In the meantime ‘Abd al-Haqq’s brother, Shukrallah, had acquired great distinction. Given the title Afzal Khan in 1615, he was a mainstay of Shah Jahan’s cause during the struggle for the Mughal throne
in 1627–8 and was rewarded with the post of first minister (dewan-i kuh), and eventually with the second-highest military rank Shah Jahan ever bestowed. It was no doubt Sukralah's continued pre-eminence that guaranteed 'Abd al-Haqq's position and led to his involvement in affairs of state, on an occasional basis at least. His name first appears in the historical literature in connection with events in 1611, when he was given the task of escorting the Iranian envoy Muhammad 'Ali Beg to Burhanpur, where Shah Jahan was in residence. His name appears again in connection with Shah Jahan's reception of a group of nobles on 8 May 1612, and on 19 June 1613 'Abd al-Haqq was given the military rank (mansab) of a commander of 900 infantry and 200 cavalry, as well as the title Amanat Khan. A year later, in July 1613, he received further promotion, to the hazart rank, that of commander of 1000 infantrymen. As Wayne E. Begley has remarked, 'These honours not only symbolized the high regard in which the emperor held him, but the promotion in military rank guaranteed him a considerable permanent income. Although the official histories do not intimate the reasons behind them, it is possible that the honours may have had something to do with 'Abd al-Haqq's appointment as calligrapher of the Taj Mahal, as well as for his diplomatic services to the state. A later honour, however, the gift of an elephant on 19 December 1617, was expressly connected to 'Abd al-Haqq's work on this building.

From Agra to Saray-i Amanat Khan

The erection of the Taj Mahal was prompted by the death at Burhanpur on 17 June 1613 of Shah Jahan’s beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal (who was also known as Taj Bibi, according to an note in cat. 73 below), and work on the tomb and its surrounding buildings began in January 1632. 'Abd al-Haqq was charged with the task of composing the inscriptions on the mausoleum, both inside and out, on the stone marking Mumtaz Mahal’s grave, and on the gatehouse and mosque that form part of the complex. The inscriptions consist primarily of a series of Qur’anic quotations, executed in the thuluth style and arranged in bands that frame the main architectural elements. According to a contemporary historian, 'Abd al-Hamid Lahawri, 'Adorning the inside and outside of this sacred tomb are numerous inscriptions—consisting of chapters and verses of the Koran, dwelling on the mercyfulness of Allah; His ninety-nine names; and prayers taught by the Prophets and Imams—so wondrously written that they astound not only the residents of earth but also the inhabitants of Heaven.' 'Abd al-Haqq probably supervised their execution in marble inlay, and his contributions to the decoration of the building
have completion dates of \textit{Ah} 1246 (AD 1636–7) and \textit{Ah} 1248 (AD 1638–9). During the years 1636–8 ‘Ahd al-Haqq also worked on the inscriptions on the three mihrabs in the Madrasah-i Shahi Mosque at Agra, two of which bear his signature.\textsuperscript{23} But ‘Abd al-Haqq’s work at Agra came to a stop before the greater of the two projects, the Taj Mahal, was complete. The calligrapher seems to have left Agra some time in 1638, perhaps in connection with Shah Jahan’s own move from the city in that year. ‘Abd al-Haqq’s departure occurred after the inscriptions of the mausoleum itself had been completed, but before the gatehouse was finished. In the event this part of the complex had to be completed after the calligrapher’s demise.\textsuperscript{29}

‘Abd al-Haqq spent the period after 1638 in Lahore, where his brother Afzal Khan died on 17 January 1639. According to the chronicler Chandrabhan Brahman, who had been a protege of Afzal Khan, ‘Abd al-Haqq was so grieved by the death of his brother that, ‘resigning service and giving up office and rank, he sought the nook of retirement and led a life of absolute seclusion.’\textsuperscript{30} He took up residence in a village he had founded one day’s journey south of Lahore, and there he built a great caravanserai, the Saray-i Amanat Khan. This was completed in \textit{Ah} 1250 (AD 1640–41), the date which appears in the dedicatory inscriptions executed in tile mosaic that frame the western entrance to the building.\textsuperscript{31} The date of ‘Abd al-Haqq’s death is variously given as \textit{Ah} 1250 (AD 1640–41), which was clearly derived from the date on the caravanserai (see below), and as the sixteenth and eighteenth years of Shah Jahan’s reign, equivalent to \textit{Ah} 1251 (AD 1642–3) and \textit{Ah} 1254 (AD 1644–5) respectively,\textsuperscript{32} but it seems to have occurred around 1642.\textsuperscript{33} The lengthy obituary devoted to him was provided by Muhammad Bakhtavar Khan’s ‘ghost writer’, Muhammad Saqa Burhanpuri, in the \textit{Mz’ar al’alam}, which was composed under Shah Jahan’s successor, Awrangzeb. ‘Amanat Khan, the learned brother of Afzal Khan. His naskh was the best of all calligraphers. He wrote the inscriptions on the tomb of Muntaz Mahal in Agra and was rewarded in \textit{Ah} 1247 (AD 1637–8) with an elephant and a robe of honour. He built a \textit{ribaat} and gardens close to the capital, Lahore, and wrote the inscriptions on the gateway in naskh. He died in \textit{Ah} 1250 (AD 1640–41) and was buried in the garden he had built near his house.\textsuperscript{34} His place of interment is almost certainly to be identified with a small ruined tomb lying just south of his caravanserai,\textsuperscript{35} where he very probably copied cat. 58 below.

5. Bayani 1329, 9; no. 10; Abad 1315, pp. 89–91; Bayani 1324–5, 3, 7; no. 38; James 1990, pp. 84–9, no. 45.
6. Yazdani 1921, 6; Gilkani 1937; but see also James 1992, p. 384, n. 3.
7. Dabloo, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. 2, folio 64; see James 1987, The other example is an unpublished page in the Polier Album in Berlin (Islamisches Museum, 74/1399, folio 16, 8, 26, 11; James 1992, pp. 184–5, 63).
10. I would like to thank Robert Skelton for his help in identifying the scribe.
17. Maharaja Sawai Mah Singh Museum, Jaipur, ms. no. 1635–60.
18. See Begley 1978–9, p. 44, n. 65.
21. For the first, see Bayani, no date, pp. 184–6, no. 444. For the second, see Bayani, no date, pp. 171–178, no. 144; Abad 1555, 2, pp. 204–5, no. 86.
22. Ms. Add. 16, 704, dated \textit{Ah} 1202 (AD 1693–4); Begley 1978–9, p. 24, n. 85.
26. For a brief description of the Mughal ranking system, see Richards 1991.
27. Begley 1978–9, p. 15.
30. Begley 1978–9, pp. 20–9, and pl. 22–6.
35. Begley 1978–9, p. 31.
36. Muhammad Bakhtavar Khan, ed. Alvi, p. 47;
The Mughal elite as scribes

58

Single-volume Qur’an
India, probably Saray-i Amanat Khan, alt. 1030 (AD 1640-41)

59

Single-volume Qur’an
India, 17th century

The scribe of this Qur’an was ‘Abd al-Haqq Amanat Khan Shirazi, who designed the inscriptions on the Taj Mahal (see pp. 178-81 above). Although several examples of his monumental calligraphy are known, the Khaliq Qur’an is the only example of his work on paper so far identified. The manuscript was copied in the same year as the building of Amanat Khan’s caravanserai south of Lahore, where he was in retirement. Its modest size suggests that Amanat Khan made this copy of the Qur’an for his own use, and, as the calligrapher died shortly after the completion of this manuscript, some time between 1641 and 1645, it may well have been his last work. In its modesty it stands in great contrast to his grandiose architectural inscriptions, which were designed to glorify his imperial masters.

The first two openings contain the first surah of the Qur’an (folios 1b-2a) and the beginning of the second surah, to the start of verse 3 (folios 2b-3a). On each page there are three short lines of text written in gold and set in ‘clouds’ outlined in blue and reserved in grounds hatched in red. The text is surrounded by panels illuminated in a distinctive, archaic style, predominately in gold and blue. The text areas of the third opening have 11 lines in gold, and there is a narrow band of gold scrollwork around the edge of the page. In the rest of the manuscript the text area on each page is divided into five compartments. The first and fifth contain a line of text in blue, the second and fourth, three lines in gold, and the third, one line in orange. All vocalization is in the same colour as the script.1 Surah headings are in the same size of naskh, in blue or orange. The hand is not especially distinguished, perhaps due to the age of the calligrapher, and to the fact that he was more at home working on a larger scale. Each fifth and tenth verse is marked by a small marginal device in gold and blue; for five verses it is a lobed rounded with a blue ground and a point at the top furnished with a blue ‘finial’; for ten verses, a four-lobed figure with a gold ground.

On folio 3b there are eight lines of text, and a blank central compartment. The baraunah of surah CXIV, which occupies the first line, is in blue, but the text of the surah (lines 2-4) is in black, as is the text of the prayer that occupies lines 5-8. All these texts were written in ‘clouds’, outlined in orange and reserved in a gold ground. The same treatment has been applied to the colophon, which was written in a slightly larger hand, in blue outlined in gold, within a roundel. The roundel and the margins of this and the preceding page are edged with the same band of gold scrolls as folios 3b-4a, and the margins are filled with gold scrollwork. It is notable that Amanat Khan wrote his name in the same style as in his architectural inscriptions, with the long final y’ (of al-Shirazi) running back through the uprights of alf and lam.2

Folio 1a contains some notes and the impression of a seal typical of those used by important Mughal officials.3 Only a small part of this is legible, but it is not too fanciful to suggest that it reads, [Amanat Khan] [Shahjahani] (‘Amanat Khan Shahjahani’).

The binding, which has no fore-edge flap, is of brown morocco and has simple tooled borders and stamped centre-pieces filled with an arabesque design. The doublures are of gold-foiled paper.
59
Single-volume Qur'an
India, 17th century

244 folios, 15.6 x 9.2 cm., with 18 lines to the page
Manuscript A smooth, dark-cream laid paper, lightly burnished; there are approximately ten laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines
Text area 10.5 x 4.9 cm
Script: The main text in naskh, in black, with reading marks to red; surah headings in white riga'
Scribe: Hajji Ibrahim
Illumination: Extensive illumination on folio 1b–24; text area scattered with gold and surrounded by frames of gold, black and blue rules; verses marked by gold discs; surah headings: marginal devices marking divisions of the text
Documentation: A colophon
Binding: Contemporary
Accession no. Q1841

This fine manuscript, which, like cat. 58, is of modest dimensions, was copied by Hajji Ibrahim, a scribe who is otherwise unknown. The text was written over a ground scattered with gold, except on folios 1b–24, where the spaces between the text are filled with red gold. The same tone of gold was used for the floral scrolls that fill the margins of these pages, which are otherwise lacking the illuminated compositions usually seen on the opening folios of Qur'ans of this quality. As in all other cases, the surah headings here were written in white 'riga' in plain gold panels. Other divisions of the text were similarly recorded in gold discs placed in the margin. The discs have outlines and finals in blue.

The red morocco binding is of comparable refinement. It has a wide, plain border defined by rules painted in yellow, and the outer edge is painted black. The inner field has inset centre-and-corner elements that have been block-pressed and gilded. The block-pressed designs consist of scrollwork and symmetrical compositions set with relatively large, rosette-like flowers. The doublures are plain.
Single-volume Qur'an
India, in or before AH 1360 (AD 1669–70)

The identity of the scribe who wrote this Qur'an is obscured by damage to the colophon, but three notes written by a Mughal courtier soon after the Qur'an was completed show that the calligrapher was Princess Zinat al-Nisa', a daughter of the Emperor Awtangzeb (reg. 1658–1707), and the illuminator was her elder sister's— and perhaps her own— tutor, an Iranian from Isfahan ca led Mawlama Muhammad Sa'id. In general such attributions must be treated with caution, but the details provided in the notes in cat. 60 accord well with the evidence of contemporary literary sources.

The damage to the colophon, written in Persian on folio 178a, means that only the words, Kātib-i Qur'an-i nājīd [...] Muhyī‘l-Dīn, that is, 'The scribe of the Glorious Qur'an is [...] Muhyi al-Din', are clear. In the damaged area there is space for one word, from which only the vowel kasrah survives. That word was probably bint, 'daughter of', since at an early stage the colophon, lacunose even in its original state, was supplemented by the three notes referred to above, which are found on folios 12, 178a and 178b. These are in a crude nastaliq hand, and all three are accompanied by the impression of the seal of Imamvidi, slave of Alamgir Shah, which bears the date AH 1374 (AD 1665–66). 'Alamgir Shah was the name taken on his accession by Prince Awtangzeb, whose other names were Abu ‘l-Muzaffar Muhammad Muhyi‘l-Dīn.2

The note on folio 178a, written immediately beneath the word Muhyi‘l-Dīn in the colophon, consists of the single word Awtangzeb. It is a gloss on the name Muhyi‘l-Dīn, showing that it refers to the Emperor, and it does not imply that Awtangzeb actually copied the Qur'an. Nevertheless, to make it seem that he did, the beginning of the note on folio 12 was later obliterated, and another hand added the word kitāb-i ('the writing of') in its place. This makes a nonsense of the remainder, which reads, '[...] the Emperor Muhyi‘l-Dīn Awtangzeb Alamgir, Zinat al-Nisa', AH 1360 (AD 1669–70). Again, the missing word was probably a term for 'daughter of', perhaps bint. The third note, on folio 178b, has not been tampered with. One part reads, 'Zinat al-Nisa', daughter of Dilras Banu Begam, first wife of Emperor Awtangzeb Alamgir, AH 1360.'

Zinat al-Nisa', the second of Awtangzeb's three daughters by Dilras Banu, was born in 1643 and was noted for her piety, having received a thorough religious education under her father's guidance.2 Cat. 60 shows that the education of Zinat al-Nisa included the acquisition of a fine naskh hand, and that she made at least one copy of the Qur'an.3

The other part of the third note reads, 'Illumination of Sayyida Ashraf, pupil of Aqa ‘Abd al-Rashid Daylamy.' Sayyida Ashraf can be identified with Mawlama Muhammad Sa'id, a figure in Isfahan literary life who was trained in calligraphy by 'Abd al-Rashid Daylamy, a nephew of 'Imad al-Hassani, and wrote poetry under the pen-name Ashraf.4

Muhammad Sa'id was the son of Mawlama Muhammad Sa'id Mazandarani, and his mother was a daughter of the great Shi'i divine Mawlama Muhammad Taqi Majlisī (1594–1659); he was thus the nephew of Muhammad Baqir Majlisī (see above, p. 126). Soon after the accession of Awtangzeb he left Isfahan for India,2 where the Emperor appointed him tutor to his eldest daughter, Princess Zeb al-Nisa. In AH 1083 (AD 1672–3), after more than a decade's service, he returned to Isfahan, but he was enticed back to India, where he died at a great age in AH 1116 (AD 1704–5).2 The date AH 1080 (AD 1669–70) given in the notes on folios 12 and 178b may therefore be the date when the Qur'an was written by Zinat al-Nisa and illuminated by Sayyida Ashraf, or it may be the date when it came into Imamvidi’s possession. He was clearly impressed by his acquisition and hastened to clarify its imperial provenance.

The text of surah al-Fatiha (1) is arranged in two panels on folios 15b and 24a and is surrounded by panels of illumination and a wide border, all set with arabesque and floral motifs on blue and gold grounds. The other colours used were white, orange-red,
to the colophon, the completed show is written by a hand of Awrangzeb, his own - tutor, which attributions is 66 accorded well.

It is noticeable that only the word of the Glorious
place for one word, 'brint', 'daughter of', was supplemented in 176 and 178b. These expressions of the
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44 (AD 1665-4).

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Sufi-name Ashraf,

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owe.
The Maghribi elite as scribes

have been the eunuchs of that name who were in her service.

4. Bayani 1348–49, iii, pp. 743–5, no. 1077, which is based on an article by Ahmad Gulchin Ma’ani in the *Nasab-i Astå‘i-i Qad. See also, amongst others, Nasrabad, pp. 181–8; Azad, pp. 116–18.

5. Just as the future Afral Khan was followed to India by his brother, the future Amnast Khan (above, pp. 174–81), so Muhammad Sa‘id accompanied or was accompanied by his brothers Mawlam Ali ‘Naqi and Mawlama Muhammad Husayn (see Nasrabad, pp. 181–8). ‘Ali ‘Naqi died in the year in which Nasrabad wrote this part of his Tadbírîb, which was also the year that Muhammad Sa‘id returned to Isfahan, that is, 1110/1083.

6. Cat. 60 is illuminated in an Indian rather than Safavid style, but this does not contradict the attribution to Muhammad Sa‘id, as Iranian painters who emigrated to India often worked in the local style, a well-known example being Farrukh Beg (see Welch 1981, pp. 211–5, no. 147).

7. See James 1924, nos 30–38, for example....

green, pink and a dull black. The first words of surah 11 are written on the next page, beneath a head-piece painted in these colours, with the addition of a carmine-red. This sequence is repeated towards the end of the manuscript: the text of surahs cxii and cxiv on folios 571b and 576a is surrounded by illuminated panels and borders, in which pale-blue and mauve were also used, and the prayer that fills folios 576b–578a begins with an ornamental head-piece. The illumination on folios 16–22 was executed with a free hand but is clearly derived from the type of Qur’anic decoration current in centres such as Herat, Bukhara and Tabriz in the earlier 16th century, but the other compositions include some elements, such as areas of floral decoration in gold-on-gold and gold-on-blue, that are typical of other Indian work (compare cat. 72–3). Gold-on-blue designs also fill most of the panels in which the gold cartouches containing the surah headings are set — other colours were used in a few examples. The cartouches are edged with orange-red, and the panels with a pink, or more rarely red, border textured with a cross-and-dot motif. In addition, the openings containing the beginnings of six surahs — al-Mā‘ânî (v), Tâhâ (x), Bani Isrâ’il (xvi), al-Shû’a‘râ’ (xxvi), al-Saffât (xxvii), and Qâf (c) — have borders illuminated primarily in blue and gold. These divide the Qur’anic text into seven roughly equal sections, although they do not correspond to the standard divisions of the text into sevenths (*sâh*).

The presentation of the text on other pages is also notable for its richness and complexity. Each line of *naskh* text is set in *‘clouds’* reserved in gold within a compartment of its own formed by single gold rules outlined in black. These rules also form narrower, blank bands between the lines of text, and these may have been intended for Persian glosses, as in some 17th-century Qur’ans from Iran (see cat. 45). The text area is framed by multiple gold, black and blue rules, and there is a wider outer frame (*kamand*) in the three outer margins. The *kamand* is filled with a scrolling leaf motif in gold only when it is seen in this position in other Indian Qur’ans (e.g. cat. 58, folios 511b–512a). A gold disc with a blue outline and ‘finials’ marks each *rukah*. In some cases the disc is inscribed with a letter *sūn* in white, and occasional omissions of the marker are supplied by a red letter *sûn, Juz’, half- and quarter-juz’* and *sajdah* markers consist of shaped cartouches with a blue ground. They are inscribed in gold and surrounded by a formal arrangement of floral motifs in gold, blue and red.
the next page,

A valuable example of this style of calligraphy is the folio from the manuscript of al-\textit{Kition al-Walid}, which contains the complete text of the Qur\textquotesingle\n
anic Law. The folio is adorned with a gold-inlaid design of a palmette, and the text is written in fine, black ink. The style is similar to that found in other manuscripts of the same period, and it is clear that the calligrapher was highly skilled in the craft.

These rules also apply to the design of the outer frame, which is adorned with leaf motifs and other decorative elements. The folio is folio 12, folios 11-12.
This manuscript, like cat. 62 and 61, is something of an art-historical curiosity. It has many of the characteristics of Iranian Qur’ans, and more specifically Shirazi Qur’ans, of the 13th and earlier 16th centuries, before the high Salavid style was introduced into Qur’an illumination in the mid-16th century. A relatively late example of the earlier style is to be found in a Qur’an written by ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni, who may well have migrated from Shiraz to India before the new style took hold (see p. 200 and cat. 62 below). We may therefore presume that the older, Turcoman-period style was transmitted to India before the mid-16th century and survived there until the late 17th century, when cat. 61 was produced. The attribution to India is based in part on the identity of the scribe and illuminator named in the colophon on folio 312b. They were two brothers, ‘Abd al-Rahman and ‘Abd al-Rasul, whose father, Nur al-Din Muhammad, bore the nisab Ahmadabad, suggesting that he or one of his ancestors came from Ahmadabad in Gujarat. The character of the script also supports an Indian attribution, as it evinces several orthographic peculiarities that also occur in cat. 61, for example. One notable mannerism is the placing of dots of varying shapes and sizes in the loops of letters in the muhaqqaq style (compare cat. 62, folios 51b–52a). The execution of the illumination, too, is distinctively Indian, especially in the colours employed, predominately gold, dark blue, white, orange-red, and pink.

The illuminator of cat. 61 was probably the ‘Abd al-Rasul who copied a large Persian-Arabic dictionary, the Ashbar al-Iṣbāḥ, in AH 1105 (AD 1693–4), the 17th year of the reign of Emperor Awrangzeb. In this work he was assisted by his two sons, Ahmad Rahmatullah and Gul Muhammad, which suggests the existence of a family atelier of copyists and illuminators that flourished for at least three generations.

The opening pages of the book (folios 1b–2a) are lavishly illuminated with a centre-and-corner composition in which the central medallions are inscribed with surah al-Waqi‘ah (105), verse 60, and a short prayer (illustrated on p. 176). The central fields and the outer borders have rich floral scrollwork in gold. The text of the opening surah extends over folios 2b–3a and was written in white muhaqqaq on gold within a lavishly illuminated frame. The third opening contains the beginning of surah 11, which is preceded by an elaborate head-piece. On these two pages the text is written in ‘clouds’ reserved in a gold ground, and the lateral compartments are filled with decoration. The margins are also illuminated, with loose scrolls in gold.

The main text is presented in the complex format that combines different styles of script within ruled compartments of different sizes. As a result, the surah headings vary in size and presentation according to where they occur on the page. They were all inscribed in a distinctive white ri’q on a gold ground strewed with polychrome floral elements, while in the larger examples the gold ground takes the form of a cartouche with shaped ends, flanked by areas of dark blue. Divisions of the text and the prostrations (sajadah) were first marked by inscriptions in gold nakkh, which were supplemented by ornamental devices mostly in the same style as the surah headings. These devices have a variety of forms, including a lobed roundel indicating the end of every tenth verse; an eight-pointed star for each sajadah; and a ‘cloud-collar’ motif for each juz’.

1. See, for example, James 1992, nos 19–40.
3. See also Muhammad Ashraf 1962, no. 2069.
It has many manuscripts, of the Qur'an, of the manuscript in Qur'an cat.61 was be and illuminator Shamsaddin and 'Abd Al-Basit, suggesting character of the script peculiarities of the writing of the dots of the manuscript in Qur'an cat.62, is Indian, especially colored and pink. It is a large Persian manuscript of the year of the death of the two sons, Ahmad and his family atelier of Najm. It is opened with a centre-page with surah 109, the opening surah of the book, within a lavishly decorated frame which is preceded by 'Alluddin's reserved in the book. The margins are filled with different styles of the surah headings. The surah headings were all written in polychrome floral patterns of a cartouche and the prostrations were supplemented by devices at the top of each tenth verse, with \textit{juz'}. 

\textbf{61 folio 20x20 cm}
62

Single-volume Qur’an

Probably India, circa 1654–86

305 folios, 14.7 × 23.5 cm, with 15 lines to the page. Material: A crisp, dark cream laid paper, lightly burnished; there are approximately ten extremely faint laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent chain lines or filigrinae. Text area 22.7 × 14 cm.

Script: The main text in a combination of thuluth (lines 1, 8, 15) and naskh (lines 2–7, 9–14); the thuluth in gold, outlined and vocalized in black, with reading marks in red; the naskh in black, with reading marks in red; surah headings in a hand with features of naskh and riq’, in red or blue; marginalia in the same hand, in red, or in true riq’, in red or gold. Scribe al-Majrân al-Islāmi.

Illumination: Extensive illumination on folios 1b–24; text frames ruled in gold, black, red, blue and a colour that has tarnished, and an outer frame of gold and black rules; text area divided into nine compartments by gold and black rules; naskh compartments sprinkled with gold; lateral compartments filled with a block-stamped design in a pale gold colour (folios 2b–7b); brown (folios 5b–8b) or red, overlaid with designs in gold on folio 5b–12b; verses punctuated by gold whirls (rotsettes on folios 1b–24) and red and blue dots; surah headings that occur within the naskh text in compartments defined by gold and black rules; basmalahs set off with floral motifs; colours that have now tarnished; marginal devices marking text divisions and sūrah divisions.


The quality of the calligraphy, the combination of large and small scripts (compare cat. 61) and the illumination of the opening pages give this manuscript the appearance of a Shirazi Qur’an of the 16th century, but it was probably produced in India, where the influence of Shirazi book production was strong, in the second half of the 17th century. The colophon on folio 1b contains no date, but a scribe of the same unusual name produced Qur’ans dated AH 1656 (AD 1654–5) and AH 1657 (AD 1655–6).2 The odd wording of the colophon – ‘Written by the poor and delinquent al-Majrân al-Islāmi’ – suggests that Marjan had an uncertain grasp of Arabic, in which his name is not normally written with the definite article, and this is borne out by the colophons found on his other work. But he was a calligrapher of considerable skill, both in his naskh, which is similar to that used by the Shirazi scribe Ruzbihan Muhammad al-Tabī,3 and in his large and excellent thuluth hand.

As has been noted above, the illumination on the opening pages has the appearance of 16th-century Shirazi work, although it lacks the characteristic ‘Chinese cloud’ motifs (see cat. 63). On folio 1a there are two superposed head-pieces of different design, which were combined in this manner so that the two texts they contain – the title of surah 1 in the upper head-piece, and the basmalah in the lower – are aligned with the first and middle lines of text in the rest of the manuscript. The third line on this page in the larger script (that is, the last) contains the title of surah 11, which is usually placed at the top of folio 1a. The text in thuluth on these two pages is set in ‘clouds’ reserved in a gold ground, and in the case of the two basmalahs the ‘clouds’ have a mid-blue ground. The lateral compartments that flank the text in naskh is filled with illumination similar to that of the head-pieces, and the margins are filled with gold scrollwork on a natural ground.

The rest of the manuscript has a rich appearance, due to the six lines of gold thuluth on each opening, the numerous gold rules and the marginal devices. Most of the latter consist of a gold disc with a border of red dots and blue ‘fruits’, inscribed in red. The markers for each ja‘az and half-ja‘az are lobed ovals and lobed fan-shaped figures respectively. A final element in the decoration is the stamped pattern of flowers and leaves, mostly in red, filling the compartments flanking the naskh text. These may have been intended as the base design for more impressive illumination, as occurs on folios 51b–52a, which contain surah 4, verses 28–41. Here the printed scrolls have been enlivened with designs in gold. The additional ornament on these pages also includes the composite lotus blossom in gold and colours placed in the margin, adjacent to the end of verse 40.

The covers are very worn but were once splendid examples of a type of leather binding current in Iran in the 16th century.4 The recessed central panel is surrounded by a border set with recessed cartouches. All the sunken areas were stamped and gilded, but the only element that is still recognizable is the Qur’anic quotation (surah 12, verses 79–80) found in four of the border cartouches. The doublures are of red morocco set with a centre-and-corner composition executed in exquisite gilded filigree on blue and green grounds.
compare cat. 61  

The appearance of a Shirazi manuscript was the influence of Timurid calligraphy. The colophon indicates that the manuscript was copied on vellum. The text is written in black ink, with a gold ruling on the margin. The title of the manuscript is "The History of the Prophet Muhammad." The scribe is unidentified, but the script is characteristic of Shirazi calligraphy.

The page layout is typical of Shirazi manuscripts, with the text arranged in columns. The chapters are marked with ornate headings, which are often decorated with geometric patterns and calligraphic flourishes. The page is bordered with a decorative border, which is also typical of Shirazi manuscripts.

The manuscript is in good condition, with no visible damage or wear. The ink is well-preserved, and the writing is clear and legible. The manuscript is an example of Shirazi calligraphy, which is characterized by its elegance and precision.
63

Single-volume Qur’an
India, perhaps Golconda, 17th century

451 folio, 39.6 x 25.8 cm, with 12 lines to the page
Material: Smooth, cream laid paper, lightly burnished; there are approximately eight laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines
Text area: 27.9 x 16 cm
Script: Main text in naskh, in black, with reading marks in red; surah headings and marginal jaw’ and half-jaw’ markers in blue naskh; black markers in red naskh; other marginals in various styles, in red and blue; concluding prayer in black tawqif
Illumination: Central roundel on folio 14; extensive decoration on folios 1b–2a; text frames of gold, red, black, and blue rule; text area sprinkled with gold; verses punctuated by gold wheels set off with blue and red dots; surah headings and hamaladahs on grounds set with floral motifs in gold, with no outlines
Binding: Leather cover of the 17th or 18th century
Accession no.: Q.0126

The text of this large and impressive Qur’an was written in a bold naskh hand that has a number of idiosyncratic features. These include a notable degree of inconsistency in the shapes of certain letters, especially daf and ba’. Thus when the letter ba’ occurs at the beginning of a group of letters its shape varies between one that is normal in Qur’anic naskh (folio 2b, line 4, naz’ahum) and the Persian form, more common in nasta’lq (folio 2b, line 6, bm). A particularly prominent mannerism of this type is the way the letter ya’ in the word al-rahiim in the basmalah is smoothed out into an arch shape, without the normal ‘tooth’ (Arabic kari; Persian dandaneh). Another feature is a tendency to run letters together (folio 16b, line 6, jaza’ahu), and in the phrase ‘ala kulli shay’in all three words are combined (folio 297b, line 6; folio 357a, line 11). On many occasions, too, final letters extend into the margins (folio 10a, lines 1, 10, for example).

The manuscript begins with an illuminated roundel, which appears to have become a distinctively Indian feature by the 16th century. The roundel, 7.5 centimetres in diameter, occurs in the middle of folio 1a and has a blank centre designed to take the name of the owner in seal form.1 It was once matched by an illuminated device in each corner of the page, but only traces of these remain. On this page there are also traces of an impression of a crowned seal of the type used by the Qutbshahi sultans of Golconda,2 and this, and the fact that the style of illumination appears to derive from one current in Golconda in the last decade of the 16th century,3 suggests that cat. 6 is produced in the Deccan. The illumination surrounding the text on folios 1b–2a includes large hasps with a gold ground on three sides, which contain Chinese cloud motifs and polychrome blossoms. The margins are filled with gold scrollwork on a small scale, which all but obscures the blue ‘tassels’ that edge the illumination. The surah headings, in blue riqa’, and the basmalahas that usually follow were set within separate compartments ruled in gold and filled with gold scrollwork on a natural ground.4 The compartments containing the surah headings are divided by cusped lines, suggesting a central cartouche.5

The text ends on folio 453a, and on folio 454b there is a prayer written in black tawqif, followed by the phrase, Tanmatt al-Qur’an bi’-izzam Allah al-Malik al-Manná (‘The Qur’an has reached completion with the help of God, the Beneficent King’), presented in the manner of a surah heading. This is followed in turn by the beginning of a fa’ilnáma, that is, instructions on how to use the Qur’an for telling fortunes, which formerly had a sheet of paper pasted over it. It seems from this that the Qur’an was once owned by someone who objected to its use for divination: he or she must have removed the subsequent folio(s), which may have contained a colophon. The presence of the fa’ilnáma, which is in Persian, may be taken as evidence that the manuscript was produced in a Shi’a context, which in turn gives added support to an attribution to Golconda.

The covers are of maroon shagreen and are inlaid with a centre-and-corner composition in stamped and gilded leather. This composition includes double perpendiculars above and below the centre-piece and ‘harp’ motifs at the sides, one each on the short sides, and three each on the long sides. The doublures are of plain red leather.
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India and Iran. A complex relationship

by Manijeh Bayani and Tim Stanley

The decoration of most of the 17th-century Indian Qur'ans described above (cat.58, 60–61) is characterized by illumination in styles derived from 15th- and 16th-century Iranian sources. These styles, which are themselves very diverse, had long gone out of use in their homeland, and this creates the impression that 17th-century India was a living museum of outmoded styles of Qur'an illumination from Iran. The contrast with figurative painting could not be greater, since the 17th century was a period when Indian artists displayed great originality, achieved by assimilating elements from a variety of sources. It also stands in contrast to the pattern of intense cultural exchange between India and Iran during this period, which can be detected in everything from poetry to portraiture. Indeed, there is evidence that Indian models, Qur'anic and non-Qur'anic, had considerable influence on Qur'an production in Iran, at least towards the end of the century. The most splendid Qur'an of the later Safavid period in the Khalili Collection, cat.45 above, has an elongated format of the type found in Indian Qur'ans at least as early as the 15th century, and its binding, faced with black shagreen and set with gilt-recessed elements, is much closer in form to 17th-century Indian examples (compare cat.58, 59, 63, for instance) than to established Iranian traditions. Other Indianizing elements may have included the use of paper of a contrasting tone for the margins ('field-and-margin' work; see cat.71), and the vibrant and lustrous style of illumination. A counterbalance to this movement of artistic concepts from India to Iran is provided by the example of cat.67 below, which was produced in India by a scribe of Iranian birth or descent, following the model of cat.44. In other words, the relations between India and Iran were so intense that the formulation of the Indianized style of Qur'an manuscript represented by cat.45 in Isfahan was soon followed by the export of this style to India.

A similar tale of men, concepts and manuscripts going to and fro between India and Iran in the 16th to 18th centuries is provided by the three copies of the Five Surahs published below as cat.64–6. The first of these items was produced by 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni, a leading calligrapher of Shiraz in the mid-16th century. Two Qur'ans by him were donated by Qutbshahi sultans of Golconda to the shrine of the Imam Riza in Mashhad, and a third was acquired by the Emperor Akbar, perhaps after his conquest of the Deccan. 'Abd al-Qadir's links with India were therefore strong, and there is some evidence, such as the Indian features of a Qur'an by him in the Khalili Collection (cat.87), to suggest that he may have emigrated there. Both this Qur'an and cat.64 were produced in a similar, complex format in which the lines of text on each page were written in a variety of styles (and sizes) of script within ruled compartments of different sizes. This is precisely the format that was still being used by al-Majdz al-Islami, the scribe of cat.62, in the second half of the 17th century – many years after it had dropped out of use in Iran.

The secord copy of the Five Surahs, cat.65, is very different in appearance, as it was written in gold and white on a text area dyed an attractive tone of chocolate brown. The attribution of this diminutive manuscript to India is supported by the type of illumination used for the head-piece on folio 1r, and by the existence of album leaves mounted with pages written in gold on a ground of the same colour, although in the nastā'īq rather than the naskh style. The pages bear excerpts from the Sayings of the Mughal emperors' great ancestor, Timur, as well as the signature of Nur Jahan, the wife of the Emperor Jahangir, and the date AH 1029 (AD 1619–20). Numerous other 17th-century calligraphic specimens intended for, or re-used in, albums were executed in light colours on grounds tinted or painted a dark colour, and it therefore seems likely that the use of paper tinted a dark colour for the text areas of manuscripts became fashionable in India in the first half of the 17th century under the influence of album production. In the second half of the century we find manuscripts being produced in a similar style to cat.65 in Isfahan, by calligraphers of the standing of Muhammad Ibrahim Qumi (fl.1657–1706) and Ahmad Nava'i (fl.1676–1741). Nava'i continued to work in this manner in the 18th century, and a prayer book by him in the Khalili Collection (text 422, folios 18–23) is written in his dramatic nastā'īq hand on paper tinted chocolate-brown. It is dated AH 1128 (AD 1716–7).

Another colour favoured by the calligraphers of the Isfahan school for the text areas of the manuscripts they produced in this style was a deep indigo blue. This can be seen in the third copy of the Five
Surahs, cat. 66. Unlike cat. 64 and 65, cat. 66 has a colophon and other inscriptions that link the manuscript to events in Iran and India, although at first sight the information provided does not seem very forthcoming. The scribe responsible for copying the manuscript in AH 1125 (AD 1717–17) is not known from other sources, and it is therefore unclear whether his name should be read as Ibn Muhayn Paydallah or Muhayn ibn Faydallah. The dedication, which precedes the colophon and was written in Persian, in the same hand as the main text, is equally enigmatic: ‘It was written in response to an instruction, informed by a knowledge of divine truths and points of saintly erudition, from the King of the Mysteries of Allah—May God grant him peace!’ The text information is found in a second inscription, on folio 23, which states that in AH 1203 (AD 1788–89) the manuscript came into the possession of Muhammad Khalil, the son of Sultan Dawud Mirza, the son of Shah Sulaeman II Safavi. This pedigree needs some explanation. Muhammad Khalil’s grandfather, Mir Sayyid Muhammad, was a grandson of the Safavid ruler Shah Sulayman through his daughter Shahrbanu Sultan Begum, and he was a nephew and son-in-law of Shah Sultan Husayn. Sayyid Muhammad’s father was the custodian (mutawallî) of the shrine of the Imam Riza in Mashhad, and Sayyid Muhammad inherited this post during the reign of Nadir Shah Afshar (1736–1747). In 1748 Nadir Shah’s grandson Shahrukh (who was also a grandson of Shah Sultan Husayn) set himself up as the independent ruler of Khurasan, with Mashhad as his capital. In 1750, however, Sayyid Muhammad deposed and blinded Shahrukh and assumed the style of Shah Sulayman II. His reign lasted only a matter of weeks before he was himself deposed and blinded, and Shahrukh restored. Sayyid Muhammad died in Mashhad in AH 1169 (AD 1753–54), but after his deposition his son Sultan Dawud Mirza had taken refuge in India, where he gained the protection of the governor of Bengal, Allahvirdi Khan Mahbubat Khan, and settled in the capital, Murshidabad. His son Muhammad Khalil joined him there in AH 1192 (AD 1778–79), after he had completed his studies in Isfahan. Sultan Dawud died in Murshidabad in AH 1205 (AD 1788–89), while Muhammad Khalil lived on until AH 1220 (AD 1805–6), engaged in literary pursuits, including the composition of his Majma’ al-tawarikh (‘Convention of chronicles’). The type of naskh employed in cat. 66 indicates strongly that it was produced in Isfahan, and the manuscript’s later history suggests that the ‘King of the Mysteries of Allah’ of the dedication is a reference to a descendent of Sayyid Muhammad in the role of claimant to the Safavid succession. This man may well have been Sultan Dawud, since the date of Muhammad Khalil’s acquisition of the manuscript (presumably by inheritance) coincides with that of Sultan Dawud’s death.

When Muhammad Khalil arrived in Murshidabad in the late 1770s, the political situation in Bengal had changed radically since his father had settled there. Mahbubat Khan’s death in 1756 had been followed by the brief but momentous governorship of Siraj al-Dawlah, who attempted to remove the British from Calcutta. The British counterattack, culminating in the disastrous battle of Plassey in 1757, led to the establishment of their hegemony over Bengal, and eventually, in 1765, to direct rule of the province by the East India Company. From this date English-speakers began to replace Persian-speakers as the main cultural interlocutors of the Muslims of India, and the longstanding relationship between the civilizations of India and Iran gradually lost its complexity and vitality. As we shall see in Part Two, the break was particularly clear-cut in the case of Sind, where the import of fine Qur’ans from Iran for the region’s Talpur rulers was ended by the British conquest in 1841.

2. On Mir Sayyid Muhammad and his family, see Gulistanah, ed. Razavi, pp. 37–37; Muhammad Khalil, ed. Isfahal, pp. 90–117.
This manuscript contains the five surahs Yāsīn (xxxvi), al-Fātih (xxxvii), al-Wāqī'ah (lvi), al-Mulk (lxxvi) and al-Nāba' (lxxxviii) and was copied by one of the leading calligraphers of 16th-century Shiraz, 'Abd al-Qadir ibn Sayyid 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Husayni al-Shirazi.

We know from Qazi Ahmad that 'Abd al-Qadir produced monumental inscriptions in thuluth, and at least some manuscripts by him have so far been identified, cat.64 is one of two copies by him of a selection of five surahs. None of his work is dated, but it is clear that he flourished before 1562, when Sultan Ibrahim Qutbshah of Golconda (reg. 1550–1581) donated a Qur'an from the hand of 'Abd al-Qadir to the Asrar-i Quds-i Razavi in Mashhad. Another Qur'an by the same scribe was donated to the same institution by Sultan 'Abdallah Qutbshah (reg. 1616–1673) in AH 1091 (AD 1641–2).3 showing that 'Abd al-Qadir was esteemed by the rulers of Golconda. It is clear from this that the calligrapher had some link with Golconda, which is in accord with his own Shi'i leanings; and it appears that after the fall of Golconda to the Mughals in 1687, the Emperor Aurangzeb came to share the local rulers’ high regard for 'Abd al-Qadir’s work, as another Qur'an by him bears an impression of Aurangzeb’s seal dated 1703.4 The link with the Deccan induced Gulchin Ma’ani to claim that 'Abd al-Qadir emigrated there. Moreover, while some of the manuscripts he copied were decorated in the style current in Shiraz in the mid-16th century,5 a Qur'an by 'Abd al-Qadir in the Khalili Collection (QUR428) has several features that suggest it was produced in India.6 Because of the limited amount of illumination in cat.64, it is not possible to say at present whether it was produced there or in Shiraz. 'Abd al-Qadir’s work was also appreciated in Ottoman Turkey, judging by the presence of two Qur’ans by him in the Topkapi Palace Library, one of which was made in 1611 by Sultan Selim III (reg. 1789–1807).7

The illumination of cat.64, although restricted in extent, is very fine. The first folio of the manuscript is a replacement, but the head-piece inscribed with the title of the surah Yāsīn, which has a blue ground set with white palmette scrolls, seems to be an accurate reproduction of the original, as the surah al-Fātih is preceded by a heading on a gold ground set with very similar green palmette scrolls. The heading of the surah al-Wāqī'ah, however, is on a natural ground, while those of the surahs al-Mulk and al-Nāba’ are on a plain gold ground. This variation in treatment reflects the overall layout of the pages, which are divided into seven compartments in order to accommodate text in two sizes of script: the heading of the surah al-Wāqī'ah occurs in the ninth line on the page, which would normally have been occupied by a line of mawhūqqat, while those on gold grounds occur where lines of nasīḥ would have been written. The closest parallel to the head-piece on folio 12 is, however, to be found on folio 9b, where the compartments containing the lines of mawhūqqat and thuluth have blue grounds set with white, red or green palmette scrolls.

The reason for this special treatment is presumably to be found in the contexts of the text written on this page. This consists mostly of verse 6 of the surah al-Fātih, which promises punishment for hypocrites and polytheists.
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54 folios, 13.1 x 8.3 cm, with seven lines to the page. The text area is 8.4 x 4.7 cm. The text is written in gold and white on a text area that has been dyed chocolate-brown. The margins are of a crisp, dark-cream laid paper, lightly burnished; there are approximately ten laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines. This small but refined manuscript contains the same sequence of surahs as cat. 64. The text is written in gold and white on a text area that has been dyed chocolate-brown. A close parallel is to be found in an album leaf in the Khalili Collection (MS 954), which is mounted with a page from a copy of the Mafrij-at-tawārif, or “Sayings”, of Timur. Made by Nur Jahan, the wife of the Emperor Jahangir, in AD 1629 (AD 1619-20), the leaf has nasta’lıq calligraphy in gold on a chocolate-brown ground. More of the history of cat. 69 would once have been clear, as folio 14 once bore the impression of a large, round seal of the type employed at the Mughal court, but this has been obliterated by gold paint.  

1. Leach 1993, no. 21. See also Sotadavar 1992, no. 139.  
56 surahs

This manuscript contains the same sequence of surahs as cat. 64 and 65. Each opening has text written in ink of a different colour on text areas stained dark blue, while the surah headings were written in a colour contrasting with that of the main text, on a plain ground, except for the first, that of surah xxxvi, which was inscribed in a illuminated head-piece. This type of presentation has 17th-century precedents, including a prayer book in the Khalil Collection (483352) copied in gold on dark blue by order of Shah Sulayman Safavi in AH 1097 (AD 1685–6). The calligrapher responsible was Muhammad Ibrahim Qumi, who worked in Isfahan (see cat. 30), and it seems that the scribe of cat. 66...
This fine Qur'an was copied by a scribe called Muhammad Riza, according to the first line of the colophon on folio 130v. The second line appears to have been erased and replaced by a line in a slightly smaller, more characteristically Indian hand which gives the scribe's name as 'Abd al-Majid and the date of the manuscript as AH 1044 (AD 1634–5). The amender of the colophon clearly wished to associate the manuscript with an important Iranian calligrapher of the 17th century, probably the Muhammad Riza Tabrizi who was the son of Ali Riza 'Abd al-Majid and the arch-rival of 'Imad al-Husayni. This dating does not, however, accord with the stylistic features of the Qur'an. Cat. 67 is similar in format and calligraphy to cat. 45, which was copied in Isfahan in AH 1101 (AD 1689–90), and the illumination is also similar but less refined than that of cat. 45. Deviations from this norm include the Deccani-style floral scrolls on folios 1b–2a, which incorporate a more naturalistic type of flower and plant than is usual in Iranian work, while the paper is of a heavier type quite different from the two papers used for cat. 45, and it too can be attributed to India. It therefore seems likely that cat. 67 was produced in India by a scribe who specialized in Qur'ans in the late Safavid style, and it cannot have been produced before the beginning of the 18th century.

The scribe responsible for cat. 67 may have been Muhammad Riza ibn Muhammad Taqi Tabrizi. He produced the earliest Qur'an with an explicit dedication to a ruling member of the Mughal dynasty, which was commissioned by Muhammad Shah (reg. 1719–48) and was completed at Shahjahanabad (Delhi) on 23 Ramadan 1145 (1 April 1731). It would appear that this Muhammad Riza later moved to Hyderabad in the Deccan and began to append the Sufi sobriquet Miskin al-Qalander to his name. Muhammad Riza attained a high level of productivity. Four Qur'ans from his hand in the Salar Jung Library are dated Hyderabad, AH 1153 (AD 1740–41), AH 1155 (AD 1742–3), AH 1157 (AD 1744–5) and AH 1159 (AD 1746), and he recorded that they were his forty-second, fifty-fifth, sixty-seventh and seventy-fifth Qur'ans respectively. Another, dated Chunarpatan, AH 1154 (AD 1741–2), was his fifty-second Qur'an. Cat. 67 now sports a 19th-century Iranian lacquer binding, more notable for its size than for the quality of the drawing. It is decorated with a floral composition rising from the base line against a plain black ground. The doubleubes are decorated with a small group of narcissi on a red ground. The binding overlaps the text block slightly, in the manner of European books, and may have been added to the manuscript at a recent date.
The image contains a page from a manuscript written in Arabic script. The text is in the vertical layout common in Arabic calligraphy. The content appears to be a religious or literary passage, possibly from a historical or religious work.

The script is calligraphic, with complex ornamental flourishes typical of Arabic calligraphy. The manuscript is likely a copy of a classical text, possibly a Hadith or a literary work.

The page number at the bottom right indicates it is from folio 175b.

Due to the orientation and script, it is not possible to translate the text accurately without a proficient understanding of Arabic calligraphy. The page appears to be part of a larger manuscript collection, possibly a library or a collection of religious texts.
This exceptionally sumptuous manuscript was written by a scribal who gave his name as Muhammad 'Arab in the undated colophon. An early owner, who may well have been the manuscript's original patron, was Muhammad Husayn ibn Muhammad Haydar Kudrash, whose name appears in an inscription on the following page. Written in an excellent naskh hand, in the form of a poetic qur'ān, the inscription is dated 27 Ramadan 1132 (19 November 1720), in the fourth year of the reign of the Mughal emperor Shah 'Alam II (reg.1727–1748), and gives Muhammad Husayn's residence as 'the walled city of Arkat [Arcoat], This city, situated in the Carnatic, passed into Mughal hands at the end of the 17th century, during the campaigns that also extinguished the Qurbshahi dynasty, and in 1703 it became the capital of the nawabs of Arkat.

The illumination is particularly rich on folios 2b–4b, which contain prefaceary matter, on folios 4b–6a and 48b–48a, which contain the beginning and end of the Qur'ānic text, and on the openings that coincide with the beginning of a jāz. The prayer on folios 2b–3a was written in gold, in five lines of a large naskh hand set within 'clouds' reserved in a gold ground and overlaid with polychrome floral scrolls. The text is surrounded by panels with a gold ground and those at the top and bottom are filled with a Persian text in white nasta'liq, which recommends reading the prayer before and after reciting the Qur'an. The margin between the text frame and the outer frame, or kawand, is filled with a prayer pattern of leaves and flowers, executed in gold with touches of green and red. The next two pages (folios 3b–4a) contain a richer and yet more extraordinary composition, which presents two Qur'ānic quotations, one from surah al-Isra' (xvii, 88), the other from surah âl 'imrân (iv, verse 53). These are in a large, deep-blue nasta'liq, set within 'clouds' that follow the outlines of the letters. The 'clouds' are reserved in a gold ground decorated with a flowering tree motif. The text panels are set within rectangles covered with fine floral scrolls on blue and gold grounds, and the same decoration is used in the outer borders, the scalloped edges of which are trimmed with gold petals. The margins are filled with blue 'finials' alternating with gold floral sprays.

The illumination on folios 4b–5a and folios 48b–48a is in the same style, but the motifs are smaller, and the effect even more sumptuous, with a different repertory of motifs used in each case. The text on these pages is also set within 'clouds' reserved in a gold ground which is overlaid with floral scrolls of different types. This theme is continued on folios 5b–6a, where the scrollwork is executed in blue and white. In addition, the margins are filled with scrolls on a larger scale, executed in gold with touches of green. On these pages, too, the marginal inscriptions are in deep-blue.

The text areas of an opening where a jāz begins are filled with one of a variety of floral patterns in gold, and the line in which the first words of the jāz occur is treated in very much the same manner as a surah heading - even to the extent that the first words of a jāz' are written in gold naskh. Both types of 'heading' were written in 'clouds' reserved in a gold ground worked with polychrome scrolls, within panels defined by gold and blue rules. They are accompanied by illuminated devices in the margin. These consist of an ornamental roundel with a gold ground and blue 'finials' in the case of surah headings, and a shaped lozenge with a blue ground in the case of the first words of a jāz; the latter are inscribed in white naskh with the number of the jāz.

The headings of the final surahs are also accompanied by a tablīr in gold. Inscriptions in the same style mark every fifth and tenth verse, every eighth and a jāz, and a number of other text divisions, reading instructions and prostrations (ṣu'āl). There is also a
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sequence of illuminated devices marking nakṣaṭrī; as in cat.63 they consist of the letter ʿayn and a number that indicates how many verses are to be read before the next nakṣaṭrī. In cat.68 this data was noted in gold within a roundel decorated with blue scrolls on a natural ground and framed by a gold band that forms a point at the top. Folios 482b–484b contain a prayer to be read on the completion of the Qurʾān, which is followed by the colophon. Opposite, on folio 485a, is the calligraphic panel bearing the ownership inscription referred to above. On folios 6b, 7a, 484a and 485a is an impression of a seal dated AH 1243 (AD 1827–8), which is engraved with the legend, al-khāṭir al-sāḥi Shaykh ‘Alī, or, 'The sinner, the supplicant, Shaykh ‘Ali'. On folio 483b the record of a birth in AH 1260 (AD 1844) is accompanied by an astronomical observation and an astrological chart.

The binding, which probably dates from the early 18th century, is of black shagreen, decorated with a modest border design in gold. There are modern paper doublures.
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In cat. 68

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Trip inscription

seal dated AH 1243

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Single-volume Qur'an
India, before 1764

707 folios, 34.1 × 22.3 cm, with nine lines to the page
Material A very crisp, light-brown laid paper, bournemouth; there are approximately eight kid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines
Text area 23.6 × 12.5 cm
Script Main text in nasta‘īq, in black, with reading marks in red; interlinear translation in red nasta‘īq; surah headings and the inscriptions in the marginal devices in white nipāt; marginal commentary in black nasta‘īq, with Qur’ānic quotations in red
Scribe Anonymous, with an appendix by Muhammad Ja‘far
Illumination Extensive decoration on folios 1b–2a; illuminated headpiece on folio 1b; text areas framed by gold, black and blue rules; verses marked by gold discs with taqquas of red and blue; surah headings; marginal devices marking divisions of the text; marginal commentary in ‘clouds’ reserved in a gold ground, in illuminated boxes; some with additional gold floral decoration; outer frames of gold and black rules
Documentation A colophon in the appendix
Binding: Modern, incorporating older material
Accession no. QCB265

1. On the same folio there is another note, dated Thursday, 11 Sha‘b 1335 (25 May 1935), in which the age of the Qur’an is calculated to be 177 years; this was clearly based on the colophon on folio 707b.

This large and beautifully executed Qur’an was probably produced in the mid-18th century. The evidence for this is as follows. The main text ends on folio 706a and is succeeded on folios 706b–707b by prayers to be recited after reading the Qur’an, written in a different hand. At the bottom of folio 707b there is a colophon, which appears to relate to the prayers. It gives the scribe’s name as Muhammad Ja‘far, and the date as AH 1178 (AD 1764–5).¹ A second piece of documentary evidence is the impression of an irregularly octagonal seal on folio 1a. This bears the legend, munawwar shahid Siddiq az nur-i Rezaazad, ‘Siddiq was illuminated by the light of the Provider’, and the date AH 1161 (AD 1748). The colophon, at the foot of folio 706a, does not give the name of the scribe or the date but consists of the phrase, ‘The whole of “There is no god but God; Muhammad is the messenger [rasul] of God” has been completed.’ It is possible that hidden within this there is a reference to the scribe’s name, which may have been Muhammad Rasul, for example.

The illumination of the opening folios (folios 1b–2a) is a beautiful example of later Mughal work, subtle in colour and delicate in treatment. These pages contain the first surah only, and the text areas are divided into five wider and five narrower bands by gold and black rules. The wider bands contain the Arabic text, written in ‘clouds’ reserved in a gold ground decorated with flowers and scrolls. The narrower bands contain the interlinear translation, written on a plain ground. Each text area is extended at the top by a blank panel with a plain gold ground, and above and below there are ornamental panels. All three elements (and the two outer borders) are ‘named’ by bands of strapwork in gold, and they are surrounded on four sides by a wide band of illumination on a blue ground. This consists of polychrome ‘vignettes’ composed of palmette scrolls linked by gold scrollwork bearing rosettes and feathery leaves. There is an outer border on three sides divided into areas of blue and gold by palmette scrolls; both are overlaid with polychrome lotus scrolls. The same elements are used in the two ‘hinges’ that interrupt this outer border. The whole composition is edged with a repeating pattern of finials and lotus blossoms in blue.

A fine head-piece in the same style precedes the beginning of the second surah on folio 2b, and similar polychrome ornament occurs at either end of the panels containing the surah headings. These were inscribed in white nipāt on gold cartouches, while gold discs inscribed in the same manner were placed in the margin to mark every ruku’, bāṣb and sajdah. The main text is accompanied by interlinear glosses in Persin. Executed in red nasta‘īq, they are not separated from the main text by rules, as was usual by this date. There is also a marginal commentary in black nasta‘īq within illuminated settings. These texts give the reason for the revelation of each surah and state whether the surah in question was ‘abrogative’ (nāṣīkh) or ‘abrogated’ (mansīkh). Such information would only have been of interest to Qur’ānic scholars or students, and this manuscript was presumably designed for use in an institution of higher learning.

The covers are modern, but they incorporate some of the block-pressed and gilded elements from an earlier binding, notably the corner-pieces and pendants.
mid-18th century. It is succeeded on a different leaf with similar decoration and relates to the year 1178 (AD 1764-5).1 The colophon at the end can be read as a reference to Musa ibn Ishaq ibn al-Khatib, a scholar of the first half of the 12th century.

The example of later copies often contain the first five surahs by 'Abd al-Wahhab ibn al-Khatib, while gold is used by this artist. As usual by this artist, the gold is used to emphasize the main themes. The text is written in black ink and gilded gold.
Single-volume Qur’an rebound in two volumes
Hyderabad, Deccan, 1780–82

According to the elaborate colophon of this Qur’an, it was commissioned by Vafadar Khan Bahador Fīqad al-Saltanah Shamsul Jang from the scribe ‘Ismatallah Uzi (Awi?) Beg al-Bukhara. Work on the manuscript started on 4 Jumādī al-Ulā 1194 (8 May 1780), and the production process, including the copying and correction of the main text, the illumination, ruling and binding, was completed on Thursday, 9 Rabi‘ al-Awwal 1196 (14 February 1781). Despite the splendour of the manuscript, almost nothing is recorded about the patron and the scribe. Three 18th-century scribes called ‘Ismatallah were recorded by Hafizqalam, but the first, the nephew and pupil of the celebrated calligrapher Muhammad ‘Arif Yaqt-raqam Khan, died in the reign of the nawab Shuja’ al-Dawlah of Avadh (1714–1771), and the second, Qazi ‘Ismatallah Khan, died in 1186 (AD 1772–3). If these dates are correct (see cat. 71), neither could have been responsible for cat. 70.

The opening pages (folios 1a–b), which contain only the first surah, are richly illuminated in a manner similar to the opening pages of cat. 69. The main exceptions in terms of the layout are the absence of the ‘hasps’ in the outer border, which is considerably wider, and the way in which the outermost gold band, here filled with a repeating floral pattern, extends across from one page to the other, interrupting the vertical bands that run close to the spine. The latter is a significant deviation from the classical format, as vertical bands continuing to the edge of the opening pages occur in most fine Qur’ans of the later Islamic period, from Istanbul to India. Despite this deviation, it is clear that many elements of the ornament on folios 1b–2a were derived from the classical style of Qur’an illumination, including the use of polychrome lotus scrolls and white palmette scrolls over blue and gold grounds in the outer border. Elsewhere in the manuscript, however, the style employed is notably less classical. The head-piece that marks the beginning of the second surah on folio 2b, for example, has blue, gold and yellow grounds, and the wide illuminated border that surrounds folios 2b and 3a has gold lotus scrolls on a dark-blue ground. In its original, single-volume format the midpoint of the manuscript was also marked by illumination – in this case, the compartments for the first and last lines of text on folio 272b and the facing page (now folio 274a) were filled with ornament on gold, blue and yellow grounds, and the margins of these pages and of the two following pages (now folios 274b–275a) were furnished with wide, brightly decorated bands. The first of these two openings was later split, so that the right-hand half (folio 272b) now forms the verso of the penultimate folio of the first volume, and the left-hand half forms the recto of the second folio of the second volume (folio 274a). During this work a single folio containing a prayer was added to the end of the first volume (folio 273), and a folio (unnumbered) bearing a second copy of the first surah was added to the beginning of the second volume. These pages, which are of an inferior paper with a high acid content, were illuminated in imitation of their facing pages, although in the case of folio 273a this painting was left unfinished.

The last two surahs were arranged within a heavily ornamented composition on folios 53b–54a, while folio 54b was ruled but left blank. This is followed (on folios 595a–598a) by prayers, a hadith, and the colophon, which was written in a mixture of Persian and Arabic. No mention was made in the colophon of the manuscripts and the Persian translation, which are incomplete. It therefore seems likely that these were added at a later stage.

The surah headings are in white ink on plain gold cartouches, set in panels with polychrome decoration at either end. The name of the surah and the first word of the surah were also noted in black in the top right-hand corner of each verso, together with
by Vafadar

and the production of the manuscript, ruling by Haftqalami, for the patron

If these are richly

which is filled with disrupting the

Despite this were derived

less classical.

surrounds the beginning – in this and the facing

lies 274b–275a

two openings

de the case of

likely that these

so, together with
الإلمام بالله، أن الدُّنَا عُرِّفَ عَلَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ الْمَلْكُ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمُنْتَظِرُونَ

خطّوا الله على قولٍ : ما يُحِي يُبْلِي مِثْلَهُ وَمَا يُمْسِكُ يُعْرِضُ مِثْلَهُ

ولَوْ كَانَ ضَرَّاً لَّهُمْ مِثْلُ مَا كَانَ لَمْ يَكُونُوا تَلَقُّوا مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ

فَمَا يُعْرِضُ وَمَا يُمْسِكُ وَمَا يُحِي يُبْلِي وَمَا يُرْكَبُ يُقَلِّبُ

لَهُمْ وَلَا تَجْهَلَيْ أَيْنَ يَسَاءَ بَلْ يَسَاءَ عَلَيْهِمَا وَيَسَاءُ عَلَى مَنْ كَفَرَ بِهِمْ وَيَسَاءُ عَلَى مَنْ كَفَرَ بِهِمْ

79 lection 18-19
is the first element in the modern
ethnonyms Uzbek, or from the
Arabic عزب, meaning 'mode of
reckoning drawn from the lunar
motions' (Steingass). This second
explanation is supported by the
colophon, which includes three
elaborate chronograms of a type that
would have appealed to a man versed
in the more esoteric branches of
Islamic science.
5. This hypothesis is supported by
the catchword on folio 273b, which
relates to the beginning of the text on
folio 174a and not that on folio 273a.

a folio number in red. A white letter 'ayn written on a gold disc with a floral border
and blue finials marks each 'rekû', while other text divisions are similarly rendered
but in shaped medallions. These were first marked by inscriptions in red, but most of
these were lost when the manuscript was trimmed as part of the production process.
The two sets of covers are of red morocco, painted in gold with a border, a corner-
and-centre composition and a lotus scroll design that fills the main fields. The fore-edge
section of the flaps has a block-pressed cartouche containing a Qur'anic quotation
(xvi, verse 80). The block used for this was dated AH 1185 (AD 1771–2). Nevertheless,
the Qur'an acquired its present, two-volume format some time after it was completed.
The doublures are of red morocco painted in imitation of leather filigree work with
a central medallion and pendants in gold and light and dark blue.

166 folios, 23.5 x 14.5 cm,
with seven lines to the
Material The text is
a smooth, light-brown
very lightly burnished
approximately nine lines
the centimetre, and 2
shadows or chain
are made of a crisp, off-
cream laid paper, but
are approximately 12
the centimetre, and
rib shadows or chain
Text area 18.8 x 10.6
Scribe Khai text in 86
with reading marks in
headings and the like:
the marginal devices in
Scribe 'Imamatullah Kh.
Illumination Head-pi-
tb, interlinear gilding
18–24; text frame of
orange and blue rules;
frames of one gold ru-
marked by gold discs
black; arabic headings
devices marking divisions
Documentation Color
Binding European
Accession no. Q1970

1. The leaves contain
verse 8, 10 surah lâ, 3
missing after folio 73;
containing surah xcvii
2. See ca. 73 and Ling
1976, no. 148, for exam-
3. Hatfield, ed. Hier.
p.127.
18th-century masterpieces

71

The final volume of a seven-volume Qur'an

India, probably AH 1197 (AD 1782–3)

This manuscript was written in a bold, Indian form of naskh, on pages composed of two types of paper in the style known in Persian as ‘field-and-margin’ (matn u hāshiyah shudah) work. This is also an Indian feature, as are the elongated format of the manuscript; the type of verse markers, marginal devices and surah headings employed; and such features of the script as the bend to the right in the letter alf in the word qala on folio 44, line 7, and the joined form of fatshah and damma. Cat.71 contains the Qur’anic text from the surah Qāf(1) to the end of the last surah, al-Nisā', which is approximately one-sevenths of the whole text, and it presumably formed the last volume of a Qur’an in seven volumes. Such a format is relatively rare at this date, but the end of each seventh of the text was marked with elaborate illumination in some single-volume Qur’ans from Mughal India.2

The colophon is in the name of ‘Isamatullah Khan, and it was originally dated AH 1197 (AD 1782–3), but most of the second figure has been crudely scraped away so that the date now appears as AH 1097 (AD 1685–6). The manuscript is clearly by a different hand from cat.70, but, as in the case of that Qur’an, it is not possible to identify cat.71 as the work of one of the two scribes called ‘Isamatullah recorded by Haftqalami. This is because cat.71 was completed in AH 1197 (AD 1782–3), while Haftqalami stated that the ‘Isamatullah who was the nephew of Muhammad Arif Yaqut-raqam Khan died before 1755, and that Qazi ‘Isamatullah Khan died in AH 1116 (AD 1702–3).3 But if the date Haftqalami gave for the death of Qazi ‘Isamatullah Khan is wrong, he would seem to be a likely candidate as the scribe of cat.71, especially since in the colophon our ‘Isamatullah Khan described his condition in 1782–3 as one 'of feebleness and old age'.

The manuscript starts (folio 1b) with a head-piece illuminated in gold, blue, orange and green. Though not as fine as 17th-century work, it follows the same style. The surah headings are in white riqa' on plain gold panels, and other text divisions are marked in the margin by a gold disc inscribed in white riqa' with the letter ‘ain (marking rukū') or the name of the text division. A curious feature is that catchwords were written in a smaller script above the last word on each folio, and not in the margin, below the text area.

1. See cat.73 and Lings & Safadi 1976, no.141, for example.
The ‘Kashmiri’ style

by Manijeh Bayani and Tim Stanley

Cat. 72—9 below belong to a broad group of Indian Qur’an manuscripts that are generally attributed to the northern, predominately Muslim province of Kashmir, where they are thought to have been produced in the 18th century. Kashmir had its first Muslim ruler as late as 1320, but the region seems to have been a centre for the production of Islamic manuscripts for much of its subsequent history. This tradition may have been initiated under Sultan Zayn al-Abidin (reg. 1420–1470), who made Persian the official language of Kashmir, and who is credited with introducing crafts related to manuscript production such as bookbinding and papermaking. It certainly existed by the 16th century: the text of an illustrated copy of the Buštān of Sa’di was completed there as early as AH 911 (AD 1504–6), and an illustrated Khamshah of Nizami dated AH 977 (AD 1569–70) has also been attributed to the region.1 After the Emperor Akbar’s annexation of Kashmir in 1586, the disappearance of local patronage caused poets, painters and scholars to leave Kashmir and seek employment at the Mughal court. Kashmiri scribes joined this emigration, and a number of the most outstanding Mughal nasta’liq calligraphers of the 17th century were of Kashmiri origin, including Muhammad Husayn Zarrin-qalam and Muhammad Murad Shkar-qalam.2 Nevertheless, a strong tradition of book production survived—or was revived—in the 18th century: A French visitor, Victor Jacquemont, recorded that in 1831 there were some 700 to 800 copyists in Kashmir. They worked only to order, transcribing copies of the Qur’an, the Shabnamah and a very small number of other books which are the objects of a small but regular trade, which had been more extensive before the Sikh conquest in 1819.3 The Kashmiri scripts of the 18th century appear not to have signed the Qur’ans they copied, nor did they record for whom they were made, although, as we shall see, two Qur’ans copied in Kashmir in the mid-18th century do bear dates. Colophons were more common in the Kashmiri illustrated manuscripts in St Petersburg studied by A.T. Adamova and T.V. Grev, but only one of these, that in a copy of the Divān of Hafiz giving the date AH 1231 (AD 1766–7), was accepted as genuine; the others have been obliterated or present dates that are impossibly early.4

The earlier of the two dated 18th-century Qur’an manuscripts already mentioned was copied in AH 1262 (AD 1749).5 Although the quality of the work is not as high as that of cat. 73, this Qur’an shares many features with the Khalili manuscripts, from the bold, neat naskh hand in which it was written, to the verse markers in the form of gold discs outlined in black, and the surah headings written in blue over gold. The margins of each page are divided into sections by rulings to accommodate a Persian commentary, written in diagonal lines. The phrase from the Qur’anic text that was to be commented upon was written in red in the same style as the main text, while the commentary itself is in black, in nasta’liq. At the same time, interlinear Persian glosses have been supplied, also written in nasta’liq, but in red. The second dated 18th-century example, which is preserved in the Gulistan Library in Tehran,6 provides a link with Kashmir, as its colophon reads, Ḥāḍīṣ-i muḥbaf al-kāfīm ba-ta’līf-i rabbābī dar khitab-i Kashmīr zeb-i tabīr yaf’t sanab 1273. ‘With divine support this Noble Qur’an was embellished with writing in the land of Kashmir in the year 1273 [AD 1759–60].’7

It is striking that all three dated manuscripts known to us were produced in the period when the Mughals were replaced by the Durrani Afghans as the rulers of Kashmir. The Afghans were first invited to intercede in Kashmir in 1747 and finally conquered the province in 1751. As a result Kashmir gained a measure of stability but became a remote province of a short-lived empire that showed no great interest in cultural innovation. It is therefore no surprise to find that the Kashmiri manuscripts produced after circa 1740—both the Qur’ans referred to above and the illustrated manuscripts published by Adamova and Grev—are often not of the highest quality. In the case of the illustrated manuscripts a direct comparison can be made with the more sophisticated Mughal court production of the period in the form of a fine copy of the Shabnamah in the Khalili Collection. This was written in 1791, probably in Delhi, and has been associated with the patronage of the Emperor Shah ‘Alam II (reg. 1759–1806).8 The 28 illustrations were carefully executed, with a great deal of precise detail, and they show a conscious realism in the arrangement of the figures within a receding setting, and in the drawing of the individual faces.9 The St Petersburg Hafiz manuscript of 1796–7, on the other hand, has
The "Kashmiri" style

miniatures with much simpler, flatter compositions, and the execution tends to be sketchy. Similar comments can be made about the illumination of the Kashmiri group. Several have poorly executed versions of the 13th c. polychrome illumination found in cat. 76-8, but the best example, in a copy of Nizami's Khwarazm and Shirin, has a great deal in common with the Qur'an of 1749 described above: the first page of text is dominated by a head-piece with gold floral scrolls running over blue and yellow grounds, framed by gold bands set with a running lotus pattern in pink and blue. Nowhere, though, does the illumination of the dated Qur'ans or the illustrated manuscripts match the superb quality of the decoration found in cat. 73-5. The execution is more peremptory, and the quality of the materials is lower, a very obvious difference being the use of yellow and blue grounds in place of the gold and blue grounds of the Khalli pieces.

On this basis it seems unlikely that cat. 73-5 were produced in Kashmir after circ. 1740. Indeed, as the 18th-century dated pieces appear to be loose renditions of a familiar type, whereas the Khalli pieces, especially cat. 73, are clearly very close to the original model, we may suggest that cat. 73-5 were produced before circ. 1740 in Kashmir or, more likely, in an important Mughal centre of production in the Great Plains. But how long before 1740 were they made? The illumination in cat. 65, which was copied by Princess Zinat al-Nisa' in the third quarter of the 17th century, is in a mixed style that may be seen as the predecessor to the gold- and blue-work found in cat. 73-5. We might therefore presume that the "Kashmiri" gold- and blue style was originated later in the reign of the princess's father, Awarangzeb, who would accord well with the information on this emperor's patronage of Qur'ans gathered above (pp. 172-3). The existence of cat. 73, and its attribution to the period before 1679, therefore presents a problem, for this Qur'an, too, is decorated with very fine work in the "Kashmiri" gold- and blue style. If the attribution of cat. 72 is correct, and the illumination is contemporary, the appearance of this style must have occurred in the first half of the 17th century or earlier. This divergence from the prevailing view that work of this type dates from the 18th century may seem extreme, but the study of Indian Qur'an production is in its infancy, and such revisions are to be expected. A similar case is that of the so-called Bhari Qur'ans, which are customarily attributed to the 15th century on the basis of examples dated between 1399 and 1483, but this practice is challenged by two Bhari Qur'ans with much later dates. One is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Arabe 472) and was copied in 1624-5, while the other, which was sold in the same city in 1994, has a marginal commentary signed by Mawlanz'Ala' al-Din Muhammad and dated 1603-4.13

2. Baraerti 1972, pp. 172-173. But note an unpublished calligraphic specimen in the Khalli Collection (cat. 688) that was signed by Muhammad Davarsh Rangin-qalam Sultan in balda'i Kashmiri, i.e. Shrinar, in 1615 (AD 1647).
3. Quoted in Parma 1969, pp. 419-420. The extent of the interchange is perhaps indicated by a Kashmiri Qur'an that seems to have been collected in Khujapid in 1795 (Paris 1994, no. 65).
5. See Schoenke and others 1971, no. 71, for an illustrated manuscript dated Kashmir, 1810.
7. Atash 1351, no. 37. Cf. also Christie's, London, 14 October 1997, lot no. 60, which contains a note recording a birth in 1787 (AD 1187) (cat. 1774).
8. Leach 1998, no. 43. One of the two colophons states that the section in question was completed on 18 Sha'ban 1205, 'in the 23rd year since the exalted accession', and it is this use of the regnal date that suggests that the scribe was working in Delhi, one of the few centres where such information would have had even symbolic significance in 1791.
10. Adamova & Grek 1976, pls 1, 6, 41, 76.
11. Adamova & Grek 1976, pl. 5-12. Dunöö 1911, no. 349.
The 'Kashmir' style

72

Single-volume Qur'an

Northern India, before 1659

The dating of this Qur'an is based on a note inscribed on folio 12a. Written in a minute nasta'liq hand on 1 Ramadan 1069 (23 May 1659), it states that the manuscript was formerly used for Qur'an recitations "in the presence of the queen of the world, Mumtaz Mahal, known as Taj Bibi". Because Prince Darashtukoh greatly admired the book, Mumtaz Mahal "bestowed it upon her beloved son with special pleasure". Mumtaz Mahal, the wife of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (1628–1658), died in 1651. The note was therefore added posthumously, but during the lifetime of her son Darashtukoh (1655–1679), by someone who was aware that Mumtaz Mahal was known familiarly as Taj Bibi. This is an important piece of information, since it explains why Mumtaz Mahal's mausoleum, which has been discussed above (pp. 178–81), is known as the Taj Mahal. Previously the only evidence for this came from the accounts of contemporary travellers such as Peter Mundy, who referred to the lady as 'Taj Mahal'.

Darashtukoh was the eldest son of Shah Jahan, and his father clearly favoured him as his successor. He was with his father in Agra in September 1657 when the emperor fell ill, and in the contest for the throne precipitated by Shah Jahan's illness Darashtukoh was charged with defending the status quo against his three brothers. His armies in the east saw off Shah Shuja's invasion from Bengal in February 1658, but those in the south were overcome by the remaining two brothers, Murad Baksh and Arawangzeb, who joined forces at Ujjain and marched on Agra. Darashtukoh met them outside the city, at Samgarh, on 8 June 1658 and was soundly defeated. Arawangzeb was able to imprison both his father and Murad Baksh and make himself emperor, while Darashtukoh regrouped at Deora near Ajmer, where he was attacked and again defeated by Arawangzeb on 23 March 1659. Fleeting east towards Qandahar, Darashtukoh took refuge with a Baluchi march- lord, Malik Javan, who eventually betrayed his guest. Darashtukoh was taken to Delhi, where he was beheaded on 10 September, having been condemned for heresy.

The note on cat. 72 would therefore appear to belong to the period when the prince was a refugee in Bahchistan, and it was presumably added after the Qur'an had passed out of his possession.

The information in such notes cannot be accepted without hesitation, but in this case there is no internal evidence suggesting that it is a later addition, designed to mislead. In fact, the greatest objection to the dating proposed here for cat. 72 is the character of the illumination, which is of a type previously associated with the 18th century. This general dating is challenged above (p. 229), and the objection is also countered to some extent by the unusual presentation of the text, which is not known from any dated 18th-century Qur'an and may be judged archaic even in a 17th-century context. The most striking feature is the solid gold grounds on which the text is set throughout, and it may be that this Qur'an is to be identified with a 'gilded and illuminated' copy of the Qur'an used by Darashtukoh which was at one time in the library of the nawab Husain al-Din Haydar in Comilla in eastern Bengal. The presentation of the text is also unusual in the division of the text area into three compartments divided by blue rules. The upper and lower compartments contain 17 lines each and have grounds covered with a lighter, greener tone of gold, while the middle compartment contains one line only, and the ground is a darker, yellower gold. The script employed in all three compartments is of the same size, but the division appears to be a vestige of the practice of writing the first, middle and last line of text on a page in a larger hand. The larger lines were often set in ruled compartments of their own (compare cat. 58, which dates from the same period).

The text area on each page is surrounded on the three outer sides by a border with a polychrome floral repeat pattern on a gold ground, and this separates the main text from the commentary in Persian, which was written at oblique angles in black nasta'liq, with
The 'Kashmiri' style

Qur'anic quotations in red. The commentary is frequently interrupted by complex devices in blue and gold marking each quarter of a juz'. There is an outer frame of gold, black and blue rules, but, whereas in most cases examples these outer rules form a kawand, a three-sided frame, here they surround the text area and marginal inscriptions on four sides. Surah headings are in blue rija' on plain gold cartouches set in blue panels decorated with floral patterns in gold, and bordered with narrow black bands textured with groups of white dots. A letter 'ayn in red marks each ruku', and the same hand supplied inscriptions recording each quarter of a juz' and each sajadah. Most of these features existed before the 17th century. The marginal commentary written at oblique angles, for example, is found in so-called Bihari Qur'ans from the Sultanate period. The strongly vertical format of the manuscript—the text area is more than twice as long as it is wide—must also have been current in India at this period, as it had been in earlier times, since it appears to have been transmitted from there to Iran in the second half of the century (see p. 200 above).

Folios 1b–22, 70b–71a and 135b–154a are sumptuously illuminated. In all three cases the reduced text area is surrounded by a broad frame, which is overlaid by 'hasp' motifs that protrude from the top and sides. The frame and the 'hasps' are divided into areas of blue and gold, both of which are decorated with refined floral scrolls in gold outlined in black. If the dating of this Qur'an before 1659 is correct, it is the earliest example with this type of illumination, which is also seen in a less developed form in cat.60, and in its full glory in cat.75.

The covers were made in the 20th century by Muhammad Yusuf Sahafa, who has left his name stamped in gold on the front doublure, but they incorporate gilt leather elements from an old binding. This had a centre-piece with pendants framed by a border of cartouches. The centre-piece contains the shahbadi written in a decorative fashion around the name Muhammad. The shahbada also appears in four of the border cartouches, but written in clear tahlil. The other cartouches and the pendants to the centre-piece are decorated with floral patterns. The two sections of the flap and the doublures are similarly decorated. The inscriptions on the doublures consist of Allâhu kâfiyûn ('God is sufficient') in the centre-piece, and a Qur'anic quotation, tanzîlan min Rabbi al-`alâmîna, 'A revelation from the Lord of the Worlds' (surah lxi, verse 80, and surah lxxix, verse 43), in the corner cartouches of the border.
This exceptionally fine manuscript is similar to cat. 72 in some respects, and the presence on folio 193a of the impression of an oval seal dated AH 1121 (AD 1759–10) suggests that it was produced some time in the 17th or 18th century. Qur'ans of this type are generally attributed to Kashmir and dated to the 18th or 19th century, but it is difficult to believe that the magnificence on this scale was the product of the periods of Sikh (1889–1866) and then Hindu rule there, and the illustrated manuscripts produced in Kashmir under Afghan governors (1722–1857) have illumination in styles closer to cat. 77 and never of the quality of cat. 73. It therefore seems reasonable, especially in view of the connection with cat. 72, to attribute this Qur'an to an Indian centre under Mughal rule and to a time when Mughal culture retained its vigour.

The manuscript starts (folios 1b–2a) with a fine double page of illumination. The reduced text areas contain the first surah only and were ruled in gold and black into five wider and five narrower bands. The main text was written in the wider bands over grounds scattered with gold and within 'clouds' reserved in gold grounds decorated with floral scrolls. As in the rest of the book, the narrower bands were used for a Persian translation in red nasta'liq. The surrounding illumination is divided into sections by gold bands textured with floral repeat patterns in black with highlights in red, and these sections are subdivided into areas of blue and gold by palmette scrolls in gold. The blue and gold fields are both overlaid with lotus scrolls in a brighter tone of gold. One of the compartments within this scheme frames the text area on two sides and contains a Persian commentary in nasta'liq, written on a slant. There is interlinear gilding similar to that in the text area, and the triangular areas left blank by the slant in the script are filled with illumination in blue and gold. Similar work in blue and gold is found in the head-piece above the beginning of the second surah on folio 2b, although here small areas of black were introduced, and the dividing bands are textured with strapwork designs. The main text on these pages is also presented within 'clouds' reserved in a gold ground. Otherwise the decoration is similar to that in the rest of the manuscript. There the main text is written on a gold-scattered ground within the wider bands. The commentary, which has interlinear gilding throughout, surrounds the text area on three sides, within a border 1.2 cm wide. This is defined by two sets of gold and black rules, the latter textured with groups of four dots, in white. This border also accommodates the marginalia indicating divisions of the text and the rakā'ī and saydabs. These marginalia consist of inscriptions in red ṭa'(ī, with an ornamental device for each quarter of a jawz. The devices are based on a lobed figure with double pendants, all in blue and gold, but no doubt due to the narrowness of this border only half of the full device is shown, as though it were projecting from beneath the text. A second, outer border, 3 cm wide, is defined by two sets of gold rules and is filled with lotus scrolls in gold and colours on a natural ground. At the centre of each side and at the top and bottom centre of each opening a 'hisp' motif protrudes into the outer margin.

Surah headings were written in blue on gold cusped cartouches, bordered with further gold illumination on blue grounds. Some headings cover parts of one or two lines (see folio 394b, for example), and they often include the number of words in each surah. Catchwords were positioned not at the bottom of the page, but to the side, close to the spine.

The text is divided into seven unequal sections, each of which ends with further double pages of illumination in the same rich style as folios 1b–2a. At the end of section 1, which is associated with the beginning of the surah al-Mā'ādah (v) on folios 70b–71a, the text area was reduced and the space between it and the border containing the commentary was filled with blue and gold illumination, which includes four 'hasps'...
the presence suggests that it is generally difficult to believe (1845) and under Afghan the quality is reminiscent of the 9th, when Mughal illumination. The gold black into larger bands over is decorated is used for a Persian sections by red, and these in gold. The line of gold. One makes and contains gilding similar the script area is found in the typeset small strapwork preserved in a manuscript. Wider bands. The text area of gold and border also has ‘khat’ and ‘sajdabs.’

A device for each surah, all in half of the full second, outer lotus scrolls at the top and margin.

Clustered with one or two words in, but to the

with further the end of of word containing the first four ‘hassas’

that project into the commentary area. At the end of section 2, which coincides with the end of the surah al-Tawbah (ix) and the beginning of the surah Yūnus (x) on folios 51β–53α, the text area is only slightly reduced and the commentary has been dropped, allowing the creation of a double border of illumination. On folios 179b–180a, which mark the end of section 3 and the beginning of the surah Bani Isrā’îl (xvii), there is a similar arrangement, but the commentary was inserted between the two illuminated borders. The gold areas around the text are further decorated with fine floral scrolls in black.

On folios 233b–234a, where section 4 ends, and the surah al-Shū’â’îr (xxvi) begins, there is no commentary, but only the inner border has blue and gold illumination. The outer border is filled with the pattern of polychrome lotus scrolls on a natural ground found in the rest of the manuscript. On folios 285b–286a, which contain the ends of section 5 and the surah Yāsîn (xxxvi) and the beginning of the surah al-Saffâr (xxxvii), there are again two borders separated by the commentary. On folios 333b–336a, where the end of section 6 coincides with the beginning of the surah Qaf (r), the text areas are surrounded by an arrangement of illuminated panels, the commentary, and one narrow and one broad border. At the end of the text, on folios 397b–398a, the two last surahs are arranged one to a page and are surrounded by a wide inner and narrow outer borders. The former is furnished with large ‘hassas’ and has the commentary written along its outer edge. Folios 398b–399a are blank, while folios 399b–400a contain a prayer to be said on concluding the Qur’an, which was provided with a fine blue-and-gold head-piece and a ruled border filled with lotus scrolls in gold on a natural ground. The outer margin is plain.
لا يعَدُّ الدّرَّةُ الَّتي عُدِّتُ لَمْ تَكُنَّ لَنّكمُ فَالْخَلْقُ مُخْلِقُوهَا ِلَّزَامٌ وَأَنتُمُ الْمُعْلُومُونَ

فَاعْلِزُونَ عَنْهَا وَأَنتُمُ أَشَدُّنَّ مُهْتَمِّينَ

أُنْعِمَ في دُرْرِي لّمْ يَكُنَّ لَنِعْمَاءَ ظَلَّٰلٌ وَأَنتُمُ الْمُعْلُومُونَ

فَالْعَلِيمُ لَكُمْ الْكُرمُ وَأَنتُمُ الْمُعْلُومُونَ

لّمَّا كَانَ رَبُّكَ يَنْعَمُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِكَتَابٍ مَّجِيدٍ وَاللَّهُ يُصَلِّبُ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِيَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

اللَّهُو أَوْلُى عَلِيمًا وَأَنتُمُ الْمُعْلُومُونَ

كُلُّ جَعْلٍ قُبْلَهُ مَلِكُ وَأَنتُمُ الْمُعْلُومُونَ

لا يَعْمَلُ الْمُغَضُّبُ عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ فَلا تَأْتِيَهُمْ مُعَلِّمٌ وَأَنتُمُ الْمُعْلُومُونَ

لَيْسَ لِلّهِ مَثَلُ مَا كَانَ مِثَالَكُمْ وَأَنتُمُ الْمُعْلُومُونَ

وَلَا تَأْتِيَهُمْ مُعَلِّمٌ وَأَنتُمُ الْمُعْلُومُونَ

لَيْسَ لِلّهِ مَثَلُ مَا كَانَ مِثَالَكُمْ وَأَنتُمُ الْمُعْلُومُونَ

لا يَعْمَلُ الْمُغَضُّبُ عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ فَلا تَأْتِيَهُمْ مُعَلِّمٌ وَأَنتُمُ الْمُعْلُومُونَ

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لا يَعْمَلُ الْمُغَضُّبُ عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ فَلا تَأْتِيَهُمْ مُعَلِّمٌ وَأَنتُمُ الْمُعْلُومُونَ
The 'Kashmir' style

Single-volume Qur'an
Northern India, 18th century

204 folios, 10.1 x 5.5 cm, with 20 lines to the page
Material: A thin, off-white laid paper, lightly burnished; there
are approximately 12 laid lines
to the centimetre, and no apparent
rib shadows or chain lines
Text area 6.8 x 3.9 cm
Script Main text in naskh, in black,
with ruling marks in red; surah
headings in blue nasta'liq; most
marginia in blue nasta'liq, some in
red (folios 177v, 178v, 180v, 194v,
195b); 19th-century additions in
gold nasta'liq (folios 1b–2a, red nasta'liq
and black naskh (folios 20v–21a),
and red nasta'liq and black naskh and
nasta'liq (folio 21b)
Illumination Extensive decoration
on every page of text except folio
20v (a 19th-century addition),
with additional features on folios
1v–2a another 19th-century
addition), 2b–3a, 9ob–91a,
199v–202v; each line within a
compartment 0.3 cm wide defined
by gold and black rules; verses
marked by gold discs outlined in
black; surah headings; text areas
framed by a border 0.9 cm wide
defined by two sets of gold, black
and blue rules, fitted with a repeating
floral pattern in colours and gold on
a natural ground; marginal devices
marking divisions of the text
Documentation A colophon relating to
the 19th-century additions
Binding Indian lacquer covers
of the 18th century
Accno 919255

1. Identical instructions are found
in q5912, which is dated 923/1414
(as 18fl–9); see Part Two of this
catalogue.

The original, Indian manuscript begins on folios 2b–3a, where the text, presented in
'clouds' reserved in gold, is surrounded by a fine double-page illuminated composition in
gold and blue, close in style to those in cat. 72. A gold band decorated with a repeating
pattern of polychrome flowers and leaves was used to articulate the design. Similar illuminated
double pages mark the beginning of the surat Bani Isra'il (xvii), close to the middle of
the text, on folios 9ob–91a (compare cat. 72), and the end of the Qur'anic text, on folios
198b–202a. The surah headings are in the same rich style (compare cat. 75), and the titles
were written in blue on a gold ground, in a decorative form of nasta'liq in which upright
letters form lobed arches (compare cat. 71).

Each line of text is separated from the next by black and gold rules, and the text
area is surrounded by gold, black and blue rules. On folio 4b the margin is filled with
lotus and other floral motifs in gold on a plain ground. On folio 4a similar motifs, but
executed in gold and colours, are contained by an outer border (kamand) of gold and
black rules. On folio 4b the outer border is composed of gold, black and blue rules, and
the space between the text frame and the outer border is filled with lotus scrolls in
gold and a variety of colours, on a plain ground (compare cat. 73). A similar illuminated
frame surrounds the text on every other page, but the motif is a repeating lotus pattern
executed in gold, with black outlines and highlights in red and green. On folio 6ob the
upper part of this illuminated border was replaced by a prayer ('I take refuge in God
from the fire and from the evil wrought by infidels and from the wrath of the Almighty.
Glory belongs to God and to His messenger'), written in black naskh in a 'cloud'
reserved in gold.

On folio 4b the illuminated border contains a marginal device, presumably designed
to indicate a division of the text, but it was left uninscribed. In all other cases marginal
devices and inscriptions marking divisions of the text and prostrations were placed in
the outer margin. Inscriptions in blue consisting of the word khams ('live') or 'asr ('ten')
record every fifth verse and every tenth verse, while single letters 'ayn mark the
rubki's. Similarly, the words rabi' ('quarter'), nisf ('half') and bahjatuh ('third-quarter')
indicate each quarter of a juz' and are accompanied by a gold half-teardrop-shaped
device with a blue border, which is attached to the outer border, as though the border
half-obscured it (compare cat. 72, 73). The same motif is used to mark the beginning
of each juz'. In this case it is accompanied by the word al-juz', sometimes written in
an ornamental fashion, and the number. In one instance, the beginning of the fourth
juz' on folio 21a, the first few words are in red.

At the top of each page there is another short inscription in blue, surrounded by
a lobed outline in gold. Those on the right-hand page of each opening usually record
the juz' number, while those on the left-hand page give the title of the surah. Towards
the end of the manuscript both inscriptions give the title of the surah, and they are
duplicated where more than one surah heading appears on a page. Where mistakes were
made in copying the Qur'anic text, they were covered over with gold, and the missing
section was written on a gilded area in the margin. This gilded area was outlined in red.

The quality of this Qur'an was clearly appreciated in early 19th-century Iran, as it
was adapted for use there by, for example, the addition of illuminated opening folios
(1b–2a) containing a prayer to be said before reading the Qur'an, and by placing one of
seven combinations of letters in the top right-hand corner of each opening so that the
manuscript could be used for telling fortunes. The key to these combinations is given on
folio 201b. The Qajar illumination on folios 1b–2a incorporates a border imitating the
marginal decoration in the Indian part of the manuscript, and this also appears on folio
202b, where it surrounds a text area laid out like the rest of the manuscript, with each
presented in a composition with a repeating column. Similar illumination to the middle Arabic text, on folios 160v, and the titles which upright and the text are filled with similar motifs, but gold and blue rules, lotus scrolls in illuminated lotus pattern. On folio 68b the refuge is God of the Almighty. In a 'cloud' traditionally designed cases marginal were placed in 'vase' or 'askr s 'ayn mark the three-quarters' drop-shaped through the border the beginning verses written in of the fourth surrounded by unusually record surah. Towards and they are made mistakes were and the missing outlined in red. This is Iran, as it opening folios by placing one of the missing so that the potions is given on under imitating the appears on folio script, with each
The 'Kashmiri' style

line separated by gold rules. The text here is a prayer to be said at the points in the text where a prostration was required, and another to be said after reading the Qur'an. The headings are in a typically Qajar style, in red riqâṭ on a plain gold ground. The prayers are completed on folio 1212, but in a different hand, and the illuminated border is closer to the Indian work in the rest of the manuscript, but this also seems to be Qajar work, as it ends with the date 26 Sha‘ban 1341 (5 April 1826).

The lacquered covers are decorated with a centre-and-corner composition with dark and gold grounds. Each element is filled with floral motifs of different types. The centre-pieces, for example, have a spray of irises on gold, while the corner-pieces have stylized lotus scrolls in gold on a dark ground. A similar motif on a green ground appears in the corner-pieces of the doublures, which frame a dark ground filled with a bouquet of flowers. The spine was also decorated with floral motifs in gold and colours on red leather. There are similarities between the motifs used here and those used in the marginal decorations surrounding each page of text, which suggests that the binding is contemporary with the text.
The 'Kashmiri' style

75
Single-volume Qur'an
Northern India, late 18th or early 19th century

The manuscript opens (folios 1b–2a) and closes (folios 435b–436a) with a double page of illumination in which gold and blue predominate. The only other colour employed is black, which is stippled with groups of small white dots when used as a background. Decoration in a similar style was used for the panels containing the surah headings, which were written in the ornamental form of riqa' used for the same purpose in cat. 74. The general character of this work is very similar to that in cat. 73, and cat. 73 can therefore be dated to the same period.

The main text was written in a neat naskh hand, and each line of text is set in a 'cloud' reserved in a plain gold ground. Most of this script is in black, but the first line of each juz' is in blue and is set against a solid gold ground within a compartment formed by gold and black rules above and below. This is accompanied in the margin by an inscription in red recording the number of the juz' and a device in black, red and gold, which consists of a medallion with eight pointed lobes and a pair of palmate-shaped pendants. The three are set two centimetres apart and are linked by a blue line decorated with subsidiary motifs in gold and blue (compare cat. 72, 73). The same device marks each quarter-juz', and each ajwab is recorded in the margin mostly in red but occasionally in blue riqa'. The letter 'ayn in either red or blue riqa' marks rub'is.

The name of the surah is written in red on the top left-hand corner of each opening, while the first word of each juz' is written in the top right-hand corner.

The lacquer covers are probably of a later date. The central field is black and is covered with trails of small flowers, rising from the base. The spaces between these motifs are set off with tiny leaf-like forms in gold. The maroon borders are filled with an undulating floral scroll in gold. The doublures have a red ground and black border, and the main composition is that of a vase set in a niche, although the treatment of the flowers is identical to that on the exterior of the covers.
Part 5 of a Qur’an in 30 parts
Northern India, probably Kashmir, 18th century

This Qur’an section shares many features with the group of Qur’ans with gold-and-blue illumination published above (cat. 72–78), but the lavish illumination on folios 19–28 is marked by the use of polychrome motifs on predominately gold grounds. This work is much closer in style to the decoration of later 18th- and early 19th-century manuscripts produced in Kashmir, and on these grounds and, on the basis of the distinctively Kashmiri style of lacquer binding to which it is attached, cat. 76 may be attributed to Kashmir (compare cat. 77, 78).

Only five lines of text are included in the central panels on folios 19–28, which are much smaller than the text areas in the rest of the manuscript. These panels are surrounded by a broad band of illumination, and the space between this and the outer frame is filled with a section of Qur’anic text, in red naskh, followed by an explanatory translation in Persian, in black nasta’lqī, which supplements the Persian interlinear glosses. This part of the margin is scattered with gold, as it is elsewhere in the manuscript, and the upper sections, which contain no text, are filled with floral scrollwork in gold and black. The outer frame and the triangular ‘thumb-pieces’ within the margins are filled with floral motifs over gold grounds. In the gold cartouche above the text on folio 19, the title of the ‘juz’ has been written in white riq‘a, and the other three cartouches on this opening have been filled with floral motifs.

The remainder of the manuscript is also richly decorated, predominately in gold, which is used in seven different ways: scattered, firstly, over the broader bands within the text area that accommodate the lines of the main text, and, secondly, over the inner margins, where the explanatory translation was written; thirdly, for the interlinear rulings within the text area; fourthly, for the verse markers; fifthly, for the frame around the text areas, which consist of two sets of gold and black rules separated by a running leaf-scroll pattern in gold only; sixthly, for the outer frame, which is formed from similar double sets of rules and is filled by floral scrollwork executed in colours and gold; and, seventhly, for the ‘thumb-pieces’, which have leaf motifs in gold only. The first quarter (folio 6b), and the middle (folio 13b) of the section are marked by diminutive devices in blue and gold filled with a single flower head.

The central panel of the lacquer covers is filled with rows of flowering plants on a red ground, and the border consists of a repeating flower and leaf pattern on a yellow ground. The doublures are decorated with a bouquet of flowers on an orange ground, framed by a lobed arch and surrounded by a border filled with scrolling flowers and leaves on a black ground.

1. See Adamov & Grek 1976, for example.
The 'Kashmiri' style

77
Single-volume Qur'an
Northern India, probably Kashmir, 18th century

The styles of script and illumination of this manuscript and its format are of types popular in India in the 18th and 19th centuries, but the ex-libris and colophon link it explicitly to the early 18th century. The ex-libris on folio 22a consists of a central roundel with a gold ground set with polychrome floral scrolls and a border of palmate-shaped elements illuminated in the same, bright style as the rest of the manuscript. The text in the central roundel, which was inscribed in white nasta’liq, reads, 'It was written by order of the sultan who is like Alexander in glory, the monarch whose every whim is executed, Shah 'Abbās Safavi Bahādur Kān—May God cause his reign to last for ever and [ensure] the continuance of his dominion!' According to the colophon, which follows a prayer to be read on concluding the Qur'an (folios 95b–95b), the manuscript 'was written with the aid of God, the Beneficent King, and presented to the Emperor of Iran on the occasion of the arrival of his august retinue on the most holy ground [of Mashhad], by order of his excellency, the pivot of grandeur and magnificence, Farhad Beg, Nasr Harati wrote it in the year 1016.' This information relates to Shah 'Abbās’s pilgrimage from Isfahān to Mashhad in AH 1010 (AD 1601–2), which he accomplished on foot, and the Farhad Beg referred to was presumably Farhad Beg Charshaf Qushchi, master of the hunt to Shah 'Abbās. He was later accused of attempting to assassinate his master with the help of Prince Safi and was executed in AH 1022 (AD 1614–15) of AH 1023 (AD 1614–15).

Given the physical characteristics of the manuscript, it is clear that it was not copied at the beginning of the 18th century, and it is probably an 18th-century textual (but not a formal) facsimile of a Qur'an presented to Shah 'Abbās i when he entered Mashhad on foot. The production of such a Qur'an in India may have been the result of the presence there of a descendant of the Safavid shahs. One such was the Muhammad Khalīl who owned cat. 66 above; another was ‘Abdul-Fath Muhammad Shah, the great-grandson of Shah Sultan Husayn (reg. 1689–1722), who took up residence in Lucknow in AD 1724.5 The date of this incident is very much in accord with the stylistic character of the manuscript, but even if there is no connection with ‘Abdul-Fath Muhammad Shah, the nature of the inscriptions suggests that the patron of cat. 77 was from a Shi’a centre in India such as Lucknow, or one of the two Hyderabads, in the Deccan and Sind.

The body of the manuscript has a layout designed to accommodate an interlinear translation and a marginal commentary, both in Persian. The central text area is divided by gold and black rules into nine wider and nine narrower compartments. The wider compartments contain the Arabic text in a large, characteristically Indian form of naskh, while the narrower compartments contain the translation in small red nasta’liq. The text area is surrounded by a band filled with a floral repeat pattern on a plain ground, and this is surrounded in turn by a broad area within which the Persian commentary was written diagonally in black nasta’liq, with the Qur’anic quotations in red nasta’liq. Surah headings were written on gold cartouches set within panels illuminated with a variety of motifs, and the name of the surah was recorded in red nasta’liq within an illuminated device at the top of the right-hand page of each opening. In the top-right-hand corner of the same page there is a code giving the character of the opening when used for casting fortunes. There is supplementary illumination at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the Qur’anic text. On folios 19b–20a, for example, the text of the first surah, al-Fātiḥah, is inscribed in reduced text areas. These are surrounded by a broad illuminated border with gold and blue grounds, defined by gold bands containing a repeating lotus-bud motif.
Five surahs
Northern India, probably Kashmir, Alt 1329 (AD 1814)

This manuscript contains the same selection of five surahs as cat.64–6. It was copied on parchment so fine as to be transparent. As a consequence the scribe, Ghulam 'Ali, was able to write on only one side of each folio. The text area on each page is divided into nine compartments by a framework of gold bands that resembles an abacus, with a line of text in each compartment. There are a number of noteworthy features. One is the composition of the baṣmālah, in which the word Allāh and the first half of al-Rahmān were written above the elongated xīn of bi‘rīm. Another is the way the text has been corrected in two places (folios 14b and 38a) by washing off the original wording and rewriting it. A third is the placing of the name of the surah, written in black naskh, in the top right corner of each written page. Other marginalia consist mainly of inscriptions marking ruku’s.

The first and last pages (folios 1a and 38b) have illumination in the style current in Kashmir in the 18th and 19th centuries. On folio 1a the text area contains only five short lines of text, which are framed by a head-piece and a wide border on three sides. These elements have gold and black grounds overlaid with polychrome and gold floral scrolls. The head-piece incorporates the surah titles, written in red on white and black cartouches, which are, unusually, supplemented by invocations to God and Muhammad. On folio 38b, where the ornament consists of two types of polychrome floral scroll on gold grounds, the text area is divided into two parts. The upper section is filled with five magic squares related to the five surahs included in the manuscript, while the lower section contains four short lines of text within a broad frame. The first three lines are the end of the last surah in the selection, al-Mulk (l.xviii), and the fourth consists of the words, tamma bih-ll-khayr (‘It finished well’). The colophon appears in the lower margin.
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by Abu Marwan 'Ali, was
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the words,
or margin.
The 'Kashmir' style

79

Qur'an in 30 parts
India, AH 1303 (AD 1885–6)

Between nine and fifteen folios in each juz', all 24 x 17.5 cm, with 16 lines to the page
Material A very crisp, off-white laid paper, burnished to a gloss; there are approximately 15 laid lines to the centimetre, and no apparent rib shadows or chain lines
Text area 17.5 x 8.5 cm
Script Main text in naskh, in black, with reading marks in red; interlinear translation in red nastaʿlīq; surah headings in blue riqa'; marginalia in red naskh verging on riqa'
Illumination Extensive decoration on part 1, folios 1B–2A; head-pieces on parts 1–29, folio 1b; each line of text within a compartment 0.7 cm wide defined by single gold rules, and separated from the next line by a blank compartment 0.1 cm wide; text areas framed by gold, black and blue rules; outer frames also in gold, black and blue; verses punctuated by gold discs; surah headings, marginal devices marking divisions of the text; colophons presented on a plain gold field, usually in the form of a disc
Documentation A colophon at the end of each section
Binding Cloth covers, perhaps contemporary
Accession no. Q.8445

1. The Baha'i first attempted to win converts in India in the 1870s, but they had no success until the 1960s; see Smith 1999, p. 453.

The continuing prestige of the late Mughal style of Qur'an manuscript, with illumination in blue and gold and each line of text set in a gold-ruled compartment (compare cat. 73–7), is shown by this example from late 19th-century India. It was ordered by a gentleman called Salih Baha'i, the son of Hibatallah, the son of Haydar 'Ali, the son of Qasim Ji and was completed in AH 1303. Salih Baha'i's name and lineage appear in the colophon of every volume, while the date appears only in the colophon of the last volume. In each case an attempt was later made to overpaint the second part of Salih Baha'i's name, no doubt because of the association it suggested with the Baha'i movement, the successors of the heretical Babi movement in Iran.¹

Part 1 begins (folios 1B–2A) with a double page of illumination predominately in blue and gold, which was clearly derived from models such as cat. 73. Head-pieces in the same style occur at the beginning of each subsequent part. The text area is divided by gold rules into horizontal bands, alternately wider and narrower. Each wider band contains a single line of text, and on folios 1B–2A of part 1 and on folio 1B of the remaining 29 parts each line is set within a 'cloud' reserved in gold. The narrower bands are generally blank, but Persian interlinear glosses have been added in red nastaʿlīq on folio 13A of part 26 (surah 1, basmalah and verses 1–5) and folio 1B of part 27 (surah 111, basmalah and verses 1–20).

In some respects this Qur'an is similar to contemporary Iranian production (see Part Two). Thus the outer frame of rules (bamanide) around each opening has small cartouches in the upper corners, formed usually of an arabesque motif in gold. The right-hand cartouche contains the number of the part (juz′), and the left-hand cartouche, the name of the surah, both in red, in a form of naskh that incorporates occasional features of riqa'. Towards the end of the Qur'anic text, where the surahs are short, and several appear on the same page, extra cartouches were supplied. Marginal inscriptions in the same type of red naskh record each quarter-juz′. Most are set in leaf- or batab-shaped cartouches (these also surround the catchwords), and all are accompanied by a marginal ornament similar to those in late Mughal Qur'ans—a small lobed medallion in gold and blue with long 'finials' set with triple pendants. Other marginalia, such as the blue letters 'ayn marking ruku′s in volumes 1–9, are later additions. Surah headings occur in panels that extend the full width of the text area; in panels inserted within a line, between the end of one surah and the beginning of the next; or in two short panels at either end of a line, divided by the last word or words of the previous surah. In all cases the title is written in blue riqa′ on a gold ground, and the panels are framed by a black band textured with groups of four tiny white dots. In the full-width panels the gold ground is presented in the form of a cartouche flanked by areas of blue and gold illumination.

Each part is bound in mid-blue glazed cloth printed with a Europeanizing design in red. This includes two medallions; one contains the name of the patron as it appears in the colophons but in tughrā′ form, the other, his initials in the Latin alphabet, serif.

A printed label gives the number of the part and the first word or words.
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Documentation
## Concordances

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